ENGAGE!
PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS
TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

The Work of the 2011-2012 API Fellows

The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals
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ABOUT THE BOOK

ENGAGE! PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS TRANSFORMING SOCIETY, is a collection of papers by the 2011/2012 Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellows. The 27 papers that comprise this volume cover key areas such as the politics of memory and meaning; cultural integrity with a focus on cultures and identities in transition; community-initiated post-development paradigms in Asia. API publications can be downloaded at http://www.api-fellowships.org.

The API Fellowships Program

As Asia enters the 21st century, it faces political, economic and social challenges that transcend national boundaries. To meet these challenges, the region needs a pool of public intellectuals willing to be active in the public sphere who can articulate common concerns and propose creative solutions. Recognizing that opportunities for intellectual exchange are limited by institutional, linguistic and cultural parameters, The Nippon Foundation (TNF) launched the Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowships Program in July 2000. The Program’s primary aim is to promote mutual learning among Asian public intellectuals and contribute to the growth of wider public spaces in which effective responses to regional needs can be generated.

The API Fellowships Program is open to academics, researchers, media professionals, artists, creative writers, non-governmental organization (NGO) activists, social workers, public servants and others with moral authority who are committed to working for the betterment of society by applying their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience. The Program is designed to stimulate the creation of a pool of such intellectuals in the region.

The API Fellowships Program set three main themes as follows:

• Changing identities and their social, historical and cultural contexts;
• Reflections on the human condition and the quest for social justice; and
• The current structure of globalization and possible alternatives.

Within these themes, the Fellows are required to:

• Propose and carry out research and/or professional activities in a participating country or countries other than their native country or country of residence;
• Conduct research and/or professional activities in compliance with a schedule accepted by the Selection Committee;
• Attend the API Workshop to exchange results of their research and/or professional activities with other fellows;
• Disseminate their findings and results to a wider audience; and
• Pursue a deeper knowledge of each other and hence of the region.

Post-Fellowship Program/Activities

Having entered its second phase of the Program, the API Fellowships Program has intensified its focus on community building efforts. In order to achieve greater social impact and support furthering collaboration among Fellows and beyond, the Program makes efforts to build and promote the API Community and its undertakings, through the following post-fellowship programs:

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
1) Regional Committee and Regional Project

The API Community has selected ten Fellows as representatives to the Regional Committee (RC) to promote activities which are critical for the region, cross-disciplinary in nature, trans-border in scope and multi-level in approach, recognizing the interlinkages of locality, nation and region. The RC aims to foster a greater regional consciousness by promoting relationships among cultures, societies, traditions and so forth by initiating or endorsing collaborative activities and by confronting public issues with discernment, integrity and commitment. The RC initially focused on the launch of the Regional Project.

The Regional Project, entitled “Community-Based Initiatives toward Human-Ecological Balance”, was launched in November 2008 as a joint effort that mobilized the entire API Community. This three-year project covered five sites in the region: Biwako (Japan), Batanes (Philippines), Khiriwong (Thailand), Tasik Chini (Malaysia) and Kalicode (Indonesia). Completing at its Culminating Event in June 2012, in conducting the Regional Project, the API Community was guided by the values of social relevance, public-policy advocacy, network-building, creativity, transparency and accountability. (For further information, please visit www.apirp.com/ and www.api-fellowships.org/apievent2012.php)

2) API-Salzburg Global Seminar Collaboration

The Salzburg Global Seminar (SGS) was founded in 1947 by three graduate students at Harvard University as a means to bringing together young Europeans and Americans engage in intellectual dialogue. In an effort to flow with the tide of globalization, the Salzburg Global Seminar decided to reach out beyond Europe and the United States, to Asia, the Middle East and Africa. To date, more than 25,000 individuals from more than 150 countries have attended Seminar sessions.

The Seminar focuses on critical challenges confronting the global community and is designed to formulate innovative solutions to global problems. Since 2008, the SGS and the API Fellowships Program have collaborated to provide API Fellows the opportunities to expand their intellectual capacities and to share Asian perspectives with other regions.

3) API Collaborative Grant

API Collaborative Grant is a new grant scheme launched in January 2013. It aims to support the efforts of Fellows in consolidating community building, serving the public good and generating social transformation in Asia, in response to the region’s key challenges especially in poverty, climate change and disintegrating communities. The grant supports collaborative projects with regional implications and transformative potentials, including clear articulations of possibilities for social change.

In addition to the new grant, API supports Fellows’ participation in various regional activities such as the API Panel Grant for the International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) Conference, the Asia-Europe People’s Forum (AEPF) and the Asian Pacific Sociological Association (APSA).

The Nippon Foundation

The Nippon Foundation (TNF) is an independent, non-profit, grant making organization that was founded in 1962. It supports projects both in Japan and overseas. It funds activities in three areas: domestic social welfare and volunteer support; maritime research and development; and overseas cooperative assistance. It works with other non-profit organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations in Japan and overseas.
The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows

The API Coordinating Institution (CI) at the Institute of Asian Studies (IAS), Chulalongkorn University, which oversaw the publication of this book, wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the following people:

- The API Fellows, for their invaluable contribution in writing the papers that comprise the volume;
- Mary Racelis, the 11th API Regional Workshop Director and Lisandro E. Claudio, the Deputy Workshop Director, who conceptualized the Workshop and guided the Fellows in their preparation of the papers/presentation materials, for providing substantive inputs;
- The members of the ad hoc committee for the 11th API Regional Workshop, namely, Tatsuya Tanami, other participants of The Nippon Foundation and Fr. Jose M. Cruz, for their crucial advice and collaboration in various aspects of the Workshop;
- The API Program Directors, Program Coordinators and other Program staff for their valuable inputs and cooperation;
- Marian Chua, Workshop rapporteur who helped consolidate the discussion inputs;
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Editorial Team
API Coordinating Institution (CI)

Surichai Wun’Gaeo
Michiko Yoshida
Chadapan Malipan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
THE CONTRIBUTORS

(in alphabetical order according to names as they are spelt)

A snapshot of the contributors in their own words is provided here
(information as of April 2014)

Abhayuth Chantrabha is an activist who has been working with the urban poor in Thailand for more than 20 years. After graduating from Thammasat University in 1989, he began working as a community organizer, a profession that he still practices today. He is currently the coordinator of Community Organization for Peoples’ Action (COPA), an NGO that specializes in organizing urban poor communities, and an adviser to the Four Regions Slum Network (FRSN), a Thai national federation consisting of slum dwellers and the homeless. In addition to his own community organizing work, Abhayuth has also taken on responsibilities as a trainer, passing on his skills and knowledge about the art of community organizing to members of the younger generation.

Albertus Yustinus Imas is a Dayak researcher who has had fifteen years of work and experience in field research on the Dayak ethnic group as indigenous peoples of Borneo. He studied at the National University of Malaysia (UKM-ATMA) during 2000-2004, specializing in the field of linguistics, which has supported his work as a researcher on Dayak issues. Currently, he is the Director of Narmac Institute (Natural Resource Management Collaboration Institute). His work with the WWF on a High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) project in 2006-2007, the European Commission on a FLEGT project in 2007-2010 and the Indonesian Forestry Department on a project pertaining to watershed management planning in West Kalimantan 2010-2011 encouraged him to focus on natural resource management planning as his recent professional interest.

Fadzilah Majid Cooke is Professor of Sociology at the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu. She has been teaching, researching and publishing on environmental justice for almost two decades, especially on issues of customary land, natural resource policy and its implications for community development in East Malaysia and, more recently, in the Philippines and Thailand. In addition to lecturing and supervising undergraduate and postgraduate students, Fadzilah actively cooperates with non-government organizations as well as government agencies at the local and national levels. She was awarded a Ph.D. by Griffith University, Australia in 1996. She has been a member of the scientific advisory committee for the social sciences, the International Foundation for Science of Sweden, since 2008.

Firly Afwika is a Digital Strategist. She gained a Bachelor of Humanities at University of Indonesia in 2008. Her research interest in culture and tourism resulted in her developing a research study on Malaysia’s tourism branding “Truly Asia”. She is interested to take some lessons from Malaysia’s bold experience in developing its tourism industry by using its diversity as a unique selling point. Currently Firly works as Digital Consultant for Sekretariat Kabinet RI, developing an online brand presence for the Indonesian Government. With her various experiences in digital services and strategies for major regional brands, she has established plans and communication strategies for sizeable online campaigns for many reputable brands.

Henri Ismail has been a professional photographer since 2005, specializing in social documentary photography. In the last few years, his work has focused on mining issues, indigenous people, human rights, poverty and other matters related to social justice. His works have been published in various mainstream media including The Jakarta Post and FORUM and in scholarly publications such as Inside Indonesia. With his photographer fellows, Henri co-founded Poros Photos, an initiative to develop social documentary photography in Indonesia.
Kam Suan Pheng, a science researcher, studied at the University of Science Malaysia (B.Sc. with Education) and Cornell University (Masters and Ph.D. in Agronomy – Soil Science). She taught at the University of Science Malaysia for 13 years before joining the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines for 10 years and is now into her ninth year with the World Fish Center in Penang, Malaysia. Her academic research involves applying geographical information systems and remote sensing techniques in agriculture and natural resources management. She also has broader professional interests in integrated and participatory approaches for greater relevance and impact of agricultural research to poor rural communities.

Khuat Thu Hong is the founder and co-director of the Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS), a non-governmental research organization located in Hanoi, Vietnam. She has a B.A. in psychology from Moscow National University in 1984 and a Ph.D. in sociology from the Institute of Sociology, Vietnam, in 1996. Hong’s major fields of study include gender, sexuality and health. In the last few years she has actively engaged in research and advocacy on civil society, social justice and social inclusion.

Lambang Trijono is a political sociologist and peace advocate. He is a lecturer at the Faculty of Social and Political Science, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. He has been Director of the Peace and Development Initiative (Padii Institute), in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 2006 to the present. He was formerly Director of the Center for Security and Peace Studies (CSPS), Gadjah Mada University from 2003 to 2005 and has been a researcher at the CSPS from 1997 to the present. He has been serving as coordinator of the Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Networks (SEACSN)-Indonesia since 2001. From 2010 to the present, Lambang has been working on his Ph.D. at the Research and Education for Peace Unit, Universiti Sains Malaysia (REP-USM). He has published several books, among them Keluar dari Kemelut Maluku (Pustaka Pelajar, 2001), The Making of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Southeast Asia: Cases and Solutions (editor and contributor of two chapters, CSPS Books, 2004), Potret Retak Nusantara (editor, CSPS Books, 2005).

Lutgardo L. Labad (Gardy) is a theater director, a multi-awarded drama and film music composer, cultural impresario and a cultural development specialist. Once a major theater curriculum developer of the Philippine Educational Theater Association and the Cultural Officer of the Provincial Government of Bohol, he has been the head of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts National Committee on Dramatic Arts from 2011-2013. He has worked extensively with local governments, arts councils, NGOs and peoples’ organizations, on cultural development planning focused on how heritage and the arts can be harnessed as community-based creative industries for sustainable development. He recently founded Likha Asya, a convergence of Asian artists, culture and tourism players to enhance exchange and solidarity on community theater, creative industries and community-based tourism, a direct offshoot of his API Fellowships to which he owes a debt of immense gratitude.

Mochamad Indrawan currently works as Executive Secretary, Center for Biodiversity Strategies, Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences (FMIPA), Universitas Indonesia. By training, Indrawan is a field biologist whose work focuses on the conservation of biological diversity. However, recently, Indrawan enhanced his engagement with the social dimension of natural resources, especially traditional ecological knowledge and local perception for the sustainability of resources. Indrawan has senior-authored a now reprinted textbook Biologi Konservasi (2007) published by Yayasan Obor Indonesia. He has also authored articles published in peer reviewed journals such as Biodiversity and Conservation, Journal for Environmental Planning and Management, Tropical Biodiversity, and Development in Practice. For his API Fellowships, Indrawan undertook the position of visiting researcher at Kyushu University’s Faculty of Agriculture, Environmental Economics Laboratory, from August 1, 2011 to July 30, 2012. Indrawan researched the satoyama system of Japan, which complemented his analysis of similar rich systems in Indonesia.

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
Mucha-Shim L. Quiling is a cultural worker and human rights defender, having worked in non-government organizations during the past 20 years and in academia as college faculty and researcher for over 10 years. She is the founding director of the Lumah Ma Dilaut Center for Living Traditions, a social development organization working for the preservation and re-invigoration of indigenous knowledge systems of the Orang Suluk, specifically the Sama communities in Sulu and Zamboanga peninsula. Her API research allowed her to retrace the route of trading, migration, expansion and the subsequent diasporization of the 18th century Suluk maritime society in the old Nusantara region covering Indonesia, Borneo, and Sulu in Southern Philippines. She finished her Masters of Arts at the Ateneo de Manila University and is a Ph.D. candidate in Inter-religious Studies at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS) of the Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Nguyen Trinh Thi is a Hanoi-based documentary filmmaker and video artist. She received her M.A. in Journalism from the University of Iowa in 1999 and her Master of International Pacific Studies from the University of California, San Diego in 2005. Her moving image work—including documentary and experimental films, single-channels and video installations—consistently engage with memory and history and reflect on the roles and positions of art and artists in society and the environment. She has taken part in international exhibitions such as Singapore Biennale 2013; Jakarta Biennale 2013; Move on Asia: Video Art in Asia 2002 to 2012 (ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Germany 2013); Women in Between: Asian Women Artists 1984-2012 (Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan 2012); and Kuandu Biennale (Taiwan 2010). Nguyen also has founded and directs Hanoi DOCLAB, a center for documentary films and the moving image, since 2009.

Norhayati Kaprawi was trained as a civil engineer. After a decade in her engineering career, she began to be involved in women's activism. She is a member and trainer in a Malaysian Muslim women’s organization that advocates for gender justice in Islam. She later ventured into producing documentary films highlighting Malaysian issues, primarily Muslim women’s issues. Amongst her films are Mencari Kartika (about a Muslim woman who was sentenced to six lashes for drinking alcohol), Aku Siapa (on the issue of wearing the veil in Malaysia) and Anak Tak Sab Taraf (on the status of Muslim children born out of wedlock). Her films have been widely screened and used as teaching materials in universities in Malaysia and in Singapore, Indonesia and Germany.

Noriko Ishimatsu is a research fellow of the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies at the Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan. She studied at the Kyushu University (Ph.D. in Social and Cultural Studies) and the Goldsmiths College, University of London (M.A. in Art History in the 20th century), and worked as coordinator for international relations at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. Her research subject is contemporary art and cultural studies focusing on non-Western artists in the UK and Southeast Asia.

Patporn Phoothong is currently a researcher and project coordinator at The Initiative of Museum and Library for Peace, Peace Information Centre and Asian Muslim Action Network. This project is a follow-up initiative of the research “Towards Peace and Reconciliation: Case Studies of Peace Museums in Japan and Philippines” supported by the API Fellowships Program. Her research focuses on political violence of the past, collective memories and oral history. Patporn has also written on peace museums and collective memories in Japan, Korea and Thailand.

Pornsiri Cheevapattananuwong is a lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand. Her research interests include the impacts of environmental changes on local communities, health impact assessments (HIA) and their implications for community.
empowerment and environment-educational activities for youth. She has worked as assistant to the campaign manager and coordinator of the Solar Generation Project (youth project) for Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Thailand. She was research assistant for the 10 Years of the Pak Moon Dam Movement Project in Thailand.

Pradit Prasartthong (Tua) was Director of the Makhampom Theater Group, a grassroots media foundation in Bangkok, for 30 years. Having worked with grassroots communities from both the rural and urban sectors, he has built a network using theater workshop processes and productions for advocacy and involving other sectors of society, including concerned artists, students and middle class communities. Pradit left Makhampom in 2011 and set up the Anatta Theater Troupe in 2012. He has been the secretary general of the Bangkok Theater Network since 2002. Pradit was part of Lohan’s journey, an Asian theater collaboration project with 15 other directors from Asia in 2003-2005. The project was organized by the Setagaya Public Theater Foundation of Japan. He was also an Asian Cultural Council (ACC New York) grantee in 2004. In the year 2004, the office of Contemporary Art and Culture (OCAC) honored Pradit as winner of its first Silpathorn Awards in the field of contemporary performing arts.

Somchai Phatharathananunth teaches politics at Mahasarakham University in Northeast Thailand. He has been involved in social movements in northeast Thailand (Isaan) since the 1970s. He gained his Ph.D. from the University of Leeds in 2001. His thesis Civil Society and Democratization: Social Movements in Northeast Thailand was published by the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies in 2006.

Susanna George has been engaged in and committed to the women’s movement and the development sector for over two decades as a communications professional, a women’s human rights activist, trainer, writer, change process and meeting facilitator and organizational development consultant. She was the executive director of an international feminist organization, Isis International Manila, for over six years and is currently one of its Board members. Susanna is keenly interested in emergent change processes in group and organizational contexts and in experimenting with spaces that enhance greater self-reflexivity, creativity and honest conversations in social movement contexts.

Syvongsay Changpitikoun is a development professional currently working as a program officer at the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. He received a Bachelor’s Degree of Education Science at the National University of Laos in 1998. Since then he has worked for a variety of development organizations in the fields of community development, emergency relief, child rights and educational development in Lao PDR. He obtained an M.A. in 2009 at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

Tawatchai Pattanaporn, photographer, delivers social issues to the public by conveying his message in the form of photography.

Toshiyuki Doi is a doctoral student at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University at Salaya in Thailand. Toshiyuki also works as senior advisor for Mekong Watch, a Japanese NGO which monitors development projects and policies in Mekong countries (i.e., Burma/Myanmar, Lao PDR, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and southern China), especially those relating to Japanese public and private funds. His research interests include sociolinguistics, ethnography of speaking, language learning/teaching, language in development, literacy, languages in Southeast Asia, involuntary resettlement, and international financial institutions, especially the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
Too Chee Hung (chi too), is from Malaysia and has recently shifted his focus from film-making to fine art practice, using humor, satire and visual poetics to create a diverse system of objects that includes videos, installations, performances, sculptures and photography to reveal his own never-ending emotional struggles and personal reflections. His experimental music, poetry reading and playful self-organized public art projects such as *Main Dengan Rakyat* (Everything’s Gonna Be Alright) and Lepark, have displayed a genuine need to engage with space and audiences as part of his complex, multifaceted approach to practice. As a self-taught artist-outsider, he has participated in various exhibitions and performance events. chi too is part of The Best Art Show in the Universe and CIPAN, a sometime artist collective in Malaysia.

Truong Huyen Chi, Ph.D. in Social-Cultural Anthropology, University of Toronto in 2001, is an independent researcher with a non-salaried affiliation at the Centre for Education Research and Application, Vietnam National University-Hanoi. Her interests include society in transition, social memory and narrative and K-12 education for ethnic minority and indigenous children in Southeast Asia.

Vicente Handa is a full professor of science education in the Division of Science Education, College of Education, West Visayas State University. He holds a masters degree in Chemistry Education from the University of the Philippines-Diliman and a doctoral degree in Science Education from the University of Georgia, undertaken as a Fulbright scholar. His research interests revolve around the socio-cultural dimension of science education, particularly on the community immersion model, service learning and the use of cultural memory banking and hybrid space in science teacher preparation. He has presented over 40 papers around those topics in international conferences in the United States, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and the Philippines and published in international academic journals such as *Research in Science Education, International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, Journal of College Science Teaching, Science Scope*, among others.

Wahyudi is a researcher at the Research Center for Society and Culture, Indonesian Institute of Science (PMB-LIPI). He received his M.A. in Cultural Studies from the Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia (2008) and in International Peace Studies from the University for Peace, Costa Rica (2010), sponsored by The Nippon Foundation. His research interests are historical memory and justice as well as cultural studies by focusing on Islam, identity and popular culture.

Yuria Furusawa is a Ph.D. student majoring in comparative studies at the School of Cultural and Social Studies, the Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Osaka, Japan. She studied aesthetics and art history at Tokyo University of the Arts and holds a master’s degree in humanities (art studies) from Kyushu University. Her major fields of interest are art history, the localization of Christian iconography in Asia, modern and contemporary art and museum studies.
WELCOME SPEECH

Yohei Sasakawa  
Chairman of The Nippon Foundation

Father Jose Cruz, Professor Surichai Wun’Gaeo, Professor Resil Mojares, members of the International Selection Committee, API Fellows, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. While I cannot be with you today, I am deeply pleased to be able to say a few words at the start of this very important 11th API Regional Workshop.

As you know, one of the most important changes taking place in the region today is Myanmar’s movement toward democracy. As Japanese Government Goodwill Ambassador for the Welfare of the National Races in Myanmar, I am striving to help bring about a ceasefire and peace accord between the nation’s government and its ethnic groups.

Last month, I invited representatives of 10 ethnic groups to Japan to discuss possible relief measures for the nation’s 1 million internally displaced people. As a result, The Nippon Foundation decided to contribute 3 million dollars of emergency food and medical supplies. The foundation is acting as a mediator between the two sides and both welcome this emergency relief.

When API started in the year 2000, we discussed urgent issues common to the region. The growing gap between rich and poor. Exploitation of natural resources. Environmental destruction. Religious and ethnic conflict. Human rights violations.

All of which continue to confront us even today. From the beginning, we have realized that to solve these problems, we need close collaboration among such stakeholders as governments, international bodies, private enterprises, academic institutions, NGOs and community organizations. We need to transcend boundaries and work together. Above all, we need public intellectuals who can drive forward such cross-border collaborations.

Thus, this API Program began in order to identify and nurture regional public intellectuals. The program selects those with the knowledge, experience and commitment to deal with complex issues. Then, it gives you, the selected individuals with opportunities to conduct research and exchange activities in neighboring countries.

A second aim has been to create a community of public intellectuals that can work together collectively to solve problems, and in June this year, the API Regional Project Culminating Event was held in Bangkok. This was the apex of a three-year project, through which Fellows combined their expertise on shared themes. Working with people from local communities, they rooted out the causes and devised solutions for many pressing issues. The results of their work will be disseminated throughout the region and the world, through documentary films, a book and a website. I hope that API Fellows continue leading the way with such collective work as this.

I congratulate you, the 11th batch of Fellows on the successful completion of your projects. I also encourage you all, both as members of the API Community and as public intellectuals responsible for the future of Asia, to continue to work for the betterment of society under the flag of API.

This year, for the first time, API has selected Fellows from Myanmar. I sincerely hope that these new Myanmar Fellows have many chances to meet Fellows from other countries, so that you can learn from each other, share information and contribute to the democratization and peace-building process in Myanmar.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Vice President Jose Cruz and everyone at Ateneo de Manila University. I also sincerely thank the members of each country’s selection committee, the International Selection Committee and the staff of the Coordinating Institution and Partner Institutions for your continuous hard work. It is you that have enabled this program to achieve such great results. I wish you a fruitful and successful workshop.

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The Making of Asian Public Intellectuals: Historical Reflections

Of the three words that compose the caption to this gathering—Asian public intellectuals—the word that is most elusive is Asian. Perhaps the word does not have to be belabored: it can be assumed simply as a convenient marker of who we are, where we work, and what by our work we hope to understand better and change for the better. We need not even try to fix what Asia encompasses in geographic terms. As the Indonesian intellectual Goenawan Mohamad wittily remarks: “Asia is like God. You cannot categorically deny or affirm its existence. No one knows where it begins, where it ends, or whether there is a way to define it.” It suffices, and perhaps it is best, that it is defined operationally and dynamically, according to where we have chosen to locate ourselves, and what range of action or imagining, for the present, is most feasible, meaningful, or necessary.

Yet, the notion of Asia remains beguiling and cannot be so quickly dismissed. That Asian public intellectuals constitute a “community” (an important assumption of this program) invites reflection on the idea and bases of such a community.

A recent book provides a highly informative account of the historical genesis of Asian public intellectuals. In *From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals Who Remade Asia* (2012), the Indian author Pankaj Mishra takes Asian public intellectuals as a definable formation, and cites as a watershed event in the genesis of this formation Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905 in the strait of Tsushima, between Korea and southern Japan, in the course of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). A major naval battle that marked the first time a modern Western power was defeated by an Asian nation, the victory was hailed by many Asian intellectuals in widely separated parts of the world—Mohandas Gandhi (then an unknown Indian lawyer in South Africa), Mustafa Kemal (a young Ottoman soldier in Damascus, later known as Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey), Sun Yat-sen (at the time, a Chinese political activist sojourning in London), Rabindranath Tagore (then a teacher in rural Bengal), and many more. For Mishra, the Battle of Tsushima was a defining moment in the political and intellectual awakening of Asia.

This awakening, however, did not begin with the Battle of Tsushima. By stressing the impact of Japan’s military victory over Russia, Mishra glosses over two important facts. Asians already began to look towards Japan in the 1880s as Japan modernized during the Meiji Restoration, by laying the foundation of an industrial economy, a modern educational system and state bureaucracy and a constitutional government. Showing that an Asian country can modernize in its own terms, demonstrating its might in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and terminating the extraterritorial rights enjoyed by Great Britain, the United States, and other Western powers in 1899, Japan inspired by its example Europe-dominated and colonized Asians from Turkey and Egypt to India and Indonesia.

What Mishra also obscures is that—though the rise of Japan was important in Asia’s awakening—the move to imagine and foster transnational or intraregional solidarities already began in many places in Asia even before the Russo-Japanese War.

Here the case of the Philippines is enlightening in showing how intellectuals in one Asian country positioned themselves in the world. (I speak of the Philippines, of course, because it is what I am most familiar with, but I hope that “local” histories of the idea of being “Asian” can be done for other parts of Southeast Asia as well).

A form of “Asianism” was already part of the Philippine nationalist movement from its beginnings in the 1880s, as Jose Rizal and other intellectuals...
sought to embed the Philippines in a wider “Malay” region, as part of the claim that—contrary to Spanish denigrations of Filipinos as “a people without a history”—Filipinos were inheritors of a “high” and “ancient” Malay civilization. In the early phase of the Filipino nationalist movement, however, “malayness”—or what was called malayismo—was deployed not as charter for separation and sovereignty but as an argument for recognition and the right to an autonomous status within the Spanish empire. It was an idea rather than a movement since Filipinos had little contact, if at all, with peers elsewhere in the Malay region and there was nothing comparable to the Filipino Propaganda Movement elsewhere in the region.

In the early 1890s, the focus of the nationalist movement was reform, “assimilation” and a status for Philippines as an overseas province rather than a colony of Spain. A revolution for independence was not as yet perceived to be a realistic option. Thus, the networks Filipino intellectuals built were not with fellow Asians but with liberal elements in Europe, and in particular with similarly situated Cubans and Puerto Ricans, to whom Filipino intellectuals felt bound by a shared grievance and purpose.

In the Filipino political imaginary at this time, Filipinos saw themselves within the frame of “Greater Spain” rather than that of Asia. Hence, Filipino leaders—who were a group of highly Europeanized intellectuals—took a distanced, skeptical view of Japan’s call for “Asia for Asians”. Instead, they used, as the Filipino leader Marcelo del Pilar did, Japan’s rising influence as argument for the closer integration of the Philippines to Spain, warning that if Spain did not introduce reforms, Japan’s redemptorist “Asia for Asians” policy would attract Filipinos and the Philippines would gravitate towards Japan in the same way that Cuba and Puerto Rico were being drawn into the orbit of the United States.

By 1895, however, the Spain-based Propaganda Movement had given up hopes that reform would come from Spain. And in 1896, the Philippine revolution began. The revolution radically changed the equation for Filipinos. Now turned revolutionary, the base of the Filipino nationalist movement shifted—physically and intellectually—from Europe to Asia. The Propaganda Movement and the Aguinaldo government-in-exile set up headquarters in Hong Kong, and turned to Japan for political and material assistance in a struggle that had quickly changed in 1899 from a revolution against Spain to a war against U.S. annexation.

As the first nationalist revolution in Asia, the Filipino revolution stirred wide interest because of its implications for Western domination in the region. Leaders of the revolution were themselves aware of its regional implications. As Apolinario Mabini, the leading theoretician of the revolution, grandly declared in 1899, the revolution’s “ultimate purpose” was “to keep the torch of liberty and civilization burning and bright in the Oceania, so as by illuminating the dark night wherein the Malayan race now lies degraded and humiliated, it may show to them the path to their social emancipation”. He wrote that if the Philippine revolution succeeded, England, Russia, France, Germany, Holland, Portugal, and “other rabid colonizers” would “tremble for their colonial possessions and those they expect to have in the coveted partition of China in this troubled sea of the Far East”. “The Philippine revolution”, Mabini warned, “is contagious, very contagious”.

In practical terms, however, the revolutionary leaders knew that the foreign material and political support they needed could only come from Japan. Thus in 1898, the Filipino nationalist Mariano Ponce was posted in Yokohama as the Aguinaldo government’s representative in Japan. In his three-year stay in Japan, Ponce actively networked with Japanese “pan-Asianists” in and outside government, publicized the cause of Philippine independence, and initiated two clandestine (and failed) attempts to smuggle arms and ammunition from Japan to the Philippines.

It is important to note that Ponce was in Japan at a time that saw, arguably for the first time, the emergence of a “community” of “Asian public
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intelligents”. Drawn by Japan’s growing power and the example it had set for how Asians can find their own path to freedom and civilization, assorted students, political agents, exiles and refugees from the Middle East and south, east and southeast Asia converged in Japan. It is quite remarkable that if one draws up a list of those who visited or sojourned in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century (say, 1890-1910), one has a roster of leading anti-colonial intellectuals in Asia. As Mishra writes:

In the early years of the twentieth century, Tokyo became a Mecca for nationalists from all over Asia, the centre of an expanded Asian public sphere…

The advance of imperialism everywhere forced Asian elites into anxious sideways glances as well as urgent self-appraisals. Very quickly in the early twentieth century, a transnational intellectual network grew, bringing Asian intellectuals into dialogue with each other.8

In Japan, societies were organized to stimulate intellectual exchanges and promote the spirit of pan-Asianism. Through various societies and gatherings in Japan, Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, Indians, Thais and Japanese met to exchange views and celebrate their solidarity. Ponce himself met fellow political refugees, like Park Yong-hyo and Yu Kil-chun, leaders of the Korean reform movement, Kang Youwei, the famous Chinese reformer and scholar and Sun Yat-sen (with whom Ponce forged the closest ties). Illustrating the value of these networks, Ponce caused to be published in Tokyo in 1901, in Japanese translation, his book on the Philippine independence struggle, Cuestion Filipina: Una Exposicion Historico-Critica de Hechos Relativos a la Guerra de la Independencia, a work that was also translated into Chinese and published in Shanghai in 1902 and reissued in 1913. Now little known in the Philippines, this book was, according to Rebecca Karl, an American scholar on Chinese nationalism, “perhaps the single most influential text for post-1902 Chinese interpretations of the global and Chinese significance of the Philippine revolution”.9 It influenced Chinese intellectuals in recasting China’s anti-dynasty struggle as a modern nationalist movement.

Political conditions, of course, quickly changed, both in the home countries of these traveling Asian intellectuals and in Japan. “Pan-Asianism” was never a unitary or homogeneous movement.10 There were deep divisions among the Japanese as to the policy their government should pursue with regards to the rest of Asia and deep suspicions among other Asians over Japan’s expansionist ambitions.

In the Philippines, the dream of an Asian republic faded with U.S. annexation. In the same way that the effective “world” for Filipinos shifted from Greater Spain to an Asia that had Japan as its axis, the orientation in the Philippines now shifted from Asia to the United States—to such great effect that Filipinos came to have the reputation as the most “Americanized” among Asians.

Asianism would persist as an intellectual current in the Philippines. Mariano Ponce, who returned to the Philippines in 1907 after a twenty-year exile, continued to cultivate a scholarly interest in Asia, publishing a monograph on Indochina and a biography of Sun Yat-sen, which is credited as the first book by a Filipino on China. In 1915, Ponce founded together with Jose Alejandrino and leading Filipino intellectuals, Sociedad Orientalista de Filipinas, which published a monthly journal of Asian affairs, Boletin de la Sociedad Orientalista de Filipinas in 1918. These are the first Asian studies society and journal independently established by Southeast Asians.

The Asian society founded by Ponce and Alejandrino was short-lived. But Asianism would continue in various forms. There were ambitions early in the twentieth century to build the Philippines as an “intellectual and commercial center” for the Malay region—an ambition that did not materialize because the Philippines was unable to build the needed material and intellectual
resources and because it was an ambition undermined by the Philippines' dubious position as an American surrogate in the region.\textsuperscript{11} "Asia for the Asians" became the dominant theme in Manila's intellectual life during the Japanese occupation—but it was an ideal warped by the reality of Japan's imperial domination.

In Japan, the years that followed the Russo-Japanese War saw Japan's "altruistic" pan-Asianism turn towards a more aggressive, self-interested posture as Japanese officialdom entered into treaties and agreements that committed Japan to recognizing the claims of Western powers in the region, at the same time that they assured for Japan certain prerogatives as an accepted member of the imperialist club in Asia. These would culminate, as we know, in World War II with the establishment of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" under Japan. While Japan's influence galvanized anti-Western feelings and boosted decolonization movements in Burma, Indonesia, Malaya and India, it also raised the specter of another domination and dispelled the old romantic notions of Asian solidarity.\textsuperscript{12}

How did Filipino intellectuals locate themselves in the world in response to these changes? The response was of course quite complex, given the pressures of changing international and domestic conditions. But one early and exemplary response was given in a lecture on "pan-Orientalism" on 23 March 1917, by Jose Alejandrino, a Filipino Asianist who also sojourned in Japan, like Ponce, at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{13} In that lecture in 1917, Alejandrino lamented that Japan's "sentimental, altruistic and noble pan-Orientalism has been substituted at the present historical moment by the aggressive and imperialist". In spite of this, Alejandrino kept his faith in the original, emancipative spirit of pan-Asianism.

This Asianism however—Alejandrino suggested—must be built on new foundations. Speaking of the Filipinos, Alejandrino said that their experience with colonialism for three centuries had cultivated in them a tendency towards dependence on others to determine their future. Nations, he said, are not a "nation of angels, without passions, who come solely animated by the altruistic proposition of working for our happiness". Hence, the tendency towards dependence should be surmounted. What is imperative, Alejandrino argued, is that Filipinos themselves strengthen their own society and government and build a nation independent, progressive, self-reliant and one that would command the respect of other nations. While he continued to hark back to the old romantic notion of Oriental solidarity, it is clear that Alejandrino was looking as well to a future when such solidarity would more securely rest on relations of parity and mutuality among nations that are mature, progressive and free.

Alejandrino's dream will remain problematic for so long as nations are divided by stark inequalities of power, economic, political and military. But an Asianism that is multi-centric and dynamic is a worthy ideal to pursue.

Asia has grown exceedingly complex, it can no longer be imagined as a totality, and the imperatives for action can no longer be reduced to the stark, racialist East-West binaries of the past. In a time suspicious of absolutes, "pan-Asianism" should remain a name for an historical artifact rather than a current agenda, since the word—like "pan-Arabism", "pan-Islamic" or "pan-European"—has a hegemonic sound to it. Today, it suffices that intellectuals in Asia are connected in many ways on the basis of shared issues, advocacies, ideologies and professional concerns. Such connections, however, need to be built up, particularly across issues and sectoral concerns. It is here where an undertaking like the "Asian Public Intellectuals Fellowship Program"—a program undertaken in the spirit of consultation and participation—is most valued and needed.

In a recent essay, Caroline Hau and Takashi Shiraishi have proposed that it is best to think of Asianism as a "network" of dynamic linkages that can appear and disappear over time and space; thin out or thicken as hubs of "people at the right place at the right time" of people of shared sympathies.
and sometimes different persuasions. A network, in other words, allows us to see Asianism in synchronic and diachronic terms of multiple agents, ideas, institutions and practices without rigidly fitting them into categorical boxes. Such a view, they say, will be a corrective to viewing “Asianism” as if it were Japan- or China-centered, or one fed simply by the “social fantasy” of shared and common origins, culture and destiny.

To think of “networks” (instead of “community”), a word with mystifying effects) is indeed a more precise and pragmatic view of how people come together. Yet, words like “networks”, “contacts” and “linkages” also seem self-interestedly instrumental and morally barren. It says very little about what causes bring people together. There is something to be said as well (as Hau and Shiraishi themselves acknowledge) for the virtues and necessities of “fantasy”—even as we are watchful of its dangers—and for the affective values of friendship, respect, mutuality and community.

Let me illustrate these values—and end this lecture—with the story of the Filipino Mariano Ponce, the person I mentioned earlier and who can justly be called the “first Filipino Asianist”. Sojourning in Japan for three years, caught between feelings of optimism and despair about his mission of enlisting Japan’s help for the fledgling Philippine Republic, Ponce lamented how the world is driven by the currents of “positivism”. “There is no nation today”, he said, “that moves unless driven by its own interest”.

Yet, Ponce remained open to the world and genuinely admiring of the Japanese as a people. While in Japan, he immersed himself in Japanese culture and history—dressing up and living like a Japanese in Yokohama and even marrying a Japanese woman. While in Japan, he immersed himself in Japanese culture and history—dressing up and living like a Japanese in Yokohama and even marrying a Japanese woman. In 1906, purely out of personal interest and on his own account, he visited Indochina (Vietnam) and tried to learn all he could about the country, alert to what Filipinos themselves could learn from Vietnam’s experience. In Vietnam, he tracked down Filipinos who had settled there, remnants of the Franco-Spanish expeditionary forces that occupied Vietnam in 1858-62.15 Ponce recounts a moving encounter with one of these Filipino soldiers, who had settled in Vietnam and married a local woman, in which the Filipino confessed that it was only when the Philippine revolution began in 1896 that he realized how wrong he and the other Filipinos were in helping the French against the Vietnamese who were, after all, only defending their own country. This realization, he said, had deepened his affection for the Vietnamese.

Back in the Philippines after 1907, Ponce promoted knowledge about Asia even as he was actively engaged in the political and cultural life of his own country. He was on a trip to visit his friend Sun Yat-sen in China and to revisit Japan when he died, while transiting in Hong Kong, in 1918. (There is more to this story. Ponce’s wife, Okiyo Udangawa, raised their family in Ponce’s hometown in Baliwag, Bulacan, took a Filipino name and during the Japanese occupation, protected her town-mates in Baliwag from abuses by Japanese soldiers. An old family photograph shows her looking very much like a Filipino matriarch, dressed in traditional Filipino dress, surrounded by her children and grandchildren).

This is just one story, and perhaps a bit romanticized, but it is a story worth telling for showing what, at the most personal level, being an “Asian public intellectual” can mean.

NOTES:

2 Pankaj Mishra, From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals Who Remade Asia (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012). Mishra takes Asia in its original Greek sense, as the continent divided from Europe by the Aegean Sea and from Africa by the Nile.

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“Malayness” was both a racial and geographic construct, referring as it did to that region late nineteenth-century geographers called Malasia, roughly corresponding to Southeast Asia today. Fluid and indeterminate, the notion of the “Malay world” had (for Filipinos) the Malay archipelago as its core, and radiated outwards to other parts of Asia. Men like Rizal, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, and Pedro Paterno claimed cultural affinities between the Philippines and countries like Siam and Cochinchina. Rizal even speculated on the Malay origin of the Japanese and the existence of “an ancient civilization, common to all the races which lived in that [Far Eastern] region”.


8 Mishra, From the Ruins of Empire, 166, 168. Among those who visited or sojourned in Japan at the turn of the century: Chinese leaders Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Sun Yat-sen; Lu Xun (a student in 1905; later China’s foremost modern writer); Abdurreshid Ibrahim (most prominent pan-Islamic intellectual of his time; a political refugee in 1909); Egyptian Ahmad Fadali Beg; and Vietnamese nationalist Phan Boi Chau (1905).


11 For the reference to the Philippines as a regional center, see Teodoro Kalaw’s 1927 article in Spiritual Register: News Columns of Teodoro M. Kalaw in La Vanguardia, 1926-27, trans. N. Joaquin (Metro Manila: Arveil Publishing, 2001), 175.

12 Jose Alejandrino, “Conferencia acerca del pan-orientalismo celebrada en el ‘Club Democrata’ el 23 de Marzo de 1917”, Boletín de la Sociedad Orientalista de Filipinas, I:1 (Jan. 1918), 17-41. A Belgian-educated engineer active in the nationalist movement, Alejandrino was involved in the effort in 1896-98 to procure in Japan arms for the revolution. He recounts that he was first made aware of “pan-Orientalism” around 1894 when, as a student in Belgium, a Japanese schoolmate, the son of the Japanese envoy in Holland, spoke to him of the need for Orientals to unite to combat Occidental arrogance.


OVERVIEW

Engage! Engage? Reflecting with Public Intellectuals

Mary Racelis and Lisandro E. Claudio
Workshop Director and Deputy Workshop Director, 11th API Regional Workshop

Introduction

Wide-ranging and meaningful ideas leap out of the papers in this volume contributed by 27 API Fellows for the 11th Regional Workshop in Tagaytay City, Philippines. As the workshop directors, we marvel at the provocative issues discussed and debated at the 2012 event. To help crystallize them into a meaningful framework, we offer our reflections on the workshop theme, “Engage! Public Intellectuals Transforming Society”.

The workshop was set up to help the Fellows reflect on the sociocultural realities they are exploring, encouraging them to integrate their professional knowledge and insights into discourse and action in rapidly transforming societies. Their range of concerns is broad, among them: peace-building, culture, meaning, memory, identity, adaptation, inclusion, performance and agency. Add to this: diversity, gender, ethnicity, child rights, religion, spirituality, local tradition, community, environment, and civil society. Nor can we forget migration, social entrepreneurship, alternative energy, localism, globalism, social movements and more. They form a breath-taking array.

Each contributor’s knowledge is fascinating in its own right, dramatizing as it does intricate and complex aspects of people’s everyday lives. That microcosm, however, is also situated in broader structural frameworks embedded in the macro-economy of power in a globalizing world.

Who are “public intellectuals?”

In Year 2000, founding fathers of the API Fellowships Program proposed this definition:

Public intellectuals are those—academics, mass media professionals, artists, NGO activists, and others with moral authority—who are committed to working for the betterment of society by applying their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience.

Our 27 public intellectuals have played out these roles by living for a time in one or more Asian countries other than their own. There, the API Fellows met people from all walks of life and attempted to apply individual and collective thinking to a better understanding of people’s stories, situations, societies and the challenges these generate. To the Fellows’ credit, most worked at grassroots levels, striving to link local realities to national, regional, global contexts and back. Their moral authority emerges from their drive to make people’s muted voices heard.

A public intellectual must therefore be ready to embrace a never-ending struggle, sometimes praised, sometimes criticized, but often controversial. This means knowing when to stand one’s ground but also when to capitulate, humbly acknowledging that there is room for alternate evidenced-based ways of understanding reality. In utilizing their privileged positions to compare findings across the region on political structures, economic systems, cultural norms, social behavior, art, or environmental perspectives with the equivalents in one’s own country, public intellectuals would do well to remember Olivier Roy’s (1994) note of caution about comparative approaches. He urges us not simply to accept the components being compared but to go beyond them by questioning also the original configuration. Astute reformers, adds Foster (1999:135, cited by Jackie Smith 2008) should be “less concerned with
the division of the pie than with the recipe for making it”. It is in this context that we as the workshop directors, exhorted API writers not only to explore and reflect on their findings, but to venture beyond and Engage! Seeking social transformation means entering into partnerships with people that place knowledge within their grasp and that help organize them to utilize meaningful information for their own enlightenment and action.

New Forms of Social Movements

Peoples’ efforts toward created social change embedded in new forms of social movements throughout the region demand our serious attention. With long-standing Marxist paradigms crumbling following the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites, and a concomitant disenchantment with the language of proletarian revolution, class conflict, and bureaucratisation, central cases of social movements and re-inventing the language of the 21st century. Are these the transformative roles that public intellectuals are expected and qualified to champion?

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In response, the writers in this volumes probe emerging paradigms featuring networks, flat organization, social media, multiple voices, power relations, historicity, people’s expertise and agency, community-initiated actions, civil society, participatory governance and climate change. An increasingly dominant element in their investigations focuses on people’s everyday lives and how these relate to the overarching social problematic, or in Escobar’s terms, the “daily living produced the world”. His exhortation remains pertinent into the 21st century. Are these the transformative roles that public intellectuals are expected and qualified to champion?

Since many authors are examining revitalization and change through incipient or explicit social movements, let us explore these concepts further. A number rely on Tarrow’s (1998:1) classic definition of social movements as “contentious collective action”. Smith (2008), however, expresses reservations:

If analyses of social movements refer only to evidence of actual protest activities, they miss the bulk of the collective action in which social movement actors are engaged….Strong movements reach people in the spaces of their everyday lives, i.e.
the more informal and non-movement spaces where people socialize, recreate, worship and nurture their families and communities.

Moreover, adds Smith, where political spaces articulate with people’s daily routines, democracy emerges in its strongest forms. Accordingly, the attention to organizations and actors in the analysis of social movements needs to embrace not only structures but much more deliberately, processes and interaction. This suggests that today’s public intellectuals will not get far if they do not immerse themselves in people’s everyday experiences. Through this immersion, they can discover how lived realities have shifted policies systematically biased against the poor into policies resulting in poverty reduction and the enhanced resilience of the poor. In whichever direction the pendulum swings, structure or process, the resulting mix can re-configure swings, structure or process, the resulting mix can re-configure skewed power relations so as to create a more level playing field.

Thinking out of the box helps. Take the groundbreaking work of Egyptian anthropologist Asef Bayat (2010), who characterizes social non-movements as the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary”:

…the diverse ways in which the ordinary people, the subaltern—the urban dispossessed, Muslim women, the globalizing youth, and other urban grass roots—strive to affect the contours of change in their societies, by refusing to exit from the social and political stage controlled by authoritarian states, moral authority and neoliberal economies, discovering and generating new spaces within which they can voice their dissent and assert their presence in pursuit of bettering their lives. The vehicles through which ordinary people change their societies are not simply audible mass protests or revolutions, even though they represent an aspect of popular mobilization; rather, people resort more widely to what I will elaborate as “non-movements”—the collective endeavors of millions of non-collective actors, carried out in the main squares, back streets, court houses, or communities.

While these arenas have not heretofore been regarded by scholars as significant in the struggle for citizenship and transformation, Bayat argues that the urban disenfranchised are in fact bringing new life to communities and redefining the meanings of urban management and participation. Largely excluded from formal institutional channels, poor urbanites have little choice but to assert their rights by taking direct action from within their zones of exclusion. They do so “quietly impinging on the propriety and powerful and on society at large”. Generally missing in non-movements, he elaborates, are those elements usually associated with the more contentious manifestations like pivotal leadership, ideology and structured organization.

People’s Agency

Bayat’s pioneering urban research offers welcome new insights into the lives, preferences and prospects of poor people in cities the world over. A number of the contributors to this volume note, for example, that in addressing onsite environmental and livelihood or poverty issues in the villages of the region, external change agents are reckoning with and showing respect for people’s indigenous knowledge and the everyday lives that “produce the world”. Spiritual underpinnings and cultural integrity are thus woven into the development tapestry to mesh community efforts with sensitive external support.

Regrettably, the “outside expert” syndrome, which has long ignored or even denigrated community capacities, has infiltrated into the people’s own self-images. Thus, newer post-development approaches emphasize enhancing people’s consciousness of the meaningful patterns in their daily lives, the richness of their indigenous knowledge and the value of their aspirations. This in turn encourages communities to organize and chart their future with greater confidence and determination.

In post-conflict scenarios, displaced families’ concepts of rights build on their memories of the everyday life which once nurtured them and to which most long to return. Their historical journeys as they recall them sustain their sense of identity and purpose. The Fellows’ explorations in art, theater, museums, filmmaking, religious imagery,
and cultural integrity refashion the problematic by lodging it in the local culture. Combining humanistic approaches with empirical social science perspectives opens promising new windows to a fast changing world. Human agency in all its power surfaces in everything from life abroad as a foreign worker, or adapting a new science curriculum to local culture, or to indigenous people determined to affirm their ethnic identity.

Fellows display their creative advantage in exploring a single topic in one or more countries, and showing how previously ignored social processes and interactions are leading to alternative paradigms of society. Illustrative of this point is the account of how long-standing negative views about “squatters” in Asian cities have been transformed over decades first into the less pejorative terminology of “informal settlers” or “urban poor”, and most recently “urban citizens” with rights to the city. Offering many fruitful lessons is the experience of policy reform generated by the urban poor as both silent and loud protesters supported by NGOs, academics and progressive government leaders.

Urban Informal Settlers Generating New Paradigms

In their quest for survival in the city, Southeast Asia’s poor residents launch a variety of coping mechanisms. Street vendors occupy forbidden sidewalk spaces to sell their wares. Police raids come as no surprise to them and they readily escape, supplies and containers in tow, to head off confiscation and destruction of their wares. The routine is all too familiar: run and hide, wait a few days until the police have relaxed their guard, then reclaim the same or nearby space to continue hawking goods and services—until the next raid. Bayat terms this the “war of attrition—a temporary compliance in times of constraint while carrying on with encroachments when the right time arrives”. One harassed Manila vendor baffled by what she perceived as the city authorities’ unrelentingly vindictive actions against striving people once exclaimed in exasperation during an interview, “We’re simply trying to earn an honest living. What’s wrong with that? Would they rather we steal?”

As thousands of informal settler households realize that the State cannot or will not respond to their escalating social and material needs and expectations, like jobs, security of tenure, or housing, or that lobbying and appeals to state bureaucracies prove fruitless, Bayat warns that poor people may take matters into their own hands. The evidence emerges in their relentless proliferation on sidewalks and open land, putting into practice the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary”.

Their basic weapon, he contends, is:

…the “art of presence”— the courage and creativity to assert collective will in spite of all odds, to circumvent constraints, utilizing what is available and realized. The art of presence is the fundamental moment in the life of non-movements, in life as politics. The story of non-movements is the story of agency in the times of constraints

(Bayat 2010:26)

Passive networks, continues Bayat, are then formed which allow individuals routinely occupying public or vacant spaces to carry out their daily activities, all the while subconsciously building up connections with one another. Normally dormant, these incipient networks can, when threatened, solidify and erupt from their below-the-surface realms to become active and organized collective resistance.

This interplay is clearly seen in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, where democratic political systems have emerged in recent decades. When non-movement crowds face imminent eviction, once passive groups now rise up to become active mobilized groups bent on countering these government threats. With the help of NGOs or political cadres skilled in community organizing, they learn the complexities of mobilizing to gain access to and use crucial information sometimes contributed by academics, and with growing frequency negotiating acceptable solutions. These movements in which people decide to defend what they perceive as their right, to occupy and utilize unused spaces at least temporarily when they are not otherwise being used, illustrate that...
democracy is lodged not only in formal state processes but in the active participation of citizens in the art of governance. Through their exercise of human agency, new norms in government-urban poor interaction are taking hold. Although these successes are still far from the norm in Southeast Asia, that they have reached this level of achievement points to cracks in the stone wall of obsolete development paradigms and implacable government bureaucracies.

From Non-movements to Contentious Politics

When do non-movements turn into contentious politics and organized, demand-driven social movements? Bayat explains:

Neither organized activism nor passive networks develop into more widespread resistance just anywhere and anytime. They require a significant breakthrough propelled by some kind of political or economic crisis, international intervention, intra-elite competition that undermines existing mechanisms of control, or a more tolerant government gaining power.

API countries can attest to the effects of coup d’état, popular uprisings or voter reactions as suddenly bringing about new political leadership and a modicum of structural change. All have experienced their share of dramatic transformations brought on by acute international financial crises in global markets, shifts from socialist to modified market economies, or widespread public indignation at open electoral fraud, massive corruption, and rapidly rising prices of basic commodities like rice and kerosene.

Other countries have seen their political institutions shattered and rebuilt after a devastating tsunami, earthquake, flood, volcanic eruption and nuclear plant accident. Crises bring to a head widespread discontent over government ineffectiveness or profligacy, sometimes leading to organized protests and possibly a reform response. The role of social media in forging solid if temporary response networks introduces a new phenomenon on the social transformation scene.

