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This study aims at making clear the basic patterns or characteristics of economic development in Asian countries for the last two decades and finding general or common aspects, on one hand, and regional or local ones, on the other, among Asian countries' economic development.

The study consists of five sections: In the first section, the objective of this study is clarified after discussing the concept of economic development. In the second section, the levels and changes of economic development in Asian countries are compared in terms of per capita Gross Domestic Product. In the third section, sectoral shares in GDP are compared, then sectoral contribution to the growth rate of GDP are measured, using growth accounting. In the fourth section, sectoral allocation of employment are compared and then changes in labor productivity are measured by sector. In the last section, international differences of welfare level among Asian countries are discussed in relation with the extent of economic development in terms of per capita GDP.

Twenty-six countries are covered under this study, which are classified into seven sub-regions, considering the geographical locations, economic similarities and social system of respective countries. Changing patterns of economic development are compared between the 1960s and 1970s.

The major findings of the study are as follows:

There exist sizable differences in the extent of economic development among Asian countries. Such differences have expanded in general for the last two decades. In spite of such differences, however, certain general patterns are observed among them. It means not only the existence of the same directions of economic changes but also the fact that those
changes in some countries or regions are on the same or close trend lines in some cases. Between the lowest developed countries, as South Asian countries and China, and the most developed countries as Japan, ASEAN countries, Middle-East non-oil-producing countries, and Newly Industrializing Countries as Korea and Taiwan are on line in this order in many cases, which compose a single trend. This implies, in principle, the existence of transferability of relatively developed countries' experiences into less developed countries in the course of economic development.

However, on the contrary, it is also clear that regional or countries' speciality are observed in many aspects. Since the historical and geographical conditions are different by countries or by regions, there must be some uniqueness for respective country or region. Such speciality should be beared in mind for less developed countries to learn something from the experiences of more developed countries. The most unique case is the situation of oil-producing countries in Middle-East: Their per capita income are considerably high but their welfare level are too low to be considered them as developed countries.

The purpose of this study is fact-findings rather than analysis, but the author trusts that the facts which are found in this study would be of vital use in a full-scale, empirical research on economic development of Asian countries as analytical regional studies in future by the same author and others in this research area.