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**East Asian Cooperation through Conference Diplomacy:
Institutional Aspects of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Framework**

Sanae Suzuki

MARCH 2004

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INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPING ECONOMIES, JETRO

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I. Introduction

Since 1997, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have emerged as a group to cooperate in various issue areas. This new group is called the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) framework. Since participating members in this framework are East Asian countries, it has been regarded as fostering East Asian regionalism. Here, I will define “the APT framework” as a cooperative framework in which government representatives of ASEAN member states, China, Japan and the ROK hold various meetings.

Since 2003, government representatives of the APT framework member states meet regularly at the summit and ministerial levels. However, it is still not clear on what kinds of institutional settings are embedded in the APT framework. The APT framework, as its name indicates, has functioned to promote ASEAN’s relations with certain non-ASEAN states. The most important common aspect of ASEAN and the APT framework is that most activities are initiated and promoted in meetings of representatives of the member states. This style is called “conference diplomacy.” Conference diplomacy is defined as “part of the management of relations between governments and of relations between governments and international organizations that takes place in international conferences” (Kaufmann 1996: 7). This type of diplomacy takes place in most international meetings whether they are ad hoc or based on international organizations. The concept of conference diplomacy is essential to understanding institutional aspects of frameworks in which cooperation is promoted through meetings.¹ The APT framework has been institutionalized through conference diplomacy, which is strengthened in the process of holding or regularizing its meetings.

This paper aims to clarify institutional features of the APT framework and analyze how these institutional features have been developed through processes associated with conference diplomacy. The APT framework has five institutional features, three of which are basic features. The first is membership in the APT framework. ASEAN member states, China, Japan and the ROK are members of the APT framework. The second feature is coverage of issue areas. Since 1997, the range of issues dealt with in the APT framework has expanded and relevant ministers of the member states have

¹ Sato (2003a) called ASEAN a regime of conference diplomacy.

been involved in meetings. The third aspect concerns organizational setting. The APT framework does not constitute a formal organization. Most ASEAN members are reluctant to create a new organization that might dilute the political influence of ASEAN.

In addition to these basic institutional features, the APT framework has two other distinctive characteristics as an independent institution separate from ASEAN. First, the APT framework has a multi-layered structure consisting of three separate levels: “ASEAN+3,” “ASEAN+1” and “+3.” “ASEAN+3” represents the level where meetings of all the members of the APT framework take place. “ASEAN+1” is defined as the level where there are three separate meetings of all ASEAN members and one of the three non-ASEAN members in the APT framework: ASEAN-China, ASEAN-Japan or ASEAN-ROK. The “+3” refers to the level where the Northeast Asian countries—China, Japan and the ROK—hold meetings. It is important to distinguish between the APT framework and ASEAN+3. The APT framework indicates an overall framework encompassing all three levels whereas ASEAN+3 represents one level within the framework where all thirteen members, namely 10 ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK, participate. On its own, ASEAN does not constitute a level in the multi-layered structure of the APT framework. ASEAN only figures into the APT framework on two levels—ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+1—where its relationship with particular non-ASEAN states is the unit of analysis. We will see that the issue area of concern is an important determinant of the level on which negotiations will take place.

The second institutional feature unique to the APT framework is its decision-making procedure. The APT framework uses consensus decision-making. The multi-layered structure of the APT framework facilitates consensus decision-making. I will argue that the last two features of the APT framework—its multi-layered structure and consensus decision-making—are unique features that distinguish it from ASEAN.

The following three chapters will analyze how the five institutional features of the APT framework have been constructed through the process of holding meetings. Chapter II deals with the three basic institutional features and chapter III and IV focus on each of the two unique features of the APT framework.

II. Three Basic Institutional Features

This chapter deals with the three basic institutional features of the APT framework: membership, coverage of issue areas and organizational setting. These are most fundamental to understanding regional cooperative frameworks.

II-1. Membership

Most explanations of the APT framework conclude that the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), which started formally as the meeting of heads of governments in March 1996, was a turning point in determining the membership of the APT framework (Stubbs 2002: 441–3; Rüländ 2000: 432–3; Dieter and Higgott 2002: 32–3; Yeo Lay Hwee 2000; Webber 2001: 356–9; Tanaka 2003: 279–82). However, ASEM did not exactly consolidate membership of the APT framework because the APT framework included all ASEAN members while ASEM did not. The need to include the entire membership of ASEAN for East Asian cooperation has been emphasized since the 1990 East Asia Economic Group (EAEG) proposal. Therefore, membership of the APT framework was not only based on establishment of ASEM, but also on the EAEG proposal.

The initial proposal for an East Asian regional framework was submitted in 1990 by Mahathir Mohamad, former Prime Minister of Malaysia in the form of the EAEG proposal. The report on the EAEG proposal released by the Malaysian government stated “ASEAN would be the core of an expanded process of regional cooperation and ASEAN should consider the question of membership at the embryonic stage” (MITI 1991: 6–7). The report also stated that “the group as the name implies is to comprise economies in East Asia” (MITI 1991: 6). ASEAN was expected to play a pivotal role in establishing the EAEG and its membership was based not on countries but on economies in East Asia, which included Hong Kong and Taiwan. Malaysia, as the Chair of ASEAN in 1991, submitted the EAEG proposal to the twenty-fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM). After the twenty-third ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting (AEM) in October 1991, Indonesia suggested renaming the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) (Yamakage 1997: 142).

The EAEC remained on the agenda of ASEAN and ASEAN members continued

discussing this matter.² In July 1993, Soeharto, then President of Indonesia, and Mahathir discussed how to realize the EAEC. They discussed several options: (1) incorporating the EAEC into the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC), (2) including it under the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and (3) making it another consultative forum attached to the AEM.³ After the bilateral talk between Malaysia and Indonesia, ASEAN members agreed that “the EAEC is a caucus within APEC” in the twenty-sixth AMM (AMM 1993). In August 1994, ASEAN released a proposal on management of the EAEC. The proposal stated the members of the EAEC would be ASEAN member states, China, Japan, the ROK, Taiwan and Hong Kong which were the East Asian members of APEC.⁴ The EAEG proposal and the EAEC fostered awareness among ASEAN members that all of them should participate in any future framework for East Asian cooperation. Also, up to this point, the EAEC was assumed to be a framework composed of the East Asian “economies” participating in APEC.

In October 1994, Singapore’s Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, proposed a Europe-East Asia informal summit during his visit to France, which led to ASEM.⁵ This proposal was first discussed among ASEAN members and later suggested to China, Japan and the ROK at the APEC informal summit at Bogor in 1994. During the preparations for ASEM, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand and India indicated that they wanted to join ASEM.⁶ However, most of these countries were not admitted. China obviously objected to including Taiwan in any kind of international forum. Singapore proposed to have a Europe-East Asia informal “summit,” which was political in nature; ASEAN and European Union member states discussed this proposal. It was not feasible for Hong Kong and Taiwan to attend such a political meeting, together with China.⁷ Japan requested that Australia and New Zealand be allowed to join ASEM. This request was rejected because Malaysia strongly objected, arguing that Australia and New Zealand did not share Asian values, although Singapore and

² The EAEC was frequently mentioned in the official documents of the ASEAN Summit, the AMM and the AEM from 1991 to 1997.

³ *Asahi Shimbun*. July 18, 1993.

⁴ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. August 29, 1994.

⁵ *Strait Times*. October 22, 1994.

⁶ *Strait Times*. May 3, 1995.

⁷ Munakata (2002: 11) stated that Taiwan and Hong Kong were not included due to the political issues in the ASEM agenda.

Indonesia were said to support their inclusion.⁸

Until the beginning of 1995, Japan had been reluctant to be involved in any meeting relating to the EAEC due to the strong objection of the US government to this idea although its business people appeared to be supportive.⁹ In April 1995, there was a plan to hold an informal meeting of economic ministers of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK at Phuket, but it was cancelled due to Japan's refusal to participate.¹⁰ Japan finally participated in informal meetings among East Asian countries to prepare for the 1996 ASEM summit in November 1995 on the occasion of the APEC meetings in Osaka.¹¹ It was necessary for Japan to participate in ASEM to avoid a conflict with the United States that would result from an attempt of East Asian countries to consolidate exclusively.

By the end of 1995, it was decided that membership on the Asian side of ASEM would include only East Asian countries. In December 1995, Goh Chok Tong proposed to invite East Asian countries to the ASEAN informal summits which would be held between the ASEAN formal summits.¹² Thailand, as the Chair of the first ASEM summit in March 1996, initiated an informal meeting of the leaders of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK at the summit.¹³ As a result, ASEM was realized not as a forum of economies along the lines of APEC and the EAEC, but as an intergovernmental political framework among nation-states in East Asia and Europe. From this perspective, ASEM was a driving force in uniting East Asian countries as a group of nation-states, which led to realization of the APT framework. However, establishment of ASEM did not allow all ASEAN members to automatically become members of the APT framework. Cambodia, Myanmar and Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos) have still not been admitted to ASEM although they became members of ASEAN by 1999. ASEAN urged the European participants to admit these new ASEAN members, but this request has not been accepted by the European participants. Accession of Myanmar is particularly troublesome for the European members due to problems with its record on human rights issues (ASEM 2002: 8).

⁸ *Strait Times*. July 24, 1995. For Malaysia's attitude toward Australia, see Milne and Mauzy (1999: 140–1).

⁹ *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 28, 1991: 26–7.

¹⁰ *Yomiuri Shimbun*. April 7–9, 1995.

¹¹ *Asahi Shimbun*. November 18–19, 1995; *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 20, 1995.

¹² *Asahi Shimbun*. December 15, 1995.

¹³ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. February 27, 1996.

In early 1997, Japan attempted to strengthen its relationship with ASEAN and proposed to regularize a Japan-ASEAN summit. In response, ASEAN made the decision to invite not only Japan but also China and the ROK to the ASEAN informal summit in 1997 (AMM 1997).¹⁴ Some explanations regard this decision as ASEAN's attempt to deal with powerful non-ASEAN nations (Takano 2001:166–8; Sato 2003a: 175–200). The most important element of this initiative was including all ASEAN members in the APT framework. Previous discussion regarding the EAEG proposal and its renamed EAEC had already established ASEAN member states' commitment to including ASEAN as a whole as a precondition for creating any kind of framework for East Asian cooperation. Participation of East Asian countries in ASEM helped ASEAN identify states that would be included in the APT framework as an intergovernmental forum among East Asian nation-states. This meant that Hong Kong and Taiwan were not invited to the 1997 ASEAN summit.

II-2. Coverage of Issue Areas

The 1997 informal summits among ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK were historical events. After the ASEAN summit, the ASEAN+3 summit and the three separate ASEAN+1 summits—the ASEAN-Japan, the ASEAN-China and the ASEAN-ROK—were also held. The 1997 Asian financial and economic crisis dominated the agenda of these summits. However, discussions at the three ASEAN+1 summits covered a wide range of issues including economic, social, political and security issues (ASEAN-Japan 1997; ASEAN-China 1997; ASEAN-ROK 1997). From the beginning, each ASEAN+1 summit had a wide range of issues in its agenda.