Once again Bayat cautions that the transformative effect of non-movements should not be judged merely by their becoming organized social movements. Non-movements can still be transformative even if they continue to operate in the quiet encroachment mode because they can support or undermine the state’s ability to govern:

For states rule not as external to society through mere surveillance but weave their logic into the fabric of society, into norms, rules, institutions and relations of power. The operation of non-movements challenges that logic of power… Should a state ultimately accommodate the claims of non-movements, it would in effect be a notable reform of the state itself.

For Asian public intellectuals, then, rethinking current paradigms in light of “evidence from below” will go a long way toward creating a new kind of knowledge-based society to which every person can gain access as well as contribute. Here “experts” are not primarily external consultants with advanced university degrees passing their insights on to community groups. It is the other way around. Community groups whose indigenous knowledge and historical experience guide their actions are recognized as adding to society’s fund of knowledge. Being strategically located and motivated to formulate workable solutions, they are best placed to decide how to tap into the tools and skills of outside partners. External expertise thus becomes most useful when it interacts with local experts as partners in an egalitarian style that generates sustainable outcomes. Note here the growing use of the term “partners”, implying peer relationships built on differential but equally valued inputs. It is reassuring to note that the unequally skewed “donors and beneficiaries” formulation is moving toward its long overdue demise.

Valuing indigenous knowledge and local cultures does not, however, deny the significance of overarching societal structures, the political economy, or the forces of globalization that affect grassroots developments. Given the interactive nature of state and society, these components necessarily figure in the analysis. Yet, because these overarching elements have long been studied, while the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary” has received comparatively little recognition as potentially
transformative, particular attention is due the latter, whether in urban, rural or other settings.

Examples abound. The search for livelihood and employment among rural households exemplifies the countryside’s quiet encroachment and its art of place. Families build informal networks enabling members to solicit funds to obtain employment in the Middle East or caregiver jobs in Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Small-scale miners persist in digging their tunnels despite government attempts to prevent or regulate them. Urban poor Filipino women with more children than they want opt for contraceptives despite the condemnation of the Catholic Church, or in desperation clandestinely undergo an illegal and unsafe abortion, as over half a million Filipino women have done each year over the last decade.

During the financial crisis of the late 1990s, role reversals formed part of family coping schemes to tide the members over until they could resume more familiar routines. Women became crewmembers on fishing boats or itinerant traders traveling for days leaving their jobless husbands home to do the household chores and mind the children. Many male farmers moved upland to cultivate cleared spaces even though the government had not declared the terrain “alienable and disposable”. Teachers erased the answers written into the previous year’s workbooks, salvaging them for re-use by pupils who could not afford to buy new ones (Racelis 2000).

Facing livelihood and other daunting challenges, with a government largely unable or unwilling to assist, beleaguered men, women, youth and children can become more daring about venturing into new roles. The pioneering ones among them may soon find their kin and neighbors following suit, legally or otherwise, reinforcing the security of all through their growing numbers. What was once extraordinary becomes ordinary. Eventually government recognizes that it cannot stand the massive tide of collective coping strategies (social non-movements) and begins to look for alternative solutions more compatible with the realities of people’s lives. In this sense the authorities too are forced into trying something new, changing the rules and, usually grudgingly at first, creating policies more responsive to the needs of previously dismissed or even harassed marginalized groups.

Again, Bayat’s observations resonate: “Despite authoritarian rule, there are always ways in which people resist, express agency and instigate change, rather than waiting for a savior or resorting to violence”. Activists and reformers should not, therefore, wait for “an uncertain revolution”, but adopt alternative modes that challenge political authorities to commit the state to carry out sustained social and political reforms. This essentially non-violent approach recognizes the validity of “poor people’s encroachment” and accepts the active participation and reform efforts of civil society interest groups bolstered by democracy movements or genuine political parties.

Public intellectuals will appreciate Smith’s contention that the expansion of a more formally organized and increasingly densely networked global civil society can lead to democratization of the global political system. A strengthened civil society, she believes, may well generate a united struggle for a world governed by principles of international human rights and social justice. Examples appear in robust global networks against land mines, child soldiers and discrimination against women, among others. International civil society networks flourish in actions around environment, global warming, disaster management, HIV-AIDs, social entrepreneurship, slum-dweller rights and many more. Closer to home, poor people with limited resources and leisure time participate more intensively in decision-making arenas through enlightened political education, discussion and action in the spaces of their everyday lives and through external links fostered by partner NGOs. The alternative is chaos, as the Middle East Arab Spring’s gone awry tragically illustrate.

Clearly, Asian public intellectuals have wide-ranging options from which to choose in the life ahead. Given likely political maneuvers in the ASEAN region, a useful strategy would assess one’s potential contributions in the context of the Global South but lodged in a globalizing world while remaining true to grassroots realities. This calls for them to
engage!—developing new paradigms, innovation and theory-building in interaction with marginalized people whose lives are most affected. Trying to figure out where and how to make their best contributions is a concern that may well become a lifelong commitment to transform our societies in ways that ensure citizenship benefits for all. In the course of that journey, recall Escobar’s insistence on the need for “challenging and up-setting dominant codes, leading to different ways of seeing the world”.

**Affect and Encounters**

Public intellectuals, then, are not detached observers of phenomena. Because they engage in knowledge-production to enhance public discourse, their writing brings in ethical elements. More importantly, the best public intellectuals contribute to the betterment of society.

But how do we achieve change in the context of heterogeneous societies? How do we propose grand solutions when different communities have different problems? And who is our public? The late historian Tony Judt (2012, 303) offers this reflection:

> Intellectual activity is a little bit like seduction. If you go straight for your goal, you almost certainly won’t succeed. If you want to be someone who contributes to world historical debates, you almost certainly won’t succeed if you start off by contributing to world historical debates. The most important thing to do is to be talking about the things that have, as we might put it, world historical resonance but at the level at which you can be influential.

In other words, Judt believes the public intellectual asks broad questions about humanity through engaging immediate realities. All API Fellows have done this, bridging the gap between concrete encounters and abstract ethics.

We encouraged Fellows to reflect consciously on their interactions. We have all been tempted to intellectualize our experiences in the field. We conceptualize, and we think of our encounters with farmers, fisherfolk, NGO workers, government officials, etc. as data to be analyzed. But this approach is incomplete. Before we write texts and before we organize information, we first encounter people. This is an affective experience—one that involves our senses and our feelings.

The notion of affect and encounter was an integral part of the workshop. It started with the first session when participants introduced themselves, answering the question: Whom am I trying to influence? The workshop offered ample opportunities for further reflection on this point.

On the concluding day, the session, “Affect and Encounters”, sought to enrich the group’s experience, not for the purpose of crafting a document but primarily to discuss ethical issues rarely raised in formal academic fora. By participating in the reflection process, Fellows would be the ultimate initiators and beneficiaries of the group’s collective thinking. We hoped that the ideas generated would have a profound effect on their lives and accomplishments as public intellectuals in the 21st century.

Out of this interchange should come a series of do-able actions representing individual commitments as well as networking and other possibilities that a public intellectual can carry out across expertise, generations and countries.

**Engaged Intellectuals: Challenges for API Fellows at Tagaytay**

The 2012 Tagaytay Workshop listed several goals: (1) exchange information through sharing the results of API Fellows’ research and/or professional activities; (2) foster close ties among the fellows; (3) explore future collaborative work beyond individual research or professional interests; and (4) identify ways in which they singly or in groups might contribute to social transformation, and what this would entail.

The four-day program unfolded in a variety of dynamic learning sessions. After the welcome dinner, keynote address, and opening session statements,
the workshop sessions were devoted to panel presentations, intense discussions, and formal and informal interaction interspersed by a day to learn from communities. Fellows selected one of three field learning sites:

1. Fish farming/aquaculture on Taal Lake: people, environment and long-term sustainability - Talisay, Batangas
2. Micro-finance and livelihood programs in relocated urban communities: partnerships and their impact on youth, women and poor households, Paliparan, Dasmarinas City, Cavite
3. Disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) in a vulnerable coastal community, Muzon 2, Rosario, Cavite

The whole-day Learning from Communities encounters offered an opportunity for interaction with local communities and the everyday issues with which they grapple. The evening before the visit, community leaders and partner civil society organizations oriented the respective participant groups to the issues at hand.

In the last session on Affect and Encounters the impact of these visits emerged from the informal conversations among participants beforehand followed by their final reflections. The Fellows were encouraged to address these questions:

1. What have been your most moving experiences during your time as an API Fellow?
2. Which of these experiences moved you to change the way you think?
3. Which of these experiences moved you to continue working for what you consider important?

Ultimately, the questions led the Fellows to reflect on what keeps them going and what allows them to continue their work as public intellectuals. Recalling the lessons learned from real people struggling with both large and mundane real-life issues in the everyday lives, participants sought to integrate these memories in ethical ways into their future roles as public intellectuals. How could they “light or replenish the fire within” that will enable them to influence others?

The individual reflections of the participants paraphrased below range widely, generally expressing a cautious optimism or an “optimistic uncertainty”:

- I will continue what I’m doing while recognizing that in the process my thinking about social transformation is evolving.
- I have no idea about the future, to be honest with myself. Where injustice clearly prevails, forgiveness and moving on are difficult; yet they must be done. Pushing for change is very tiring, so I can’t answer the question yet.
- On returning home, I hope to transfer this enlightening experience of doing politically risky research on religion to younger generations as essential for their intellectual credibility.
- Our advocacies from the research process require significant paradigm shifts which are not likely to happen soon. I’m not sure my activities will change anything but I won’t stop trying. At least there is a forum like this one in which I can participate to sustain my hope.
- I worry that my research may have led to the death of a shaman for sharing her secret knowledge with me. My research goes against mainstream norms and thus incurs risks of losing academic identity. But I must follow the heart more than the intellect, or be bound by structures and standards.
- Family values are important.
- Inspiring stories abound in human situations.
- I will return home with increased confidence.
- Learn more in order to retake the space for a peaceful society. Address the dominant structures – moral, ethical and political leadership.
• I appreciate that the communities welcomed us with great hospitality and no questions asked. Enriched by the interaction I was encouraged to continue learning from them while having fun and avoiding romanticizing them.

• I learned I can understand the other and why they do things the way they do, which we have not understood. I now see people as human beings, not as subjects of research.

• I gained an increased respect for people, their friendly outlooks and what they know.

• I learned not only factual information but how to adapt to different ways of life; it was exciting.

• Urban poor people are smart; they know how to deal with their lives, especially Muslims who are greatly stereotyped. But my research brought out their many abilities.

• I feel more motivated to help the people I worked with, admiring their resilience and coping behavior. We need to reduce the alienation they feel from government. That means being more critical of our own cultures. Restructuring of society is needed and I must help make that happen.

• People don’t want to fight injustices, but may be forced to do so.

• This chance to reflect pinpointed my anger at injustice and the determination to engage with people’s actions. I will seek guidance from NGOs to legitimize people’s rights and recognize their struggles.

• Activism is reinforced by grounded understanding. When you are discouraged, it is good to remember that although clouds and fog obscure the sky, underneath is beauty.

Ultimately, all of the Fellows agreed that it was people who kept them going: the people back home, the people they interacted with during their research and the people they will serve in the future. Motivation to continue one’s work, as such, occurs when our goals are concretized through the realities of human experiences.

Responding to the reflections of the Fellows and in particular to the rice cooker story told by one woman participant, Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J. presented an analogy: “We are all called to be rice cookers”. He explained:

Rice in its uncooked form is inedible. It has to be brought to fire. In Ilokano, rice is called inapuy, something to which you have to apply a fiery heat before it becomes edible. In the end, the final measure of whether applying fire is worthwhile is whether it results in aromatic cooked rice. For the Asian Public Intellectual, the equivalent question is: Can/Will my effort at engaging society transform it?

In bringing to the fore a variety of experiences and affective responses, the Workshop found Fellows in agreement about the essential contours of the public intellectual’s duties. Thinking back to the opening plenary, they recalled that Professor Resil Mojares had set the tone for these reflections and influenced many of the ensuing discussions. On the surface, he explains, public intellectuals create networks and forge linkages. But to constrain their activities to these instrumental tasks may seem “morally barren”. And neither do these terms explain “what causes bring people together”. For Mojares, the public intellectual cannot forget “the affective values of friendship, respect, mutuality and community”. The forging of Asian public intellectuals thus remains an open-ended ethical project.

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The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
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Remembering the Legacies of the Marcos Dictatorship: The Formation of Historical Memory and the Struggle for Justice in the Post-Marcos Period

Wahyudi

Introduction

In 2011, a controversy emerged in the Philippines regarding whether President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos deserved to be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (Heroes’ Cemetery). The idea of a hero’s burial for Marcos was initiated by the congressional representative for Sorsogon province, Salvador Escudero III, and was supported by an overwhelming majority of House members. In House Resolution No.1135, they urged “the administration of current President Benigno S. Aquino III to allow the burial of the remains of former President Marcos at the Libingan ng mga Bayani”. For these politicians, Marcos was not only a “well-decorated soldier, veteran of World War II, and a survivor of the Bataan Death March”, he was also a successful president who built the modern foundation of the Philippines through the “construction of vast infrastructure, the utilization of energy resources and the strengthening of local governments”.

This initiative prompted resistance from many Filipinos from different backgrounds. For many, the bid was an attempt to create a “false history” of the Philippines, in which memories of the former leader’s atrocities, corruption, and nepotism would be erased. In addition, by rehabilitating Marcos and other human rights violators, the move would contradict the mandate of EDSA People Power I, which overthrew Marcos and abolished his dictatorship. McCoy (1999: 131) has recorded that during the period of martial law (1972-1986), there were approximately 3,257 extra-judicial killings, 35,000 people tortured and 70,000 people incarcerated. A total of 2,520 people, or 77 percent of all victims who died, were tortured, mutilated, and dumped by roadsides for public display. The Philippine military was the primary organization through which Ferdinand Marcos terrorized people, social institutions, and communities who tried to resist his policies. Through presidential proclamation no. 1081, which began the period of martial law on September 21, 1972, Marcos’ regime suppressed freedom of speech, the press, and many other civil liberties.

The Marcos regime and martial law still remains in the memory of many Filipinos. While many wish to have past violations addressed in the courts, others wish to perpetuate a positive version of the regime. This study seeks to contextualize the issues and to focus on transitional justice in the post-Marcos regime by examining some questions, including a) how Philippine governments have dealt with human rights violations, and b) how do the Filipino people, especially the victims of human rights violations and their families, remember Marcos’ legacy?

This study is based on fieldwork and literature research. The fieldwork was conducted mainly in Manila in the Philippines for one year (July 2011-June 2012). Several weeks were also spent in Ilocos Norte, Marcos’ home province. The fieldwork included interviews with human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the Taskforce for Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD), and Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND). I also had discussions with social scientists at the Ateneo De Manila University. Secondly, I visited museums and monuments such as the Ayala Museum in Makati, and the Bantayog ng Mga Bayani Foundation in Quezon City, the Bantayog ng Desperacidos in Baclaran, the Aquino Museum in Tarlac, and the Marcos museum and its monument in Batac, Ilocos Norte. The literature review was conducted mainly in the Ateneo’s Rizal Library and focused on martial law during and after the Marcos regime and politics during Cory Aquino’s administration, especially her policies on human rights. The study aims is to add a small contribution to transitional justice issues and to contribute to the study of collective memory in post-authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia.
The Commitment to Uphold Human Rights

After four dramatic days of Epifanio de los Santos (EDSA) People Power in Metro Manila from February 22-25, 1986, Ferdinand Marcos fell from power. In the morning of February 25, Cory Aquino was inaugurated as president. This was to be the dawn of a new era for the Philippines as it emerged from an authoritarian regime to a democratic era.

In order to unite all factions and ideologies, Cory Aquino formed a “rainbow cabinet”. This was at least in part to accelerate political consolidation among political elites in the Philippines, which had broken down during the Marcos regime. However, in consequence, she had created an unstable state in which there was a coalition “between anti-Marcos civilians and military rebels”. This would boomerang and threaten the administration. (Thompson, 1996: 164-165, Nemenzo, 1988: 223)

The Cory Aquino administration focused on five agenda items to restore and rebuild democracy. These appeared designed to “undo what Marcos had done for twenty years” (Nemenzo, 1988: 223). The five items were 1) to recover ill-gotten wealth, 2) to purge local governments, 3) to rewrite the constitution, 4) to prosecute human rights violators during Marcos regime, and 5) to pursue the quest for peace. The government stated that it wished to remember the victims of violations by bringing all perpetrators to court. Aquino stated at her inauguration in Proclamation No. 1

“I pledge to do justice to the numerous victims of human rights violations. Consistent with the demands of the sovereign people, we pledge a government dedicated to uphold truth and justice, morality and decency in government, freedom, and democracy”.

(Quoted in Bella III, 1993: 118)

Nineteen days after the fall of the Marcos regime, on 2 March 1986, Aquino issued Proclamation No. 2 lifting the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus throughout the Philippines. She also signed Executive Order No. 8 to create a Presidential Committee on Human Rights (PCHR) as a fact-finding and advisory body to the president. Its mandate included investigating human right abuses since the beginning of martial law in 1972, including forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, massacres, and torture. The PCHR was staffed by capable persons and it was expected that it would reveal past violations under the Marcos regime and would result in the prosecution of violators and the provision of justice to victims.

In order to maximize its mandate, PCHR committees made a number of recommendations concerning the investigation of past violations. The Cory Aquino administration adopted some of the recommendations but failed to revoke “certain existing presidential decrees which gave investigative and judicial authority to military courts concerning all criminal responsibility against military personnel”. The PCHR faced a number of challenges in revealing human rights abuses. First was a lack of commitment by the military to discipline field officers suspected of being involved in human rights violations. Second was the military’s putting pressure on PCHR committees to investigate human rights violations committed by members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPR) and the New People’s Army (NPA). Third was the lack of protection provided by PCHR for witnesses providing testimonies against accused military personnel (Frey, 1989: 24; Nemenzo, 1988: 232-234). By the end of 1986, the PCHR in its first year in operation had received 708 complaints of human rights violations, including 483 incidents that had occurred under the Marcos administration and 225 under the Aquino administration. Of the 708 complaints, 249 cases were referred to other agencies and 23 cases were closed (Frey, 1989: 24).

The administration responded slowly to the PCHR’s recommendations. The PCHR was particularly disappointed by the response to the Mendiola Massacre, in which state security forces had opened fire on a demonstration by farmers and militant groups such as the Kilusang Mayo Uno (May One Movement), Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance), the League of Filipino students, and the Kongreso Ng Pangkakaisa ng Maralitang Lungsod (Unity Congress of Urban Poor) to demand agrarian reform from the Aquino administration. Some 13 people were killed and 72 were injured.
Four of the seven PCHR commissioners resigned in dissatisfaction and the PHCR became defunct. Through Executive Order No. 163, the president created the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to take over its powers. After approving a new constitution with a commitment to human rights in Article II, Section 11, the president then legalized the CHR as an independent institution. Its mandate was not confined to violations under the Marcos regime but also included the investigation “on its own or on complaint by any party, all of human rights violations involving civil and political rights”. (Frey, 1989: 25).

By June 1988, the CHR had produced only a few convictions of people from military and civil complaints, although it had received a total of 1,811 complaints including 872 cases filed by the PCHR. The CHR had no authority to prosecute. It only had the power to recommend prosecution in individual cases.

**Toward a Culture of Impunity**

Peace was a key agenda item for the Aquino administration. The president had to face challenges from both the right and the left. The rights included Marcos regime loyalists and the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), a cabal of officers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who had an agenda to seize power. There were a total of seven attempts by the group against her government. On the left, the administration had to cope with insurgencies from the New People Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as well as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), an armed organization advocating autonomy for the predominantly Muslim areas of Mindanao.

During the first month of the Cory Aquino administration there was a bid to end insurgencies. As a first step towards ending the conflict between the AFP and the NPA, an amnesty program was introduced which released some insurgents who had been jailed during Marcos regime. A 60-day ceasefire agreement was implemented to allow for negotiations between the AFP and the National Democratic front (NDF) as the NPA’s representatives. Unfortunately, the talks made little progress. In January 1987, the NDF withdrew and the peace talks collapsed before the 60-day ceasefire expired (Amnesty International, 1992a: 8; 1996b: 6).

Following the breakdown of negotiations, the administration issued a ‘total approach’ policy to counter insurgencies. It aimed to control the NPA’s movements and its infrastructural base by abolishing the Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF), an armed civilian force auxiliary to the Philippines Constabulary (PC) under the Marcos regime, and replacing it with a new paramilitary force, the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU). Thus a vigilante/paramilitary organization became a tool for “peace”. However, the result instead was an increase in human rights violations. The Philippines Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), as cited by Parang and Lopez (1992: 1756), reported that in November 1988, 705 persons were executed, 480 died in massacres, 11,911 were arrested and 1,676 tortured, and 204 reported missing. A total of 37,132 families became refugees in their own land during the first 1000 days of the Aquino government due to the total approach policy.

The number of violations was less than the total committed during the Marcos regime. However, there were still a high amount of violations during the administration’s seven years in power (1986-1992). The Cory administration, represented by her apparatus of paramilitaries, had indirectly committed human rights violations. Hence, she had derailed from the “railway track” of her commitment as a part of EDSA People Power agenda to deal with past violations. Indeed, her administration apparently became a part of the problem in upholding human rights rather than “a problem solver”.

**Tying the Future to the Past**

In the post-Marcos period there have been many efforts to break the silence over past violations. These include establishing monuments as a form of remembrance of Filipino’s struggles during the Marcos regime. Famous sites include the EDSA People Power Monument, located on the corner...
of Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA), and the Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace, known as the EDSA Shrine, located at the intersection of Ortigas Avenue and EDSA in Quezon City.8

The following section focuses on sites of memory built by victims and their relatives, and human rights NGOs.

**Remembering the Heroes of the Anti-Marcos Movement: Museum, Monument and Documentation**

Ferdinand Marcos, Ninoy Aquino and Cory Aquino are famous icons in the minds of Filipinos. Ferdinand Marcos is generally symbolized as “a bad thing”, and Ninoy Aquino and his wife, Cory Aquino as “a good thing”. These ideas can be seen at the Ayala museum on Makati Avenue at the corner of De La Rosa Street. The museum’s second floor houses a permanent exhibition featuring videos, images and information. Marcos and his regime are portrayed in three steps chronological steps; 1) working towards democracy (1946-1972), 2) Freedom lost (1972-1983), and lastly 3) freedom regained (1983). A series of videos illustrate how Marcos suppressed democracy and freedom and enriched his own family. Another part of the exhibition shows photographs and memorabilia related to Ninoy Aquino’s early struggle to resist the Marcos regime while working as a journalist, his later career and a picture of his “martyr’s death” when he was assassinated at Manila International Airport on August 21, 1983. The exhibition includes a large image of Cory Aquino published by Time magazine in its profile of her as Women of the Year for 1986 for her contribution in leading “a fairy-tale revolution” in EDSA People Power.

The Bantayog Nga Mga Bayani Memorial ground, located in Quezon Avenue corner EDSA in Quezon City, commemorates the struggles and sacrifices of ordinary people during the Marcos regime. It includes a museum, a monument, and a wall of remembrance. An exhibition provides a detailed chronology of martial law and a “map” to help the visitor to understand the period. Exhibits about the military, contrasted with Filipino flowers, and the replica of a prison which held those who resisted the regime encouraged me as a visitor to imagine the reality of a dark history. I saw the wall of remembrance, consisting of black granite walls with the names of heroes and martyrs, as a form of honor intended to remember those contributions as well as to unite against forgetting, and the monument of Inayangbayan (Motherland), a 45-ft-high sculpture made of steel and brass.

The Family of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) also built a monument dedicated to preserving the memory of disappeared people, named the Bantayog Ng Mga Desaparecidos. It was inaugurated on July 13, 1994, to commemorate the ninth anniversary of the disappearance of Redemptorist priest Fr. Rudy Romano who was abducted on 11 July, 1985 while riding his motorbike in Cebu city. According to FIND, the disappeared people were “they whose passion for freedom, truth, and justice, expressed in varied ways, became the reason why they were abducted and never surfaced again”. Designed by Sculptor Lito Mondejar, the Flame of Courage monument consists of a figure of a woman holding a torch and a child holding a picture of his father, and a wall on which all the names of the desaparecido are etched. The mother carrying the torch symbolizes the courage of those who were left behind to steadfastly struggle for justice. The child holding the picture of his/her father symbolizes the hope that one day his/her family members will be reunited with his/her missing loved one.

Those books may have had little impact on most Filipinos in regard to past violations of rights. However, they do support more recent efforts to achieve transitional justice in the Philippines. In September 2011 the CHR and the Department of National Defense (DND) signed a common position to “end impunity and build a culture of human rights” and established the Martial Law (ML) Files Project. The project aims to take seriously “the process of national reconciliation and healing in the long journey to end impunity and make human rights our way of life” (Inquiry, 2011).

**Commemorative Activities of Past Injustice**

There are at least four commemorations of the martial law period at the national and local levels. The initiatives come from the government and from civil society, represented by institutions and NGOs concerned with human rights. The commemoration of EDSA People Power (February 22-25, 1986) is a special holiday for all schools in the Philippines under the Philippines president’s proclamation No.295. Unlike previous presidencies, for the current government, EDSA People Power “which restored and ushered political, social and economic reforms in the country” is “an inspiration to Filipinos everywhere as a nation and as a people”. Creating a school holiday is unlikely to be a major influence on young Filipino people. However television shows and other events on the day may help them to understand EDSA People Power better. Also there is recognition of Filipinos struggling against the dictatorship.

Second is to remember martial law as a pretext to oppress, to jail, and to torture individuals, communities, as well as scholars. Currently, most young Filipinos do not know what martial law is. This means that young people who will lead the country remain ignorant in relation to history and perspectives on past injustices and may thus more easily repeat them. Thus the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), Claimants 1081, the CHR and Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) launched an online awareness education campaign about martial law six months before its 40th anniversary. Those institutions felt there was a moral obligation “to remind the public about this part of their history and educate the new generation”. Tagged as #rememberML@40, the group pledged to inform and inspire youth about the former tyranny and urged lawmakers to pass a compensation for martial law victims’ bill before Martial Law Day on September 21 through Facebook.

Thirdly, there is a “program of honor” created by the Bantayog Ng mga Bayani Foundation to give the title of heroes and martyrs to those who struggled against martial law. Since 1993, the foundation officers and members decided to honor those who died every year on November 30, the birth date of Andres Bonifacio, national hero of the Philippines. Their names will be inscribed on the Wall of Remembrance of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani, where, up to now, there are 207 of Heroes and Martyrs (www.bantayog.org, 1996). The annual event is also used as a medium to reunite people to remember their friends who were killed, disappeared, jailed, and tortured during the dictatorship regime.

Lastly, there is the commemoration of *desaparecidos*. The whole Christian community celebrates November 1 and 2 (All Saints Day and All Souls day) in remembrance of their departed loved ones, where they can come together to offer flowers, pray together, and light candles on the tomb of their loved ones. However, this ritual is problematic for the families of the disappeared who do not know “whether to offer prayers for their loved one or to
continue their search, to accept the loss or to find ways to ascertain the whereabouts, to be forever filled with questions whether their loved one is in good condition, being treated humanly, being provided with food, clothing, and shelter, or whether their loved one will still be coming home”.

The families gather at this time in front of the Bantayog ng Desaparecidos at the Redemptorist Church, Baclaran. Their feelings were expressed by Mary Guy Portajada, Secretary General of Families of the Disappeared for Justice, on November 2, 2010, as follows; “Today, as the whole nation remembers the lives of those who have departed, we commemorate the missing. We light a candle not for their souls to rest in peace but to shed light on their way home. We offer flowers not because we believe that they are no longer with us but because their deeply missed by their loved one”. (www.arkibongbayan.org, 2011)

Conclusion

After the fall of the Marcos regime, the administration of Cory Aquino had a chance to restore democracy and justice in the Philippines. The administration stated that it wanted to move from an authoritarian regime to an era of democracy. One of its policies was to uncover human rights violations during the Marcos regime. The PCHR was established to do this. However, the administration subsequently encountered many challenges in doing this. She had created an unstable state accommodating many different ideologies and this boomeranged as there were seven coup attempts. The administration also faced insurgencies, to which it responded with the ‘total approach’ policy which resulted in more human rights violations.

The unresolved past has led to a culture of impunity in the Philippines. However, efforts to keep memories alive also continue. Sites of memory, commemoration activities and publication of books of testimony are evidence of the aspirations of Filipinos to include the past with the future and to give a voice to voiceless victims.

This alone will not break the culture of impunity in the Philippines. This will continue as long as the military group, Marcos regime families, and his alliances are still in power dominating the government and controlling public discourse. In addition, the sites could not influence massively in shaping collective memory of the Filipino, especially youth. But they are a storehouse for memory and perhaps a trigger for future action to resist efforts to falsify or bury past injustices. The controversy of Marcos burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani is one examples of how collective memory can fight an undesirable policy. Hence, the sites of memory built by Filipino people are, in the words of Milan Kundera, a part of “the struggle of memory against forgetting”.

NOTES:

1 They are PAHRA (Philippines Alliance of Human Rights Advocates), AFAD (Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances), TFDP (Task for Detainees of the Philippines), MABINI (human rights lawyers’ group formed during the Marcos dictatorship), the Bantayog ng Mga Bayani Foundation (which honors martial-law martyrs and heroes), the Catholic Education Association of the Philippines, the Makati Business Club (MBS) and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)


3 Some of those recommendations were the ratification of international human rights covenants, Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, disbanding the Civilian Home Defense Force and other paramilitary units, speedy preliminary investigation and trials of human rights violators, education and training for all police and military personnel.

4 They were Jose Dikno (Vice), Jose Reyes (Vice Chair), Zeneida Avancena and Sr. Mariani Dimaranan (Commissioners)

5 As explained by Thompson (1996, 168-170), there were seven coup attempts against the Cory Administration.

6 There were three documents that strengthened the police: the Philippines Constitution of 1987, Executive Order 264 of 1987, and regulations promulgated by the Department of National Defense. In early 1987, the Cory administration also authorized the formation of the Civilian Self Defense
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7 Because of those situations, the unfinished human rights violations affected her successor, Fidel V Ramos. During his administration, in the name of state stability and economic growth, the Ramos administration neither revealed human rights abuses during the Marcos regime nor investigated violators during the Cory administration. Through an amnesty program to reconcile groups of various backgrounds in conflict since the Marcos regime, he gave impunity to violators (Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights/KARAPAN and Task Force Detainees of the Philippines/TFDF, 1997; McCoy, 1999: 300-304; Miranda, 1995: 72-82). The number of conflicts undoubtedly decreased through those policies. However, an avoidance of revealing the past may lead to violations in future and creates impunity for violators, who may deny their crimes. Such impunity has apparently become a part of the culture in the Philippines.

8 To understand more about both sites of memories as collective memories in EDSA People Power, see Lisandro Elias E. Claudio (2011), Movement and Post-Authoritarian Mnemonics: Populist Narratives and the Commemoration of People Power in Contemporary Philippines, PhD Thesis, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, the University of Melbourne.

9 Interview with Egay Cabalitan, staff member of the Task force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDF), June 5, 2012

10 Fieldwork notes, November 30, 2011 at the Bantayog Ng mga Bayani Foundation, Quezon City, the Philippines.

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Introduction

I first encountered Iri and Toshi Maruki’s Hiroshima Panels in the summer of 2010, on the insistence of a friend who had made last-minute arrangements for me to visit the Maruki Gallery which houses the art works. I somewhat reluctantly made the almost two-hour journey to Saitama Prefecture. I say reluctantly, because I knew that the works were in response to the Hiroshima atomic bombings. I have a general distaste for artworks created in response to trauma, and this was the most traumatic incident to have struck Japan in recent history. In any case, I obliged.

Confronted by the Hiroshima Panels, I was overcome by the human realities the Hiroshima bombing incident.

It was a procession of ghosts; in an instant all clothing was burned off. Hands, faces, and breasts swelled up.

The purple blisters on their skin soon burst and peeled off, hanging down like pieces of rags.

With hands half lifted up, they were like ghosts in a procession.

Dragging their ragged skin behind them, exhausted, they fell down, moaning in heaps and died, one after another.

At the center of the explosion, the temperature reached six thousand degrees.

The above is an excerpt from the caption for “Ghosts”, the first of the 15 Hiroshima Panels jointly painted by the husband and wife painting duo, Iri and Toshi Maruki. According to the information at the museum, they finished the first Hiroshima Panel in 1950 and devoted the next 32 years to creating the remaining panels. This became their response to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, the aftermath of which they had witnessed when they returned to Hiroshima three days after the bombing to help in the recovery of Iri’s affected family members and community.

I was not an expert in history; however I did have a rough idea of what happened in the past. I was aware of the wars fought. The education I received in Malaysia taught me about the Japanese colonization of Malaya and the former’s exploits in the Asia Pacific region. This information was coupled with many anecdotal stories told by my late grandparents; of the loss of loved ones, of starvation, hardship, and the fear of rape, torture, and their own mortality. I was well aware that the Japanese occupation in Malaya was the most traumatic period my own nation had endured in recent history.

Prior to my encounter with the Hiroshima Panels, the twin atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki merely meant the end of the Second World War to me. Despite the despicable inhumanity of the atomic bomb, it symbolized the liberation of nations and the end of the suffering brought upon by the Japanese empire’s colonization of the Asia Pacific region. For me, the atomic bombs were a solution to a long, protracted situation.

Too Chee Hung
In 1945, the Allied Forces began pressuring Japan to voluntarily surrender. As a result of their refusal, the Allied Forces dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, and subsequently on Nagasaki on 9 August. In the end, Japan surrendered unconditionally on 15 August 1945. General Seishiro Itagaki, the leader of the Japanese army in Malaya surrendered to Allied Forces in Singapore.

(Ramlah et al. 2010, p.27; translated from Bahasa Malaysia)

The above is an excerpt from a Malaysian history textbook taught to 15-year-old secondary students and taken from a chapter about the Japanese occupation in Malaya. That paragraph, accompanied by an image of the atomic bomb mushroom cloud, was all there was to describe the atomic bomb incident. Unlike the descriptions by the Marukis, the text lacks humanity and says very little about the extent of the destruction and suffering caused.

My first encounter with the Hiroshima Panels also reminded me of an event that had taken place about 10 years ago when I visited the War Memorial Museum in the remote northern state of Kelantan, Malaysia. Considering that Malaysia’s only involvement in any major wars was with the Japanese invasion and occupation of Malaya during the Second World War (besides the emergency period of 1948-1960 which has never been officially recognized as a war), the museum displays were primarily about that. During my visit there, I observed an elderly Japanese couple weeping profusely in a discreet manner. It occurred to me that they were likely learning for the first time about the foreign exploits of the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War. It was then that I realized (and later confirmed), that most Japanese people had no knowledge of what happened outside of Japan during the war.

Similarly, I found myself in the same position as that elderly couple when I saw the Hiroshima Panels. I realized that I myself had little to no knowledge of what had happened in Japan during the Second World War. As a Malaysian, I had always seen us as being on the receiving end of wartime atrocities. Little did I realize that Japan too, despite being the aggressor nation, had its fair share of suffering and loss.

Objectives

Considering the obvious gaps in knowledge that exist, and that each party considers itself as the ultimate victim of the Second World War, first and foremost I wanted to find a way to use performance art as a means to bridge this knowledge gap in our understanding of this shared history. I wanted to develop a shared collective history of the events that took place, in spite of the bias of our own official versions.

Secondly, this was an experiment in using performance art as a medium to deal with difficult issues. I was aware that “to deal with”, in this case, was subjective, and was subject to whatever was disparate and problematic about the issue; e.g. whatever was misunderstood, forgotten, falsified, unresolved, denied, misrepresented, etc. In the case of “difficult issues”, few were more difficult or more taboo than the issues surrounding the Second World War and the atomic bomb incidents (hereon referred to as the “subject matter”), for reasons that will be explained later in this paper.

Methodology

I devised and performed a series of seven performance art works while in Japan. In the process of developing these performances, I sought to learn about and understand the following:

- The events surrounding Japan’s involvement in the Second World War and the atomic bombing incidents.

- The current state of understanding of the subject matter among Japanese people, and its associated sentiments and sensitivities.

- The artistic works and strategies undertaken (particularly performance art) to address the subject matter.

For the purpose of the above matters, I spoke to and interviewed various individuals from the fields...
of history, sociology, activism, politics and art. I also read and referred to books written about the above matters. Besides that, I visited the locations most affected by the incidents; Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Okinawa. There I was able to visit the museums commemorating the events and speak to locals and experts on the issue.

As much as the performances were the end result of the project itself, they too were a means of conducting research and data-gathering. I used the performances as a means to engage audiences, to tap into their knowledge and gauge their reactions to the subject matter and the medium of performance art. To a certain extent, each performance was a reaction and response to previous performances. Future performances were devised based on the lessons learnt of the issues, realities, and limitations of current situations, both regarding the subject matter and the medium of performance art.

Whenever possible, these performances were performed in a public space. “Public space” is defined as a space where anyone may enter and exit freely without the consent of strangers, and without declaration of purpose. It is a space that allows social interactions. Whether a space is privately owned or otherwise is irrelevant as long as it fulfils the said criteria.

_Pika-boo_ (November 2011)

_Pika-boo_ (a wordplay on the Japanese “pika”, a word used to denote the blinding flash of the atomic bomb, and “peekaboo”, an expression used when playing the childhood game hide-and-seek) was billed as: an attempt to uncover the hidden truths behind the Second World War and the atomic bomb incidents. Performed at the artist-run space Kotaka Syouten, this performance involved me playing a game of hide-and-seek with the audience. I devised this performance with the intention to gauge the level of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter among young people.

The performance began with me hiding in the surrounding neighborhood. When the audience arrived at the space, they were tasked to look for me. Once found, I returned to the space with the audience. There, I began to read a chapter from a Malaysian history textbook titled “The Japanese Occupation” in the Bahasa Malaysian language, which was then translated into Japanese. After that, it was the audience’s turn to hide in the surrounding neighborhood and for me to seek them. Once found, each person was required to tell me a story he/she knew about the subject matter. This could be either oral or official in origin. When everyone was found, we returned to the space for a discussion.

It was here, at the very beginning of my project, that I found my premise to be flawed. As the audience told me about the subject matter, I observed that many of them faced great difficulty and discomfort in doing so. Very few had anything to say; most regurgitated the often-repeated facts of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. A few confessed that they never knew Japan had once occupied foreign territory. When asked if they had heard any stories from their grandparents about wartime suffering, the standard answer was “no” and that their grandparents did not like to talk about past sufferings. This was in direct contrast to my experience (and to a certain extent, the experience of most, if not all Malaysians) as my late grandparents had often told me of the suffering they experienced during the Japanese occupation, if only to remind me to be thankful for the comfortable existence I enjoyed in the present.

In the discussions that followed, I was shocked to learn that the subject matter was barely covered in official textbooks and in history education in Japan. Participants mentioned that history was only taught up to the Meiji period (1912) and that the Second World War in its entirety took up merely a few pages.

Another participant claimed that her knowledge of the subject matter only began when she was traveling in Southeast Asia as a university student.

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This I found later in my research and in the many casual conversations I had with young people, to be a recurring scenario. Many confessed to me of the shame they felt when confronted by friends in Southeast Asia about the subject matter, and when elderly folks told them about the harsh and atrocious treatment they received under the Japanese occupation. One woman recounted her shock when an elderly man she met stood up and sang to her the Japanese National Anthem, “Kimigayo” (it was a requirement under the Japanese Occupation for students to sing the Kimigayo during school morning assemblies). All of them realized then that they knew nothing of the deep pain and trauma their own country had inflicted upon the rest of Asia. Most of them, having had such encounters, eventually took it upon themselves to do their own research to learn about the subject matter.

I then needed to seriously evaluate the feasibility of my original premise of “bridging the gaps in knowledge”. How could I bridge a gap in knowledge when what existed was not a chasm, but a cliff? The bridging of knowledge can only take place when both parties have sufficient knowledge to share. This was not the case, not after there had been systematic and deliberate attempts to erase and alter the past, both through government and civil society efforts. The people seemed to have developed what I came to think of as a “national collective amnesia” through the acts of textbook revisionism, media manipulation, and the oppression of individuals seeking justice for the wrongs done against them. The ignorance or lack of awareness of the participants of “pika-boo” and the people that I subsequently spoke to, confirmed to me that this assault on history and the truth had been a resounding success.

Any effort to bridge gaps in knowledge, or to seek mutual understanding and forgiveness, seemed to ring hollow in the presence of this elephant in the room. Forgiveness becomes meaningless when none of us knows exactly what it is that we are forgiving each other for, and becomes more problematic when its intentions are misunderstood. At this point, I was reminded of the many people who had asked me what do we (as Malaysians) have to ask the Japanese to forgive us for, when it seemed that the Japanese were the ones who had all the reasons to ask us for forgiveness.

I was not unaware that non-Japanese too are often ignorant of the subject matter. I had been accused many times of holding double standards against the Japanese. I stood guilty of that charge as I myself, prior to my interest in this subject matter, was almost completely uninformed. However, I felt I could and can assert that indeed, a double standard needs to be applied, considering the differences in the level of involvement of the various parties in the Second World War. Japan, whose actions in the war were comparable to those of Nazi Germany, must be held to much higher standards of responsibility. I do not need to mention in detail the atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army in Asia for these are very well documented; however, we need to remember that 25,000,000 individuals (about 10 percent of them Japanese) died as a result of Imperial Japan’s senseless ambitions.

While the Germans have criminalized the denial of their country’s wartime atrocities, Japanese ultranationalist and right wing extremists as a minority fringe. By contrast, the critical problem in Japan is the fact that key support for historical revisionism comes from the very core of Japan’s political and economic leadership (Metraux, 2003, 304).

Considering the enormity of its involvement, I considered it scandalous, and morally reprehensible, that Japanese people were made unaware of this history. John W. Dower, in his essay War, Peace, and Beauty in response to the Hiroshima Panels, wrote:

‘Indeed, as time passes and new generations come to the scene, memory fades; and as new nationalisms, alliances, and technologies of destruction are promoted, the past is deliberately obscured’.

(Dower, 1985, 9)
“Target Practice” was performed at the 18th Nippon International Performance Art Festival (NIPAF) Asia 2012. In an attempt to understand and immerse myself in the performance art scene in Japan, I participated in the said festival, which took place in Tokyo and Nagano over two weeks.

A reenactment of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing incidents, this performance was my response to a statement by Iri Maruki’s mother, Suma Maruki, who once said, “Atom bombs do not fall by themselves, someone has to drop them”.

I began by placing two cups on the floor. The position of each represented Hiroshima and Nagasaki in relation to where I was sitting, which represented Tokyo. With 60 eggs, I began my attempt to ‘bomb’ Hiroshima by attempting to throw an egg into the cup that represented it. When Hiroshima was bombed, I proceeded to target “Nagasaki”. The performance ended when both cities were bombed. In the first instance, 54 eggs were used.

An awkward silence filled the room, punctuated only by the sound of eggs breaking on the floor, one after another. After the night’s program, members of the audience and fellow artists approached me to tell me of the many audience members who complained to them about the discomfort they felt as they watched the eggs fall and break, one by one. While direct confrontation is usually shunned in Japan, any taboo is exponentially magnified. The list of taboos in Japan includes the subject matter, which many would agree is the biggest taboo around.

One contributor to the success of the revisionist movement in relation to “the subject matter” is precisely this observation; that Japanese people generally avoid taboo, negative, uncomfortable, and difficult issues. In the many conversations I had with Japanese people, be their friends, associates, or acquaintances, they seemed to experience a high level of discomfort when I tried to engage them in conversations regarding the subject matter or other issues of such magnitude. Many found ways to change the subject. Some, at the onset, just asked, “can we not talk about this?” (or its equivalent). Those who did allow me to engage them in the subject matter often did so with much pain in their facial expressions, usually punctuated by the ominous “hissing” sound often made by Japanese people when searching for the right words to say. At first I thought that this could be a problem when conversing in English, a language that they were not familiar with. However, I found the same thing occurred even when I was conversing through an interpreter and the individual was speaking in Japanese.

According to Professor Okahara Masayuki, a sociology professor at Keio University, Tokyo, this can be attributed to the “meiwakku deshita” (めいわっくでした) phenomenon. This simply means “to not cause inconvenience/anxiety for others”, which is a central approach to living for all Japanese people. Meiwakku deshita governs all aspects of social life in Japan, from one’s social interaction at home, school, work, to how one behaves in public. An example cited by Okahara was a common phenomenon in university classrooms. He claimed that it is considered a faux pas for a lecturer to ask difficult questions that would require critical thinking in class, for this would bring anxiety upon a student to give a correct and satisfactory answer in front of everyone. The failure to do so would eventually result in a sense of shame for that said student. Hence, in the spirit of meiwakku deshita, critical discourses are rarely held. As shocking as this is, it was later confirmed by conversations with other academics and lecturers.
Considering that “public performance art works” were to be the eventual outcomes of my project, I knew I would have to experience for myself what it was like to perform in public spaces in Tokyo and to get to know the types of parameters that existed. I also wanted to test how far I could push these parameters before I got in trouble with the authorities.

For this purpose I invited Sakiko Yamaoka, a veteran artist based in Saitama, Japan, to collaborate with me. To push the boundaries of acceptance, I proposed that we perform a real act of violence, in this case, the two of us slapping each other indiscriminately. Yamaoka suggested that we perform this in five different locations in Tokyo, which would help me experience the different environments and audiences unique to each location. We decided to perform at the Imperial Palace, Ginza, Akihabara, Ropponggi and Shibuya.

Prior to the performance, we agreed to arrive at each location on the hour, and travel to each location individually. The first person to arrive chose a position and stood still while waiting for the other. When the other person arrived, he/she would stand two feet directly in front of the first person. We then began the indiscriminate act of slapping each other. The performance ended when either of us decided to remove ourselves and travel to the next location. The performance was repeated until it was performed at all the locations.

Looking at the video documentation that I have of this performance, I realized that public performance art might not be the most effective medium in Tokyo. As a city, Tokyo is an assault on the senses. The excessive lights and neon signs; the constant blaring of music and noise; the swarms of people moving from one place to another; the deviant subcultures of young people in costumes and extreme make-up; the non-stop assault of commercial advertising both in passive and human form. Tokyo presents many distractions to its inhabitants. It occurred to me that there was so much strangeness in Tokyo that people are generally immune to public spectacles and mostly ignore them. People were either ignoring, or making an effort to ignore, the performance. The fact that the action we presented was such an awkward spectacle did not help in our efforts to gain an audience.

I realized that public performances and actions would need to include the direct participation of the audience themselves. Passive performances like this one would have no impact on the audience at all, besides their asking the equivalent of, “what the hell is that?”

This performance was held at the Maruki Gallery housing the Hiroshima Panels. Although this was not performed in a public space, it was done with the objective of interacting with the specific audiences of the museum, a generally older audience aged 40 years and beyond.

Having only interacted with artists and younger people (besides many experts and academics) on the subject matter, I felt that it was important for me to talk to ordinary older folks who were alive at a time closer to the war, or who had actually...
experienced the war first-hand. Like in some of my previous performances, I had decided that the act of foot-washing was a perfect way to create an awkward environment to talk about an awkward subject matter.

I set up a foot-washing station in the middle of the main hall in the Maruki Gallery. The main hall is usually the last gallery a visitor would enter, after looking at all the 15 Hiroshima Panels. It contains works in response to other atrocities, like Auschwitz and the Nanking Massacre. Through an interpreter, I offered visitors in the hall that I would serve them tea and wash their feet. Once they were seated, I also offered them a flyer containing an essay on the intentions of my performance. I prepared a cup of tea and the hot water to wash their feet. I then served the cup of tea, and proceeded to wash their feet. While doing this, I struck up conversations with the participants through my interpreter. The performance ended when the conversation between the participant and me was over.

In total, I washed the feet of 15 people over the course of two days, about half the total number of visitors to the museum on that cold winter weekend. This had been a very humbling experience and had generated the most meaningful conversations I had with people in Japan throughout my entire time there. Many of the participants remarked that not only had they never had their feet washed by others before, they also had never had such a frank conversation about the war before. At the end of one of the conversations, a participant commented, “Perhaps it is because I am showing and letting you touch my feet, which I consider to be extremely private, is why I am opening myself up to you”.

Another participant, with whom I have kept in touch ever since, commented to me after a few weeks, that having her feet washed and talking about the subject matter felt like a ‘ghost’ has been lifted from her shoulders. A woman in her forties, she had previously believed that not only had they never had their feet washed by others before, they also had never had such a frank conversation about the war before. At the end of one of the conversations, a participant commented, “Perhaps it is because I am showing and letting you touch my feet, which I consider to be extremely private, is why I am opening myself up to you”.

What is this “ghost” that had stopped her from talking about such matters? I would like to attribute this to the social homogeneity that exists in Japan. One could dispute the stereotype of Japan as a homogenous country. This is a fair question, as there are actually many different groups in Japan. The discreet and introverted urbanites of the Kanto region (where Tokyo lies) differ from those who live in the Kansai region who are more vocal and friendly. There are the quiet agrarian societies of the rural regions, and the indigenous communities of Hokkaido (the northern-most region) and Okinawa (the southernmost region). There are also many people of Chinese and Korean origins who have settled in Japan. On top of that, economic migrants from China, South Asia, West Asia, and the west continue to flock to Japan. Indeed, like any other developed nation, Japan can be considered a melting-pot of peoples.

Here, the term “melting pot” is extremely appropriate within the context of Japan. It is a melting pot because it seems as though all the ingredients of different peoples and cultures have melted into a giant uniform liquid, its contents indistinguishable and modulated by the conditions within the pot. Despite the many different people that exist in Japan, it has occurred to me that there seems to be an unknown force that pressures people to conform to the local culture, a certain “Japanism” that governs daily living and being in Japan. Japan is well known for its customs and social decorum, many of which are exclusively unique to Japan, and the strict adherence to which is necessary for one to be “Japanese” or risks ostracism. The never-ending bowing, exchange of name cards, the long list of dining etiquettes, the respect for hierarchy, mobile phone use, and of course “meiwakku deshita”.

All this explained the “ghost” that has prevented the woman from speaking about the subject matter. The necessity to be like everyone else had resulted in the need to not inconvenience others by introducing uncomfortable subject matters. Was this homogeneity the ghost that prevented her from talking? Did this homogeneity also mean that since it was considered proper to not talk about this subject matter, that it would never warrant any real, and proper discussion? Does proper social decorum take precedence over doing what is morally responsible?
After “Cuci”, I decided that I would like to find ways, or rather, excuses, to talk to my audience. Realizing that the collective amnesia surrounding the subject matter was quite severe, I abandoned efforts to bridge the gap in knowledge and instead began to create entry points in which I could find ways to implant awareness of the Second World War (and the extent of Japanese involvement).

After I had performed “To See You Again” with Sakiko Yamaoka, she gave me a set of Japanese war song cassettes which contained war songs dating back as far as the late 1800s and into the mid-1900s. The cassettes had belonged to her late father, whom she said was a staunch conservative.

I walked around with the cassette player and a clipboard with a notebook. I asked individuals who were seated, “Excuse me, do you speak English”, in Japanese. If they said “yes”, or “a little”, I proceeded to sit down next to them, introduce myself and explain my intentions… “Hi, my name is chi too, I am an artist from Malaysia. I am here in Japan to do research about the Second World War and in my research I found these war song cassettes. Since I do not understand Japanese, I would like to ask if you can help me translate them into English”. If they agreed to do so, I passed them the clipboard with a pen and began to play the music. The performance ended when the participant had finished translating a song, or had requested to leave. The performance was repeated many times.

