耶鲁为何选择新加坡？

耶鲁大学选择新加坡，是因为新加坡的地理位置、经济发展水平、教育质量以及政府的政策支持等多方面因素。新加坡作为东南亚的金融中心和科技中心，拥有良好的投资环境和跨国公司总部的聚集，吸引了众多海外人才来此发展。

新加坡政府对教育的重视也是吸引耶鲁大学的重要因素。新加坡政府在教育领域的投入逐年增加，尤其是高等教育和科研领域的投资，使得新加坡在国际上享有良好的声誉。新加坡政府还推出了一系列吸引海外人才的政策，为外国人提供便利的签证和居留条件，以及良好的生活和工作环境。

此外，新加坡的教育质量和国际影响力也是吸引耶鲁大学的重要因素。新加坡的高等教育水平在亚洲名列前茅，拥有世界一流的大学和研究机构，如新加坡国立大学、南洋理工大学等。新加坡政府还与多个国家的大学和研究机构建立了合作关系，为新加坡的教育国际化的进程提供了有力的支持。

综合来看，新加坡的地理位置、经济发展水平、教育质量和政府政策等多方面因素，使得新加坡成为耶鲁大学选择的合适地点。耶鲁大学在新加坡的设立，将有助于加强新加坡与美国及全球的学术交流和合作，也将为新加坡的高等教育和科研领域带来积极的影响。
Why did Yale choose Singapore?

Even though Hong Kong stands to benefit more from the booming economy of mainland China due to its sheer proximity, in the strategic landscape of Asia in the 21st century, it is easier for Singapore to be free from dependence on any one single major economy and to become the centre of the knowledge economy of a diverse Asia.

Education

I received the new issue of Yale Alumni Magazine before United States President Barack Obama concluded his Asia tour. The magazine cover featured Singapore’s night scene. Needless to say, the theme for this issue was to introduce the plans by Yale University and the National University of Singapore (NUS) to jointly set up a liberal arts college.

It is unprecedented for Yale to establish a liberal arts college overseas under its brand name. Yale President Professor Richard Levin is a well-known fan of China. He frequently shares his views on China when speaking at graduation ceremonies. The rise of India has also become a focus of world attention in recent years. During his Asia tour, President Obama expressed his support for India to be given a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, and called India an "emerging power". Thus the first question which reporters posed to Prof Levin, was why Yale chose to bypass China and India to set foot in Singapore, in making inroads into Asia.

The first reason which Prof Levin gave was that Singapore was located between China and India, and enjoyed close relations with both countries. If the liberal arts college were to be established in China or India, 90 per cent of the students would be locals. If it were established in Singapore, it would be able to recruit students from across Asia. Based on Yale’s plans, it is expected that half of the student population of the proposed liberal arts college in Singapore would comprise locals, while the remainder would be from Asia and across the world.

US university presidents today are politicians by half, to say the least. They are concise in their speech and to the point, knowing that saying more could invite trouble. However, these brief comments amply illustrate Yale’s impressive foresight, and reveal the important strategic status of higher education in Singapore in the 21st century.

It should rightly be said that the rise of China has dominated Western media attention for the past 20 years. All strategies on Asia had to be formulated with China at the centre. However, the intense efforts by India to catch up in recent years has started to steal some of China's limelight and even lent credibility to talk of "India overtaking China". People are bound to have their own opinions on whether the 21st century belongs to China or India. In its global strategy, a world-renowned university should certainly not choose to wager its bet on one single possibility, nor let itself be swayed by the media's fixation of the moment. Yale achieves a strategic balance between China and India by choosing to locate its liberal arts college in Singapore.
Before President Obama's visit to India, the first issue of *The Economist* in October this year featured a cover story entitled, "How India's growth will overtake China". The article observed that even though India's gross domestic product is not more than one-quarter of that of China, and its literacy rate of just 66 per cent is far lower than China's 93 per cent, its economic growth rate has reached 8.5 per cent and is accelerating. Experts at Morgan Stanley predict that China's growth rate will remain at around eight per cent for the next three to five years, while India's growth rate will reach nine to ten per cent. India is expected to surpass China to become the world's fastest-growing major economy over the next 20 to 25 years.

