

## **The Idea of New International Order China Is Seeking and An East Asia Community (5)**

**By AMAKO Satoshi**

Finally, we will look at how moves toward regional integration in East Asia, with a rising China as the biggest agent, should be interpreted in relation to the region's existing order revolving around the Japan-U.S. alliance, by seeing these moves as a process of establishing a new regional order for East Asia and further for the entire Asia-Pacific region. Two interpretations are possible.

The first is an interpretation using a “zero-sum” game-like approach from the perspective of power politics. It regards the “rising China” and the “three sphere-oriented new order” of the EU, North America and EAC revolving around the rising China as an inherent threat to the Japan-U.S. alliance and the existing regional order in Asia, and argues that in light of the reality of progress in economic integration, the East Asia Community should function as a framework for reining in China's initiatives. China is well aware of this deep-rooted attitude in Japan and the United States. Shi Yinhong, in his earlier-quoted article, notes, “the ‘diplomatic revolution’ designed to contain U.S. influence through Sino-Japanese cooperation is certainly not acceptable for Japan and would only augment its sense of vigilance.” At the same time, it is true that China similarly entertains a sense of vigilance against the Japan-U.S. alliance. Feng Shaokui, an expert on Sino-Japanese relations, discussing the East Asia Community in *Shijie Zhishi* (World knowledge), Vol. 10, 2004, emphasized that “Japan should heed that the Japan-U.S. security does not include any part of targeting China, directly or indirectly.”

The second interpretation maintains that, beyond the acknowledgement of “zero-sum” game-like realities, “new East Asian order” is becoming an important issue caused by rapid development of mutual and complex interdependence and today's arguments of East Asia community should be dealt with in this context. As discussed in the early part of this paper, the trend in the economic realm clearly points to a deepening of this structure of interdependence. In the area of security, however, the creation of a new security mechanism is clearly needed, considering the six-party consultations on the Korean Peninsula, the accession by Japan, China and India to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), and human security in such fields as the fight against terrorism, energy, food and the environment.

China itself cannot rule out a “threat from the United States” and consequently a threat from the

Japan-U.S. alliance, making it almost impossible to free itself from the first approach of power politics. However, it seems to be actively seeking ways to fundamentally facilitate the formation of the “East Asia Community” following the second approach.

Several statements and actions can be used to shed light on this line of thinking. The “peaceful rise” theory, first voiced by Zheng Bijian, Chinese co-chairman of the 21st Century Committee for Japan-China Friendship and former vice president of the Central Party School, at the Boao Forum for Asia in November 2003, was indeed intended to dispel other countries’ concerns about the “China threat,” and Zheng emphasized that China would never pose any political or military threat to other countries. Meanwhile, Feng Shaokui, who was cited earlier, argued that “no major country in the region should create fear in smaller countries, and no major country in the region should regard smaller countries as within its sphere of influence. . . . Both Japan and China need to recognize that any model of East Asian cooperation ‘dominated by any particular country’ would turn sour.” He also said that “all major countries or powers in the region should ‘match their words with action’ and expressly declare their national intentions and determination to uphold the universal principles of ‘peaceful development’ and ‘peaceful rising’ toward other countries in the region as well as to the entire world.” His references to “peaceful development” and “peaceful rising” may be construed as a message to the Chinese government.

In the first half of the 1990s, the author personally became involved in a debate with Feng Shaokui over the idea of a “Chinese threat.” It seems not long ago that while Feng emphasized that “China will not become a threat in any way as it will follow the royal road of diplomacy,” the author contended that the “royal road approach itself is problematic because it places China above other countries, toward which China will look down.” The fact that the same speaker who once defended the royal road for China’s diplomacy is now calling on China to declare its intention to seek “peaceful development” may be viewed as a sign of the important changes that are taking place in China.

For many years, while China defined itself as “a member of the socialist camp” and “a member of the Third World,” using subtitles such as “the second biggest country in the socialist camp” and “in the vanguard of the Third World,” it was not associated with an horizontal identity such as “a member of Asia.” China began to describe itself as “a member of Asia” only in recent years. An important benchmark for the realization of the “East Asia Community” concept, as argued by Feng, appears indeed to be an approach for creating an identity for China as “a member of Asia” and “a common home of Asia.”

Another important feature is perhaps the approach to the “Taiwan issue,” a subject that was barely addressed in this paper. A careful examination of China’s idea of a “East Asia Community” unmistakably reveals its consistency in the “exclusion of Taiwan” even in economic areas. It may be argued that China’s drive for regional cooperation in East Asia has a motive of “isolation of Taiwan” under the surface. Moreover, the Taiwan problem may be

described as the key arena where a close contest is being fought between the maintenance of the “hegemonistic order under the single superpower,” by the United States, and the “idea of a new order” advocated by China in challenge to the U.S.-imposed order. Thus, if the second interpretation of a “East Asia Community” is to be pursued, China will naturally be required to apply the approach of “new thinking” to the handling of the “Taiwan issue” as well.

The regional integration in East Asia should be considered as a process of creative thinking and practices by Japan or China in response to the questions of how they recognize the present stage of the region and how they envision the future shape of the region, and what regional mechanisms they think will be needed to help realize the peaceful stability and prosperity of the region. In particular, it is no exaggeration to say that Japan has a crucial role to play in accurately analyzing the potential and problems associated with the regional integration of East Asia, listening to China’s recent arguments, and ensuring that the steady and appropriate institutional harmony can be achieved through a variety of processes needed for regional integration. If the integration moves forward along the lines of the above-described crucial roles for Japan, it will probably bring with it fundamental changes in the way China operates and a crucial shift in Japan-China relations.

(End)

**(This is the text of an article by Prof. AMAKO Satoshi, Professor of Waseda University and Member of the Council on East Asian Community, which was originally posted on the website of “Amako Ajia-ron” (<http://eac.cocolog-nifty.com/amako/>).)**