Unlike “Cuci”, in which “audiences” were visitors to the museum, and who had come prepared to engage with the subject matter, this performance did not have that benefit. Although conducted with the same intentions, in this case I was shoving the issue down the throats of those, whom I would say, I had “tricked” into participating. Many, upon realizing that I was there to deal with the Second World War, immediately requested or made excuses to leave. Those who agreed to participate could not wait for the experience to be over. Most of the interactions were uncomfortable and tense, and there were no opportunities at all to have conversations about the subject matter.

There was an incident that I found recurring too often for me to say that it was an isolated case. Upon hearing me say “World War Two”, the person’s facial expression would immediately change. He/she would then excuse him/herself, look at his/her mobile phone, tell me that they had to go, and take leave, only to have me bump into them five minute later at a different location.

In the end, I felt that this performance was too confrontational and, most likely, simply alienated my participants. I have no qualms in acknowledging that this performance was a failure as I failed to engage with anyone in any meaningful conversations about the subject matter. I was in a state of doubt. I had become an obnoxious foreigner trying to remind Japanese people of a past that they were uncomfortable with, a history that they had no responsibility or control over. Yet, I held them accountable.

My values seemed incompatible with local social norms. My confrontational approaches had definitely caused much discomfort. I could not help but feel that I had alienated my audiences, my friends and all the generous people who had helped me with the project. Worse, considering my position as a Malaysian, and the nature of the subject matter, it had occurred to me that my position and project had become “uncriticizeable”.

Loss In Translation (May 2012)
The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows

Given the lukewarm response I received from “Loss In Translation”, I decided to take on a softer approach by making a senninbari. The senninbari is an old war-time custom whereby women would ask 1,000 other women to contribute a stitch each to a piece of cloth that would be given to their men as an amulet for protection on the war front.

I learned about the senninbari in my research about the role of women in the war. At this point, I had resolved that interactions should be kept simple and the performance would only serve the purpose of creating an entry-point to the subject matter. Ultimately, I wanted to leave the participants with the question, “Why is a Malaysian making a senninbari in Japan?”

I approached strangers (men and women) who seemed to be just standing around and asked them, “Can you help me?” in Japanese while showing them a sheet containing my intentions and instructions in Japanese. If the person agreed, I gave him/her the senninbari and guided him/her through the stitching process. If the participant was able to speak English, I attempted to strike up a conversation about the subject matter. The process was to be repeated until I got 1,000 stitches on my senninbari.

People seemed more willing to participate in making the senninbari. I believed this was because it required a lot less attention and commitment. With an unwilling audience, simple actions encourage participation. I also wondered if participation was a result of the audience’s sympathy for my monumental task of acquiring 1,000 stitches.

After conducting a total of six performances in Tokyo, I decided that performances involving passive audiences would be most effective in a city where people are generally private, discreet and non-confrontational in nature.

In this performance, I set out to cut an individual blade of grass for each of the 71,012,650 deaths caused by the Second World War.

Originally conceived to be performed in the grass fields in front of the Hiroshima Peace Museum, the “Cut Grass Piece” aimed at helping me and the audience make sense of the huge number of casualties of the Second World War. When one person dies, we are able to grieve and make sense of it; 10 deaths is quite mind-boggling; but when millions die, there is no way for us to make sense of such massive numbers, and they are reduced to just that… numbers. So, by performing an action in which I tried to make every death count, I hoped to bring perspective to this unspeakable tragedy.

This performance was also a response to what I feel is a “victim mentality” that Japan seems to possess in regard to the incidents of the Second World War. By presenting the numbers of Japanese killed (3,238,000), and the number of those killed by the Japanese Imperial army (23,877,000), I hoped to present some kind of perspective to this victim-aggressor relationship.

I began by setting up a signboard stating my intentions and the statistics about the Second World War deaths. I cut a blade of grass, and kept a count as
I cut more and more, in commemoration of every death caused by the Second World War. The blades of grass I cut were kept in ziplock bags. Steps 2 and 3 were repeated again and again.

If I were to do this alone, it would take me 207 years to complete working for two hours every day. Therefore, I invited others to contribute to this performance through the project website, www.cutgrasspiece.tumblr.com and other social media sites. This way, I hoped that it would proliferate into a worldwide movement to commemorate and to better understand the Second World War. I intended to continue this performance until 71,021,650 blades have been cut, collectively.

**Conclusions**

I ended the project with an exhibition entitled “State Of Doubt: Seven Actions Towards Dilemma”, which was co-curated by Emma Ota and Sakiko Yamaoka, with whom I had previously collaborated. At this exhibition I displayed the documentation, methodology, and intention of each of the seven works I had carried out in Japan. Audiences were encouraged to offer critique and feedback.

In the discussions that led to the exhibition, Ota, Yamaoka and myself disputed the title and we all questioned whether the word “action” or “performance” was more appropriate. I eventually settled on the word “action”, as I felt that action carries with it a sense of responsibility and that was how I felt about what I had done with my audiences. Actions have consequences; I was accountable to those I had engaged. While what I had done could be classified as a performance, I begged to differ. A “performance” ends when the performance is over. Performance allows the performer to enter and exit a character. Unfortunately I did not have that luxury. The word “action”, on the other hand, insists that the performer remains as he is when he performs.

However, I also would like to bring the concept of “performance” to a different level. Many who had known my works in the past expressed shock when they learned about the nature of this project.

In the past (and now), most of my work has leaned towards lampooning and parodying issues, be they personal, social, or political, often with comedic and humorous effects. Those who knew me all echoed the same thought; “Why so serious?” when I explained my project. Perhaps, in Japan, I myself entered a different character or persona. Maybe my entire 10 months in Japan was one big “performance”, and each of the performances I carried out were, in fact, performances within a performance.

Emma Ota in her essay “Called to The Table”, written for the exhibition flyer wrote:

“While aiming to hold us all account for our actions, our past, our values, he cannot escape his own responsibility as an artist, and he himself must be held account for his seven actions. The privileged position of the artist to question the world around them has no standing if we do not in turn question the artist back”.

Then, is art an appropriate tool to tackle this subject matter? Or am I, an artist, the right person to deal with this subject matter given its weight, and because it requires specialist knowledge of history, sociology, law, and international relations? I feel inadequate.

Considering the discreet, private, and non-confrontational nature of Japanese society, I also feel that performance art work in public spaces is not an appropriate medium to deal with something as heavy as the subject matter. Especially not when the subject matter is considered taboo and is rarely talked about even in private.

However, the dialog must not stop. Many who attended my exhibition agreed that Japan cannot continue to live with this amnesia of its past history. Kenzaburo Oe in his essay *Denying History Disables Japan* writes, “For the Japanese to be able to regard 21st century, Asia not as a new economic power rivaling the West but as a region in which Japan can be a true partner, they must first establish a basis that would enable them to criticize their neighbors and be criticized in turn. For this, Japan must apologize for its aggression and offer compensation”.

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To do this, Japan has a very small period of opportunity. The comfort women, the survivors of Nanking, and everyone else who suffered under Japanese aggression are all slowly dying, one by one. Japan must stop denying its past and begin compensating and apologizing for what it has done, or it will forever be held guilty for its actions (or in this case, inaction). A prosperous and peaceful Asia cannot exist as long as Asia feels like Japan is indebted to it, and Japan thinks it owes Asia nothing, and continues to tell its own people that it was instead, doing Asia a favor.

As a performance artist, I do not think that I am able to effect this change. However I do hope that I have played my part in this process, albeit it being a slow and arduous one, in bringing true peace, forgiveness, and understanding within the Asian region.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Towards Peace and Reconciliation: Case Studies of Peace Museums in Japan and the Philippines

Patporn Phoothong

Introduction:

The protracted violence in Southeast Asia which encompasses political violence, conflict of interest, obstacles to the access to resources, the expression of identities and ideas, criminal violence, violence against women, unjust laws, social disparity, and cultural violence, all of which contribute to direct violence, has led to the following set of questions: How does Southeast Asian society understand violence? How is violence explained and managed? How are the lessons learned of violence extracted and how is violence remembered?

Apart from the academic discourse on violence and peace, I have a strong interest in peace museum in my search of an answer to how violence and peace are explained by the museum.

A peace museum is a public space for communicating with the wider public on history, memory, what are to be remembered and what forgotten. It has the power to decide on what information and objects are to be displayed. Such power enables museums to exhibit, interpret and define the given events.

The complexity and aspect that one must not fail to take into account is that history is not only a historical fact, but is a result of the clustering or reorganizing of facts. This means that historical fact displayed in the museum has gone through the selection process. This process reflects the value prescribed by each museum, what is deemed appropriate to be remembered and forgotten, and what it wants the audiences to value. It is certain that displays in the museum cannot change policy or law within a short time, but I propose that information in the exhibitions displayed in the museum can profoundly impact the perception, attitudes and knowledge of the state’s citizens. This is because the museum itself has the power to reconstruct, redefine, and interpret history and events.

In this article, I discuss the political space of memory in six peace museums, namely: (1) the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (1955), (2) the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum (1955), (3) the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum (1992), (4) the Kyoto Museum for World Peace (1992), (5) the Himeyuri Peace Museum in Japan (1984), and (6) the Iloilo Peace Museum in the Philippines (2009). My aim in doing so is to answer the following questions: (1) How does each peace museum present history? I do not only prioritize the past occurrences as such, but also consider how the museum tells the story and what it directs the audiences to remember; (2) How are the traumatic events used as a political tool? and (3) Can the political messages and peace approaches lead to a new understanding of violence and peace? I strongly hope that the outcomes of these studies will serve as a new body of knowledge in operating peace museums as part of peace studies, and that they will be relevant to contemporary conflict and violence management efforts. However, this research is not a critique of the museums per se, but aims to enhance their efficiency in peace studies and alternative education.

The target areas of the studies are in Japan and the Philippines. I chose to study peace museums in Japan because of the strong museum culture in it, and because of my personal interest in the Japanese peace museums’ perspectives on peace and how to tell the stories of World War II, given its role as perpetrator. In the case of the peace museum in the Philippines, I would like to find out what a peace museum established and supported by Japanese tell Filipino society, amidst the people’s collective memories as victims of Japanese invasion.

I chose peace museums which exhibit World War II events with the intention to draw conformity uniformity and linkage in term of time and events. The diversity of museums in this study can initially be considered in terms of their ownership.
The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum were established by the government and are managed by the municipalities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum was established by Reverend Oka Masaharu, who works closely and directly with the direct victims and the marginalized population of Japanese society, including Korean forced labor. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace was established by Ritsumeikan University, one of the leading private universities in Japan. The Himyuri Peace Museum was established by the victims and their families, who organized themselves and formed a foundation called the Himyuri Alumnae Incorporated Foundation. The Illo Peace Museum in the Philippines was established and supported by Mr. Toshimi Kumai, a former veteran who was dispatched to and stationed in Iloilo City in the Philippines during World War II.

Such diversity reflects the abilities of different segments of society to use museums to create social and political space in communicating the people's experiences, perspectives and aspirations. It is the indicator of the openness of society to such diversity.

The Historical Context of Peace Museums

The first peace museums in Japan were the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum established in 1955, a decade after the end of World War II. Presently, there are over 55 peace museums in Japan, making Japan the country with the most peace museums in the world. In the Philippines, the Iloilo Peace Museum established in 2009 is the only one of its kind.

In considering the position of Japan during World War II and the Japanese political context from pre-WWII to date, the emergence of the peace museums reflects three interrelated evolutionary approaches: (1) the creation of political space for victims and Japanese citizens, (2) the change in the vision in the international political arena from perpetrator to victim and (3) the change in the vision within Japan.

The creation of political space for the victims and Japanese citizens, plus the change of the perception in the international political arena that Japan was not only the invader but was also adversely affected, is apparent in the establishment of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (1995), the Nagasaki International Cultural Hall, which later became the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum (1955) and the Okinawa Peace Memorial Museum (1975). Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by nuclear weapons, while Okinawa was the only battlefield in Japan during World War II. The tragedy of people in the three cities led to the construction of museums in public spaces to express the cruelty of war, as evinced in the experiences of direct victims. At the initial stage, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum promoted the exhibition on the evils of war from the perception of Japan's victims, without mentioning at all the Japanese invasion of other countries and the damage caused. However the direct experiences of nuclear victims have become an important lesson and one of the clearest argument of the anti-nuclear and peace advocacy campaigns for which both museums are the world's leading advocates.

The social movement activities against war and those of the peace advocacy have become lively during the decades of international political sensitivity, mainly between 1960-1980. The anti-communism policy of the US, which had encompassed the whole of Asia, sparked a question among academicians, activists, and students across Japan on the relationship between the Japanese and American governments, given how Japanese support extended to the American government during the Vietnam War and the US dependent state policy.

At the same time that the US troop's air invasion of Northern Vietnam was being studied, academicians and students researched and mounted exhibits on the US air invasion of many Japanese cities during World War II. In 1970, Osaka organized the Osaka War Memorial Exhibition, which displayed the air invasion and devastation of Osaka city during World War II.
This exhibition paved the way for the establishment of the Osaka International Peace Center. The exhibition on the air invasion of Kochi City was held in Kochi City in 1979, followed ten years later by the same organizers’ establishing Grassroots House, which also runs a museum for peace. In the summer of 1980, the exhibition on war was organized with the aim to call for peace. The effort had expanded to three major cities, namely, Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. The exhibition was organized in accordance with significant days in political history, such as August 6, to commemorate the day when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima; August 9, which recalls the atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki; and August 15, the anniversary of the surrender of Japan. The short duration of the exhibition prompted an appeal to establish a permanent exhibition at the peace museum for Japanese citizens to view all year round. There was also an appeal to build more peace museums (Yamane 2009, 1).

However, the mushroom-like growth pace of peace museums in Japan took over a decade to happen, post the war for peace exhibition in 1980: many public peace museums emerged between 1990 and 1992. These museums included the Kawasaki Peace Museum, the Kanagawa Plaza for Global Citizenship, the Saitama Peace Museum, the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, the Suita Peace Center, the Osaka International Peace Center, the Sakai City Peace and Human Rights Center, the Fukuyama City Human Rights & Peace Museum, the Takamatsu Civic Culture Center: Peace Museum, the Himeji Historical Peace Center, the Shizuoka Peace Center, the Grassroots House and The Peace, Human Rights and Children Center (Yamane 2009, 2). The exhibitions in the peace museums during this period did not only emphasize the experiences of the Japanese victims, but also expanded to urge the Japanese government and army to be responsible for the crimes committed during World War II. They also revealed another side of the Japanese army’s history, giving information on casualties in other countries invaded by the Japanese army.

The important phenomena in 1990s that must not be forgotten were the movements of the Chinese and Korean governments urging the Japanese government in 1992 to revise the history textbook for high school students as the textbook contained with contents that justify the actions of the Empire of Japan during World War II. In 1990 other strong movements from several countries sought to hold the Japanese government responsible for the Nanjing Massacre and the materialization of comfort women during World War II. This movement led to questions of truth pertaining to World War II, the military system at that time, and the silence of Japanese society regarding a decade of violence, which was the fruit of the Japanese army invasion.

Implementation such as an amendment of the school curriculum and additional research to verify truth, plus the number of peace museums have grown significantly. The amendment of school curriculum in 1990s did not only reflect the influence of the international movement, but also the response to its demands by the Japanese government, educational institutions and civil society.

At the same time, the creation of peace museums within this same period did not only reflect participation in socio-political learning by different segments, but also the need for space to allow their voices to be heard, their desire to discover truth, their sense of responsibility and the premium they put on uncovering knowledge. Finally, changes in this period indicated a political culture which has space for diverse experiences and memories, and promotes freedom to acquire knowledge and wisdom.

What the Six Museums Speak Of?

One of the discussions that arose from spending a prodigious amount of time at the research area in peace museums was this: “Who are the audiences? The audiences are the temporary visitors, but are these audiences the readers of victims’ experiences? Up to what level can the audiences understand the experiences of the victims? No matter how much effort they put into it, the audiences can never replicate the experiences of the victims because those experiences were personal”.

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Time is another factor for accessing the experience. As time moves on, the major events which had impact on the lives of people all over the world, such as World War II, become but a chapter in history books. The link between the experience of war and today's experience is very thin. The challenges facing the peace museum include recalling history and making the stories come alive, linking the past with the present, and enriching the visit to peace museums. The latter goes beyond listening to the experiences of the victims, as it encompasses creating new experiences for the audiences by stimulating their thinking processes and leading them to analyze present and future events through the past.

The storytellers and the tone of the storytelling are important factors in developing the imaginary frame of the audiences. If the storytellers were the victims who told their bitter experiences in a sad tone, surely the audiences would be emotional, feel dejected and sympathetic. This heart moving atmosphere is evident in the museums built in the war destroyed cities, e.g., the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Himeyuri Peace Museum in Okinawa, and the Nagasaki Okinawa and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum in Nagasaki, as well as the Iloilo Peace Museum. However the emerging challenge would be this: if the audiences were overwhelmed with emotion, would their logical abilities diminish?

At the same time, the dryness of the storytelling based on academic information as presented at the peace museum in the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, which provides information on the events, could lead to boredom and alienation due to the lack of an affinitive feeling.

The Himeyuri Peace Museum is a museum that presents a balance between emotion and rationale, when compared with the five other museums. The Himeyuri Peace Museum recounts the experiences of female students in two girls' schools on Onawa Island, where 240 students were forced to serve as nurse assistants at the Okinawa Army Hospital in Haebaru during the war. The difficulties of being nurse assistants who had to work hard in the dark caves day and night did not take the lives of the young girls, until the last moment at battle. Rather, in the belief that an honorable death is better than being caught alive by the enemy, many of the girls decided to commit suicide. At the same time, bombs and bullets from the fighting killed some of them. While audiences are depressed by the fate of these young girls, the museum gradually leads the audiences to the question of the imperial system and Japanese army, both of which generated the structural violence that caused massive devastation on Okinawa Island.

The lives lost were not only of the girl students. The museum also displays information and images of civilians killed on Okinawa Island, soldiers stationed on Okinawa Island, and soldiers from mainland Japan, among them American soldiers. These figures reflect the truth of the war situation, where victims and perpetrators equally and unavoidably experience loss and pain.

Demise at a young age is part of the story told by the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and the Kyoto Museum for World Peace. The objects displayed in them include a lunch box, shoes, a student's uniform, a cloth bag, a three wheel bicycle. These museums represent tens of thousands of children killed in their localities. At the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, one of the sections propels audiences to ponder upon the dark future of students who had to abandon their classrooms for the battlefield during the war.

The Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum can be approached from the three perspectives provided by general management: the first is that of the city before the nuclear tragedy, the second is of the city during the tragedy and the third is of the city during its rehabilitation. Sorrow and loss seem to be the main emotions both museums purposely move audiences to feel. These two museums send across a clear message of the great tragedy caused by the atomic bomb. The image of the clock whose hands indicate the hour and minute that the atomic bomb began to explode has been magnified and put on the museum's wall. This image reminds everyone that the time of the tragic event should never be forgotten.
Information-wise, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace has been doing well in disseminating comprehensive data. It presents Japanese political history events in order, from the prewar days on to the war and post-war periods. The academic position of the museum can be clearly seen. The museum discusses the military and education systems during the war. It also exhibits memorabilia of the anti-war movements, from both the academic and civil society spheres.

One of the interesting aspects of this museum is the review of the past of its founder, Ritsumeikan University. There are those who believe that the review from the perpetrator's perspective shows the sincerity of Ritsumeikan University in joining the army at that time. It defended the palace of the emperor and deployed its students to serve in the war. This participation eventually proved to be the greatest loss in the history of the university since its establishment.8

The Kyoto Museum for World Peace also exhibits the people and events which are sensitive to Japanese society: the comfort women, the Nanjing Massacre and the construction of death railways by the prisoners of war.

There are a few peace museums that display politically sensitive issues. This endeavor stems from the courage of the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, a small private peace museum in a two-storey house. The museum is full of pictures and rarely available information that cannot be found elsewhere, such as images of the Nanjing massacre, comfort women, and Unit 731, where experiments on biochemical weapons using human beings were conducted for the Imperial Army’s Biological Warfare Program.

One of the conflicts of the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum is its location in Nagasaki. The experience of the city, which led to the establishment of diverse public memories’ spaces such as the monument, park, or museums to commemorate the miseries and losses of the war victims, counterbalances the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, by directly urging the Japanese army to be responsible for what they have committed.

The Iloilo Peace Museum was established in 2009. Though small, it recalls the mass suicide of Filipino civilians, women, and children, including 50 Japanese soldiers, in the deep forest after their declaration of surrender. It also tells the story of Toshimi Kumai, the former Japanese soldier who established the museum. He was dispatched to Iloilo during World War II and learned about the mass suicide in 1972. After the discovery of the suicide venue, a small monument was built on the spot for the departed souls.

However, storytelling alone could not possibly transform the wounds of violence into the collective memory. The creation of value, emotion, and feeling is the most important factor in transforming the abstract stories into a new experience.

At the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, audiences can experience what took place over 60 years ago. The atmosphere created allows them to feel sorrow, bitterness and pain together with the victims and their families. The dark ambiance and the objects displayed represent the losses. Although the museum leads audiences to a more hopeful mood at the end, one of the worst tragedies against humanity has made them feel small and powerless in the struggle to put an end to the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons.

In contrast, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum have ventured into a more critical mode in the quest for answers. The approach of both museums is to display information that cannot be read elsewhere, rather than objects which influence feelings and emotion. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum creates a learning environment by providing books, educational materials, tables and chairs beside the exhibition board.

The past and new experiences exhibited indicate the interactions between museums and audiences, which somehow present the power of museums to influence audiences to believe and conform to the selected displays. They also reflect the power which controls the feelings of the audiences. However, audiences also have the power to interpret the

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exhibitions by themselves or the power to refuse or ignore the influence conveyed by the information provided. Nonetheless, the power of the audience does not come automatically; it depends on their ability, stemming not only from their knowledge, but also from the education they have obtained. It also draws from the freedom they enjoy in their respective societies, where enthusiasm over promoting ideas and knowledge acquisition is evident.

Observation and Question: Can Peace Museums make Peace a Reality?

A question worth considering might be this: can peace museums make peace a reality? This is not easy to answer for one generation merely, because conflict is a common and natural aspect of mankind. The compromise and peaceful settlement of conflict are more challenging than warfare. Therefore, in answering this question, one needs to understand peace as not only a goal but also a process.

In effect, while the ultimate goal of a peace museum is peace, the peace museum itself is a process. In this sense, peace museums work to provide peace education. However, in the transformation of collective memories of bitter tragedies into the learning process, exhibitions comprising only sentences and objects cannot enhance the learning process. In driving the peace process, other major components of the museum are required. These include activities, management, fundraising and good relations with the community where the museum is located.

The following considerations are the results of my observations and visits to peace museums. They indicate how much peace museums can contribute to the peace process.

Violence

After spending three quarters of an hour to one and a half hours in a museum, what can audiences with diverse backgrounds learn? The backgrounds of the audiences can be divided into three categories: (1) the audiences who superficially observe the museum – they read only some of the headings of exhibits; (2) audiences who choose to read only topics that interest them; and (3) audiences interested in every detail at hand. Given the aforementioned, the challenge facing the museum is how to organize the exhibitions so as to benefit all three categories of audiences. While too little information can lead to a better understanding of ideas or beliefs without a rational base, too much information can be overwhelming and can lead to the refusal to learn.

The Nagasaki Atomic Memorial Museum and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum work hard at providing information, thereby resulting in too much information. At the same time, the facts they provide do not include the events which serve as the most important factors in propelling Japan into making the decision to start the war. It is certain that there can never be a reason to justify the use of the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but obscure information on the real causes of the war and the aim to subdue negative feelings deprive audiences of the ability to understand the position of Japan in the international political arena at that time. Most importantly, the information displayed is based on the perspective of Japan rather than those of other external societies. This undermines the ability of audiences to comprehend the root causes of the war. Finally, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedies have become political tools to cover up the responsibility of the Japanese army and government to the Japanese people.

Both museums prioritize the anti-nuclear campaign which links perfectly with the World War II tragedy and violence, and the current nuclear power station incident. However, the museums do not give adequate importance to current conflicts in East Asia, Southeast Asia and other regions.

The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum and the Iloilo Peace Museum do not touch upon the actual root causes of the war. Especially significant is the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. When the audiences view the images and receive information on the extreme violence committed by the Japanese army, e.g., the case of the Nanjing Massacre, comfort women, or the experimental unit of 731 which carried out the human biological experiment, what would their reactions be? Despite their fright upon getting the
new information, this can be a good beginning to find out why a military man as father, brother or husband in their country could commit cruelty in other countries. Such fright and fear can also cause anger and hatred, which undermine the eagerness to discover the real reasons. The museums still fail to provide information on the justification process behind the violence. These limitations reduce the roles of peace museums to the level of historical museums.

On the other hand, the Himeyuri Peace Museum and the Kyoto Museum for World Peace have been doing well in this aspect. Both museums direct audiences to view structural and cultural violence as having more dimensions than physical violence. These museums have a clear stance in their critique of the military system and the ultra-imperialism which led to the damage from war that cannot be over-estimated. As mentioned earlier, the Himeyuri Peace Museum has appropriately divided the emotional prevocational elements including the storytelling of the victims and links with the causes of the losses, while the Kyoto Museum for World Peace employs storytelling from the perpetrator’s perspective and illustrative narrations by scholars as an approach to explain the root cause of violence. This approach also provides a rationale for analyzing what the violence and peace is to the audiences.

**Peace Education**

The peace museums’ understanding of peace is very important, serving as the major component of peace museums themselves. This is because the definition of peace does not only lead to education for peace, but also determines the direction, boundary, and content of the activities, as well as cooperation with different stakeholders. One of the challenges of museums in exhibiting war-related issues is defining peace. Peace does not merely mean the absence of war or conflict; peace links with equality, justice, human rights, freedom, and the liberty of everyone. A correct understanding of peace can result in a sustainable peace process.

However, definitions of peace given by the exhibitions displayed in the four museums, namely, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, and the Iloilo Peace Museum are largely still abstract and confined to physical violence. In contrast, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Himeyuri Peace Museum have shifted the societal perspective from the physical dimension to structural and cultural violence. The approaches of these two museums reflect their activities and movement for peace in different forms. These surfaces in protests against the American army’s stationing in Okinawa and the support for Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which prohibits the state from engaging in warfare.

**Memory Studies**

On the one hand, the emblematic memory represents the struggle over a space in collective memories or, on the other, the creation of memory, which is more valuable. While different people may have experienced the same incident, each may have a different memory and experience of it, depending on one’s personal perspective, background, education, impact, or self-esteem. Another problem is that people in society differ in terms of their feelings about traumatic events of history. While one group believes that society can only move on when people abandon this history, another group upholds that remembrance of the past is the only way to move the society forward (Satha-Anand 2010, 13). Thus, peace museums should have a space for collective memory and the memories of other groups. They should attempt to build awareness that learning the history of violence is imperative for determining a peaceful future.

However, the reality is that peace museums are not only institutions but are also individually-oriented entities. They represent people of different groups such as the victims of nuclear weapons, veterans, students and Korean laborers. All need space to communicate and remind society of their fate, or to call for justice and responsibility.

Therefore, every peace museum has the right to exhibit its memories to serve its objectives. The selection of memories does not establish the status of peace museums. This poses a challenge to the approach in the organization of exhibits and
the dissemination of knowledge on peace and violence. As mentioned above, the space which the museum offers allows for the review, analysis, dispute, and critique of these issues, as well as reflection on whether political culture has a space for diverse memories. To be simplistic, can every segment of society have space for everyone and every memory?

When they consider the representativeness and the voices of the atomic bomb victims, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum play crucial roles in the historical memory space of Japanese history. Both stimulate or condition Japanese society and the international community to realize that when thinking of World War II, the severity of the atomic bomb and damage to the victims must be remembered.

Similarly, the Himeyuri Peace Museum represents 240 girl students and families in communicating with the audiences to remember the bitterness of the war and the rigid governance which dominated the brain and heart of the subordinates. The Iloilo Peace Museum operates on behalf of Japanese citizens and soldiers in Iloilo City, and informs Japanese society of the fate of Japanese citizens and soldiers in the foreign land. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum represents the victims of violence of every kind, perpetrated by the Japanese soldiers. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace positions itself as an international museum that displays diverse memories, such as those of victims from Japan, Korea, China, and Southeast Asia, and even of Japanese soldiers.

**Audience Space**

Although participatory learning is the most effective approach, the limitation of space, the use of sound and management undermine the ability of most of the peace museums to create the space for interaction between audience and the museums. The communication between audiences and museums has to take place in other forms.

Seminars on violence and peace related topics are popular activities of peace museums. It can be observed that the seminar calendars of the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, and the Kyoto Museum for World Peace are very full throughout the year. However, the limitation of these seminars is the incompatibility between the time of the activities and the visits of the audiences to the museums. This gap undermines opportunities and deprives audiences of the chance to participate if they want to clarification or to express their disagreement.

In addition, the temporary exhibition is part of the communication with audiences. Each year, curators of these three museums plan the exhibitions ahead by studying the situation of the moment and the interest of prospective visitors at that time.

Printed materials are among the activities which keep the museums alive, but one must not forget that Japan has a strong reading culture. All five peace museums have their own printed materials such as research works, displayed objects, book collections, newsletters, magazines, and books for children.

**Academic Freedom**

Exhibitions on the invasion and malfeasances of the Japanese army at the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, the Himeyuri Peace Museum, and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, which are privately run, reflect the freedom of expression of Japanese society. The exhibition at the Iloilo Peace Museum shows the sense of responsibility taken by a Japanese veteran for the losses suffered by Japanese citizens, which cannot be seen in Japanese museums, especially those run by the state. At the same time, the exhibitions in the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, which are state run, aim at portraying the damage caused to the Japanese, without mentioning devastations in other countries that were invaded by Japan. This is a form of self-censorship among the museums. The case does not reflect the state’s control over the collective memory, but indicates the peace museum’s option as an independent institution, which is significantly dependent on the owners and funders.
Cooperation between Peace Museums

There are two peace museum networks in Japan, namely the Japanese Network of Museums for Peace and the Citizens’ Network of Museums for Peace. The differences between these two museums are that the Citizens’ Network of Museums for Peace consists of members that are local and self-managed private peace museums. However, most members are also members of the Network of Museum for Peace.

The activities of both museums aim at strengthening the operation of peace museums, especially the small ones and at exchanging information or the co-organization of activities on common topics. Both networks hold a network seminar once a year, publish a newsletter and hold a meeting between each round.

Learning Space and Management

The Himeyuri Peace Museum, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum are not only venues of peace education but are also managed as tourism spots. The transformation of a tragic space into a tourism spot sounds not only odd but also sad. Entertainment and tragedy do not seem compatible but it is undeniable that, in reality, tourism development in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa is based on the invitation to visitors to “experience” the losses.

Nonetheless, the management of the museum does not promote suffering for sale. The museums operate soundly and enjoy widespread appreciation that has turned them into venues of effective learning rather than being merely tourist destinations.

The three museums are ready in every aspect, including human resources. They have full-time curator10 volunteers, most of whom are victims or their families. Well organized and prepared are the information center, the research department, the maintenance of facilities such as transportation, earphones, leaflets in different languages and facilities for disabled people including resource materials for the blind.

The Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum have clearly positioned themselves as learning centers. There are not many tourists at either museum. Most of the audience is made up of students and people who have a genuine interest in the issues. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace is outstanding in terms of a strong academic environment when compared with other private museums, which are small and operate at the community level. However, that status is not only a result of the university as an initiator but also springs from its serious activities, like its membership in the International Network of Peace Museum’s Annual Academic Magazine, a high quality magazine, and its leadership in many seminars on peace including peace studies courses for outsiders.

Another outstanding aspect of the Japanese peace museums is a volunteer system which lessens management costs and builds the self-esteem of senior citizen or student volunteers. In this sense, the museums contribute significantly to fostering civic participation as well.

Comparing them with the Iloilo Peace Museum in the Philippines, the latter’s weak management has many negative consequences, such as the invisibility of the museum even within the community where it is located. The museum does not interact with the community or the local educational institutions. One of its limitations is its audience targeting strategy which is inappropriate, considering its location. Since its main target audiences are the Japanese who visit Iloilo, this focus deprives the museum of the opportunity to cater to other potential visitors to whom it could impart knowledge or who could be agents of change.

It is unfortunate that while it is a repository of the collective memory of the people of Iloilo of the Japanese military invasion and the losses of the Filipinos caused by war, this peace museum does not even serve as a voice of Japanese citizens who dwell in Iloilo City, who were themselves victims of the war. This has become an obstacle to the diversity of collective memories in Iloilo city and to
arriving at a better understanding of the war from a holistic perspective.

The Strength of the Museum Culture in the Country

The success in terms of the active existence of peace museums in Japan is the result of the country's having a strong museum culture. One can clearly observe that in Japan, visits to museums are common among the Japanese. Museums are the place where everyone can equally acquire knowledge. Visiting a museum is not a special occasion. The museums also receive strong support from the state and its civilians. As for private peace museums in Japan, one must not forget that they are heavily dependent on donations from their members.

The Japanese education system is another key aspect which sustains the culture of museums in Japan. Schools in Japan organize regular exposure visits and, often, museums are included in the bulletin. A Japanese child will have to visit a peace museum at least once in her life. The Himeyuri Peace Museum, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, including the Kyoto Museum for World Peace are the primary target museums in the schools' schedule. Visits to the museum are part of the curriculum of some schools.

Moreover, the diversity of museums in term of types and founders has to be taken into account. This diversity reflects the strong museum culture, e.g., the co-existence of a military museum and a peace museum, a state-run history museum and a local history museum managed by the local people, a classic art museum and a contemporary art museum, a religion museum and a gender diversity museum, etc. Such variety reflects the access of people from different backgrounds to the socio-political spaces and levels of democracy, human rights and peace in society.

Along with the socio-political space in every segment of society is the ability to question and critique society. A society without critiques or questioning indicates its weakness when basic human rights and democratic principles are absent. A critique culture on culture and history in Southeast Asia deserves critical analysis. Crucial is questioning political history and political violence including collective memories, which are managed by the state and can be seen in the history textbooks, monuments and museums. The critique or questioning not only gives lessons to the new generations, but also generates sparks the quest for justice for the victims, by questioning the state on its justice system. Society should be empowered to protect the rights of the victims.

In considering the museum culture in Southeast Asia, the people's perspectives of the museum are the most interesting aspect. It is clear that museums are categorized as extra-curricular activities. The alienating aspects of museums come in the form of the large luxurious buildings estranged from the local context. The quiet and serious environment inside and the knowledge offered do not often link with nor are they relevant to the visitors, in general. In many cases, museums are categorized as tourist destinations, which imply indicate its status as a venue for visitors who are educated and have financial capacities and time. This alienation and perception undermine the access of the local people to the museum which, in the long run, results in a weak museum culture.

Conclusion

The origin of museums is the transference of value, experiences and memories through public learning spaces. It is undeniable that the peace museums’ space is one form of socio-political space that victims, perpetrators, and stakeholders can rightfully utilize in the search for justice, human rights, sharing, questioning, constructing memories, or reviving memories. The most important question is whether the ultimate goals of the peace museum are peace and the peace process. How should peace museums, for instance, address the experiences and memories of World War II to develop understanding and knowledge on violence and peace?

Based on knowledge acquired from this research, history is one of the root causes of conflict. History can also be instrumentalized for peace if it
encompasses facts from different angles and offers socio-political spaces collectively, to critique and share diverse versions of history based on the reality that acquainting oneself with a memory associated with many people is diversity. The success of peace museums which exhibit diverse histories, memories, or experiences cannot be possible without a socio-political space which embraces everyone.

One of the key factors behind the success of peace museums in Japan that deserves to be mentioned is the clear example of the Himeyuri Peace Museum, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. It is clear that Japan has the space for diverse memories and space for critiques. These spaces are guaranteed by Article 19 of the Japanese Constitution: Freedom of thought and conscience shall not be violated and Article and Article 21: Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression are guaranteed. No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated. This means that the state recognizes and respects the fact that Japanese citizens are diverse in term of backgrounds, experiences and memories. There is more than one set of history and truth.

However, due to the many limitations of peace museums as mentioned earlier and as gleaned by looking back at the socio-political conditions of Southeast Asia where each country is now experiencing protracted conflicts, including the eruption of unrest in Eastern Asia, I would like to offer peace museums and all stakeholders the following recommendations to make peace museums supportive of a possible peace process:

- Museums can play a role in empowering the visitor's capacity to read and interpret the hidden messages. Each museum should be enabled to provide space for critical thinking.
- Museums can play a role as social and political space rather than by becoming a political tool; they can provide various kinds of knowledge to empower people to analyze, criticize, and reconstruct the structure of violence and evolve ways to achieve sustainable peace.
- The museums’ visitors can be encouraged to exercise their rights to investigate, criticize, analyze, or disagree with official versions of history.
- The visitors can be influenced to face their traumatic experiences of past violence directly and openly, with the objective of moving forward into the future, which is not to forget or distort the past, but to remember it and question it.
- Museums should enjoy academic freedom in presenting and exhibiting information and evidence. This is not only to elevate a museum to the level of educational institution, but to promote the development of knowledge in collaboration with educational and social institutions.

In parallel with effective peace museums, there should be an effort to develop an education system which encourages the student to research and nurture his or her ability to critique something based on academic rationale. This kind of education system will enhance the capacity of society to support peace museums where society can review and verify exhibitions, as well as provide recommendations for the further development of peace museums.

Societal capacity to support peace museums will come from the empowerment of peace museums by way of changing the perception that museums are not a place merely for the educated people, the middle class, or tourists who have time and financial capability. Rather, museums are public space that everyone can access. Visits to the museums should be based on equal spirit and awareness of knowledge acquisition, as well as the entertainment of people in society. Respect for knowledge in the museum should take precedence over the museum itself. This is how power is truly given to the audiences.
The promotion of freedom of expression is very important. Peace museums will lack efficiency if this human rights principle is missing. The promotion of freedom of discussion is not only a way to open up the space; it also promotes the culture of recognition of differences and diversity which will lead to peaceful agreement when conflicts arise.

NOTES:

1. The documents in most of the academic discourses are mostly found in the academic and research institutes.

2. In the bracket is the year the museum was established.

3. The Himeyuri Peace Museum was established in 1984 and launched in June 1989.

4. The initial name of the museum was Nagasaki International Cultural Hall.

5. According to Peace Museum Worldwide, which was published by the United Nations in 1998.

6. The American army used Okinawa as a base for deploying troops and weapons to Vietnam.

7. The Okinawa Women's School and First Women's Prefectural High School.

8. The participation in the warfare which brought about the great loss of Ritsumeikan University led to the “The Ritsumeikan Charter” which declared as its objective its support for democracy and peace.

9. Based on the interview and sharing with a curator, aside from studying the museum manual, the time museum assumes that the duration audiences can concentrate on the exhibitions is between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours.

10. There are five curators at Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum

11. Based on the interpretation of tourists and visitors who are not the local.

REFERENCES


Post-Conflict Institution in Support of Reintegration and the Peace Process:

Lambang Trijono

Introduction

Bringing human security issues to the central public discourse and making them a national policy concern will significantly reduce conflict and open windows of opportunity for building peace in conflict-prone regions. This is especially true in the case of Mindanao where not only the conflict but also the peace process are simultaneously protracted (Oquist, 2001: 2-4; ICG, 2008:1-4; and 2011:2-3). Although peace agreements have been achieved several times, conflicts continue. In such a situation, it is not only conflict that should be highlighted, but also peace deterioration and its negative impacts on human security. This is especially relevant when the ongoing peace talks reach a deadlock and have not resulted in a substantial peace agreement.

This paper discusses the vulnerabilities of the people in Mindanao who live between war and peace situations. The people are easily trapped in civil war and dislocated from their home regions. Based on observations and interviews done during three months of field research in Mindanao, this paper highlights human security issues affected by peace deterioration, a critical issue that has to be tackled in order to build peace in conflict-prone regions. As a case study, the paper draws lessons from the conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao from August to November, 2011. On 4 August 2011 President Benigno “P-Noy” Aquino, the new elected President, had reopened dialogue with MILF leaders. While continuing the peace talks, he declared ‘all-out justice’ instead of ‘all-out war’ and issued the promise to strengthen the peace process in Mindanao.

As will be elaborated below, unlike the previous governments, the government of President Aquino brought with it a new promise to build peace in Mindanao. The paper argues that, despite the conflict causes that need to be addressed properly, the weaknesses of peacemaking process to produce peace agreement (Oquist, 2001: 6-10; Brillantes, 2005: 6-9) is one of the obstacles to build peace in Mindanao. After raising awareness on human security issues and calling out to peace advocates to support the building of a democratic peace process, it is expected that a sustainable peace would be prospectively achieved in Mindanao. Moreover, as the main source of human security problems in Mindanao is not only the conflict causes but also the peace obstacles, the paper argues that strengthening the peace process and foreseeing the future of post-conflict peacebuilding institutions, as “structures and institutions supporting the peace process to avoid a relapse into conflict and promote sustainable peace” (Boutros Boutros-Gali, 1996:4), would be highly significant to transform conflict and build peace in Mindanao.

The following report elaborates on this issue, first of all, by assessing the current conflict dynamic and peace development in Mindanao. Then, discussions on peace deterioration and its impacts on human security problems in Mindanao will ensue. After discussing this issue, the paper elaborates on humanitarian (human) intervention in responding to human security problems and presents lessons from them to promote reintegration and build the democratic peace process. Based on this analytical examination, the paper finally presents recommendations to tackle those issues by raising awareness on human security issues and proposing a visionary democratic peace process to promote peacebuilding in Mindanao.

Protracted conflict, but also protracted peace

Before the report presents an analysis and proposes recommendations, it is worthwhile here, first of all, to assess the current situation of conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao in order to find out an appropriate approach to promote reintegration and peacebuilding. Taking into account what has been discussed in literature and during public
discourses on Mindanao so far, immediately it is found that there has been much more attention been given to conflict issues than to peace dynamics. In fact, besides its being a conflict region, Mindanao is also a very dynamic region in terms of peacebuilding and development.

On the surface, we can see that the region is a very rich one with abundant natural resources. It is also surrounded by the beautiful sea areas, a rich regionwide plantation, beautiful mountains, green paddy fields, rich traditions and cultural diversities. But, behind all the beauty are sedimented tensions and conflict in its social and political landscape; not only horizontal ethno-religious and vertical self-determination conflicts, but a combination of both ethno-religious nationalism and self-determination conflicts (Ferrer, 2005: 7-15). Moreover, the region faces vertical ethno-religious nationalism or a self-determination conflict between the state and the people over political identity and state formation as part of the nation-state building of the modern Philippine society, historically it is also marked by a horizontal conflict of traditional feud among the “big man”. Now it is sustained in the form of *rido* or clan conflict (Abinales, 2004: 47-48 and 163-170). However, many peacebuilding efforts have been made to settle the conflicts, either by government, civil society organizations or development agencies by means of political negotiations, humanitarian intervention and many other civilian peace initiatives (Lee, 2005: 121-123; Lingga, 2005).

The conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao can be properly understood from the inter-relations or actions and counter responses of the armed struggle with the Moro fronts, on one side, and the Government of the Philippines (GRP), on the other side. There are two main fronts in the Moro rebellion, the MNLF (Mindanao National Liberation Front) and the MILF (Mindanao Islamic Liberation Front) (Santos, 2005: 4-8). While both the MNLF and the MILF were previously united in a single front against the GRP under the umbrella of MNLF that demanded Mindanao’s independence, the latter then split to launch its own struggle with the objective of establishing an Islamic state in Mindanao. This was mainly driven by the dissatisfaction of the MILF due to its exclusion from the power sharing arrangement in the regional autonomy for Mindanao reached between the MNLF and the Philippine government as provided for in the First Tripoli Agreement.

Meanwhile, from the government’s counter insurgency position, there are three dominant positions that can be identified, namely; military victory, pacification and demobilization and politico-institutional positions (Oquist, 2002; Brillantes, 2005). The military victory position refers to a political position of government who sees the winning of the war or crushing the rebellion of the enemy using military measures. This, according to them, is the only viable solution to end the conflict in Mindanao. On the contrary, while both the pacification and political institution positions oppose the military victory approach, the two are slightly different. The pacification and demobilization approach tend to believe more in achieving peace through economic development and social welfare distribution, the institutional approach believes that the political solution would be the only viable solution to end the conflict and build sustainable peace. Seemingly, it is in the interplay of the multiple positions of the armed struggle in the Moro fronts, on one side, and the different positions in the counter insurgency responses and policies, on the other, that the conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao could be properly comprehended. The following brief trajectory of conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao gives an illustration.

The modern armed conflict in Mindanao began in 1972 when the MNLF declared Mindanao to be independent and free from the Philippines. The rebellion was immediately responded to by the Philippine government under President Ferdinand Marcos who issued a mixed counter insurgency strategy; military mobilization on the one side and political solution through negotiation on the other. Peace talk between the GRP and the MNLF was held for the first time in 1976. The Tripoli Peace Talk resulted in a political arrangement granting regional autonomy to Mindanao. This arrangement was fully implemented after the second peace talks held in 1996 under President Fidel Ramos. However, some core members of the MNLF from the Islamic faction were not satisfied with the agreement as they
perceived its implementation to be fully controlled by the central government. Eventually, they withdrew from the peace agreement and set up a new front, the MILF movement.

After President Ferdinand Marcos was ousted from office, President Cory Aquino reactivated negotiations by revitalizing the regional autonomy of ARRM. The peace situation continued to improve under the next president, Fidel Ramos who promoted more power devolution, political decentralization and regional autonomy for Mindanao. To back up this process, the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCDC) was established with the specific objective to promote ‘post-conflict’ rehabilitation and reconstruction. However, the MILF still did not accept the policy as they perceived it to tend to favor the MNLF and traditional local community leaders who had a close personal relationship with the political elite at the central government while excluding them from taking part in the new power sharing arrangement.

The situation became worse under President Joseph Estrada, who favored adopting the military victory position to pacification and the political institution solution. This was clearly shown in his decision to declare “all-out-war” in response to the rebel movement. Under such option, the military clashes between the government’s military arm and the MILF was unavoidable. In the case of the battle attacking Camp Abubakar, for instance, the MILF lost its stronghold (Ferrer, 2005: 6). President Joseph Estrada himself directly celebrated the victory in the ruined Camp to delight the propagandists (Oquist, 2002: 13). The war deescalated after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the MILF resumed peace talks in the Second Tripoli peace Agreement in 2001. Three main points resulted from the agreement, namely, a cease fire, reconstruction and rehabilitation and ancestral domain. To support their implementation, four bodies of post-conflict institutions were formed; the Coordination Committee on Cessation of Hostility (CCCH), the International Monitoring Team (IMT), and the Bangsamoro Development Agencies (BDA) and Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute (BLMI) were established to implement the Second Tripoli Peace Agreement.

While the first and second points of agreement were quite successfully implemented and resulted in significantly decreasing violence, the third point faced many obstacles. There were political debates and contestations over the ancestral domain issue or the MOA-AD agreement at the national policy level so that finally, it was rejected by the Senate and Congress in 2008 which perceived it to be unconstitutional. Since the MOA-AD was rejected by the government, conflict resumed in Mindanao with regular armed clashes between the GRP and rebels taking place. The critical situation ended after the newly elected President “P-Noy” Aquino held a secret meeting with the MILF leaders in Japan on August 4, 2011, to resume political dialogue that was expected by many to come up with a more democratic political solution. As will be elaborated on more in the next section, after this meeting, a series of political negotiations were held in Kuala Lumpur starting September 2011, with much tension breaking out between the MILF and the government in the drive to find a political solution.

**Peace deterioration and human security impacts**

One crucial issue that can be learned from the previous conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao is the tendency when the peace process is deteriorating for rising tension, polarization, and conflict between the warring parties to follow immediately, with devastating impacts on human security. The rising tension and military clashes during the Joseph Estrada presidency, for instance, happened after the peace process deteriorated. At the time, in 2002, all-out war was declared that resulted in serious destructive impacts on human security. It was estimated that about almost one million people were dislocated or displaced as a result of the all-out war decision (PHSR, UNDP, 2005: 4).

A similar case also happened in 2003 when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued a ‘buliok offensive’ that resulted in almost a half million IDPs evacuated from their home region. The military clashes occurred again after the MOA-AD was rejected by the government that led to the displacement of some 700,000 persons and the
death of approximately 500 people. Serious destructive impacts were also inflicted on productive assets, livelihood, houses and schools in the conflict areas (PHSR, UNDP, 2005: 4).

This tendency can also be captured in the bigger picture of conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao. Seen from the conflict incidents, for instance, is how the cases of violence drastically decreased when the peace process regained its political momentum (PHSR, UNDP, 2005). President Corazon Aquino’s decision to update regional autonomy for Mindanao, for instance, produced a significantly decreasing number of conflict incidents from 288 to almost zero in her last term in power. The zero incident level was then maintained under President Fidel Ramos by promoting more political decentralization and greater political autonomy for Mindanao. But then, during the military victory period under President Joseph Estrada the number of incidents rose to 114 after he declared all-out war in 2000. And the number continued to increase and peaked at 316 in 2008 after President Arroyo issued an all-out war declaration after the MOA-AD was rejected by the Senate and Congress (PHSR, UNDP, 2005: 3-5). Different direction toward a conflict decrease taken place when the peace process sustained and regained its political momentum. The extended peace process did allow a larger number of people to return to their homes, either through humanitarian intervention or peacebuilding efforts. The restoration of the cease-fire with the MILF in mid-2003, for instance, and relative peace in 2004, allowed thousands of people to return home to pick up their lives (PHSR, UNDP, 2005: 5-6).

However, the restoration of the cease-fire did not mean that the people in Mindanao were freed from vulnerabilities and violence. As the peace process proceeded, and military victory approach take a rest, another armed conflict in the form ofrido conflict wake up at community level. Though it had no direct relation between state and rebellion conflict and rido conflict, the rido conflict tend likely to emerge when there is no extent degree of social stability quaranted by state presence. The impacts of the rido conflict are not indifferent in compare to military clashes between rebellion and government as it also similarly created serious devastating impacts on human security. The recent land dispute among community leaders in Datu Piang, Maguindanao in August, 2011, particularly between the group of the Abunawas commander (Kato’s followers) and Azmi commander (MILF’s followers) in Datu Piang regency, for instance, resulted in the death of 14 combatants and displaced more than 3,500 villagers (Mindanao Cross, 20 August, 2011).

Peace deterioration, and the rising tensions and conflicts that follow are the main or key issues behind the human security impacts. The protracted conflict and contestation over peace policy has resulted in specific political and conflict dynamics in Mindanao. The three different positions in the government’s counter insurgency policy produce their own impacts on local dynamics. While the military victory position tends to create polarization and armed clashes, the pacification and demobilization position tends to create a social fabric without a single political reference to hold and unite the social fabric in a stable political order (Oquist, 2002; Abinales, 2004). Therefore, in order to tackle peace deterioration and human security impacts, consolidation of peace peace policy has to be strengthened at the national level. Bringing to the fore human security issues to be a national policy concern would definitively strengthen peace process. The recent opening dialogue and ongoing peace talks between President “P-Noy” Aquino and the MILF leaders might be expected to create a more promising process for bringing about a democratic solution and sustainable peace in Mindanao.

Humanitarian intervention and human security responses

Building human security requires collaborative action among strategic actors and agencies. In this respect, the existing local mechanism and regional institutions, such as the regional autonomous government of Mindanao (ARRM), civil society organizations, community based organizations and development agencies, are potential strategic partners to promote democratic peacebuilding governance in Mindanao. As mediating institutions, they can be a bridge for building peace between
the government and rebels and for finding a democratic solution.

The central government normally runs its policy through local government by building a close connection and political ties with the local elite and civil society institutions. Moreover, both the government and rebels also try to build closer relations with civil society organizations and people at the community and grass-roots levels in order to gain political legitimacy in public policy and the political struggle. In addition, in order to reach people in the ground, development agencies also deliver development assistance and humanitarian relief via or with the approval of both the government and rebels. Because of their potentials to be a mediating institution, collaboration among these various actors and agencies could strengthen peacebuilding. However, there are also many obstacles to build human security and peace through the measures. The research finding below shows the potential and weaknesses of using this approach to promote democratic peacebuilding.

