

## Preface

Did you know that the Japanese used to be a maritime people? Nowadays, we use airplanes to go abroad. However, when we look back on history, we find that the Japanese people expanded their activities to Southeast Asia by crossing the sea. In the Edo period (1603-1868), they rode the ocean currents and conducted vermilion seal boat trade with various parts of Asia. You may have learned in your junior high social studies classes that there was a Japanese town in Ayutthaya, Thailand, where many Japanese people traded. The Japanese are a nation that actively seeks business opportunities overseas.

After opening the country to the outside world in 1868 and the beginning of the Meiji era, Japan adopted a modernization policy increasing wealth and military power to catch up with the Western world. In the Sino-Japanese War, Russo-Japanese War, World War I and World War II, Asian countries were the battlefields and were always the targets of territorial expansion. After the defeat in World War II and the subsequent economic recovery, Japan became an economic powerhouse. During this period, Japan's business partners were always the West. This is evident from the fact that Japan's main industry is the automobile industry and its main exporting countries are the United States and Europe.

As we enter the 21st century, Japan's economic growth will slow down as the birthrate declines and the population ages, similar to other developed countries. In contrast, many Asian countries that broke away from colonialism and became independent after World War II began to experience high economic growth. Initially, large Japanese corporations and multinational corporations in developed countries regarded Asian countries as production markets because of the abundance of low-wage workers, but gradually they began to pay attention to the remarkable economic growth and began to consider Asian countries as new markets to replace the Western markets.

The main purpose of this text is to train students to research and think in order to survive in today's increasingly globalized and uncertain society. The materials are positioned as a study of entrepreneurs working in Southeast Asia, with the aim of strengthening students' entrepreneurial mindset and problem-solving skills.

In Chapters 1 and 2, you will learn about changes in the employment environment of our society and the economic development of Southeast Asia. Chapters 3 to 9 are based on interviews with 21 Japanese business owners who have started their own companies in

seven Southeast Asian countries. The interview transcripts are based on face-to-face interviews conducted by the author during visits to the region from 2017 to 2019, and the interview content was current at the time of the interviews. Students will methodically learn about each country, the market environment, and skills required for employment by answering questions embedded in the chapters and exercises at the end of the chapters. Chapters 10 to 12 are focused on career planning, entrepreneurial preparation, and writing an entrepreneurial plan. Not all students will become entrepreneurs, but we aim to foster the ability of students to think and analyze independently.

The Japanese version of the book is designed as a textbook for large group lecture courses in semester-long university courses, but it can also be used for small seminar courses and group work. The English version of the text is designed for small seminars and group work. It should be noted that the questions and tasks in the English version are slightly different from those in the Japanese version of the book. In a lecture, the text can be taught sequentially from Chapter 1, or you can start with the case study in Chapter 3 to familiarize students and then return to Chapter 1.

This book is based on the book *Transnational Entrepreneurship in South East Asia-Japanese Self-Initiated Expatriate Entrepreneurs*, published by Springer in 2019 as part of the results of a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Fundamental Research (C) (General) (JSPS Grant-in-Aid 17K03948) (ISBN 978-981-32-9251-2), and *Working in Southeast Asia*, in Japanese, (ISBN 978-4-8315-1490-5), published by Pelikan-sha in 2017, as part of the research findings. The Japanese entrepreneurs featured in Chapters 3 to 9 understood the purpose of this book and kindly agreed to allow us to publish their interview transcripts. We would like to thank them again for their cooperation.

Finally, we hope that students who study this book will be able to sense the changing times we live and that as many students as possible will be able to make their own career plans, take initiative, and navigate their own lives.

Kazuko Yokoyama

Sarah Louisa Birchley