

# Exploring the Possibility of an Asian Union through the Voices of JICA Participants from Asia

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## Abstract

*International cooperation for sustainable development will be a key concept for the transition from the consequences of irresponsible human activities to the promise of international community. The mission of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is to advance international cooperation through the sharing of knowledge and experience and to work to build a more peaceful and prosperous world. As globalization has brought about increasing economic disparity between the haves and have-nots, and accumulated global issues cannot be solved individually or unilaterally, Japan's contribution to the international community, especially developing countries in Asia, will be more vital as a regional and global partner of Asia. The purpose of this paper is to explore the possibility of an Asian union by analyzing responses received from 351 JICA participants from 14 Asian countries over seven years (2003-2009). First, it examines JICA's mission for Japan-based education and trainee programs for Asian adult students. Secondly, it discusses what Japan should do and should not do for Asian nations through the responses to interviews and questionnaires. Thirdly, it analyzes national identities and pride among the respondents. Finally, this paper examines the pro and con voices among the JICA participants on the possibility of an Asian union, especially the East Asian Community as a promise of the future of Asia. Opportunely, as Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama recently proposed the formation of an East Asian community along the lines of the European Union in his first meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao (New York, Kyodo, September 22, 2009), it is worth exploring the possibility of a more peaceful and sustainable Asia. Heeding the direct voices from promising adult students from developing countries in Asia will serve as a useful tool as Japan develops new policies towards a peaceful Asia.*

**Key Words :** Peace, JICA, Asian union, national identity, citizenship

*Japan's non-war and non-nuclear policy with a sense of philanthropy should be highly valued and spread in Asia.* (Central government official, male, 37, from Bangladesh)

*Wherever I go, whatever I may become, I will always be a citizen of Asia both in spirit and in deed.* (Central government official, female, 27, from Philippines)

*Japan committed "a great mistake" in the past but I admire the commitment not to do it again.* (Company worker, female, 30, from Philippines)

*I agree with an Asian union, because we have enough human resources and material resources. People of Asia basically work hard, study hard, learn and borrow from each other for the purpose of uniting Asia.*

(Researcher of occupational safety and health, 35, from China)

## 1. Introduction

Does the emergence of Asian citizenship threaten individual national identities? Are individual national identities and an awareness of being an Asian citizen mutually exclusive? Why did the majority of JICA participants in my class (80.0% of 351 respondents) show a positive response to the possibility of an Asian union (AU) rather than AU skepticism? Why are they keen on a peaceful and economically united Asia? Why do they dream of a united Asia despite the fact that most Asian people were victims of colonialism and expansionism by the West and Japan?

Hakogi, Rosefielde and Chen (2008, p.32) state that an East Asian Community may be an attractive dream that people in the East Asian region may naively dream of, but it is quite an artless and unrealistic one. It is very true that there are so many high hurdles to overcome to pave the road to a possible "Asian Union."

One of the universal challenges is how to balance national identities and pride with Asian citizenship. Therefore National identities and pride as well as the awareness of Asian unity among young leaders of Asia who are studying in Japan through JICA programs should come under close scrutiny for the purpose of a brighter future of Asia. If Japan is to take a trustworthy and peaceful leadership in the formation of an Asian union in the future, the direct voices of young JICA elites from Asian countries will be valuable. Most JICA participants from Asia have openly and bravely shared their honest opinions regarding what Japan should and should not do in Asia in this study conducted from 2003 to 2009.

As I have been an invited lecturer of JICA over 15 years, I am very convinced that Asian citizens cannot see the promise of the future of Asia, unless Asia can rectify its economic and educational disparity through international cooperation

and exchange programs. It seems that Japan could play significant roles in creating a potential AU through the trust that many JICA participants have bestowed upon Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Kakuzo Okakura (1903, 2009, p.23) states as follows in his book *The Ideal of the East*. "Asia is one. For if Asia be one, it is also true that the Asiatic races form a single mighty web." His lofty ideal was utilized by the Japanese militarism and Japan became the former expansionist and imperialist power of Asia during the Asian Pacific War (1931-1945). After the war Japan got her independence in 1952 in exchange for Japan-US Security Treaty and 2824 American military facilities in Japan. Japan has been militarily protected by the US and enjoyed her economic growth. Japan has been tied up with her US relationship over 64 years despite the fact that the world has been changed with the end of the Cold War and September 11<sup>th</sup> in 2001. This has been criticized and described as "a faceless economic giant" or "a US's lap dog" by the neighboring countries. As the world has been changed and the US unipolarism has been modified by the president Obama, Japan must change with it in order to be trusted by Asian countries, especially from neighboring countries. Japan should represent herself as a peace-loving and environmentally friendly "techno-democratic nation." The clear vice of a non-nuclear Japan should be heard in Asia and international community.

Japan's continued efforts for international cooperation for developing countries since 1955 through JICA programs for peaceful coexistence have obtained trust from not a few Asian countries. Van Ness (2006, p.113) emphasizes that the countries of Southeast Asia have known firsthand the horrors of war and the benefits that peace can provide for economic modernization and increased prosperity through cooperation rather than confrontation.

The East ASEAN Summit in December 2005 had a significant meaning for the future of Asia. Asian people became more aware of multilateral and alternative strategies for how to solve differences between adversaries. Most Asian countries were not happy about George W. Bush's "our-side or their side" rhetoric nor his "unipolarism." Many Asian have already supported the fact that ASEAN decided a long time ago that war was not the answer.

Furthermore, the world history has began to show a more peaceful, democratic and environmentally friendly orientation with the advent of Barack Obama, the new president of USA (Democratic Party) since January, 2009; Kevin Rudd, the new prime minister of Australia (Labor Party) since November 2007; and Yukio Hatoyama, the new prime minister of Japan (Democratic Party of Japan) since September 2009. Van Ness, invited professor of National Australian University stated as follows,

“The East Asian Community is not a design for Chinese hegemony. The countries of the region want Japan to play an equal part to counterbalance Chinese influence. Moreover, although the model to date appears to be one in which only Asian countries, as well as Australia and New Zealand, are invited to be members, they are aware that some way must be found for the United States to continue to play an important role”

(Van Ness, 2006. p.114).

Over the last decade, Japan has been making efforts to be a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations despite strong opposition from China and Korea. Now that Japan has been born again as a peace-loving country since 1945 and has been the largest ODA giver in Asia with heavy currency, strong economy and environmentally-friendly technology, the need to take a lead in exploring the possibility of an Asian union will be more pressing. We can learn from what Germany, France and the UK did for the peacefully united Europe as the European Union through the lesson of their historical awareness. The regions of the world seem to be more economically united such as European Union, United States, African Union and “Asian Union to be”. Therefore, in creating an Asian union in the future, it is worth examining how individual national identities in Asia are relevant and compatible with Asian citizenship and with the conviction of liberal democracy, fundamental human rights and multiculturalism. As the world has witnessed the changes from pro-war leaders with “force” to pro-peace leaders with “dialog,” Asia must change with it. Therefore, now is an opportune time for us to explore the possibility of an Asian union through the voices of JICA participants. As most of the respondents in this study are young promising leaders from each Asian country, it is meaningful to heed their direct voices in order to reconfirm Japan’s mission and create a more peaceful Asia.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2-1. Questionnaire and Interviewing**

The questionnaires were given to 351 JICA participants from 14 Asian countries at JICA Osaka International Center, Ibaraki, Japan with the great help of the Briefing Unit of Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) from 2003 to 2009. The questionnaire and interview cover nine main areas:

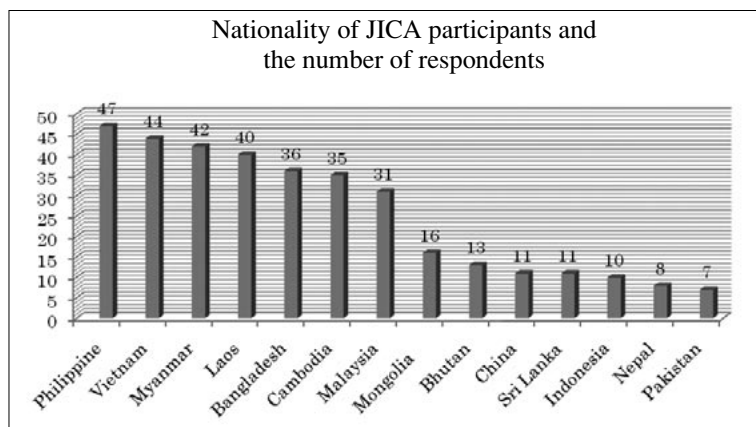
1. Opinion on Japan’s policy towards developing countries
2. Opinion on JICA programs.
3. Major factors of national identities
4. Major factors of national pride

5. Awareness of being Asian citizens
6. Opinion of cultural affinity between countries
7. The possibility of Asian union
8. Japan's possibility to be a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations
9. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution (Renunciation of war)

## 2-2. Respondents: 351 JICA participants from 14 countries in Asia

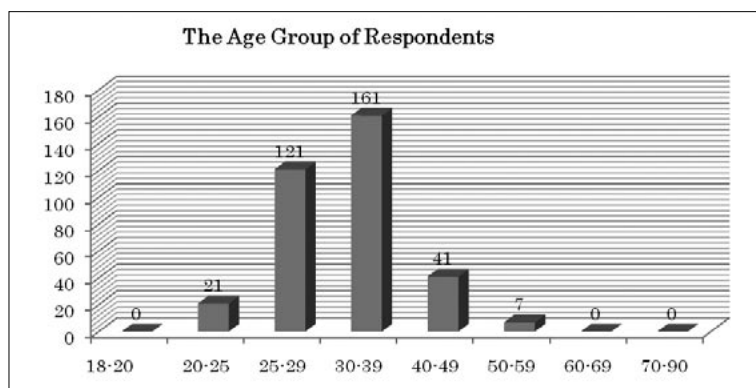
**Nationalities:** The respondents are from 14 major Asian countries, as shown in Graph 1.