Many development agencies and civil society organizations in Mindanao undertaking humanitarian intervention, unfortunately, is still a partial intervention. They were not very much aware of the importance of integrating humanitarian intervention and the peacebuilding approach. Many of them only working around the conflict, and only some of them work in the conflict, and the few who do intervention on the conflict integrate humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches (Gaigals and Leonhardt, 2001). With the exception of one or two civil society organizations and networks, for instance the Katuntaya Foundation and Consortium of the Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS) who work by simultaneously combining both the humanitarian/community development and peacebuilding/conflict prevention, most civil society organizations in Mindanao do not apply conflict sensitivity and peace driven development approaches, as suggested for instance by the former secretary of the UN, Boutros-Boutros Gali, in his triple agendas for peace, development, and democratization (Boutros-Boutros Gali, 1996).

The regional autonomous government of Mindanao (ARRM), for instance, through its Social Welfare and Development Bureau has been extending a lot of development assistance and undertaking humanitarian relief efforts, especially during times of crisis. The Pamana Program, for example, is one of the biggest humanitarian intervention programs of the central government launched in coordination with the local government of Mindanao in order to assist and resettle the displaced people affected by conflict (Mindanao Cruz, 20 August, 2011; 24 September, 2011; Manila Bulletin, 29 October, 2011). However, in many cases, it is very difficult for them to enter communities and areas controlled by the rebels as provided for the cease-fire agreement which classifies them as “restricted”. The MILF and government may not enter territories under the other group’s control.

Moreover, resistance and oftentimes, disputes between groups in the community and the local government over issues pertaining to the IDPs’s resettlement program have been noted. One of the contentious issues has to do with whether the IDPs should be ‘reintegrated’ back to their original areas that are now controlled by the rebels, or be “relocated” to other places outside the territories but under the state control. There are also different perceptions and interpretations with regard to reintegration issues between both the government and the rebel groups. While for the government reintegration means reintegrating people into areas controlled by the government for them to be part of the body of citizens of the Philippine state, for the rebels it means they should be returned to their original home territories now under the control of the rebels.

The other potential institutions for building partnerships for peacebuilding are the post-conflict institutions, that resulted from and were established by a peace agreement. Besides the ARRM that was initially established by a peace agreement in 1996, the BDA and BMLI (the latter was recently reactivated by P-Noy Aquino’s government, see Manila Bulletin, 29 October, 2011) are post-conflict institutions resulting from the Second Tripoli
Agreement of 2001. They can be viewed as potential strategic partners for peacebuilding. As institutions established by a peace agreement, they get support from both the government and the MILF leaders to perform the tasks of rehabilitation and reconstruction and, therefore, have a wider reach of people and peace constituencies at the community levels controlled by both the rebel groups and the government (Interview with the head of BDA, 25 August, 2011).

Moreover, a broader activity included people and IDPs across borders was the humanitarian intervention done by development agencies in collaboration with civil society organizations and community-based organizations. The Community Services and Family Initiative (CSFI), for instance, gets funding support from international development agencies such as World Bank and UNDP. It has been doing a lot of humanitarian interventions, among them a food security program for IDPs and the IDPs’s resettlement (Interview with CSFI staff, 18 August, 2011). But, its main program so far mainly focuses on helping out in humanitarian relief efforts and development assistance, without much integration with a broader conflict-sensitive and peace driven development framework. As the sources of the people’s vulnerability in Mindanao are mostly peace deterioration and conflict impacts, by giving development assistance and humanitarian relief only, though these are very helpful, will not mean much help to effectively prevent and resolve problems. Many cases show that after the IDPs returned to and resettled in their home regions, they were easily affected again and again by reemerging tensions and conflicts and vulnerably became “permanent” IDPs in their home regions.

However, some other civil society organizations have built a more integrated approach by combining both development assistance and peacebuilding compared to the two development agencies above. The Katuntaya Foundation (KFI) has employed double intervention approaches; on the one hand, it promotes humanitarian and community development and, on the other, it also utilizes conflict sensitive planning and a peace driven development approach. Established by NGO activists from different backgrounds, especially from community development and peace activism, it simultaneously organizes community development and peacebuilding initiatives by integrating development intervention into a peace and development framework. For its broader framework, its activities are not only supported by people and community leaders from various ethnic and social backgrounds, but also by international development agencies, such as UNDP, JICA, and many other international agencies especially those that promote humanitarian dialogue initiatives and programmes (Interview with the head of the Katuntaya Foundation, 19 October, 2011). Moreover, for its broader objective to achieve peace rather than merely doing community development in a narrow sense, it also easily mediated various interests and demands of the people and groups to formulate a common agendas of peacebuilding and, therefore its programmes are able to easily enter communities across borders, controlled either by the rebel groups or the government (Interview with Katuntaya Foundation Staff, Norman Abas, 23 August, 2011).

In addition, as a member of the Consortium for Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS), the KFI also has a specific program to promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the areas affected by conflict in Mindanao. The CBCS is a network of civil society organizations established by NGO activists in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It could be seen as a “strategic think-thank” of civil society in Mindanao that is not only concerned with development issues, but also with finding a political solution for Mindanao. There are regular discussions held in the CSBS office to discuss the current political situation and peace negotiations between the government and the MILF. Several programmes on conflict prevention and peacebuilding are also organized by the network involving the local government, MILF, MNLF leaders, national and local politicians, community leaders, religious leaders, academicians, civil society organizations and community based organizations (Interview with Guamel Alim, head of CSBS and Katuntaya Foundation, 19 October, 2011).
For its inclusivity in running the programs, it is not strange therefore that the network gets support from multiple sides actors and agencies; such as ARRM, MNLF, MILF, community leaders, religious leaders, civil society and community based organizations, and could be a potential mediating institution that supports the building peace process. But, the challenges for making peace in Mindanao are so great, that in order to be a powerful institution supporting the peace process, it is highly suggested that the agency strengthen its capacity to be a mediating institution, especially through the application of a comprehensive framework and approach to peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Those five categories of mediating institutions above illustrate how the local institution can be a potential strategic partner promoting peacemaking and the building of a democratic practice process. Collaboration among them would help support the peace process and build democratic peacebuilding in Mindanao. However, as will be elaborated below, a new visionary peace process is highly required to mediate the differences and build equivalent changes among them to consolidate the peace process in Mindanao.

Post-conflict institution and peacebuilding

Since the MOA-AD was rejected by the government, the peace process was terminated and there were no significant sign of improvement in peace building in Mindanao. However, the peace process has gained new political momentum as recently President “P-Noy” Aquino resumed peace talks with the MILF leaders on 4 August, 2011. The peace process now is taking place under the specific political context of a more open negotiation process between MILF leaders and the more open and democratic government of the Philippines which has closer relationship with civil society organizations and the pro-democratic movements. Because of the more democratic and its openness to pursuing political dialogue, the commencement of the political dialogue and negotiations can be expected to bring about better prospects or the future of building peace in Mindanao.

However, there are also obstacles to promoting political negotiation, especially when the contestation over peace policies between military victory and the political and institutional solution position at the national level is escalating. There are political leaders who are still in favor of a military victory approach rather than a political solution to resolve the Mindanao problem, especially when political contestations between the government and political opposition is getting intense. How to transform the increasingly military approach to the peace process to a more democratic political solution is the most challenging task for political negotiations for Mindanao today.

Moreover, the other critical issues that need to concern are the obstacles to achieve a deliberate peace negotiation. As recently shown during peace talks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, there is a highly charged debate between the MILF and the GRP over the issue of how to govern the Mindanao region in the future. The MILF proposed a “sub-state”, which proposal was rejected by the GRP that in turn offered the alternative of a comprehensive autonomy package for Mindanao. The MILF rejected this autonomy package proposal, after which a ‘reject of the rejection’ process and positions between the two parties proceeded. The peace process deteriorated thereafter and went on in a ‘mutual hurting process’ that tended to push the peace process to a deadlock. Fortunately, there is still a basic ethico-political principle agreement among the parties to continue the peace process that would solve the Mindanao problem through a peaceful political solution instead of a military one (Arguillas, 2011; Coronel-Ferrer, 2011).

As happened in the past, whenever the peace process deteriorated, and political contestation over the peace policy at national level was in tense, tensions and conflict on the ground were expected. Immediately after the recent peace process in Kuala Lumpur deteriorated, military clashes between the armed rebels and government forces took place in Al-Barka, Payao, Zambuanga, Sibugay in the province of Basilan that claimed about 19 lives from the special force troops were, thousands of
people were displaced (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 26 October, 2011; Philippine Star, 29 October, 2011). The incidents instigated the moving up of a military victory approach either from the side of the Moro fronts or government, that finally forced the highest level of authority President “P-Noy” Aquino to declare “all-out justice”.

The “all-out justice” declaration was very decisive and different from the pronouncements of the previous administrations that tended to declare “all-out war” when faced with a similar crisis and equally difficult situation. The difference between “all-out war” and “all-out justice” is that; while the first is totally outside the rules of the game of peace and falls under the category of war, the second still has in it a certain place for and degree of the rule of law and justice as being inseparable from peace and the rules of the game in a democratic peace process. As expressed in the statement delivered by the peace adviser of President “P-Noy” Aquino, Ging Deles, who defended the President’s all-out justice decision, “In this case, the President was very clear. The best possible outcome was to go after the lawless elements but at the same time preserve the peace process. That was really something that was important for everybody” (Philippine Daily, Inquirer 30 October, 2011).

Mindanao in this time needs a new visionary peace process to strengthen the ongoing peace talks and find out a viable political solution. Insofar as the protracted conflict and peace and human security affected by the conflict are the main concerns, strengthening the peace process by putting human security as the first concern should be the main objective of the new visionary peace process. But, as in the Mindanao context human security could only be realized if there were consensus on the peace policy among policy makers, and it should be supported by the demilitarization of politics and the demobilization of rebellion, the new visionary peace process should be able to provide a viable democratic political solution.

In this respect, democratic imagination would help in visioning the future of the peace process in Mindanao. Through democratic imagination, the future of war-to-democracy scenario and transformation, especially how to transform rebellion to a new democratic post-conflict institution under the rules of the game of democratic society can be foreseen. The democratic imaginary could assist everybody in foreseeing what kind of post-conflict institution can be expected to come up in Mindanao after a peace deal to transform rebellion is achieved. While in this respect the existing post-conflict institutions should be enhanced, how to build a new democratic peace process to transform the rebel groups to democratic groups or post-conflict institution after a peace deal is the main concern of democracy-to-peace transformation (Kovacs, 2008). This scenario is very promising to building sustainable peace in Mindanao. But, the main problem would be the persisting conservative politicians who still believe in having a military victory in order to win peace rather than winning the hearts and minds of the people through deliberative political negotiation and a democratic peace process. To make the democratic solution come true, a democratic agonistic politic has to be built to transform the antagonistic conflict or enemy type of power relationship among the parties to agonistic or adversary type of power relationship so that the conflicting parties could articulate their voice freely through democratic process.

Conclusion

This paper raises critical points on how to tackle peace deterioration and conflict tension to prevent negative impacts on human security and promote a democratic peace process in Mindanao. Based on observations and interviews done during three months of field research in Mindanao, this paper comes to the conclusion that a visionary peace process should be promoted to strengthen the peace process and find a viable democratic solution and foresee the future of post-conflict institution to transform rebel groups to be a new democratic post-conflict institution.
Mindanao is a very dynamic region in terms of conflict dynamics. However, there are also peacebuilding initiatives and efforts that have been promoted by many to settle the conflicts, either by state, civil society, or development agencies. From the overall picture of the conflict and peace dynamics in Mindanao, there can be found a tendency that when the peace process deteriorates, it is then immediately followed by tensions between the warring parties that ultimately result in negative impacts on human security. As shown by the trend of the conflict and violent incidents in the region, the violence decreases as the peace process improves, but then it will increase when the peace process deteriorate. Behind this overall tendency, there are contestation over the peace policy, especially between military victory and political-institution solution position on the government side, on the one hand, and tensions and divisions among the rebel groups, on the other hand, that make peace consolidation difficult to achieve.

Rising awareness on human security impacts affected by peace deterioration and conflicts, in this respect, would help promote reintegrations and build a democratic peace process in Mindanao. Strengthening collaboration among strategic actors and agencies, both at the national and local levels, especially between post-conflict institutions and civil society organizations and development agencies that function as a mediating institution, would help promote reintegrations and a democratic peace process. However, a new visionary peace process is required in this respect to resolve their differences by building equivalent changes among them to consolidate the peace process, especially to build common agendas and platforms, and strategic actions to promote reintegrations and strengthen the democratic peace process.

Mindanao now urgently requires a new visionary peace process to build and strengthen the ongoing peace talks to find a viable democratic political solution for human security problems and the conflict. In the Mindanao context, human security could only be realized if there were consolidation over peace policies, supported by demilitarization of politics and the demobilization of the rebellion process. Then and only then should, the alternative new visionary peace process be able to provide a viable democratic space to transform political contestation and conflict between state and rebels from antagonistic conflict or enemy type of power relationship to agonistic conflict or adversary type of power relationship within a democratic system and framework without violence.

In this respect, democratic imagination would help in visioning the future of the peace process in Mindanao. It will assist in foreseeing what democratic political system and post-conflict institution will come up after a peace deal to transform rebel groups to be a democratic post-conflict institution. While the existing post-conflict institutions have to be enhanced, how to build a democratic system and post-conflict institution to transform rebel groups to new democratic groups and institutions after a peace deal should be the main concern of the war-to-democracy scenario and conflict transformation in Mindanao.

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In the Name of Civil Society: Land, Peace Initiatives and Environmentalism in Muslim Areas of Thailand and the Philippines

Fadzilah Majid Cooke

Introduction

This paper deals with peace-related initiatives at the grassroots level in the southern provinces of the Philippines and Thailand, where Muslims are a minority in terms of national demographics and politics, but are majorities in areas they consider to be their homelands. In both regions there is widespread experience of violence from war or conflict. An additional, though less immediately obvious reality for many people in both regions is the issue of how to cope with or survive “slow violence”.

Rob Nixon (2006-2007), describes “slow violence” as a “violence of exclusion”. It emanates from large-scale loss to livelihoods, accumulating over time, as a result of top-down development practices such as mining, industrial development and commercial agriculture. “Slow violence” may emanate from legitimate (legal) acts that may yet be ethically or morally suspect, or via covert practices such as discriminatory employment practices which generate cumulative effects that may be felt years or even decades later.

Against a background of exclusion, and strengthened by a widespread lack of faith in the state system of maintaining peace and order, conflicts in Muslim-dominated regions of the Philippines and Thailand have escalated. In Mindanao, the Philippines, the prevalence of rido (clan feuds), sometimes involving killings, has been much written about (Torres 2007). Similarly, the violence in southern Thailand in the three mainly Muslim provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat has escalated since 2004, triggered by what is perceived by Muslims to be human rights abuses by the state (Mullins 2007).

Poor Muslims in both countries share a lack of trust in government enforcement agencies to resolve conflicts and often perceive the state as partisan, at best, or antagonistic to their quest for autonomy. Nevertheless, many continue to work within the system to try to support peace, by working alongside government agencies, or by aligning themselves with non-government agencies (NGOs), often simultaneously. In some cases, NGOs can be viewed as filling a niche created by a relative absence of government.

Within Maranao society in Lanao Del Norte and Lanao Del Sur in the Philippines, one of the major causes of rido is land disputes dating back to the 1900s (Durante 2007, Abreu 2008).

Two initiatives have emerged from NGOs seeking to promote peace which have also resonated with local communities that are tired of war. One is the formation of formal clan associations, based on genealogy. The second is the formation of clan-based community cooperatives, in Lanao Del Norte and Lanao Del Sur. Both initiatives require new forms of leadership that may or may not incorporate the old systems in which leadership came from datus and sultans, who form part of Maranao royalty. Cooperatives introduce new methods of accountability and transparency that can be empirically tested as the ventures develop and begin small-scale commercial activities. Both kinds of initiatives can provide new ways of thinking about clans and new methods of organizing relationships within them. This work is deserving of greater policy support.

In southern Thailand, discourse around environmental care and rehabilitation includes the issue of livelihoods loss. It is sometimes argued that environmental networks involving villagers as community researchers, working together with researchers from local universities, have provided avenues for expressing dissent. Yet, such avenues may also dampen anger against marginalization and exclusion, by asking villagers, “what can we do ourselves to solve our own problems?”

The experiences of communities in the study area are resonant of Joan Martinez-Alier’s description...
of “environmentalism of the poor,” which refers to the struggles of the poor to maintain access to the natural resources on which their livelihoods depend. Most involved in such struggles would not refer to themselves as environmentalists if environmentalism were equated with struggles in defence of pristine nature, or against the effects of industrial pollution, as in earlier forms of environmentalism in northern countries (Martinez-Alier 2002: 11,12). The communities may use the language of environmentalism in order to advance their interests. Nevertheless, issues of socio-economic marginalization and the unequal sharing of environmental costs from deforestation, pollution, water contamination and other problems are shared by both the environmental justice movement of the north and the livelihoods movement of the south (Martinez-Alier 2002:10-11).

**Method**

Fieldwork in both countries took place during the first half of 2012. Similar field strategies were used at both sites, namely, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observation. In the Philippines a focus-group session in May 2012 was attended by 15 community leaders from two clans, the Moriatao Tara of the municipality of Pantaoragat and the Baesa Radapan of the municipality of Poona Piagapo. Both locations are in the province of Lanao Del Norte, although clan members also spread into the province of Lanao Del Sur (see Map 1). Supplementary interviews with key respondents were carried out before and after the workshop. In all, close to 50 interviews were held. Key respondents included two clan representatives, two NGO facilitators and one academic researcher. The two clans were the focus of study because they have been active in genealogy and in forming cooperatives as a form of social, cultural and economic activity. Although these activities were facilitated by NGOs, the clans were nevertheless initiators and implementers of their own visions and plans. Focus group participants were actively involved in genealogy tracing and in forming cooperatives. They were nominated to attend by other clan members. Of the 15, three were women. The group included five sultans, one datu, a former barangay captain, farmers, retired government employees, and school as well as religious teachers (ustaz).

In Thailand the area of study involved a network of twenty villages from the coastal lowland to the uplands of the Saiburi river. Together with researchers from the Prince of Songkhla University (PSU) in Pattani and Mahidol University in Bangkok, the villages were members of a group of community and university researchers involved in the Research Project for the Development of Peoples’ Participation to Manage the Saiburi Wetlands (henceforth: the Research Project). The wetlands stretch across the provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.

The Research Project had a dual objective of firstly, addressing environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods resulting from development or State conservation projects, and secondly, enhancing community capacity to participate in decisions concerning local land use. Community researchers were unpaid village volunteers who observed and reported on the environmental and livelihood changes taking place in their areas on a bi-monthly basis. Community researchers attended meetings at village sites or occasionally, at the PSU. They were allocated small travel allowances and small per diems for this work. The meetings were both fora for sharing information about environmental and social change, livelihoods issues and places where people could access moral support. Since the Research Project was linked to other NGO and government networks, village researchers had access to a rich portfolio of support services.

**Map 1: The Provinces of Lanao de Norte and Lanao del Sur in the Island of Mindanao**

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
From January to March 2012, I attended three network meetings and made field visits to village sites including in the districts of Bachok, Ruso and Sukhirin of Narathiwat province (see Map 2). A total of 80 interviews were conducted with community and university researchers, supplemented by interviews with village key respondents as well as an academic researcher who has been working with all the villages for more than fifteen years and who was one of the original founders of the Research Project. In view of the nature of the insurgency in Thailand where the insurgents create fear by remaining unknown (Mullins 2007), the names of villages and key respondents in this paper are not revealed. No such restrictions in revealing village names needed to be applied in the Philippines where clans were happy to be named and their activities looked into by the researcher.

The context in which rido has taken place in the contemporary era has been ascribed to a complexity of geopolitical and socio-economic factors, including the diminishing of the ancestral domain due to the opening of “public” lands to settlers from Luzon, the Visayas and other parts of Mindanao (Durante et al 2007, Abreu 2008), and the changing (reducing) value attached to kinship (Doro 2007). These changes led to what has been called the “moroisation” of landlordism. “Moroisation” here means the changing role of rural elites who shifted from systems of wealth distribution to wealth accumulation through various means, including pushing for personal land claims over existing customary ones, using fake titles for generating personal wealth, or through partnering with multinational corporations (Doro 2007, Durante et al 2007, Fianza 2004).

As discontent over land increased, so did attempts at achieving peace. Cooperatives should be seen as one of the many mechanisms for achieving peace that have been attempted in recent years (Gaspar et al 2002). Moreover, solving disputes over land via cooperatives working on genealogy tracing is new.

In terms of future prospects, the sustainability of new forms of social and natural resource management depends on a host of factors, especially structural ones, including institutions of leadership, and the building of new skills and capacities to negotiate economic and political obstacles (Timenez 2005).
**Genealogies and leadership**

New skills, as seen from the narratives in the later section of this paper, are leadership by example (of hard work, efficiency and sacrifice). This kind of leadership is different from the warlordism of old, and has the potential of attracting a different group of followers. This new nascent form of leadership finds support from local non-government organizations (NGOs) which provide moral and some (limited) financial input as well as guidance in the basic rules of cooperative management. As well, the participation of hundreds of unpaid volunteers in tracing genealogies is a sign that the activity has grassroots support, which could be a strength that could be further enhanced through capable leadership. Nevertheless, the “moroisation” of landlordism remains a potential obstacle and a dilemma that communities themselves are fully aware of and are trying to address.

A major motivation for organizing clan members to trace their lineage is to prevent misunderstandings that could lead to full-blown conflict or rido.

“It is hoped that if we know how we are related, and whether we share the same ancestors, we would hesitate at killing one another.”

*(Interview at focus group discussion, May 22, 2013)*

Another motivation is for working in a broader way towards peace, which is a signal for wanting to overcome marginalization, poverty and loss of livelihood as well as a desire to uphold spirituality:

“We work for peace so that we have a common goal. Some of us were not united. Now we know people that we didn’t know we were related to, or how we were related.”

*(A woman leader and a school teacher at focus group meeting, May 22, 2012)*

The statement above reflects the feelings of many among the younger generation who are no longer interested in the kinship system (Doro 2007), or who might know who they are related to but might not be aware of how closely linked they might be.

In a later interview, the woman leader informed us that she wanted peace, and was tired of war. She wanted school children to have language training (Arabic and English) and access to computers. She wished for teachers who did not leave their jobs because they were demoralized by war, and by a lack of facilities and support. She wanted her students to be competitive; instead, the reality was that many were not able to compete when they found themselves in schools in the city *(interviews, Iligan City, May 24 and 26, 2012)*.

The Muslim religion is a cause for some to volunteer time:

“In our religion, everyone is mandated to work for good and avoid what is bad. We should help our community and provide voluntary service to people. Our forefathers… they succeeded as leaders of the Bangsa Maranao or the Bangsa of certain families of the Baesa Radapan. It is obligatory for us to service our people because the benefit is in the akhirat (judgement day)”.

*(Interview with an ex-sultan, at focus group meeting, May 22, 2012)*

Such sentiments about “being rewarded by God,” is also shared by Magindanao and Christian communities which Gaspar et al (2002) worked with in the Dinas municipality of Pagadian.

Further, according to Gaspar et al (2002) the sustainability of peace efforts depends on leadership qualities embedded in the community. So, for aspiring leaders, a major first step is to create trust in the leadership, which could eventually be shaped into people’s trust for one another.

As has been pointed out by Mednick (1965), tracing lineage to the original shariefs who spread Islam to Mindanao is a useful claim to leadership status. A sultan in the focus group explained his lineage, tracing it back to the three shariefs who intermarried with Muslims in Mindanao; Sharief Alioden settled in Sulu, Sharief Alawi in Lanao del Norte, particularly in Tagoloan, and Sharief Kabungsuan in Maguindanao.
However, in contemporary times high status could also be earned via other means, including being a religious teacher or a school teacher, in addition to being a sultan or datu. Being of high status may not in itself be sufficient to attract followers. Persons should also show a track record of being dependable and capable of working hard for the community. Modern leadership success may depend on the ability to mobilize by example.

“People look at our performance record. I devote my time for the good of the clan, for them to have close relationships to understand each other, to minimize *rido*. About 60 percent of my retirement money goes to the people. I don’t just talk, I organize the clan, there are 50,000 clan members, it’s not easy to organize”.

*(Interview, clan leader and sultan, Iligan city May 18, 2012)*

The sultan’s leadership by example has motivated clan members to volunteer time to trace genealogies, and they painstakingly proceeded with the job for close to 15 years. Modern tracing of genealogies requires dedication, time and systematic information-gathering and filing skills. Community tracing of genealogies translate into paper what used to be mental maps of clan relations held by some elders in the community. The labor involved in the forming of clan cooperatives is intensive, skilled (especially in lineage and ancestry), and time-consuming, and worse, unpaid (funds are unavailable to pay workers). Consequently, the two large bound books of genealogies occupy a pride of place in the sultan’s living quarters.

*Clan cooperatives: a training ground for new leadership?*

At the time of fieldwork only the Baesa Radapan Consumer Cooperative had been formed. It had up to 100 paid-up members and 13 representatives on its board of directors. The Moriatao Tara Consumer Cooperative, which at the time of fieldwork in early 2012 was at the planning stage, was successfully formed in October 2012 and had more than 200 paid-up members and 30 members on the board of directors (personal communication, Monalinda Doro, October 20, 2012).

There are two steps in the process of forming a cooperative. Before clan associations can be registered, the prior work of tracing genealogies is essential because clan members are the foundations for the formation of clan associations, upon payment of formal membership fees.

The Baesa Radapan Consumer Cooperative wants to open a school for the teaching of Islamic principles, language training, in addition to the selling of consumer goods similar to that of the Moriatao Tara. Schools create jobs for teachers, canteen workers, security guards, cleaners, and other workers.

The woman leader interviewed (mentioned earlier) looked upon enhanced knowledge of Islamic principles through higher education, as a positive force in the management of *rido*. She maintained that Maranao inclination to resort to *rido* as a sign of a lack of understanding of Islamic principles *(interview Iligan May 26, 2013)*.

Upon the formation of the clan association, work begins for the registration of a community cooperative. Rules of cooperatives harbor ideas of transparency and equal treatment among members. The cooperative is to be run by a board of directors (BOD) that represents all family groups in the clan. Management is to be transparent and accountable according to by-laws and adopted accounting as well as auditing procedure. Working for the good of the clan and the cooperative (not the reverse) are new ideas. The plan is that the cooperatives would be a place for buying and selling basic needs, such as rice and fertilizer, at members’ price. To enjoy the benefits of the cooperatives, clansmen have to become members by paying an association fee.

At a broader level, the motive for the formation of cooperatives is partly driven by the question: “where will we be as Maranao five years from now?” *(Interviews with clan leaders, May 18, 2012)*. It is a question that underlies fear of continued marginalization. Among the many reasons, a driving factor is the “economy of hope”—the hope among poor Maranao that cooperatives could provide one avenue for redressing widespread poverty, generalized exclusion and landlordism within their own society, as well as manage *rido*. 
“Conflict among Maranao is not only about land, but especially about hereditary land, land boundaries, selling of land that others claim as theirs. Leaders in Maranao procured land and brought it to the bank through fake titles, got money from the bank because they had collateral and started businesses for personal wealth”.

(a second ex-sultan, at focus group meeting, 22 May 2013)

Moreover, education in Arabic or English language are viewed as a positive force;

“I agree that education is important and ultimately the solution to conflict is education. English, Arabic, both are needed. Only 10 percent of Poona Piagapo people are educated. I don’t know whether, if you have knowledge of Arabic or English, there will be no conflict. Although our main demand is education, in rural areas we cannot afford education. We cannot afford tuition fees, we cannot communicate to government that we cannot afford to pay. There is rido, land conflict and we do not know how to settle the conflicts. There are financial problems caused by rido. We cannot go to our farms, because we are protecting our family. Better to die than run away because of martabat (family honor)”

(a farmer, focus group meeting, 22 May 2013)

The hope of finding peace through being “educated” and of achieving a viable alternative livelihood via education as expressed by the workshop participants becomes significant if contextualized. When conflict escalates into full blown rido, farmers lose their livelihood. Farming families not being able to attend to their farms because of war is a common experience in war torn zones of Mindanao (BALAOD Mindanaw 2010). The burden is greater if there is rido and farmers are involved in the defense of family honor. If family members are killed, due to rido, then the norms of martabat must be upheld or the family risks being labeled “low class” or “a disgrace” for failure to seek redress (Torres 2007: 20). Hence, a dilemma is created between the desire for peace and being able to earn a living versus the norm of upholding family honor.

The question then is whether new forms of leadership in the formation of clan cooperatives run according to new systems of responsibility and accountability, could provide sufficient buffer against an institutionalized defense of family honor and violence. In response, cooperatives form the surface of an underlying grassroots movement for change, as seen in the thousands who volunteer time to genealogy tracing and become involved in the process of cooperative formation.

Muslim Discontent and Environmentalism Southern Thailand

The three Muslim provinces of Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani (see Map 2) of southern Thailand have a history of distrust in and resentment of the Thai Buddhist State. With the escalation of violence in recent years, statistics show that from 2004 and 2009 more than 3,000 individuals have been killed (Mullins 2009) and the number has increased even further since then. The brutal official handling of the Kru Se and Tak Bai incidents, in which nearly 200 Muslims died and, subsequently, the failure to prosecute officials responsible for the incidents (International Crisis Group 2008 cited in Mullins 2009:925) has often been regarded as the trigger for the escalation of the violence in recent years. There has been much research on the possible causes of discontent, both at the macro and grassroots level (Wattana 2006, McCargo 2006, Mullins 2009; Sri Sompob and Panyasak 2006).

Research has pointed to historical socio-economic marginalization and national and international geopolitics, resulting, at the micro level, in human rights abuses. Research has also pointed to national and international discourses on Muslim separatism and terrorism with implications for how Muslim groups are viewed by officialdom and the Thai public (Wattana 2006; Castro and Masbud 2012).

Such analysis draws attention to how certain issues are underplayed, especially how some Muslim and non-Muslim actors benefit from the insurgency in the form of increased military budget and spending in the South, how political and military careers
are built from “managing” the insurgency, and the commercial gains made by many in arms trading, smuggling and drug dealing in war zones (Wattana 2006:123).

There are some similarities in the socio-historical and geopolitical causes of conflict in both southern Thailand and southern Philippines. There is one clear difference however, in the standard operating procedure in the two countries. In southern Thailand, unlike in Mindanao, the insurgency movement is clandestine. No one comes to the fore to claim responsibility for actions (including frequent bombings and the killing of targeted individuals, especially those seen to be linked with government), but it is on everyone’s minds in the three provinces (Mullins 2006).

In a village bordering the Budo-Sungei Padi National Park (henceforth the Park) where I went to interview a community leader who was actively mobilizing village action in regaining access to village lands that have been inadvertently included in the Park, Khun Muso (not his real name) first and foremost talked about the insurgency, followed subsequently by his mobilization of active village committees.

“They asked me whether there are separatists in my area. I said I don’t think there are any, but there are people demanding justice, for example, organizations of imam (religious clerics), or ketua kampung (village heads). They are all negotiating with the government, separatists usually do not want to negotiate… Some ketua kampung have been shot if they are seen to be cruel, unjust or too close to the government”.

(Interview with Pok Muso, in a village bordering the Budo-Sungei Padi National Park 26 February 2012)

In two or three sentences within the first few minutes of meeting someone unknown to him, Pok Muso had set the scene for the discontent of his village with government, as well as with local leadership within the Muslim communities.

So, if the insurgency is in the minds of everyone (especially community leaders such as Pok Muso), and defending land, environment and natural resources is second, why act on the second? Or do people do both (by supporting the first clandestinely)? A tentative answer to this question can be gleaned from comments made by community leaders and researchers at the numerous bi-monthly meetings of the Research Project.

**Environmentalism – a method for avoiding conflict?**

Through the participation of villagers in monitoring their environment and regularly attending meetings to report on progress, the Research Project is creating among its participants a discourse about conservation that comprises a respect for the land and of active participation. At every meeting, after lengthy discussions, inevitably a question will be raised that can be summarized as, “what can I (not the government) personally do for the land, and what can I do to maintain livelihoods, despite having lost access to natural resources?”

Activities that are supported by the network can be gleaned from the bi-monthly meetings. At the January 2012 meeting of the Project, five young men who were from a coastal village of Pattani explained why they were involved.

“We work in house building, and we have remained in the villages and not migrated to look for other work elsewhere. Of the six villages in the area, our village is the only one that is interested in the wetland project. We are community researchers. We get a small allowance for attending the meetings—plus the cost of transport. But our main hope is we can be an example to the other villages”.

(Interview at Amphur Ruso, Narathiwat province, 27 January 2012)

Similarly, two villagers from the mountainous part of Narathiwat explained why they had volunteered to be community researchers.

Khun A: “I am formerly from Nakhon Si Thammarat. I came 40 years ago. At that time fish was plentiful. Now the water is dirty. In one day it is difficult to get even 10 fish... I have informed the government...”
department, they did not pay attention. I was appointed a security guard by the council that is supposed to protect the hills and wildlife, but the officials themselves are selling the animals. I was sacked. Thank God there is this project, we try and join”.

(Interview, Narathiwat, 27 January 2012)

Khun B. “The river … The people did not care… they use electric shocks to stun the fish so that they can catch a lot of fish. We took our own initiatives: we introduced our own system, to safeguard fish species, to clear the river of rubbish. The initiatives started before the project began. After the project there are many places that are protected by people”.

(Interview, Narathiwat, 27 January 2012)

The emphasis on what communities can do for themselves is clear from the responses above. At the meetings, frustrations were also expressed at the draining of wetlands without proper consultation with people who then have to abandon their rice fields and live with the disappearance of valuable breeding grounds for fish (among the roots of sago trees), and the loss of wallowing grounds for buffaloes.

An academic at PSU who has been working with the network of villages for twenty years, explained the relationship between the villages and the university:

“We never failed them. They wanted exposure and education. They wanted ways to make their frustrations known. We exposed them to the outside, took them to Malaysia, (Terengganu) to see how others live and to Indonesia. We started with exposing them to the university. They make the decisions about what they want to do. Through the bi-monthly meetings, the exposure and some actions that they have initiated themselves, they saw how strong they can be if they are united. Some villagers are also generating new knowledge through observation. One village is rejuvenating the river near their place. While doing so they make observations and learn about the habits of specific types

of fish, their habitat and food habits. They then tell me what they have observed. They are my teachers, but they say I am theirs”.

(Interviews, key respondent, 25 January 2012, 12 February 2012)

The tentative conclusion that could be drawn from the above narratives is that discourses about the environment provide an avenue for channelling frustrations resulting from top-down development and from socio-economic marginalization. The Research Project has become a forum for channelling discontent as well as for social learning.

In the network, there are active and less active villagers.

“Among the active villagers there are no bullets or firearms that affect their lives. Villagers who volunteer to participate as community researchers in the Project are considered active villagers”.

(Interview, key respondent March 5, 2012).

Conclusion

The paper has shown the experiences of Muslims in both countries as a process of “slow violence” through covert or overt practices, often legally sanctioned and ultimately marked by displacement and loss of access to ancestral domains (Fianza 2004, Wattana 2006). Their responses in defending livelihoods or regaining access to natural resources have been described by Joan Martinez Alier (2002) as “environmentalism of the poor”.

The attempt at achieving clan unity among Maranao and to dare to hope for a better future through cooperatives resonates strongly with the history, grievances, and quest for self-determination of minority groups elsewhere, including the Maori of New Zealand, the Bogainvillean of Papua New Guinea, the Inuit of Canada and the various indigenous groups of East Malaysia. In East Malaysia, disenfranchisement caused by large scale harvesting of natural resources through logging from the 1960s to the 1980s, and then oil palm plantations in mostly untitled lands claimed under customary rights by indigenous peoples, have led to similar

In Mindanao, cooperatives may effect change slowly and this requires leadership with new kinds of skills, of uniting not dividing the clans, of being transparent and accountable. Clearly it is change for the long term. Genealogy tracing and forming cooperatives require a stamina and support of a financial, moral and political nature because of the need to cope with the increasingly divergent interests of the Maranao community. That genealogy tracing is done by unpaid volunteers for the last 15 years is a sign of internal (grassroots) commitment. Learning by doing through the management and running of cooperatives could provide a practical training ground for new leadership.

Sociologically, genealogy tracing and the formation of cooperatives could be viewed as a process inscribed with social learning and healing, both essential for a recovery from “slow violence”.

In Thailand, discourses of managing environmental degradation provide an avenue for expressing anger, frustration and socio-economic marginalization and loss of livelihoods. Enduring alliances with networks that are environmentally and socially aware have generated new knowledge and partnerships. An important outcome from such alliances lies in a new awareness about what communities themselves could do to help manage their environments and livelihoods. Similar to the Philippines, community development in Thailand relies on social learning, in which new forms of local leadership plays an important role since it is an attempt at transparent decision-making and institutionalizing leadership by example.

In Thailand, the sustainability of community development depends on whether discourses of environmentalism continue to support the strengthening of community capacities when the Research Project ends, as it is bound to in the near future. Community strength, if not supported, could prove to be tentative.

For both countries, community peace initiatives are taking place in the broader context of the political economy of militarization and violence, and are remarkable for their resilience. The question for future research and policy is how to avoid routinization from setting in so as to render meaningless initiatives built on hope and the practical embrace of the new. An additional practical question for policy then, is how to avoid elite capture.

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The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
Documentary Film on Progressive Islam in Indonesia and its Impact on Muslim Women

Norhayati Binti Kaprawi

Introduction

As a Malaysian woman living in a Muslim majority country, I have noticed that the increasing conservatism that sees the adoption of more restricted and rigid interpretations of the Qur’an, hadith and legal body of law that has come to be known as the shariah, has detrimental impacts, including exclusion and discrimination, on both non-Muslims and the Muslim female population. After various short visits to Indonesia, and engagement with a few Muslim scholars and activists there, I found that Indonesia is home to thriving religious intellectual discourse as well as progressive and pluralistic religious thought. During my visits I was struck by the richness and openness of religious dialogue by and between male and female religious scholars and public intellectuals. Community and social issues were openly and widely debated from within a progressive religious framework, so that an issue that affects a particular segment of the community, for example women, was seen not only as an issue for that specific community of people to deal with alone, but that needed to be addressed by the wider community, including both men and women.

This was made evident during efforts to challenge a proposed Bill against Pornography and Pornographic Action which set out to make it unlawful to act in any manner deemed indecent. This included women showing their navels or shoulders, or being seen performing dances that could incite sexual arousal. In these efforts, Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, arts practitioners, activists and ethnic groups from diverse backgrounds worked hand in hand in rejecting the bill for violating personal freedom and because it was felt it could have adverse impacts on the many traditions and cultural practices of diverse ethnic groups. This exemplifies the uniqueness of Indonesia, where traditional Muslim organizations such as Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim non-governmental organization (NGO) in the country and a traditional independent Sunni group with about 30 million followers, along with some of its religious figures, including its former leader and also the former Indonesian president, Abdur Rahman Wahid, are promoting a more progressive understanding of Islam and defending an “Indonesian Islam” that is more tolerant to diversity and friendlier to women.

The creative, vibrant and progressive Islamic discourse amongst religious scholars and activists has in the main been contained within the geographical boundaries of Indonesia. As a result, regional and international intellectual discourses have not benefitted fully from the progressive discourses being developed. Discourse on Islam, especially that projected by the international media, primarily still focuses on the Middle East and the West. Through the accessible medium of film, I hoped to be able to highlight Indonesia’s progressive Islamic thought, particularly on women’s issues, at a regional and international level. I believe that the inspiring religious tradition in Indonesia can contribute to a growth of public discourse in which effective and nuanced responses to gender issues can be generated.

Indonesia has its fair share of Islamic fundamentalism and even religious radicalism. But on the whole, Indonesia’s moderate and tolerant stance and vibrant intellectual traditions embrace diversity of religion and cultures and advance progressive Islamic discourse. This project tries to understand the development of progressive Islamic discourse in Indonesia and its impact on Muslim women’s issues. It will highlight several figures who play roles in shaping a societal landscape that empowers women to take more prominent roles in the public sphere.

As a means to engage with the general population, particularly youth, it was intended that the research would be presented in a one-hour documentary film. The film would try to capture relevant elements such as the history, culture, education system and socio-political landscape of the country. It would
demonstrate the relationship between Muslim women and general Islamic discourses, and their mutual impacts. It would seek to give a glimpse of “Indonesian Islam” in terms of how religion engaged with culture, politics and the lived realities of people, particularly girls and women. It would focus on a few personalities, both male and female, that have had great influence on Islamic discourse. It was planned that the film would include snapshots of events that illustrate the diverse Islamic thinking that takes place within traditional Islamic settings.

This paper is in three parts; i) a description of the methodology of research, including interviews with progressive Muslim scholars and activists ii) the historical and cultural context of Indonesia, particularly in relation to the development of the Islamic discourse, iii) preliminary findings, including challenges and wider impacts.

Methodology

The project was carried out between July 2011 and the same month the following year. It focused primarily on the island of Java, since this is the dominant site for progressive Islamic discourse. The research was carried out through personal observation of the daily lives of Indonesians, interviews with activists and scholars, observing media such as television, theater, cinema, magazines and newspapers, following programs such as the Female Ulama program and cultural festivals in a few cities, short stays with a few resource persons to better understand local contexts, and reading materials written by scholars and researchers.

During the process I sought to establish closer networks and relationships with individuals and groups of interest as well as to develop on-the-ground understanding of the politico-religious landscape. Filming was carried out during events of interest, such as Hari Raya, the Muslim religious festival. Groups and individuals filmed and interviewed include religious scholars, public intellectuals, women activists and women's organizations and participants of training programs.

I planned that the film would depict “Indonesian Islam” in terms of how religion engages with culture, politics and the lived realities of its people, particularly girls and women. I set out to include snapshots of participant observation such as the bahthul mathail (an annual event whereby a debate on religious issues takes place within various religious establishments) and events organized by Fatayat, the women's wing of NU.

During interviews with scholars and activists such as Dr. Agus Sunyoto, Ms Lies Marcoes, Dr. Musdah Mulia, Mr. Ulil Abshar Abdalla and Ms Eridani, I gained insights into their knowledge, opinions and personal stories which shed light on issues such as the history of Indonesia, the early spread of Islam in the country, early national figures who left a great impact in the development of progressive thinking, and women’s movements.

On the technical side, the filming process comprised three phases i.e. i) shooting ii) editing iv) conversion. The shooting was carried out primarily through “solo-journalism” style, using a high-definition video camera and mini tapes. About 100 one-hour tapes were recorded. Editing was carried out on Final Cut Pro software. At the time of writing this paper, editing was in the process of completion.

Indonesian Historical and Cultural Context

Indonesia has a population of around 210 million, of whom almost 90 percent are Muslims. In contrast to general public perceptions, Dr. Agus Sunyoto, a history lecturer in Brawijaya University in Malang, asserts that the wide distribution of Islam throughout Indonesia was not carried out by Arab traders, but in fact was spread by Sufi missionaries known as Wali Songo (the nine saints) from Champa (Vietnam). According to Dr. Sunyoto, although Arabs came to the region at around 700 CE, they did not succeed in spreading Islam widely. The main reason why Wali Songo succeeded was due to its soft approach in engaging local cultures. The Saints saw themselves not only as religious figures, but also as agents pushing for social reform and fighting oppression of the poor. Syeikh Siti Jenar, for example, empowered people to be independent agents and to free themselves from the tyranny of oppressive Sultans. He taught the concept of “Tauhid,” that is, the Oneness of God, and that human beings should only worship and be subservient to God, and not to other...
human beings. He introduced the term masyarakat or society, which was derived from the Arabic word for “live and work together” and rejected the imposed notion that people were slaves to rulers. The saints deployed a great deal of wisdom. One of them, Sunan Kudus, was known to prohibit Muslims from eating beef in order to respect the Hindu majority; this tradition is still practiced. This rich historical background, transmitted from one generation to another, has helped to create a more tolerant society.

Dr. Sunyoto is also the head of LESBUMI, a cultural department in NU. This organization advocates for local culture to be acknowledged as an intrinsic part of the Muslim identity in Indonesia. Sunyoto rejects any move to curb the practice of local cultures in the name of religion, asserting that, “If you say that local cultures are not Islamic, then you are actually accusing God of being unjust”.

The two large Muslim organizations in Indonesia, namely NU and Muhamadiyyah (the country’s second largest Muslim organization), supported the first Indonesian President, Soekarno, in the inception of “Pancasila” in 1945. Pancasila is a philosophical foundation for Indonesia which includes the promotion of ideas around nationalism, justice, equality, humanity, and religious tolerance. Both NU and Muhamadiyyah play a pivotal role in promoting Pancasila and maintaining the moderate and tolerant nature of Muslim societies in the country. They reject the notion of an Islamic state or the implementation of hudud, the classical Islamic criminal law.

Muhamadiyyah focuses on carrying out reform within the Muslim community by engaging with modernity through activities such as building modern schools and clinics, and also by rejecting syncretism, which is deemed un-Islamic. The reformist ideas of Rashid Ridha, the student of Syeikh Muhammad Abduh, the renowned reformer who was the Mufti of Egypt, have been embraced by various Muhamadiyyah figures such as HAMKA. Open forms of Islam were later promoted by figures such as Dr. Nurcholis Madjid, who was instrumental in the setting up the Universitas Paramadina, and the intellectual activist Dawam Rahardjo.

NU, on the other hand, maintains a traditional approach and embraces existing local cultural practices. One of its renowned leaders, Abdur Rahman Wahid, was a staunch defender of what he terms “Indonesian Islam,” that was tolerant and respected diversity of religion and culture as well as diversity of thought. He also showed a great concern for protecting the rights of minorities and marginalized groups.

Many other national figures, religious figures, artists, cultural activists and public intellectuals have contributed to progressive discourse. These include Harun Nasution (reformist scholar), Syafie Maarif (leader of Muhamadiyyah), Goenawan Muhammad (artist and thinker), Emha Ainun Nadjib (artist and religious personality) and Musdah Mulia (woman scholar). They advocated for a more intellectually vibrant education system, moderation and tolerance of diversity of cultures and diversity of opinion, and for a more humanist Islam that upheld justice and equality. Kartini (1879-1904), a woman from an aristocrat family who was exposed to Western education, put forward feminist views and advocated for women’s empowerment in an era where patriarchy, feudalism and autocracy were cultural norms. Her works, including advocacy for girls’ education, left a great legacy in the promotion of women’s rights in Indonesia.

Another figure whose writing is widely read, especially by university students and activists, is Ahmad Wahib, an intellectual who died at the young age of 35. Wahib’s journal Islamic Thinking, Discontent: The Diary of Ahmad Wahib can be considered a great legacy towards the growth of progressive thinking. The book encourages Muslims to question, think, and use reason in understanding religion. It is widely read and has inspired many contemporary progressive scholars and activists.

Prof. Dr. Quraish Shihab and Dr. Nasaruddin Umar, two renowned scholars who have lectured at the Islamic State University (UIN) and held high positions, are also among the contemporary Muslim scholars who show concern for gender issues. Their books are widely read by academics, activists, university students and their lectures are available on the Internet.

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
The State Islamic University (UIN), previously known as the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) (established in 1960), plays an important role in producing human resources that are intelligent, creative and innovative, and that treasure Islamic values while embracing modernity and Indonesian identity. The university promotes diversity of thought amongst its students and strives to integrate religious, social as well as scientific and technological knowledge with Indonesian identity, in order to enrich the national culture. Important figures in shaping the focus and direction of UIN include Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra and Prof. Dr. Komaruddin Hidayat.

During the Soeharto era, in 1998, Nurcholis Madjid was granted funds to build the Universitas Paramadina. The institution promotes freedom of thought and adopts a comprehensive, holistic, rational, critical-analytical and methodological approach in responding to issues faced by contemporary societies. Numerous classes and forum discussions are open to the public, thus enabling the general people to participate and engage in vibrant intellectual discourse.

The two modern educational institutes, UIN and Universitas Paramadina, are not the only hub of progressive discourse. NU itself has a rich tradition in developing jurisprudence that corresponds with the needs of contemporary society. Its Bahtsul Masa’il event in which the ulama hold extensive debates on a variety of issues such as on Islam and nationalism, the legal system and also on ritual matters, plays an important role not only in the enrichment of jurisprudence itself, but in encouraging healthy debates and respecting diversity of opinion and knowledge amongst its followers, particularly the young. Traditional religious institutions, namely the pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools) also play a significant role in the promotion for a more moderate and tolerant Islam. Pesantrens are generally run by members of NU, while Muhamadiyyah runs “modern” schools.

In 1983, a body called P3M, the Indonesian Society for Pesantren and Community Development, was formed to engage in human rights and sociocultural issues, focusing on economic matters, health, environment and gender. Many P3M activists later branched out individually or organizationally, to further their work in areas such as women’s leadership and women’s sexual and reproductive rights. Among them are organizations such as Rahima (the Centre for Education and Information on Islam and Women’s Rights) and individual activists such as the renowned Muslim woman activist Lies Marcoes and Kiyai Husein Muhammad, a traditional religious scholar who has written many books and give lectures all over Indonesia and the world on women’s rights in Islam.

The above historical and cultural context is important for the purpose of contextualization in relation to progressive Islam in Indonesia.

Issues, Challenges and Impacts of Progressive Islam

This section focuses on issues, challenges and impacts of progressive Islam. It provides brief profiles of notable Muslim organizations and individual intellectuals and activists.

i) Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) and Ulil Absar Abdalla

Ulil Absar Abdalla is a founder of the highly controversial organization Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) (Liberal Islamic Network) formed in 2001. JIL promotes progressive and liberal ideas such as freedom of thought and religious pluralism. Although it is a small organization, it has had a significant impact on Islamic intellectual discourse. Despised by conservatives but welcomed by those who seek intellectual enlightenment, especially amongst the young, JIL has acquired iconic status, including among some young people who disagree with it. JIL was highly protected by Abdur Rahman Wahid, who remained consistent in his support for freedom of speech. He in fact collaborated with the organization by being the main resource person for its radio talk show.

Abdalla comes from a traditional religious background, and is well versed in both classical and modern discourses in Islamic and Western thought. In 2010, he tried to contest the position of head of
NU. Although some quarters shunned him for his liberal views, he remains quite popular among young intellectuals who wish to have a more critical discourse.

Abdalla believes that society has a “religious rationality” that encompasses the ability to discern teachings that are conducive to the wider good. With that religious rationality, society will evolve in keeping with the times, without leaving behind the basic principles of the religion. He is optimistic that liberal views in Islam will be more widely accepted as many things that were regarded as too liberal and were rejected earlier have been slowly accepted, such as the wearing of “Western” clothes.

JIL was formed by young activists who were influenced by senior progressive Muslim figures. Prof Munawir Sazali, the former minister of religion in 1980s, for example, criticized the classical Islamic law on inheritance, in which males receive the bigger share. He used his religious rationality to interpret religious texts to correspond to the changing context.

Uli's work is more focused on the relationship between Islam and the state. He believes that one of the challenges after Indonesia’s reformation (i.e. after the fall of Suharto) is how to achieve a proportional relationship between religion and politics, between Islam and the state, between religious morality and ethics and universal ethics based on human rights and the state constitution. His concern relates to the implementation of shariah in the country and he critiques the impact of implementing classical shariah in the modern world without the proper reinterpretation. He believes that if the state wants to implement classical shariah in modern societies, then it must subject the Islamic law to reinterpretation, criticism, and reevaluation. He is confident that people do exercise their wisdom and religious rationality, and thus constantly evolve. People will continue to dialogue with religious texts in order to provide answers to their contemporary situations, which are becoming more complex by the day.

