

International Student Mobility for the Formation of an East Asian Community

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1. “The East-Asianization of East Asia” is also taking place in the area of international student mobility

It is said that behind the concept of the “East Asian Community” lies a situation where the weight of this region in the world economy is expanding and where, due to the growing interdependence within the region, an independent economic system is forming that does not rely on the Western economy. Watanabe (2004) demonstrated “the East Asianization of East Asia” based on an analysis of the amount of trade within and without the region, and concluded, “the most important issue now is whether this de facto economic integration can be transformed into a framework for institutionalized integration” (p. 9, *op. cit.*).

Can this trend observed in the economic sphere be confirmed in the sphere of international student mobility? UNESCO releases yearly statistics on the number of students studying abroad, but unfortunately there are many missing figures, making it difficult at the moment to conduct any comprehensive quantitative analysis like those issued for economic exchanges. However, through the following data obtained for some countries, the situation of international student mobility in East Asia can be grasped with a certain degree of accuracy, as follows:

(1) As can be seen in Table 1, the number of students received by the U.S., France, and U.K., which traditionally have accepted large numbers of foreign students, increased approximately two-fold between 1987 and 2002. In particular, the increase in the number of students accepted by the U.K. stands out. On the other hand, the number of foreign students studying in the three major countries of East Asia increased twelve-fold. The increase in the number of foreign students in China and Japan is striking. Although there still is a considerable gap in the number of the students received by the major Western countries and the major countries of East Asia, it can be assumed that the relative weight of the East Asian countries in receiving foreign students is rising.

(2) As can be seen in Table 2, while the East Asian countries have traditionally sent large numbers of students abroad, the number of students sent from China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan—the major senders of students in the region—increased more than five times between 1987 and 2002. In particular, the increase of the number of the students sent by China is remarkable. The number of students sent to the three major Western countries increased a little less than three times. It can be assumed the relative presence of the East Asian countries as senders of students abroad in the world is also rising

Table 1. Trend in the acceptance of foreign students by major countries of the West and East Asia

	1987	2002	Rate of increase
US	343870	586316	1.705
France	133848	221567	1.655
UK	45416	255233	5.619
Total for the three countries	523134	1063116	2.032
China	3250	85829	26.408
Republic of Korea	900	4956	5.506
Japan	10697	86505	8.086
Total for the three countries	14847	177290	11.941

Sources: Compiled from UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks and Education Statistics Yearbook of China, various years

Table 2. Trend of students sent by major countries in the West and East Asia

	1987	2002	Rate of increase
US	19707	40750	2.067
France	12500	53152	4.252
UK	14513	30201	2.081
Total for the three countries	46720	124103	2.656
China	42491	274144	6.459
Republic of Korea	22468	83242	3.705
Japan	15335	62938	4.104
Total for the three countries	80294	420324	5.235

Sources: Compiled from UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks and Education Statistics Yearbooks of China, various years

(3) Figures 1 to 3 show the trend in the number of students from East Asian countries studying in China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan. There was a sharp increase in international student mobility within the region. This tendency points to an increase in student exchanges within the region, suggesting that there is a tendency toward the “East Asianization of East Asia” in the field of the international education exchanges, as in other areas.