In 1998, leaders of the ASEAN+3 member states agreed to hold the ASEAN+3 summit annually.¹⁵ In the 1999 ASEAN+3 summit, the leaders announced the first statement of the ASEAN+3 summit. In the statement entitled *Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation*, they agreed to strengthen cooperation on specific issues in economic, social and political arenas. Furthermore, the leaders tasked the relevant ministers with

¹⁴ ASEAN informally agreed with invitation of the three countries at the special AMM in May 1997 (*Asahi Shimbun*, June 1, 1997). The thirtieth AMM formally endorsed this decision in July 1997.

¹⁵ “ASEAN+3 (Nicchuukan) no Kyouryoku ni Tsuite” [Summary of Cooperation in ASEAN+3 (Japan-China-Republic of Korea)]. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/asean/asean+3/wakugumi.html>). Last accessed on June 26, 2003.

overseeing implementation of this statement (ASEAN+3 1999). Since 1999, several ministers of the ASEAN+3 members have become involved in the APT framework.

The process of holding meetings within the APT framework was particularly significant for financial cooperation because several members were badly hit by the 1997 Asian monetary and economic crisis. Dieter and Higgott (2002: 2) argued that “[t]he East Asian’ region will become an increasingly important domain within which to explore protection against financial crises and what we might call ‘monetary regionalism’ is now firmly on the regional agenda.” It is true that financial cooperation preceded cooperation in other issue areas because of the Asian crisis. However, before the crisis, the members in the APT framework had already agreed to meet to discuss various issues. Discussions at the ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN+1 summits from 1997 to 1999 indicated that meetings held under the APT framework would include a wide range of issues.

Since 2000, various ministers’ meetings such as finance, trade, environment, labor, agricultural and tourism started to be held in the APT framework (see Annex). This occurs at the ASEAN+3, the ASEAN+1 and the +3 levels. Here, we will consider meetings at the ASEAN+3 level to illustrate expansion of the agenda in the APT framework. The ASEAN+3 economic ministers’ meeting was first held in May 2000. The first ASEAN+3 foreign ministers’ meeting was held in July 2000 on the occasion of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The first ASEAN+3 ministers’ meetings on labor and agriculture were held respectively in Kuala Lumpur in May and in Medan, Indonesia in October 2001. In 2002, the first ministers’ meeting on tourism was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in January, on energy in Osaka, Japan in September and on environment in Vientian, Laos in November. Those ministers’ meetings have been held once or twice each year (see Annex). It is interesting to note that the ASEAN+3 ministers of health initially met in Kuala Lumpur in April with a second meeting in Cambodia in July 2003 to discuss combating the Severe Acute Respiratory (SARS). In early 2003, SARS was spreading in several countries and regions including Canada, China, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Vietnam.¹⁶ Thus, by 2003 the APT

¹⁶ The ministers’ meeting on health in July invited the Canadian ambassador to Cambodia, state secretary of Ministry of Health of Mongolia and regional director of the Western Pacific Regional Office of World Health Organization as observers (AHMM+3 2003). Though Hong Kong and Taiwan were also affected by SARS, representatives of the two areas were not invited in the ASEAN+3 ministers’ meeting on health. This instance confirms that membership of the APT framework is based on nation-states.

framework had already dealt with a wide range of issues, which enables its members to gather if necessary.

There are three points to consider when explaining why its coverage of issue areas in the APT framework expanded rapidly. First of all, this framework was initiated at the summit level and the leaders of its member states endorsed cooperation in various issue areas. Instructions from the summit legitimized holding the ministers' meetings in given issue areas. By contrast, at the beginning of APEC which started with the ministers' meetings, members agreed to deal only with economic cooperation. Second, the wide range of issue areas on the agenda of ASEM provided momentum for East Asian countries to discuss various issues within the APT framework. Finally, the environment surrounding ASEAN favored development of the APT framework in this direction. Since its founding, ASEAN has expanded its agenda and regularized its meetings in various issue areas. The APT framework was established in the late 1990s when ASEAN reached such a stage. At the same time, ASEAN had already faced various political, economic and social problems related to enlargement of its membership since 1995. The problems are centered mainly on economic and political gaps between the ASEAN 6 members (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) and the new members: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar (CLMV). The APT framework provided an appropriate arena for ASEAN to ask Japan, China and the ROK for help in solving these problems. These points contrast with the beginning stages of APEC and ASEAN which were characterized by limited involvement of various ministers, other than economic and foreign ministers.

II-3. Organizational Setting

There is little analytical insight on whether the APT framework will become another new organization like ASEAN or APEC. However, there has been a discussion among ASEAN members regarding this matter in response to Malaysia's proposal to set up a secretariat of the APT framework.¹⁷ In 2001, the press statement of the seventh ASEAN

¹⁷ This paper distinguishes between "ASEAN+3" and "the APT framework" as analytical concepts. The former represents one level where meetings of ASEAN member states, China, Japan and the ROK take place, whereas the latter means an overall cooperative framework covering meetings on three different levels: "ASEAN+3," "ASEAN+1" and "+3." It is believed that Malaysia's proposal was intended to

summit and the fifth ASEAN+3 summit indicated that “a proposal was made to establish an ASEAN+3 secretariat” (ASEAN and ASEAN+3 2001).

At the thirty-fifth AMM in Brunei in July 2002, Malaysia was willing to offer seed funding of 10 million US dollars to cover the first five years of the secretariat’s operations.¹⁸ Senior officials of the other ASEAN members expressed reservations on Malaysia’s proposal, insisting that they preferred to strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat in order to promote cooperation in the APT framework.¹⁹ The ASEAN foreign ministers at the thirty-fifth AMM only concluded “[w]e resolved to further strengthen the ASEAN+3 cooperation. In this context, we noted the need to strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta and Malaysia’s offer to host the ASEAN+3 Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur” (AMM 2002). During the thirty-fifth AMM, senior officials discussed three options: (1) Malaysia’s proposal to set up a new secretariat, (2) expansion of the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta and (3) establishment of an ASEAN+3 bureau within the ASEAN Secretariat.²⁰ The second option means maintaining the existing mechanism of the ASEAN Secretariat without changing its organizational structure. Cooperation in the APT framework has been dealt with in the External Relations and Coordination Bureau in the ASEAN Secretariat. Responding to discussion on the possibility of establishing a secretariat of the APT framework, the ASEAN Secretariat showed its support for setting up an APT Unit within the External Relations and Coordination Bureau in the ASEAN Secretariat. Setting up an APT Unit is more feasible than establishing another new bureau such as an APT Bureau in terms of staff and budget constraints of the ASEAN Secretariat.²¹

Related to discussion on a secretariat of the APT framework, an idea for an “East Asia Summit” (EAS) emerged in 2001. According to the Report of the East Asian Study Group (EASG) submitted to the 2002 ASEAN+3 summit, three concrete measures were recommended for institutional cooperation:

create a secretariat for cooperation at the ASEAN+1 and the +3 levels in addition to the ASEAN+3 level. Therefore, this paper uses “a secretariat of the APT framework” instead of “the ASEAN+3 secretariat” except for citations.

¹⁸ *New Strait Times*. July 27, 2002.

¹⁹ For the Thai position, see *New Strait Times* (July 27, 29, 2002). The Singaporean and Indonesian positions were confirmed by interviews with relevant officials by the author in October 2003.

²⁰ *New Strait Times*. July 27, 2002.

²¹ Interviews with officials in the ASEAN Secretariat by the author in October 2003. The existing bureaus in the ASEAN Secretariat are for (1) Economic Integration, (2) Finance and Integration Support, (3) Resources Development and (4) External Relations and Coordination.

- (1) Pursue the evolution of the ASEAN+3 Summit into an East Asian Summit
- (2) Institutionalize regional dialogues, including regular Meetings of Foreign Ministers and leaders of other sectors on diverse political and security-related subjects
- (3) Establish an East Asia Forum consisting of the region's governmental and non-governmental representatives from various sectors, with the aim to serve as an institutional mechanism for broad-based social exchanges and, ultimately, regional cooperation

(EASG 2002: 18–19)

The report states the first measure on evolution into an EAS is a long-term objective whereas it is feasible that the second and third measures could be realized in the short-term (EASG 2002: 18–19). Setting creation of an EAS as a long-term goal reflects fears that ASEAN members have toward rapid institutionalization of an East Asian group. Most ASEAN members fear that evolution of the APT framework into an EAS would expedite setting up a new organization and thereby dilute the political presence of ASEAN.²² Singapore and Vietnam, for instance, strongly argued that East Asian cooperation must be conducted through a gradual building-block approach (Subianto 2003: 8). Only Malaysia showed support for establishing an EAS at a much faster speed because doing so would be in line with its own EAEG proposal.²³ The report of the EASG indicates “concerns that ASEAN may be marginalized if the transition towards an EAS would be encumbered with too fast” (EASG 2002: 5).

As a practical step, the report suggests strengthening regular director-general meetings of ASEAN member states, China, Japan and the ROK. The first ASEAN+3 director-general meeting was held in Seoul in August 2002 (EASG 2002: 5, 19). Instituting regular director-general meetings is an alternative to establishing a new secretariat. ASEAN also initially regularized its director-general meeting and took ten

(<http://www.aseansec.org/13106.htm>). Last accessed on March 4, 2004.

²² The term “ASEAN Plus Three” is important to avert objection from the United States. ASEAN members still remember the objection of the United States to the 1990 EAG proposal. This prevents the APT framework from changing its name into an East Asia Group or an East Asia Summit (An interview with Dr. S. P. F. Luhlima, Centre of Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta by the author in October 2003).

²³ At the 1997 ASEAN+3 summit, Malaysia, as the Chair of the summit, insisted on holding a regular ASEAN+3 summit but China and Japan did not respond positively to the Malaysian proposal (*Asahi Shimbun*. December 17, 1997). At the 2000 ASEAN+3 summit, Mahathir welcomed the direction toward instituting an East Asian summit to replace the ASEAN+3. He stated “[w]e need to formalize the grouping and call it something” and further said that “there would be a need to define the meaning of East Asia as many countries might want to claim to be East Asian” (*New Strait Times*. November 25, 2000). Malaysia also held the first East Asia Congress in August 4–6, 2003. On this occasion, Mahathir “called on East Asian countries to openly say they want to have an East Asian economic grouping and stop hiding behind the label of the ASEAN Plus 3” (*New Strait Times*. August 5, 2003).

years to set up its Secretariat. In this sense, it is possible that the APT framework will follow the organizational evolution of ASEAN.