**ii) Rahima**

Rahima is the Centre for Education and Information on Islam and Women's Rights. A few members of P3M founded this women’s organization in 2000, a year before the inception of JIL. While JIL focuses primarily on promoting liberal ideas at the intellectual and academic level, Rahima’s main concern is the empowerment of women from the Islamic perspective, with grassroots women as its main target audience. Hence, Rahima has to adopt more progressive positions in its effort to provide answers that correspond to women’s lived realities in arenas such as women’s rights in Islam and reproductive health.

In its early years, Rahima focused on advocating for critical thinking and dissemination of information on women's rights within the pesantren community. It later reached out to wider groups such as state religious schools and their teachers, religious discussion groups, Muslim women's organizations, university students and NGOs.

In 2010, Rahima launched a seminar on “The Future of Female Ulama Leadership”. The “Female Ulama” program can be considered as a bold and radical movement. This is a pilot project and the participants are pioneers; it is thus understandable that they may not have enough confidence to project themselves widely. However, the knowledge received from the program will empower women to participate in decision-making and share their views with the public as well as strengthen their advocacy networks.

**iii) Kiyai Husein Muhammad**

Amongst the active members and main resource persons in Rahima's advocacy work is a traditional Muslim scholar by the name of Kiyai Husein Muhammad. He studied in local pesantren and later graduated from Al Azhar University in Egypt. He has acknowledged that he held more conservative views on Islam until he was exposed to gender issues during a workshop held by P3M. The discussions on gender troubled his conscience, for he began to question the long-held
classical position of women being inferior to men. He then re-read the religious texts from the perspective of justice and equality, and concluded that a more progressive understanding needs to be adopted in order to find solutions to problems faced in contemporary society, especially by women and children. His familiarity with the classical religious texts, understanding of gender and human rights issues and critical analysis is a great contribution to the growth of progressive religious discourse in Indonesia. Some of his writings have been translated into other languages, benefiting not only Indonesian society but also international communities.

The involvement of a male religious scholar like Muhammad shows support for gender issues and support for the empowerment of women. He has written various books that argue for gender equality in Islam.

iv) Prof. Dr. Musdah Mulia

Prof. Dr. Musdah Mulia was the first woman to obtain a doctorate degree in Islamic political thinking from the Islamic State University, Jakarta, in 1997, and she was an advisor to the Ministry of Religious Affairs. She was very active in Fatayat, the young women’s wing of the NU. Her involvement exposed her to the lived realities of Indonesian society, particularly the needs of women and children. She thus conducted advocacy work on human-rights issues related to gender, sexual orientation and freedom of religion.

She has been involved in the preparation and submission of the Counter Legal Draft of the Compilation of Islamic Law in 2004, which proposed for a revised law that upheld democracy, pluralism, human rights and gender equality in the context of Indonesian society. Known as a vocal scholar, Musdah Mulia has not minced words in expressing her thoughts on women’s issues, interfaith issues and even Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues. She has written books on topics such as reformist Muslim women, Islam and gender equality and women in politics. Women activists and scholars like Prof. Dr. Musdah Mulia are held in high esteem and respected for their knowledge, skill and expertise, including among male activists and scholars.

v) Masriyah Anva

Nyai Masriyah Anva was a wife of a local religious leader who ran a pesantren. After her husband’s demise, she was concerned about the possibility of the school being closed down. Her despair later turned into courage and conviction in ensuring its survival. Her strong faith in God, and with guidance and moral support from Kiyai Husein Muhammad, meant she found the courage to lead the school herself. She is now amongst the very few women to be the head of a pesantren. Kiyai Husein Muhammad believes that by having a good understanding of gender equality, it will be much easier for a person to understand other human rights issues such as respecting cultural and religious diversity. He thus not only helped Nyai Masriyah to have a good understanding of gender issues, but also interfaith issues. Together they engage with other religious groups such as visiting churches and dialoguing with the Christian community.

While Prof. Dr. Musdah Mulia is a nationally and internationally-renowned scholar who writes extensively on the issues of Muslim women’s rights, gender equality and religious freedom, Nyai Masriyah is a local woman figure in her community who inspires and empowers her students by her courage and resilience. She is living proof that a woman can be a good leader of a traditional religious institution and is well respected in her community.

General Observations

My stay in Indonesia was very refreshing and inspiring. I considered myself very privileged to be able to witness the vibrant intellectual discourse there. Young activists and university students, including those who focus on Islamic discourse, are knowledgeable about western philosophy and progressive discourse, informed by local and international scholars. Their thirst for knowledge and interest in engaging in debates is something
to be envied by Malaysians. People in Indonesia are generally open and respectful of diversity of opinion. Most Indonesian communities are still deeply rooted in their own cultures and *pesantren* education has also taught them to be humble, cooperative, respectful and articulate in expressing their views. My first exposure as to how Syiah (Shi'a) came about, and on the fundamental difference between Syiah and Sunni, emerged during this study. Although there is a generally negative perception about Shiites, academics and activists can openly discuss the issues in public forums or workshops. There are also some traditional scholars who come in support of Syiah and declare publicly that Syiah is not deviant from Islam.

Many people that I talked to were quite skeptical about the government's efforts and record in helping the people. Rampant corruption is a particular source of discontent. The situation makes people expect little of government, and instead, to adopt an independent spirit and venture into new terrain with a strong sense of camaraderie. Many people form groups, lobby certain quarters, network and engage with local communities in order to bring about change or keep their cultures alive. The Lumajang Anniversary Cultural Festival, the Jogja Festival, the Tanoker children’s group and the many small arts groups in different parts of Indonesia express this energy. The amazing Jember Fashion Carnival, an international-level event held at a town far from Jakarta, is another inspiring example.

There is a more relaxed attitude in male-female relationships in Indonesia than in Malaysia. Perhaps this is because it is an agrarian society where men and women have traditionally worked together in the fields. Segregation between the sexes or seeing women as “the source of fitna, or evil” is not the norm. Activists generally work, joke, and laugh together at a comfort level similar to that of family members, rather than exuding a constant fear of “being seduced by the other sex”. In some *pesantren*, male teachers speak directly to female students without any separators. The girls may even laugh and jeer at the teachers’ jokes and comments.

In the mosques, there are no high or thick curtains separating males and females. In certain sections of some mosques, men and women can even be seen praying side by side. There are less hang-ups about the issue of women wearing hijab in the mosques. This goes also for religious classes that are open to the public participation, held at the Paramadina University. Some women attend classes in skirts without raising any eyebrows from anyone present, including the lecturer who is a senior scholar in the Qur’anic exegesis. Girls are taught public speaking in *pesantren*. In fact, in their leadership trainings, they are not only trained to articulate their thoughts and to speak in public, but they are also taught on human relationships and team building. Women conduct choirs and conduct the singing of the national anthem, even in the religious gatherings held by the NU.

On the whole, I find many Indonesians are articulate and knowledgeable about many issues. In the era of Facebook, I have noticed that posts by Indonesian friends on religious issues are often thought-provoking, written from a philosophical perspective and articulated in a humorous and relaxed manner. The posts show their deep level of understanding, maturity and confidence in engaging with others and in expressing their views.

**Conclusion**

It is hoped that this research, and the forthcoming documentary, will contribute to wider understanding of gender issues. It is also hoped that learning about progressive Islam in Indonesia will inspire some, especially youth, to bring about transformative social change in their own communities. More importantly, hopefully women will feel empowered to question and challenge some of the discrimination that they face, some of which has been justified in the name of Islam, including in the arenas of domestic violence, marital rape, and child marriage. Other countries, particularly Muslim societies, could learn and benefit from the Indonesian experience, by understanding the factors that have influenced and continue to contribute to the intellectual
diversity of Islamic thought and scholarship as well as gender mainstreaming in Indonesia.

Possible future research could focus on the development of the female ulama program. It would be interesting to study the impact of the program on the respective communities of each participant. It would also be interesting to follow the progressive Islamic discourse that continues to be vibrant and growing in Indonesia’s fast-changing societal context. Apart from intellectual discourse, Indonesian models of engagement and discourse on culture and religion may also offer a model for a more women-friendly society.

Susanna George

“Perhaps work like this can provoke feminist and antiracist theory to provide a more complete language of organizational process and practice for feminist workplaces. A language is needed that will help to analyse and address the contradiction between the emancipatory goals of groups and their internal practice, between their interest in transforming social relations towards liberatory power relations and the tense, conflicted organizational culture of many women’s groups. Organizational development theory, as it currently exists, has been developed largely in the corporate world. It is premised on empiricism and on liberal ideas of the self and the right of individuals; it is generally devoid of critical content on context or power relations.”

Honor Ford-Smith, (1997)

Introduction

My experiences over the past two decades, both as a volunteer and as a salaried staff member of a number of feminist organizations, networks and groupings, have led me to similar insights as Ford-Smith describes in the quote above. I too discovered that often there appears to be a “contradiction between the emancipatory goals of groups and their internal practices”. Despite our mission of transforming social relations in the societies and national contexts from which we have emerged, in many feminist organizations, what we advocate externally, we actually struggle to realize and enact in our internal organizational settings. In other words, “walking our talk” appears to be a serious challenge for many feminists, both individually and organizationally.

I sought the opportunity of the Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowship programme to revisit some of my notions drawn and observations made over the course of two decades working in the women’s movement as an organizations-based feminist activist. My last full-time position as executive director was fraught with challenges and struggles as I attempted to create a feminist workspace and find congruence between principles and practices amidst often implicit or hidden assumptions, cultural norms and expectations of staff members and the Board.

What priority do feminists working in feminist/women’s human rights organizations in the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan place to manifesting/enacting their core feminist values in their internal organizational structures, systems, processes and practices?

Within that I sought to:

i) bring to the surface the kinds of challenges faced by feminists leaders in running their organizations;

ii) understand how their organizational core values around hierarchy, decision-making and leadership are shaped;

iii) explore the (re)negotiations and strategies that they evolve in relation to perceived core values as their organizations have grown or responded to local/national contexts,

iv) gauge their understanding of their changing circumstances in the national, post-colonial, pro-globalization contexts of the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan and its impact on their organizations; and,

v) offer spaces where feminists could safely engage in reflective discussions regarding these issues.

I use the term “we” deliberately above, as my positioning throughout this research has been as someone from within, a feminist activist who...
imagines herself as movement-based and a part of a larger feminist whole. Through this research, I sought to engage other feminist activists and scholars as peers and participants to an issue area that I discovered resonated quite a bit with many of the feminists I met. When I scratched the surface of any organization or individual with some probing questions, inevitably, I would find that the issue of greater congruence between organizational values and practices, structures and processes was one that others also struggled with. Other feminists also desired to create feminist workspaces that are empowering, sustainable and living examples of the transformation we want to see in the world.

Methodology

I define this project as qualitative research that is feminist in nature, and anchored in a feminist research methodology. Rather than stating what “is” or uncovering “the truth,” about feminist organizations and the way feminists run them, I wanted a research framework that suited the more dialogic, emergent ways in which I understand organizations in my own work as an organizational consultant and an activist. I never once assumed I could be a dispassionate observer from outside of the phenomena of feminist organizations. Given my subjectivity from the outset, I sought to use my very presence in my research context as a research event of sorts.

An important component of my methodology was finding personal congruence. I had to first uncover my own mental model—and untangle the layers of notions I had been subconsciously loyal to. From this exercise, I saw that I started this project seeking to validate the notion that there was some kind of intrinsically “feminist” way of running organizations. I was also seeking to find a more radical reading of feminist organizational processes, a reading that would take into account the particular post-colonial dynamic of women’s organizations receiving aid from international donor agencies, and how this links to the current geo-political and economic dynamics between countries of the North and those of the South.

I also wanted this project to link to my concern for the larger social justice struggles for democracy and new democratic meaning outside of the neo-liberal capitalist framework. However, at a later stage in the research, I realized that examining the influence of receiving aid from international donor agencies was not an angle I could do justice to, given time constraints. I dropped these questions for my interview guide, and just focused on examining what values congruence meant to feminists in the contexts of their organizations.

My core research setting was feminist/women’s rights activists working in an organization that was either explicitly feminist in its identity or worked with a conscious feminist ethos towards realizing a feminist vision of social transformation. As a secondary research setting, I also sought to engage: i) older feminists who had founded or co-founded feminist organizations in the 1980s and early 1990s and who may or may not have been functioning any longer in an organizational setting; and, ii) younger feminists who had founded, co-founded, or been active in feminist organizations or groupings in the past decade (i.e. since 2000).

With each organization I worked with, I chose three key modalities for data gathering: i) semi-structured interviews with the leader/s of the organization; ii) “workshop style” group interviews with the leadership group/management committee and/or Board of the organization; and, iii) a half-day facilitated workshop with the staff members of the organization examining personal values and organizational values. With the individual feminists, I used semi-structured interviews that also explored personal values and organizational values, as well as their insights as leaders and on feminist leadership.

I sought to straddle my roles of researcher-facilitator-rainer in a way that would create a research event. I also experimented with facilitated workshops as a research methodology that would produce useful data while at the same time create a space where research participants could become more reflective of their own values, assumptions, attitudes and behaviors. I engaged feminists in conversation...
and trusted how they understood and perceived their organizations. I made no attempt to diagnose their organizations against some “gold standard,” nor did I seek to assess or judge them as feminists. I stated this at the outset of interviews and it helped allay any doubts or fears that those interviewed might have. I encouraged all those I interviewed to engage in personal story-telling, as a way of encouraging reflection on their own values formation. As such, the research was far more focused on attitudes and perceptions of the research participants than a closer reading of their actual organizational processes and practices.

In total, I managed to include seven organizations in my research; two in the Philippines, four in Indonesia and one in Japan. I also interviewed a total of 48 individual feminists, either individually or in group interviews; 12 in the Philippines, 16 in Indonesia and 20 in Japan (See Appendix 1 for details).

Theorizing on Organizations and Organizational Values

How one understands organizations determines very much how one then views what happens within them, and where the potential for transformation lies. I understand organizations as living systems, as inter-dependent structures made up of “people in interactive relationships with the multiplied complexity of all the individual people involved” (The Barefoot Collective, 2009). In this research, I was trying to get a sense of how the visible aspects of the organization such as its structure, governance, decision-making, policies and practices were shaped by the more invisible aspects of the organization such as values, principles, assumptions and unique and unwritten behaviors and logic. The interaction between these two aspects of the organization is what can be defined as organizational culture.

There are numerous definitions of organizational culture. E. Shein (pg. 17, 2004) describes culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”. Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (pg. 13, 1999) who have pioneered work on the hidden structures of gender inequality in organizations refer to this as the “deep structure” of the organization, “that collection of values, history, culture and practices that form the unquestioned, ‘normal’ way of working as an organization”.

Arising from definitions of organizational culture, different theorists have attempted to provide a structured model of studying organizational culture. Among them is Schein’s three-level model of organizational culture. In this model, Schein starts with underlying assumptions at the bottom, espoused values in the middle and artifacts and behaviors at the top (Schein, 2004). This model indicates that artifacts and behaviors (that which is observable) emanate from values (which are both explicit and implicit) and which are in turn based on sets of assumptions (hidden norms and social agreements).

Since I was interested in the congruence of espoused values and organizational practices, I found useful R. Barrett’s (2006) emphasis on values as pivotal to organizational culture. He was also influenced by Ken Wilbur’s (1996) whole systems approach to change, and used Wilbur’s Four Quadrant Model of understanding human systems to understand the linkages between individual (personal) values, actions and behaviors and collective (organizational) group values, actions and behaviors.

In Barrett’s model there are four levels of alignment needed in an organization to reduce what he describes as the “degree of cultural entropy” and to increase productivity. In essence, he theorizes that where is a greater level of congruence between personal and organizational values, there’s a higher degree of productivity. Although I did not use this model explicitly to construct the research, I did use the model as an input in my interviews and workshop and an entry point into reflective conversations.
Theorizing on Feminist Organizations

There appears to be a gap in scholarly works that examine in depth the structures, processes, organizing principles and ethos of movement-based feminist/omen's human rights organizations in the South. From what is available, however, it would be safe to say that there is a general sense that the organizations founded by feminists are somehow different from and alternative to mainstream organizations. A broad definition of feminist organizations would be that they “are seen as doing the work of the women's movement and re- alising feminist goals in society”.7 There are also seen as the spaces where women are conscientized and nurtured into activism.

In feminist circles, the development of alternative organizational forms has been viewed as an integral expression of a feminist politics as well as a feminist alternative to mainstream society.8 The view that feminist organizations are qualitatively different in ethos and practice than other organizations is strongly held by many and expressed by many different feminist scholars, including those writing from the South (Ferguson, 1984; Helen Brown, 1990, Gandhi and Shah, 1992; Batliwala, 2008, Ford-Smith, 1997). This difference has very much to do with the ideological underpinnings of feminism that strongly critique male domination and the ways it manifests in society. The bureaucratic, hierarchical model of organization has been seen as intrinsically linked to the exercise of patriarchal power in society. Feminist organizations were seen by many of their founders as spaces for alternative models of organizing to be manifest.

Terms such as “non-hierarchical”, “participatory”, “collectives”, “consensual decision making”, “flatter hierarchies”, “collective leadership systems” are rife in the limited literature available about feminist organizations. As politically significant as these concepts are to feminists, more than one scholar has noted how much harder these ideas are to realize in reality. Riger as quoted by Arnold notes that “precisely because of their politically symbolic importance, issues concerning organizational structure...have time and again been the rocks upon which feminist groups have been shipwrecked”.9 Riger touches upon a truism that few feminists have been able to adequately deal with in their organizations. The deep investment many feminists have to notions of non-hierarchy, collectivism and egalitarianism as core feminist values can make the exercise of leadership and management within their organizations a serious challenge. Too often feminist organizations find themselves “shipwrecked” over these principles that are difficult to actualize in their organizational settings.

As organizations both in the North and South have changed and evolved over time, institutionalized, and received external sources of funding, many feminist groups have practiced what Claire Renelt described as “politics of engagement”. According to Renelt, a “politics of engagement” is “based on a belief that long-term social change depends on mobilizing and educating women in their communities by creating autonomous institutions, and on establishing relationships and structures of communication with those who work in and set policy for mainstream institutions”.10 Over the decades, many feminists have engaged in direct advocacy with the State and its policy and treaty-making bodies at national, regional and international levels. Likewise, feminist organizations in the South have increasingly been open to receiving funding from external sources. This has in turn put pressure on organizations to structure themselves in ways that make them trustworthy and accountable to external donors and legitimate representatives of women’s concerns.

Leadership and decision-making structures become tricky affairs as organizations evolve to meet new challenges and change from the early founding stages to more established entities. As structures are developed and new processes put in place, those who founded organizations often find it hard to relinquish their central role in the organizations to which they have invested their lives. A couple of younger feminists working in a regional women’s rights organization don’t mince words when they stated: “We have observed that most feminist organizations thus have a matriarch who seeks control over the organization...Heads...
of women's organizations and their management structures often play power games with their subordinates which run counter to feminist thinking and double standards abound”.

Jo Freeman in her classic 1973 essay, *Tyranny of Structurelessness*, warns against assuming that collectives would function in completely egaliitarian ways. The absence of structure, and clear articulation of roles, functions and processes, she argued, could merely mask hierarchies rather than eliminate them. Jo Freeman strongly critiques the notion that a group can be structureless and leaderless, and that in fact all groups inevitably structure themselves over time. The idea of structurelessness, Freeman argues, “becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others”. Given how hard it appears to negotiate, work through and manifest more collectivist and non or lesser hierarchical models organization, and how much judgement and debate has arisen over this question, Martin (1990) questions the emphasis placed in academic and activist circles about whether and how feminist organizations mirror feminist principles in their internal structures and processes to the neglect of other qualities. Even so, feminist scholars Alexander and Mohanty make an articulate case for feminist collectivities and organizations as a central aspect of transformational practice in a postcolonial and transnational context. They posit decolonization as an essential component of feminist visions of democracy and “the practice of thinking of oneself as part of feminist collectivities and organizations” as a counter to the “liberal pluralist individual self” promoted in a globalized capitalist context. Collective practice is seen as central therefore “in transformation of the self and re-envisioning organizational democracy, and anchors feminist thinking”.

The Notion of Collectivism in the Feminist Psyche

At the outset of this project, I brushed off comments that likened my research to comparing apples and oranges with an unshakeable belief that I would find a common “feminist soul” in the feminist organizations that I encountered in the three countries. The nagging fear that the sceptics might have a point was finally confirmed by my encounter with Japanese feminists. The stark contrast between feminist organizations and the state of feminist organizing in Japan and those that I encountered in Indonesia and the Philippines helped me crystallize some of the insights that emerged from this research project. I summarize them below:

- The values, structures and practices of feminist organizations in the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan are far more influenced by norm, standards, socio-political events, culture and history of the national and social contexts from which they emerge than some more universal feminist code of ethics or value base they may ascribe to. For example, many organizational feminists in Indonesia that I encountered were very interested in mass-based organizing, and were a part of networks that were seeking to network and unify women from all strata of society. Solidaritas Perempuan (SP), for example has over 900 members, while Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia (KPI) touts over 30,000 members. There is no bashfulness or doubt in wanting to keep expanding their organizations, and there was very little doubt in any of those I encountered that they could do this in a way that was keeping with feminist principles. Soshiren, a reproductive health and rights advocacy group in Japan, has deliberately chosen to stay relatively small, with under 20 women in its core group, and 200+ newsletter subscribers, and has chosen not to register as a formal organization despite being active for over two decades. In Indonesia, when asked about what influenced the formation of their organizations, and the desire to rebuild mass based organizations, many of the respondents recalled the history of GERWANI, a mass-based women’s organization that was villified, had many of its members raped and murdered and then was banned by Suharto in the 1960s, and needing to re-build a mass-based movement to realize feminist goals. In Japan however, many feminists spoke with aversion about formal,
hierarchical organizations as replicating the dominant, patriarchal norms that render the Japanese imperial system as indefilable and supreme. Soshiren is just one of several feminist organizations that has chosen to stay small enough to maintain its collective structure and processes. Formal registration as a non-profit entity is seen as a part of conforming to the mainstream, and thus not matching with their understanding of the way that feminists organize. In both cases, the understandings of organizational form were in response to their national socio-political, historical and cultural contexts, even though both responses were viewed by those involved as “feminist” responses.

• Whatever form their organizations take across the three countries, most feminists carry in their psyche the notion that collective/consensual/democratic processes are indeed a “feminist” imperative and a touchstone in feminism. It was in Japan I understood how deeply embedded notions of collectivism, non-hierarchy and total equality can be in feminist organizing, when left unchallenged. Here, I found that there were ideas about feminism and feminist organizing that date back to the 1970s in the United States. The “Women’s Libbers” of Japan were deeply influenced by the early days of the second wave of the women’s movement in the United States, and the notion of pure collectivism as the only “true” form of feminist organizing seems to have withstood the test of time. Feminist groups are for the most part very small, unstructured, and when interviewed, feminists from these groups insisted that “everyone was a leader” and that there was absolutely no need for hierarchy and only minimal structure. Feminist organizations that did exist as formal entities were few and most of them also adopted some measure of collective or consensual process in their decision-making. In the Philippines and Indonesia, it appears that for feminists in both these countries, there is far less resistance to mass-based organizing, registering as a formal entity, and adopting structures and systems that enhance their legitimacy as advocates of women’s rights. Perhaps this has something to do with the way resistance movements to the military dictatorships in these countries organized themselves, and then later gained legitimacy when these dictatorships were overthrown. Also unlike Japan, in both the Philippines and Indonesia, development aid has flowed into social movements, and women’s organizations like other social movement organizations have eventually needed to formalize and structure themselves in ways that they were recognized as legitimate recipients of development funding. Even so, members of large organizations with hierarchical structures such as Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia and Solidaritas Perempuan in Indonesia, and Gabriela in the Philippines, when interviewed, were very definite about the ways in which they ensured consensual decision-making through their structures and systems. SP, for example, has developed over the years a very thick organizational policy document known as the Anggaran Rumahtangga that details all processes of the organization including how to ensure the maximum amount of consensus-building, democracy and transparency in their decision-making. At its national congress held in 2012, SP members were unperturbed by an elections process for the office bearers of their organization that went late into the night and right through the next day. When asked casually about the lengthy process of elections the following day, a couple of the members confirmed that they were satisfied with the process because it was based on consensus and was an expression of democratic practice.

• This notion of collectivity/consensuality as a feminist imperative is implicit in the minds of its members, both voluntary and paid, and sometime becomes a source of tension as the organization formalizes and institutionalizes. One of the reasons why feminist groups, workplaces and organizations struggle around issues of decision making and leadership is that
those who join feminist/women’s rights groupings are looking for an alternative to mainstream society. Even those who are not feminist and join initially purely for economic or other reasons, soon come to share in the belief that democratic, participatory and consensual processes are the way feminist organizations “should be”. Where research participants were facing or recalled conflicts in their organizations, few were able to decipher their own mental maps of how the world was, how people are and how organizations “should” be. The disappointment that people were almost always related to an expectation they had about their colleagues, fellow members or bosses, about how they thought they “should” behave as feminists activists or leaders.

• Feminist leaders find themselves surrounded by a complex set of unspoken expectations around how they must conduct themselves in a feminist organizational setting. Feminists in leadership positions often find themselves under severe scrutiny in relation to their conduct and performance as leaders. Batliwala (2011) points to the fact that our understanding of leadership depends upon “our cultural context, our history and the dominant models and practices of leadership that is deeply embedded in us”. I added the question on feminist leadership into my interview guide late, so only asked this question in Indonesia and Japan. In Indonesia, where many feminist organizations have a clear structure of leadership, I found greater certainty of response to questions about feminist leadership—meaning, people had a picture of the type of attitudes, traits, skills and perspectives that were necessary to be effective as a feminist leader. Those in leadership that I interviewed were for the most part reflective on what they thought was required of them as leaders and the challenges they faced in measuring up to expectations. One executive director of a feminist organization in Indonesia described her role as the following: “I constantly try to make decisions in a collective manner, in a participatory manner, because what worries me is that if I don’t make decisions collectively, I will be regarded as authoritarian later. But it is really not all decisions that need to be taken collectively. Some decisions I could take on my own. In this short period, the past month or two, I’ve been looking for how to exercise collective leadership in a way that does not create hidden power”...

In contrast, those I interviewed in leadership positions in Japan, with one or two exceptions, found it hard to speak about themselves as leaders and could not describe characteristics or values needed in a leader. In one case, despite being a clear leader for over two decades in her organization with over 300 members and a well-known advocate in different social movement forums, the respondent found it hard to respond to different questions about feminist leadership. When asked if she considered herself a leader, she responded after some prompting, “I consider myself an activist but I don’t think I am a feminist leader...maybe just of my organization”. She then went on to explain, “I became a feminist without noticing myself, so it was difficult for me to get the idea of feminist organization or feminist processes”. In all three countries, several respondents spoke about the importance of leaders themselves being congruent and consistent with the values that the organisation/feminist movement espoused. Where feminists in leadership positions had failed to meet the standard of congruence in the eyes of their colleagues or staff members, however, I found that they tended to be judged not as poor managers, but rather as not sufficiently feminist.

Priority placed on enacting feminist values in internal organizational practices

To a great extent, I found that in most of the organizations included in the research, and in the individual interviews conducted, manifesting feminist values in internal organizational processes...
and practices was of high priority. In some organizations, it was an explicit effort, which was deliberated upon and put into policies and practices—however in others it was assumed and little discussed. Following are some of the insights in terms of values congruence that emerged from this research:

- In the organizations where the staff members expressed satisfaction with their workplace environments, there was indeed a relatively high degree of alignment between the personal values of the staff members with other staff members, and between personal values of individual staff members and the organization’s overall core values.

- Likewise, where there was alignment between the organization’s espoused values and its actual practices, staff members reflected upon these with some pride. The actual practices were varied and each organization developed ways to enact a feminist ethos differently. In Kapal Perempuan in Indonesia, staff members actually ate lunch together, and people chipped into the lunch on a sliding scale depending on their salary. In keeping with their shared values of respect for diversity and fairness, this same organization had the same health insurance, leave and benefits extend equally to the families of their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff members as they did their heterosexual staff members. Staff of Likhaan in the Philippines described how the internal equity issue that kept the gap in incomes between the director and the most junior staff member modest was a strong expression of its feminist ethos. When discussing the organization’s core value of equality, one staff explained: “In Likhaan, we’re really not equal in terms of position...we develop the ED as our boss and she has a very high position but we also believe that she’s also equal with us. No hierarchy regardless if you’re executive, if you’re driver, we’re both equal here. because we’re both working”. A couple of other staff in Likhaan described how they had developed a very strict organizational value around being on time, and this was strictly enforced and appreciated by all because it applied equally to everyone.

- What is or is not feminist practice and ethos is highly subjective, and very context specific. In Japan, for example, the idea that activism must be completely voluntary and unpaid is one that holds strong in feminist circles. Likewise, formally registering as a non-profit organization was a decision that drew a lot of contention from members in one feminist organization, one of the arguments being that to register would be to conform to a patriarchal form of organization. In this context, it was useful to share with Japanese feminists I encountered, the kinds of formal mechanisms and structures to ensure democracy and accountability in the context of large feminist organizations in Indonesia, and the fact that many activists in both the Philippines and Indonesia are paid for their work. I presented this information as a way of gently challenging the many “shoulds” and “musts” in relation to feminist organizing and organizations I found in the Japanese context, and to a large extent, it was well received.19

- Where there was not a lot of open discussion of values and principles, organizations tend to develop an unspoken culture based on norms and assumptions often deemed “feminist”. Only when these norms and assumptions are not adhered to do they become visible or a source of tension in the group. One example of an unspoken norm is the expectation that those working in a feminist setting understand, support and are comfortable with and support gay and lesbian rights. In response to one of the interview questions in the research, a couple of staff members of one of the feminist organizations that participated in
the research expressed an inner conflict around the issue of gay and lesbian rights stemming from their religious beliefs. There had never been an open discussion within the organization and so she maintained silence on the matter despite feeling an inner struggle. Every member of an organization carries with him or her one’s own mental map based on their own value system and sets of experiences, and if this is not actually discussed openly and negotiated, it could create an environment where conflict can easily arise in unexpected moments.

- A key factor in how people felt in their organizational setting had to do with the leadership (even in organizations where no leaders were acknowledged). It was clear through the research, that those interviewed, both leaders and other staff members of feminist organizations had some definite ideas of what qualities are leader must have, and when interrogated these were often very specific to their culture, family and/or sets of experiences of leaders in other contexts. Those heading the organizations that I included in the research were very aware of such expectations that others had of them, and found different ways to minimize hierarchal relationship with their colleagues. Three executive directors that I interviewed, for example, did not have a separate room from their staff and sat in a shared office space with either the administrative staff, or in a general area where other staff members also sat. Some of the qualities that appeared to be most sought after and thought needed in feminist leaders were clear vision, humility, capacity to listen, accountability and grounding in feminist understanding. Most importantly, where leaders did practice what they preached and where everyone was equally held to the same standards, there was a greater sense of alignment and wellbeing.

Conclusion

Over the course of the research year, many of my assumptions were challenged and revisited, and many of my notions and guesses were confirmed or refined. Time and space for reflective conversations that touch at a deeper level on values, ethics, and relationships are rare commodities for feminist activists. I contend that when assumptions, hidden norms and meanings are uncovered and understood, and values are negotiated by all those who make up an organization, there is a greater chance of the organization’s finding balance, and being supportive of community and productive workplaces.

In this regard, a researcher-activist could facilitate such a process, and create the opportunity for a different kind of conversation such that it supports the organization's evolution and growth. The “findings” of this research are useful as conversation starters, and as ways of engaging different groups of feminists in reflective processes. I believe there is a lot of potential and room for starting conversations that Bushe and Marshak (2009) describe as a more dialogic kind of organizational development practice that attempts to “create containers and processes that allow stories to be told, narratives and patterns be made sense of, and new ideas that could generate change emerge from the group that made up the organizational system”. Rather than attempting to influence and change what people do, there is value in engaging people in many more conversations that influence how they think about their organizations and their roles within them.

NOTES:


2. A research event is a happening that occurs within the research setting where observation about the cultural relations of those participating in the research can be made. In this research, I tried to maintain the awareness of what A. Holliday (pg. 140, 2007) notes: “The people in a research setting are as culturally skilled as the researcher, and have the potential, if
they wish to be as much involved as the researcher in negotiating the research event...both the researcher and the people in the research setting enter into a relationship of culture making”...  

5 “An organization that works towards realizing a feminist vision of social transformation” borrows from two frameworks: i) Patricia Yancey Martin in “Rethinking Feminist Organizations” provides ten criteria by which to assess a feminist organization, suggesting that meeting five of these ten criteria should be sufficient to be recognized as a feminist organization; and, ii) Chandra Mohanty Talpade in Feminism Without Borders, understands feminist practice as operating “at a number of levels: at the level of daily life through the everyday acts that constitute our identities and relational communities; at the level of collective action in groups, networks and movements constituted around feminist visions of social transformation; and at the levels of theory, pedagogy, and textual creativity in the scholarly and writing practices of feminist engaged in the production of knowledge”.

4 In the research methodology that I call the “workshop approach” to data-gathering which I used in the organization component of the research, I engaged the staff members in a series of facilitated processes that enable them to: i) encounter their own core value base; ii) reflect about those values that they understand as core to their organization; iii) compare their core values with those of others in the staff grouping, and with what they perceive as their organization’s; and iv) come up with a set of examples that they would define as examples of where their organization’s core values are expressed in their organizational practices. I used the Differentiate/Integrate (D/I) method familiar in facilitation, meaning differentiate interests in a group before integrating them(Weisbord and Janoff, 2007).

5 As Schein (2004), Barrett (2006), Rao(1997), Acker (1990) and others have noted, culture is shaped by hidden norms and values in an organization. Very often our personal norms and values are hidden from ourselves. Without being in a self-reflexive mode, it is unlikely that the research participants will be able to provide responses to my questions from the space I would like their responses to emerge from.

6 Barrett’s definition of cultural entropy: “the proportion of energy in an organization consumed by non-productive activities [which] occurs when there is a lack of alignment between the four quadrants. Cultural entropy is inversely related to resilience. When cultural entropy is high, resilience is low. When cultural entropy is low, resilience is high”. Pg.115, Barrett, Robert (2006)

7 Ferree and Martin. 1995


13 Martin, Patricia Yancey. 1990


15 Ibid.

16 The second wave of the women’s movement is how the period of intense feminist activism and consciousness in the 1960s and the 1970s in the United States and Europe is often described. The ideas that emerged through this period spread to and resonated with national liberation and post-colonial struggles that women were engaged with in other parts of the world through the 1970s and 1980s.

17 Translated from Bahasa Indonesia, taken from interview transcript.

18 Translated by a translator from Japanese, taken from audio recording

19 In one of the workshops that I held, as part of my sharing on my findings in the other countries, I shared some of the critiques of collectives discussed in Jo Freeman’s “Tyranny of Structurelessness”. Within a week of sharing the link to the group, the article was translated into Japanese by one of the feminists present, and then circulated through one of their activist mailing lists.

REFERENCES


The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH

PHILIPPINES
1. Likhaan (Centre for Women's Health Inc.), Quezon City
2. Gender Watch against Violence and Exploitation (GWAVE), Dumaguete City

INDONESIA
3. Kapal Perempuan, Jakarta
4. KOMNAS Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women), Jakarta
5. RPUK Banda Aceh (Relawan Perempuan untuk Kemanusiaan), Banda Aceh
6. Solidaritas Perempuan, Banda Aceh

JAPAN
7. Asia Josei Shiro Centre or Asia-Japan Women's Resource Centre (AJWRC), Tokyo

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
**INDIVIDUAL ACTIVISTS INTERVIEWED AS PART OF THE RESEARCH**

### PHILIPPINES
1. Tita Lubi, Gabriela Party List, Quezon City
2. Aida Santos, WEDPRO, Quezon City
3. Claudia Sylvia Estrada, Lilibaan, Quezon City
4. Mari Luz (Maloy) Quesada Tiongson, formerly with WEDPRO & Isis International Manila, Quezon City
5. Teresita (Teres) Balayon, Women’s Crisis Centre, Quezon City
6. Ana Dinglasan, Liyab, Quezon City
7. Clem Novales, Liyab, Quezon City
8. J.J. Josef, formerly with The Lesbian Collective (TLC) and CLIC, Baguio City
9. Clare Luczon, WomenLead, Quezon City
10. Anne Lim, GALANG Philippines, Quezon City
11. Mary Jane Real, formerly with Ateneo Human Rights Center and the Asia Pacific Women Law and Development (APWLD), Quezon City

### INDONESIA
13. Yanti Mochtar, Kapal Perempuan, Jakarta
14. Zohra Baso, Women Concern Forum of South Sulawesi
15. Augustin, Ardhaniary Institute, Jakarta
16. Kamala Chandrakiran, formerly of KOMNAS Perempuan, Jakarta
17. Ibnu Nurni Murniati, Solidaritas Perempuan, Jogjakarta
18. Salma Safitri (Fifi), Solidaritas Perempuan, Malang, East Java
19. Ibu Damai Paskah, Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, Jogjakarta
20. Tri Nur Hastuti (Nurso), Ansyah Muhammadiyah, Jogjakarta
21. Noviana Dwi Arini, Solidaritas Perempuan, Jogjakarta
22. Siti Habiba Jalal, Jaring Perempuan Jogjakarta, Jogjakarta
23. Budi Wahyuni, Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia, APIK, Yayasan Anisa Swasti, Jogjakarta
24. Dian Kartika, Secretary General, Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, Jakarta
25. Soraya Kamaruzzaman, RPUK, Banda Aceh
26. Lita Anggraini, Jalar Pekerja Rumah Tangga (JALAR PRT), Jakarta
27. Aditiana Dewi Eridani (Dani), RAHIMA, Jakarta
28. Fathoum Ade (Dede), Perempuan Mahardika, Jakarta

### JAPAN
29. Mina Watanabe, Women’s Active Museum for Women’s Peace, Tokyo
30. Prof. Kazuko Tanaka, Professor of Gender Studies, International Christian University, Tokyo
31. Chizuko Ueno, Feminist Writer, Women’s Action Network (WAN), Tokyo
32. Masaya Niwa, Josei no Anzento Kenko no Tameno Shienyo iku Center (Centre for Support and Education for Women’s Health and Safety) & AJWRC, Tokyo
33. Chicko Akaishi, Single Women’s Forum, Tokyo
34. Naoko Ono, formerly of Asia Japan Women’s Resource Center (AJWRC), Tokyo
35. Makiko Matsumoto, Feminist Action Video Collective (FAV) & Asia Japan Women’s Resource Center, Tokyo
36. Noriko Seyama, FAV & AJWRC, Tokyo
37. Satoko Yagura (Satokin), FAV & AJWRC, Tokyo
38. Hwami Park, formerly of Asian Women’s Association, belongs to a Zainichi support organization, Tokyo
39. Shigeko Takemori, formerly with Soshiren, Engeki Design Group, Karadano Oshaberi Kai (Body Chatting Group), Tokyo
40. Kyoko Tanaka, Women’s Support HotLine, Otaku Municipality, Feming Magazine, Tokyo
41. Mayumi Makita, Women’s Counselling Network, Editor of Feming magazine, Tokyo
42. Yayo Okano, Women’s Action Network, Kyoto
43. Kumiko Ida, Women’s Action Network, Kyoto
44. Misako Ichihara, Nora – Homeless Women’s Network, Tokyo
45. Hiroko Hara, Japan Women’s Watch (JAWW), Tokyo
46. Hiroko Hashimoto, Japan Women’s Watch (JAWW), Tokyo
47. Reiko Aiko, Japan Women’s Watch (JAWW), Tokyo
48. Eriko Tanno, Japan Women’s Watch (JAWW), Tokyo

*The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows*
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Promoting Child Rights: Comparisons between Thailand and the Philippines

Syvongsay Changpitikoun

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

Introduction

Citizen participation has become an important force for social change, including in the fight against poverty. In Lao PDR, people’s participation in national life is provided for in a range of legal and other arenas, including the Constitution, the Decree of Non-Profit Associations and Foundations, the 7th National Social Economic Development Plan and the 9th Party Congress (through the “four breakthroughs” approach to development). The efficacy of people’s participation in poverty reduction will be important for efforts by the country to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) Status.

Lao PDR, a single party socialist republic, is a landlocked country with a population of 6.25 million people, 80 percent of whom live in rural areas. It is ranked 122 out of 169 countries in the Human Development Index (2011). Approximately 70 percent of the population lives on less than USD $2 a day. Lao PDR has the largest number of unexploded ordinance in the world, which currently affects 25 percent of villages and poses a huge challenge to human security and to access to land for a population still largely dependent on subsistence agriculture.

Lao PDR embraced economic reform in 1986, when it began to encourage private sector investment and integration with its neighbors in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Since then Lao PDR has achieved a degree of economic development, some macro-economic stability, and a considerable increase in foreign direct investment. The government is committed to removing the country from the ranks of Least Developed Countries (LDC) by 2020. It has committed to important United Nations goals and instruments, including the MDGs, Education For All (EFA), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The country submitted its second report on the implementation of the CRC to the CRC Committee in 2009. In its Concluding Observation (CO), the Committee encouraged the development of a social welfare system to support children, including provision of teams to handle individual cases, and special investigators and community focal points to address and respond to the needs of neglected and abused children. The committee expressed concern that children’s participation is still low and that the views of children are not sufficiently taken in account, including within the family, the school, and the care and justice systems. The small participation of CSOs working for children is also still a concern. In principle, CSOs could be instrumental in promoting and contributing to more inclusive development policies and practice to respond to the needs of Lao children.

In early 2009, the government approved a decree for the regulation and operation of Lao Non-Profit Associations (NPA). This decree authorizes the Ministry of Home Affairs, in conjunction with line ministries, to register and monitor all NPAs. However, civil society organizations are still very new and some organizations have encountered obstacles to formation and operation.

This research aims to identify the actual and potential roles of CSOs in promoting child rights in the Lao context.

Background to the study

The study investigates the strategies of CSOs in the Philippines and Thailand. The research was carried out in four stages (1) literature review (2) field research in Thailand, including in Bangkok, the North and the Northeast, and in
Metro Manila in the Philippines, (3) primary data collection from key informants from government and civil society organizations and 4) analysis and report-writing.

In Thailand, the author visited a) the Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities Center (DEPDC) and b) the Child Help Foundation, c) the Education Center for the Blind, d) the Daughters of Charity and e) the Foundation for Child Development. In the Philippines, the author interacted with a) the Psychosocial Support and Children’s Rights Resource Center, b) the Philippines Coalition to Protect Children Involved in Armed Conflict, c) the Child Rights Coalition Asia, d) the Justice Cecilia Munoz Palma Foundation and e) Child Hope Asia. In addition, the author visited governmental agencies for child rights, international organizations and other relevant institutions.

What does Civil Society mean?

There is no common agreement on the term civil society. The meaning of the term varies in different contexts, but it often refers to organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women’s organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, self-help groups, social movements, coalitions and advocacy groups. The term may sometimes include the family and the private realm. Civil society is sometimes referred to as the “third sector” of society, distinct from government and business.

In the early 1900s, Friedrich Hegel defined civil society as “the intermediate realm between the family and the state,” wherein civil society was set out as a form of freedom, where the individual becomes a public person. Hegel suggested that though the state and civil society depended on each other, their relations were full of tensions and therefore required complicated balancing acts.

For Jurgen Habermas, civil society was “made up of more or less spontaneously created associations, organizations and movements, which find, take up, condense and amplify the resonance of social problems in private life, and pass it on to the political realm or public sphere”. This theory in essence will form the basis of discussions in this study. Similar views can be found in Larry Diamond’s definition of civil society as “the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, bound by a legal order or set of shared rules”.


The CRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history and encompasses the social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights of all children. It has four foundational principles; non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, right to life, survival, and development, and respect for the views of the child. Both Thailand and the Philippines have ratified the CRC and its two Optional Protocols.

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<th>No</th>
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<td>Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, 2000</td>
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Table 1: Comparative status of ratification
In the Philippines, two years after the country’s ratification of the CRC, then President Fidel V. Ramos stressed that despite progress made in improving the welfare of Filipino children, there was still much work to be done. In his first State of the Nation Address, the president declared that, henceforth, “Growth will be measured not in terms of statistics, but in terms of people: in the child we save from hunger and raise to a life of dignity and well-being”. Thus, he placed children at the heart of the national development agenda with improvements in their situation as indicators of progress.

In recent years significant global initiatives have been undertaken to translate the Convention and its Optional Protocols into action, including the periodic United Nations General Assembly Special Sessions (UNGASS), World Summits for Children and the MDGs.

Both Thailand and the Philippines have made significant progress in promoting awareness and action on child rights issues, in part through cooperation between governmental agencies and CSOs. Such progress includes improved sensitization on child rights, enhanced nutrition for maternal and child health, better water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS prevention and care as well as prevention of maternal to child transmission, education, child-friendly schools initiative, and action to prevent human trafficking.

**Civil Society Organizations in Thailand**

In Thailand four types of civil society organizations can legally be formed. These are associations, labor unions and federations, foundations, and political parties.

These types of CSO vary greatly in terms of size, mission, objectives, and they address differing problems and complex issues at various levels. They may be involved in (1) providing public services, (2) supplementing government agencies in providing social support for the poor and other disadvantaged groups (3) monitoring public organizations and their activities, (4) advocating for justice, human rights, environmental protection and anti-corruption measures. Traditionally, voluntary organizations in Thailand have been formed in honor of some outstanding individual, with an aim of providing relief to the poor in times of disaster or hardship. There are both volunteers and paid workers in these organizations. Development-oriented organizations rely on full-time workers whereas other organizations and associations largely depend on volunteers.

Thai CSOs work in varied areas including children, women, health, slums, the environment, small farmers, integrated farming, human rights, workers’ rights, women workers’ rights, farmers with land problems, consumer protection, anti-corruption, anti-violence against women, animal protection, and others.

Globally, signatories to the CRC are recommended to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are widely known and understood by adults and children. Thus the contents of the Convention should be translated and made available in all minority or indigenous languages and there should be adequate and systematic training and/or sensitization of professional groups working with and for children.

The CRC has been translated into standard Thai and made available both in print format and through the Internet, including in child-friendly or youth-created versions. CRC-related materials have also been distributed to schools and communities, some of which material targets marginalized groups via traditional and alternative media. A series of training workshops have been conducted at the level of CRC trainers and child welfare practitioners for both governmental agencies and NGOs, mostly supported by the UN entities.

Translation of the CRC concept into day-to-day practice is not an easy task, in part due to attitudes towards children which see children’s roles predominantly in terms of obedience and as followers. There is a lack of children’s inputs into development processes that impact them, and a lack of financial commitment to do capacity building and awareness-raising on child inclusion.
Given the influence of the media on public opinion, it is very important that media practitioners fully understand the CRC and are aware of their potential role in supporting it. Although, media coverage of children's and women's issues has increased, Thai CSOs and youth groups are in agreement that more efforts are needed to encourage the media to pay more attention to children's rights issues as well as to respect the rights of the child. Child rights to privacy are often violated through insensitive media coverage.

Civil Society Organizations in the Philippines

The term civil society in the Philippines generally refers to non-government organizations, cause-oriented organizations, people’s organizations, voluntary organizations, and cooperatives. In addition, there are business and professional associations, labor unions, socio-civic organizations, church-based organizations, and educational institutions. Similarly to Thailand, four terms have legal validity in the Philippines; (1) non-stock corporations, (2) non-profit institutions, (3) independent people’s organizations, and (4) non-governmental, community-based or sectorial organizations.

CSOs working on child rights are prominent in the Philippines, but in general children’s rights are still not widely recognized or acted upon. Most Filipinos’ knowledge about rights comes from trainings and workshops organized by NGOs. Therefore, the CRC committee has urged a greater cooperation between the state and civil society to work for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

Research Finding

This study found that CSO activities in promoting child rights are conducted in the following areas; (1) operational, (2) networking and (3) fund raising/grant-making.

In operational terms, CSOs often complement government activities, link government and communities, and relay the voice of communities to governments. CSOs can do this as they are often flexible and innovative. They are often invited to collaborate with the government on child-related policy reviews and policy development.

Networking is also important in the two countries. There has been a lot of training and capacity building in human rights, development, resource mobilization and volunteer management. Sometimes, due to donor influences and requirements, there is unnecessary overlap in activities, resulting in competition for funding and duplication of efforts. It is also interesting to note that many CSOs are very dependent on their founders’ vision or dynamism and are thus at risk when key figures move on.

As regards funding, CSOs rely on a range of strategies to mobilize financial resources including earned income, contributions from individuals and corporations, and grants from international organizations. In the Philippines, CSOs also secure funding through membership dues, donations, subsidies, and revenue from income-generated activities. Many depend on project-based financing from overseas development organizations and local and multinational companies. This can result in perceptions of conflict between donor interests and community interests. Overseas development assistance is now in decline so competition for these dwindling resources has grown. The sector urgently needs a resource base that is more reliable, yet few organizations provide training in resource mobilization. Overall, to sustain funding from donors, both internal and external, it is crucial to have a funding strategy for long term partnerships and programmes in line with donors, rather than relying on short-term programs or strategies.

Key Lessons Learned for Lao NPAs

Lessons from the above for Lao CSOs/NPAs include:

- **Child Foundations or Associations** have more funding opportunities compared to CSOs working in other arenas such as the environment. Child foundations are respected and can gain a high profile.
• **Moving From Volunteerism to Professionalism.**
  It is vital to build a core staff of committed people who can connect the vulnerable, donors and state. Many CSOs face regular staff turnover. Staff development and motivation should be high on the agenda of organizations.

• **Capacity Building.** In order to truly leverage the opportunities that exist for civil society, capacity building is critically needed, especially in relation to: (1) **Sustainability of Funding.** Many international sources of funds have discontinued support for Lao CSOs, leaving these organizations in a position of needing to raise more funds on their own. (2) **Building human resources.** People often come to CSOs because they believe in the goals of the organization and have the passion to strive for a better society. Increasingly, more attention is being drawn to the managerial and skills required complementing this passion. (3) **Transparency.** As the CSO sector gradually matures, more organizations are learning about the important role that systems for financial reporting and/or operations play in building and maintaining strong accountable organizations. (4) **Enabling environment.** As in any society, the enabling environment is a critical component that can either positively or negatively affect the development of CSOs. At present, Lao CSOs are tax-exempt but are also subject to time-consuming and complex government inspections.

**Conclusions**

CSOs in Thailand and the Philippines have significant roles in promoting child rights. A key factor for the sustainability of CSOs is to move from volunteerism to professionalism, whereby committed people are in a position to connect the vulnerable, governments and donors. CSOs are also strengthened through networking with different stakeholders, from the vulnerable to the highest levels of government and others. Human rights instruments assist in this work.

CSOs in Thailand and the Philippines tend to be locally owned, governed and operated. Though they may earn income that they use to fund their programs, they aim to be independent, non-profit, non-governmental and private. They have missions in relation to encouraging the state as a duty bearer to have accountability to fulfill child rights and address child survival, development, participation and protection. They mobilize resources from within or outside the country and pass them on to other civil society groups via grants or other financing mechanisms.

Many of the models of children’s associations and foundations seem appropriate in the context of Lao NPAs. Capacity building is critically needed for NPAs to flourish in Lao society. It is also necessary to establish networks with similar organizations in neighboring countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. This would help in strengthening capacity-building, knowledge generation, fund-raising and advocacy skills.