**Graph 1: Nationality of the 351 Respondents**



**Age Groups:** Graph 2 shows the ages of the respondents.

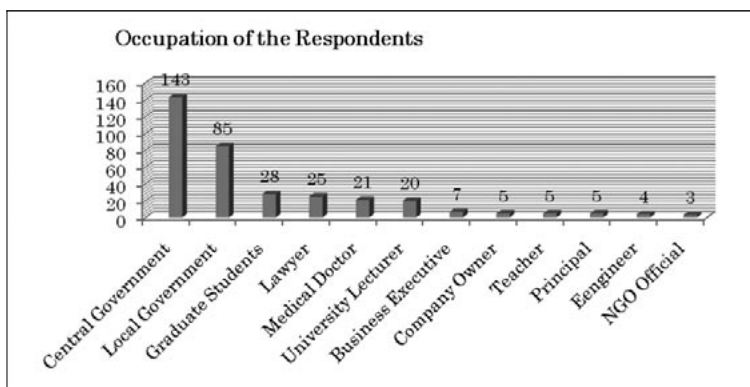
**Graph 2: Age Group of the Respondents: Female (174) male (177)**



**Occupations:** Graph 3 shows the occupations of the respondents. Most of these JICA participants have promising careers as government officials, international

lawyers, medical doctors, university lecturers, public school teachers, engineers, NGO specialists and graduate students.

**Graph 3: Occupation (JICA Participants from Asia)**



### 3. ODA and JICA

Facing the increasing economic and educational disparity in today's globalized world, the roles of ODA (Official Development Assistance) provided by advanced countries are significant contributors to the promise of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ODA is the form of funding and technical and educational cooperation provided by the governments of advanced countries. The basic principal of Japan's ODA is to contribute to peace and development in the international community.

According to JICA PROFILE (2009, p.6), Japan's ODA budget was 13,126 US \$ million and JICA's technical cooperation cost 1,354 US\$ million in 2005. Despite the global economic recession, Japan's ODA budget in 2008 was 9,362 US \$ million. JICA's educational and technical program performance has been quite impressive, although many Japanese public and international observers are not aware of this. There are more than 154 recipient countries and regions in the world. The cumulative total of the Japan-based technical training participants are 407,979, and JICA had already dispatched 92,777 experts to developing countries. Also, it had dispatched more than 31,180 JOCV (Japan Oversea Cooperation Volunteers, aged 20 to 40) as well as 4,371 other volunteers including senior overseas volunteers (aged 40 and above) by 2008 in order to contribute to the development of the impoverished regions of less fortunate countries in the world.

Having been involved in JICA educational programs in Japan, especially in lectures on "Education in Japan" and "History & Culture" for Japan-based technical participants and the Youth Invitation Program for the past 15 years, I

have seen a significant shifts in their awareness of their Asian citizenship, and in their appreciation for JICA's contribution as well as their understanding of Japan. I have felt the power of education and training for these promising young leaders from developing nations that are becoming more influential and significant for the future of Asia. As JICA has already invited so many trainees from developing countries, including Youth Invitation Programs which hosts promising young people in their 20s and 30s from developing countries, we have confirmed that after finishing JICA programs, many of them have played leadership roles in their professional fields for the betterment of national and local development in their various home countries. Most JICA participants are young central and local administrative officials or hold similar positions of authority. I am sure that these human resource development programs will pay off in the long run for the sake of a peaceful global and local security and prosperity beyond national interests.

#### **4. JICA's Mission**

The Japan International Cooperation Agency is an independent administrative institution which was established in 1962 as the Overseas Technology Cooperation Agency (OTCA). JICA was founded in 1974 as an implementation agency for technical assistance, focusing on systems building, organization strengthening and human resource development that will enable developing countries to pursue their own sustainable socio-economic development (JICA, 2007, p.11). JICA's mission is to advance international cooperation through the sharing of knowledge and experience which will work to build a more peaceful and prosperous world. The main objective of JICA is to contribute to economic and social advancement in developing countries and help expedite Japan's international cooperation (JICA 2007, p.13). JICA's capital was 7,474.2 billion yen in 2009 and 104 JICA offices are located worldwide to promote projects in response to local needs. JICA started the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program in 1965 in order to involve Japanese young professionals to contribute to the sustainable development in South East Asia, Central Asia, Africa, Middle East, South and Central America and East Europe.

The mission of JICA has been dramatically activated by the new president, Sadako Ogata (2003~), who was an influential Director of the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR), (1991-2000). Ogata (2007, p.2) emphasizes that as an international community, we are facing the need to take collective actions to address today's multiple threats and challenges, and thus assisting developing countries is even more important than ever. In this context,

the role of Official Development Assistance (ODA) has added importance.

This is why how to close the economic, technical and educational disparity would be more urgent mission of ODA in today's divided world. According to JICA PROFILE (2009) the regional initiatives in Asia in terms of provision of needs-based cooperation and corresponding to regional diversity are strongly emphasized as follows:

While some countries have a high rate of economic growth, others are struggling with poverty or conflicts in Asia. There is rising inequality even within high-growth countries between urban and rural areas, and challenges for poverty reduction and unemployment issues lie ahead. Furthermore, in urban areas, deterioration of the environment, such as pollution, is accelerating in line with economic growth. JICA focuses its operations on issues which have a considerable impact on Japan's security and prosperity, providing support that best meets the diverse needs of those countries (2009.p.9).

What is really vital in JICA's mission is that, as Ogata states, JICA, through its current attempt to decentralize the decision-making process and strengthen field-based initiatives, will effectively respond to the needs of people in developing countries in a more efficient manner (Ogata, 2007, p.2).

The following are the direct voices of young Asian leaders regarding Japan and JICA programs. With these direct responses we can reexamine how the mission of JICA has been fulfilled. Japan should listen to Asia and the world in order to truly represent herself as a peace-loving partner on the local and global stage.

## 5. Opinions of JICA Participants regarding Japanese Policy

Listed below are some meaningful comments on Japan and Japanese policy toward Asia. They are direct and representative voices, including both positive and critical comments.

### 5-1. Positive Comments

- *Japan's rebirth from the war is very enlightening. Japan's way of reaching out as a peace-loving economic and technological contributor and trying to make up for what has happened is very remarkable.* (Philippines, female, 40, company worker)
- *Honestly today's Japan is a country that kindly contributes to human relief and donates to many poor countries in the world. I would say that Japan is a very generous and kind country that has contributed to world peace.* (Cambodia, male, 38, central government)
- *Japan's highly developed technology used for peace will bring about a good example of a sustainable and environmentally friendly country in Asia.* (Bangladesh, female, 27, central government official)

- *Japan has high technology but lacks natural resources, therefore cooperation with the countries which have abundant resources is very important for Japan and the Japanese.*  
(Laos, male, 32, central government official)
- *Malaysia always welcomes and is thankful to Japan for providing a lot of training courses and study in various fields.* (Malaysia, male, 33, central government official)
- *The Japanese policy of supporting human resource development is urgently necessary for my country. We hope Japan will give more opportunities of education and training not only for central government officials like us, but also more young leaders of our country.*  
(Mongolia, female, 27, I lawyer)
- *Excellent as far as Japan's commitment and sincerity regarding support to developing countries are concerned. Japan can be a role model to be studied by all countries in Asia.*  
(Pakistan, male, 29, local government official)
- *The Japanese policy of having a peaceful constitution is very good and we highly estimate that Japan is giving economic aid to make poor countries happy.*  
(Myanmar, female, 30, government official)
- *I love Japan and the Japanese. They are friendly and the only Asian country that has supported poor countries in Asia.* (Bhutan, female, 27, local government official)
- *We are neighbors, and due to integration processes we can enhance our friendship, economy and mutual wellbeing and stability in our region.*  
(Kyrgyzstan, female, 25, graduate student)

## 5-2. Critical Comments:

- *Government should prepare for the aged population and support fertility to avoid the fastest aging society in the world. Who will take care of the many Japanese elderly people? Foreigners?* (Mongolia, female, 35, international lawyer)
- *The Japanese people's extreme tendency to be perfect in everything will lead to some social tension and stress.* (Mongolia, female, 30 university lecturer)
- *In the past, the Japanese government made heavy mistakes by starting the war. Today's Japanese government should behave more friendly towards neighboring countries.*  
(China, male, 26, researcher of human health)
- *It seems that Japan is based on USA in our general observation. But it is great if Japan could express themselves in the international community regarding international cooperation.* (Laos, female, 30, central government official)
- *Japan is a highly developed industrial country with a diligent work ethic and skillful people. However, Japan should solve social issues such as its stressful society with the highest suicide rate and the fastest aging society. Who will take care of the many elderly people?*  
(Myanmar, female, 33, lawyer)
- *Japan has provided a lot of funds for developing the capacity of human resources in developing countries, but Japan should consider their own capacities as this budget is from the tax in Japan..*
- *Japan should consider educational issues among young people today, its shrinking birth rate, its care for elderly people, and the loss of family and community life in many large cities.* (Cambodia, female, 32, medical doctor)
- *Japan is a trusted friend to all nations. But Japan should open itself up like USA, UK and Australia in terms of immigration policy.*

(Bangladesh, male, 37, central government official)

- Japan is losing its family-based society because Japanese work too hard and they are too stressful in their work.