III. The Multi-layered Structure and its Utilization in Various Issue Areas

The APT framework has a multi-layered structure, which consists of three levels: ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1 and +3. This chapter will analyze why this structure resulted from the process of holding meetings and how this structure was utilized in various issue areas. The analysis in the chapter deals with both ad hoc and regular meetings at the summit and ministerial levels. Regularization of the meetings at the three levels aims to institutionalize the multi-layered structure. Irregular meetings are also discussed to show momentum in the process of instituting regular meetings. This chapter will also analyze bilateral deals, such as a swap agreement between Japan and Thailand, which are allowed as long as they are endorsed in meetings on the three levels of the multi-layered structure.

III-1. Determinants of the Multi-layered Structure

In 1997, the APT framework was established through holding of the ASEAN+3 summit and the three separate ASEAN+1 summits. Independent of the ASEAN+3 summit, ASEAN respected Japan's proposal in January 1997 and decided to hold the ASEAN-Japan summit. To be fair, China and the ROK were given opportunities to hold the ASEAN-China and the ASEAN-ROK summit. The leaders achieved the three separate documents at the ASEAN+1 level, not the ASEAN+3 level (ASEAN-Japan 1997; ASEAN-China 1997; ASEAN-ROK 1997). This indicates that each of the three countries felt the necessity to strengthen their existing relationships with ASEAN at the ASEAN+1 level.

Before the APT framework was formed, ASEAN and the three countries established relations at the ASEAN+1 level. The ASEAN-Japan relationship has been maintained at the summit level since 1977 when Takeo Fukuda, then Japanese Prime Minister, met with the ASEAN leaders. Since then, Japan had developed a close relationship with ASEAN. Since 1997, the ASEAN-Japan relationship has been

regarded as the one pillar of the APT framework (Yamakage 2003: 36). As for the ASEAN-China relationship, China was first admitted as a full dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1996 after its foreign minister was invited to the 1991 AMM. The ASEAN-ROK relationship started when the ROK acquired the status of a full dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1991. Both the ASEAN-China and the ASEAN-ROK relationships had been conducted at the foreign ministerial level and were upgraded to the summit level in 1997, due to formation of the APT framework.

Yamakage (2003: 33–6) argues that Japan changed its attitude toward East Asia cooperation and positively participated in the APT framework in the late 1990s. Takahara (2003: 59–65) also points out that China has moved toward cooperation in East Asia by enhancing its diplomacy with ASEAN in order to reduce perceived threats from China's growing economic and political power. Positive attitudes of China and Japan toward East Asian cooperation do not deny their interest in maintaining institutional arrangements at the ASEAN+1 level. China and Japan compete for the leadership role in East Asia and attempt to maintain their political leverage with ASEAN by preserving their individual relationships with ASEAN through the ASEAN+1 channel.

On the other hand, ASEAN attempted to establish the ASEAN+3 meeting as its primary relationship with these three external partners. ASEAN has officially maintained its commitment to preserve ASEAN+3 to limit influence of powerful East Asian countries, especially China (Takano 2001: 163–5; Yoshino 2003: 115–6). At the same time, ASEAN views its leading role as a buffer between the shaky and sometimes contentious political relationship between China and Japan by taking advantage of the ASEAN+1 relationships (Dieter and Higgott 2002: 35–6; Tay 2000: 232–3; Hew and Mely 2000: 26). Expansion of the ASEAN membership since 1995 created a gap of economic and political development between the old and the new ASEAN members. The APT framework, whether at the ASEAN+1 or the ASEAN+3 level, is a tool for ASEAN to maintain its political leverage and reduce the economic and political gap among ASEAN members by cooperating with China, Japan and the ROK.

In 1999, another new summit among China, Japan and the ROK, the +3 summit, was initiated by Keizo Obuchi, then Prime Minister of Japan on the occasion of the

ASEAN+3 summit. The three leaders mainly discussed economic issues in 1999.²⁴ At this summit, Japan suggested regularizing the +3 summit. The ROK supported this proposal but China expressed reservations.²⁵ The +3 summit was recognized as an annual summit in 2000 after China finally agreed to its regularization.²⁶ The agenda of the 2000 summit remained focused on economic issues, while the ASEAN+3 summit included other issues.²⁷ In 2003, however, the +3 leaders adopted the first document at the +3 level to express their support for cooperation not only in economic but also in political and security areas with special reference to tense affairs on the Korean Peninsula (The +3 2003).

The multi-layered structure of the APT framework is the result of maintaining the ASEAN+1 channel even after the APT framework was formed. China and Japan are still in competition for a leadership in East Asia and each maintains its influences on ASEAN by promoting their own individual relations with ASEAN. ASEAN supports continuation of the multi-layered structure because both ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN+1 are convenient tools for ASEAN to smoothly handle relationships with the three external players.

In spite of leadership competition in East Asia, there are several crucial issues such as the nuclear proliferation problems in North Korea to be solved among the +3 countries. It is significant that the +3 summit gradually developed as a comprehensive forum with a wide range of issue areas. It is also important to note that the +3 members started to foster relationships by utilizing their opportunities to participate in the ASEAN+3 summit. This implies that the ASEAN+3 meeting fostered support for building a group or framework among the +3 countries, which had not been previously proposed.

III-2. Financial Cooperation

Faced with the Asian financial crisis, finance ministers of the members of the APT framework as well as other concerned economies in the Asia-Pacific region met frequently to discuss how to address the problems caused by the crisis from 1997 to

²⁴ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 20, 1999.

²⁵ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 29, 1999.

²⁶ *Asahi Shimbun (evening paper)*. November 24, 2000.

1998 in various arenas such as ASEAN, ASEM and APEC with involvement of the World Bank and IMF. In November 1997, there was a meeting of finance and central bank deputies representing Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, the ROK, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the United States. This meeting achieved the so-called Manila Framework to emphasize the IMF's role for facilitating regional financial cooperation (AFMM 1997).

After the crisis-affected economies were disappointed with solutions proposed by the IMF, ASEAN members, in particular, increased their expectation of the role of East Asian countries, particularly Japan, in helping find a solution (Narine 2001; Higgott 1998; Stubbs 2002). Japan as well as ASEAN members recognized that it was necessary to build up a financial architecture independent from the IMF's US-led program.²⁸ Japan quickly responded to the Asian crisis by proposing the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) in August 1997, but the AMF proposal was firmly rejected by the United States. In a second attempt, Japan proposed the "New Miyazawa Initiative" providing a package of support measures totaling 30 billion US dollars in October 1998. This initiative gave bilateral financial support to the crisis-affected countries, mainly the ROK, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. Utilizing this initiative, Japan signed swap agreements with Malaysia and the ROK in 1999 (Japan-Malaysia 1999; Japan-ROK 1999).

It was not until April 1999 that finance ministers of the ASEAN+3 met for the first time. Therefore, the ASEAN+3 finance ministers' meeting was not the primary channel used to achieve consensus on how to respond to the crisis in 1999.²⁹ The second ASEAN+3 finance ministers' meeting in May 2000 endorsed "the Chiang Mai Initiative." This initiative "involves an expanded ASEAN Swap Arrangement that would include all ASEAN countries, and a network of bilateral swap and repurchase agreement facilities among ASEAN countries, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea" (AFMM+3 2000). ASEAN members signed the ASEAN swap arrangement in 1977 (ASEAN 1977). However, they found this arrangement ineffective in attempts to

²⁷ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 24. 2000.

²⁸ Related to this argument, Oba (2003: 160–3) argues that Japan attempted to promote internationalization of the Yen in order to establish a financial architecture independent from the United States.

²⁹ Deputy finance ministers and deputy central bank governors of the ASEAN+3 members announced the press release in March 1999 (ADFMM+3 1999). This is the first document announced at the ASEAN+3 level, ahead of the joint statement announced at the ASEAN+3 summit in November 1999.

combat the 1997 Asian crisis and learned that it was not possible to solve the problems of the crisis by themselves. Under the ASEAN swap arrangement, the Chiang Mai Initiative encouraged the ASEAN+3 member states to sign bilateral swap agreements (Ravenhill 2002: 187). Before this initiative was undertaken, Japan had signed bilateral swap agreements with Malaysia and the ROK in 1999 under the 1998 New Miyazawa Initiative. From this perspective, Japan's New Miyazawa Initiative was one of the forces in facilitating development of a network of bilateral swap agreements (Oba 2003: 157). The crisis-affected ASEAN members asked Japan to help by signing bilateral agreements; China and the ROK also showed their interest in signing those agreements (AFMM+3 2002). The network of bilateral swap agreements among Japan, China, the ROK and the ASEAN 6 members emerged by 2003 (MOF 2003). It is assumed that the new ASEAN members, CLMV, will join this network in the future although they have yet to sign bilateral swap agreements.

In addition to the Chiang Mai Initiative, the ASEAN+3 finance ministers started to promote the Asian Bond Market Initiative (ABMI) in 2003, which was originally initiated by Thaksin Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand, in October 2002 (Thaksin 2002). The ABMI became a common agenda for several frameworks:³⁰ the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Executives' Meeting of East Asia Pacific Central Banks (EMEAP)³¹ and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).³² By the 2003 ASEAN+3 meeting, six voluntary working groups had been established to further discuss a range of key issue areas, such as a credit guarantee mechanism, in order to develop regional

³⁰ ADB explains this point in details. (<http://aric.adb.org/docs/asiabondmarket/ABM.pdf>). Last accessed on December 10, 2003.

³¹ Members of EMEAP include the Reserve Bank of Australia, People's Bank of China, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Bank of Indonesia, Bank of Japan, Bank of Korea, Bank Negara Malaysia, Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Monetary Authority of Singapore, and Bank of Thailand. (<http://www.emeap.org/>). Last accessed on February 18, 2004. On 2 June 2003, EMEAP members announced the launch of the Asian Bond Fund (ABF) which will have an initial size of about 1 billion US dollars. The ABF will invest in a basket of dollar denominated bonds issued by Asian sovereign and quasi-sovereign issuers in EMEAP member economies (other than Japan, Australia, and New Zealand) (EMEAP 2003).

³² ACD was established in 2000 by Thailand. It comprises 22 countries in Asia: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, the ROK, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. (<http://www.acddialogue.com.web/3.php>). Last accessed on December 15, 2003. Thailand has volunteered to be the primary actor on the Asian Bond Market Development Initiative through working out a set of feasible guidelines for developing sound Asian bond markets. (<http://aric.adb.org/docs/asiabondmarket/acd.asp>). Last accessed on December 10, 2003.

bond markets (AFMM+3 2003a).³³ ADB has approved the provision of technical assistance—not to exceed the equivalent of 500,000 US dollars—on a grant basis for the ASEAN+3 regional guarantee mechanism under the ABMI (ADB 2003). The ASEAN+3 finance ministers’ meeting, along with other frameworks, became one of the main forums for establishing the ABMI.