**NOTES**

2. Fact Sheets from UN Women Lao Office 2012. www.unwomen.org
3. The United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989), sets out the rights, standards and monitoring mechanisms for meeting all children’s rights. The CRC is the most widely accepted of all human rights treaties. As of 2011 it has been ratified by 192 countries. The state parties have obligations to submit an initial report to the CRC Committee in Geneva two years after ratification and a periodic report every four years (article 44). Civil Society and specialist agencies are entitled to be represented in producing alternative/supplementary reports which are welcomed by the CRC Committee.
4. The London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society.
REFERENCES


CONSULTED WEBSITES

ILO-IPEC Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women in Greater Mekong Sub-Region at http://www.ilo.org/

NGO Guide on reporting to the CRC (NGO Group for the CRC) http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/

Introduction

Nowadays, contemporary Asian art is often showcased in international art fairs and exhibitions like biennales or triennales throughout the world. Such art fairs and exhibitions are also held in Asian countries like Singapore, China, Korea and Japan, where they show cutting edge artworks and new art trends. Along with the rise of multiculturalism, this tendency has started to be seen since the 1990s and contemporary Asian art has dramatically increased its visibility in global art scenes.

Until two or three decades ago, however, Asian modern and contemporary art was not given much attention and received very little interest in the international art world. Indeed, modern and contemporary Asian art existing before the 1980s is hardly shown or discussed outside Asia. It could be suggested that there is an imbalance of understanding between Western art and Asian art. Virginia Spate observed:

When audiences are confronted with recent art from Asia, the chasm of knowledge is such that they often experience it in terms of nationalistic stereotypes coloured by the old assumptions that such art is inevitably derivative, merely decorative, or a destructive debasement of “traditional” art…¹

Actually, the West-centric value including the notion of art was introduced in Asian countries through the western modernization and colonialism from the late 19th century to the 20th century. Because of this historical background, sometimes art from Asia is considered as “derivative”, “backward” or “exotic”. In a way, however, such perspectives that are based on the West-centric art value could lead to a biased viewpoint toward Asian art. In order to understand contemporary and modern Asian art, it is necessary to make a “re-examination of Eurocentrism, as well as conspicuous effort to fairly examine and evaluate the culture and art of the non-Western world, without prejudice or preconceptions”.² While accepting the Western art value, artists from Asia have been producing their own artworks that reflect their society, politics, history and daily lives.

In this paper, I would like to explore the development of art in Malaysia and Thailand by looking at the shifting phases of art scenes from the 1960s to the 1990s. Moreover, by comparing the two countries, I also examined the difference in processes in developing visual art between the colonized and non-colonized countries in order to see how colonialism has or has not influenced the art scenes. To do so, I paid attention to art institutions and systems that played an important role in the development of art in each country.

Basically, I conducted the research by collecting publications, articles, documents and images, as well as by interviewing artists and researchers. The understandings gained through the research help re-examine and reconsider the West-centric art values pertinent to fairly evaluating art values in Asian countries.

Malaysia
Toward the Establishment of the National Art Gallery (NAG)

In the 1950s, Malaysian art scene became activated with a new public body called the Malayan Arts Council and several art groups: the Wednesday Art Group (1952), the Selangor Art Society (1954), and the Angkatan Pelukis Semenanjung (Peninsular Art Group) (1956). It could be considered that some of these movements were led by support and initiative of the British colonial administration. The Arts Council was formed on April 15, 1952 as the first public body that dealt with fine arts in Malaya and as the main body responsible for addressing the need for a National Art Gallery and National Art Collection.³ Since the Arts Council
of Great Britain was established to promote arts just after the Second World War, it could suggest that the system of the Arts Council was introduced in the Federation of Malaya following the model developed in Britain. Moreover, an Englishman named Peter Harris, who came to Malaya in 1951 was appointed to be the first superintendent of Arts for the Federation of Malaya and the first education officer to engage seriously in arts education in the Federation at that time. He also conducted evening drawing classes known as the Wednesday Art Group, which produced several acclaimed Malaysian artists. Particularly, the Federation Arts Council nurtured the idea of establishing a National Art Gallery, which was realized as Malaysia headed toward its independence.

In 1958, the National Art Gallery (now the National Visual Arts Gallery) was established in a government building called the Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman (now Malaysia Tourism Center) in Kuala Lumpur. It was the year after the Federation of Malaya gained independence from Britain. This early establishment of the NAG after independence could suggest that the NAG was expected to play an important role in the newly-independent nation. In the foreword of the first National Loan Exhibition catalogue in 1958, the necessity for and responsibilities of the NAG are mentioned:

The foundation of Independence have been well laid, and it is the responsibility of the present generation of Malaysians to build on them a nation which will gain some of its inspiration from a fine collection of works of art, worthily housed and accessible to all.

Due to British colonial rule, the systems of the museum and arts council were introduced to and adopted by the Federation government in the very early stage of independence. The NAG was expected to form representative art of Malaysia in recognition of the new nation by collecting, exhibiting and promoting artworks in the country. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the NAG, since its opening, organized many exhibitions and competitions showcasing local art, such as Salon Malaysia, the National Art Exhibition, the Annual Invitation Show, Young Contemporaries and retrospective solo exhibition of local artists. By showing local art through these exhibitions regularly and repeatedly, the NAG contributed to forming Malaysian art as well as introduced it abroad in exhibitions, in cooperation with overseas museums. As there were quite a few art venues in the 1960s and the 1970s, it is clear that the NAG has played an important role in promoting understanding and the development of Malaysian art locally and internationally.

New Tendency in the 1960s and the 1970s

The 1960s marked the progress of art education in Malaysia. In 1965, the Institute of Technology MARA (now Universiti Teknologi of MARA, UiTM), an institution to provide advanced education for Malays, was set up and a school of fine and applied arts ran the first art-school type of courses in painting, graphic design, textile design, fine metal and industrial arts. The Malaysian Institute of Art, a private art college, was established in 1967 by the Chinese artist, Chung Chen Sun, and the Universiti Sains Malaysia became the first local university to offer a Fine Art degree course in 1972. This means that those who wanted to take higher education in art before the 1960s had little opportunity to study art. Yeoh Jin Leng mentions the state of the art situation and education before the Second World War:

The arts, had little or no role to play in the educational system up to the Second World War. Education then reflected the economic trend of the period. Colonial policy concerning matters of culture was one of non-interference and cultural matters came under the prerogative of the Sultanates. Because of the British colonial policy, art education and appreciation were not officially introduced in Malaya. In terms of training teachers, however, two Malayan Teachers Training Colleges were established in England to meet the immediate need from the 1950s to the 1960s. Experiences in the college seem to have stimulated some students such as Ismail Zain, Yeoh Jin Leng, Anthony Lau and Redza Piyadasa to pursue further
study of art in the UK. Moreover, some of the local artists received governmental scholarships to study in the UK. This could suggest that the colonial relationship with the British initially brought opportunities for local artists to gain higher education in art and deepen their knowledge. And later, the US and other European countries also became destinations for art studies. Those who had studied abroad returned to Malaysia and became lecturers in art courses or worked in positions responsible for developing the art scene, the museum, or art education. They also started to organize group shows by themselves and showed new tendencies in the Malaysian art scene.

In 1967, the *Grup* exhibition was held by seven artists; Ahmad Jamal, Abdul Latiff, Anthony Lau, Cheong Laitong, Ibrahim Hussein, Jolly Koh and Yeoh Jin Leng. In the exhibition, they introduced Abstract Expressionistic and Expressionistic art. Then, The New Scene exhibition in 1969 and *Experiment’ 70* exhibition were held, where participating artists such as Redza Piyadasa, Tan Teong Kooi, Tang Tuck Kang, Choong Kam Kow and Sulaiman Esa showed their works employing hard-edge, minimalism, constructive art. Since these forms and styles, abstract expressionism, hard-edge, minimalism, and constructive art, had been prevailing in the West at that time, the artists in these exhibitions adopted the new forms and styles and brought them back to the local art scene.

In 1972, Redza Piyadasa and Sulaiman Esa organized the two-man exhibition, *Dokumentasi’ 72* where they abandoned illusionistic devices and became involved with actual space, actual time and actual light. As an extension of *Dokumentasi*, they also held the two-man exhibition titled *Toward a Mystical Reality* in 1974. Inspired by Taoism and Zen, Sulaiman Esa and Redza Piyadasa simply situated objects that can be found in daily life. Through this exhibition, they criticized previous exhibitions such as *Grup* and *New Scene* in which artists showed the works employing Western art forms and styles, although they had also joined one of those exhibitions. According to Redza Piyadasa and Sulaiman Esa:

*The modern Asian artists have by and large opted for a scientific and rationalistic attitude and ignored the mystical religious considerations which helped produce the great artistic traditions of Asia in the past. Clearly, the dilemma of modern Asian art to a very large extent has been the inability of Asian artists to identify themselves with their own cultural and philosophical traditions and values.*

They rejected the art forms and styles developed in the West and employed the Eastern philosophy like Taoism and Zen. However, in terms of anti-formalism and the use of daily objects for conceptualizing the artist’s idea, their works in the exhibition seemed to have some similarities with conceptual art or Arte Povera that took place in the West from the mid 1960s to the 1970s. Rather, this exhibition might imply dual interpretations of Eastern and Western ideas.

Apart from those exhibitions, the informal artistic community called Anak Alam was formed for young artists, poets and thinkers in 1974. It was led by the artist and poet, Latiff Mohidin with Mustapa Ibrahim, Zulkifli Dahalan and others. In their 1974 manifesto, they called for a respectful and harmonious multicultural co-existence and celebrated nature and the artist’s imagination as states of purity and inner truth.

Lee Kian Seng and Nirmala Shanmughalingan are also important artists who brought new styles in the 1970s. Nirmala Shanmughalingan produced research-based works employing documentary photographs and newspaper articles and dealt with social issues like environmental problems or slum people in Malaysia. And Lee Kiang Seng is one of the pioneering artists who produced installation to Malaysia. Since the term “installation” was not yet common, it was called “mixed media” at that time.

**Exploring Cultural Identity**

Due to the racial riot on 13 May 1969 that caused great damage and left many victims, political and
cultural anxieties rose in Malaysian society. After the riots, the New Economic Policy was introduced and set Malay’s racial-preference policy called Bumiputra (Son of the Soil). Moreover, the National Cultural Congress convened at the University of Malaya in 1971 in order to discuss the grounds for the national culture. Consequently, three principles of the National Cultural Policies were set as follows:

1) The National Culture must be based on the indigenous culture of this region.

2) Suitable elements from the other cultures can be accepted as part of the National Culture.

3) Islam is an important component in molding the National Culture.

The need to set up this policy seems to indicate that there are no established or unified traditions and cultures in Malaysia. Since Malaysia is a multiethnic country consisting mainly of Malay, Chinese and Indian people, each ethnicity has its own tradition and culture. Actually, British colonialism comes into the background of this situation. During the British colonial rule, the British pursued a “divide and rule” policy whereby the different ethnic groups were systematically separated by a divisive network of vernacular language schools, making cultural interaction more difficult. That is why there is no established tradition and culture for a unified nation in Malaysia. The government therefore attempted to form the national culture through its Cultural policies.

After the Congress, it became important and significant for artists to search for a cultural identity. The artists directed their attention toward their own culture and tradition. Redza Piyadasa mentions that on another level, the self-conscious need to rediscover Malay and Islamic roots might be viewed as a belated research against the impact of Westernization and colonization. The need for many creative Malay intellectuals to rediscover their cultural values, forms and aesthetic principles was very real. In the visual arts, Malay artists began to incorporate influences derived from traditional architecture, woven and printed textiles, silverware and jewelry, folk art and Malay myths and legends.

In fact, through the Toward a Mystical Reality exhibition in 1974, Piyadasa and Suliman criticized the Western-centric notion of visual art. The exhibition was their reaction or response to the Congress. After this exhibition, Sulaiman Esa started to create works based on Islamic art and Piyadasa produced portraits of Malaysian people. Like them, many artists shifted their styles or subjects of work after the National Cultural Congress. It is clear that the Congress influenced some artists to search for their own styles.

Experimental Art and the Artist Initiative in the 1980s and the 1990s

In the late 1980s and the 1990s, experimental art employing media or performance and artist initiative groups became visible. This could be because equipment like video cameras or editing machines became available from the late 1980s (although they were still very expensive at that time) and young artists exposed to international art tendencies had increased. In the earlier art scene, most of the artists mounted a group show as a single event, but the younger artists became collective working together continuously and showing their works by themselves. I would like to introduce some of the examples.

In 1988, Ismail Zain’s solo exhibition called Digital Collage showed artworks of Macintosh-based digital prints, which heralded new media art in Malaysia. This exhibition inspired younger artists like Husnul Jamal Saidon who now leads the local new media scene by making and researching new media art, as well as curating exhibitions like the 1st Electronic Art Show at the National Art Gallery in 1997.

In the late 1980s, Tan Chin Kuan and Zulkifli Yusoff were awarded for their theatrical-stage installation art in the Young Contemporaries.
Exhibition. This marked a new wave of young generation artists. The activities of young artists became outstanding from around that time onward.

By collaborating with visual artists, Five Arts Center established around the mid 1980s showed experimental art mixed with dance, performance and artworks. Hong Hoy Cheong and Liew Kung Yu showed video installations combined with performance, which were presented by Five Arts Center around the early 1990s. Five Arts Center also presented “Skin Trilogy” and “Warbox, Lalang, Killing Tools” which showed installations, sculptures and paintings along with performance in the National Art Gallery. These cross-disciplinary collaborations created a distinctive and unique style.

In the 1990s, artists’ groups such as MATAHATI (eye of the heart) and Rumah Air Panas (house of hot spring) appeared and organized exhibitions and projects by themselves. MATAHATI consists of five artists – Bayu Utomo Radjikin, Ahmad Shukri Mohamed, Ahmad Fuad Osman, Hamir Soib @ Mohamed, and Masnoor Ramli Mahmud who were students of University Technology MARA, which was founded in 1989. And Rumah Air Panas formed by several artists like Chuah Chong Yong and Phuan Thai Meng was initially an independent artist-run space with studios and venues for exhibitions, talks, music concerts and projects. Now it is known as the Rumah Air Panas Art Society without the space and keeps activities as a loose and organic artist group. Since 2000, artists’ groups have increased and they work as a collective, as well as independent artists by supporting each other.

Thailand
Silpa Bhirasri & Silpakorn University

The School of Fine Arts (Rongrien Pranotsilpakam) was founded in Thailand in 1933, with the Italian sculptor Corrado Feroci (who later took the Thai name Silpa Bhirasri) as the first principal and in the following year, a constitutional monarchy was established in the wake of a coup d’etat, marking the start of the modern Thai state.22 Behind the establishment of the School of Fine Arts, the government-commissioned works to produce memorial sculptures increased and the need to train local artists was identified to meet the demand, along with modernization and the promotion of cultural nationalism. In 1943, the School of Fine Arts was upgraded to the status of the university, called Silpakorn University. It is important and necessary to mention Silpa Bhirasri, who initially came to Thailand to train craftsmen and artists to work for the government and later devoted himself to art education in Silpakorn University, in order to understand visual arts in Thailand. Considering his contribution and influence, I would like to mention Silpakorn University specifically.

Silpakorn University started with only one faculty, the Faculty of Painting and Sculpture and Silpa Bhirasri became both its inaugural Dean and Director of the teaching program. He adopted the Western-style curriculum in which students study art history and anatomy for drawing. Since most of the Thai pioneering artists learned from Silpa Bhirasri, he is regarded as “the father of modern art” in Thailand. There is no doubt that he built up a foundation for fine art in Thailand. His ideas about art influenced his students. Silpa Bhirasri discusses modern art below:

Modern art was born from scientific discoveries, from knowledge and education, and principally from the reciprocal influence of ideas and arts of all the races of the world. Asia and Europe, America, Africa and Australia, all these cultures fused together in creating the new artistic expression. There should be no prejudice against it, since it does not represent any particular race. Indeed, modern art has no national style; it is the individual expression of the artist, and it will impress his work with the peculiarities of his race. An Indian will always think as an Indian, a Thai as a Thai, an Italian as an Italian and so on. We may all speak the same language but the thought will always be individual.23

While he considers modern art as fused expression of other cultures, he promotes vernacular culture that can infuse works with artistic individuality or originality. Indeed, he introduced both Western
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and Eastern art styles in his textbook titled A Bare Outline of History and Styles of Art (1959) as well as his books called History of Art: Chinese, Japanese, Oceanic and Australian, Old America, Africa & Technique (1965), An Appreciation of Sukhothai Art (1962) is about Thai traditional art.

Through his teaching and writings, he encourages students to learn not only Western art, but also Thai traditional art and other cultures. He also emphasizes the importance of academic trainings to gain a sound foundation in order to express the artist’s individuality:

Once the young student has finished his art training he may express himself better in whatever style he likes because it becomes a personal matter and each artist has the right to express himself individually.24

Silpa Bhirasri respects individual expression or the individualism of each artist. His attitude toward art has been established in Silpakorn University where students gain a sound foundation for making artworks.

Furthermore, Silpa Bhirasri initiated the 1st National Exhibition of Art to develop the local art scene and to promote understanding of visual art to the public in 1949. This exhibition first organized by Silpakorn University has continued to be a gateway to success for artists’ careers until today. It was not until the 1980s that other universities where students can study fine art appeared. Therefore, Silpakorn University has played an important role in forming and developing visual art in Thailand.

Art for Art’s Sake and Art for Life and People

During the Vietnamese War, the US army was stationed in Thailand, to which it brought foreign exchange. Under the circumstances, many commercial galleries such as Bangkapi Gallery and the Fine Arts Gallery appeared and so the business went well in the 1960s. Around the same time, artists who studied abroad returned to Thailand and brought new forms like abstract and semi-abstract paintings to the local art scene. While some artists pursued the new forms that were considered as art for art’s sake, other artists appealed to art for life and people movement initially triggered by the Vietnamese War. In the 1970s, this tendency of art for life and people expanded because of the unstable political situation and increasing poverty in the villages.

In 1973, pro-democracy students protested against the military government and it was overthrown. But, in 1976, the military reassumed power with bloodshed. Inspired by the publication of Chit Phumisak’s (1933-66), Art for Life and Art for the People (1957), some artists produced works for the people and for their lives. It became a movement called Artists’ Front of Thailand that initially protested against the Vietnamese War and later supported the Thai students’ protest against the military government. Kamchorn Soonponsri, who joined the movement, mentions that the Thai people did not have freedom under the dictatorship at that time and the people’s situation was expressed in artworks.25 The Dharma Group founded by Pratuang Emjaroen in 1971 also expressed its views about the unstable social conditions.

In 1979, artists such as Kamchorn Soonponsri, Pratuang Emjaroen, and Sompote Upa-in organized Art Exhibition of Thailand, which was open to all artists regardless of their age and education. This meant that any artist who wanted to show his works could participate in the exhibition without any screening. This exhibition was held in opposition to the National Exhibition of Art, where most of the participating artists were from Silpakorn University and pursued formalism. On the other hand, the works in the Art Exhibition of Thailand depicted the poverty of the people and labor exploitations. This exhibition was held in five locations including Bangkok and other provinces. Since the art scene was centered in Bangkok at that time, it was meaningful that the exhibition provided an opportunity for artists to show their works as well as for the local people to see artworks. While the National Exhibition of Art presents “art for art’s sake” or academic art that is supported by Silpakorn University, the Art Exhibition of Thailand shows “art for life and the people”. It should also be mentioned that a number of
artists have produced artworks inspired by Thai traditional art, local culture and the Buddhist philosophy. In particular, after the Department of Thai Art in which students study Thai traditional paintings was formed at Silpakorn University in 1976, artists like Panya Vijinthanasarn have been developing neo-traditional styles of Thai painting.

**Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art and support by the private sectors**

In Thailand, university-level art education was set in 1943, but it was not until 1974 that an art institution for the display of Thai art appeared. Carrying out the late Silpa Bhirasri’s wish, the Silpa Bhirasri Foundation was formed in 1963 to establish a non-profit art gallery in Bangkok. It was a private foundation consisting of his friends, colleagues, former students and art lovers. As part of the fund-raising campaign, the foundation organized the 1st International Art Exhibition at the National Theatre in 1965 and Thai artists and foreign embassies donated their works for selling. As the result of donations and efforts of the foundation, the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art was established near South Sathorn Road in 1974. The building was newly built with facilities including temporary and permanent exhibition rooms, an auditorium and a library. The institute aimed to encourage patronage of art and promote contemporary art in Thailand with a distinctive character of its own. It provided opportunities for local artists to present their works and exchange ideas among themselves. Moreover, in cooperation with foreign cultural organizations like Goethe Institute, the institute showed exhibitions of German, British and Japanese artists. The institute hoped to close the gap between art and the people of Thailand through programs that attempted to spread knowledge and appreciation of art. For the public, therefore, the institute organized not only exhibitions, but also music concerts, film screenings, theater plays, workshops, art classes and lectures.

In 1979, the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art co-organized the Contemporary Art Exhibition with the support of Thai Farmers Bank and the International Association of Art (IAA) to promote contemporary art in Thailand. The institute also presented the Bua Luang Painting Competition for Thai traditional paintings and contemporary art, which was sponsored by the Bangkok Bank. Thus, art competitions sponsored by private corporations have increased since the 1970s. Since most of them acquired works through competitions, the private corporations became not only good sponsors but also collectors of Thai art. By co-organizing and providing venues for the competitions, the institute fulfilled its role to encourage as a patron of the arts.

In the 1980s, the institute’s director, Chatvichai Promadhattavedi and assistant director/artist Chumpon Apisuk organized a series of events called “Wethi-Samai”, an experimental theater and art workshop where artists exchanged their ideas on art, drama, poetry and music. The institute became a place to show new ideas and styles like video art, performance, happenings and installations by Thai artists such as Chumpon Apisuk, Kamol Phaosavasdi, Apinan Poshayananda and others.

The Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art played an important role not only in promoting Thai and foreign art, but also in stimulating artists by showing cross-disciplinary events like “Wethi-Samai” and experimental arts such as performance installations or happenings. Unfortunately, however, the institute was closed down in 1988 because the principal donor, Princess Pantip Chumbhot, passed away. Actually, because it was run by a private foundation, the institute experienced financial problems from the very beginning. Its closure caused disappointment and despondence among artists and the people related to the institute. But it also led to a campaign for the establishment of a new art center, which started in 1995. As a result of the campaign, the Bangkok Arts and Cultural Center (BACC) was established near Siam Square in 2008. Having learning from the experiences of the Institute, BACC now obtains funding from the public and the private sectors to ensure stable revenue sources. BACC also organizes not only Thai and foreign art exhibitions, but also workshops, talks and screenings. It has become an important center for the Thai art scene and the public.
The National Gallery, Bangkok was established in 1977, which was later than the opening of the Institute. It has acquired Thai artworks and presented mainly local art exhibitions including solo, group and retrospective shows of important artists. Although the gallery is funded by the government, it may need to be improved in terms of the facility and the number of its staff. In Thailand, it seems that the private sector is more enthusiastic about promoting Thai art.

Social Involvement in the 1990s

Like in Malaysia, artists in Thailand exposed to international art tendencies increased in number starting in the 1990s. Some artists produced artworks related to the environment and social involvement and showed them outside the gallery space. I would like to introduce some of these examples.

In 1990, a workshop jointly organized by Silpakorn University and Goethe-Institute Bangkok debated artistic approaches and responses to the environment. An outcome of the workshop, an exhibition titled *Art and Environment*, was held in 1991. Participating artists like Kamol Phaosavadi, Vichoke Mukdamane, Pinaree Sanpitak, and Surasi Kusolwong had explored and developed their styles concerning their own surroundings.

By using natural objects and local materials like clays, woods or pots, Montien Boonma who was a teacher in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University produced works reflecting his ideas from the various ways of life. His works and ideas stimulated many students. Since the 1990s, the art scene centered in Bangkok also extended across Chiang Mai. In 1992, a landmark project called the *Chiang Mai Social Installation* was initiated by Navin Rawanchaikul, Kosit Juntaratip, Uthit Atimana, and Mit Jai Inn who were then art students and teachers in Chiang Mai University. In the annual project that took place until 1998, artworks were displayed in temples, cemeteries, sidewalks and other places in town so that local people could easily see them. In 1992, another project called the Land Project was initiated by Rikrit Tiravanija and Kamin Lertchaiprasert in Chiang Mai. This was an experimental project intended to cultivate rice fields and build houses by involving artists and local people. Through these artists and projects, Chiang Mai gained international attention for its participatory art whereby the people and the local community were involved in the process of project or art-making.

In Bangkok, there are also socially engaged projects. For example, in 1996, by involving the community, Manit Sriwanichpoom organized a site-specific exhibition in deserted shop houses near Huay Kwang - Ratdada. Then, in 1998, Jakapan Vilasineekul curated the Book exhibition with other artists in a closed publishing house in which had been printed the first school textbooks in Thailand. The importance of the building for Thai education history became known in the community through the exhibition.

Comparing the Colonized and the Non-colonized countries

By looking at the shifting phases of art scenes in Malaysia and Thailand and comparing these countries, the similarities and the differences between the colonized and the non-colonized countries can be seen.

In both Malaysia and Thailand, mainstream art was constructed through art institutions in the past. While many artists adopted Western art through modernization or by studying abroad, they explored their own expressions, ideas, or identity by reflecting their society, politics, history and daily lives in their work. Younger artists are now actively looking for opportunities to show their works by initiating projects and exhibitions even outside galleries and museums, or by making alternative art spaces. Lately, a wider range of mediums and styles such as installation, video art, and participatory art are getting more popular and common in each country. While these similarities could be seen, there are differences in terms of art institutions and systems as well as in attitudes toward art.

Due to the British colonial policy, the arts had little or no role to play in the Malaysian educational system up to the Second World War, which fact could have led to less attention's
being paid to the foundation of fine art courses and schools, even after the Independence was achieved. On the other hand, however, the colonial administration provided opportunities to study art in the UK and supported the formation of the Arts Council which, in turn, led to the establishment of the National Art Gallery the year after the Independence was attained. It was because the NAG was expected to form Malaysian art through exhibitions and collections in recognition of the new nation. Later on, because of the racial riots, the National Cultural Policies were set and artists were encouraged to create artworks based on the vernacular culture. While artists learned styles and ideas from Western art, they also tried to resist or react against Western-centric art values. Because of their colonial experience, artists seem to have complicated feelings, mixed with positive and negative attitudes toward the West. Because of the absence of Malaysian identity, the government attempted to form one as symbolizing the unified nation through the NAG and cultural policies. But if the NAG and the cultural policies emphasized the national art and culture too much, it could become a burden for artists who then had to represent or be concerned about national art or the Malaysian identity, rather than merely pursue individual expressions and creativities.

Compared with Malaysia, it was not an urgent requirement to form national art by establishing an art museum in Thailand. This could be partly because Thai traditional art was readily recognizable. Rather, in Thailand, artists or craftsmen were needed to work on governmental commissioned works. To meet the need, the School of Fine Arts was formed in 1934 and later became the Silpakorn University in 1943. Through the efforts and contributions of Silpa Bhirasri, university-level art education has been offered since then. While the art school was set up in the early period, it was in 1977 that the National Gallery was formed by the government. Before that, the need to establish a gallery or museum was brought up by the people. Consequently, the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art was established by a private foundation. But the fact that this first art institution was closed and abandoned implies the weakness of the foundation for the museum system in Thailand.

While Silpa Bhirasri adopted Western-style art education, he showed his attitude of respecting Thai traditional art, as well as encouraged his students to pursue individual expression and creativity. Unlike Malaysian artists, Thai artists, who were without complicated feelings about the West, could pursue their individual expressions and originality and consider the Thai identity and Western art in their work.

Conclusion

Whether the country was colonized or not, it had advantages and disadvantages in terms of founding art institutions or art education. Actually, the development of the art scenes is related to art systems and institutions as well as to social and political situations. As can be gleaned in the art system, institution and education were not sufficient until around the 1970s in Malaysia and Thailand. It could also be said that art criticism and history were not enough discussed enough at that time. Although the art history of each country has been developed, there are still a limited number of researchers. While increasing the visibility of contemporary Asian art in the global art world, the discussion and debate on art history and scenes in the past are limited to the local scene and hardly produced outside Asia. Given that contemporary art has progressed and evolved from previous artworks or movements, the discussion and debate should have increased at the global level. It is also important and inevitable to re-examine the West-centric art value in order to fairly evaluate contemporary and modern Asian art.

NOTES


4 Ibid.
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REFERENCES


Image and Identity: A Study on the Images of the Virgin Mary Clad in a Local Dress in the Philippines

Yuria Furusawa

Introduction

This art historical and iconographical study on the images of the Virgin Mary dressed in a local or ethnic dress in the Philippines forms part of a comparative study on the images of Mary in Asia. It explores the multilayered culture and identities of individuals and societies in the Philippines through the creation and the meaning of such images found in modern and contemporary art, and in popular religious images in the 20th to the 21st centuries.

Studying images of Mary in an Asian dress could help us understand “changing identities and their social, historical and cultural contexts”, which is the API theme for the year 2011-2012, because a dress shows the wearer’s identity, and the traditional or national costume especially represents the tradition and uniqueness of a culture or a country. Also, faith and devotion expressed through religious images form part of the culture and the people’s identity. This study hopes to cast new light on Christian iconography in Asia for a multilateral understanding of localization and contextualization.

Methodology

This research was done under the API Fellowships Program granted to the author by The Nippon Foundation. The research period spanned a total of eight months or from October 2011 to May 2012, during which the author conducted field research in the Philippines as a visiting research associate (VRA) at the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) of the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) in Quezon City, Metro Manila. During the fellowship period, the author was mainly based in Manila, but went on several research trips to other regions including Palawan, Iloilo, Guimaras, Negros Occidental, Bohol, and Cebu.

The study was carried out using three methods: library research of literature on related themes, and of historical or contemporary documents on religious art and the images of Mary; observation and documentation of art works and religious images in museums and churches; and interviews of individuals such as artists, researchers, religious leaders, and devotees. These interviews were conducted in English, which is widely spoken in the country.

The objects of the research were images of Mary among Christian lowlanders of the Philippines, including art works housed in museums, and devotional images enshrined in churches.

Backgrounds

First of all, who is Mary? The mother of Jesus Christ, she lived in Palestine 2000 years ago. Ever since the early days of Christianity she has been venerated. Many of her images were created across the history of Western visual art, among them beautiful Madonna by Renaissance masters and exquisite Byzantine icons. The Western iconography of Mary has become so familiar and universal that we no longer even think that these are the images of Mary interpreted and expressed in a particular culture and time or that they are her Europeanized images.

Now, what are the images of Mary in a local dress in Asia like? The images of Mary expressed in religious art (paintings, sculptures etc.) as a local woman in a local dress are found in many countries/regions of Asia including the Philippines, Japan, China, Korea, and Vietnam, especially in modern times. Before modern times, there had been localized images of Mary. In Japan, for example, sacred images of crypto-Christians (Christians in hiding during times of persecution) were localized due to their lack of knowledge on iconography and their need to disguise their faith. But the reason and
idea behind localization in modern times seem to be different from the pre-modern cases.

The localized features of each image of Mary have a different background. For example, Our Lady of Lavang from Vietnam, venerated since her apparition in 1798, began to be rendered as a Vietnamese lady in a local dress (áo dài) in 1998, to reflect the people’s consciousness of their ethnic identity and the yearning of Vietnamese Catholics in the US to integrate Vietnamese ethnicity into Catholicism (Ninh 2011). On the other hand, the Japanese style paintings of the Madonna and Child dressed in kimono painted in a Carmelite monastery in Tokyo started out as a painting on thank you cards for foreigners who had helped the monastery soon after World War II (Vita Cattolica 2006). An element of self-orientalist motive can be seen in this. In both cases, the relationship between the creators of the image and the other seems to have played a certain role in the localization of the Marian image.

Why a local dress? This could be because a national or ethnic dress is considered as the representation of cultural identity in the modern nation state. The national dress is usually re-created at the time of the birth of the modern nation state, as a symbol of the authenticity of its tradition and culture. And, often, images of a woman wearing an ethnic dress function as the symbol of tradition or the metaphor of a nation. This is true in the Philippines (Roces 2008).

Still, in most cases, the identity and culture represented in an ethnic costume are not “pure” in the essentialist sense but rather, are “hybrid”. This is typically true of the Philippine lowlanders’ dress which has developed over time to reflect many cultural elements like pre-colonial Malay traditions, and colonial and Western influences (Capistrano-Baker 2009). The traditional women’s dress of the lowland Filipinos is called *baro't saya* which consists of *baro*, a short blouse with wide sleeves made with a thin fabric and often embroidered, and *saya*, a long skirt, often accompanied with a *tapis*, a wrap-around over-skirt, and a shawl, known locally as a *painelo* or *alampay*. Another type of dress in the Philippines is the *terno*, a one-piece long dress with distinctive decorative sleeves called “butterfly” sleeves. The men’s national costume is the *barong tagalog*, a long-sleeved shirt made out of a thin fabric crafted from pineapple fiber called *piña*. The *barong tagalog* usually has embroidery in the front.

Various previous studies on Mary in the Philippines have been made. One is “Mary in the Philippines” (L. Santos 1982) which documents aspects of the Marian devotion in the Philippines. It features many images and stories including localized images such as the *Virgin of the Barangay*, and localized Madonna made by modern and contemporary artists. Another study is “Ynang Maria: A Celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Philippines” (Barcelona and Estepa 2004), which features the 36 titles of Mary venerated in the Philippines. It defines her as “*Yna***” (Mother) based on the strongly maternal orientation of Philippine culture.

On the other hand, feminist scholars like Flaudette May Datuin (2012) argue that in the Philippines, the image of the Virgin has served as a symbol of patriarchal control of the woman’s body, whereby women are put in their place as mother and as virgin. Datuin (2009), a feminist art historian, specifically refers to localized Madonna painted by male artists and says “Ocampo’s Brown Madonna wears a perpetual, Kodak moment smile, festooned with the signature *baro at saya* attire of the pristine virgins or dalagas of an idyllic, timeless countryside. She is the ideal Filipina—ever fragile but with a healthy, rustic tan, virginal, virtuous and confineable within a domestic, asexual space of contented motherhood”. She also wrote that “the emblematically clothed Filipina Mother is permanently dressed in Culture, wearing ornaments and clothes of stereotypes that transcend history”.

At the same time, of course, there are empowering elements of Mary. Sr. Mary John Mananzan (2012), a Filipino Catholic activist, said “Feminist theologians have re-interpreted the role of Mary. They take Mary as an example of a strong woman and mother who can be the model of modern Filipino women in courage and service to people. Her song ‘Magnificat’
is a freedom song that can be the inspiration for women and men who struggle with the poor and against the oppression and injustice of those in power”. To her, Mary is “a simple, ordinary woman with whom ordinary women can identify in all the aspects of their lives”.

History of Marian Images and Devotions in the Philippines

Before we look into the localized images, let us review the background and history of images of Mary and Marian devotions in the Philippines, the land known as pueblo amante de maría (a people in love with Mary).

Christian faith was first preached in the Philippines in 1521 when Ferdinand Magellan (1480-1521) landed on the archipelago, planted a cross, had a mass offered, and converted the local people. After Miguel Lopez de Legazpi (1505-1572) conquered Cebu and built the foundation for the colonization of the Philippines by Spain in 1565, Spanish friars converted the lowlanders to Christianity. Now, about 83% of the population is Catholic and the devotion to Mary is very popular.

The oldest image of Mary in the Philippines is believed to be that of the Nuestra Señora de Guía (Our Lady of Guidance) enshrined in Ermita church, Manila. Legend has it that a soldier of Legazpi found it along the shore of Ermita in 1571, soon after the conquest of Manila. The image was said to have been on a pandan tree where it was venerated by the local people, which means, it had been there, venerated by the people, even before the coming of the Spaniards (R. Santos 1994). There are several other theories about the origin of this image, with some claiming it to be of oriental origin.

Thereafter, many images of saints including Mary were brought from Europe or Latin America, or were made locally. One of the early documents narrates that the missionaries had Chinese painters paint images and “…thus almost all the churches in the islands were adorned with images, nearly all of which were of Mother of God” (Chirino 1604).

The author would like to suggest that the iconography of the images of Mary venerated in the Philippines today can be generally classified according to their origin and style, as follows. It is important to note that there are so many images of Mary under different titles that it might seem as if there were many Virgins, when, in fact, they are all the same person, though in different dresses and bearing different names.

Images in Spanish style

Most of the images made during the colonial period are in the Spanish style, particularly the Ibero-Baroque style of the 17th century. Many of them have a distinctive triangular silhouette garment (Fig. 1). Zobel (1963) classified the Philippine colonial santos (images of saints) into the popular, classical, and ornate styles.

The Spanish style images may have different origins.

a) Images brought from Spain during the colonial era.

For example, the image of the Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados (Our Lady of the Abandoned) in Sta. Ana, Manila, is a replica of the original statue in Valencia. It was blessed by contact with the original statue before being brought to the Philippines in 1717 (Laya 2008).

b) Images brought from Latin America

Some images in the Spanish style were made...
in Spanish Latin America during the colonial period and then brought to the Philippines. For example, the *Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje* (Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage) in Antipolo, Rizal, was made in Mexico. It traveled in a galleon over the Pacific Ocean between Manila and Mexico, during the 17th to 18th centuries (Mercado 1980).

c) Images made locally
Some images were made in the Philippines by local artisans who followed the instructions of friars. While these were done in the Spanish style, some local elements were evident in them. For example, the statue of Our Lady of the Rosary, popularly known as La Naval de Manila and enshrined in Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon City, was done by a Chinese Filipino ivory carver and has some oriental elements (Jose 2007).

Images of Mary of Apparitions

Images of Mary of Apparitions which surfaced from the 19th to 20th century in Europe are now venerated not only in Europe but also worldwide, including the Philippines. This group of images includes those of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (France, 1830), Our Lady of Lourdes (France, 1858) (Fig. 2), Our Lady of Fatima (Portugal, 1917), The Lady of All Nations (Netherland, 1945), etc.

Various images newly introduced to the Philippines

There are some images newly introduced to the Philippines though they have had a long history of veneration in their countries of origin. Typical of this is the Mother of Perpetual Help, which is the most popular Marian devotion in the Philippines today. In many places we can see reproductions of this image, which is a Byzantine style icon of Mary holding the Child Jesus. The image’s wide and enthusiastic popularity continues till today, although the Redemptorist fathers are said to have first introduced it to the Philippines in the early 20th century. The practice of the novena (nine-day prayer) to the Mother of Perpetual Help started in the late 1940s (Hechanova 1998).

Images originated in the Philippines

There are images of Mary that originated in the Philippines. These include the Queen of Peace of the EDSA Shrine in Metro Manila, and the Mary Mediatrix of All Grace in Lipa City, Batangas. “Queen of Peace” is one of the universal titles of Mary, but the Queen of Peace at the EDSA Shrine is closely associated with the political and historical memory of the People Power revolution of 1986. The image of Mary Mediatrix of All Grace is based on an apparition of Mary that occurred in 1947 to a Carmelite novice in Lipa. While these two images do not necessarily look Filipino, their origin is local. Images of Mary in a local dress, which we will see in the next section, also fall under this category.

Others

Images of Mary in a local dress in the Philippines

Compared to images of Mary of European-origin, there are not too many localized images of Mary. For example, during the 2011 Grand Marian Procession, an annual Marian feast held in Intramuros, Manila, only one image among 89 floats, each carrying an image of Mary under a different title, was in a local dress.
The tradition of Western-origin iconography remains very strong, so much so that it is hard for most people to imagine Mary’s devotional images in churches and altars to have local features. This is true even if there are more localized non-devotional Christian images such as the nativity scene in Christmas cards, or Madonna and Child themes presented as artistic expressions.

Notwithstanding this seeming scarcity, the author was able to encounter several localized images. Here we focus on and discuss five distinctive images out of those.

(i) Virgen sa Balintawak (Virgin of Balintawak)

The first image of the Virgin in a Philippine dress was most likely that of Virgen sa Balintawak of the Philippine Independent Church in 1924 (Fig. 3). It is a statue of the Virgin wearing a balintawak dress. The Philippine Independent Church is a Christian sect that became independent of the Catholic Church in 1902. It was then led by Gregorio Aglipay.

According to legend, Virgen sa Balintawak first appeared in a dream of one of the Katipuneros (members of the revolutionary society Katipunan) staying in a place called Balintawak during the time of the revolution against Spain in the 1890s. In the dream, the virgin was with a child Katipunero, who stood beside her shouting “Freedom! Freedom!” while carrying a bolo or a sword in his hand. The virgin supposedly gave a warning to the dreamer to the effect that they act with caution; the Katipuneros’ eventual decision of staying longer in Balintawak saved them from arrest in Manila. The title “Balintawak” here stands for both the name of the dress the virgin is wearing and the place where she appeared in a dream.

This statue was installed in Maria Clara Church in Sampaloc, Manila in 1924. Aglipay (1925) wrote that “The Virgin at Balintawak is the mother country”, while the child Katipunero represented the people anxious for the freedom. During that time, the Philippines was under American rule and the people were prohibited from displaying the national flag and talking about independence. They were able to do that only in churches, largely because of the separation of Church and state. The shape of the halo of the Virgin of Balintawak is reminiscent of the rays of the sun in the Philippine flag.

The devotion and novena to the Virgen sa Balintawak were popular from the 1920s to the 1940s but after the war, they became less popular as the Church became less nationalistic. According to a devotee, Leo Albano (2012), who is a member of the Philippine Independent Church, however, the Virgin’s message remains relevant today. For while the Philippines is no longer under foreign rule, there still are suppressions within the nation. He says that the Virgen sa Balintawak’s message is this: “You won’t be suppressed forever”. She supposedly promised freedom from all kinds of suppression which the Filipino people and society face until today.

(ii) Brown Madonna by Galo B. Ocampo

The first localized image of Mary in the Philippines by a Catholic artist is a painting titled Brown Madonna (Fig. 4). Done by modernist Galo B. Ocampo in 1938, it is now housed in the UST Museum of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. In this painting, the Madonna and the Child, depicted
Ocampo’s Brown Madonna is significant not only as one of the earliest localizations of the image of Mary, but also as one of the important pieces in Philippine modern art. After Ocampo’s painting became known, many modern artists painted their versions of local Madonnas, producing such works as Madonna of the Well (H. R. Ocampo 1939), Madonna of the Slums (Vicente Manansala 1950) and Madonna of the Bamboos (Carlos Francisco 1962).

(iii) Virgen sang Barangay (Virgin of the Barangay)

The original image of the localized Virgin called Virgen sang Barangay (VSB) is enshrined in the National Shrine of Virgen sang Barangay in Silay City, Negros Occidental. It was conceptualized by Antonio Gaston, the mayor of Silay City and the founder of the Barangay sang Virgen (BSV) Organization. He wanted to have an image of Mary as the patroness of the organization, but he had a hard time finding an appropriate image. Finally, in 1954, a painting done by a leprous painter in the Sta. Barbara leprosarium in Iloilo was approved. A barangay, which is the Filipino term for a village or town, is the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines. The Barangay sang Virgen is a rosary movement whose activities are based in barangays. The organization seeks to spread Christian values through the rosary devotion to Mary.

In the Virgen sang Barangay painting, Mary is carrying the Child Jesus who is holding a rosary. The background of the painting consists of the sky at dawn, the sea, and the coastline with woods in the background. On the foreground are the seashore and nipa huts. Mary is wearing a white veil, a white blouse (baro) with butterfly sleeves, a long white skirt (saya), and a red and yellow striped overskirt (tapis) (Fig. 5). Each motif in the painting stands for something. For instance, the colors red and yellow in Mary’s over-skirt symbolize the Spanish flag, because it was Spain that evangelized the Philippines. The rock at the foot of the Virgin symbolizes the firm faith of the Filipino people; whereas the sampaguita (jasmine), a fragrant white flower, is the national flower of the Philippines (Barangay sang Virgen 1999).

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The devotion to the *Virgen sang Barangay* spread with the rosary movement and is popular especially in the Visayas region. Replicas of the original painting and statues based on the image are popularly venerated in many places like churches or home altars. Many stories of miracles including healing from illnesses or protection from accidents have been attributed to the Virgin's intercession (Infante 2012, Fernandez 2012). This indicates how people seek and find answers to both their physical and spiritual needs from her.

(iv) Our Lady of the Philippines

There are three images of Mary under the title, Our Lady of the Philippines (OLP).

Our Lady of the Philippines first appeared as the titular saint of the Trappist monastery in Guimaras. The first image was made in Spain and brought by American priests to the island, when they established the monastery in 1972. This first image was not that of a Filipina. Then in 1997, Fr. Filomeno Cinco, Filipino abbot of the monastery, conceptualized a localized version. He asked an *Ati* (indigenous people) craftsman from Guimaras to make a statue using local materials such as coconut shells and wood, and told him to visualize “what a Filipina mother should be”. The face of OLP now depicts an Ati lady, but the dress is not Filipino (Fig. 6). According to Cinco (2012), the idea behind Filipinizing the Mother Mary is this: “Mary is for all. She belongs to all of us. She is the mother of us all. It is important especially in this age of globalization, the people can identify with the images of Mary”.

Another newly localized version of Our Lady of the Philippines came into being in 2004 in Manila (Fig. 7). The original painting of Our Lady was commissioned by a pious devotee, who wished to be known only as “The Pilgrim”. The 2004 work was done by artist Caloy Gabuco. The image was approved by the cardinal/archbishop of Manila, and an enlarged mural was officially installed in the Sta. Potenciana chapel at the Manila Cathedral in May 2011.

The Pilgrim’s version of Our Lady of the Philippines shows a young Filipina mother standing, while holding her child. She wears an embroidered white blouse (*baro*) and skirt (*saya*) with a colorful striped over-skirt (*tapis*). Unlike many of the conventional images of Mary, she does not have accessories—no crown, no veil, no golden halo. The image projects simplicity and intimacy.

![Figure 6 An Ati craftsman, Our Lady of the Philippines, 1997, coconut shell and wood, Our Lady of the Philippines Trappist Abbey, Guimaras](image-url)
According to The Pilgrim, the messages of Our Lady of the Philippines focus on the regeneration of the Filipino people and the protection of the environment.

The Pilgrim is deeply concerned about social issues such as political corruption and environmental destruction, and wishes to make people conscious of these concerns through a devotion to Our Lady. That she is for the Filipino people is depicted by the colors of her over-skirt, which are those of the Philippine flag (white, red, yellow and blue). The Pilgrim and his son (2012) are promoting the devotion of Our Lady of the Philippines but it has yet to become widespread.

(v) “Filipina Madonna” series

A series of paintings of the Filipinized Mary has been produced by the Society of St. Paul in Makati, Metro Manila. These were painted by Fr. Armand Tangi, the society’s art director, who studied Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines. In the painting Queen of Apostles from the series, Mary is wearing a white translucent Filipino blouse with distinctive butterfly sleeves that make the image look Filipino (Fig. 8). But at the same time, the image itself of Mary holding the Child Jesus who has a scroll of the Good News, is based on the traditional iconography of the “Queen of the Apostles”.

Conclusions

From the findings above, we can say the following about the images of Mary in a local dress in the Philippines:

i) They were found only after the early 20th century, despite the long tradition of the Marian devotion in the country, which dates back to the late 16th century. This late development is probably because of the fact that the Filipinos’ awareness of their cultural identity and Filipino cultural value gained ground only after they strove for independence at the end of the 19th century. In the case of the Filipino Catholics, the Church’s favorable attitude towards localization in modern times may also have played a role in the Filipinization of images of the Virgin Mary.

ii) The localized images of the Virgin Mary are associated with the freedom and protection of the Filipino people, from the current conditions of suppression and social difficulties. These are particularly evident in Virgen sa Balintawak and The Pilgrim’s version of Our Lady of the Philippines.
Panel 3

iii) The localized images are associated with the maternal love and the ideal mother realities in the Filipino culture, as seen in Fr. Cinco’s version of Our Lady of the Philippines and Fr. Tangi’s Filipina Madonna series.

iv) They are mostly expressions by Filipinos for the Filipinos themselves, rather than reactions to the eye of exoticism from the other, i.e. self-orientalism.

v) They are not meant to replace other images (Western images) of Mary. The people’s understanding is that the Filipinized Mary is the same person as its Western counterpart, except that it is differently clad. For example, Catholics who are devotees of the Virgin in a local dress are also often devoted to other titles of Mary such as Our Lady of Fatima, which is not a Filipinized image.

As we have seen above, this study collected information and data of images of Mary in a local dress in the Philippines, and has tried to discuss them in the context of localization and identity. It is hoped that this study lays the groundwork for further research and analysis in a broader light, to consider the localization of images of Mary not as something merely exotic and strange to the eye which is so used to Western iconography, but as expressions of a people’s yearning for freedom and salvation through spontaneous expressions of identity and cultural values embodied in the Virgin Mary whom devotees regard as the mother of all nations who identifies with the people.

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Introduction

The tension between reality and construction has always been central to practitioners of documentary filmmaking right from the start. Documentary was first defined in 1929 as the “creative treatment of actuality” by the “father” of the documentary, John Grierson; since then, influential avant-garde filmmakers around the world have offered creative treatments of experience (Grierson 1933).

By 1990, the work of filmmakers from diverse cultural backgrounds in which the representation of the historical world was inextricably bound with self-inscription gained prominence. In these films, subjectivity serves as “the filter through which the Real enters discourse as well as a kind of experiential compass guiding the work toward its goal as embodied knowledge”, (Renov 2004, 176).

Together with this trend, various Western film scholars wrote extensively around the objectivity in documentaries: Bill Nichols (1994) discussed the “blurred boundaries” between fiction and non-fiction in films; Michael Renov (2004) argued for a heightened role and function of subjectivity in contemporary documentary practice; Catherine Russell (1999) broke down inherited genre distinctions, allowing for the consideration of “experimental” films, “ethnographic” films, “documentaries”, and “video art”, within the same critical framework.

For their part, Asian films and filmmakers have been largely absent in such film theories and histories. In Asia, there has not been much academic attention to explore this potent interplay between documentary, visual anthropology, and the avant-garde, which can arguably become a solution to the “crisis of representation” of cultures and the world’s history.

While conducting research in Japan and Thailand in 2011-2012, I came across a number of films and filmmakers who have made important contributions to both documentary and experimental film histories. They used innovative forms to blur boundaries and challenged the definitions and aesthetics of documentary films as well as addressing social issues.

I am particularly interested in films where an individual subjectivity collides with larger social and political issues; those that relate objective events from a subjective point of view; in ways where reality and fiction negotiate; and where documentary and avant-garde filmmaking converge. These kinds of films can perhaps be called broadly called “experimental documentary” (with the formulation of “critical subjective-ness”).

This paper consists of two sections: (1) my survey of filmmakers who consistently work in the gray areas between documentary and avant-garde filmmaking in Japan and Thailand; and (2) a description of the two experimental non-fiction films that I made with footage I shot of everyday life in Japan and Thailand, respectively.

Findings

JAPAN

Among Asian countries—where until recently documentary filmmaking was largely the domain of central governments—Japan is exceptional for the vigor of its nonfiction film industry. Documentaries came to the fore of film history in Japan as early as in the sixties, with pioneering activities of independent documentarists. While Ogawa Shinsuke and Tsuchimoto Noriaki—the “two figures [that] tower over the landscape of Japanese documentary”—took the “history written in bold” (challenging state and corporate crimes) as their subject matter and fixed their eyes on the “extraordinary”, from the 1970s, we’ve also seen directors who made films about the “ordinary” that are also personal and subjective (YIDFF 2005).
Through film organizations in Japan, especially the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (YIDFF)—the longest running and most distinguished documentary film festival in Asia that takes place every two years since 1989—I have discovered significant filmmakers who work within the “blurred boundaries” of documentary and avant-garde filmmaking.

Imamura Shohei (1926-2006)

Shohei Imamura has been widely recognized as one of the most important directors to emerge during the 1960s from the Japanese New Wave, or Nōberu bāgu (the Japanese pronunciation of the French term nouvelle vague). His documentary and fiction films, which commonly depicted the underside of the Japanese society—criminals, pimps, and pornographers, are considered to have “both an anthropological aspect and an implicit critique of modernity and consumer capitalism”, (Harvard Film Archive 2007).

