

ASEAN: Origin, Evolution, and Economy

The material of the first class covers an introduction to ASEAN. At the beginning of this first class, our professor brought up a pre-learning quiz. The quiz consists of basic information about ASEAN. I have taken a few number of courses about ASEAN when I was in high school, but I realize while answering the questions that I have little knowledge about ASEAN that I can still remember.

We learn the difference between ASEAN and AEC in this class. ASEAN is a regional organization containing ten countries in Southeast Asia. The ten nations include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Some people expect Timor Leste to join ASEAN after it has been applying for many times. Meanwhile, AEC is one of three communities within ASEAN. I never think that ASEAN economy combined together will be this big as the seventh largest in the world in 2014 according to information from ASEAN Statistics and International Monetary Fund. It is very interested to know how big ASEAN is. The history of ASEAN has started since 1967 with Bangkok Declaration with the goals to promote regional cooperation and to ensure stability. We also study about ASEAN economy in this class.

The most interesting topic for me in the class is key industries of each member country. I have known before that Thailand mostly exports computer parts and automotive, but I never have an idea that we buy natural gas from Myanmar and Indonesia is renowned about natural resources other than petroleum. The professor provided the graph which shows GDP per capita in USD from 2000 to 2017. GDP per capita in Singapore and Brunei Darussalam are much greater than the other eight countries.

Cambodia Economy

Cambodia is a country in ASEAN community and CLMV which consists of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Cambodia is a neighbor country of Thailand. The statistics in 2019 show that more than half of population in Cambodia is under 25 years old. However, I expect the median age and number of population to be higher than as shown in the statistics. I have just learned that Cambodia is currently the sixth fastest growing economy in the world. Cambodia and Thailand seem to have excellent diplomatic relation as they will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Cambodia and Thailand in the next year. The two countries share similarity in culture, traditions, and religions. Only around four hundred thousand of Thai tourists visit Cambodia each year. The lecturer has mentioned about education cooperation that governments provide scholarship to students, and I suddenly realize there is one of my classmates who told me that she is a scholarship student from Cambodia. Internal conflict in Cambodia, such as democracy problem of Prime Minister Hun Sen possessing power, has caused Cambodian people to escape from the country in order to get away from poverty and political conflict. Thus, many Cambodian workers are seeking for a job in Thailand.

CLMV framework, which has four members, is set up to decrease the gap of development and focuses on nine priorities. In addition, ACMES (Ayeyawedy-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy) was established by Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand with the objectives to complement economic gap among the five countries, including Vietnam, and to further promote sustainable growth of this sub-region.