

History of Japan's ODA Ties with ASEAN



While Japan today is known as a stable, reliable provider of Official Development Assistance, the origins of the country's ODA lie in the tumult of the immediate postwar period. Japan rejoined the community of nations with the 1951 signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. In the years that followed, it launched its international cooperation efforts in tandem with the payment of reparations.

The early history of Japanese ODA was in a real sense the history of its formation of ties with Southeast Asia. It began making reparations to four countries, Burma (now Myanmar), the Philippines, Indonesia, and Viet Nam (then South Vietnam), and offering grants-in-aid to countries including Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

In 1954 Japan further integrated its cooperation into an international framework when it joined the Colombo Plan, an organization formed after World War II to promote the development of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In the following year the Japanese Government commenced technical cooperation, hosting trainees and dispatching specialists. The targeting of Asian countries with close ties to Japan – many of which would go on to be members of ASEAN – became the basis for a long-lasting focus on Asia in later ODA activities.

Not all was rosy. In the 1970s the wave of Japanese business activity in Southeast Asia caused a growing backlash, as seen in the large anti-Japanese demonstrations that occurred in Indonesia and Thailand in 1974. To assuage regional concerns, during a visit to Manila in 1977 Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda announced the Fukuda Doctrine, a pledge that Japan would deal with ASEAN members as equal partners. The efforts to improve relations bore fruit, with Japan becoming the association's first "dialogue partner" and the first participant in regular summit meetings with its leaders. In recent decades the countries of ASEAN have enjoyed rapid economic growth, becoming invaluable economic partners for Japan.

Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda visits Southeast Asia in 1977. (PHOTO: MAINICHI SHIMBUN/PANA)

JAPAN and ASEAN by the Numbers

Japan has accepted

170,000 trainees

from ASEAN countries

from the start of the program through the 2011 fiscal year. In turn, JICA has dispatched a cumulative total of some 48,000 experts to the region's countries.



For

59 years



Japan has offered assistance to Southeast Asia.

These efforts began in 1954, when Japan signed a peace treaty and agreements concerning war reparations and economic assistance with Myanmar (then Burma). The cooperative relationship predates the creation of ASEAN itself in 1967.

Japan helped build

facilities providing

of Indonesia's hydro power.

61.5%

JICA has contributed to infrastructure development throughout ASEAN countries, including airports, railways, and port facilities, as well as power generation.



Japan provided

34.9%

of global ODA to ASEAN

during the period from 1960 through 2011. Japan is a key partner for the people of Southeast Asia.



1954

Japan joins the Colombo Plan; Program to Receive Trainees in Japan is launched.

1965

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) dispatch program is launched, with its first set of young volunteers going to Laos.

1967

ASEAN is founded with its five original members; the number will double over the next 32 years.



AFP/Jiji

1977

Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda announces the Fukuda Doctrine, defining Japan and ASEAN as equal partners working toward a shared future.

1982

JICA program launched to build capacity-development training centers in ASEAN countries.

1994

Following a Japanese proposal to create a regional venue for security dialogue, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is launched, bringing together foreign ministers from ASEAN and other participants around the world.

2004

After the Sumatra quake and Indian Ocean tsunami, JICA dispatches Japan Disaster Relief teams to the affected region.



2013

Japan and ASEAN mark the 40th anniversary of formal relations. Japan will host the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in December.