Korea-China-Japan: The Possible Trinity

Robert Suphian[1], Im Je Cho[2]

Department of International Trade, Dong-A University, Busan,
SOUTH KOREA.

[1] reshaki@hotmail.com, [2] ijcho@dau.ac.kr

ABSTRACT

This paper considers the long time desire for realization of Korea-China-Japan (KCJ) trilateral cooperation as a possible process if the respective countries opt for togetherness strategy in healing historical scars, solving territorial conflicts and maintaining peace and security. The KCJ is advised to initiate a Four Party Talks which include a separated North Korea as an important part in the region stability. South Korea is specifically advised to play a middle strategy role and stop accelerating problems by advertising sensitive issues like Dokdo but rather call for a Korea-Japan dialogue or mediator to resolve the matter.

Keywords: KCJ, Togetherness strategy, Four Party Talks, Negotiations

INTRODUCTION

For long time Korea, China and Japan (KCJ) were distinguished from most other major trading nations by their nonparticipation in regional economic arrangements (Scott and Ben, 2001). However in 1999, an agreement was reached for heads of state from each of the three countries when they met in the sidelines of the ASEAN+3 Summit. In 2008 the KCJ formally separated itself from the Asian plus Three (APT) process and formed North East Asia Trilateral Summit (NEATS). Since then KCJ countries have been trying to work for the realization of trilateral economic cooperation, butt existing complicated obstacles continue to hinder the substantial efforts already in place.

OBJECTIVES

This paper aims at analyzing the Northeast situation by digging down the generic root causes hindering cooperation processes in Northeast Asia and proposing the action plan model towards realization of the dynamic and sustainable KCJ trilateral organization. While other literatures denied the possibility of trilateral economic cooperation, this study focuses on the possibility of the trinity to happen.

RATIONALE AND FACTS

The KCJ bloc is an important part of the Asian and world economic and social developments. This is because China, Japan and South Korea are among top 20 largest economies in the world. Any potential changes or instability in the region may result to a much greater impact in the region and World at large. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of KCJ countries is expected to reach 23US$ trillion in the year 2019 which will be the top and leading against 28 European Union countries (EU28) and USA. Its contribution to the World GDP will also be highest at about 23%. Its contribution to the World merchandise export will reach 21.4% in 2019 as second top after EU28 (32.8%) and USA at third place with 8.4%. More details are found in diagrams 3-1 to 3-5 at the appendix.

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