The two major initiatives have been taken by the ASEAN+3 finance ministers’ meeting made cooperation on financial issues at the ASEAN+3 level visible. In particular, endorsement of the Chiang Mai Initiative and the ABMI indicates that the ASEAN+3 meeting was recognized as a forum to be used to prepare for future crises. After the experiences of the crisis, Japan, the big player on this issue, maintained its commitment to creating a financial architecture independent from the United States. The ASEAN+3 presented one of the tools for Japan to use to create such a financial system in Asia, which would be attractive to as many economies in the region as possible.

Until 2003, the ASEAN-Japan, the ASEAN-ROK and the ASEAN-China finance ministers’ meetings have not been held regularly. However, ASEAN members and Japan held the ASEAN-Japan finance ministers’ meeting in December 1997 and agreed to combat the financial problems that resulted from the crisis (AFMM-Japan 1997). Since 2000, the +3 finance ministers’ meeting has been held as an exchange of views on issues of common concern to build support for the agreements of the ASEAN+3 finance ministers’ meeting.³⁴

On the issue of financial cooperation, all three levels of the APT framework have been used to advance cooperation. In particular, the ASEAN+3 meeting achieved concrete measures such as the Chiang Mai Initiative. The ASEAN+3 meeting was only one of the areas where the 1997 Asian crisis was dealt with but it is significant because it provided a convenient channel for the members who felt necessary to conduct regional financial policies independent of the United States or the IMF.

³³ The six working groups are (1) creating new securitized debt instruments (coordinated by Thailand), (2) credit guarantee mechanisms (Korea), (3) foreign exchange transactions and settlement issues (Malaysia), (4) issuance of bonds denominated in local currency by Multilateral Development Banks, foreign government agencies and Asian multinational corporations (China), (5) local and regional rating agencies (Singapore and Japan) and (7) technical assistance coordination (Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia) (AFMM+3 2003b).

³⁴ “Nicchuukan Zaimu Daijin Kaigi” [The Finance Ministers’ Meeting among China, Japan and the Republic of Korea]. Ministry of Finance, Japan. (<http://www.mof.go.jp/jouhou/kokkin/kokusaikaigi.html#JCK>). Last accessed on December 15, 2003.

III-3. Agricultural Cooperation

The ASEAN+3 ministers of agriculture first met in October 2001.³⁵ In its joint statement, the ministers agreed to the second meeting in Laos in October 2002 and to “institutionalize the ASEAN Agricultural Ministers Meeting (AMAF) Plus Three and Senior Official Meetings (SOM)” (AMAF+3 2001). At this meeting, the ministers endorsed a plan for Thailand to coordinate a study of an “East Asian Rice Reserve System” with assistance from Japan, aiming at reducing poverty and strengthening food security in East Asia (AMAF+3 2001).

In order to achieve the expeditious establishment of an East Asian Rice Reserve System, a Pilot Project was launched on a voluntary basis at the second meeting in 2002. It was also requested that Thailand and Japan serve as the interim coordinators for the Pilot Project (AMAF+3 2002). In 2003, participating governments agreed that “a Management Team would be established in early next year to carry out the Pilot Project of the East Asian Rice Reserve System” (AMAF+3 2003). Although this project started to function “on a voluntary basis” (AMAF+3 2002), Thailand and Japan have been playing pivotal roles in attempts to formalize it. It remains to be seen whether the other ASEAN+3 members are deeply committed to taking part of this project. Nonetheless, it is important for the ASEAN+3 agricultural ministers to continue to meet to build up a common position toward agricultural negotiations under the World Trade Organization (WTO) (MAFF 2002).

The ASEAN+3 ministers’ meeting on agricultural cooperation was regularized at the first meeting in 2001. The ASEAN+1 meetings on agriculture were still not regularized at the ministerial level in 2003, but China proposed to give agricultural technical assistance to ASEAN by sending experts to ASEAN member states at the 2000 ASEAN-China summit (Takahara 2003: 60–1). In 2002, China’s Ministry of Agriculture and the ASEAN Secretariat on behalf of ASEAN member states signed the memorandum of understanding on this matter (ASEAN-China 2002c). In contrast, the +3 ministers’ meeting on agriculture is also not regularized and, in addition, there has been only a meeting of research institutions on agriculture of China, Japan and the ROK for research cooperation that started in Tokyo in November 2003 (MAFF 2003).

³⁵ This meeting was initiated by China in 2000 (Soesastro 2002: 389).

Therefore, the multi-layered structure has been partly realized with at the ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN+1 level ministerial meetings on this issue by 2003.

III-4. Cooperation on Transnational Crime

At the 1999 ASEAN+3 summit, the leaders decided to include political and security issues on its agenda. The Philippines proposed the East Asia Security Forum in order to make the ASEAN+3 an arena for discussing security issues (Baja 2000). Although the ASEAN+3 leaders did not approve this proposal in 1999, they did not exclude security issues from the agenda of the ASEAN+3 summit. Based on a proposal from China, members agreed to cooperate on transnational crime such as terrorism at the third ASEAN+3 foreign ministers' meeting in 2002 (AMM+3 2002). Under the direction of the foreign ministers' meeting, the senior official meeting of the ASEAN+3 members on transnational crime was held in July 2003.

The first +3 foreign ministers' meeting was held in 2002 on the occasion of the ASEAN+3 foreign ministers' meeting. At this meeting, the foreign ministers praised China's proposal to deal with transnational crime issues at the ASEAN+3 meeting and expressed the need for the three countries to cooperate on this issue (MOFA 2002). Thus, China's proposal to deal with this issue at the ASEAN+3 meeting contributed to the decision of the +3 foreign ministers to include transnational crime issues in the agenda of the +3 meeting.

Cooperation on this issue at the ASEAN+1 level has been also enhanced since 2002. In 2002, when ASEAN members and China announced the joint declaration on cooperation in the arena of non-traditional security issues and specified priorities for cooperation against trafficking in illegal drugs, people-smuggling, sea piracy, terrorism, arms-smuggling, money-laundering, international economic crime and cyber crimes. ASEAN members and China also agreed to "use the existing mechanism, as far as possible, such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime and Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime to pursue the cooperation" (ASEAN-China 2002b). In December 2003, Japan and ASEAN announced intentions to "enhance cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism, anti-piracy and in combating other transnational crimes through the ARF, ASEAN Plus Three process, ASEAN Ministerial

Meeting on Transnational Crime Plus Three as well as other regional and international fora” at the ASEAN-Japan special summit in Tokyo (ASEAN-Japan 2003b). At this summit, the Japan-ASEAN Plan of Action was endorsed to implement several measures such as conducting training exercises in combating transnational organized crimes (ASEAN-Japan 2003c).

Within the multi-layered structure of the APT framework, there are three levels for cooperation on transnational crime issues by 2003. At the ASEAN-Japan and the ASEAN-China meetings, there was agreement to promote cooperation by utilizing the relevant existing mechanisms such as the ASEAN+3 meeting, the ASEAN ministers’ meeting on transnational crime and the ARF. The ASEAN-Japan meeting endorsed concrete measures to be undertaken by ASEAN members and Japan. This indicates that there is an attempt to maintain the ASEAN+1 level by implementing resulting measures independent of the other two levels. In addition, the +3 foreign ministers included transnational crime issues in the agenda of the +3 meeting in 2002 even though they have yet to produce measures to be implemented by the three countries.

III-5. Economic Cooperation

This section deals with how the multi-layered structure has been utilized in economic cooperation with particular attention to cooperation on economic projects and on free trade agreements (FTAs).

III-5-(1). Economic Projects

In 2000 and 2001, the ASEAN+3 economic ministers met twice each year, after 2001 they have gathered only once per year (see Annex). At the second ASEAN+3 meeting in 2000, economic ministers identified priority areas for cooperation: strengthening efforts in accelerating trade, investment and technology transfer, encouraging technical cooperation in information technology and e-commerce, and strengthening small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and supporting industries. The ministers endorsed the criteria for implementing projects in these areas:

- (i) Projects should be regional in nature and benefit all member countries under the AEM+3³⁶ cooperation.
- (ii) The Projects could be implemented with the participation of as many as possible (based on 13-X principle³⁷). However, these projects should involve, at the minimum, participation by any two ASEAN member countries and any two countries from Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea.
- (iii) Projects should be implemented on a cost-sharing basis. Nevertheless some flexibility could be provided to the new members of ASEAN namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

(AEM+3 2000)

The fourth ASEAN+3 economic ministers' meeting in 2001 adopted six economic projects including technology transfer in information technology and assistance of SMEs (AEM+3 2001). And in 2002, the ministers approved new projects and requested senior economic officials to investigate the feasibility of another seven projects that were in the pipeline (AEM+3 2002). By the 2003 ASEAN+3 meeting, 12 projects had been approved, nine of which are being implemented while three have been completed. New projects were also approved at this meeting (AEM+3 2003).³⁸

As for the ASEAN+1 level, the ASEAN Economic Ministers and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan Consultations (AEM-METI)³⁹ has been held since 1992, the ASEAN-ROK meeting since 1999 and the ASEAN-China meeting since 2002.⁴⁰ The AEM-METI has already launched several cooperative programs to further ASEAN economic integration, in particular filling the economic divide among ASEAN members (METI 2003: 316–8). The relatively new ASEAN-China meeting focused on development assistance projects for CLMV and the ASEAN-China FTA (Takahara 2003: 58–65).

³⁶ The AEM+3 refers to the ASEAN+3 economic ministers' meeting. The AEM+3 is a term based on ASEAN since the AEM represents the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting. This usage became common to describe the ASEAN+3 meetings in the other issue areas by 2003.

³⁷ This principle prescribes a procedure of implementation. It means that the concerned projects can be launched even if some of the members are not ready for or resist implementation of those projects. It is desirable that all the ASEAN+3 members ("13") can implement the projects at the same time and this principle encourages participation of as many members as possible. But it also allows some members ("X") not to participate in the projects.

³⁸ According to a Singaporean official, there is a tendency for China, Japan and the ROK to individually propose projects to ASEAN without taking into account the feasibility of implementation. The proposed projects can be accepted by ASEAN members if those projects are beneficial for development of their economies (An interview with an official at International Enterprise, Singapore by the author in October 2003).

³⁹ Its former name was the ASEAN Economic Ministers and Minister of International Trade and Industry of Japan Consultations (AEM-MITI). After 2001, MITI was renamed Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). This paper uses the AEM-METI for the ASEAN-Japan economic ministers' meeting.

⁴⁰ The ASEAN Secretariat handles the funds contributed by Japan and the ROK for financial assistance to projects for ASEAN integration (Interviews with officials of the ASEAN Secretariat by the author in October 2003).

The +3 economic ministers' meeting was first held in September 2002 in Brunei on the occasion of the ASEAN+3 meeting. The +3 meeting has not dealt with economic projects and is limited to the exchange of views on current international trade situations including the WTO new round (METI 2003: 321).

