

Foreword

It is a pleasure to introduce to you the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of East Asian Studies*. This journal is a tribute to the teaching and research conducted at the Department of East Asian Studies which is part of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Malaya. The department is one of its kind in Malaysia as it offers three comprehensive programmes that includes the China Studies, Japan Studies and Korean Studies.

East Asia has some of the most dynamic countries in the world like that of the People's Republic of China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Mongolia and Taiwan. It covers about 12,000,000 km² and has 22% of the world's population. Economically, the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 brought closer some of the East Asian economies. The East Asian region has many new developments that necessitate constant research, in an increasing number of real world issues. When defining regional economic cooperation, more often than not, East Asia includes the ten member states of ASEAN together with Japan, South Korea and the People's Republic of China, otherwise known as ASEAN Plus Three. According to the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Plus Three agenda has expanded to include security, transnational crime, agriculture and forestry, energy, minerals, tourism, health, culture and arts, environment, science and technology, information and communication technology, social welfare, rural development and poverty eradication, disaster management, youth, women, education, among others. More importantly, the ASEAN Plus Three is increasingly becoming the key to the goal of building an East Asian community. Hence, it is imperative we educate the public of East Asian dynamism. In line with this, the papers in this volume offer different aspects of the economic, social and political development of Japan, the two Koreas and China. They are original papers, both by established as well as up and coming young researchers in expertise related to East Asian studies.

As the Department Head, I hope this new journal will become a seminal source for published work on East Asia in Malaysia as well as have profound implications for quality research and international networking as well as collaborations among academics. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Managing Editor, Dr Geetha Govindasamy as well as our editorial team, mainly from the Department of East Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, at University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, who have done an excellent job in putting together this introductory volume. A special thanks to Puan Rohayati Paidi from the same department who designed the journal cover. Without funding this publication would have been possible. Hence, I would like to thank the University of Malaya for providing the required financial assistance. Finally, I hope you will enjoy reading our first issue. In the future, I encourage you to submit your research results to the *International Journal of East Asian Studies*.

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