

China-Japan Cooperation against the Coronavirus

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1) A black swan or a grey rhino ?

We have been wondering if the hanging new type of coronavirus is either a black swan or a grey rhino. It broke out in Wuhan area in China in the last late year and within months spreading all over the East Asian countries and beyond. The governments and medical scientists have tried to identify its truth and strategy to counter-attack it, but in fail so far. Should we categorize it as a black swan or a grey rhino?

As you know, a black swan has meant the incident hard to predict but cause great chaos like terror attack in 1991 or the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2007~09. On the other hand, a gray rhino is the obvious dangers that could be easily expected to happen but mostly ignored, and hence would have greater damages not to control easily once it happens.

In other words, a black swan comes up unexpectedly in sight with certain limited amount of damages, while a big grey rhino in the African savanna begins suddenly to run and rush out of control making a great deal of damages all over the grassy land.

The new type of corona-virus incidents could be categorized as one of the typical grey rhino rather than a black swan in the sense of their collateral damages as well as their scales.

Then we wonder again why we have had the attack of the great grey rhino in China and spreading over East Asia particularly and why and how Japan should cooperate with China to counter-attack against this awful beast.

2) The third wave of globalization

First, we should recognize the fact that the grey rhino is the negative by-product of the rapid economic growth of the middle-income nations under the third wave of globalization.

It has brought about the sharp rise of Asian powers as the region led by China who could take advantages of its great amount of population and huge geographical space. China has been assisted by Japan and followed by South Korea, India and ASEAN ten countries.

Both of the onuses that used to be the elements to obstruct their

development has turned out to be the bonus through their huge markets with middle-income peoples and function as the elements to promote their development under the knowledge-based information revolution.

Moreover the Eurasian huge space that used to be the onuses of negative developmental moment has turned out to be the positive bonuses through the advanced infrastructural construction technology including the one of solar energy as well as railroad and highway systems.

However, the rapidly advancing middle-income nations in Asia have been too late in developing the risk management systems in the fields of agricultural-food safety and sanitary-health care. China has fallen into the pitfalls of the middle-income nations.

We could wonder why China and East Asia could not learn the lessons of the SARS incidents in 2003. The answer must be the collective faults to create the multilateral institution for the safety-net of the agricultural-food safety system. We could learn the case of European Union which established in 2002 the European Food Safety Authority to control in every field of food security and safety risk control from production to marketing. They include the safe reproduction and importing system and the GM good products.

3) Towards the redefinition of the security concept

The grey rhino of new corona-virus has shown the essence of the conditions of peace and prosperity in the post-cold war.

We could not enjoy the wellbeing of the nation without having the cooperative relations with the neighboring countries.

The supply value chains and the human travelling movements across the national borders have turned out to be the bases of the prosperity of the region under the highly advanced technologies.

We have the sharp contrast of the size of trade and travel business between China and Japan in 2003 when they plagued by SARS and the one in 2019 when plagued by the corona-virus. In 2003 the size of trade was only half of the one in 2019 that out-numbered as much as 3.3 trillion Japanese yen. The Chinese bought 4.5 million Japanese new automobile cars in 2003 which increased to 45.7 million in 2019. It is approaching to 51.9 million of the domestic car markets in Japan.

The inbound travelers from China to Japan counted 0.45 million in 2003, while they increased to 9.6 million in 2019.

If we count the trade by supply chains between Japan and Korea as well

as the inbound-outbound travelers of both nations, we could notice the the de-fact socio-regional community among the three nations in East Asia, particularly between China and Japan.

We have much accustomed to the politico-military security concept since the European modern state system. The gray rhino of the coronavirus has been asking us the redefinition of security. We should emphasize on the socio-economic fields rather those of armament. We could now find out the more pragmatic strategies to apply the Belt and Road Initiative to the regional community building processes including the food safety mechanism initiated by the closer cooperation between China and Japan. It could include the establishment of Asia Health Organization.