The multi-layered structure of cooperation on economic projects has been utilized on two of the three levels: ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+1. The +3 meeting has been held but it is for an exchange of views on broad economic matters and has not launched its own economic projects. Concrete goals have been pursued in the meetings on the other two levels.

*III-5-(2). Free Trade Agreements*⁴¹

The ASEAN+3 economic ministers met twice a year from 2000 through 2001, but once a year after 2002 (see Annex). The reduced frequency of the meetings indicates that the ASEAN+3 members had difficulty agreeing on several economic issues at the ASEAN+3 level and shifted the work of dealing with the issues from the ASEAN+3 level to the other levels. Cooperation in establishing FTAs is one of the issues.

Cooperation on FTAs started to deepen at the ASEAN+1 level after China showed interest in changing its FTA policy. China had taken a cautious position on bilateral and regional FTAs because those FTAs could create exclusive trading blocs. However, proliferation of FTAs caused China to change its position and pursue FTAs. At the ASEAN-China summit in 2000, China proposed to set up a working group to explore the possibility of establishing an FTA between ASEAN and China.⁴²

In response to China's proposal of pursuing an ASEAN-China FTA, ASEAN decided to propose an ASEAN+3 FTA at the 2000 ASEAN+3 summit (Yoshino 2003: 115–6).⁴³

⁴¹ Related to the term “free trade agreements (FTAs),” there are several terms such as preferential trade agreements, regional trade agreements, regional trade arrangements, the Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP) and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). This chapter uses the term “FTA” as an analytical concept to describe these different terms despite each of the terms referring to a different agreement or arrangement.

⁴² *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 23, 2000. This policy change is partly due to the Chinese recognition that “there was no need for concern that FTAs would retard the next round of global trade talks.” In particular, an official of the Chinese Foreign Ministry expressed resentment against the double standard of the United States toward FTAs and stated that “the US is willing to form FTAs with other countries but is concerned when other countries form FTAs among themselves.” (*Strait Times*. November 22, 2000). Takahara (2003: 61–5) argued that China proposed an FTA with ASEAN in order to soften China's threat to economic growth of ASEAN members and create a “win-win mechanism” to give benefits of China's economic growth to ASEAN members.

⁴³ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 24, 2000.

This proposal was initiated by Thailand.⁴⁴ At the 2000 ASEAN+3 summit, a Chinese foreign ministry official said that “the subject revolves around several suggestions, including an East Asian or a China-ASEAN FTA.”⁴⁵ However, leaders of the ASEAN+3 member states did not reach consensus on the ASEAN proposal of establishing an ASEAN+3 FTA. This accelerated pursuing FTAs at the ASEAN+1 level.

China formally proposed an ASEAN-China FTA at the ASEAN-China summit in 2001 (ASEAN and ASEAN+1 2001). In 2002, the first ASEAN-China economic ministers’ meeting was held to consider the draft Framework Agreement on the ASEAN-China FTA (AEM-MOFTEC 2002). At the 2002 ASEAN-China summit, ASEAN members and China signed the Framework “to establish an ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (‘ASEAN-China FTA’) within ten years with special and differential treatment and flexibility for the newer ASEAN Member States of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (‘the newer ASEAN Member States’) and with provision for an early harvest in which the list of products and services will be determined by mutual consultation” (ASEAN-China 2002a).⁴⁶ During negotiations of the ASEAN-China FTA, Thailand and China decided to remove tariffs on 188 agricultural products, which was completed in October 2003.⁴⁷ This agreement was not a bilateral FTA, but a bilateral free trade deal of tariff reduction on several products implemented earlier than deals between China and the other ASEAN members. Singapore also expressed interest in expediting a bilateral deal with China before realization of the ASEAN-China FTA.⁴⁸ Initially, Malaysia had expressed concerns about pursuing FTAs but later began to react positively toward establishing FTAs with non-ASEAN countries.⁴⁹

Faced with the Chinese strategy of having an FTA with ASEAN, Japan also began to consider pursuing an FTA with ASEAN. In January 2002, Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan delivered a speech proposing an initiative for an ASEAN-Japan FTA

⁴⁴ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 25, 2000.

⁴⁵ *Strait Times*. November 22, 2000.

⁴⁶ Sato (2003b: 13) argued that the ASEAN-China FTA had exclusion lists with a broad-range of products and this FTA could not ensure elimination of tariffs of all the trade products.

⁴⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*. August 21, 2003.

⁴⁸ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 14, 2003.

⁴⁹ There was a controversy over the relationship between the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and bilateral FTAs pursued by some ASEAN member states. Since the end of 1999, Singapore has started negotiation on bilateral agreements with New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Japan. This Singapore’s action was copied by Thailand (Nagai 2003). Malaysia expressed concerns with this movement and insisted that ASEAN members should focus on implementation of AFTA (Suzuki 2003).

which was called “the Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP).” In his speech, Koizumi took the Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA),⁵⁰ the Japan-Singapore FTA, as an example of the ASEAN-Japan FTA (Koizumi 2002). The ninth AEM-METI in September 2002 agreed that “the implementation of measures for the realization of the partnership, including elements of a possible FTA, should be completed as soon as possible within ten years” (AEM-METI 2002, emphasis added).

It is interesting to note that, after the 2002 AEM-METI, at the ASEAN-Japan summit in November 2002, the leaders “endorsed the approach that, while considering a framework for the realization of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP) between Japan and ASEAN as a whole, any ASEAN member country and Japan could initiate works to build up a bilateral economic partnership” (ASEAN-Japan 2002, emphasis added). Japan took this approach because it has already signed the bilateral FTA with Singapore in 2002 and attempted to make this FTA the first step in the process of realizing the ASEAN-Japan FTA as a whole. At the 2003 ASEAN-Japan summit, the leaders of ASEAN member states and Japan formally endorsed this approach and signed the Framework for the FTA between ASEAN and Japan. This Framework ensured consistency between the ASEAN-Japan FTA as a whole and bilateral FTAs between Japan and each ASEAN member state, which were labeled as bilateral Economic Partnerships Agreements (EPAs), as follows:

ASEAN and Japan will start the consultations on the ASEAN-Japan CEP on the liberalization of trade in goods, trade in services, and investment, from the beginning of 2004 by discussing the basic principles of ASEAN-Japan cumulative rules of origin⁵¹ and customs classification and collecting and analyzing trade and custom data.

ASEAN and Japan will initiate on the CEP Agreement between ASEAN and Japan as a whole, taking into account the achievements of bilateral negotiations between each ASEAN Member State and Japan, and the further progress of the ASEAN integration process. Such Agreement should be consistent with the WTO Agreement.

⁵⁰ For further information on the JSEPA, see Ogita (2003).

⁵¹ The ASEAN-Japan cumulative rules of origin were introduced to enable the entire process of signing bilateral FTAs between each ASEAN member state and Japan to be consistent with the ASEAN-Japan FTA as a whole. This measure specifies rules in each of those bilateral FTAs that acknowledge accumulative origin in multiple countries and leads to realization of the ASEAN-Japan FTA encompassing bilateral FTAs (METI 2003: 303–4).

During the negotiation, those ASEAN Member States that have not concluded bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement (“EPA”) with Japan will negotiate concessions bilaterally. Schedules of liberalization concessions between Japan and those ASEAN Member States that have concluded a bilateral EPA should not be renegotiated in the negotiation of the ASEAN-Japan CEP Agreement.

(ASEAN-Japan 2003a, emphasis added)

Japan established working groups for a study on FTAs with three ASEAN member states: Thailand in September 2002, the Philippines in October 2002, Malaysia in February 2003 (METI 2003: 306–7).⁵² At the ASEAN-Japan commemorative summit in December 2003, Japan and these three countries declared the start of negotiations on FTAs (Japan-Thailand 2003; Japan-Philippines 2003; Japan-Malaysia 2003). The leaders of Indonesia and Japan agreed to start a preliminary study on the possibility of an FTA when President Megawati Soekarnoputri of Indonesia visited Japan in June 2003 (Japan-Indonesia 2003).

This complicated approach to the ASEAN-Japan FTA is quite a contrast with the ASEAN-China FTA which focuses on the negotiation of an FTA between ASEAN and China as a whole. This difference can be attributed to different economic statuses of China and Japan under the WTO. The treatment of the new ASEAN member states, CLMV, is difficult for Japan in terms of signing FTAs. Since Japan has to abide by the Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as a developed country under the WTO, its FTAs with these less-developed ASEAN members should be consistent with this rule. However, considering the levels of economic development in these countries, Japan cannot easily expect to sign FTAs with those countries under the constraint of this rule. On the other hand, China as a developing country under the WTO does not necessarily follow this rule owing to the Enable Clause agreed at the 1979 Tokyo Round of the GATT.⁵³ Pursuing bilateral FTAs is a convenient tool for Japan so that it can announce the schedule of negotiation for each FTA with any ASEAN member who is ready to negotiate with Japan.

At the +3 summit held in Phnom Penh in November 2002, then Chinese Prime

⁵² For further discussion on these bilateral FTAs/EPAs, see Aoki (2004).

⁵³ The Enable Clause permits special and differential treatment to developing countries. This preferential treatment can apply to regional or global arrangements entered into among developing countries. The Framework Agreement of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and China stated that ASEAN members and China agreed “to establish an ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (‘ASEAN-China FTA’) within ten years with special and differential treatment and flexibility for the newer ASEAN member states” (ASEAN-China 2002a, emphasis added). For further discussion on this matter, see Yanai (2004).

Minister, Zhu Rongji proposed a study on the feasibility of an FTA among China, Japan and the ROK, that is, a +3 FTA. In response to this proposal, Japan expressed the opinion that “the first step in that direction should be assessment of China’s compliance with its WTO accession commitments and a Japan-China-ROK [FTA] should be studied from a mid- to long-term perspective. For the time being, it is decided for the study to be advanced among research organizations of the three countries” (METI 2003: 309). On the other hand, in October 2003, Japan and the ROK agreed to start negotiating a bilateral FTA within 2003 and complete it before the end of 2005.⁵⁴ Japan envisions its FTA with the ROK as one of the stepping stones to creating “an East Asian economic zone” (METI 2003: 307–8). But Japan’s policy does not explain whether creation of an East Asian economic zone is different from establishment of an ASEAN+3 FTA or whether its creation is possible without establishment of a +3 FTA. During a visit to the ASEAN countries in 2002, Koizumi introduced the idea of a “community that acts together and advances together” in East Asia and stated that “the ASEAN members, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand would be core members of such a community” (Koizumi 2002). The “East Asian” region in Japan’s policy includes Australia and New Zealand. If an East Asian economic zone is defined as this membership, its realization will not coincide with establishment of an ASEAN+3 FTA. A Japan-China FTA and a China-ROK FTA has not been officially proposed and it remains to be seen whether these FTAs would be realized and attempts made to link to FTAs at the +3 and the ASEAN+3 levels.⁵⁵ Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore, urged that China and Japan should seriously consider of establishing a bilateral FTA between the two countries in order to speed up the process of creating an ASEAN+3 FTA.⁵⁶

Although there was not agreement on the ASEAN proposal of an ASEAN+3 FTA in 2000, the ASEAN+3 members have discussed the possibility of developing this FTA as an East Asia Free Trade Area (EAFTA), which was suggested by the two reports of the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) and the EASG (EAVG 2001; EASG 2002). The 2003 ASEAN+3 economic ministers expressed the shared view that “the establishment of EAFTA shall be a long-term goal which shall be evolutionally and step-by-step” (AEM+3 2003).

