

Research on China-Myanmar Relations from the Perspective of East Asian Regional Cooperation

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Keywords: East Asia regional cooperation, China-Burma relations, China, Myanmar

Abstract: After the Asian financial crisis in 1997, Southeast Asian countries gradually realized the importance of regional cooperation. With ASEAN as a platform, they started regional cooperation with China, Japan, and South Korea. At the same time, ASEAN is playing an increasingly important role and influence in the region. After 26 years of development of China-ASEAN relations, cooperation is generally greater than differences. Myanmar's political transformation began in 2010, when the new NLD government came to power, and Myanmar opened to the outside world, reshaping the country's image. China and Myanmar both have traditional friendly relations. Based on the two countries' own national interests, the two countries' joint participation in regional cooperation in East Asia is the top priority. Under the background of this, China-Myanmar relations will achieve more profound and wider development.

1. Overview of regional cooperation in East Asia

In the past two decades, East Asian regional cooperation has gone through a series of cooperation processes. In general, East Asian regional cooperation has brought greater benefits to conflicts and conflicts among East Asian countries (regions).

1.1 Review of East Asian Regional Cooperation

The 1997 Asian financial crisis was a key turning point in East Asian regional cooperation. In the pre-financial crisis period, with the rapid economic growth in East Asia, the average annual growth rate of the economy in the wild goose array model is much higher than that in the developed countries of the United States and Europe. While in the post-financial crisis period, due to the outbreak of the Asian financial crisis, many East Asian countries (regions) suffered heavy losses and even caused domestic political instability. They must be more open and integrated with each other, and have a very broad space for cooperation in the areas of trade in services, finance, environmental protection and non-traditional security.

1.2 Trends of regional cooperation in East Asia

1.2.1 Realistic Basis of East Asian Regional Cooperation

In order to safeguard the political and economic security of the region, it is an important means for East Asian countries to promote regional cooperation with East Asian values. If countries can try to resolve these disputes at the level of regional cooperation or minimize dissolution and restraint to avoid the escalation of disputes, it can prevent local wars and affect peace and stability throughout East Asia.

1.2.2 Long-term goals of regional cooperation in East Asia

Starting from economic cooperation, the establishment of free trade zones, economic communities, currency unions, and other forms has developed into a security community and even a higher-level social community. The ASEAN Community has been established. The cooperation mechanisms such as "10 + 1", "10 + 3" under the leadership of ASEAN have strengthened the

institutionalization of East Asian regional cooperation in different fields. And ASEAN is limited by its own strength. To achieve the long-term goal of the East Asian Community requires East Asian countries, regional powers such as China, Japan, and South Korea, need to undertake and respond.

2. Impact of East Asian Regional Cooperation on China-Myanmar Relations

China and Myanmar, as participants in East Asian regional cooperation, need to work together to promote regional cooperation in East Asia. East Asian regional cooperation has had a certain impact on the development of China-Myanmar relations, which affect the attitudes and policies of China and Myanmar on East Asian regional cooperation in turns.

2.1 The Policy of China-Myanmar East Asia Regional Cooperation

China is the world's largest developing country, while Myanmar is one of the world's least developed countries. And China has a strong role in driving the regional economy and is an irreplaceable role for regional cooperation and regional governance in East Asia. Since the beginning of political transformation, Myanmar has gradually opened to the outside world. Participating in regional cooperation and integrating itself into the governance of regional affairs is in Myanmar's national interest. China and Myanmar have their own regional cooperation policies. The two countries have many common interests in regional cooperation, but contradictions and differences are inevitable also. However, the common interests of the two countries' cooperation and development are far greater than conflicts of interest.

2.2 Promotion of East Asian Regional Cooperation on the Development of China-Myanmar Relations

Since the 1990s, East Asian regional cooperation has experienced a development process from nothing to reality, showing a multi-layered, wide-ranging and all-round development trend. The gradual advancement of East Asian regional cooperation has greatly promoted the development of East Asian countries and relations between countries. Also China is an important participant in regional cooperation in East Asia, and Myanmar, a developing country in regional cooperation in East Asia, both countries firmly support and promote regional cooperation in East Asia.

The complementary and interdependent relationship that China and Myanmar have formed over the years will continue to deepen development within the framework of East Asian regional cooperation. Then the relations would extend from political, economic, security, and cultural exchanges to non-traditional security, the drug control, and environmental protection areas. There is plenty of room for expansion of bilateral cooperation.

2.2.1 Construction of East Asian Community

The construction of regional identity is based on the inseparable geopolitics, common cultural origins, and realistic development of mutual needs. And the East Asian Community is based on the common interests of East Asian countries in response to the current international era and the needs of regional development. The construction of the East Asian Community requires long-term multi-level exchanges and interactions among countries from the political, economic, cultural, and social perspectives. Also the East Asian Community has been established as a long-term goal of East Asian regional cooperation.

2.2.2 Main areas of China-Myanmar cooperation in East Asia

Both China and Burma are advocates of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. As regional developing countries, they have similar demands and maintain good cooperation and coordination in many areas. The areas of cooperation between China and Myanmar in the Lancang River-Mekong Basin are mainly focused on the development of hydropower resources, ecological environment protection and shipping and transportation construction, which has long-term significance for the development of China and Myanmar and regional development.