In A Man Vanishes (1967), which began as a documentary about the rising number of missing persons in Japan, Imamura ingeniously mixed fiction and documentary and created a great impact rarely achieved in films. While Imamura presented the film as a documentary investigating an actual missing person’s case, he actually hired an actor to play the investigator who interacts with the missing man’s fiancée, thus creating a fascinating mixture of fact and fiction. The filmmaker’s message is clear – objectivity is impossible in films and the relationship between filmmaker and subject will always be fiction.

History of Postwar Japan as Told by a Bar Hostess (1970) shows us that history is subjective and is conditional on individual interpretations. Instead of an official history of post-war Japan, the film presented the unique and candid views of the resilient, lower-caste Onboro-san, brilliantly contrasting the bar owner’s story of her life with newsreel footage of key national events from Japan’s surrender at the end of WWII, through the U.S. occupation, to student protests and the Vietnam War.

The fact that the authenticity of Onboro-san and her story is in doubt only helps highlight Imamura’s point that “fiction can be a more potent and truthful way of approaching historical events than documentary”; and suggests that by freeing themselves from the realism and objectivity pretensions of the documentary format, documentary films can actually come closer to the heart and spirit of what they try to portray (Sharp 2001).

Hara Kazuo (born 1945)

Hara Kazuo started to make documentary films from the early 1970s, and for the next four decades, continued to produce radical films that focused on outcasts and those on the margins of postwar Japanese society. His groundbreaking and controversial films usually followed dramatic narratives and characters in a documentary style that is personal and severe.

Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974 (1974)—Hara’s most personal and confessional film—offers an intriguing portrait of a postwar Japanese society that was going through a time of transition with
dramatic social changes. The film for several years followed Kazuo’s 26-year-old ex-wife Miyuki Takeda, a radical feminist who relocated from Tokyo to Okinawa. The film shocked Japanese audience at the time as it, in an extremely intimate and matter-of-fact way, confronted such issues as sexual liberation, homosexuality, gender politics and racial discrimination. In one long, raw, and striking shot, Hara showed spread-legged Miyuki squeezing out her mix-race baby onto the floor while shaming her infant for looking like his father, an American GI. By ignoring various cinematic conventions, using jump cuts, flash frames, hand-held camera, and out-of-sync sound, the film in effect aptly created a feeling of dislocation and loss (Runoff 1993).

The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On (1987), a highly original and controversial film, traces the efforts of the one-man wrecking crew Okuzaki Kenzo, an ex-Private of the 36th Engineering Corps, who fought in the West Pacific during World War II, to chronicle war crimes committed by Japanese soldiers in occupied New Guinea. Instead of using historical documentaries’ didactic form—such as relying heavily on archival footage and interviews with eyewitnesses and scholars—Hara chose to focus on Okuzaki’s “present day activities and the reactions that he provokes in others”, thus exploring the living memory of the war, not the past as history (Runoff 1993).

American documentary theorist Bill Nichols—who seeks to distinguish particular traits and conventions of various documentary film styles—identified six different documentary “modes”: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive and performative (Nichols 2001).

According to Nichols’ conceptual scheme, Hara’s films can be considered as belonging to the reflexive, participatory and performative modes. In contrast to many “observational”, or “direct cinema” documentaries—which follow rules and techniques that make the subject and audience least aware of the presence of the camera—Hara’s characters regularly directly address and interact with the camera and the filmmaker.

Collaborating with the film subjects is also an important strategy for Hara’s documentaries—which also include Goodbye CP (1972), a raw and disturbing film made in collaboration with a group of individuals afflicted with cerebral palsy; and A Dedicated Life (1994), which explores the maddening duality of controversial literature figure Inoue Mitsuharu. Hara’s collaborating method with his subjects is comparable to pioneering ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch’s etno-fictions, in which, by means of fictional narrative and often improvising, the subjects are encouraged to act their own lives for the camera. Hara states, “I am not the type of director to shoot something just happening [like a demonstration], but rather I like to make something happen and then shoot it” (Runoff 1993).

Yutaka Tsuchiya (born 1966)

Tsuchiya, a video maker and media activist, has been one of the more imaginative examples in Japan since 1990s. Among his various activities to expand the network of media activists in Japan, Tsuchiya has been producing and distributing free shareware videos through his organization Without Television and supervised the independent video distribution project Video Act!

In The New God (1999), Tsuchiya documented the neo-fascist movement in Japan at the turn of the century. The outspoken anti-imperialist filmmaker gave Amemiya Karin, the female vocalist in the ultra-nationalist noise band The Revolutionary Truth, a video camera that she used to present herself with a video diary method. For Tsuchiya,
“this approach was extremely exciting, as the film left my control and developed by itself” (YIDFF 2011).

As the film progressed, the punk rock political documentary was turned into a love story between the left-wing filmmaker and the right-wing singer, and Amamiya gradually moved away from hard-line nationalism. Her transformation was, however, ambiguous and indecisive—unlike in conventional documentaries, where story development, messages and meanings would be unequivocal and convincing. Ending the film with this ambiguity in the transformation of Amamiya’s politics, however, is important as it succeeded in provoking a sense of cultural void permeating young people in Japan in this contemporary time.

Tetsuaki Matsue’s thought-provoking and playful documentaries explore and undermine the clichés and conventions of the documentary and Adult Video genres, while also self-reflexively addressing the uneven power relationship between the director and his subject (SOAS 2010). Touching on the areas of personal and ethnic identity, Annyong Kimchee (1999) explored Tetsuaki’s own Korean ancestry, while Identity (2004) portrayed non-Japanese performers in the sex film industry.

For Tetsuaki, “documentary is fiction storytelling using reality as its ingredients. When I say story, I don’t mean something like three-act structure, but a certain drama that exists from the clashing of shots. That’s why editing is very important for me. By juxtaposing this shot with that shot, I can create a story that is different from straight reality. That’s what documentary can do. For example, after the great earthquake this year, many Tokyo documentary filmmakers went to shoot the tsunami and what’s happening in the Northeast and claimed they made films. But documentary is not news reportage. I doubted whether the results of fictionalizing reality could be completed so fast. Cinema cannot be made without fiction” (YIDFF 2011).

What Tetsuaki meant by “fiction” essentially was reflections, layers of meanings, nuances and poetry. Essentially, he argued for a mode of poetic anthropology in documentary films. “Poetic anthropology”, or “anthropological poetry” is a form of ethnography that “challenges the dehumanization that lies in the reductionist tendencies of scientific formalization”, while encouraging “intuitive interpretations” of poetic approaches (Fernandez 1991).

Other Japanese filmmakers and video artists who also worked in between documentary, experimental, and fiction, include Hiroshi Teshigahara (1927-2001); Susumu Hani (born 1928); Terayama Shuji (1935-1983); Ogawa Shinsuke (1935-1992); Tsuchimoto Noriaki (1928-2008); Tatsuya Mori (born 1956); Hirokazu Koreeda (born 1962); Nobuhiro Suwa (born 1960); Naomi Kawase (born 1969); Terashima Mari (born 1965); Meiro Koisumi (born 1976).

THAILAND

The independent film revolution started in Southeast Asia much later than in Japan – at the beginning of the 21st century with filmmakers like Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Pen-ek Ratanaruang in Thailand, Lav Diaz and Brillante Mendoza in the Philippines, Eric Khoo in Singapore and Yasmin Ahmad in Malaysia. The rise of an independent cinema in Southeast Asia, however, has quickly become one of the most significant developments in World Cinema. These independent films have not only told “stories from the dark underbelly of society” and dealt with “subject matters that are politically taboo in the often rather authoritarian countries of Southeast Asia”, but also showed the ordinary everyday life, and addressed “the anxieties of...
The newly emerging middle class” in these countries (Baumgartel 2012, 5). These films—many of which aim to revive traditional story-telling through cinema or develop their own experimental film language—should be assessed not only by their subject matters or their political significance, but also by their aesthetic standing and innovativeness.

Through organizations in Thailand, in particular – the Thai Film Foundation, the Bangkok Experimental Film Festival, and Jim Thompson Art Center, I have discovered a number of Thai experimental filmmakers and moving image artists whose works reside at the intersection between documentary and fiction, and have expanded the boundaries of documentary films.

**Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook (born 1957)**

Araya is Thailand’s most prominent female artist whose work, for the last 25 years, has consistently explored issues of sexuality, identity and death. Araya’s meditative and provocative video works often focus on the idea of communication between different realms—between the living and the dead; the insane and “normal” people; humans and animals; and between East and West.

Although Araya’s work uses global references and media and can be aligned with such feminist video and body art as that of Carolee Schneemann, Tracy Moffatt, Mona Hatoum, Louise Bourgeois, and Joan Jonas, it remains to be rooted in the Thai context, drawing on Thai literature, music, bodies and social context (Fuhrmann 1997).

In *The Two Planets Series* (2008), Araya placed large-scale reproductions of iconic 19-century Western artworks—paintings by Renoir, Manet, and Van Gogh—in villages, markets, and a Buddhist temple in Northern Thailand, where she filmed groups of farmers or working class people discussing the artworks. In one video, a Buddhist monk turned to the Five Precepts of Dharma in trying to explain Artemisia Gentileschi’s *Judith Beheading Holofernes* and a Jeff Koons work—which shows the artist surrounded by scantily-dressed women—to an audience of villagers, children and dogs.

**Apichatpong Weerasethakul (b. 1970)**

For the last 10 years, Apichatpong Weerasethakul has been a central figure not only in Thai film, but also Southeast Asian independent cinema. The original and pioneering moving-image artist studied architecture at Khon Kaen University before completing a Master of Fine Arts in filmmaking at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Although influenced by Euro-American experimental traditions—with key influences including Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol, and the Surrealists—Weerasethakul’s video and film works explore the genres of documentary and fiction in distinctively Thai contexts—for example, he frequently borrows the idioms and stock narratives from Thai television soap operas, comics and radio plays (Ingawanij and Teh 2011).

In his films, which usually focus on the everyday life, Weerasethakul picks up ingredients from reality—recorded telephone conversations, radio drama, street scenes, or sound recordings and footage from his own film shoot—and strings them together in different ways. Weerasethakul refers to documentary as “a reflection of reality according to its maker. It is not the truth (and will never be), but it is a representation of the person behind it” (YIDFF 2003).
In *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000), instead of following a conventional narrative structure, Weerasethakul used a surrealist technique called ‘exquisite corpse’—by which each collaborator adds to a composition in sequence by being allowed to see the end of what the previous person contributed. By fusing fiction into documentary, the film was successful in recording the national rural unconsiousness and revealing the country’s collective dream world.

As Apichatpong states, “It depends on one’s point of view whether the piece of moving image is fact or fiction. If you look at it in a large, perhaps ethnographic, scale, everything is a rehearsal—a documentary of mankind. But if you approach it in a philosophical way, everything is fiction. Every cut, every pan, every frame is a subjective [piece of] make-believe. With this complexity in mind, I prefer to have the film work [itself] to provide the discourse” (Fitch 2011).

**Paisit Phanprucksachat (b. 1969)**

Apichatpong described Paisit—who regularly works as a soundman for other filmmakers—as someone who was “made to become the first modern experimental filmmaker in Thailand” who “in his desperation to tell stories, equipped himself with sound recorders, home made microphones, and a still camera”, whose filmic world is “filled with dark and apocalyptic humor” (Limitless Cinema 2011).

Although Paisit presents many of his films—all of which were made with extremely low budgets—in a documentary style, he never narrates them for coherent meanings, but leaves it to viewers to use their own imagination and make sense of the films themselves. Paisit’s experimental films including *The Cruelty and the Soy-Sauce Man* (2000) and *Tough Creatures Who Burden the Earth* (2004) are typically strung together with shots of mundane urban scenes juxtaposed with those of private spaces, spontaneously recorded footage combined with staged ones—in which he would ask his actors to walk into a real situation and spontaneously respond to it (Lertwiwatwongsa 2012).

In *Manus Chanyong: One Night at the Talaenggaeng Road* (2008), Paisit adapted a classical piece of Thai literature, set in Ayutthaya of 200 years ago, and used images of street scenes, the river, and ruined temples of present-day Ayutthaya to retell a period tale. “It’s not often you come across someone who combines the ability to draw from his rampant unconscious childlike stories in images, and to convey them through a fully formed aesthetics—an artistic vision unto himself” (Lertwiwatwongsa 2009).

Other Thai filmmakers I also want to mention include Panu Aree (b. 1973); Thunsha Pansittivorakul (b. 1973); Taiki Sakpisit (b. 1975); Anocha Suwichakornpong (b. 1976); Jakrawal Nilthamrong (b. 1977); Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit (b. 1984); and Chulayarnnon Siriphol (b. 1986).

**DESCRIPTION OF MY WORK IN VIETNAM AND EXPERIMENTAL FILMS IN JAPAN AND THAILAND**

A new movement of independent films started in Vietnam in the mid-2000s with the Ford Foundation sponsoring new training programs for both short
fiction and documentary films. Of particular importance, from my point of view, has been the emergence of independent and experimental documentary films in Hanoi for the last several years with the establishment in 2009 of Hanoi DocLab, a center for documentary films and video art supported by the Goethe Institut where I have worked as director and course instructor.

My experimental documentary *Chronicle of a Tape Recorded Over* (2010) was in fact inspired by Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s use of “exquisite corpse” in *Mysterious Object at Noon*. Traveling along Vietnam War’s notorious Ho Chi Minh Trail, I asked local villagers to contribute their tales while the camera was observing their present-day life, merging past with present, reality with fiction, in an effort to assemble a piece of collective history, a history told by the people from the bottom up.

From the very beginning, DocLab’s focus has been to train and nurture local creativity and independent, critical thinking. DocLab organizes weekly screenings of experimental documentary films and video art; filmmaking courses and workshops; and a video library accessible to the public. Public interest, especially from young locals, in DocLab screenings and workshops has been phenomenal. Students from the workshops are first confused, but mostly excited by the freedom to be able to experiment for the first time. They are encouraged to cross boundaries between documentary and fiction, narrative and abstract, video and performance.

In my own video works, I have been interested in experimenting with storytelling and narrative; mixing documentary and fiction, with forms, installation, and performance; using found footage from different sources such as classical Vietnamese fictional movies, corporate events, and Youtube – to examine hidden histories, memories, the role of artists in contemporary Vietnam, freedom of expression and censorship.

Such works, however, have difficulty in immediately creating a new discourse on the local contemporary art scene because they are typically exhibited in underground or private spaces locally, or overseas. They influence only a tiny number of local artists and audience. The educational efforts on creating the movement of independent and experimental documentary filmmakers and local audience who start to appreciate and understand contemporary films and videos are therefore much more important. Through these efforts, a new set of values – independent, non-commercial, subjective—is on the process of being established.

**In Japan:** *Jo Ha Kyu*, an experimental non-fiction film by Nguyen Trinh Thi (2012)

During the four months in Tokyo from July through October 2011, I shot video on a daily basis in the format of a video diary, which included footage of the everyday life in Tokyo as I observed it: crowds in subway stations; trains coming and going; people sleeping on the train; children playing in the park. Out of these materials, I’ve made an
experimental film entitled Jo Ha Kyu, using the essential concept of the narrative structure of traditional Japanese temporal arts as a starting point.

With Jo Ha Kyu, I started to be conscious about building the soundscape for film. During the four months in Tokyo, I recorded different sources of sounds from various locations in city, including everyday life sounds and sounds from music performances. I also used sounds recorded from under the ocean of the Japanese earthquake of 3/11. Sound became a very important though invisible element of my whole experience of the place.

In Thailand: Lakhon Haeng Chiwit (Life is a Play), work-in-progress, an experimental film by Nguyen Trinh Thi (2012).

Between December 2011 and April 2012, I filmed everyday life in Chiang Mai and Bangkok as I experienced and observed it. Later, I asked several Thai cinephiles to provide me with “memorable” dialogues from Thai cinema, which I intended to use as a source for the sound tracks in my experimental film.

Lakhon Haeng Chiwit is the title of an important work of Thai literature by Akat Damkoeng in 1929, written shortly before the 1932 coup. This work focused on class consciousness, discrimination and the virtues of democracy.

I have made these two films with significant influences of the numerous experimental documentary films and filmmakers I discovered in Japan and Thailand.

Conclusions

The encounters and discovery of the many films and filmmakers in Japan and Thailand who work in the “blurred boundaries” of documentary and the avant-garde have given me tremendous inspiration. In the creation of works such as these lays an implicit invitation and a tacit permission—a sense something like “we’ve done this, what can be done next?” And moreover, the permission and invitation seem extended to both author and audience alike. It seems something perhaps closer to a dare even; this incarnation of contemporary filmmakers and viewers are being challenged by these experiments to take the next logical, or illogical, step and there is great potential in that.
Additionally, this area—where documentary and fiction, objectivity and subjectivity meet—deserves much more attention among film scholars interested in experimental and documentary practices, as well as visual anthropologists in Asia. There has been some acknowledgement, which my footnotes allude to, but clearly there is a great need within Asia for a vastly expanded theoretical, critical and philosophical base of experience and scholarly writing within this loosely definable genre.

Naturally, what I have presented here excludes quite a bit more than is put down on these pages and there are many more films and filmmakers that might be discussed but in the interest of clarity and succinctness of example are not included here. Furthermore, Asian filmmakers working in the narrative idiom who lean aesthetically on the traditional documentary form are not discussed here. This is another area where some scholarly work exists but much more remains to be done and particularly from within Asia. It is also a genre ripe for further experimentation.

Exploring these subjective, personal, fictional, experimental documentaries of Japan and Thailand has given me great insights into these cultures, societies and histories. As we have come to realize that given cultures and the social reality cannot be understood as encompassing totalities, we should embrace and value the ‘experimental documentary’—a mode of non-fiction that is concerned with the personal or poetic interpretation of history and experience—where cultures are represented from many different and fragmented perspectives.

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The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows


Understanding the Indigenization and Hybridization of the Science Curriculum: The Model of Culturally Relevant Science Education in Thailand and Japan

Vicente C. Handa

Introduction

Science education in East Asia, both in the preservice teacher preparation and elementary level, is faced with multiple and legitimate challenges in the twenty-first century. In view of the over-importation of Western scientific knowledge and practices in the teaching of science in a non-Euro-American country, which according to Aikenhead (2008, 1) and Zembylas (2005, 709), is a potential recipe for colonization, there is a need for culturally relevant and culturally responsive science education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 159)—one that is mindful of indigenous knowledge and practices as capitals in the teaching and learning of science.

The overarching goal of this cross-cultural, multi-site ethnographic research project was to generate models of culturally relevant science education through an in-depth understanding of how the indigenization and hybridization of the science curriculum take place in Thailand and Japan. Indigenization, in this study, refers to the “revisioning of cultural landscape from the perspective of indigenous peoples and opposition to colonization through indigenous identity and practices” (Chinn 2007, 8). As an educational strategy and approach, it looks into indigenous knowledge and practices as curricular capitals in the teaching of school science. Thus, the indigenization of the science curriculum makes use of “indigenous science”—the science in a given culture—as curricular capital, which gives preference to the process of generating knowledge based on “indigenous ways of living with nature and the neo-indigenous ways of knowing” (Aikenhead and Ogawa 2007, 540). What statuses do indigenous knowledge and practices hold in school science? What happens when indigenous knowledge and practices are transported into schools and taught to students? Can I find models of science education that draw upon indigenous ways of knowing and doing? If not, in what ways do schools and teachers hybridize their curriculum to accommodate both indigenous knowledge and practices alongside dominant discourses of Western science?

This study was further informed by Barton and Tan’s (2009, 52-53) notion of hybridization as an avenue for marginalized knowledge and practices (e.g., indigenous science, local wisdom) to stand alongside Western science in schools. Zembylas and Avraamidou (2008, 977) argue that hybridization opens an opportunity to disrupt and resist any form of colonialism and imperialism in a Western-based science curriculum. The hybrid space provides a “navigational space… to negotiate differing discourse communities” and to destabilize and expand boundaries of official school science (Barton and Tan 2009, 52). The indigenization and hybridization of curriculum, therefore, are two complementary approaches to make science more relevant to the lives of students. I focused on these two approaches as my specific lenses in understanding and generating models of culturally relevant science education in Japan and Thailand.

Methodology

My research project was conducted in Japan and Thailand. I stayed for about six months in each country. I employed the multi-site ethnography as a research methodology. Framing from the epistemological stance of constructionism and the theoretical perspective of interpretivism (Crotty 2003), I utilized the interpretative lens of symbolic interactionism in understanding the notion and practice of cultural relevancy in science education. Specific theoretical underpinnings of the study revolved on assumptions surrounding culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 1995, 159), community funds of knowledge (Gonzalez 2005, 29; Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti 2005, 29), indigenous science education (Aikenhead and Ogawa 2007, 539; Chinn 2007, 50), and hybrid space/hybridization in science curriculum (Barton and Tan 2009, 50; Zembylas and Avraamidou 2008, 977).
This study was conducted in Thailand from July to December 2011 and in Japan from January to June 2012. In Thailand, I visited 11 provinces/cities and collected data in 6 universities, 12 schools and 16 surrounding villages. The summary of research activities, participants and data/outputs is presented in Table 1.

The second part of the research project was conducted in Japan from January to June 2012. I conducted my ethnographic study in five elementary schools and six teacher preparation institutions in the Kanto, Shikoku and Chugoku regions. The research data collected from research sites included a total of 32 audio records.

### Setting/Activity

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<tr>
<th>July-September</th>
<th>Data/Output</th>
<th>Participant</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Visited 5 provinces/cities: Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Nakorn Nayok, Prachin Buri, Chantaburi and Chiang Mai</td>
<td>31 interviews</td>
<td>• Interview</td>
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<td>• Visited/Collected data in 8 elementary/middle schools and their surrounding villages and in 3 universities</td>
<td>7 focus group discussions</td>
<td>- 5 preservice teachers</td>
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<td>22 observation notes/researcher-generated memos about 1000 pictures</td>
<td>- 3 scientists</td>
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<td>45 documents (e.g., syllabi, program of studies, pamphlets, among others)</td>
<td>- 16 elementary/middle school teachers</td>
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<td>25 textbooks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- 2 FGDs with a group of preservice science teachers</td>
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<td>- 4 FGDs with a group of elementary science teachers and their school officials</td>
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<td>- 1 FGD with a group of elementary students</td>
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<td>• Immersion in rural communities with two cohorts of preservice teachers (n1=23; n2=20)</td>
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<td>• Immersion in a school/community of Buddhist monks, lay persons, and students (n=about 200)</td>
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<td>• 6 science education faculty members</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October-December</th>
<th>Data/Output</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Visited Bangkok, Chiang Rai, Mahasarakham, Loie, Nong Khae, Kalasin, Sisaket</td>
<td>15 individual interviews</td>
<td>• Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observed, visited and/or collected data in 4 schools, 3 universities, and 8 villages</td>
<td>5 focus group discussions</td>
<td>- 5 preservice teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 observation notes/researcher-generated memos 900 pictures with about 100 relevant pictures annotated</td>
<td>- 3 scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35 documents (e.g., syllabi, programs of study, pamphlets, and other archival/electronic information)</td>
<td>- 16 elementary/middle school teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• FGD</td>
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<td>- 2 FGDs with a group of preservice science teachers</td>
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<td>• 6 science education faculty members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of Research Activities, Outputs and Participants in Thailand
of classes at an average of 45 minutes each, 52 video records of classes at an average of 37 minutes each, 7 tape-recorded formal interviews, over 30 expanded notes, over 2000 pictures, and a wide array of documents ranging from books, courses of study, syllabi, class schedules, among others. Table 2 shows the major research activities and accomplishments in Japan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/University/Place</th>
<th>Research Activities/Accomplishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University A (Host University, Kanto Region)</td>
<td>Arrived and settled in the university; familiarized myself with “ways of doing” in Japan; observed some science classes in the university and served as a resource person in some science and math classes; reviewed the literature, most especially the historical, cultural, and legal bases of Japanese science education; presented findings of the study to graduate students and gathered feedbacks/reactions to validate the results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University B (Kanto Region) University B Attached Elementary School</td>
<td>Observed elementary science classes in the morning, mostly Grades 5 and 6; observed preservice science teacher preparation classes at University B; generated 16 expanded observation notes, about 12-hour videotapes of classes/inquiry activities, over 500 photographs, and 3 audio-records of interviews conducted with a science teacher, a science teacher educator and a school principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University C (Kanto Region)</td>
<td>Interviewed three science teacher educators; did an informal conversation with two graduate and three undergraduate students; observed an undergraduate chemistry class; collected documents (e.g., course of study, National Science Education Curriculum of Japan, Teacher Education Syllabus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University D (Shikoku Region) University D Attached Elementary School</td>
<td>Observed and videotaped preservice science teacher preparation classes, did two paper presentations in seminar classes, participated in research meetings in a science lab, did informal conversations with graduate and undergraduate students, collected documents (e.g., lesson plans, course of study, syllabus), did informal interviews/conversations with two science teacher educators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Center near University D (Shikoku Region)</td>
<td>Observed a lesson study, videotaped the proceedings and took pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What I Learned in Thailand

My major research goal was to draw models of culturally relevant science education in Thailand. In this section, I represent my findings using the Integrated Model of Culturally Relevant Science Education in Thailand (Figure 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/University/Place</th>
<th>Research Activities/Accomplishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University E (Chugoku Region)</td>
<td>Presented two seminar papers to undergraduate students, participated in a research meeting with science education faculty, observed undergraduate science education classes, conducted three informal interviews with four science teacher educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University E Attached Elementary School</td>
<td>Observed lesson study sessions, collected sample lesson plans, took pictures, did informal conversations with elementary science teachers and teacher educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A rural elementary school</td>
<td>Observed lesson-study sessions; participated in the critiquing sessions; collected sample lesson plans; took pictures; conducted a focus group interview with the principal, science teachers, science teacher educators, and a graduate student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Conservation Center</td>
<td>Toured the site; tape recorded some informal conversations with tour guides; took pictures; collected documents such as science inquiry activities, pamphlets, brochures, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Major Research Activities and Accomplishments in Japan

1. Learning science in informal setting (e.g., national parks, zoos, museums)
2. Learning science from local wisdom persons and resources
3. Learning science through engagement in citizen science projects
4. Learning science through examination of eco-justice and socio-scientific issues
5. Learning science through participation on research on local wisdom
6. Learning science through service learning projects in the community
7. Learning science using the school-based instructional materials
8. Learning science through local-wisdom-inspired investigatory projects
9. Learning science using local contexts to teach inquiry using the national curriculum
10. Learning science as an integrated temple-school-home-community life
11. Learning science via hybridization of language in classroom discourse

Figure 1. Integrated Model of Culturally Relevant Science Education in Thailand

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
Elements of Culturally Relevant Science Education in Thailand

There are three major elements which support cultural relevancy in science education in Thailand, namely: (a) law, (b) language, and (c) curriculum. National in scope, these elements are considered pillars of culturally relevant science education in Thailand because they provide support and enabling mechanisms for the creation of hybrid spaces in school. In these spaces, local wisdom and Western scientific knowledge and practices stand side by side in the teaching and/or learning of school science.

The Law. Culturally relevant science education in Thailand is supported by several legal bases. For example, the Thai Constitution and the National Education Act of 1999 provide a solid foundation to support practices toward cultural relevancy in science education. In particular, Section 81 of Thailand's Constitution stipulates that the “State shall promote local knowledge and national arts and culture”. It also guarantees the right of the local people to conserve their local knowledge and practices. In addition, Section 46 states that “Persons so assembling as to be a traditional community has the right to conserve or restore their customs, local knowledge, arts or good culture of their community”.

In addition to the Constitution, the National Education Act of 1999 (e.g., Sections 7, 23, 24, 25, 27 and 57), supports the utilization of local wisdom in the teaching of science. Section 27, for example, states that “Basic Education shall be responsible for prescribing curricular substance relating to needs of the community and the society, local wisdom, and attributes of desirable members of the family, community, society and nation”. The same Act stipulates the creation of the Office of National Policy which issues various statements and outlines strategies in the utilization of local wisdom in schools. This Office has been responsible for the following: (1) the establishment of the Thai Knowledge Council, (2) the establishment of the National Research Institute for Thai Knowledge and Education, (3) the establishment of the Thai Knowledge Fund, (4) the establishment of Teaching and Learning Thai Knowledge, (5) the recognition (e.g. honouring and rewarding) of Thai Knowledge Teachers, and (6) the formation of the Thai Knowledge Information Network System. In summary, culturally relevant science education in Thailand is grounded on various laws, thereby providing enabling mechanisms to support the use of local wisdom in the teaching and/or learning of school science.

The Language. The use of a national/local language is closely tied to the issue of relevancy in science education. This is true in Thailand, where Thai is used as the medium of instruction in the teaching of science, from the elementary up to the graduate level. Furthermore, Thai is the dominant language for academic discourses, both inside and outside the school. Science education in Thailand has accumulated equivalent Thai words or phrases to represent scientific technical terms. Some of these technical terms are already integrated in the everyday language of students. For example, during my observation of a group of students doing a field investigation in a national park, the Thai language was used in all of their conversations and interactions with the resource person. Similarly, technical words to represent science concepts were in the Thai language. I also noticed the same trend in my classroom observations where scientific and technical terms in the Thai language had become part of the normal classroom discourses of students. Thai science education has accumulated technical words to communicate science content and processes. Thus, hybridization via language has taken place through the adaptation of Western scientific and technical terms in the Thai language.

The Curriculum. The School-Based Science Education Curriculum in Basic Education in Thailand allows for a “30% deviation from the nationally prescribed science education curriculum to accommodate ‘local wisdom’ in schools”. In other words, teachers may include 30% indigenous local knowledge (popularly termed as local wisdom in Thailand) in the teaching of science to students in the elementary and secondary levels. In addition to the nationally prescribed textbooks, teachers have also been encouraged to infuse local wisdom in the instructional materials they developed for students coming from local communities.
In the preservice science teacher preparation program, local wisdom is infused in the teaching of Professional Education subjects such as Field Experiences and Classroom-Based Action Research. The local wisdom is also incorporated in science education subjects such as Local Wisdom in School Science (as in the case of University B in the North); Science, Technology Education and Society (as in the case of University A in Central Thailand); and Curriculum Development for Local Needs (as in the case of University C in the Northeast). The inclusion of local wisdom in science content subjects is mostly dependent on the teacher/professor handling the course. A university in the northeast offers interesting subjects under the (its) Science Content such as Physics for Everyday Life, Household Physics, and Survey and Collection of Local Plants.

In summary, in my observation and analysis of the science education curricula and practices in Thailand, I found some evidences of inclusion of local wisdom in preservice science teacher preparation programs. However, this inclusion has not been systematic and systemic. The integration of local wisdom was mostly determined by a professor’s/teacher's commitment, advocacy and experience. I also noticed that in-service science teachers who specialized in or were mentored on the use of local wisdom in science education during their graduate education, were most likely the ones who integrated local wisdom in their teaching of science.

**Creation of Hybrid Spaces in Thai Science Education**

In the course of my six-month stay in Thailand, I was able to document 11 hybrid spaces in Thai science education. Barton and Tan (2008) consider these hybrid spaces as negotiational spaces; they do not occupy the central position in science education discourses. However, they allow local wisdom to gain entry into the official school science. These are spaces wherein local wisdom stands alongside Western scientific knowledge in science instruction. As shown in Figure 1, hybrid spaces in Thailand are supported by pillars of cultural relevancy—the law, the curriculum and the language. Hybrid spaces are situational, local, and specific. They are present in the learning of a specific subject, in the implementation of a program, or in the enactment of a specific classroom practice. For discussion purposes, I am highlighting three examples of hybrid spaces in this paper, namely: (1) learning science in an informal setting and from local wisdom; (2) learning science through engagement in citizen science projects; and (3) learning science through service learning projects in local communities;

Learning science in informal settings and from local wisdom. Culturally relevant science education in Thailand takes place in various settings, both inside and outside the four-walls of a classroom. “We make use of our local wisdom and resources to teach science in schools”, says Tam (pseudonym), an elementary science teacher in the northeast of Thailand. Local wisdom, according to Tam, refers to the “knowledge and practices of our people;... they are tested as effective through continuous use in local communities”. During the course of my stay in Thailand, I observed several informal settings (e.g. national parks, farms, forests, zoos, museums, science centrums, etc.) where students learned science. For example, in Pathum Thani Province, an Agri Museum is used to teach students about Thai rice varieties and technologies. The Sirindhorn Museum in Kalasin, on the other hand, has been the setting of geology classes for prospective science teachers. In Bangkok, there are various learning centers and science centrums to help students learn and appreciate science. These resources have been utilized by teachers in their field trips. In one particular university, a science fair was conducted inside the campus. Elementary and high school students observed traditional and emerging technologies in science fairs and exhibits. Students also participated in the science fair by putting up booths and tables to display or demonstrate their science-related products and/or activities. At the university level, a group of preservice science teachers learned the dynamics and interrelationships of organisms in a tropical forest using the national park as the context for learning science. In their bird-watching and safari-night activities, students learned about the behaviors of local animals and linked them to their science lessons.

*The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows*
In addition to the local sites as contexts for learning science, there are numerous sources of “local wisdom” which, according to in-service science teachers and local villagers whom I interviewed, refers to “persons formally recognized by the government as bearers of traditional skills and knowledge”. Some of them are “informally known through words of mouth in the village because of their expertise in one or several life skills” (e.g., dying of fabric, making of clay pots, weaving of clothes, producing rock salt).

Preservice science teachers recognize the “knowledge possessed by the local wisdom holders in the village”, despite their “lack of [formal] education”, because “they work” by “solving real life problems and producing desirable and tangible results”. In other cases, local wisdom may take another meaning. Local wisdom also means “local knowledge, to include both “traditional” and “Western scientific knowledge”. Local wisdom, therefore, appears in various levels and forms—as traditional knowledge in one end and in the form of Western scientific knowledge, on the other end. Much of this knowledge appears in a hybrid form. For example, in his farm, a famous local-wisdom expert in the northeast applied the Economic Sufficiency Theory of His Majesty the King. The theory has been applied in the agriculture sector, most especially in the production of agriculture-related products. This theory promotes economic sufficiency and prosperity among Thai farmers by encouraging them to produce a surplus of goods. “All I need is in the farm. I produce them…. I can live in this farm without buying much from the outside. I sell the extra in the market”, said a local-wisdom holder. Successful and economically self-sufficient, he was accredited by the Ministry of Agriculture as a person possessing local wisdom in the field of farming. Farmers and students come to his farm and learn from his knowledge and practices. I joined a group of preservice science teachers on a one-day trip to the farm of this local-wisdom holder and, together with the students, learned how to cultivate mushrooms; raise chickens, bullfrogs, catfish, ducks, pigs; grow various kinds of vegetables; make organic fertilizers and pesticides; produce biogas; and grow rice and process them into various by-products. I noticed that most of these knowledge and practices exist in hybrid form, with Western knowledge enacted in a local practice. However, some knowledge exists in a highly traditional form. For example, local-wisdom persons teach students how to dye fabrics, make earthen clay pots, weave cloth, and produce salt, among others. In a Chong community, a village herbal doctor served as a resource person, teaching students the names and uses of various forest plants.

Learning science through engagement in citizen science projects. Schools offering basic education are sometimes selected by big universities and/or scientific institutions to become partners in a research project. Scientists from the university engage elementary and/or high school students and teachers, and local village people, in the conduct of a research project. This was the case of a citizen science project, a rich context for examining culturally relevant science education in Thailand. For example, a huge citizen science project took place in a local school in the Northeast. Scientists from a nearby university involved village elders, and high school students and teachers in the documentation of various plants, insects, and mushrooms in the forest located at the back of the school. According to the students and teachers involved in the project, “We were first trained in the university on different aspects of the collection, documentation, and preservation of plants, animals (mostly insects), and mushroom specimens... With the help of village elders, [we] collected, identified, and preserved these specimens.” and then “uploaded their pictures and basic information” [e.g. local name, scientific name, uses] “in a website maintained by the scientists in the university”.

In another elementary school in the north of Thailand, students learned about birds and their behaviour by “engaging in a bird-watching research project”. These students “identified and documented various species of birds” found in the community and, in collaboration with their teachers, “created instructional materials” to teach science. This project was made possible through the school’s partnership with a science-based, non-government organization.
involved in the conservation and protection of birds. As an extension of the project, the school principal put up a “bird-watching garden in the school” where students in science classes could “study birds and their behaviour”. As part of their inquiry activities in the garden, students made instructional materials related to birds, such as three-dimensional books, pamphlets, fliers, models, drawings and sketches. These outputs were displayed in the school’s learning resource center.

Learning science through service learning projects in the community. I had the chance to participate in a science camp for prospective science teachers. The camp was held beside a Buddhist temple. In this camp, students learned science-related practical skills from the Buddhist monks who taught them about the different uses and applications of forest herbs. “We do this project on a regular basis... I have a personal connection with monks in the village. As part of our merit-making activity, we engage our students in making herbal products based from the local wisdom and practices of the monks”, said a College of Science dean, who initiated the project. One important dimension of this camp was the “service learning project conducted by prospective science teachers with the local village people”. Students worked with local people in the production of a herbal medicine capsule, a herbal shampoo, herbal powder to serve as a substitute for monosodium glutamate (MSG), and a herbal detergent, among others. Students donated to the monks the herbal products they made as part of their merit-making activity. The service learning project was conducted in collaboration with local villagers, who also offered their “service for free in the production of products”. In addition, prospective science teachers conducted a simple medical/physical examination of (on) local villagers by determining their blood pressure, height, weight, etc. and computing their obesity index.

What I Learned in Japan

Japan offered a unique experience in my search of a model for culturally relevant science education. I experienced several tensions as a researcher. For example, my initial theoretical framework—that of dichotomizing traditional/local knowledge and Western science—did not work well in Japan. It was difficult for me to locate such distinction from the perspective of my research participants. “Rika”—the school science—was considered Japanese. On the surface, I personally found Rika too Western in content and practice, but my research participants did not and could not locate its Western roots or origin. “Rika is Rika” and “it is Japan’s”, so to speak.

In the succeeding section, my discussion focuses on the goal of characterizing Japanese elementary schools by examining science teaching and learning practices, and locating their unique qualities with respect to macro socio-cultural discourses in science education, within and outside Japan. I have attempted to answer the following questions: What and how do students learn in elementary science? What are the unique practices in elementary science teaching and learning, in particular, and of the Japanese elementary schools, in general? What do these practices reflect on the socio-cultural dimension of elementary science education?

The findings of my study revolve around three major themes: (a) co-existence of uniformity and individuality, (b) reproduction of scientific knowledge in Rika classes, and (c) education for citizenship training.

The Co-existence of Uniformity and Individuality

Rika, the school science, is characterized by a standardized, national curriculum implemented in a uniform manner across Japan. According to a science teacher educator I interviewed (Researcher’s Notes, April 27, 2012), this national curriculum assures “similar objectives and content”, including “suggestions on handling the content...[to be] uniformly implemented among school children”. Examining the content of the curriculum, I wrote the following descriptions: “very compact and focused...”, “not too heavy in science content”. Rika follows the spiral curricular model—“topics and content are built and expanded as one moves from one grade level to another”. One strong
component of the curriculum is the integration of the “love of nature” in “Rika”, as reflected in its goals: “To enable pupils to become familiar with nature and to carry out observations and experiments with their own prospectus, as well as to develop their problem-solving abilities and nurture hearts and minds that are filled with affection for the natural world, and at the same time, to develop realistic understanding of natural phenomena, and to foster scientific perspectives and ideas”.

Another evidence of uniformity in the science curriculum in Japan is found in textbooks. Textbook development and production are tightly supervised, regulated and controlled. “writers and publishers are carefully selected”, said a science teacher educator (interviewed, May 25, 2012) who participated in the writing of a textbook for elementary students”. There are only four “authorized” publishers of science textbooks in Japan. I examined these textbooks and described them in my field notes (May 5, 2012) as “thin, coloured, printed in glossy paper, with less words but more of pictures, not too content-heavy”. I also noticed the “positive depiction of science” in the textbooks. I found pictures of children enjoying science. The pictures also depicted science in everyday life, in the natural environment, and in the use of reusable materials such as toy cars, which were used in several experiments; so were styro/plastic cups in activities involving the germination of seeds.

How was the national curriculum enacted in science classrooms? Classroom instruction was directly linked to the national standard and was carefully controlled. Teachers saw to it that the instruction would fit a given time frame. The board work of teachers was also carefully planned, usually at the rate of one board work per session; erasures were discouraged. The board work usually followed a pattern inclusive of the topic, the goal, objectives and/or inquiry questions. The teacher scaffolds took the form of drawings, sketches, the outline of an activity, findings and conclusions. There seemed to be an equal opportunity for students to learn: “same textbooks, laboratory materials, school uniform” (Researcher’s notes, June 2, 2012). Every student was given “equal opportunities to shine”. Responsibilities were rotated and equal chances to talk or participate in discussions were provided as long as one knew how to wait. Where was the sense of individuality in the seemingly uniform curriculum in Japan? Answers to this question were reflected in my notes after I observed a Grade 6 class:

There seemed to be a homogenization of learning experiences in the science class. I was looking for a personal space for students to think individually and represent their thinking outside the group activity. I was drawn to science notebooks. Despite the uniform learning within a group activity, I noticed variations in the way students represented their knowledge in their science notebook. Students differed in their drawings, side notes, labels, and sketches, showing an individual, unique way of representing learning from a common activity. The teaching of science content was the somewhat uniform but there seemed to be variations in the ways students represented their learning in the science notebooks.

(Researcher’s Note, February 6, 2012)

Students are made to draw from an actual specimen (e.g., fruit of a soybean). I see variations in their drawings. For instance, a student may add elaborations in the drawing like details, personal notes and colors. Students scrutinize the specimen; use a magnifying lens, sometimes a microscope; remove the seeds from their pods; and thinly cut the seed. The macro and micro details of the specimen are recorded in their notebooks...Although there is an attempt to homogenize learning in science, variations in learning exist in the way an individual student makes sense of his/her classroom experiences. These variations can be gleaned in the students’ representation of learning in their notebooks.

(Researcher’s Memo (May 15, 2012)
Reproduction of Scientific Knowledge through Rika

The scientific knowledge and skills were reproduced in elementary science classrooms. Science concepts and skills development exercises were embedded within inquiry activities. Students engaged in "thinking like scientists". They “did science”, with instructions strongly emphasizing observational skills and experimental design (e.g., controlling and manipulating variables). For instance, I observed classes using a guided inquiry approach in the teaching of science. The focus of the inquiry was: “When the water evaporates, will the salt appear or not?” I observed that the “students did not open their books. They thought and made their own procedure. The teacher provided the scaffold by drawing a sketch on the board….. Students got their materials from the cabinet. Using the teachers’ scaffolds on the board, students performed their activities with minimum supervision from the teacher” (Researcher’s note, February 2, 2012).

A teacher scaffold is a type of assistance given by the teacher to students so that they can independently perform their inquiry activities. Since science inquiry in Japan is not of the cookbook type, in the sense that procedures are not typically given by the teacher, the students must devise means to answer the inquiry questions. The inquiry questions must come from the students; though the teacher may already have something in mind. Once an inquiry question becomes clear to the students, after the brainstorming, the teacher writes the question(s) and the topic on the board. The topic, usually written in capital letters, is enclosed in angle brackets (<TOPIC>), while the objective of the inquiry is written inside a rectangle. The teacher then facilitates the brainstorming for inquiry questions. Once finalized, the inquiry question is written on the board. The teacher makes a sketch of the set-up or writes an outline of the procedure. During the activity, the teacher moves around to observe and supervise students. Once the activity is finished, students write their entries on a summary table on the board. The student presentation follows, highlighted by an open forum to accommodate questions from the audience.

The abovementioned observations are typical of Rika classes in Japan, which science teachers and teacher educators believe to be “effective in the promotion of scientific thinking among young children”.

Education for Citizenship Training

I notice a very strong emphasis on citizenship training in Japan’s elementary education. Pupils, at an early age, are trained to become responsible citizens. Elementary education is clearly used as a tool for citizenship training. (Researcher’s Memo, February 9, 2012)

I observed four elements of citizenship training embedded in the teaching of Rika in elementary school: Students generally (1) work as a team, (2) are taught to be clean and orderly in doing their tasks, (3) are trained to follow rules, and (4) practice environment-friendly routines. As a rule of thumb, I observed “teamwork” to be a primary context in doing inquiry in science classes, as well as in activities outside the classroom. In Rika classes, students worked together as a team in doing and reporting inquiry activities. Every student played a role in the team activities; nobody was left idle. In my observation note (February 2, 2012), I wrote: “Every student exactly knew what to do in this activity [evaporation of salt water]. Students [a group of three] got their materials from the cabinet. Then, they helped each other in setting up the activity... While one observed, the other wrote and drew his observation in his notebook. Another student prepared the slides for observation. Nobody was idle”.

I also observed a strong emphasis on cleanliness and orderliness in Rika classes. Students were trained to be clean and orderly in all that they did. There seemed to be a right way to do things inside the class. They fell in line when they got inside the class and when they got the materials from their laboratory cabinets. At the end of their laboratory activity, students cleaned their materials. Glass wares were washed and dried. Students wiped their laboratory tables. Materials were returned back to
the cabinets. The teacher inspected each working table and formally dismissed students when everything was in order. There seemed to be protocols in doing things inside the class; students followed them. For example, before students got inside the school building, they had to deposit their shoes inside a locker and wear a new pair of shoes to be exclusively used inside the building.

I had also an opportunity to observe school activities wherein students were consciously aware of and enacted environment-friendly routines. Upon the invitation of a science teacher (February 9, 2012), I joined a group of students—whom I had previously observed—during their school lunch. I was amazed at the kind of order and discipline they exhibited during lunch. “Two students (male and female) stood in front; they seemed to play the role of hosts”. They saw to it that “everyone got their lunch”. There were students assigned to serve the food, distribute milk, give table napkins, etc. When lunch was over, “each student began to roll and tie the plastic wrapper, reducing it into a small piece. A small box was passed around; all the wrappers fit inside the box”. In the same manner, “they rolled the tetra pack milk containers and reduced them into minute size before depositing them inside a box”. I said to myself that this practice possibly explained why waste segregation worked well in Japan; their children were taught such practice in school while they were young.

Reflection on Local Knowledge/Wisdom, Hybrid Space and Science Education

Local knowledge, often called local wisdom in Thailand, comes in various shades and colors. It may appear in a highly traditional form, passed from one generation to another. Its continuous use affirms its intergenerational validity, i.e. having, as it were, been validated in and through practice. Sometimes, local knowledge, which may appear traditional to the village people due to their limited exposure to the Western world, is highly hybridized in form. Western scientific knowledge has found its way into local villages, interfacing with traditional knowledge and practices. Since it has worked in local villages and been found effective through continuous use from one generation to another, it may appear to be part of the local wisdom/knowledge of the community and may easily find its way into science classrooms.

The concept of hybrid space in science education opens an opportunity for Western science taught in classrooms to coalesce with local knowledge, which in itself might be hybridized in form. The hybrid space, a negotiational space for local wisdom to gain entry into the official science, is filled with unsettling tension. Science is a very jealous field; it has its own standards to assess the validity and reliability of knowledge, different from the pathway to validity claims of local wisdom. This paradigmatic clash often limits the entry of traditional local knowledge, with limited scientific basis, in school science. However, hybridized local knowledge may find its entry in school science to be unproblematic, since it has successfully coalesced with local practices in the village.

Conclusion

Thai science education has provided a space where local wisdom and Western science can stand side by side in school science discourses. The law, curriculum, and language of Thailand provide a strong mechanism for the inclusion of local wisdom in science teaching and learning. Consequently, hybrid spaces have been created in schools to accommodate local wisdom and Western science in the teaching of school science. These hybrid spaces occur in citizen science projects, service learning activities, informal settings, in the use of local wisdom resources, and in persons, among others. In Japan, science education is viewed from a more holistic perspective, sans the local knowledge and Western science dichotomy. From the Japanese perspective, Rika, the school science, is infused with love for/harmony with nature and is characterized by the co-existence of individuality within uniformity in the science curriculum. It provides a context for the reproduction of scientific knowledge within classrooms, and uses education as a tool for citizenship training among Japanese school children.
CAVEAT

Inasmuch as I desired to locate my interview data using the language of my research participants, I had difficulty in doing so because I did not speak and understand Thai and Japanese languages. I had to rely mostly on the interpretation of my interpreters, mostly science educators.

REFERENCES


Acculturation Between Two Societies: Vietnamese Contract Migrant Workers in Japan

Khuat Thu Hong

Introduction

International migration in Asia has gone through significant changes over the last few decades during what Castles and Miller (2009) have called “The Age of Migration”. According to the 2005 Migration Report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the intensification of migration within Asia is one of the major global migration transitions since the early 1990s. Migration flows taking place between Asian countries consist primarily of low-skilled temporary workers from developing to more developed nations in the region. With studies suggesting that remittances have the potential to reduce poverty in migrants’ areas of origin, sending countries see temporary labor migration as a strategy to develop their economies. For receiving countries, including Japan and South Korea which are experiencing an aging population and fertility decline, migration benefits are perceived to be cheap and disposable labor.

International labor migration has become an important development policy for Viet Nam. The government assumes that migrants will send remittances home and enhance their skills through migration. There are approximately 500,000 Vietnamese migrant workers in different global locations (Abella and Ducanes 2009, 145). About 90 percent of these are deployed in Asia, with the main destinations being Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan (Government of Vietnam 2010).

But as more workers are sent abroad, evidence is accumulating to suggest serious problems with the country’s labor export programs. Despite increasing flows of remittances from migrant workers, international migration does not produce solely positive outcomes. In fact migration experiences are polarized between “winners” and “losers” (Belanger et al. 2010, 67). This is caused by variables in pre-migration costs, working conditions, degrees of deception about the nature of the work, net earnings and others. The “winners” are often those workers who have completed their contract, learnt sufficient skills that can help them to integrate into the local labor market after returning home, and have some savings after paying off their pre-departure expenses. In contrast, the “losers” are often those workers who have not paid their pre-departure debts, due often to early return or to having been deceived. Equally, if not more important, are the impact of socio-cultural factors on migrants’ success or failure.

This paper provides some light on the situation of Vietnamese migrants going to work in Japan, by documenting their experiences and difficulties in the migration process. In particular, the paper inquires into the acculturation of Vietnamese migrants in Japan, and how it affects different migration outcomes. No less important is the issue of reintegration when migrants return. The paper addresses questions of if, how, and under which conditions migrant returnees serve as agents for development and social change in their home communities.

Data for this paper is drawn from ethnographic research that combines participatory observations and in-depth interviews with 30 migrant workers (fifteen males and fifteen females). Of the total, 15 were located in Vietnam (Thai Binh and Hung Yen provinces) and 15 were in Japan (Osaka and Nagoya). In addition, three focus group discussions (one in Thai Binh and two in Osaka) of migrant workers were conducted.

The research is grounded in perspectives of acculturation that are distant from simplistic assimilation theories (Redfield et al. 1936), to include personal choice (Social Science Research Council 1954) and other interacting external institutional and internal group or individual characteristics (Zhou 2011). Far from a uni-
dimensional process, acculturation can be reactive (assimilation is resisted), creative (new cultural norms emerge) or delayed (changes appear later). For example, most recent research on acculturation has shown that acquiring the beliefs, values and practices of the host country does not prevent immigrants from upholding their heritage beliefs, values and practices (Schwartz et al. 2010).

The main features of acculturation include a complexity of determinants, including cultural characteristics of both societies of origin and of settlement, immigrant group acculturation, and individual-level variables operating prior to and during acculturation (Berry 1997).

1. Factors influencing acculturation of Vietnamese migrant workers

External factors

Programmatic factors

International migration of Vietnamese workers to Japan has been institutionalized since the early 1990s through the Industrial Training and Technical Internship Program managed by the Japan International Training Cooperation Organization (JITCO). The program was established with the official purpose to bring into Japan workers from developing countries for training in technical skills so that, upon return, these personnel should become “the foundation of economic and industrial development” in their countries of origin (JITCO, 2012). From 1992 to 2010, the program recruited more than 40,000 Vietnamese workers (Le, 2010).