⁵⁴ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. October 21, 2003.

⁵⁵ For further discussion on FTAs in Northeast Asia, see Okuda (2004).

⁵⁶ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. December 2, 2003

The members of the APT framework took complex approaches to pursuing FTAs at the ASEAN+1 level. It can be argued that an EAFTA, an ASEAN+3 FTA, will be realized not as a single FTA among the ASEAN+3 members but as a network of the ASEAN+1 FTAs in the near future.⁵⁷ Terada (2003: 270–2) recognizes this and further argues that China and Japan expressed their willingness to pursue the plan through sharing the leadership role in creating an EAFTA through consolidation of regional and bilateral FTAs. However, a +3 FTA has not been discussed in depth and its absence posed an obstacle to realizing an EAFTA as “a dense network of FTAs.” Besides, there is the difference on implementation of the each ASEAN+1 FTA. The ASEAN-China FTA was aimed to establish an FTA with ASEAN as a whole whereas the ASEAN-Japan FTA was built on a network of bilateral FTAs between each ASEAN member state and Japan with a secondary goal of pursuing an FTA between ASEAN and Japan as a whole.

The multi-layered structure is evident in the case of cooperation on FTAs. The ASEAN-China and the ASEAN-Japan FTAs have started to be negotiated by 2003. Proposals of an ASEAN+3 FTA and a +3 FTA have been under discussion. In other words, negotiations on FTAs have made progress at the ASEAN+1 level. This contrasts with financial cooperation where negotiations were concentrated at the ASEAN+3 level. On the other hand, the agreement to build up a network of bilateral FTAs under the ASEAN-Japan FTA is similar to the approach to financial cooperation based on pursuing a network of bilateral swap agreements under the Chiang Mai Initiative in 2000.

III-6. Environmental Cooperation

Cooperation on environmental issues is distinctive because the +3 meeting was held before the meetings at the other two levels.

The Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) among China, Japan and the ROK has been held since January 1999. One of the reasons why this meeting was held is because of deadlock on the Kyoto Protocol in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In particular, the total emission of Carbon Dioxide in

⁵⁷ The proposal to create an ASEAN-ROK FTA was made by ASEAN to the ROK at the 2000 ASEAN-ROK summit although the ROK responded negatively on the ground that the country was not ready for negotiation on an FTA with ASEAN because it needed to protect its agricultural sector

China and Japan and the ROK made up 67 per cent of the total emissions in Asia in 1999.⁵⁸ The three ministers of the environment repeatedly asserted the need to achieve mutual understanding among them for close cooperation to realize the Protocol in the following four TEMMs. In addition, the three countries started to enhance more concrete project-style cooperation in the 2000 TEMM by launching projects of raising consciousness of environmental community, fresh water pollution and land-based marine pollution prevention and cooperation in the field of environmental industry.⁵⁹

The +3 leaders agreed in 2002 to cooperate on issues of trade, environment, human resources development, information technology and culture (The +3 2002). In October 2003, they announced the first joint declaration at the +3 level and agreed that “[t]he three countries will, under various frameworks such as the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM), intensify cooperation in addressing common environment concerns, such as dust and sandstorms and their monitoring and early warning, acid deposition monitoring, air, water and marine pollution, and climate change” (The +3 2003). In December 2003, the fifth TEMM was held in Beijing and the +3 environment ministers welcomed this joint declaration and emphasized that the environmental issue was formally recognized as an area of cooperation at the +3 level (TEMM 2003).

The first ASEAN+3 ministers’ meeting on the environment was held in November 2002 and the ministers “reviewed national and regional cooperation among ASEAN member countries and among the +3 countries” (AMME+3 2002). It was also agreed that there should be consultation visits by senior officials of ASEAN member states to the +3 countries in order to establish working level contacts. The second ASEAN+3 meeting was held in December 2003 on the occasion of the ninth ASEAN ministers’ meeting on the environment. At this meeting, ASEAN expressed its intention to participate in the TEMM (MOE 2003). By 2003, the ASEAN+3 meeting on the environment had been established as a consultation forum among the ASEAN+3 members, in particular, between ASEAN members and the +3 countries. The intention of ASEAN members to participate in the TEMM indicates that the TEMM became a model for conducting cooperation activities on the environment.

(*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. November 6, 2002).

⁵⁸ On the other hand, the total emission of ASEAN members except Cambodia and Laos only shared 9.7 per cent in Asia (WRI 2003).

⁵⁹ See (<http://www.temm.org/>). Last accessed on December 12, 2003.

On the other hand, there is no formal arrangement on the ASEAN+1 level regarding environmental issues at the ministerial level. The +3 meeting was held in 1999 at an early stage of instituting the APT framework and promoted cooperation on environmental issues such as global warming. Because the +3 countries already agreed on an approach to environmental issues, there was no need to address them at the ASEAN+1 level. This confirms that the +3 countries have been consolidated as a group on this issue. ASEAN members indicated their willingness to use the achievements on the +3 level as an example for incorporating environmental issues into discussions at the ASEAN+3 level. Thus, the ASEAN+3 meeting became an arena for discussion and exchange of ideas between ASEAN members and the +3 members. Within the multi-layered structure of the APT framework, environmental cooperation has been institutionalized on two levels: ASEAN+3 and +3.

The multi-layered structure of the APT framework consists of meetings on three levels: ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1 and +3. This structure is the result of China and Japan's desire to maintain meetings on the ASEAN+1 level, which could maximize their political leverage with ASEAN. ASEAN, on the other hand, seems to take advantage of the leadership competition in East Asia between China and Japan by creatively using the ASEAN+1 and the ASEAN+3 levels as negotiating tools.

Until 2003, how the multi-layered structure of the APT framework was used varied depending on issue area. This variation is not just temporal it also depends on strategies members use in different issue areas.

On finance, transnational crime issues and FTAs, cooperation was developed on all three levels of the multi-layered structure. On finance cooperation, the ASEAN+3 meeting made progress by agreeing on concrete measures such as the Chiang Mai Initiative and the ABMI. Cooperation at the ASEAN+1 level has been fostered by holding meetings such as the 1997 ASEAN-Japan meeting when necessary. The +3 meeting started to be held to facilitate the agreements endorsed in the ASEAN+3 meeting. On transnational crime issues, cooperation started in 2001 or 2002 at each of the three levels. The ASEAN-Japan meeting endorsed concrete measures such as training exercises to be conducted among ASEAN members and Japan. This indicates that ASEAN members and Japan attempted to maintain relationships at the ASEAN+1 level. The +3 members have not moved toward instituting concrete measures. But, the

+3 foreign ministers agreed to support China's proposal that the ASEAN+3 meeting should deal with transnational crime issues and also promote cooperation among the +3 countries on this issue. Cooperation on FTAs has been enhanced at all three levels of the multi-layered structure. Negotiations on FTAs were started at the ASEAN+1 level and there have also been proposals supporting establishment of FTAs at the ASEAN+3 and the +3 levels.

As for cooperation on agriculture, economic projects and environment, activity within the multi-layered structure has been primarily focused on two of the three levels. On agricultural cooperation, the ASEAN+3 meeting has been regularly held after the first meeting in 2001. ASEAN and China agreed to cooperate on technical assistance from China to ASEAN in 2002 although the ASEAN-China ministers' meeting on agriculture is not held regularly. The +3 meeting on this matter is limited to a seminar of research institutions of the +3 countries. It remains to be seen whether the +3 ministers' meeting on this matter will be held in the future. The members of the APT framework have conducted economic projects at the ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN+1 levels. On environmental issues, the +3 meeting preceded the ASEAN+3 meeting and provided a model for ASEAN members to learn how to cooperate on this issue. The ASEAN+3 meeting on the environment was developed as a forum for ASEAN members to learn from the preceding cooperation activities conducted at the +3 meeting.

The assertion that the APT framework has a multi-layered structure consisting of three levels is open to debate. It can be argued that ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1 and +3 should not be viewed as part of the APT framework, but regarded as different frameworks. In particular, the ASEAN+1 level is complex because relationships at this level existed in the context of the ASEAN's relations with non-ASEAN countries before meetings on the ASEAN+3 and the +3 levels emerged. This chapter considered issue areas where meetings of the ASEAN+3 level are held regularly to determine when and how the APT framework was established as separate from other frameworks. Nonetheless, it is still possible to understand the APT framework as having a multi-layered structure and to analyze how the various levels of this structure have been developed differently in various issue areas. Because the same members participate in cooperation at least at two of the three levels, they may face difficulty of institutional coordination among the two levels. FTAs, for instance, started to be negotiated at the

ASEAN+1 level and the possibility of having FTAs at the ASEAN+3 and the +3 level has been under discussion. When it comes to instituting FTAs at all three levels, it will be necessary to coordinate rules of different FTAs.

IV. Decision-making by Consensus in the Multi-layered Structure

At the first ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+1 summits in 1997, the members did not discuss whether to regularize the summits. Therefore, all procedures for conducting the meetings such as documenting the procedures and decision-making rules were not settled in the first summit. Members have gradually recognized that the APT framework relies on consensus decision-making in its meetings.

Decision-making by consensus is common in international conferences. It is quite often the case that efforts are made to reach consensus even when a vote is required (Kaufmann 1996: 27–32). Here, decision-making by consensus refers to a procedure for reaching outcomes to which all participants agree. Decision-making by consensus is different from unanimity in that, with the former procedure, decisions are often postponed if there is an objection. The means of overcoming objections in the consensus decision-making process largely depends on the kinds of agreements to be reached. There are two typical examples used to illustrate this point. The first is the case of establishing mutual understanding that will be recorded in “declarations” or “chairman statements.” In these documents, the members announce their willingness to cooperate but do not specify detailed measures to be implemented. Decisions to indicate willingness or understanding are taken by consensus either when the opposing members can overcome their objections or when conflicting sentences in documents are adjusted to satisfy those members. However, this case permits different interpretations and understandings of the documents by different members and leads to “pseudo-consensus” (Kaufmann 1996: 29). The second case concerns making decisions on agreements that require implementation by the members. Such agreements are likely to be decided by consensus if the members attempt to find compromises by changing implementation procedures in order to satisfy opposing members.