And the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is an initiative initiated by China to provide financial support for infrastructure construction in Asian countries and promote connectivity in the construction of Asian regions. Myanmar was the first founding member of the AIIB. For Myanmar's infrastructure is backward and it lacks financial support, foreign loans are needed to help improve infrastructure construction. The AIIB can provide Myanmar for counterpart services to achieve rail, road and maritime connectivity between Myanmar and Asian countries.

3. Potential problems and differences between China and Myanmar in East Asia regional cooperation

3.1 China - Myanmar -ASEAN Triangle Relations

ASEAN and China are bound by economic interests, and ASEAN is willing to continue to deepen economic and trade cooperation with China. As a result, ASEAN adopted a "strategic alienation" policy towards China. ASEAN relies on China economically, keeps distance from China politically, and introduces US military forces in security to balance China's influence.

The establishment of ASEAN community determines that it will occupy a dominant position in Southeast Asia, but the differences in politics, economy, culture and development stages among the countries within ASEAN are also the weak points of it. And Myanmar is facing many tests such as the process of domestic peace and national development and construction, and Myanmar is still difficult to play a large role in ASEAN. Based on the actual needs of its own development, Myanmar will continue to maintain friendly relations of tradition with China by taking advantage of China's fast-growing free ride.

3.2 Differences between China and Myanmar in East Asia regional cooperation

The deepening of regional cooperation in East Asia needs a larger push while at present, due to the lack of core countries, the issue of dominance is one of the obstacles in the process of regional cooperation in East Asia.

At this stage, Myanmar's influence on regional cooperation in East Asia is very limited. It is more in the stage of integration into regional cooperation. It needs to keep pace with ASEAN in regional affairs and regional cooperation. Although China and Burma do not face the cooperation mechanism and dominance dispute directly, in order to safeguard their respective national interests, there may be differences in the orientation of the cooperation mechanism, and potential differences are difficult to avoid.

4. Prospects of China-Myanmar Relations from the Perspective of East Asian Regional Cooperation

The relationship between China and Myanmar has been impacted by Myanmar's domestic political transformation, regime change, and the involvement of external factors. Neutrality and the strategy of balancing large powers are the political heritage inherited by the new government of Myanmar and the strategy pursued in the national interest. Under the framework of East Asian regional cooperation, China-Myanmar relations will have broader space to develop and richer levels of cooperation.

4.1 China-Myanmar Common Interests in East Asia

China and Myanmar are important neighbors to each other, and China's strategic interests and Myanmar's economic development need each other. In terms of trade, China mainly exports complete sets of mechanical and electrical equipment, chemicals and vehicle configuration products to Myanmar, and Myanmar mainly exports mineral resources, timber, agricultural products and jewelry to China. In the fields of infrastructure, manufacturing, energy and telecommunications, Myanmar needs to attract a large amount of foreign investment and the technology introduction. The growth of China's economic strength is stubborn to the region's economic radiation ability.

Myanmar's opening to the outside world has also made it an important market and the investment destination for China.

On the bilateral level, China and Myanmar have cooperated in the areas of combating transnational crime, epidemic disease control, energy security, disaster management, water resources protection and environmental protection. Food security is the most basic issue of people's livelihood. Both China and Myanmar attach great importance to food security. The two countries can exchange experiences and learn from each other in terms of food production, storage and transportation. The vaccines produced in China are of high quality and low price, and they have advantages in the field of public health. Myanmar's public health governance is lagging behind and China's assistance is needed. The solution and response to non-traditional security issues will help China and Myanmar establish a new cooperation framework, promote bilateral economic development, and promote common security.

4.2 Suggestions for the development of China-Myanmar relations from the perspective of East Asian regional cooperation

4.2.1 Expanding China-Myanmar cooperation in East Asia

To promote regional peace and stability and address global challenges, East Asian countries should deepen cooperation in various fields such as economy, security and society. China and Myanmar have established the China-Myanmar Electric Power Cooperation Committee and the China-Myanmar Agriculture Committee to promote bilateral cooperation in the fields of electricity and agriculture. And in the three major areas of disaster relief, high-tech research and development, and climate change, China can provide Myanmar with technology, experience, and personnel training assistance.

4.2.2 Deepening the level of China-Myanmar regional cooperation in East Asia

From the perspective of bilateral, sub-regional and regional coverage, East Asian regional cooperation has promoted and launched cooperation mechanisms with "10", "10 + 1", "10 + 3", and "1 + 1". Along with these multi-level regional cooperation mechanisms, the process of regional cooperation in East Asia is advancing steadily. It has become the world's most dynamic and promising region.

China and Myanmar have established a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership at the bilateral level. China is an advocate of the Bangladesh-China-India-Burma Economic Corridor. Myanmar is an important fulcrum country. The Bangladesh-China-India-Burma Economic Corridor is a cooperation platform for both sides to give play to their geographical advantages, accelerate economic development and transformation, and promote regional economic integration. The results of subregional cooperation will bring substantial help to the economic development and national construction of all participating countries.

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