(Laos, male, 36, central government official)

- We do not want Japan to participate in any war, especially the war instigated by USA.

(Laos, male, 26, central government official)

- Japan should encourage its people to use the English language in order to promote its tourism.

(Malaysia, female, 32 central government official)

- Japan, from my point of view, is likely to depend on the US. I believe Japan could stand on its own..

(Malaysia, male, 27 central government official)

- Japan, I feel, is being dominated by machines and too dependent on them. Also people mentally are feeling too much stress.

(Bhutan, male, 26, local government official)

- The policy of being a homogeneous society is not good because it is a conservative approach. On one hand, Japan is following a Western approach and on the other hand, it is restricting people to go and live there. In other words, it is against biodiversity.

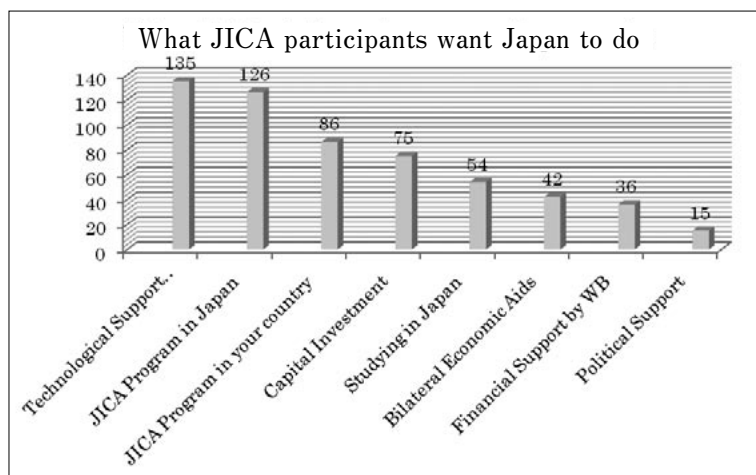
(Pakistan, male, 31, local government official)

Both positive and critical comments reflect what Japan continues to contribute to Asia and what Japan should not do regionally, domestically and internationally. What is really vital in international cooperation is to meet the urgent needs for appropriate people in an appropriate time and in an appropriate place with the philosophy of equitable partnership.

## 6. Voices from JICA Participants regarding JICA

### 6-1. What JICA participants want Japan to do for their countries.

Graph 4.

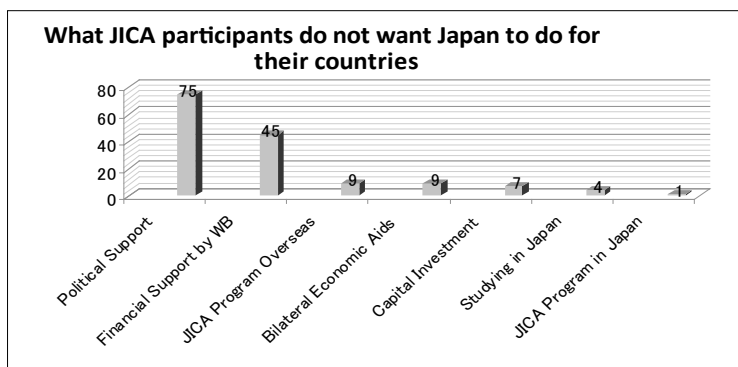


This graph shows that 135 (38%) of these JICA participants want Japan to continue more technical support to their countries and 126 (36%) want JICA to continue JICA programs in Japan, while 86 (25%) want JICA to offer them in their countries.

## 6-2. Comments that accompanied the Graph 4 responses

- *Japan's policy regarding ODA and JICA is correct. The technology is very high. This point is valuable for any country* **(China, male, 28, fire fighter in Chinese military)**
- *I appreciate the Japanese policy, which assists many developing countries around the world by providing grant aides, technological assistance and loans with low rates through JICA. Although Japan provides something and gets something else in return, it is the best way to live together on the same earth and under the same sky.*  
**(Cambodia, male, 28, engineer)**
- *Opportunities for education and training through JICA programs are one of the most significant factors for developing poor countries such as ours. Also technological support through JICA is essential to upgrade our living conditions.*  
**(Laos, female, 27, university lecturer)**
- *Education in JICA is very important to our country and people. If we have already had higher education, we believe, we could further build our nation in every aspect.*  
**(Indonesia, female, 50, central government official)**
- *Japan and Japanese society has been very significant for socio-economic and technological development of the developing countries in Asia through JICA projects.*  
**(Bangladesh, male, 35, university lecturer)**
- *Japan is a developed country and its people are very hardworking and well-disciplined. Japanese policies towards developing countries such as through ODA and JICA programs are very effective in assisting all the developing countries in the world.*  
**(Myanmar, female, 31, central government official)**
- *Japan has advanced technology, friendly people and has helped Fiji in rescue technique skills through JICA programs.*  
**(Fiji, male, 35, fire fighter)**

## 6-3. Graph 5: What JICA participants do not want Japan to do for their countries



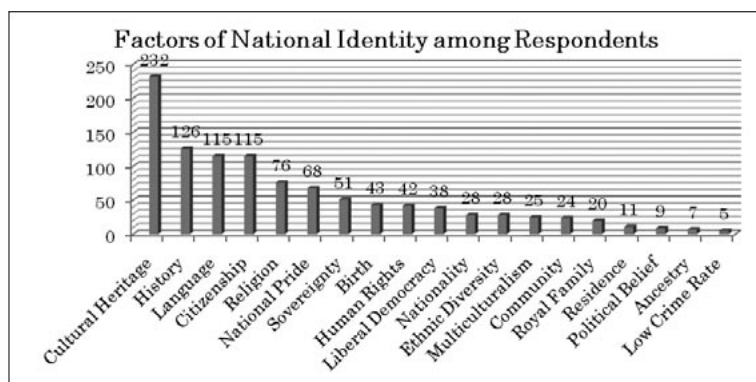
Through the direct voices regarding Japan's policy towards Asia, it becomes clear what JICA should do and should not do for each Asian country. First, a majority of JICA participants feel the necessity of technical and educational support via JICA programs rather than through bilateral economic aid. Second, it is clear that citizens of these countries view political support as interference, and history has shown this. On the other hand, almost none of these students oppose studying in Japan through JICA programs. Also, it is very important to consider that they are not happy about financial support provided by the World Bank as 45 (12%) JICA participants expressed negative attitudes towards it.

## 7. Factors of National Identities among JICA Participants

When we think about the possibility of union in the future along the lines of the European Union, we should be highly considerate of major factors of individual national identities and pride among Asian people. The European Union respects cultural diversity and the individual national identities of its member states based on liberal democracy. This is wisdom learned through historical lessons. According to the questionnaire, major factors of national identities that respondents chose were cultural heritage (66.1%), history (35.9%), language (32.8%), citizenship (32.8%), religion (21.7%), national pride (19.4%), sovereignty (14.5%), birth (12.2%), human rights (12.0%), liberal democracy (10.8%), nationality (8.0%), ethnic diversity (8.0%), multiculturalism (7.1%), community (6.8%), royal family (5.7%), residence (3.1%), political belief (2.6%), ancestry (2.0%) and low crime rate (1.4%).

Graph 6 shows the three most important factors of national identities for JICA participants from 14 Asian countries.

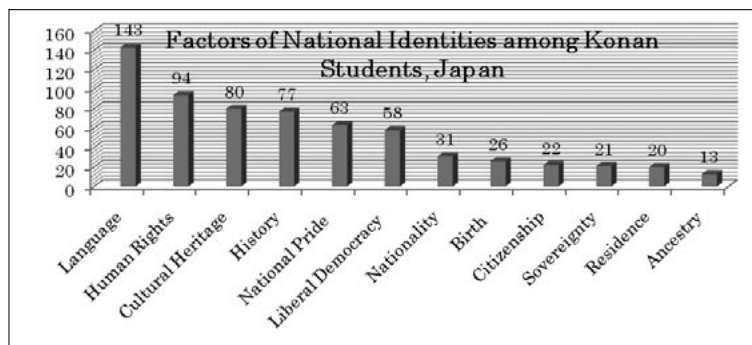
**Graph 6: Factors of national identities among JICA participants:**



When the same question was posed to British, German and Japanese university students; they also considered language, cultural heritage and history to be major factors of their national identities (Nakamura, 2007, p 14). However, they included human rights and liberal democracy within the five major factors as an inalienable prerequisite of the foundation of UK and Germany in the European Union and democratic Japan today. In contrast, what is most striking in this graph is that citizenship ranks as the fourth factor among the Asian respondents. This is a possibility of becoming a modern nation with clear citizenship of “rights and duties” and the point of departure for shared citizenship among Asian countries. This is because an Asian union would need shared citizenship among Asian countries as the European Union has proven in the process of twists and turns it experienced while creating European citizenship.