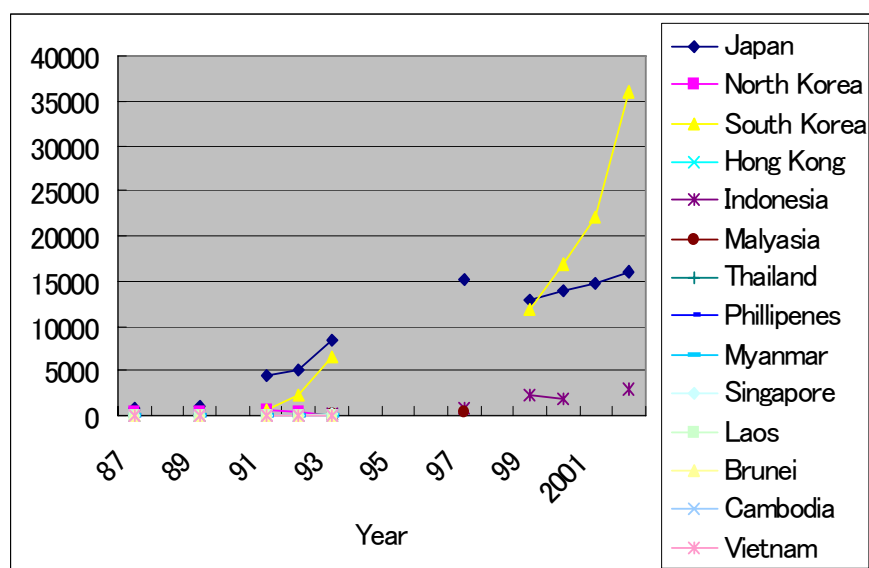
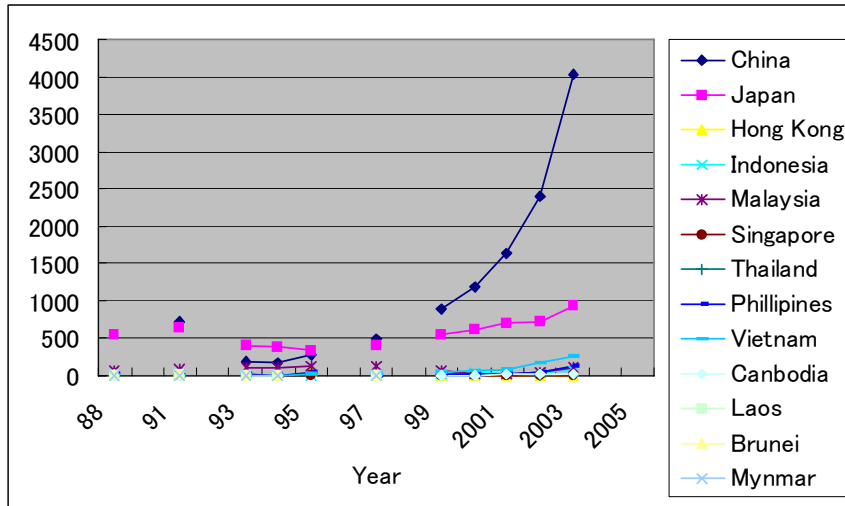


Figure 1. Asian Students in China

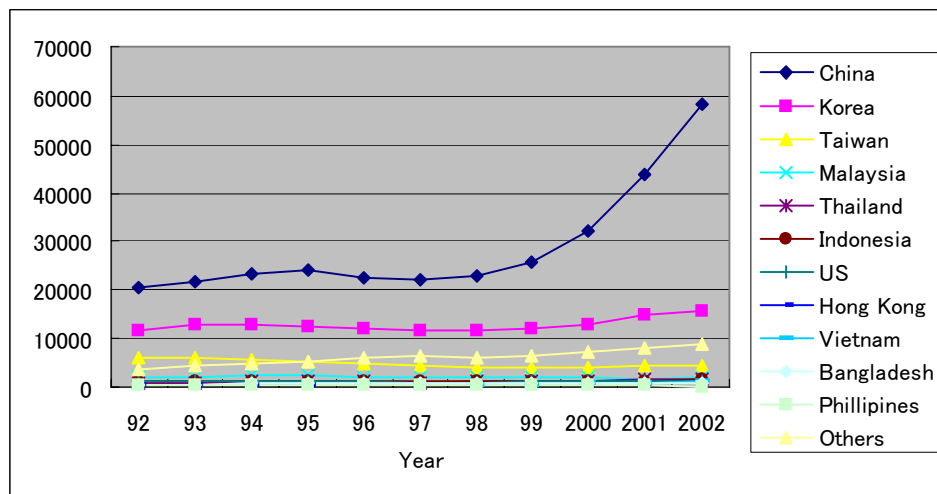
Sources: Compiled from UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks

Figure 2. Asian Students in Korea



Sources: Compiled from UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks

Figure 3. Asian Students in Japan



Source: Compiled from Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2004)

However, looking at South East Asia, although there has been a gradual increase in the number of foreign students from relatively populous countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia, it is unclear whether there has been an increase in the number of students from these countries studying in East Asian countries other than China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan, due to the insufficiency of data.

Also, as shown by Figure 4, the number of Asian students accepted by the Philippines, which conducts its higher education in English and historically has accepted a relatively large number of students from East Asian countries, did not rise between the latter half of the 1980s and 2000. This seems to be partly due to the slow response to internationalization of the education market, which will be dealt with later in this paper. However, the number increased sharply again after 2000.

