

③The Roles of my Country and Asia in the Future (6F25 Yukiko Nukina)

Looking at the social climate of the world in the past decade, it seems obvious that the countries that have shaped the post-war world have lost their dominance. The introduction of the single market and a common currency, at first the symbol of regional integration, left EU countries vulnerable to financial crisis and exposed irreconcilable gap within the Union. No longer recognizing itself as a world police and the promoter of free trade, United States seems to care less about the world around it and focus more on its domestic issues. Meanwhile, neither of two economic giants in Asia are not capable enough to bring stability for the region: China is strengthening its socialist rule and long-rooted corruption is still ailing India. In such time, I think Japan and South-East-Asia should be the next to promote free trade and to maintain peace and security in Asia.

In spite of the growing wave of protectionism, I think Asia and Japan can still benefit greatly from free market and international trade. There is a skepticism about ever-growing market system and the destructive force of technological revolution. In developed countries, people say overseas production transfer lowers average wages. In the developing world, people say foreign capital only exploits them and the new technologies take away menial jobs from workers. However, in order for South-East-Asian countries to keep developing and to acquire better standards of life, foreign investment, as well as influx of products, services and technologies are crucial. Japan, for a different reason—to cover population decline and keep its current national power — needs further overseas expansion and influx of labor force. Given these, I think Japan and South-East-Asia have a potential to cooperate with each other to further strengthen our economic ties.

In addition to promoting free trade, Japan should also play a role as a mediator between the powerful and the relatively less powerful states within Asia. In Asia, there are a lot of ongoing territorial issues and ethnic conflicts. As Japan is still too influential and powerful to ignore, I expect that it can put on the brakes on countries if any tries to take irrational action. I think that Japan should not be too interfering but instead should aim to become a calm yet reliable ally for countries that seek for its help.

I believe that by strengthening economic and political ties between Japan and the South-East-Asia, we can together thrive greatly and form a