Next, let us have a close look at national identities of Japanese students of Konan University. The major factors of national identities are slightly different from those of the 14 other Asian countries, especially in terms of human rights and liberal democracy. However, it seems that cultural heritage, history, language and citizenship are shared basic components of national identities all across Asia.

**Graph 7: National Identity of 216 Japanese Students of Konan University, Kobe, Japan in 2006**



It is meaningful to compare the three most frequently chosen factors of national identities for British students of Leeds University, German students of Bochum University, American students of University of Hawaii, and the Japanese students of Konan University with those of the JICA participants. As Figure 6 has shown, cultural heritage (66.1%), history (35.9%), language (32.8%), citizenship (32.8%), religion (21.7%) are very important factors of national identities for most respondents in the JICA group.

In contrast, according to similar studies (Nakamura, 2007 p. 6), the three major

factors of British identities for British university students (n=46) are English language (52.2%) of respondents, cultural heritage (39.1%), and history (37.0%); followed by liberal democracy (32.6%) and ethnic diversity (28.3%).

Furthermore, the three most important factors of German identities among German graduate students of Bochum University (n=49), are history (61.2%), liberal democracy (51.0%), human rights (44.9%), German language (40.8%) and cultural heritage (30.6%). In addition, the three most important factors of American national identities among students of the University of Hawaii (n=49) are American English (61.2%), cultural heritage (51.0%), history (30.6%) and citizenship (28.5%).

As for the 216 Japanese students of Konan University, the three most important factors of Japanese identities are Japanese Language (66.2%), human rights (43.5%) and cultural heritage (37.0%), followed by history (35.6%), national pride (31%) and liberal democracy (26.9%).

On the whole, we can say that unlike my previous research on national identities of British and German university students who highly estimated multiculturalism, liberal democracy, and human rights; these factors are not yet the first priority for most of the JICA participants. The exceptions are Malaysia (multiculturalism: 44.8%), Philippines (citizenship: 51.0%), and Japan (human rights: 40%). This implies a significant challenge for the formation of Asian togetherness with the quality of citizenships.

Figure 1 shows the major factors of national identities among 4 different countries and the JICA participants. This figure shows tangible differences of components of national identities among the five groups.

**Figure 1. The major factors of national identities**

British Students of Leeds University, Yorkshire, UK (n=46)		
•	1. <u>English language</u>	(52.2%) (n=24)
•	2. <u>Cultural heritage</u>	(39.1%) (n=18)
•	3. <u>History</u>	(37.0%) (n=17)
•	4. Liberal democracy	(32.6%) (n=15)
•	5. Ethnic diversity	(28.3%) (n=13)
German Students of Bochum University, Germany (n=49)		
•	1. <u>History</u>	(61.2%) (n=30)
•	2. Liberal democracy	(51.0%) (n=25)
•	3. Human rights	(44.9%) (n=22)
•	4. <u>German language</u>	(40.8%) (n=20)
•	5. <u>Cultural heritage</u>	(30.6%) (n=15)
American Students of University of Hawaii (n=49)		
	1. <u>American English</u>	(61.2%) (n=30)
	2. <u>Cultural Heritage</u>	(51.0%) (n=25)
	3. <u>History</u>	(30.6%) (n=15)
	4. Citizenship	(28.5%) (n=14)

## Japanese Students of Konan University in Kobe, Japan (n=216)

- 1. Japanese Language (66.2%) (n=143)
- 2. Human Rights (43.5%) (n=94)
- 3. National Pride (29.2%) (n=63)
- 4. Cultural Heritage (37.0%) (n=80)
- 5. History (35.6%) (n=77)

## JICA participants from Asia (n=351)

- 1. Cultural Heritage (66.1%) (n=232)
- 2. History (35.9%) (n=126)
- 3. Language (32.8%) (n=115)
- 4. Citizenship (32.8%) (n=115)
- 5. Religion (21.7%) (n=76)

From these comparative results we can say that language, cultural heritage, and history are common shared factors of national identities anywhere in the world regardless of north-south and east-west differences. However, we can see human rights and liberal democracy as the major factors of national identities among citizens of developed countries, and multiculturalism seems to function within the framework of liberal democracy with human rights, which JICA participants should think of in the formation of an East Asian community and an Asian union.

The following are some representative opinions of national identities provided by the JICA participants.

### 7-1. Voices of National Identities among JICA Participants

- *National identity is a factor, like values, perspectives, and behaviors that differentiate an individual from other nationalities.* (Philippines, male, 28, post graduate student)
- *National identity for my country is defined as something that our ancestors have adopted for our nation such as our national anthem and cultural heritage which have been developed through our history.* (Cambodia, male, 29, central government official)
- *National identity may be defined, to my point of view, as the unique symbols, tools, and language that indicate the whole country and people whenever those identities are shown to other nations.* (Cambodia, male, 28, central government official)
- *We look upon our country as our mother, we love China, and we are proud of Chinese history and the prosperous future of China.* (China, female 30, local government official)
- *Ghengis Khan is a symbol of Mongolian identity. Also, our Mongolian blue spot on the buttocks in babyhood is also a symbol of our identity, as is our own language.* (Mongolia, male, 28, central government official)
- *National identity is something which can be used to identify yourself and your country and it is very important for me.* (Indonesia, female, 29, central government official)

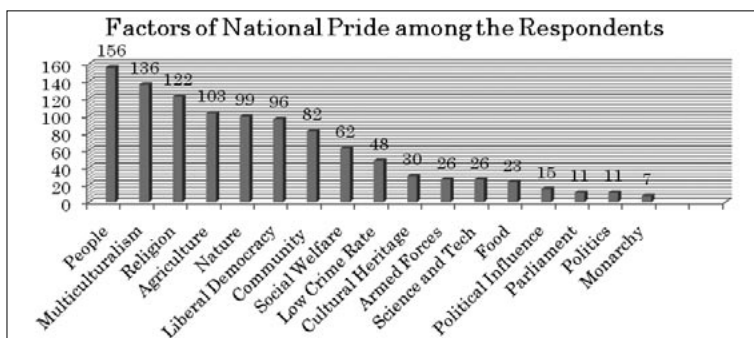
Although the range of respondents is regionally limited, we can see a general tendency that the multi-ethnic Asian identity and the nationalistic Asian identity coexist in the hearts of Asian people, regardless of their nationality, age, sex and regional differences. However, judging from the responses of both interviews and the questionnaire, the pendulum of Asian identities is leaning towards a

citizenship-oriented and multi-ethnic Asia rather than a nationalistic and individualistic Asia. Presumably it derives from the fact that the Asian economy and society have been increasingly transformed into a more multicultural, citizenship-oriented society with common markets.

## 8. Factors of National Pride among JICA Participants

Next, let us look at major factors of national pride. These feelings of pride are also very important and we cannot ignore them whenever we start to think about mutual understanding and the possibility of common citizenship among potential member countries in an Asian union. When asked to name the three most important factors which make the JICA participants proud of their own countries, the respondents replied that they are proud of their people (human resources) (44.4%), multiculturalism (38.7%), religion (34.8%), agriculture (29.3%), nature (28.2%), liberal democracy (27.4%), community (23.3%), social welfare (17.7%), low crime rate (13.7%), cultural heritage (8.5%), armed forces (7.4%), science and technology (7.4%), food (6.6%), political influence (4.3%), parliament (3.1%) and politics (3.1%), monarchy (2.0%). Graph 8 shows the raw numerical data for these results.

**Graph 8: What makes JICA Participants from Asia proud of their countries?**

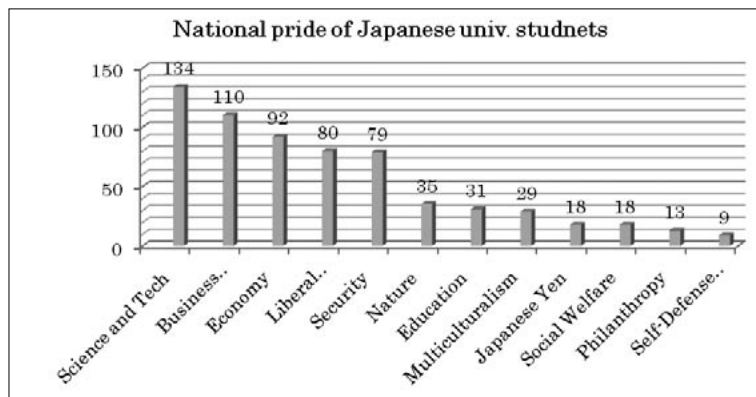


Let us compare the factors chosen by the JICA participants with those of British, German, American and Japanese university students reported previously (Nakamura, 2007, p. 17). It is worth noting that both British and German university students identified liberal democracy and multiculturalism as two of the three most important factors which make them proud of their countries. Also it should be noted that 23.9% of British students reported being proud of their social

welfare, as did 67.4% of German university students are most proud of their social welfare. On the other hand, German students are not proud of their political influence (2.04%) As for the American students, they are proud of multiculturalism (55.1%) and education (44.9%) .

