

AN ABBREVIATED HISTORY

OF

THE JAPAN-ASEAN RELATIONSHIP

1967

FOUNDING OF ASEAN

THAILAND  SINGAPORE  MALAYSIA 
 INDONESIA  PHILIPPINES 

1973

OPENING OF THE JAPAN-ASEAN SYNTHETIC RUBBER FORUM
 FIRST CO-OPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP

1977

FORMER PRIME MINISTER TAKEO FUKUDA ANNOUNCES
 THE FUKUDA DOCTRINE IN MANILA
 FIRST ASEAN-JAPAN HEADS OF STATE MEETING

1978

OPENING OF THE FIRST ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING

1981

OPENING OF THE ASEAN-JAPAN CENTER IN TOKYO

1984

BRUNEI JOINS ASEAN 

1995

VIET NAM JOINS ASEAN 

1997

ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS — JAPAN ANNOUNCES ITS
 INTENTION TO PROVIDE 80 BILLION USD
 OPENING OF THE 3RD ASEAN-JAPAN HEADS OF STATE
 MEETING (HELD EVERY YEAR FROM THIS DATE ONWARD)
 MYANMAR  AND LAOS  JOIN ASEAN

1999

CAMBODIA JOINS ASEAN 

2003

ASEAN-JAPAN SPECIAL HEADS OF STATE MEETING —
 ASEAN-JAPAN TOKYO DECLARATION
 ADOPTION OF A COOPERATIVE MANIFESTO
 CONCERNING THE DEEPENING AND EXPANSION OF
 THE ASEAN-JAPAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

2008

ASEAN-JAPAN COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC
 PARTNERSHIP (AJCEP) PUT INTO EFFECT

2013

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF JAPAN'S
 ASEAN DIPLOMACY

DR. SHIRAISHI INTERVIEW

VEENA YOSHINO



FOR Japan and ASEAN to carve out a new history as equal partners, the important key will be to build a new relationship in anticipation of the changing era. In continuing to grow together, what will be expected of Japan? Dr. Takashi Shiraishi is the president of GRIPS (the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies) and an expert in Asian politics and international relations, we asked him about some of the issues that Japan should tackle in further strengthening the relationship with ASEAN at the same time as looking back at the path that have been taken so far.

Shiraishi stated that in terms of its importance to Japan,

the Japan-ASEAN relationship comes second to the Japan-US relationship.

In 1977 Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda introduced what is now called the Fukuda Doctrine which has the heart-to-heart conversation at the base of the Japan-ASEAN relationship. The Fukuda Doctrine still holds a very significant place as was seen in January this year when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe released a statement that he will inherit the Fukuda Doctrine in the future diplomacy towards ASEAN.

Shiraishi explains that there were a couple of big changes that took place in the 1990s. One of which occurred after Viet Nam's withdrawal from Cambodia and the implementation of the Cambodian Peace Settlement. Japan's very first post-war international peace keeping operation took place then. Second is Japan's support of the integration of the 6 ASEAN countries as well as of Indochina. Third is the Economic crisis of 1997-1998 where Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia were severely affected. The Asia Monetary Fund to monitor East Asian economies for currency stability and to provide support in times of economic crisis was informally proposed by the Japanese government in response to the devastation but did not

go through. However, what did happen was 10 years was spent in building virtually the same system, now called the Chang Mai Initiative (CMI) to prevent this region from ever getting hit by such a destructive economic crisis.

When we asked how he thinks the Japan-ASEAN relationship will transform in the next 10 or 20 years, he explains that in the past 10 years, Japan lent a hand in establishing a stable ASEAN, as well as a stable East Asia. Due to this, ASEAN's economy is growing and according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the economy will be approximately the same as Japan's by the year 2030 and he states "ASEAN will become very important". "Therefore there are a few significant discussions that need to take place between Japan and ASEAN. First and foremost, is the discussion of how to develop each individual nation in a time when liberalization of trade is taking place. Second is how to prevent their economies from getting stuck in the middle income group. To aim for a further prosperous and stable Asia, Japan and ASEAN needs to work closely with each other."

"The most important thing currently is to welcome people who will become globally active from ASEAN as well as other

parts of the world. In order to do that, Japan should make every effort in creating an environment in which even people with limited Japanese capability are able to feel comfortable" Shiraishi adds.

"The next step for Japan is to help strengthening the unity of the ASEAN, raise the capacity of each ASEAN nation in terms economic cooperation, human resource development, and the adjustment and upgrading of infrastructure."

Furthermore, due to visas being easier to obtain or no longer required for visitors from countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Philippines and Indonesia there is a visibly large flow of ASEAN population into Japan. In such a time, Shiraishi predicts that "beginning with ASEAN, Japanese companies will start to appoint people from Asia instead of only Japanese as their senior officials. In about 10 years, it could easily be possible that the CEO of a renowned Japanese company would be a non-Japanese. As a result, Japanese companies will start doing very well outside of Japan."

Shiraishi strongly emphasizes that "To educate people will become one of the most important tasks for Japan in playing a part in the growth of Asia as a whole." ■