

Message from the President

On November 11, 2023, I was appointed as the President of the Japan Association for Chinese Economy and Management Studies at the general meeting held at Doshisha University, Kyoto. I feel somewhat anxious about whether I can live up to the trust placed in me by the members, but I am determined to do my best.

Today, arena for discussions related to the Chinese economy have significantly expanded. In some cases, emotions and speculations may take precedence, leading to heightened tensions.

The environment surrounding the Chinese economy has also changed drastically. Many businesspeople are actively engaged on the ground, and the number of Japanese researchers working at Chinese universities is increasing. The opportunities to interact with the realities of the Chinese economy are expanding and continuously evolving. Moreover, in Japan, not only researchers and economists but also journalists, commentators, and politicians are now discussing the Chinese economy. These micro-level connections represent a unique phenomenon in today's world, where globalization has deepened to an unprecedented degree.

On the other hand, significant global events such as the U.S.-China trade friction, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have introduced the logic of security into economic domains. Understanding international political logic has become essential when evaluating macroeconomic policies.

China itself has undergone significant changes, which forced the research environment to change as well. The Preliminary Session in November 2023 was the "45th Anniversary of Reform and Opening-Up." How we interpret this 45th anniversary is a topic that, depending on the viewpoint, can lead to very high tensions.

Given these changing circumstances, it is more important than ever for research on the Chinese economy to involve multifaceted perspectives and analytical approaches. The deepening of Chinese economic research, rooted in economics, has been remarkable. The Econometric Society, for example, had so many researchers on the Chinese economy that before the pandemic, the China Meeting was held separately from the Asian Meeting. The European Economic Association has reported numerous analyses related to Chinese

policies in fields such as business economics, competition policy, and industrial policy. The NBER's China Working Group Meeting in the U.S. has attracted very high-quality analyses, including political-economic perspectives.

At the same time, researchers are increasingly facing the challenge of how to deal with political taboos. To objectively analyze such situations, it is essential to maintain a broad, overarching perspective, approach reality as closely as possible to verify facts with one's own eyes, and develop independent thinking through a scientific attitude.

Our association values the importance of approaching the Chinese economy from a scientific perspective, offering a space where various viewpoints, analytical methods, commentary, and analyses can be freely explored—a "psychologically safe" environment. Additionally, we value providing a platform where a wide range of people interested in the Chinese economy can engage in calm discussions. The decreasing number of young researchers, reflecting Japan's declining population, is a common challenge among many area studies associations. We believe it is valuable to provide a space where young researchers aspiring to study the Chinese economy can start and pursue their research with confidence. Furthermore, we consider it valuable to have a place where diverse people who discuss the Chinese economy in Japan can gather and engage in open discussions.

This year marks the 10th anniversary since our association relaunched following the merger of the Japanese Research Association for Chinese Economy and the Japanese Research Association for Chinese Economy. Thanks to the efforts of past presidents, including Presidents Shanping Yan, Tomoo Marukawa, Goro Takahashi, and Deqiang Liu, and the long-standing contributions of our members, the association has grown significantly. The pandemic has also facilitated the use of online platforms.

I intend to continue the initiatives set forth by President Liu in the fourth term, expanding stimulating discussions within the association, revitalizing our journal Chinese Economic and Business Studies, and further strengthening collaboration with researchers on China both domestically and internationally across various fields.

I look forward to sharing a more vibrant and fruitful academic environment with all of our members.

Mariko Watanabe
(December 18, 2023)