



Student Name: Liow Jun Lin

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The Asia's role in the world is becoming more important and influential. But considering the vastness of Asia, attempt to cover all of its future in an essay is futile. So in this essay, focus in going to be on the Southeast area of Asia. The reason I chose this specific region of Asia is because I believe this place holds tremendous potential for the future, and also because I'm a Malaysian, and this is the place I call 'Home'. Southeast Asia is comprised of mostly developing countries, just to name a few: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and much more. All these countries combined holds the world's third largest labor force, with a population of 633 million in 2015, population is still expected to grow exponentially. Other than the increasing population and enormous labor force as one of Southeast Asia's advantage, diversity in culture, youthfulness of nations, and the various resources available are all key factors that hold large potential for future economic and social development. But still, the people of Southeast Asia have yet recognized the immense potential they hold and work together to create positive changes. Social issues such as poverty, economic inequality, insufficient education system is still present in Southeast Asia. And big challenges such as the fourth industrial revolution, the rise of China's economy, and several disputes within the Southeast Asian countries would also have a big impact on us. We must recognize it and work together to create a better future. Southeast Asian countries hold significant economic and social potential, but to unleash that potential, Southeast Asians must have a common vision for the future, and work together to make that vision into a reality.

The Southeast Asian countries except East Timor are all under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN is a 10-member international body that represents more than 600 million people living in the regional Southeast Asia. And as of 2016, ASEAN is the seventh largest world economy. In addition, many international businesses have already started to shift their focus from China to ASEAN due to ASEAN's power and growth potential. However, according to the data of World Economic Forum, intra ASEAN trades make up the largest share of ASEAN's total trade by partner and ASEAN has yet to unite as a single market. Still, even only with intra ASEAN trades as majority,

ASEAN still has a combined GDP of \$2.4 trillion in 2013. This demonstrates ASEAN's potential for unprecedented growth if ASEAN were to increase their extra regional trade. South Asian governments should also encourage for more businesses and entrepreneurships, as it would stimulate the growth of the economy and jobs. Investments in human capital must also be valued, governments should cultivate a new generation of highly skilled workers to advance the development of technology. Therefore, transforming the role of ASEAN into a major contributor of economy and technology in the world.

Education is also an important subject, being the basis of all development in a country as it raises people's productivity and creativity, while promoting entrepreneurship and technological advances. But the problem that lies is that most of the education system's curriculum is no longer relevant. Most of the modern school systems was based in response to the Industrial Revolution and the workforce needed to read, write and have basic mathematical skills in order to operate machines. Today creativity and efficiency to develop and refine existing ideas, products, and systems are in demand, but schools are not teaching students these concepts as it is still based on the same system a few hundred years ago. In most high schools, students are expected to absorb large amount of information in a short period of time, and doing large amounts of futile work such as repetitive math questions or memorizing history incidents blindly. It seems that schools turn students into machines who can only solve x and y , instead of applying these concepts to effectively and creatively for innovative inventions. We will be left behind if we don't adapt to the new demands of the world. To prevent this from happening, the leaders of our country and education world must recognize what is going on, and implement new changes into the educational system with a clear vision in mind. But relying solely on our leaders is not enough, we the people must also understand the situation we face, and demand for that change, most important of all we ourselves must change first.

Malaysia is the 3th largest and one of the most stable economy in ASEAN. The role Malaysia plays in the integration of ASEAN countries can be major. Closing the economic and social development gaps between member countries is an important step of integration of ASEAN, with most of ASEAN member countries being low middle-income countries, only a few countries are positioned better economically, and that includes Malaysia. One of the challenges ASEAN would face is the enlarging gap between country's development, as it could lead to certain countries workers to migrate to other prosperous member countries for better income and future. To prevent this the government should implement certain policies such as providing better job opportunities regardless of race, caste, or even religion, promoting workers based solely on merit, etc. This situation can be solved if we do something about it, and it's important that we have the awareness of the consequences if we turn to a blind eye. Malaysia being the stable and leading ones in ASEAN, should take the role of initiating the integration of ASEAN economy, and raising the awareness of people regarding the challenges ASEAN faces as we approach the new coming age.

Southeast Asia holds significant potential for the development of economy and society. Changing our education system, reformation of economy structure, raising awareness of the situation, all are just steps on the staircase that leads to success, but what's of most importance is taking that first step that will open a whole different dimension of reality for us.