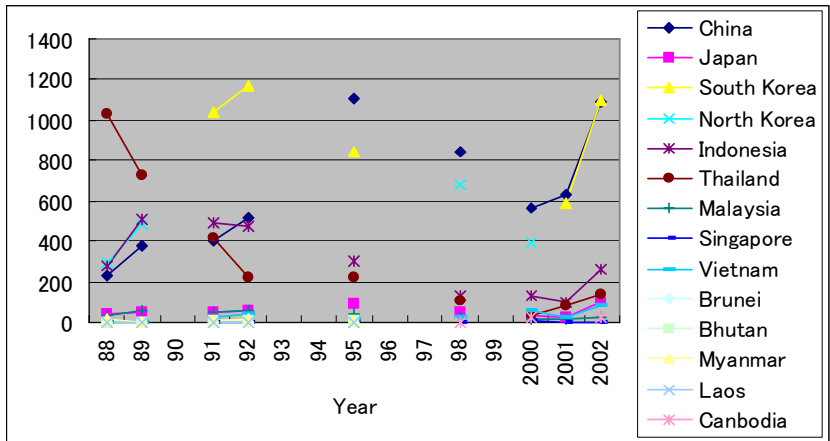


Figure 4. Asian Students in the Philippines

Sources: Compiled from UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks

In Malaysia as well, the number of the foreign students, in particular those from China and Indonesia, increased rapidly from 2000, as shown in Figure 5. The result of the active response by Malaysia to the internationalization of the higher education market could be observed in the number of foreign students it accepted.

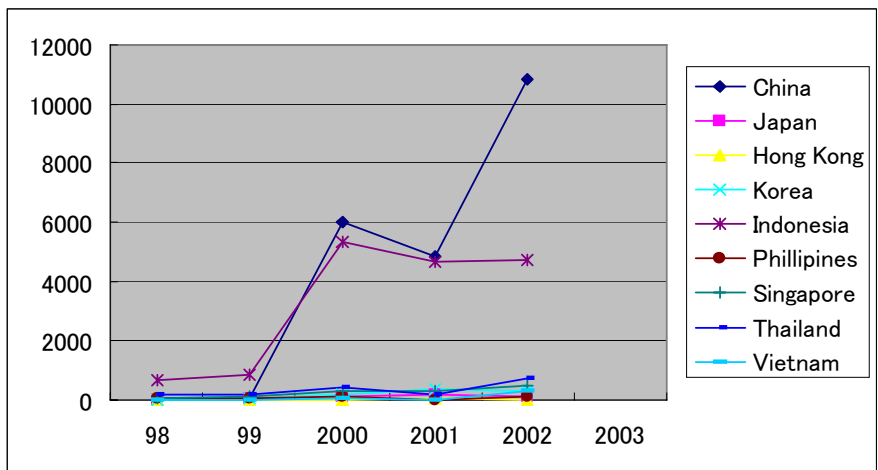


Figure 5. Asian Students in Malaysia

Sources: Compiled from UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks

Thus, as we have seen, although the situation differs from country to country, the “East Asianization of East Asia” could be confirmed to a certain extent in the field of the international education exchanges as well as in the economic field. It can also be observed that China has acquired a particularly major presence from 2000, both as recipient country and sender of students.

2. Changing ideal of international education exchange

As international student mobility in the East Asia region grow rapidly, in order to examine their role in the scheme for an “East Asia Community,” we need to work out the framework in terms of philosophy and policy. Here, we will look back at the history of international student mobility so far in order to obtain a basis for understanding such exchanges in East Asia.

(1) The “cosmopolitan model,” “nation state university model,” and “regional integration model”

The original ideal for international student mobility is the view about universities based on universalism and internationalism, where universities were viewed as literally of the “universe,” and were seen as communities of universal knowledge, not premised on states, that should be open to all regardless of cultural and political background. This view was based on the history of higher education at classical universities such as those of Bologna, Paris, and Oxford in the Middle Ages, which served students of various nationalities in a common language, Latin. In these universities, which were born before the advent of modern states, the international nature of both the faculty members and the students was quite peculiar, and at certain periods more than half of the faculty members and students of these institutions were foreigners (Kitamura 1984).

However, as time went by and the features of the nation-state were strengthened, universities were no longer given the independent position without a sense of borders, and were gradually expected and then forced to play the role of promoting the integration of the population and national policy goals. As shown typically by universities in late-comer countries such as Berlin University in Germany and Tokyo Imperial University in Japan, universities with the tradition of universalism and internationalism were gradually transformed into universities with a national nature along with the formation of nation-states. On the other hand, many of the universities that were established in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, mostly after the war, were built under the control and protection of the state, and with the idea of contributing to the state in mind. Kerr (1990) calls these two models of universities the “cosmopolitan model” and “nation state university model,” and states that today’s universities are trying to find a way to contain both of these diametrically opposed, contradictory models.