Since the APT framework relies on consensus decision-making, examples of the two cases described can be found in its decisions. But, understanding decision-making

by consensus in the APT framework requires taking its multi-layered structure into consideration. The first case, in which decisions to illustrate mutual understanding are taken by consensus, is found at all three levels. The meetings at every three level basically function as channels to indicate mutual understanding for cooperation. The 1997 ASEAN+1, the 1999 ASEAN+3 and the 2003 +3 summits, for example, announced joint statements which only outlined issue areas for cooperation in the region. Arriving at statements of cooperation may require some adjustments to satisfy objecting members. At the 1999 ASEAN+3 summit, the Philippines insisted on including its initiative of an East Asia Security Forum in the joint statement. This initiative aims to institute the ASEAN+3 summit as a political and security forum. But, some ASEAN+3 members objected to this proposal and supported utilizing the existing political and security mechanisms such as the ARF.⁶⁰ Faced with objections, the Philippines changed its proposal from establishing the ASEAN+3 as a new forum for political and security issues to including such issues on the agenda of ASEAN+3 meeting (Baja 2000); there was general agreement on this revised proposal.

The multi-layered structure is particularly important when making decisions that require implementation by consensus. When it comes to the agreements requiring implementation, the members select one particular level among the three in the multi-layered structure as most appropriate to pursue their interests. It is necessary to find compromises on implementation procedures to satisfy all the members.

On issues related to financial cooperation, the ASEAN+3 level became the most appropriate for most of the members to build up a financial architecture independent of the United States. But, its implementation procedures had to rely on signing bilateral swap agreements under the Chiang Mai Initiative. In agricultural cooperation, the decision to pursue a Pilot Project under the East Asian Rice Reserve Scheme was made by consensus at the ASEAN+3 level. But this decision was possible with compromise on its implementation procedure, which made participation in a Pilot Project under the East Asian Rice Reserve Scheme voluntary. Decisions to implement economic projects were taken by consensus in the ASEAN+3 meeting. At the same time, the ASEAN+3 economic ministers compromised on implementation of those projects that was subjected to the “13-X principle,” where the economic projects were launched when

⁶⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*. November 13, 1999.

two of ASEAN members and two of the +3 members agreed to participate.

Each decision on negotiating FTAs was made at the ASEAN+1 level without waiting for signing an EAFTA at the ASEAN+3 level. This indicates the extent of the difficulty of reaching a compromise on implementation of FTAs. In addition, the ASEAN-Japan FTA takes the approach with a compromise on implementation, which had to start with negotiations on bilateral FTAs between Japan and each ASEAN member state before realizing the ASEAN-Japan FTA as a whole. In cooperation on transnational crime, concrete measures were adopted at the ASEAN+1 level although cooperation started to be enhanced at the other two levels. This indicates different interests of China, Japan and the ROK in cooperating with ASEAN on this issue since transnational crime includes a variety of activities such as piracy, terrorism and trafficking. In environmental cooperation, on the other hand, the +3 meeting had been conducting its projects since 2000 earlier than meetings at the other two levels.

Since ASEAN members form a core group in the APT framework, we can assume that the APT framework is likely to adhere fundamentally to ASEAN's decision-making procedures (Sato 2003a: 183).⁶¹ Modified procedures of implementation, such as the "13-X principle" and allowing voluntary implementation, are akin to the "five-minus-one" principle in ASEAN.⁶² Nonetheless, this does not explain why decisions requiring implementations have been made at one particular level of the multi-layered structure of the APT framework. Which level is chosen depends on which members are more likely to implement projects or agreements. This variety is based on members' perceptions toward feasibility of implementation in each issue and diplomatic reasons to maintain relationships at a particular level. Thus, members of the APT

⁶¹ ASEAN members have interpreted its decision-making by consensus as the way to continue consultation and discussion (*musyawarah*) until unanimity (*mufakat*) is reached. This interpretation allows the members to "put aside conflicting issues which are unlikely to achieve agreements due to strong objections" (Thambipillai and Saravanamuttu 1985: 10–13). Most declarations announced by ASEAN focus on illustrating mutual understanding for cooperation. In other words, it is possible that ASEAN members might be "for in principle but against particulars" on cooperation.

⁶² In order to facilitate decision-making by consensus on projects for industrial cooperation in the 1980s, ASEAN introduced the principle of "five-minus-one" as a modified procedure of implementation. This principle was proposed by Lee Kuan Yew, former Prime Minister of Singapore, "where even if one member disagreed with a certain policy it could still support the activities of the others and not be an obstacle" (Thambipillai and Saravanamuttu 1985: 22). By the early 1980s, ASEAN had been composed of the five members: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. "Five-minus-one" means "all the members-minus-one" indicating that all ASEAN member states are expected to implement but one member is allowed to drop out. For the statement by Lee Kuan Yew on this matter, see *Far Eastern Economic Review* (May 2, 1980: 23).

framework are given discretion to choose levels and partners when they consider the possible difficulty of implementation and other interests.

V. Conclusion

This paper identified five institutional features of the APT framework and analyzed how these features have been developed in the process of holding meetings. This analysis is based on the understanding that the APT framework was developed through conference diplomacy among its members.

The first institutional feature is membership. Membership of the APT framework has two characteristics. The first one is that ASEAN is a core player in the APT framework. The belief that ASEAN should be a core player in East Asian cooperation has been held by ASEAN members since the 1990 EAEG proposal and its renamed EAEC. This led to realization of the APT framework which ensured that ASEAN members would be included. On the other hand, the APT framework excluded Taiwan and Hong Kong whereas they were members of the EAEG proposal and the EAEC. This relates to the second characteristic that the APT framework is intergovernmental. ASEM as an intergovernmental forum was a driving force in creating the APT framework as an intergovernmental forum through the preparation meetings among East Asian countries of ASEM. ASEM, however, has not incorporated all ASEAN member states and accession of Myanmar to ASEM, in particular, has yet to be approved because of the objection of European countries based on its political situation.

Secondly, the APT framework had dealt with quite a wide range of issue areas by 2003. The 1999 ASEAN+3 summit witnessed the declaration to specify cooperation on trade, finance, social, culture, political and security issues. This institutional feature was developed partly because the APT framework was initiated at the summit level and ASEM, as a driving force for this framework, was established as a forum with a wide range of issue areas. ASEAN has been developed as a multipurpose forum by holding meetings on various kinds of issue areas until the 1990s. ASEAN reached the stage where it would utilize its matured cooperative schemes as political leverage to have more equal discussion with China, Japan and the ROK. In addition, ASEAN enlarged its membership to include CLMV from 1995 to 1999 and thereby faces political and

economic gaps between the old and the new members. The APT framework gave ASEAN a good opportunity to ask for assistance in various issue areas from China, Japan and the ROK to help shrink these gaps.

Thirdly, the APT framework remains a loose cooperative framework based on conference diplomacy. Most ASEAN members responded negatively toward setting up a secretariat of the APT framework, which was proposed by Malaysia. They do not want the APT framework to become formalized as an organization because of their fears that a new organization in East Asian region would dilute ASEAN's political leverage.

Fourthly, instead of having a formal organizational structure, the APT framework has constructed an interesting multi-layered structure, which is composed of three levels for cooperation: ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1 and +3. This structure results from its members having different strategies toward cooperation in East Asia. In particular, China and Japan attempted to maintain their existing relationships with ASEAN in order to expand their political leverage vis-à-vis ASEAN and compete for leadership in East Asia. How the multi-layered structure is used differs depending on the issue being considered. Cooperation on finance, transnational crime issues and FTAs took place on all three levels. On the other hand, on the issue of agriculture, economic projects and environment, cooperation has been centered on two levels. The independent development of each level in the structure requires institutional coordination among the three levels when cooperation activities such as FTAs are pursued at all the three levels.

Finally, the APT framework utilizes consensus decision-making. Decisions to announce mutual understanding for cooperation in general are taken by consensus when there is no strong objection from any member. But this kind of decision-making leaves room for several interpretations of the resulting documents. On the other hand, decisions to implement measures are less open to interpretation and it is difficult to make decisions by consensus without finding compromises such as modifying implementation procedures. Those two cases are found not only in ASEAN and the APT framework but also in other international forums or organizations. However, the APT framework is unique in that its multi-layered structure affects its decision-making. Decisions to cooperate in broad terms can be made at every level of the multi-layered structure. On the other hand, decisions that require implementation, such as FTAs, were taken at the ASEAN+1 level and the agreement on building a network of bilateral swap

agreements was at the ASEAN+3 level. The members of the APT framework have chosen among the three levels of its multi-layered structure when they had to make decisions with implementation. Their choices indicate the extent of difficulty of compromise on implementation.

Annex. Relevant Meetings to the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Framework

Year	Month	Type	Meeting
1990	12	Others	The EAEG proposal by Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia
1991	10	Economic	23rd AEM, Kuala Lumpur: the EAEG was replaced by the EAEC.
1992	1	Summit	4th ASEAN Summit, Singapore
	10	Economic	1st AEM-METI, Manila
1993	7	Others	The Joint Consultative Meeting (AMM and AEM), Jakarta: Report “An Appropriate Modality to Complete the Elaboration of the EAEC Concept”
	7	Foreign	26th AMM, Singapore: the EAEC is a caucus within APEC.
	10	Economic	2nd AEM-MITI, Singapore
1994	7	Foreign	Breakfast meeting among foreign ministers of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK on the occasion of the ARF, Bangkok: Discussion on the EAEC
	9	Economic	3rd AEM-MITI, Chiang Mai, Thailand
	10	Others	Proposal of ASEM by Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore
1995	4	Economic	Cancellation of the Plan to hold an informal meeting of economic ministers of ASEAN members, China, Japan and ROK at Phuket, Thailand, due to Japan’s rejection of participation.
	7	Foreign	Informal lunch meeting of foreign ministers of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK in Brunei: Agreement to establish ASEM
	9	Economic	4th AEM-MITI, Brunei
	11	Economic	Informal lunch meeting of economic ministers of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK on the occasion of APEC, Osaka, Japan
	12	Summit	5th ASEAN Summit, Bangkok: Goh Chok Tong’s suggestion to invite East Asian countries to ASEAN informal summits
1996	2	Foreign	Meeting of foreign ministers of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK to prepare for ASEM, Bangkok
	2	Economic	Meeting of economic ministers of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK to prepare for ASEM, Bangkok
	2	Summit	Meeting of heads of governments of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK on the occasion of ASEM, Bangkok
	3	Summit	1st ASEM Summit, Bangkok
	9	Economic	28th AEM, Jakarta: Discussion on the EAEC
	9	Economic	5th AEM-MITI, Jakarta
	11	Summit	First Informal ASEAN Summit, Jakarta

Annex. (Continued)