India possesses a demographic advantage over China

Many believe it is inevitable that India will ultimately catch up with China in the competition between the two. China's strictly enforced birth control policy has swiftly led to the problem of an ageing Chinese society. Despite the fact that India's dependent population aged below 15 and above 64 constitutes 56 per cent of its overall population in 2010, far higher than that of China at less than 40 per cent, the rate of India's economic growth has started to close in on that of China. In about 15 years, both countries will have a largely similar age-dependency ratio. By 2030, China's age-dependency ratio will reach 50 per cent, and India's will reach about 45 per cent. By 2050, China's dependent population will comprise around 62 to 63 per cent of the total population and India's will comprise about 48 per cent, a difference of as much as 15 per cent. To apply a more short-term indicator, by 2020, the median age will be 28 in India, 38 in the US, 45 in Western Europe, 49 in Japan, and 37 in China. China's population will continue to age, and the country's median age will eventually surpass that of the US. By 2020, India will add 136 million people to its economically active population, while China will add just 2.3 million.

With a growing population of younger citizens, a relatively low literacy rate, and a fast-growing knowledge economy, India's higher education sector is set to become a bottleneck in the country's development. India has become a global leader in the export of information technology services, and the scale of its pharmaceutical industry is third in the world, behind only the US and Japan. However, the ratio of researchers to every one million citizens in India is only one-tenth of that of China. It should be said that India has nearly managed to catch up with China in its speed of development, despite such substantial disadvantages in manpower and technical resources. The fact that India has surpassed China in the level of innovative content generated is a miracle in itself. Such a miracle also means that India will face huge difficulty in resolving the issue of a severe shortage of talent in its higher education sector over the next 20 to 30 years, and will have to seek the help of resources from overseas.

In comparison, the blind expansion of schools in China over more than a decade will soon lead to a "crisis of empty schools" in the near future, as the number of high school graduates continues to decrease each year due to an ageing population. As the standard of living in China far exceeds that of India, more upper middle-class Chinese families are eager to send their children to the US for higher education. Moreover, other countries such as Hong Kong are also actively attracting talents from the mainland through their higher education sector, transforming themselves into the new "gateways to China". Amid such intense competition, it will not be easy for Singapore universities to attract the "crème de la crème" of China's younger generation.

There has recently been heated competition between Hong Kong and Singapore universities in the global university rankings. Even though we certainly cannot
measure a university’s performance based solely on its ranking, university rankings in themselves are also not completely devoid of significance. The marked improvement of Hong Kong and Singapore universities, and the failed expansion and reform of China’s universities continues to be reflected in the rankings. It should be said that both Hong Kong and Singapore universities have currently attained central or leading positions in Asia’s higher education landscape. The reason for this could lie in the fact that English is the main medium of instruction in universities in both countries, which facilitates the recruitment of top talents from the US and UK higher education systems.

Although the issue of freedom of speech in Singapore has become the main reason for opposition within the Yale community to the plan to jointly establish a liberal arts college with NUS, both Hong Kong and Singapore are societies governed by the rule of law and lead Asia in terms of information openness. The decades of experiences of Hong Kong and Singapore in integrating into the Western economic system and their special connections with China in several areas, including the economic, cultural and political spheres, have strengthened their edge in higher education. Even though Hong Kong stands to benefit more from the booming economy of mainland China due to its sheer proximity, in the strategic landscape of Asia in the 21st century, it is easier for Singapore to be free from dependence on any one single major economy and to become the centre of the knowledge economy of a diverse Asia.

In recent years, US universities such as New York University, Michigan State University and George Mason University, as well as UK universities like Nottingham University and the University of Liverpool, have all made inroads into Asia. However, none of them possesses the prestige of being a leader in global higher education. Yale President Prof Levin summed up Yale’s contributions to US undergraduate education along three lines: the courses and teaching methods introduced in the early 19th century; the development of co-curricular activities in the late 19th century; and the residential college system introduced in the 1930s. These three major contributions have been widely emulated in the US, and will now be transplanted to Singapore through the establishment of the proposed liberal arts college. At the same time, Prof Levin sees the liberal arts college in Singapore as being the fourth wave of innovation in higher education led by Yale in response to the challenges of globalisation. For instance, core programmes that will be introduced by the liberal arts college in Singapore will include experiments in integrating the cultures of the East and West, which can be channelled back into the design of US undergraduate education in future.

It is also worth pointing out that the proposed Yale-NUS College will have an estimated enrolment of 1,000 students. Yale currently admits only about 140 international students each year. These 1,000 students will naturally have a significant impact on Yale's international influence. However, for Asia, home to most of the world's population and a region witnessing rapid economic growth despite a lagging higher education sector, these 1,000 students are merely a drop in the bucket. NUS has already launched important partnerships such as collaborating with Duke University to establish the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School, launching engineering programmes in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and introducing law and music programmes in collaboration with New York University and Johns Hopkins University respectively. If the liberal arts college can help to expand collaborations between Singapore and the world’s top educational institutions, Singapore will be able to help build the “nerve centre” for Asia’s rise through its unique higher education system.
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