

Preface

This book is the product of the first conference of the Asia Economic Community Forum which was held on 11–13 November 2009 at Songdo Convensia in Incheon, South Korea. In 2001 a non-governmental organization (NGO) called the Northeast Asia Intellectuals' Solidarity Korea (NAIS Korea), was established with the goal of promoting regional integration in the form of a Northeast Asian Community. NAIS Korea now has more than 500 members, composed of scholars both in Korea and across the region. With NAIS Korea at the core, the Asia Economic Community Foundation (AECF) was established in 2008 with the goal of eventually establishing an Asia Economic Community. The main activity of the foundation to date has been organizing the annual Asia Economic Community Forum (AEC Forum) with the eventual goal of transforming that forum into 'Asia's Davos Forum'. One of the co-editors of this volume, Professor Jehoon Park, is Secretary General of AEC Forum.

Even though the AEC Forum is benchmarking the Davos Forum as its model, the conference was initiated by academics with the participation of business and political leaders. Therefore it is hoped that the presidents of prestigious universities around the world as well as distinguished scholars will participate in the conference and serve as members of the advisory committee of the AEC Forum.

The permanent theme of the forum is 'Creating One Asia Together', while the theme of 2009 conference was 'Global Crises and Asia: Solutions and New Paradigm'. There were three plenary sessions: 'Grand Debate About the 21st Century Capitalism', 'Grand Compromise among the US, China and the EU' and 'Grand Dialogue between Asia and the West'. More than 1200 official participants actively shared their interests and views concerning the future of Asia and the vision for an Asia Economic Community. There were 20 sessions where more than 50 papers were presented. This book collects the 11 best papers from among those 50. One additional chapter was invited to deal with the security issue of China, along with the introduction and conclusion.

The three co-editors of this volume are all core members of the AEC Forum. Professor Pempel has been an active participant in this AEC movement since the formation of NAIS Korea.

While interest in regional integration and regionalism in East and Northeast Asia has been increasing recently, most of the publications have been written in national languages and hence are limited in their inclusion and in their audiences. Some are written in English, but mainly by Western scholars. This book includes contributions by Asian scholars as well as Western writers. The book also has a unique feature in that contributions are made from an interdisciplinary approach covering economics, political science and culture. The book deals with various issues such as applications of European experiences to Asia as well as perspectives of each country from the region together with perspectives from outside the region (US or Russia). Lastly, this book expands the scope of analysis beyond Northeast Asia or East Asia, to Asia in general.

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