

China – Korea – Japan International Summer School 2008

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Thoughts on Summer School 2008

Overall, the summer school program was thought-provoking, educational, and at the same time has stimulated communication among the participating students, thus led to future friendships. After participating in the China-Korea-Japan Summer School 2008, it is fair to say that I have gained better understanding on the differences and similarities among the students and myself. East Asia as a region, where is believed to increase in importance in regional integration and interaction in the near future. As a result, to familiarize with the general public in the 3 countries is as essential to understand the government policies and national interests in the region. Being the only student from Taiwan, I was able to interpret from the others' viewpoints of Taiwan Strait issue, and as well as to observe the China-Korea-Japan relation in a relatively subjective stand.

My interpretation of how the others in Northeast Asia viewing Taiwan issue was rather reluctant especially among the Korean and Japanese students

because the issue do not pose a direct effect upon them. However, my viewpoints have changed since many students have showed interest in discussions in class and off-campus. As a few Chinese professors stating in the lectures in Shanghai, the Taiwan Strait issue is viewed as internal threat to the Chinese government; however, it is definitely an external threat on the Taiwanese perspective. The Mainland China and Taiwan dilemma has been an indefinite issue, which has yet to be resolved since the Chinese Civil War during the mid 20th century. At present day, the unclear situation between the two regions directly affects the domestic economic growth in Mainland China and Taiwan. This uneasy relationship also increases the concerns of their trade-partner countries, including Japan, Korea, and as well as the United States. The tensed atmosphere creates uncertainties to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGO), and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI); which all play essential roles in supporting the economics in both China and Taiwan.

The ideal solution to the One-China Policy may fall on the peaceful consensus between the two parties; however, it is against the will of a great percentage of the Taiwanese public and the Democratic Progressive Party

(DPP) in Taiwan. On the other hand, the independence of Taiwan might very well provoke the military invasion of the Chinese government and lead to another Chinese Civil War, which is also not desired by Japan and the United States and as well as the majority of Taiwanese . If the Mainland China and Taiwan issue lingers on for another few decades, the X, Y, and Z generations may be the dynamic bearer to the relationship. As a result, it is essential to understand the opinions of the people, since they may be the ones who decide their own destiny in both mainland China and Taiwan. However, after the lectures in Shanghai, I have observed the national interest represented by Chinese professors, and I highly doubted that a peaceful reunification can be implemented in the near future. The national pride seemed strong among the Chinese professors and some students, thus the emotional factors can create conflict between the mainland Chinese and Taiwanese. As a result, remaining status quo may seem passive yet may still be the most ideal solution to the Taiwan issue at the moment.

Visiting Yasukuni Shrine in Japan was another essential feature of the summer school. As professor Akaha mentioned in class, to improve understating of China-Korea-Japan relationship, it is vital to appreciate the fruitful side of each

nation, as well as the less-pleasant historical paradox and conflicts. The dead of Japan is praised and honored in a nationalistic way that seemed difficult to be accepted by the general public of China and Korea. I personally think that the Chinese and Korean governments should begin to educate the youngsters in each nation not to stress on the sentiment created by the wars in the past, but looking forward to opportunities and mutual prosperity in the region. People's believe may change overtime; similar to slavery, imperialism may be tolerant in the past, yet wartime ideology does not dominant at present Japanese society. However, I feel there is improvement that could be applied in the exhibition in Yasukuni Shrine museum. The desire for peaceful integration with neighboring countries can be observed in the Japanese society today; therefore, peace-making approaches implemented by Japanese government should also be stressed in the exhibition. The desire for war has diminished, and how Japan can play a peace-making role in the region could be showcased with the current exhibitions. War is an extreme measure of national conflicts; a lesson can be learned in Japan and colonized nations. As a result, youngsters in Japan and as well as foreigners visiting Yasukuni Shrine and museum can be educated in a more constructive viewpoint on the dark side of China-Korea-Japan relationship.

Participating in the lectures conducted in Shanghai, Tokyo, and Seoul, I have observed a rather unenthusiastic focus on environmental protection measures in the region. Professors in the 3 countries tend to stress on interregional economic developments, national security issues, and political policies. However, yellow dust blowing in the northern China and affecting Korea and Japan sporadically in the springtime is as a phenomenon or issue in a country that has a regional influence. Carbon dioxide emission in a country has an even greater negative affect led to global warming beyond regional boundaries. Japan, as the most technological advanced country in the region, relatively puts more emphasis on environmental protection coping with the current trend. Therefore, a transformed flying-geese effect; the implementation of know-how to support and assist neighboring countries would be an interesting topic as a lecture during the summer school.

To sum up, I sincerely appreciate the effort of all the staff members and professors, and as well as the proactive attitude of each and every participant. In my opinion, the China-Korea-Japan summer school has been one of the most enjoyable yet educational summer breaks. As I result, I put faith and look forward

into Northeast Asia to prosper and a profound regional integration.