In contrast, the Japanese students reported being proud of science and technology (62%), business companies (50.9%), economic performance (42.6%), and liberal democracy (37.3%).

**Graph 9: National pride of 216 Japanese students of Konan University, Kobe Japan**

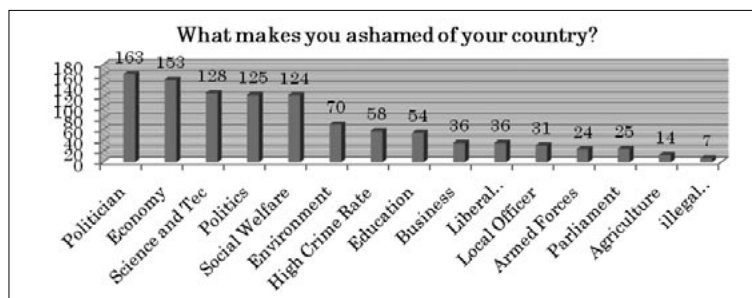


This shows that British and German students are proud of their post-industrial and multicultural society blessed with extensive social welfare, whereas Japanese students are proud of their industrial society full of commercial activity and producing companies with strong economic performance and technology. As Japanese students highly estimate science and technology as well as liberal democracy, we can say that they take pride in what we might call a “techno-democracy.”

Judging from the graph 8, the JICA participants seem to be proud of their people in multicultural and agricultural societies. Figure 2 shows the comparison of national pride among British, German, American, and Japanese university students with the JICA participants. National pride appears to be quite contrastive in terms of whether a society is post-industrial, industrial, or agrarian. Next, I would like to focus on what aspects of their countries causes the JICA participants to feel shame.

**Figure 2. The major factors of national pride**

British students of University of Leeds (n=46)			
•	1. Multiculturalism	(76.09%)	(n=35)
•	2. Liberal Democracy	(47.83%)	(n=22)
•	3. English pound	(32.61%)	(n=15)
•	4. Social Welfare	(23.90%)	(n=11)
German students of Bochum University (n=49)			
•	1. Social Welfare	(67.47%)	(n=33)
•	2. Liberal Democracy	(61.22%)	(n=30)
•	3. Multiculturalism	(55.10%)	(n=27)
American Students of University of Hawaii (n=49)			
•	1. Multiculturalism	(55.10%)	(n=27)
•	2. Education	(44.90%)	(n=24)
•	3. Science and technology	(44.90%)	(n=24)
Japanese Students of Konan University (n=216)			
•	1. Science and technology	(62.00%)	(n=134)
•	2. Business Companies	(50.90%)	(n=110)
•	3. Economic performance	(42.60%)	(n=92)
•	4. Liberal Democracy	(37.30%)	(n=80)
JICA participants from Asia (n=351)			
•	1. People	(44.40%)	(n=156)
•	2. Multiculturalism	(38.70%)	(n=136)
•	3. Religion	(34.80%)	(n=122)
•	4. Agriculture	(29.30%)	(n=108)

**Graph 10: Factors of national shame among JICA participants**

Graph 10 shows some factors which the JICA participants clearly are not proud of. Despite the fact that most JICA participants are working as central and local bureaucrats, they are not proud of their politicians (46.4%), economy (43.6%), science and technology (36.5%), politics (36.2%), social welfare (35.3%) and natural environment (20.0%). What is really necessary for these countries are trustworthy politicians, and more competitive economies with social welfare

which would allow them to pursue common Asian citizenship with a full measure of happiness and health. Generally speaking, these factors have already been demanded by the citizens in the advanced countries of Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

## **9. Asian Identities**

What is the relationship between individual national identities and Asian identities? In Western Europe today, the more people become aware of cultural and national identities in interactive and diversified cultural contexts, the more they tend to confront, share, accept and integrate dual and multiple identities. As a result, they have become more accustomed to sharing several layers of identities in order to reconcile themselves to coexistence and achieve various instrumental benefits.

Therefore it can be said that the process of confronting, sharing, accepting and integrating dual and multiple cultural and national identities in Europe is a process of forming European identities. Jimenez et al. (2004) state that civic theory stresses the development of identities around agreement over rules for peaceful political co-existence, shared cultural norms, and common beliefs. As one of the major factors of national identities is citizenship among the JICA participants we can learn from European citizenship and identities, which have been proven to be compatible (see Nakamura, 2007).

One's identity is basically conditioned by one's own culture and influenced, modified or transformed by interactions with other cultures. The more we have been involved in and have absorbed different cultures in our social life, the more tolerant and generous we become to other cultures. As a result we will be able to reconcile ourselves to accept dual or multiple cultural identities (Nakamura, 2007, p. 5). This is what people of the European Union are working on as they pave the road for a multicultural civic society.

It is self-evident that modern nations are moving in the direction of a multicultural society. It is a multicultural society that can respect and accept plural identities. It is historically proven that human civilization flourishes and develops where multiple cultures are encountered. Consequently, we can transcend the limits of individual cultures by sharing our cultures. This concept of sharing cultural diversity and legitimized citizenships, whether they are supranational or transnational, will sow the seeds of new identities guaranteed by the entitled citizenship in Asia.

National identity was one of the most discussed, but least understood concepts

of the late 20th century. It is of considerable relevance, with allegiance to state identity, citizenship or 'nationality', and under threat not only from the rise of different national identities within states, but also by the growth of systems (such as the European Union) that seek to encompass a plurality of states (McCrone, 1998).

If we could find some shared Asian identities through opinions of the JICA participants, they could become a first step in the forming of an Asian union in the future.

### 9-1: Asian Union Supporters

Asian union skepticism is a reflection of the conflict between one's national identity and a broader Asian identity. Asian union supporters emphasize multiculturalism, citizenship and human rights, which are compatible with the philosophy of an Asian union. The following are representative voices of Asian union supporters among JICA participants interviewed:

#### Voices from the Philippines

- *There is a possibility that Asian Union may enhance interdependence among countries of Asia which may in turn make developing countries like the Philippines globally competitive in economic terms without strong nationalism.*  
(Philippines, male, 35, international lawyer for central government)
- *If Asia is united as an Asian union, we will be able to share a political and economic strengths, and the unified area will have a bigger voice in the international arena.*  
(Philippines, female, 37, medical doctor)
- *Through this united Asia as an Asian union, developing Asian countries may help each other and grow together.* (Philippines, female, 30, central government official)
- *An Asian Union would strengthen economic and political ties and develop more human linkages. To encourage an exchange of goodwill among neighboring countries will bring security and prosperity in Asia.* (Philippines, female, 35, central government official)

#### Voices from Myanmar

- *We Asian people need to have a body that can represent all Asian nations like the EU. If so, we can solve problems more effectively.*  
(Myanmar, male, 30, central government official)
- *It is good idea to unite the economies of Asian countries in the form of an AU. If we can establish an AU, it can narrow the gap between the rich and the poor in Asian countries. Also the countries, business, and people in the whole region can enjoy benefits that EU countries are currently enjoying.* (Myanmar, female 30, lecturer in university)
- *Under the leadership of an Asian union, the developing countries could get more economic and technical support from the developed ones and share the natural resources for a united Asia.* (Myanmar, 30, male, Lecturer in University)
- *An Asian union is essential for regional cooperation and mutual benefits in Asia because sometimes we cannot overcome financial problem by ourselves. At such times, we should*

*have very close and supportive friends. The member countries of the European Union get mutual benefits and profits due to their unity.*

**(Myanmar, 30, female, public school teacher)**

- *We can cooperate and solve any issues of the member countries and reduce the economic and educational gap between rich countries and poor countries in Asia.*

**(Myanmar, 26, male, post graduate student)**

## **Voices from Vietnam**

- *The world is in the flow of globalization and an Asian union must be a good choice, which will make each Asian country economically stronger and united.*

**(Vietnamese, male, 28, central government official)**

- *Human beings must face a lot of serious global problems and individual countries cannot solve them by themselves. Therefore, we need more cooperation in different fields among Asian nations in this globalized era.*

**(Vietnamese, male, 29, international lawyer)**

- *An Asian union could make each country economically and environmentally stronger and could have them protect themselves from Western powers.*

**(Vietnamese, female, 36, business executive)**

- *Asia needs unity and cooperation to make a good balance with other continents.*

**(Vietnamese, male, 36, medical doctor)**

- *We need to find out an appropriate way forward for an Asian union in order to bridge the economic and educational disparity among Asian countries themselves.*

**(Vietnamese, female, 30, post graduate student)**

## **Voices from Cambodia**

- *Economic and political integration will result from the proposed union. Trade and travel will be made easier and more convenient.*

**(Cambodia, male, 28, graduate student)**

- *All Asian countries have similar cultures and skin color as well as a long history together. We all need a peaceful unity to develop and help each other.*

**(Cambodia, male, 25, engineer)**

- *An Asian union would be a kind of global cooperation and bring mutual benefits as we have similar cultures and societies compared with Europe. The unity would activate economic cooperation and technological development among Asian countries.*

**(Cambodia, female, 39, lawyer)**

- *Despite the difficulty of integrating Asia, Asian nations can work together to take advantage of an Asian union. Nothing is impossible with team work and cooperation. We need to open our eyes to the world.*

