abstract

Using insights gleaned from 85 in-depth interviews with Asian-born, Western-trained bioscientists in Singapore, Taiwan, China, and India, I argue that objective improvements in the bioscience research and education infrastructure in Asia, and Asian scientists’ subjective impressions about the current state and potential of Asian bioscience, have together left the door open for more Asian scientists-in-training to choose to stay in Asia for their doctoral training. At the same time, however, a different set of factors—including Asian governments’ continued privileging of Western qualifications and network connections—have conspired to make a postdoctoral appointment in the West (and particularly the US) essential for an ambitious Asian-born bioscientist. As a result, while there may be increasing serious consideration of Asia as a location for a PhD in bioscience, when it comes to postdoctoral appointments, there is still a distinct preference for, and field-based pressure, to train in the West. These shifts encourage the emergence of new, hybrid training and migration pathways for Asian-born scientists-in-training.

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