Student exchanges developed within this conflict between the model of universalism and internationalism and that of nation states. Under the former model, the nationality of the members of a university, who were seen as a community of world-wide knowledge, did not matter, and the existence of foreign students were positively assessed as proof of the universal nature of the university. This became the

ground for promoting international student mobility. Under the latter model of universities based on nation states, the dispatch of students abroad and invitation of foreign teachers were considered useful for the process of modernization of integration of people and state building, the need for receiving students from abroad and cultivating an international outlook on the part of students were not considered.

However, as pointed out by Ebuchi (1997), as the modern states matured, even in the view of universities under the nation state there arose a recognition that the international nature of the university, represented by the presence of foreign students, was useful for the development of science and for raising the nation's political and cultural influence vis-à-vis foreign countries. This led to the pursuit of a third model, the "cosmopolitan nation state university," with a strong sense of the need for internationalization.

During the process of regional economic and political integration in postwar Europe, a proper role of universities was sought for, and in 1987 the European Commission decided to establish the ERASMUS project to promote higher education exchanges and linkages in the region. This led to a rapid expansion and development of international student mobility in the region—the beginning of the "regional integration model."

In the context of the "East Asian Community," what significance does the above-mentioned historical development have when considering the ideal form of universities and international student mobility? Many of the universities in the East Asian region have developed in close linkage with the formation of the nation state. In this region, a situation emerged in international higher education which can be considered as a historical exception: the acceptance of students from other British colonies by the University of Malaya and University of Rangoon, and the common education of colonized peoples and Japanese at Taipei Imperial University and Seoul Imperial University. These cases went beyond the model of the nation state and could be viewed as an imperialistic form of university and international student mobility. At the time around 1905, near the end of the Qing period, students were dispatched to Japan on an unprecedented scale, said to be on the order of 8,000 people (Lee, 2002: A department for students from Qing was established at Waseda University). It is undeniable that this had an aspect of nation state construction for Qing, and for Japan involved the imperialistic aspect of extending interests in China.

In the post-war period, East Asia was mostly a region that sent out students to the West, and international student mobility within the region were not necessarily active until the first half of the 1980s. However, the rapid economic development and extension and maturing of higher education in the region since the 1980s has influenced the shape of the universities and international student mobility, leading to a strengthening of the idea of promoting exchanges based on the view of the "cosmopolitan nation state university," with an eye to the acceptance of foreign students. While this is seen most clearly in Singapore and Malaysia, the formation of a knowledge economy centering around universities is clearly a part of the national strategies of most other East Asian countries, and they are actively engaged in moves to acquire excellent students and brains and, as a precondition for this, securing the international nature of universities as a central ideal of international education.

It should also be noted that in the 1990s, ASEAN, which had been founded in 1967, started to move in the direction of promoting regional integration following the end of the Cold War. It set up the ASEAN university network at its 1992 Singapore summit, leading to a gradual recognition of the role of universities and international student mobility within regional integration. In addition, in the framework of Asia-Pacific cooperation since the 1980s, the University Mobility in

Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) program was established in 1993 to promote studying abroad within the region, and preparations began on institutional arrangements, such as the transfer of credits, to promote it. Thus efforts for university/international student mobility based on the “regional integration model” have come into existence.

(2) “International understanding/international peace model”

International student mobility have traditionally entailed various ideals in addition to the significance of the above mentioned models (the “cosmopolitan model” and “nation state university model,” and the models that can be described as sublated models of them, namely the “cosmopolitan nation state university model” and “regional integration model.”

The most representative of the other ideals is the “international understanding/international peace model.” The idea of linking international student mobility to international understanding and peace began to spread after World War I, and became popular after World War II. For example, UNESCO was established based on the spirit that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed,” as is stipulated in the preamble of its constitution adopted in 1945. It is this peace-oriented philosophy that has been at the basis of the ideal for UNESCO’s international student mobility.