**(Cambodia, female, 29, company worker)**

## **Voices from Bangladesh**

- *Since many Asian countries like Bangladesh have been dominated by others, any sort of union and peaceful integration could help us unite and thereby give us strength.*

**(Bangladesh, male, 33, central government official)**

- *An Asian union would give us the significant opportunity to become not only an economically and politically strong power, but also a peaceful power in the world like the European Union.*

**(Bangladesh, female, 32, central government office)**

- *An Asian union would create more peace in the development process through increased international trade within the region.*

**(Bangladesh, male, 30, central government official)**

## **Voices from Laos**

- *ASEAN plays a very important role on the global stage and it will contribute to the*

*formation of a powerful Asian Union.* (Laos, male, 30, central government)

- *To build its economic community, Asia needs more power to get along with other world economic communities such as the EU and USA*

(Laos, male, 29, central government official)

- *As we cannot isolate ourselves from the global world, we should be united to help each other, so we can stand in many ways in the 21st century as a united Asia.*

(Laos, male, 31, central government official)

### Voices from Malaysia

- *An Asian union would benefit Asian countries in terms of reducing economic instability, political disputes and international welfare.*

(Malaysia, female, 33, central government official)

- *An Asian union would benefit Asia as a whole and it would further enhance the greater relationship between countries of the continent*

(Malaysia, male, 29, central government official)

- *An Asian union would create better understanding in the future among participating countries and create an economically strong region.*

(Malaysia, male, 28, central government official)

- *If all Asian countries joined in union, it would be much easier to cooperate in all fields.*

(Malaysia, male, 33, central government official)

### Voices from China

- *I agree with an Asian union because we have enough human resources and material resources. People of Asia basically work hard, study hard, and learn and borrow with each other for the purpose of unity.*

(China, male, 35, Researcher of occupational safety and health)

- *The union would have strength in many fields if each country in it is recognized as equal.*

(China, male, 29, Researcher for health)

- *When the Asian countries are united, we can be strong in every fields and we can keep safe from economic dangers and crises.* (China, female, 27, local government official)

### Voices from Mongolia

- *Economic and political integration and harmonization are good for each Asian nation on condition that we respect each individual culture and religion in Asia.*

(Mongolia, female, 30, central government official)

- *It would be nice to get united with strong economy and political stability in Asia. We should not be controlled by Western powers. This century is the century of Asia.*

(Mongolia, female, 31, international lawyer for central government official)

### Voices from Indonesia

- *It would be wonderful if we could go to any country in Asia and without bothering to change our currency*

(Indonesia, female, 50, central government official)

- *All Asian countries should be united on condition that every country has its own political freedom and will.*

(Indonesia, female, 39, central government official)

### A Voice from Nepal

- *We should accept all the nations and citizens in Asia and improve diplomatic relations with others.*

(Nepal, female, 40, local government official)

### Voices from Pakistan

- *An Asian union is necessary to save Asia by helping each other and supporting the*

*poorest of the poor in Asia.*

**(Pakistan, male, 30, local government official)**

- *To help out the poor Asian countries and maintain the security of Asian countries, an Asian union is necessary.*

**(Pakistan, male, 33, local government official)**

### **A Voice from Kyrgyzstan**

- *We Asian countries have all the possibilities to make an Asian union. We can share all natural and human resources more effectively by respecting each cultural and national identity.*

**(Kyrgyzstan, female 25, Graduate student)**

### **A Voice from Fiji**

- *An Asian union may prevent unnecessary wars in Asia and would certainly unite the countries, allowing them to work together. Also the same currency will activate trading among the member countries.*

**(Fiji, male, 35, Fire fighter)**

## **9-2. Asian Union Skeptics**

The following are representative voices of skepticism among the JICA participants.

- *Although I feel I am an Asian citizen, An Asian union would be quite different from the European Union because of the political, economic and educational differences.*

**(Chinese, male, 28, company worker)**

- *An Asian union would never become like the European Union due to our different cultures and totally different religions in Asia.*

**(Myanmar, female , 30 , central government official)**

- *The EU has so many countries of similar cultures and they share Christian influences. However, Asia has so many cultural, religious and political differences that forming an Asian union would not be an easy task.*

**(Myanmar, male , 35 , central government official)**

- *We do not need to unite Asia because we do not need confrontation and war anymore in order to unify Asia, and unity would bring a powerful and dominant leader.*

**(Cambodia, male, 37, medical doctor)**

- *I have thought about this possibility as a university teacher. However, it would be very difficult to make it possible, as Asia is the largest continent with the largest population and can be categorized into various regions due to different cultures and religions.*

**(Cambodia, male, 38, central government official)**

- *Countries in Asia are very different from each other in terms of cultures, religions and economic systems; some are rich and some are poor, some are politically stable and others are unstable.*

**(Cambodia, male, 28 , central government official)**

- *In Asia there are two powerful countries -- China and India. They always think of their own business interests and national interests and they do not want to sacrifice themselves for poor neighboring countries, and this makes Asian unity difficult.*

**(Bangladesh, male, 33, government official)**

- *There are so many differences in culture, society and community in Asia, which would make an Asian union difficult unlike the European Union.*

**(Bangladesh, male, 30, university lecturer)**

- *The lifestyle of Asian people and European people are so different in terms of culture and religion, so we cannot achieve an Asian union. We should examine the problems of the European Union.*

**(Laos, female, 30, central government official)**

- *Each country in Asia is unique in its own political and social structure and has its own cultural identity. There must be other way to unite countries in Asia without losing our original diversity.* **(Mongolia, female, 30, central government official)**
- *Europe is fundamentally different from Asia in terms of living standard and religion. There are few developed countries in Asia compared with European countries. It is quite difficult to close the economic and educational disparity in today's Asia. What JICA is doing is the first step to close the gap in Asia. Which country can assist poor countries in Asia except Japan?* **(Mongolia, female, 29, central government official)**
- *Asian countries have more diversity than European countries in terms of religion, economic disparity and cultural differences.* **(China, male, 35, local government official)**

## 10. Forming Asian Citizenships for an Asian Union

The awareness of being Asian and having dual citizenship are very vital in the forming of Asian citizenship. The following comparisons between being European citizens and being Asian citizens have significant implications for the formation of an Asian union. Figure 3 shows the consciousness of being European and dual citizens and support to European Union among 46 British students from university of Leeds and 49 German students of Bochum university in 2005. Figure 4 shows the consciousness of being Asian citizens and agreement with an Asian union among the JICA participants in 2009, as well as 216 Japanese university students and 40 Thai graduate students of in 2005.

Figures 3 and 4 will show the following facts: 257(73.1%) of the JICA participants agree with the possibility of an Asian union, and of these 129 (36.7%) strongly agree with it and 128 (36.4%) agree with it. In total, 73.1% agree with it. The surprising contrast is that only 46.6% of the Japanese students of Konan University agree an Asian union, as it shows the lowest awareness of it.

As for dual identities of both British and European, 58.0% of the British think of themselves as both British and European as Figure 3 shows. It is surprising again to note that among the 46 students of Leeds University, 71.7% of them feel themselves to be European and 65.2% of them feel themselves to be both British and European. It can be safely said that British university students are more aware of being European citizens than 100 British citizens. Because only 58.0% of British citizens are aware of being European citizens and dual identities.

In comparison, it is interesting to note that responses from the German students of Bochum University show that 91.8% think of themselves as European citizens and 81.6% think of themselves as both German and European. It is true that German university students are more aware of being European citizens than British university students regarding dual identities. However, in spite of the

**Figure 3: Being European**

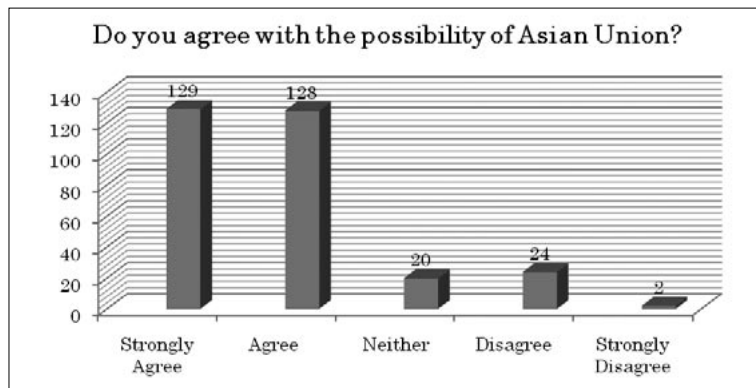
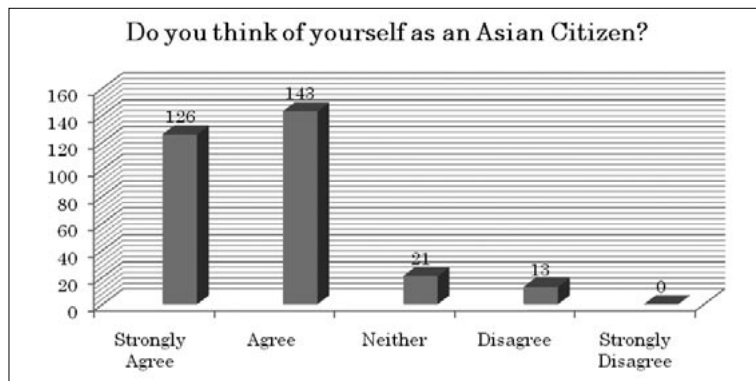
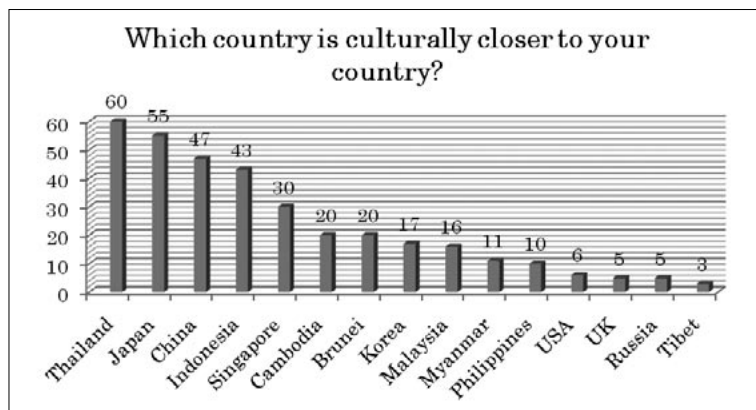
		Being European	Dual Citizens	European Union
100	British citizens	58.0%	58.0%	47.0%
46	British students of University of Leeds, UK	71.7%	65.2%	56.5%
49	German graduate students of Bochum	91.8%	81.6%	91.84%

