

Emerging India as a Leader of the Global South & Its Future Relations with Japan

By Naoyuki Haraoka

I would like to thank our Indian colleagues on the Editorial Committee for their help in enriching the contents of this issue by introducing the authors and interviewees featured in this cover story which highlights India's key role in the global economy and geopolitics.

The Roundtable, moderated by JEF Chairman Masakazu Toyoda, provides, as always, a good overview of the theme of the cover story. It deals with the Indian macroeconomy, trade policy, foreign policy, climate change, contributions to culture and science, and future highlights of India-Japan relations. Amitabh Kant, sherpa of the G20, responds to all the questions from leading Japanese thinkers, Prof. Shujiro Urata and Prof. Yukiko Fukagawa. This is followed by an interview with His Excellency Sibi George, ambassador of India to Japan, with a focus on the current India-Japan relationship.

We have three articles by Japanese experts on India: one by Prof. Makoto Kojima gives an overview of the expanding Japan-India economic relationship, one by Prof. Masanori Kondo offers a professional economist's views on the structural issues of the Indian economy, and one by Prof. Toru Ito, an international security expert, discusses India's foreign policy. There is also a special contribution from Prof. Rohit Wanchoo, a distinguished historian from India, on the contemporary history of the two countries' relations from 1950 until today.

We have paid particular attention to the issue of India-Japan student exchanges, since they have not been particularly substantive in spite of the increasing importance of projected relations in the future. But we highlight the good relations between St. Stephen's College in India and Soka University in Japan. Our interview with Prof. John Varghese, principal of St. Stephen's, and two subsequent articles by former Soka students who studied there, Kohei Ono and Harumi Yokokawa, reveal the

deep bonds of friendships they formed, as well as their English language capacity which I found impressive, and how their experience in India has enhanced their abilities in their working life.

Finally, we have an interview with Sunil Kulkarni, an Indian entrepreneur who has lived in Japan for many years and speaks excellent Japanese. He started a software company in Tokyo which recently did an IPO in India. His success story shows that risk-taking Indian start-ups could collaborate well with the risk-averse Japanese.

This long line-up, however, is still not enough to cover all aspects of India-Japan relations. For example, Indians have a deep-rooted skepticism of American and European values, such as respect for human rights and protection of the environment, as they point to contradictory behavior by Westerners during colonial days and hold them more responsible for seriously polluting the global environment. How can Japan help convince India of the utility of those values today in a world where Russia has invaded Ukraine, and human rights and the rule of law are constantly exposed to crises?

AI has emerged as a revolutionary innovation. It could contribute to the Japanese economy today, which is suffering from labor shortages, by raising labor productivity. But could it cause high unemployment in countries like India where the population still continues to grow?

These questions have yet to see solutions. We need a prudent analysis of India's great potential in both the economy and politics.

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