

April 27, 2017

Follow-up comment on "the Japan-China Dialogue"

By IKEO Aiko

The Council on East Asian Community (CEAC) organized "The Japan-China Dialogue: Prospect of Japan-China Cooperation in Aging Society," under the co-sponsorship of The Global Forum of Japan, Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and Fudan University, and under the auspice of Research Center for Sustainable Peace of the University of Tokyo, on the afternoon of February 20, 2017. The conference material has already been posted on the website of CEAC and the report of the Dialogue is under way. Here, let me highlight some of the key points of the discussion in the Dialogue, as they deserve due attention.

In Session 1 "Sustainable Development in the Era of Low Birth Rate and Population Aging," firstly, an excellent briefing were made on the development of a new industry for the elderly in China. Secondly, a clear overview of the challenges faced by the Chinese economy was given and followed by an explanation on the (delayed) reforms of state-owned enterprises in response to the questions raised from floor. Thirdly, the efforts made through international fora in the Asia-Pacific region was presented from a Chinese perspective. Fourthly, a few notes of caution were given as to the regional cooperation for solving problems in aging societies. In addition, recent efforts made by the World Bank (such as the promotion of the concept of "Digital Dividend" instead of "Digital Divide") were also introduced.

Session 1 proceeded without a hitch and I had an opportunity to interact with some participants from Shanghai in a friendly manner. Then, I noticed that the discussions among experts on the issues covered in the session seemed to have gained some ground. On the other hand, some concrete issues concerning business are out of the sphere of academic research and discussion.

Session 2 "Towards Stabilization and Confidence Building of the Japan-China Relations" made it evident that some issues cannot be fully discussed just at a half-day long dialog. The English phrases such as "rule of law" and "rule by law" have received attention in the Japanese business community and the Japanese translations of these phrases have come into usage. The phrase of "rule by law" was created probably after China's government began to rule the country by its own law. The essential differences in the idea of "law" have to be scrutinized before going into judicial discussions. The bottom line of the presentations encompassed the fundamentals of law and politics. I would find

a conflict on a fundamental level if the idea of "Socialist Market Economy" (utilizing market economy so as to enhance socialism) is still prevalent.

(This is an English translation of the article written by IKEO Aiko, Professor of Waseda University, which originally appeared on the e-forum "Hyakka-Somei (Hundred Ducks in Full Voice)" of CEAC on March 3, 2017.)