In contrast to this ideal of international student mobility to promote international understanding and peace, there is a view that sees the acceptance of foreign students as a means to enhance the prestige of the culture and values of one’s own country and to secure and increase its political influence. An example of this can be observed in the case of France, which has continued to accept students from its former colonies following their independence in order to maintain its influence, as well as in the case of the U.S., whose peace-oriented Fulbright program contributed to the spread of U.S.-style democracy around the world in an efficient and effective way.

In the case of Europe’s regional integration, arousing the consciousness of people as European citizens and creating mutual understanding and confidence building among member states are important part of the goal of the ERASMUS program. The promotion of student exchanges is considered not as a simple return to the intellectual community of the Middle Ages Europe, but as a process for consolidating “the concept of a People’s Europe” in order to promote conciliation toward regional the integration of countries that experienced various wars in the modern era (European Commission 1989). In other words, the “regional integration model” and this “international understanding/international peace model” cannot be separated from one another.

When considering international student mobility within the region toward the formation of an “East Asian Community,” it is essential to work based on the “international understanding /international peace model.” In addition to the political frictions and differences in people’s outlooks between Japan, on the one hand, and China and the Republic of Korea on the other, the East Asian region has greater diversity in terms of political regimes, culture, and religion compared to Europe, and international student mobility will be able to play a major role in the promotion and building of mutual understanding and confidence. However, we should not expect that international student mobility will automatically promote confidence building and international understanding. In fact, there are many foreign students that end up returning home with strong ill feelings and mistrust toward the host country. In addition, the question of how international student mobility influence people’s likes and dislikes toward a country should be discussed separately from the issue of their contribution toward building the infrastructure for mutual understanding.

(3) “Development policy/development aid policy”

Following their independence, many developing countries adopted development and growth as imperatives, and the developed countries strengthened their aid and cooperation for development partly due to the competition for “containment” between the two blocs under the Cold War. Developing countries, as part of their quest for modernization and development, sent students to developed countries, sometimes using scarce resources, to have them acquire technology and knowledge and thus contribute to the development of their own country. There are in fact many countries that, like Japan in the Meiji period, have placed the policy of sending students abroad as part of their modernization and development policies and continued their efforts in terms of policies and finances.

The developed countries supported these efforts with aid and scholarships. In the U.S., the Institute of International Education, which played an important role in establishing infrastructure during the period of the enlargement of postwar international student mobility, cites as goals of exchanges the promotion of international understanding and preparation of students so that they could serve their country by acquiring new knowledge and techniques (IIE 1955). In the 1984 “Recommendation on the foreign-students policy toward the 21st century” by the Council on Foreign Students Policy toward the 21st Century of the Japanese Ministry of Education, which can be seen as the prototype for Japan’s foreign-student policy, contains as its essence, “cooperation with developing countries for fostering capable people.”

In recent years, a recognition has arisen that it is not only sending students abroad but also accepting foreign students that has effects on development, and some Asian countries have begun to adopt policies to actively accept foreign students. In Singapore, the Economic Development Board, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, in 1998 launched a World Class University Program, under which leading universities are invited to set up campuses in Singapore. So far, universities including MIT, the University of Chicago, INSEAD, and Waseda University have established graduate school level education and research programs in Singapore, and this has attracted excellent foreign students to Singapore. Malaysia, for its part, long depended on foreign countries for higher education due to the Bumiputra policy and the lack of opportunities for domestic higher education, particularly among the Chinese population. However, in the latter half of the 1990s, the higher education policy was drastically revised. The establishment of private universities was allowed and there was a liberalization and intensification of international cooperation of higher education and the promotion of the use of English in curriculum. As a result, the number of students from Islamic countries such as Indonesia and Bangladesh, as well as from China, has increased sharply. Thus, in East Asia, the acceptance of foreign students, along with the sending of students abroad, is becoming an important development strategy.

It should be noted, in relation to the “regional integration model,” that under the ERASMUS program, as mentioned above, the purpose of international student mobility is on the one hand the building of the concept of a People’s Europe and confidence, but it is also considered to be a human resource strategy for securing competitiveness in the world market. In order to achieve regional integration in East Asia, centering on the economy in an economy-first way, international student mobility within the region should also be considered from the perspective of strengthening competitiveness vis-à-vis the human resources of the other regions. With regard to the effects of education on economic development, empirical studies

such as earning rate analysis and growth accounting by education level from the perspective of human capital theory, have often cited the educational systems of the East Asia region as examples of efficient and successful human resources development policies. However, few empirical studies have been conducted on the effects of international student mobility on the economy. In order to expand fiscal expenditures for student mobility within the region, it is necessary to develop an analytical framework to evaluate the costs and benefits from an economic point of view.