**Figure 4: Awareness of Asian citizenship and support for an Asian union**

		(Do you think you are an Asian citizen?)	(Do you agree with an Asian union?)
47	JICA adult students from Philippines	93.6%	91.5%
44	JICA adult students form Vietnam	95.5%	88.6%
42	JICA adult students from Myanmar	95.2%	81.0%
40	JICA adult students from Laos	90.0%	80.0%
36	JICA adult students from Bangladesh	94.4%	91.7%
35	JICA adult students from Cambodia	88.6%	88.6%
31	JICA adult students from Malaysia	75.9%	93.1%
16	JICA adult students from Mongolia	81.3%	62.5%
13	JICA adult students from Bhutan	92.3%	76.9%
11	JICA adult students from China	81.8%	63.6%
11	JICA adult students from Sri Lanka	81.8%	63.6%
10	JICA adult students from Indonesia	70.0%	80.0%
8	JICA adult students from Nepal	87.5%	87.5%
7	JICA adult students from Pakistan	71.4%	71.4%
<b>Total (351 JICA participants from Asia)</b>		<b>85.7%</b>	<b>73.1%</b>
216	Japanese Students of Konan Univ.	72.7%	46.6%
40	Thai Graduate Students of Srinakharinwirot Univ.	95.0%	95.0%

limited number of British respondents and regions, the positive result of these questionnaires has a significant meaning in terms of British attitudes towards Europe and the European Union. As for the dual identity of Japanese and Asian citizenship, 72.7% of students feel that they are Asian citizens and 59% of the students feel that they are both Japanese and Asian citizens at the same time.

Graph 11 shows how strongly JICA participants agree or disagree with an Asian union, and Graph 12 shows their awareness of being Asian citizens. Graph 13 shows which Asian country the JICA participants feel culturally closer. It is surprising to know that the respondents showed that they feel Japan to be culturally closer than any other Asian country except Thailand. This results from Japan's economic contribution and support to the rest of Asia and JICA's continued efforts and influence on these respondents. These positive responses

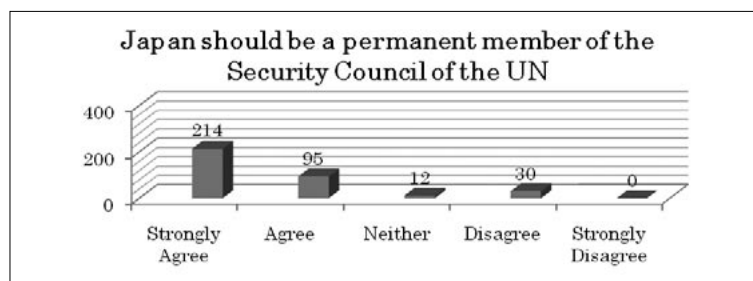
**Graph 11: The possibility of an Asian union****Graph 12: Awareness of Asian Citizenship****Graph 13: Culturally close countries**

will be a point of departure of the formation of Asian union in the future.

## 11. Japan's Leadership in Asia

Japan's leadership in forming an Asian union is indispensable, and so laying a groundwork of legitimacy for its leadership status would be an important first step. Graph 14 shows how much JICA participants from Asia support Japan's being able to be a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN. It shows that 309 (88.0 %) of the respondents agree with Japan's being given permanent membership. It is surprising to observe that 214 (61%) of the respondents strongly agree with Japanese membership on the Security Council. Becoming a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN would have many consequences, one being that Japan would more likely be able to take a lead in forming a possible Asian union.

**Graph 14: Japan's Being a Permanent member of the Security Council of the UN**



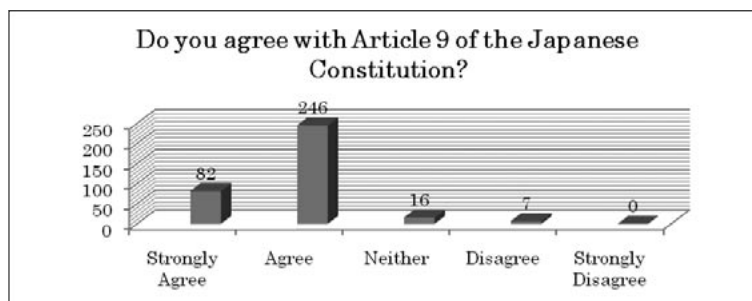
### 11-1. Article 9, for the Security of Asian People

Article 9 is not a provision for Japan's security but it is a provision for the security of the people of East Asia and the victims of Japanese militarism (Kimijima, 2009, p. 541). If Japan were to "go nuclear," that would probably mean the end of a viable nuclear nonproliferation regime worldwide (Van Ness, 2006, p.113). It is a prerequisite of a peaceful Asia, especially for those who were victimized by the Japanese military invasion during the Asian-Pacific War between 1930-1945.

If Japan plays a leading role in forming an Asian union in the future, the spirit of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution will meaningfully function for the purpose of forming a peacefully united Asia. The following results (see Graph 15) clearly show how much Asian people support the spirit of Article 9 which prevents Japan's militarism forever. Actually, 328 (93%) of the respondents agree

with Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. Among them 82(23%) strongly agree with it.

**Graph 15: Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution**



Similarly, among the 216 students of Konan University in Japan in 2005, 184 (85%) agreed with the Article 9, while 15 (7%) disagreed with it and 7% answered “Neither.” It is very significant that a clear majority of students support the renunciation of war despite the fact that the former government (the Liberal Democratic Party in power in 2005) was hoping to revise Article 9 through a national referendum into a more realistic one which allows for greater involvement in the Japan-US Security Treaty in order to cope with potential threats in East Asia. It is an impressive fact that the both JICA participants and Japanese university students support the spirit of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. This result convinces that keeping Article 9 as it is will be a prerequisite for Japan to take the lead in forming a peaceful Asian union.

## **11-2. Asian Citizenship with Shared Asian Identities**

Asian identities are diverse, complex and interrelated. They are also transient, malleable, transformative and influenced by political, social and cultural influences. Nobody can assume that what is confirmed today will necessarily be true in the future. Social, economic, political and cultural changes are likely to have a significant impact on how people regard themselves and others.

Historically, unlike Europeans in the European continent, Asians, especially Japanese did not have to identify themselves without close cultural contacts, rejection, confrontations, conflicts, acceptance, coexistence and integration. How is Asian identity conceptualized? The five most important factors of Asia identities are cultural heritage, history, language, citizenship and religion.

Thus, what does citizenship in diverse societies imply? It involves a synthesis of republican and communitarian concepts of citizenship based on liberal

democracy. a synthesis of liberal, republican, and communitarian notions of citizenship are involved. “European citizenship” can be understood as being closely related to shared views of human rights and civic duties. It is also related to economic and political benefits. As a result, people sometimes are able to support regional integration beyond cultural and national borders. In today’s world, citizenship is based on basic civil rights and institutions to support individual security and well-being. (Nakamura, 2007, p. 18)

The kernel of citizenship in the European Union lies in sharing and ensuring the common values of human rights and obligations, freedom, equality, autonomy and solidarity as peace-loving citizens within the framework of national and transnational liberal democracy in diverse societies. But what about Asian citizenship? The current study suggests six positive results regarding the possibility of a shared Asian citizenship.

- \* 95 (27.1%) of JICA participants from Asia agreed that citizenship is one of the most important factors of national identities .
- \* 301 (85.7%) of the JICA participants feel they are Asian citizens.
- \* 257 (73.1%) of the JICA participants support the possibility of Asian union.
- \* 55 (15.7%) of the JICA participants feel Japan is culturally closer to their countries than China (13.4%).
- \* 328 (93.4%) of the JICA participants agree with Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which will affect all Asian countries.
- \* 309 (88%) of the JICA participants agree with the idea that Japan should be a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations.