1997	1	Summit	Visit of Ryutaro Hashimoto, Prime Minister of Japan, to Southeast Asian countries: Japan's proposal of regularization of the ASEAN-Japan summit
	2	Foreign	1st ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Singapore
	3	Finance	1st ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, Phuket, Thailand
	5	Foreign	Special AMM, Kuala Lumpur: Agreement to invite heads of governments of China, Japan and the ROK on the occasion of 2nd Informal ASEAN Summit in 1997
	7	Foreign	30th AMM, Subang Jaya, Malaysia: Formal agreement to hold ASEAN+3 Summit: Last reference to the EAEC in the AMM documents
	8	Finance	Meeting on Thai Financing Package held by the IMF, Tokyo: Japan's proposal of the AMF
	9	Finance	Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and IMF, Hong Kong: Discussion on the AMF
	9	Finance	1st ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting, Bangkok
	10	Economic	29th AEM, Subang Jaya, Malaysia: Last reference to the EAEC in the AEM documents
	10	Economic	6th AEM-MITI, Malaysia
	11	Finance	Meeting of Finance and Central Bank Deputies representing Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the United States, Manila: The Manila Framework to assist the role of IMF
	12	Finance	Special ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting; ASEAN-Japan Finance Ministers' Meeting; Meeting of ASEAN Finance Ministers and the Finance Ministers of Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and the United States, Kuala Lumpur
	12	Summit	2nd Informal ASEAN Summit, Kuala Lumpur
	12	Summit	1st ASEAN+3 Summit, Kuala Lumpur
	12	Summit	1st ASEAN+1 Summits (ASEAN-China Summit; ASEAN-Japan Summit; ASEAN-ROK Summit), Kuala Lumpur
1998	2	Finance	2nd ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, Jakarta
	4	Summit	2nd ASEM Summit, London
	10	Finance	New Miyazawa Initiative providing a package of support measures totaling US\$30 billion
	11	Summit	6th ASEAN Summit, Ha Noi
	12	Summit	2nd ASEAN+3 Summit, Ha Noi: Agreement to regularize the ASEAN+3 summit (ASEAN's proposal) and establish the EAVG (the ROK's proposal)
	12	Summit	2nd ASEAN+1 Summits (ASEAN-China Summit; ASEAN-Japan Summit; ASEAN-ROK Summit), Ha Noi

Annex. (Continued)

1999	1	Environment	1st TEMM, Seoul
	1	Finance	2nd ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting, Frankfurt
	3	Foreign	2nd ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Berlin
	3	Finance	ASEAN+3 Deputy Finance Ministers' and Deputy General Bank Governors' Meeting, Ha Noi
	3	Finance	3rd ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, Ha Noi
	4	Finance	1st ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting, Manila
	10	Others	Establishment of the EAVG
	11	Finance	Special ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, Manila
	11	Summit	3rd Informal Summit, Manila
	11	Summit	3rd ASEAN+3 Summit, Manila: First Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation, Philippines' proposal to set up the East Asia Security Forum
	11	Summit	3rd ASEAN+1 Summits (ASEAN-China Summit; ASEAN-Japan Summit; ASEAN-ROK Summit), Manila
	11	Summit	1st +3 Summit, Manila
2000	2	Environment	2nd TEMM, Beijing
	3	Finance	ASEAN+3 Deputy Finance Ministers' Meeting, Brunei
	3	Finance	4th ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, Brunei
	5	Finance	2nd ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting on the occasion of the ADB Annual Meeting, Chiang Mai, Thailand: The Chiang Mai Initiative
	5	Economic	1st ASEAN+3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Yangon
	5	Economic	Informal AEM-MITI, Yangon
	7	Foreign	1st ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the occasion of ARF, Bangkok
	9	Finance	3rd ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting on the occasion of Annual Meeting of the World Bank Group and the IMF, Prague
	9	Finance	1st +3 Finance Ministers' Meeting on the occasion of APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting, Brunei
	10	Finance	ASEAN+3 Deputy Finance Ministers' Meeting, Beijing
	10	Economic	2nd ASEAN+3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Chiang Mai, Thailand
	10	Economic	7th AEM-MITI, Chiang Mai, Thailand
	10	Summit	3rd ASEM Summit, Seoul

Annex. (Continued)

2000	11	Summit	4th Informal ASEAN Summit, Singapore
	11	Summit	4th ASEAN+3 Summit, Singapore: Agreement to establish the EAVG (the ROK's proposal); Thailand's proposal of an ASEAN+3 FTA
	11	Summit	4th ASEAN+1 Summits (ASEAN-China Summit: China's proposal of an FTA with ASEAN; ASEAN-Japan Summit; ASEAN-ROK Summit), Singapore
	11	Summit	2nd +3 Summit, Singapore: Agreement to regularize the +3 summit (Japan's proposal)
2001	1	Finance	3rd ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting, Kobe, Japan
	3	Others	Establishment of the EASG
	4	Environment	3rd TEMM, Tokyo
	4	Finance	5th ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, Kuala Lumpur
	5	Finance	4th ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting, Honolulu, the United States: Establishment of a study group to examine ways of enhancing the effectiveness of our economic reviews and policy dialogues
	5	Economic	3rd ASEAN+3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Siem Reap, Cambodia: Endorsement of six economic projects
	5	Labor	1st ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Labor, Kuala Lumpur
	7	Foreign	2nd ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Ha Noi
	9	Economic	4th ASEAN+3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Ha Noi
	9	Economic	8th AEM-METI, Ha Noi
	10	Agriculture	1st ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Agriculture, Medan, Indonesia
	11	Summit	7th ASEAN Summit, Brunei
	11	Summit	5th ASEAN+3 Summit, Brunei: Malaysia's proposal of an secretariat of the APT framework; Report by the EAVG to mention the possibility of an EAFTA
	11	Summit	5th ASEAN+1 Summits (ASEAN-China Summit; ASEAN-Japan Summit; ASEAN-ROK Summit), Brunei
	11	Summit	3rd +3 Summit, Brunei: Agreement to hold +3 Foreign Ministers' and Economic Ministers' Meetings
2002	1	Tourism	1st ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Tourism, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
	4	Environment	4th TEMM, Seoul
	4	Finance	6th ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, Yangon
	5	Finance	5th ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting on the occasion of the ADB Annual Meeting, Shanghai, China
	5	Finance	2nd +3 Finance Ministers' Meeting, Shanghai, China

Annex. (Continued)

2002	5	Labor	2nd ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Labor, Vientiane
	6	Finance	1st ACD, Cha-Am, Thailand
	7	Finance	4th ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting, Copenhagen
	7	Foreign	3rd ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Brunei: Establishment of ASEAN+3 Directors-General meeting
	8	Foreign	1st ASEAN+3 Directors-General Meeting, Seoul
	9	Summit	4th ASEM Summit, Copenhagen
	9	Economic	5th ASEAN+3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Brunei: Endorsement of four projects in addition to six projects.
	9	Economic	1st ASEAN-China Economic Ministers' Meeting, Brunei
	9	Economic	9th AEM-METI, Brunei
	9	Economic	5th ASEAN-ROK Economic Ministers' Meeting, Brunei
	9	Economic	1st +3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Brunei
	9	Energy	1st ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Energy, Osaka, Japan
	10	Agriculture	2nd ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Agriculture, Vientiane: Agreement to launch the Pilot Project of the Eats Asian Emergency Rice Reserve System
	11	Summit	6th ASEAN+3 Summit, Phnom Penh: The Report by the EASG to regard establishment of an EAS and an EAFTA as long-term objectives.
	11	Summit	6th ASEAN+1 Summits (ASEAN-China Summit; ASEAN-Japan Summit; ASEAN-ROK Summit), Phnom Penh
	11	Summit	4th +3 Summit, Cambodia: China's proposal to study possibility of a China-Japan-ROK FTA, Phnom Penh
	11	Environment	1st ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Environment, Vientiane
	12	Finance	ASEAN+3 Deputy Finance Ministers' Meeting, Chiang Mai, Thailand: Endorsement of the ABMI
2003	1	Tourism	2nd ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Tourism, Phnom Penh
	2	Foreign	2nd ASEAN+3 Directors-General Meeting, Jakarta
	2,3	Finance	ASEAN+3 Deputy Finance Ministers' and Deputy General Bank Governors' Meeting, Tokyo: Discussion on the ABMI
	4	Health	ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Health to combat SARS, Kuala Lumpur
	5	Labor	3rd ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Labor, Indonesia
	6	Finance	EMEAP: the launch of the ABF with an initial size of about 1\$ billion
	6	Foreign	4th ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Phnom Penh
	6	Foreign	3rd ASEAN+3 Directors-General Meeting, Phnom Penh

Annex. (Continued)

2003	6	Finance	2nd ACD, Chiang Mai, Thailand: The Chiang Mai Declaration on Asian Bond Market Development
	6	Health	ASEAN+3 Special Ministers' Meeting on Health for SARS, Siem Reap, Cambodia
	7	Foreign	ASEAN+3 Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crimes, Ha Noi
	7	Finance	5th ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting, Bali, Indonesia: Discussion on the ABMI
	7	Finance	3rd +3 Finance Ministers' Meeting on the occasion of 5th ASEM Financial Ministers' Meeting, Bali, Indonesia
	8	Finance	6th ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting, Makati, Philippines
	8	Tourism	ASEAN+3 Special Ministers' Meeting on Tourism, Beijing
	8	Agriculture	3rd ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Agriculture, Kuala Lumpur
	8	Others	1st East Asian Congress, Kuala Lumpur
	9	Economic	6th ASEAN+3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Phnom Penh
	9	Economic	2nd ASEAN-China Economic Ministers' Meeting, Phnom Penh
	9	Economic	10th AEM-METI, Phnom Penh
	9	Economic	6th ASEAN-ROK Economic Ministers' Meeting, Phnom Penh
	9	Economic	2nd +3 Economic Ministers' Meeting, Phnom Penh
	10	Summit	7th ASEAN+3 Summit, Bali, Indonesia
	10	Summit	7th ASEAN+1 Summits (ASEAN-China Summit: China's accession to Treaty of Amity of Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC); ASEAN-Japan Summit; ASEAN-ROK Summit), Bali, Indonesia
	10	Summit	5th +3 Summit, Bali, Indonesia: Announcement of the first Joint Statement
	12	Summit	Special ASEAN-Japan Summit, Tokyo: Japan's accession to TAC
	12	Environment	5th TEMM, Beijing: TEMM was endorsed as the +3 Ministers' Meeting on Environment
	12	Environment	2nd ASEAN+3 Ministers' Meeting on Environment, Yangon

Source: Author, based on information from Oba 2003; Takano 2001; Official websites of ASEAN, IMF, ADB, Ministry of Finance, Japan, Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry, Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, Ministry of Agriculture, Japan, Ministry of Environment, Japan; *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* ; *Asahi Shimbun* .

Notes: "ASEAN+3" refers to the level where meetings of ASEAN members, China, Japan and the ROK take place. "ASEAN+1" indicates the level encompassing ASEAN-China, ASEAN-Japan and ASEAN-ROK meetings. "+3" represents the level where China, Japan and ROK hold meetings.

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