(4) “International education market model”

The most salient trend in higher education throughout the world today is the rapid process of marketization. The trend of transforming national universities into incorporated administrative agencies or privatization is seen not just in Japan but also in many countries around the world in different forms. Partly due to the growth of private universities and the progress made in industry-academic cooperation, the diversification of higher education financing and the idea of self-investment, including through the imposition of payments on the beneficiary, is becoming stronger. With the background of these changes in higher education lie the increase of students studying abroad at their own expense as well as dramatic changes in the characteristics of international student mobility as schools attempt to attract “customers” known as students through measures such as the provision of international remote instruction made possible by the information technology revolution, and progress in international cooperation among education institutions aimed at the acquisition of students in the international market. In the WTO, a discussion on the liberalization of trade in education services and a policy framework concerning international education are being readied. In addition, efforts to respond to the internationalization of the education market within regions have begun. For example, various FTAs have items concerning higher education.

Such moves to promote the acceptance of foreign students, which see students as “customers,” were not adopted in the past when higher education was part of the public sector and the public funding was the main source of its income. Due to the cuts of public funding for higher education by the Thatcher administration in the U.K. at the beginning of the 1980s, and in particular the introduction of the so-called “full cost policy”—under which foreign students who do not pay taxes are responsible for their full educational costs—the concept of the “acceptance of foreign students as a source of revenue” emerged.

In Australia as well, because of the tight financial conditions of higher education during the 1990s, it became necessary for universities to secure revenues independently, and the government began to consider the acceptance of foreign students as an “export industry” in its policy. It promoted a deregulation of policies related to foreign students, carried out public relations overseas, and worked to ensure the quality of educational services, etc., resulting in a drastic increase in foreign students.

Many countries in East Asia are also undergoing a marketization of higher education/international student mobility, and major changes have been implemented in the higher education policies of various countries and the management of universities. In many East Asian countries, the principle of payment by the beneficiary can be seen through the initiation of the collection of tuition fees and rises in fees, the transformation of national universities into incorporated administrative agencies, the authorization and establishment of private universities, and progress in industry-academic cooperation. Exchanges in higher education within the East Asian

region are also being directly influenced by marketization. In particular, the rapidly growing demand for higher education in China cannot be fully absorbed domestically and is overflowing overseas, forcing considerable changes in the acceptance of foreign students by neighboring countries. The increase in the numbers of foreign students, progress in international cooperation on higher education, and the transformation of higher education into a service industry in Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and other countries, depend on the demand from China to a great degree. In East Asia, a regional market is being formed in the area of higher education together with the global market.

This rapid expansion in international student mobility in a market form has brought with it concerns and risks with regard to the quality of education. In some cases, private universities have compensated for the drop in the higher education age population by expanding the acceptance of foreign students, without securing the quality of education. In order to overcome problems involving the quality of education related to international student mobility, there is a need to systematically develop, at the international level, a mechanism to evaluate and guarantee the quality of higher education, like those that are already being implemented at a national level in various countries.

3. Connecting international education exchanges in East Asia to the formation of an “East Asian Community”

In this paper, after confirming that the “East Asianization of East Asia” is taking place in the sphere of international student mobility, we have looked at various points concerning how such exchanges can contribute to the formation of an “East Asian Community” using various ideal models of international student mobility.

When the formation of an “East Asian Community” becomes a full-pledged policy issue through the East Asia summits, international student mobility will be discussed alongside political and economic issues such as trade and security. It will become necessary to plan an international cooperative scheme, perhaps an East Asian version of the ERASMUS program, in order to foster leaders in East Asia who can promote the construction of a future “East Asia Community.” For that purpose, there is a need for cooperation with existing frameworks for higher education exchanges and cooperation such as the ASEAN university network, UMAP, South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization, as well as the activities of international agencies in the region such as the Asia Development Bank and the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.

In doing so, Asian countries must share a vision concerning higher education and international student mobility that can foster a consciousness toward confidence building in East Asia and a concept of people’s Asia, and strengthen the competitiveness of Asian human resources in the world. International student mobility in East Asia are being carried out based on diverse models and ideals, as discussed in this paper. By comprehensively discussing and internalizing diverse views, rather than relying on a single model or ideal, it will be possible to build international student mobility in East Asia that can be expected to contribute greatly to the formation of an East Asian Community, and thus, to the peace and prosperity of the region.

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