These are positive indicators that Asia will be more economically united in a peaceful context, if the factors listed above are met. However, the surprising fact is that the 216 Japanese student respondents showed that while 157 (72.7%) of them feel they are Asian citizens, only 101(46.6%) agree with the possibility of an Asian union. This shows, presumably, that Japanese university students are relatively indifferent to the prospect of the security and economic cooperation in Asia, which could bring a more peaceful and prosperous Asia including Japan.

Hakogi, Rosefielde and Chen (2008, P. 28) state that we need to learn lessons from the case of European integration. They continued to state that it took Europeans more than fifty years to establish the EU, and if we count time from the proposal at the earliest days of Victor Hugo and Count Kudenhorf Calergie, it took in actuality more than a hundred years. It might be necessary for Asians to take much more time, make greater efforts, and reach out more generously to

realize the dream of an Asian union. However, a dream cannot come true unless we dream it. As the world is changing with the advent of the European Union and Obama's USA as arenas of human experiments in the West, we Asians also must align ourselves in the direction of a peaceful Asia which has shared views of Asian citizenships based on human rights and security as well as civic duty and responsibility based on national and transnational liberal democracy. The future of Asia depends on Asians' being able to transcend the limits of individual national interests and petty grievances. The promise of Asia lies in the hope for unity of purpose among young Asian leaders in dealing with conflicts and discord.

## 12. Conclusion

We have learned from history and the process of the forming of the European Union that the road to an Asian union requires democratization of political systems, a guarantee of cultural and religious diversity, a mutual agreement of fundamental human rights, a basic social welfare, the abolition of militarism and the nuclear threat, and the observance of international rules in sustainable environment and trade. Also, more flexible exchange programs both academically and technologically among Asian countries should be encouraged for better mutual understanding. These are not easy assignments for most Asian countries today. However, we can learn priceless lessons from what the European Union has shown through its trial and error experiments for the past 50 years. What is really vital is not only the several common assignments to be worked out but also the will and vision of young promising leaders of Asia. In this respect, the opinions gathered from the 351 JICA participants in this study could provide some of the momentum needed to make Asia more peaceful, sustainable and united.

This study has examined the possibility of Asian Union through the direct voices of JICA participants by means of questionnaires and interviews regarding their views on Japan's policy towards developing countries, JICA programs, major factors of national identities and pride, awareness of Asian citizenship, feeling of cultural closeness among Asian countries, the possibility of Asian Union, Japan's possibility to become a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, and the significance of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution for peaceful Asia.

As for Japan's policy towards developing countries, the contribution of JICA programs to Asia has been highly valued through Japan's continued efforts for ODA. Regarding the major factors of national identities, these JICA participants

have shared backgrounds of respect for each cultural heritage, history, language, citizenship and religion. The first three — cultural heritage, history and language — are equally important factors of individual member countries of the European Union, too. On the other hand, the national pride of the JICA participants tends to lie in people (human resources), multiculturalism, religion, agriculture and natural environment. It is very important to realize that multiculturalism is a central philosophy of the European Union as an ideal, which 14 Asian countries have shown except Japan, too. But multiculturalism should go hand in hand with liberal democracy. It can function and be truly accepted within the framework of liberal democracy as history has demonstrated.

Regarding Asian citizenship, 269 (85.7%) of the JICA participants are aware of themselves as being Asian citizens. It is very interesting to note that awareness of cultural closeness shows that Japan ranks second behind only Thailand and followed by China and Indonesia. This shows that Japan successfully demonstrates her cultural closeness towards most Asian countries, or that the 14 major Asian countries culturally feel Japan to be much closer. As for the possibility of Asian union, 257 (73.1%) of the respondents of this study support it. Although the respondents are limited to young Asian elites who are studying in Japan through the sponsorship by JICA, their responses at least offer some hope for realizing an Asian union in the future.

Regarding Japan's possibility to become a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, 309 (88%) of the respondents support it. This ought to encourage Japan to play a more peaceful role in the UN with its peaceful constitution and without nuclear weapons. Finally, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution (renunciation of war) is supported by 328 (93%) of the respondents.

In conclusion, Asian national identities and pride will not interfere with an Asian union based on shared Asian citizenships and multicultural principles with human resources which 351 JICA participants from Asia highly value. Furthermore, the results could predict that Asia citizenship will be shared among Asian countries on condition that Asian citizens respect more fundamental human rights and social welfare in liberal democracy. As discussed previously, the fact that 269 (85.7%) of respondents feel themselves to be Asian citizens and 73.1% (n=257) of them support the possibility of an Asian union is a significant indicators for the future of Asia.

It is true that the differences in living standards between developed countries and developing countries will bring about labor migrations as we have seen in the European Union. However, it is a natural process of history and we cannot interrupt this global orientation in the direction of a more peaceful and equitable

Asia in terms of human security and sustainable development. It is time for Asian citizens to pick ourselves up and dust ourselves off in order to get rid of the recrimination and political dogmas of the past and to strive to pursue a shared citizenship with full responsibility for the future generations of peaceful Asia. They all deserve an equal to pursue a full measure of happiness in Asia.

As Kofi Annan (2006), the former Secretary General of the United Nations, said when he addressed the Japanese Diet, "You cannot choose your neighbors." It is time for us to think of Asia as "ours" not as "others" through international education for sustainable peace, especially in higher education for leadership development, such as liberal education in universities and JICA educational programs for promising young leaders from Asia. The dream of Asian union will not be a mere fantasy if the people of Asia dream of it and explore its possibility and pursue its practicability with a strong sense of neighborhood concern and human solidarity involved in national and transnational liberal democracy. This can best be accomplished through cultural, educational and technical cooperation and exchanges within Asia. This research reconfirms that JICA has a crucial mission to continue to play a key role in the formation of Asian union for the purpose of the peaceful and equitable future of Asia.

*"Twelfth-five years from now, rather than a bipolar Asia divided between U.S. and Chinese blocs, there might grow up a cooperative Union of Asian States. The critical test is probably whether China and Japan can ever reach a genuine reconciliation and partnership."* (David P. Calleo, 2008)

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#### **Questionnaire for National identities and pride for Global Education in Japan**

1. Are you female or male? ☐ female ☐ male Your Country ( )
2. How old are you? ☐18-20 ☐20-25 ☐25-29 ☐30-39 ☐40-49 ☐5-59 ☐60-69 ☐over70
3. Your occupation: ☐student ☐post graduate student ☐company worker ☐teacher  
☐central government official ☐local government official ☐company owner ☐politician  
☐doctor/lawyer ☐Business executives ☐homemaker, ☐retired pensioner,  
☐other ( )
4. What do you think are the *three* most important factors of your national identities?  
tick *three* factors.  
☐ birth ☐citizenship ☐residence ☐cultural heritage ☐history ☐ancestry  
☐liberal democracy ☐multiculturalism ☐language ☐religion ☐human rights  
☐sovereignty ☐ethnic diversity ☐belonging to your country ☐national pride  
☐Monarchy ☐community ☐low crime rate ☐political belief ☐King  
☐Other ( )
5. What makes you feel proud of your country? Please tick *three* factors.

- ☐ political influence in the world ☐ parliament ☐ liberal democracy ☐ People  
☐ multiculturalism ☐ Business ☐ Empire ☐ religion, ☐ community  
☐ Armed Forces ☐ economic performance ☐ social welfare ☐ agriculture  
☐ monarchy ☐ Science and Technology ☐ philanthropy and public generosity  
☐ low crime rate, ☐ politics ☐ politician ☐ local officers, ☐ Navy  
☐ Other ( )

6. What makes you feel ashamed of your country? Please tick *three* factors.

- ☐ political influence in the world ☐ parliament ☐ liberal democracy  
☐ multiculturalism ☐ Business ☐ Empire ☐ religion, ☐ community ☐ Navy  
☐ Armed Forces ☐ economic performance ☐ social welfare ☐ agriculture  
☐ monarchy ☐ Science and Technology ☐ philanthropy and public generosity  
☐ low crime rate, ☐ politics ☐ politician ☐ local officers  
☐ Other ( )

7. What do you want Japan *to do* for your country now and in the future?

- ☐ Education and Training through JICA Programs in Japan  
☐ Education and Training through JICA Programs in your country  
☐ Capital Investment ☐ Bilateral Economic Aids  
☐ Financial Support through World Bank  
☐ Technological Support and Training in your country  
☐ Political Support to your Country ☐ Studying in Japanese Universities  
☐ Other ( ) WHY?

8. What do you want Japan *not to do* for your country now and in the future?

- ☐ Education and Training through JICA Programs in Japan  
☐ Education and Training through JICA Programs in your country  
☐ Capital Investment ☐ Bilateral Economic Aids  
☐ Financial Support through World Bank  
☐ Technological Support and Training in your country  
☐ Political Support to your Country ☐ Studying in Japanese Universities  
☐ Other ( ) WHY?

9. Which country do you think is culturally closer to you?

( ) ( ) ( )

10. Do you think of yourself as Asian citizen or, South Asian Citizens, Central Asian Citizens, Middle East Citizens, African citizen, East European Citizen, South American Citizens?

- ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Other ( )

11. Do you agree an idea which explores the possibility of Asian Union like European Union?

- ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree  
 WHY?

12. What do you think of the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which renounces war forever?

- ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree  
 WHY?

13. Do you agree with the idea that Japan should be one of the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations?

- ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree  
 WHY?

14. Your Comment or Criticism on Japan and Japanese Policy