In essence, however, the program is viewed by critics as a Japanese government strategy to address the rising need for cheap and disposable labor in Japanese enterprises (Belanger et al. 2011, 32). To serve this objective, workers are deliberately selected almost exclusively from the young rural population in Vietnam. Before leaving for Japan, many workers had never been exposed to cultures other than their native communities. Indeed, most had never worked outside their family enterprise and possessed no working experience other than farming skills. This “migration selectivity” can partly explain the many adaptation difficulties that migrant workers face when they arrive in Japan.

In addition, the program does not provide workers with quality pre-departure training so that they are better prepared for life in Japan. Important courses on Japanese language and culture and on legal matters are often short and insufficient. The workers we met in this study, for example, did not have the capacity even for very basic communication in the Japanese language; their understanding of Japanese culture was poor, and their knowledge of legal provisions for labor immigrants was very inadequate. For example, when we asked the workers about what they did when experiencing mistreatment, almost none showed an understanding of the labor law in Japan that they could use for their own protection.

A related issue is migration cost. Workers must pay very high pre-departure expenses, split into non-refundable components consisting of a recruitment fee, passport and visa fee, mandatory training, plane tickets, and a refundable safety deposit, to recruitment agencies. These agencies are local, private, for-profit companies that play the role of intermediary between Japanese enterprises in Japan and the labor market in Vietnam. Most of these agencies take full advantage of the country’s still poor regulations regarding labor emigration to maximize their profits at the expense of the migrants.

For the workers in our sample, the total cost, on average, was between US$10,000-$16,000. A large portion of this was a safety deposit of between US$8,000 - $12,000 which was due to be refunded if the workers fulfilled their labor contract and returned home in time. The imposition of the deposit has been institutionalized as a measure to reduce the possibility of workers “running away” or “over-staying” in Japan. The fees for Japan are higher than those for other labor-receiving countries in East and Southeast Asia (Belanger et al., 2011, 43). However, workers in Japan often receive a higher salary than in other countries. In addition, the fact that Japan is one of the world’s richest countries also boosts the desire of people to go, and consequently the migration cost. It should be noted that these high departure costs are not demanded by the Japanese government, but are imposed by local recruitment companies. As explained by one respondent:

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“I decided to choose Japan because, first, Japan is more ‘civilized’ than Vietnam; second, its economy ranks first or second in the world… People in my commune who returned from Japan told me many good things about this country. They earned good money. Japanese people are very kind… Society is in good order… I see that all of them returned with good savings… Back home, they all can find jobs in Japanese corporations…”

(Male worker)

Yet to pay these fees, very often workers have to borrow money from banks, relatives, friends, or private money lenders, generally with interest rates of about 2 percent per month. Some workers in this study had to mortgage their houses and land to accumulate enough capital. The situation was even worse if workers relied on private agents and thus had to pay extra fees. The debt incurred by the high pre-departure costs puts strong pressures on workers, forcing them to work for longer hours to earn more. It can also prompt some workers to work in the irregular sector. As most of their time is spent for work migrants have almost no time for social activities. The story below of a young respondent working in Nagoya is not uncommon among the workers interviewed.

Hung paid a total of US$17,000 to participate in the labor migration program to Japan. There, he began working for an enterprise in Nagoya. During the first year, Hung often worked overtime to earn more money in order to repay his debt. After a year, the enterprise reduced production due to the country’s overall economic slow-down. Hung was therefore not able to work extra hours. As a result, he left the enterprise to work in the irregular sector as a welder since the pay was higher and he could work many more hours. To make more money, Hung purchased goods stolen from shops by immigrant workers of different nationalities, then sold them to customers, mostly Vietnamese workers, at higher prices.

(Excerpt from field notes in Nagoya)

Finally, the program deploys workers in the lowest stratum of the Japanese labor market, compartmentalizing them into a short-term rotated labor category, with essentially no opportunity for occupational or social upward mobility. Upon completing their three-year contract, workers have no alternative but to go home. Thus, they find little incentive for acculturation as their life in Japan is predetermined to be temporary. As stated by one respondent:

“Coming here, I had many hopes. I wanted to learn as much as possible. But after two years I realize that the important tasks are all performed by the Japanese. They do not need us for that work”.

(Male worker)

Cultural distance between Vietnam and Japan

Without exception, all the workers in the study experienced “culture shock” during the first stage of settlement. This means they experienced stress caused by numerous and immediate adaptation demands, as well as feelings of loss due to detachment from their familiar environment. They had a sense of uncertainty and helplessness regarding their identity and role and felt isolated from members of the host society. Indeed, the length of this stage is context-specific and dependent on individual variables. Those who originated in urban areas may have a certain ease of adaptation, due to some similarities in city lifestyles. Those originating in rural areas often found the abrupt change overwhelming and struggled to cope with the new social relationships, cuisine, etiquette, public attitudes and social order.

The major environment for workers’ acculturation is the workplace, where social interactions with the Japanese people are most intensive. The workplace is also where the host culture and heritage culture of the workers strongly interface. Interviews with the workers reveal a set of conflicting feelings regarding the clash between the two cultures. Repeatedly, we heard the respondents praise the discipline and devotion to work of their Japanese co-workers, which contrasted sharply with what they had experienced in Vietnam:
“I think the Japanese work like machines. Everyone just focuses on his or her work. They only talk with each other in work meetings. Even during breaks, they often stay silent. We do not feel comfortable. In Vietnam, we talked a lot during work”.

(Male worker)

“It is strange to me that good performance is considered normal here. But poor performance is severely condemned. They [managers] shout at us whenever they find that we are not doing good enough… In Vietnam, we are always praised if we’re performing well. Poor performance can be ignored if you are in good terms with managers”.

(Male worker)

“Japanese people always work to their fullest capacity. They consider the company their second home. Even during the breaks, I saw some workers still fixing something. It seems like they do not want to rest… Workers keep working hard even when no one is supervising them… In Vietnam, we always try to ‘escape’ work whenever possible”.

(Female worker)

“The Japanese are extremely keen on quality [of work/products]. Their professionalism is what I like most… It seems like they want all things to be perfect… They do not care about quantity so much as quality… In Vietnam, people are encouraged to just produce as much as possible”.

(Female worker)

“Criticisms is not a personal matter in Japan. People appreciate criticism as they think it helps to improve their work. In Vietnam, if a boss makes a worker feels he is “losing face”, he [the worker] just simply quits the job”.

(Male worker)

The above interviews point to a fundamental difference between the two working cultures as experienced by the workers. The Japanese attach a very strong personal moral value to work. For the Vietnamese, work is often seen as just a means to gain an income, an unpleasant necessity associated with pain and sacrifice. The Japanese work culture experienced by the workers helped them to develop a more critical view of the culture in Vietnam, and served as part of their workplace acculturation.

Probably the most challenging aspect for the Vietnamese workers is the management style at the Japanese enterprises, especially in the large corporate plants. Here the workers witness personally what Mouer and Kawashini (2005) describe in their sociological study of work in Japan: how work practice is deeply rooted in Japan’s unique culture which attaches strong values to hierarchy, group belonging, organizational solidarity and consensus.

Hierarchy

“The Japanese are very hierarchical. The boss is the boss and workers are worker… Whenever the boss says something, people just obey… The same [Japanese] boss of mine, in Vietnam I could see him regularly. I could take him around with me on my motorbike. I could not do that here”.

(Male worker)

Group solidarity

“I see that the Japanese work in groups. They learn how to do various tasks to be able to support each other, and they can do all the tasks if someone is absent. This also helps them not to get bored doing just one task… Usually they only do something if all others agree that they should do so… I think this is good for collaboration and management”.

(Female worker)

Communication

“Innovation is appreciated, but it must be communicated to managers and get approval before we can actually do it… In Vietnam, the situation is different. If we can make a ‘short-cut’ [even without communicating], we are praised”.

(Male worker)
Given the assimilationist/monocultural nature of Japanese enterprises, newly arrived Vietnamese workers must come to terms quickly with all these factors. For some, especially the young or those who previously worked for Japanese companies in Vietnam, the process is relatively easy. But for others, especially those who previously worked in Vietnamese factories and contexts, changing work habits often requires much time and effort. Some simply adapt their overt behaviors, such as showing up at work in time, concentrating on assigned tasks, or following rules on the shop floor. This is a survival strategy rather than a change of values.

“At the beginning they followed the rules strictly. They were afraid to be sent home. During the second year they learn tricks and become less disciplined, because they know that they will not be fired. Especially because they live together, their lifestyle does not change and they teach each other tricks to bypass rules at the plant”.

(Female worker)

Group acculturation

As indicated in the interview above, close association among Vietnamese work-fellows is a strong factor for retaining the heritage culture. In fact, the way accommodation is arranged for workers strongly facilitates this association. Typically, employers arrange for workers of the same nationality to live together in one dormitory for the convenience of management. While this arrangement may facilitate intra-ethnic mutual support, it limits social engagement of the workers with the host community.

For the Vietnamese workers, housing in Japan becomes a cultural haven where home values, beliefs and practices are maintained through daily interactions with housemates. The structure of workers’ days is characterized by joint activities, from working at the enterprise to cooking Vietnamese food and spending leisure time together. Cultural conformity at the group level, a strong feature of the Vietnamese culture, can discourage attempts by group members to adopt new attitudes and behaviors of the host society.

The shortage of free time also prevents the workers from participating in social life outside the enterprise and dormitory. They often leave the dormitory at about 7 am and only return after 5 pm. If they work extra hours, return can be much later. Exhausted from work, the workers just want to rest, even during the weekend. Only on a few occasions did the workers allow themselves to do some sightseeing and usually not very far from their base.

In addition, the general social remoteness of local people, particularly to foreigners, further limits the workers’ acculturation. Language represents a strong barrier to integration of workers to their local neighborhoods and to Japanese society at large.

Individual factors

Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the workers are also important determinants of the acculturation progress. Among the workers in our sample, there was a clear segregation between those who had an urban background, higher education attainments, previous experiences of acculturation (working in Japanese corporations in Vietnam), and those without these characteristics. Workers of the former group showed much better social learning capacity and social integration, for example in acquiring various cultural values and beliefs in both the workplace and the local community. Some were able to use the Japanese language in their daily activities, make Japanese friends who were co-workers or local inhabitants, and felt comfortable with the working environment at the enterprises where they were employed. Younger workers were more likely to adapt fast than older workers.

Acculturation attitudes and strategies account for the most variations in cultural adaptation and integration. In the study, the workers who were proactive about acculturation (e.g. being determined to learn Japanese, seeing value in acquiring local cultural beliefs and practices, participating in social life at work or in local communities) achieved a more balanced life. Essentially, there are three types of attitudes towards acculturation. Adopting
terminology from Berry (1997), the first can be classified as assimilation attitudes. Workers of this group comprise the young people who are enthusiastic about “going native”.

“I am determined that making money is just one goal. Another purpose of my coming here is to learn the ‘modern’ features of this country… I observe and learn from people around me in every way”.

(Male worker)

“I have changed quite a lot because I have learned hard. I thought we needed to change in order to adapt; if not we could not live here. I did not see any problem in adapting good practices. This is good for myself, and I have also asked other Vietnamese workers to do the same”.

(Male worker)

The second type of attitude is separation. Workers of this group have critical views of some Japanese values and are more comfortable with retaining their heritage cultural norms.

“Honestly, I prefer Vietnamese values. I think Vietnamese are more sociable. Here people just mind their own business”.

(Male worker)

The third type includes integration attitudes, i.e. retaining the heritage culture while embracing certain host values. Compared to other categories, workers with integration attitudes sustain a more balanced life and thus gain more from their migration experiences.

“Of course there are many things that we can learn from the Japanese. I think I have become much more mature compared to my first year of settling in here… Yet we are Vietnamese anyway, and there are things that I do not want to change. I am comfortable living this way”.

(Male respondent)

Finally, language plays an important role. In the study, it was clear that migrants with sufficient Japanese language capacity had obvious advantages and were more likely to be successful, both in cultural adaptation and other areas of work and life.

“Without knowing the language, it is very difficult to live there [Japan]. I know some people [migrant workers] who for three years did not dare to go anywhere. They just stayed home [after work] and knew almost nothing of things around them”.

(Female worker)

2. Acculturation variations and migration outcomes

Acculturation processes of the workers in this research followed four major paths. The first, found among the majority, took a U-curve similar to the acculturation process experienced worldwide by international migrants. This process starts at a high point, characterized by optimism, and then experiences a decline, or depression, before leveling off. It then goes through a “recovery” stage and ends up more or less balanced (Lysgaard 1955).

The second process starts at a low point. Frustration begins immediately upon arrival and remains for a while before migrants get used to the situation. Workers deployed to rural areas are more likely to experience these feelings.

“In the first six months or so I was very depressed. Calling home I just said ‘Oh Dad, oh Mom, I want to go home’… With time, I was able to adjust… I thought I could overcome [the situation] if the time [to stay] was not too long”.

(Male worker)

The third progression begins in a similar fashion to the first, yet never reaches the recovery phase. This situation is found among the so-called failed migration cases, in which workers are either placed in inadequate jobs or when the enterprises where they work face financial difficulties.
I felt like I was in a prison, it was very painful. My boss was very difficult. Probably he was too stressed… Working hard ten hours a day and returning to the dormitory was no better… We Vietnamese did not talk to each other for months”.

(Male worker)

The last path is characterized by a flat line of frustration. While this happened to only a few workers, the result was a total migration failure.

“The life like we had, in a rural area, was full of difficulties. We enjoyed nothing, we were feeling frustrated all the time. The boss showed no concern for us… So after one year when they closed my contract [the company went bankrupt], I was happy that I could go home”.

(Male worker)

In another case, a female worker was deployed to work on a farm. Because of unfavorable contract terms, she received a much lower salary compared to other coworkers doing the same kind of work; she had to work extra hours without pay; she was not allowed to use a cell phone, and her passport was kept by her boss to prevent her from running away.

The different acculturation processes resulted in different migration outcomes. For the first two progressions, migration outcomes varied. The successes or failures of their migration were dependent on external and individual factors described in the previous sections. For the last two acculturation paths, migration outcomes were mostly negative. At best, the workers fulfilled their contracts and had some savings after repaying their debts, but they felt they had to swallow bitter experiences abroad. At worst, some returned home before finishing their contract, had debts instead of savings, or became run-away workers living at risk in the irregular sector.

There was a slight difference between the male and the female workers in our sample. Few female workers underwent the third and fourth acculturation paths. They showed more resilience in life and work on foreign soil. Compared to their male counterparts, they tended to preserve more of their own cultural heritage and acquired fewer of the cultural values of the host society. One possible explanation is that compared to men, female workers often adopt a more utilitarian approach towards migration: they concentrate on working, saving, remitting and returning home. They also spend less time on leisure activities, do less travel, and stick to their female fellows while abroad. These attitudes reflect the traditional social role prescribed to women, dictating the need for them to sacrifice their own social life to devote themselves to the welfare of their families.

3. Reintegration at the home community

All the migrant returnees that we met experienced difficulties upon returning to the familiar social and cultural milieu of their communities of origin. In the study, we found three kinds of attitudes towards returnees on the part of the home community. The first, and most common, attitude was optimistic, considering the returnees as agencies of “modernity” who would bring “modern” values to, and promote economic development for, the communities. It should be noted that for many local people, “modernity” or “modernization” are values, both material and cultural, attached to “Western” societies, which in this case includes Japanese society. The second attitude contained resentment, whereby the returnees were viewed as the “lucky ones” who had money and looked down on the local poor. The third attitude was openly hostile, judging the migrants as a threat to social stability by “importing” foreign values that would obliterate traditional ones. While the second and third kinds of attitudes were found only in a minority of local people, such reactions can give the migrant returnees a bitter sense of rejection and isolation.

The common process of readjustment of the returnees in the study took two paths. For most, returning to Vietnam resulted in a reverse cultural shock when values and behaviors cultivated abroad were not embraced by the local people.
“I am frustrated because my politeness and sincerity receive nothing in return”.

(Female worker)

“I do not dare to push too much to change co-workers’ work attitudes because they would say ‘ah, this guy is showing off; he’s strange; he is insane to think he is higher than us’.

(Male worker)

“What people in Japan see right, here they [Vietnamese] see wrong… and vice versa”.

(Male worker)

A simple solution adopted by some returnees is to give up and readjust their behaviors in order to melt back into the local culture. Yet there are a number of returnees who quickly overcame the cultural shock and determined to make a life for themselves and to push for possible changes. Belonging to this group were migrant returnees who sustained proactive attitudes towards work and life, both in Japan and Vietnam. Many had good savings and had acquired sufficient technical and life skills abroad.

Dzung returned home in 2008. With the savings and learnt skills from his work in Japan, he opened a company producing bags of recycled plastic to export to the Chinese market. Because of the economic crisis in 2009, he suffered a big loss. Not one to give up, Dzung then invested all his capital in a furniture business. He imports wood from South Africa and produces furniture for the national market. For the last two years, his business has been quite successful, rewarding him with an annual personal income of 840 million Dong (about US$42,000).

Yet only a few returnees are able to open their own businesses. To do so requires not only relatively large capital but also multiple skills that are not available to many migrant workers participating in the training and internship program. For example, one returnee dreamt of opening a consulting firm to support migrant workers going to Japan. However, after several failed attempts, he ended up working as a technician for a Japan-Vietnam joint venture in his home province. In fact, for most of the returnees, their occupational aspirations are often limited to gaining a job in a Japanese corporation. Indeed, compared to other local people, these returnees have many advantages stemming from their familiarity with Japanese work culture. The returnees interviewed for this paper confirmed that those who return from Japan were very likely be employed again by a Japanese company if they applied.

Probably the major contribution brought home by the migrant workers is social. It was notable that many migrants showed a strong admiration for Japanese social values, including, most notably the civic virtues of mutual respect among citizens, public order and legal compliance, honesty, dignity and responsibility, as well as other features such as politeness and cleanliness. Indeed, many work norms and attitudes such as work quality, self-discipline and prudence were also appreciated. All returnees wanted to apply at least some of these values into their immediate social surroundings, including their family, community and workplace.

“What I like most about the Japanese is their serious attitudes towards work and their personal responsibility about almost everything. I just want to tell anyone I know about these values, with the hope that they will follow them. I too always hold up these values in everything I do… I just want Vietnam to be ‘civilized’ like Japan… This is also what I will teach my future children”.

(Male worker)

The returnees fully realized that changes would take time, but some showed strong determination to cultivate these values consistently.

“I really want to promote good public attitudes among the people. I am ready to do it, step by step, with no expectation that things will change overnight. I will do the
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Easiest things first, things that people will more likely to accept, then introduce other things, one by one, over and over again. It will take ten years, twenty years.”

(Male worker)

Finally, many returnees exhibited certain economic and social entrepreneurial qualities. Their attempts to capitalize on their Japanese-built human capital, including learnt skills, to their own advantage and to improve the well-being of their families and communities, were impressive, even though the levels of success varied. One respondent expressed his desire to open an enterprise producing household goods from recycled materials. Another respondent was developing a plan to establish a garbage-processing company.

Ironically, female returnees were less active than their male counterparts. Although they sent more remittances home, they had less power over the money’s use, given their inferior status within a patriarchal family order. Often they let their parents spend the money for unproductive purposes, for example, to buy luxury goods, while they kept just a small amount for themselves, for their future marriage. Female returnees aged between 25 and 28 were focused on finding a husband and building their own families. Younger returnees were often thinking of migrating again. Some had already started to learn Korean in order to join the labor program to South Korea. The male returnees, in contrast, were much more proactive in using their savings and applying the knowledge and skills they had learned in Japan.

“Money? My father keeps it all. He just wants to improve the house, to live more comfortably... I asked him for some money to buy a motorbike so that I can go around and visit friends... My boyfriend [a migrant in Japan] will be back next year and we plan to get married... but I have to ask permission from my parents as we cannot decide ourselves.”

(Female worker)

Conclusion

The findings of this research suggest the importance of acculturation in the migration process. Migrants often experience a double “identity crisis”, one in the receiving country and one in the society of origin upon returning home. Better acculturation will help lessen these crises. Some critical determinants of acculturation can be influenced through programmatic measures to produce better migration outcomes.

First, it is very important to provide migrants with quality pre-departure training with a focus on language, cultural adaptation and legal matters.

Second, the safety deposit migrants must contribute is currently set too high, pushing most into heavy debt. This has serious consequences for migration outcomes. Better regulation and monitoring of recruitment agencies regarding migration fees is therefore critical. Prevention of “run-away” and “over-staying” migrants, which is the purpose of the safety deposit, could be achieved through other management and welfare measures. In addition, there should be special loan schemes for migrants so that they do not have to rely on private lending sources.

Third, there should be bilateral arrangements between the governments of Japan and Vietnam to ensure that the migration program will meet the development objectives of both countries, including the protection of migrants’ well-being and elimination of unauthorized conduct of migrants.

Fourth, the Vietnamese government should develop policies and collaboration with local communities and the private sector to make the reintegration of migrant returnees economically and socially beneficial for both the society and migrants.

Finally, while abroad, migrants should form extensive support networks, formally and informally, not only for protection but also for better integration and acculturation, in order to maximize the strengths
of both host and heritage values for the benefit of themselves and of the host society. This would help to make migration truly productive and generate cultural developments that benefit not only migrants but also the countries of origin and settlement.

NOTES
1 In assimilation theories, immigrants are expected to gradually abandon their heritage cultural and behavioral patterns to accommodate the dominant culture of new homelands. The process is seen as inevitable, progressive and irreversible. (Padilla & Perez, 2003).

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The Reflection of Indigenous Peoples’ Changing Identity in the Social, Cultural and Historical Contexts in the Cities of Sarawak

Cases Study: Kuching (including Lundu and Serian as satellite towns) and Miri cities

Albertus Yustinus Imas

Introduction

According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, a modern understanding of the Indigenous Peoples should consider the following: (1) their self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and their acceptance by the community as members; (2) their historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; (3) their strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; (4) their distinct social, economic, or political systems; (5) their distinct language, culture, and beliefs; (6) their forming non-dominant groups in society; and (7) their resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. According to Benedict Kingsbury (1995, 23), World Bank, in September 1991, promulgated a new operational directive which states that “the terms indigenous peoples, indigenous ethnic minority, tribal groups, and scheduled tribes describe social groups with a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society that makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the developing process. For the purpose of this directive, indigenous peoples is the term that will be used to refer to these groups”. Based on the aforementioned criteria and definition, it goes without saying that the Dayak ethnic group is an Indigenous Peoples because all the criteria and the definition stated by the UN is valid for them. For the sake of national security and development, the Malaysian government also provided for ethnic segregation in the Malaysian Constitution of 1957. Just as ethnic segregation in Malaysia was permanently defined in the Malaysian Constitution of 1957, the constitution also mentioned the Indigenous Peoples of Sarawak and Sabah in article 161 A [6] and [7], and named them “bumiputera”. This ethnic category was formulated to differentiate the indigenous peoples from the Chinese and Indians. In Peninsular Malaysia, bumiputera is applied to Malay and Native groups, whilst in Sarawak, the term is used for Malay, Sea Dayak (Iban), Land Dayak (Bidayuh and Selako), and upper river peoples which further consist of many subdivisions. Due to the ethnic segregation defined in the Malaysian Constitution of 1957, the status of indigenous people as Iban, Bidayuh, and Selako will still be embedded in their social life.

There is no official definition of Dayak in Malaysia, except for Malays. A Dayak is someone born of a parent from the Dayak lineage (Selako, Bidayuh, and Iban). He or she speaks Dayak vernaculars, and adheres to Dayak customs and traditions. This category is suited for the three dimensions of ethnicity identified by Fisherman (1977) in Appel and Myusken (1987, 12) to be paternity, patrimony, and phenomenology.

The Iban group still consists of several subdivisions divided in accordance with the rivers where they dwell, such as Iban Batang Lupar, Iban Batang Rejang, Iban Skrang, etc. From a linguistic perspective, the Iban tribe is included in the Ibanik language family. Bidayuh is divided into four different ethnic dialect groups, as follows: Bukar Sadong dialect (Serian District), Biatah dialect (Kuching District), Singai/ Jagoi dialect (Bau District), and Selakau/ Lara dialects (Lundu District), (Chang Pat Poh 1999, 19). In this paper, Bidayuh and Selako are distinguished based on the language they speak. Bidayuh speak dialects from the Bidayuhik language family, while Selako speak dialects like those of the Melayik language family. A large concentration of Iban such as, Sibu, Sankei, Kenowit, and Kapit dwell along the Rejang River basin. Their early old settlement found in Sri Aman and Betong divisions. The Bidayuh are mainly found in the Penrissen, Padawan, Serian,
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and Bau areas, whereas the Selako are mainly found in the Lundu area.

Being inland people, their culture, livelihood, and way of living and seeing the world were determined by nature. All these aspects intertwined with one another. For example, in Dayak’s cultivation practices, all customs and traditions related to natural elements applied from the time of the land survey up until harvesting time, e.g., gawai batu (stone feast) for Iban, naik dango (harvest feast) for Selako. Sounds of birds were used to determine the location of ground farming and the schedule to clear the land. Krober (1963) in Maffi (2005, 601) said, “Cultures are rooted in nature, and therefore can’t be completely understood except with reference to environmental or natural factors”. In rural life, several aspects of nature directly formed Dayak’s culture such as omens, dreams, rain at midday, a rainbow in the sky, and taboo. These aspects were able to trigger fear in Dayak who saw in them signs of calamity. Nonetheless, these elements were also able to predict the time for holding some activities like feasts, farming activities, hunting, and gathering. These aspects shaped the notion of how Dayak construed themselves.

In the rural areas, two physical environments were highly considered to have formed the social, cultural, and historical life of Dayak: shifting cultivation and longhouse. Shifting cultivation was the main livelihood of Dayak and also the core of Dayak culture, due to the whole process of shifting cultivation practices involving adat ceremonies based on natural elements. For instance, the gawai Naik Dango (harvest feast in Dayak Selako) and Gawai Batu (stone feast in Dayak Iban), which were conducted annually after harvest time, indicated a sign of respect for the spirits and nature. In this farming method, Dayak planted hill paddies with corn, cassava, and indigenous vegetables.

The longhouse was built as a fortress to protect Dayak, especially the women and children, from the attack of their enemies when headhunting practices among the Dayak were rampant in the past. Dayak’s enemies were the other Dayak sub-ethnic groups outside their community members; so, for instance, there were encounters between the Iban and Bidayuh. In addition, the longhouse also became the center of the socio-cultural activities (births, weddings, festive events, and death) of the inhabitants. As the center of the socio-cultural activities, longhouse became the city for Dayak in the past. When the city for Dayak served as their longhouse, every decisions for Dayak such as customary law, custom and tradition, schedule to open farming ground and arrange the feasts will be determined in the longhouse.

In modern society, a city is a physical environment for rapid social changes where multicultural interactions happen. Staying in a city for the first time may be a challenge for Dayak, though they prefer to live in this new living space. Having spent most of their lives in the rural area, Dayak have to learn many things about city life such as job specification, the urban people’s different perception of time compared to Dayak, and the difference in cultural behavior among those who live in a multicultural society. In order to keep their identity as Dayak, they needed to be empowered in the field of culture and identity when dealing with the influences of city life. This sort of empowerment should be clearly stated in the national education curriculum that applied as early as the first year of school.

Research objectives

a. To describe the situation and characteristic of Kuching (including Lundu and Serian towns) and Miri cities.
b. To describe the Selako, Bidayuh, and Iban cultures, their social situation and history during a specific period of time.
c. To describe how the three communities feel about living in the city.
d. To see and identify in the Iban, Bidayuh, and Selako communities their changing identities in the urban area (Kucing, Lundu, Serian, and Miri) due to the development of cities.

Significance

This study tries to look at the changes in the Dayak identity as an interior people after having had intensive contact with the urban environment. The basic idea of this paper is to see how city life

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shapes and influences the Dayak’s socio-culture and way of life. The expected contributions of city life to the Dayak community include: a new way of thinking, particularly their beginning to construe themselves as part of the wider community; and, how this new way of thinking enriches their life such that they maintain a great understanding of one another for the betterment of the community, and strengthen their awareness of their local knowledge and wisdom, for the sake of their own dignity, sovereignty and integrity.

Methodology

This research applied a qualitative method through observations and interviews that were supported by relevant theories. Since this study used a multi-disciplinary approach, relevant theories from various scholars are elaborated on throughout the different sections of this research. In-depth interviews with informants were also encouraged. Additional data and information considered as primary data and information were obtained from various documents and books. The field findings were collected through random sampling. There were 100 persons interviewed during the field work in Kuching, Lundu, Serian, and Miri. Twenty percent were recorded, while 30% of the interviews were done during working hours, and 50% were investigated and interviewed in the traditional markets, which sold local vegetables, fruits, and food, such as the Sunday Market in Kuching, and traditional markets in Serian and Lundu. Most of the interviews were conducted candidly to maintain a natural atmosphere.

Borneo – Sarawak

Sarawak measures 124,449 square kilometers. According to Mark Cleary and Peter Eaton (1992,18), “Since the ancient time, the central spine of rugged mountain with dense, impenetrable, and steamy rainforest which covers the middle island of Borneo had become the boundary of nation-states, Kalimantan, Indonesia and Sarawak-Sabah, Malaysia”. Brosius (1986, 175) said that “the forest and mountains were the repository for memories of past events”.

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The coming of Islam to Brunei in the 16th century marked the commencement of the dominance of the Malay Kingdom in Sarawak. On 24 September 1841, James Brooke was appointed Sarawak Governor and then assigned as Rajah. Then Brooke’s family governed Sarawak for 100 years, from 1841 to 1941. On 1 July 1946, Sarawak was proclaimed a British colony. Finally, on 16 September 1963, Sarawak joined Malaya to form the nation of Malaysia, (Tan Chung Lee 2006, 7-9).

The population of Sarawak by ethnic groups can be broken down as follows: Iban 713,421 (31%), Malay 568,113 (27%), Chinese 577,646 (23%), Bidayuh 198,473 (8%), Melanau 123,410 (5%), and others 156,436 (6%) for a total population of 2,354,048 persons (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2010).

The city as a place of rapid social change

The city is characterized by high population density, diverse social strata, the specialization of jobs, and a consumer society that provide the promise of prosperity and livelihood improvement. The specification of jobs in the urban area has established a pattern of complex relationships with the isolation of groups, depending on their job specification and social status. This phenomenon tends to cause persons with the same kinds of jobs to be more closely associated with one another. Due to the specification of their jobs, people can easily change their social class.

Today, the main problems in urban areas are traffic congestion, flooding, garbage, disease, joblessness, slum dwellers, squatter settlements, and social tension. The increase in vehicles and population growth do not balance with the increase in physical infrastructure such as roads, housing, and other facilities. This condition has been aggravated by limited job availability, which ultimately triggers unemployment and criminality.

In order to be sustainable, the modern city must heavily depend on the network system in the periphery, namely, the suburban areas, villages, or settlements in the vicinity. The network system consisting of economic forces, labor, education,
and trade functions as a connective tissue that feeds the city through the network of commuting goods and people.

**Urbanization**

Urbanization is defined as a process of growing the urban population as a result of the movement of the rural people into the urban areas. According to Ridu (2003, 21) “What we need to do is to enhance the urbanization of rural life through rural-urban convergence characterized by towns, rural non-farmers, and fading rural urban distinction”. Most of Dayak’s villages in Sarawak are provided with good transportation networks to cities that enable villagers to live conveniently as commuters. As commuters, the villagers can commute easily from village to the city and head back to their village again at the same day. In the village, they can work at their home to provide goods, handicrafts, local vegetables, etc., and bring the goods to the city in the morning; and then in the afternoon, they can be back again in their villages. This way of living and working should be encouraged for Dayak, due to the scarcity of land in the city and expensive housing options.

**Kuching City**

“Kuching derived from the mata kuching (cat’s eye) – fruit tree (*Nephelium natalense*),” so says Alice, Yen Ho (2004, 10). This city is situated in the middle of Sarawak River which has a number of bridges built by the state to provide access to either side of the river, making it very convenient.

Kuching consists of two administrative areas administered by a *Datuk Bandar*, legally called “Mayor” in Kuching South and “Commissioner” in Kuching North. The Northern City of Kuching ever since the era of James Brooke (1841-1868) had become the administrative area. As the administrative area, James Brooke established houses and government buildings for his personnel offices and homes, this area was the center of Brooke’s administrative kingdom. To develop his kingdom, Brooke encouraged migrant workers to come to Sarawak. They lived in many kampongs situated in the northern area. Meanwhile, since the early years of the city, the southern area had been busy with business activities. This area is now better known as the city center.

Nowadays, Dayak come to Kuching as commuters, as temporary or permanent residents. As temporary residents, most of them live in rented rooms located on the second or third storey of buildings, although there are some employers who also provide rooms for their workers. These rooms are sealed and bulkhead without any window. A narrow alley stands between each of the rooms. There are three doors that should be passed through to come to the rooms from downstairs. Each door has to be locked for security purposes. For the workers, these rooms are but a place in which to sleep. They are very similar to human cages. The rooms’ building is the zone of the working people’s homes. Meanwhile, permanent residents live in the residential zone and in single family dwellings. This is the zone of the high class.

To maintain the sustainability of urban life in Kuching, the Government has encouraged the establishment of rural-urban interaction by enhancing the quality of physical infrastructure such as roads and bridges, water resources development, sewerage, the maintenance of high conservation areas for tourism purposes, and agricultural development. In the urban area, the main attractive amenities such as the university, tourism objects, bus stations, supermarkets, and traditional markets are built outside the city center. For Dayak, this condition is a blessing in disguise because they can access these amenities easily. For instance, they can go to university from their village, and buy food, clothing, and household needs by commuting. This set-up is able to accelerate social transformation and erase the difference between rural and urban areas.

**Lundu Town**

Lundu is a satellite town of Kuching which is located in Southwest Sarawak, at the border of Sambas District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. There are several tourism objects in this area such as Gunung Gading National Park, attractive Siar...
and Pandan Beaches and the peoples with variety of culture and way of life. From Kuching, Lundu is able to be reached in one hour.

This sleepy up-country town is the nearest town from the Dayak Selako’s settlements. It is also the nearest place where Selako are able to feel the city life and intensive social interaction with outsiders. Most of Dayak Selako commute to sell their goods and forest produce. The local government provided a place for Selako to sell local fruits and vegetables to the outsiders. This place became a place to make social interaction between Selako people and the outsiders.

Serian Town

Serian Town is located at the Sanggau District Border, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. It is about 65 Km from Kuching. Serian is also a satellite town of Kuching. This town has become the most important place for Bidayuh to interact. The town is very well connected to its rich hinterland, both by road and by river.

It can be reached in a half-hour or one hour by vehicles from Kuching city center. As satellite town, Serian has potentially become the commuters’ zones for their exposure to urban expansion.

Based on the Yearbook of Statistics Sarawak 2011, the Serian district population was 90,763, of which about 65% were Bidayuh and the rest consist of Chinese, Iban, Malay and India.

Miri City

Miri is located near the beach. The term “Miri” was derived from the name of Miri’s native, known as “Miriek”. Europeans inadvertently changed the name Miriek to Miri. Miri’s history is closely related to the history of the petroleum industry in Sarawak. On 10 August 1910, the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company found oil in Canada Hill, overlooking the small fishing village of Miri. “At the time of the spudding in of Well No.1, Miri consisted of about 20 scattered houses and two Chinese shops” (Harper 1972, 24).

In the mid-1920s, Miri became the administrative center of Miri and Baram regions. In the 1970s, Miri was also the center of a major timber industry. Baram River, the second largest river in Sarawak, became the transport artery that linked inland forests to the coastal ports, thereby facilitating the conveyance of humans and timber. Owing to the support from these two main resources, Miri grew from a fishing village into one of the modern cosmopolitan cities in Sarawak within a short period.

Today, Miri, with an area of 977.43 Square Kms, is inhabited by several ethnic groups. The population by ethnic groups is as follows: Iban 90,649; Chinese 77,183; Malay 45,884; and other native ethnic groups, as many as 54,584 people (year 2010 census).

Who are the Indigenous Dayak People?

Who are the indigenous Dayak people? What information do we use to categorize the Dayak? How have their territories formed their identity? In the past, the notion of Dayak as backward, aggressive, fierce, cruel, ruffian, poor, stupid, uncivilized, pagan, drunken and head-hunting (Gomes 2007, 1) gave them a stigma. As a result, Dayak were marginalized, humiliated, and ignorant in all aspects of life. They had to struggle for their dignity, sovereignty, and integrity, and their quality of life was so low. In mid 1980, one of the prominent Dayak figures in West Borneo said, “If it was possible for me to fire myself as a Dayak, I would like to fire myself; but I cannot do that. Therefore, I have to empower myself so that the other ethnic groups will respect me as a human being”. Due to their history, how Dayak were colonized, marginalized, manipulated, and humiliated by the Malay Sultanate, ultimately led to the increase in their sense of kinship and solidarity, which in turn created ‘a shared us feeling’ a feeling that they had the same fate and destiny which united them as one group, Dayak.

Aside from their cultural values, Dayak also had a shared belief, common values, and attitudes derived from natural elements. In the past, these
shared beliefs were able to trigger fear and anxiety among them. Recently, many Dayak from the younger generation did not allow themselves to be dictated to by these natural elements because Dayak who had been to the city started to realize that their fear did not have a strong basis. They also witnessed how their forefathers feared such animals (certain birds, crocodile, insects etc.), which, in the city, were stored in the museum. Still, some Dayak from the older generations continued to allow these natural elements to influence their belief system.

**Dayak Selako**

Based on their language differences, the discussion on Selako and Bidayuh are separated in this paper. According to several linguists, Dayak Selako speak one of the dialects belonging to the Malayik language family, while Bidayuh speak Bidayuhik (see Hudson (1970, 1978) and Collins (1999a, 1999b, 1999c) in Albertus (2004)). Language has strong dimensions that differentiate human identities. Fishman (1977 in Appel and Muysken (1987, 13)) stated “Language is the recorder of paternity, the expresser of patrimony and the carrier of phenomenology”. As the recorder of paternity, language is able to record values, ways of life, and core cultures from forefathers to their descendants. It influences culture and thought. As the expresser of patrimony, language becomes a means of communication to express feelings and cultural practices. It facilitates the learning of new values and culture as the legacy of collectivity and learning. As the carrier of phenomenology, language provides meaning to the culture and values inherited from the forefathers.

The starting point of Selako’s migration to Lundu was the Sajingan area, Sambas region, West Kalimantan. Schneider (1974,195) stated that “The migration occurred in two waves: the Year 1830, Selako Gajekng who settled in Kampung Sedemak and around it, and the Year 1871 Selako Sangkuku who settled in Kampung Biawak, Pueh and around it”.

According to Nek Dewa, the informant from Sajingan village, “A group of persons in Dayak Selako community who can apply the customs, tradition, and customary law is usually more respected in their community because they were considered as having the responsibility to regulate the relationship between man and man, man and nature, and man with God. This group was called Salako Gajekng and the rest of the group is Salako Sangkuku”. This group represented the Selako community in general.

**Rumah bantang** or the longhouse of Selako people was the center of their culture. It was associated with socio-cultural activities such as rituals and festive events.

During the reign of James Brooke as Rajah of Sarawak (1841-1868), Dayak Selako still conducted barter for their forest produce to purchase their households needs, as noted by Henriette (2008, 119): “Dayak chief with a number of his people come to Kuching to pay their rice tax, or purchase clothes, tobacco, gongs, gunpowder, whatever the bazaar possessed which they valued, to exchange for those things, they brought with them beeswax, dammar, honey, or rattan”. From the sixties to the seventies, Dayak Selako planted palm oil, pepper, and rubber trees which provided a steady source of cash. Palm oil, pepper and rubber trees plantation were a form of monoculture plantation because other vegetation could not be allowed to grow in the same area. This monoculture plantation for getting cash made it necessary for the barter system of the past to be replaced by the currency trading system.

The Bidayuh population in Lundu region is around 12,034 (year 2010 census). This figure classified Selako and Bidayuh as one group. In 1970, Schneider (1974) recorded the population of Selako to be 4,207 persons, which showed that in 40 years, the Selako community increased twofold.

**Dayak Iban**

Iban moved from West Kalimantan to Sarawak as early as 1540. They entered Sarawak by way of the low-lying watershed Kapuas Between Batang Lupar / Batang Ai’. After the 1880s, Iban populated the coastal region toward Miri (Samuel 2005, 42).
Iban are familiar with the myth of Keling (the god of adventure and warfare) and Raja Berani (the King of Bravery). Keling and Raja Berani are the spirit of Iban to move and to walk (bejalai). Bejalai is a form of the Iban tradition, which is allegedly used as a driving force for Iban to become the most expansive and aggressive people in Sarawak. Bejalai means “walking”, which was the way the Iban looked for farming ground, hunting, and gathering spaces. To it is attributed the Iban’s spread to the whole Sarawak region within the shortest possible time.

Two aspects led to the emergence of Iban’s customs and traditions in shifting cultivation. Firstly, Iban believed that the forest and land were always inhabited by invisible creatures (the spirit of their ancestors and deities). Therefore, they should ask permission from these spirits/deities before clearing the land. Secondly, the Iban also believed that paddy or rice had a soul or spirit; therefore, a form of respect and gratitude toward the spirits should take place in the form of a feast, for instance. One of the feasts was a stone feast (gawai batu). Gomes (2007, 48), wrote “Gawai Batu takes place before the farming operations begin, and is in honour of Pulang Gana (the god of the land), who lives in the bowels of the earth, and has the power to make the land fruitful or unfruitful”.

James Brooke (1841-1868) encouraged the Iban move to Kuching for the position of Sarawak Rangers. The reason behind this was that James Brooke wanted to get the protection of Iban, especially after the insurrection conducted by the Chinese gold miners in Bau in 1857. The movement of Iban to Kuching mostly happened due to the rubber economy which peaked in the 1900s. However, from 1947 to 1980, the increase in the number of Iban that moved from the villages to the cities was relatively very small because city life did not support Iban’s farming livelihood. Based on the official statistic data, in 1947 Iban in the urban areas comprised just 0.9%, while in 1980 just 4.8% of the total Iban population (Department of Statistics Kuching in James Masing 1988, 57).

As time passed, Iban learned the market mechanisms of working and selling their goods. Presumably, city life appeared more promising than staying at the longhouse. As the number of well educated Iban increased in the city, many of them got decent jobs, conducted business activities, and obtained employment with a fixed salary.

The main reason for life in Kuching to be preferred was that everything was available, such as adequate food, lots of ways to earn money, medical services, and education. The close proximity between the villages and Kuching was also an important reason for Iban to come to Kuching, either as daily commuters or residents.

Iban with permanent jobs in Kuching chose to live outside the urban center and to stay at the suburban areas (commuters’ zone) such as Tabuan Dayak, Sekama, and Sekandis. Nowadays, there are also some Iban in Kuching, among them prominent figures during the early days of Sarawak Independence. These are rich families who own hotels, supermarkets, oil palm plantations, etc. In Kuching, Iban are divided into three social ranks: low class, middle class, and high class. Unfortunately, however, their incomes are not known. Most Iban choose to commute from the village to the city to do business, due to the proximity of the villages to the city.

Dayak Bidayuh

The Bidayuh people also originated from West Kalimantan, Indonesia. According to Nais (1983, 54) in Albertus (2003, 2) “‘Dayuh’ itself means far-inland or interior area. Bidayuh means having the elements of Dayuh in custom, culture, language, prestige, etc.” Meanwhile, Geddes (1954, 6) said that “‘Bidayuh’ means people of the interior”. From these discourses, we can make one conclusion: that ‘Bidayuh’ is a person or group of persons who live in the interior.

Robert Jacob Ridu (2003,16) stated that, “Many writers and adventurers described Bidayuh as introvert, meek, docile, weak, friendly, and tender persons. They spent mostly of their lifetime in the upper rivers, headwaters, and mountainous areas”. Bidayuh are also a religious society. They believe in deities who live in the uplands and forest area for
instance, Tampa Raiyuh (creator) (Geddes 1954, 25), Devata (from devata of Hindu deity) (Roth 1968, 7), Jevana (from devata of Hindu deity) (Gould 1909, 38), Topah (supreme being), etc. It was very possible that the presence of Bidayuh in the hills and the upper rivers was also motivated by a religious attitude, which was embedded in the Bidayuh people. Today, many Bidayuh people are converts to Christian religions such as Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant due to the fact that during the Brooke era (1841-1941), many missionaries came to their villages to introduce Christian values.

Bidayuh believe that rice or paddy has a soul or spirit. Patrick Rigep Nuek (2005, 9) wrote “The Bidayuh treats rice with respect, for fear the next harvest that would be a poor one. They respect rice as if it had a life and soul Ieng sumuk babai (the name of the soul of rice)”. Nowadays, many Bidayuh live in the city, either as residents (permanent or temporary) or as commuters. Bidayuh as residents commute as well with a difference compared to the real commuter. They commute simply because they want to visit their family members in the village and for recreational purposes. As commuters, on certain days, Bidayuh come to Kuching to sell their crops and farm produce. In Kuching, government has set up a storefront for villagers to sell their crops, a traditional market which is famously known as the “Sunday Market”. Every weekend, the Sunday Market is full of people from various backgrounds selling a variety of foods, forest produce, and handicrafts.

Bidayuh who live as residents of Kuching are divided into two categories. One consists of those who have lived in Kuching for a long time and hold a permanent job, e.g., teachers, lecturers, police officers, civil servants in governmental agencies and politics, midwives, nurses and doctors in hospitals, and security officers. The second group is made up of temporary residents. This group mostly consists of the younger generation, those who have just arrived in Kuching and have already gotten jobs but still do not have houses. For a while, they lease houses or rooms available in Kuching.

How Dayak feel about living in the city

In Kuching (including Serian and Lundu towns) and Miri Cities, Dayak could be divided into three groups: First would be the group that has the status of permanent resident in the city. The second group would consist of Dayak who are temporary residents, while the third would be the commuters.

In general, permanent residents have a permanent job in the city, or have second and third generation descendants living in the city. They are able to adjust well to city life but their ties with their own homeland remain strong. Alim Mideh, a Bidayuh Dayak from Serikin, said, “In my opinion, Kuching is a better place to live in because all amenities needed such as education, health, and the market are available. Nowadays, I stay in Kuching. Anyway, I also still head back regularly to my village because most of my family members still live there. Besides that, my village is able to be reached from Kuching in just one hour by car”.

When I asked about the influence of the city on the young generation of Bidayuh, a prominent Bidayuh, Patau Rubis, said, “The young generation of Bidayuh who live in the city are different from the Bidayuh in the village who still respect their parents and cultural values, and are still trustworthy. The young Bidayuh in the city do not respect local wisdom anymore. This is not a matter of changing identity, but is just a social disease due to the city’s influences”.

The second Dayak community group consists of temporary residents. This group usually includes young Dayak people who have already graduated from college or high school, or villagers who seek jobs in the city. This group mostly stays in the zone of the working people’s homes to have easy access to their jobs. Their homes are in several storey buildings which provide rooms for rent in the second or third floor/storey. The function of the room is to provide a place to sleep. Roffina, an Iban girl from Miri said, “If I had a choice where to stay and work, I would chose to stay in the village rather than in this city. Living in this city is expensive, but I live in Miri because there is a
job in this city; anyway, when I get older or start receiving a pension, I’ll go back to my village again”.

Midi Jonek, a Bidayuh who always commutes to Kuching said, “Nowadays, I am able to survive and live comfortably in the city because the roads and bridges reach the rural areas as well, so I can move from my village to Kuching in just 30 to 60 minutes. In Kuching I have a house, although to live in the city is a better choice for personal reasons, especially because you gain access to better education, job opportunities, and a career. I can assure you that my children will get better education and health”. He added, “Recently, I experienced having no boundary between rural and urban any longer. I usually bring my laptop to my village from where I can access the Internet for 24 hours. Therefore, good transportation and technology information fade the gap between rural and urban areas”.

As soon as they experienced the process of transition to city life, Dayak nearly never practice their tradition and culture any longer; but this condition never changes their identity as Dayak because they are majority in number and there is strict ethnic segregation in Malaysia that separates citizens into different ethnic group categories.

Conclusion

Since time immemorial, Dayak have been spending most of their lifetimes in and with nature. Therefore, their way of life, how they think, and see the world have also been determined by their culture and nature-based belief systems. Their close association with natural elements has earned for Dayak the title “inland/interior people”.

In recent years, the urbanization and modernization of the rural areas, and the industrialization of natural resources through development programs provided them opportunities to interact with the outside world beyond their own community members. In the Sarawak region, transportation and communication networks connect all places and humans across the region.

In Kuching, the improvement of physical infrastructure such as, roads, bridges, storage facilities; water resources development, drainage, sewerage, river conservation and communication systems; social infrastructure such as health and medical facilities which consist of hospitals, dispensaries, maternity and health centers; educational components of infrastructure consisting of primary, secondary and technical schools, vocational schools and universities, as well as electricity, water supply, community centers, and security services have become the main attractions of city life. To a certain extent, these developments are also expected to reach the rural areas—a condition that has the potential power to reduce and fade the differences between urban and rural areas.

Population growth due to urbanization has caused certain areas which were originally rural zones, to turn into developing zones of the city. There is a tendency in Kuching for the city center to expand its area by invading the outer areas. For the Dayak people, especially those who now live in the city permanently and have disconnected themselves or are less related to their original homeland in the rural areas, this progress has become a blessing in disguise. It has given them the opportunity to revitalize their own roots and basic identity as Dayak, which have already faded due to the influence of modernization in the city. For commuters, this condition potentially improves their quality of life due to the increase in business activities. The temporary residents have also started to try harder to improve their qualifications by empowering themselves through formal education, as stated by Peter Minos (2003, 103) “Good formal education is our savior from economic backwardness and poverty and a vital vehicle for our advancement and progress”.

Urban development and progress, in fact, have positive and negative impacts on Dayak as they have provided them enough preparation to live in the city, like well-educated men and women who regard the city as the living space to get a better life. Meanwhile, Dayak who do not get sufficient preparation will turn out to be the hard worker...
with a low salary for whom city life will be a burden. Such situations are able to change their identity to feel positively about the community and to feel negatively about the challenges of city life and job specifications due to their preference for city living. City life will aggravate their inherited local values and wisdom acquired from the village.

The language spoken has also an important role in the identity of Dayak because while the common language in the city is the Sarawak Malay language, Dayak still use their vernacular when they get together by themselves. The use of the Sarawak Malay language will never disappear because the Malaysian government has started to determine the Malay language as the national identity of the Malaysian people.

Actually, there are many similarities among the three Dayak ethnic groups (Selako, Iban and Bidayuh). One similarity is their practicing egalitarian principles based on their self-confidence to show that they are able to do everything themselves without any help from outsiders. This indicates that all Dayak are supposedly equal. The movement of Dayak from rural to urban areas is also motivated by the egalitarian principle.

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MBAL ALUNGAY BISSALA: Our Voices Shall Not Perish*
Listening, Telling, Writing of the Sama Identity and Its Political History in Oral Narratives

Mucha-Shim Lahaman Quiling

\[\text{Allungay bissala, alanyap na bangsa.} \]
Lost language, banished people

(an old Sama Dilaut adage)

Mba’ Alungay Bissala (Our Voices Shall Never Perish) retells the everyday politics of the Sama people in the shared borders of Southeast Asia. Through their narratives and testimonials, the Sama peoples’ stories in the sahed borders of the Philippines, the Indonesian and the Malaysian Borneos, are woven in ordinary people’s discourses into a new perspective toward understanding the sea-nomadic existence and the sea-faring peoples’ experiences of war, migration, and the challenges to social integration as that, rather than purely descriptive ethnography, is a political discourse. Historical memory especially of pre-colonial Southeast Asian maritime society aided in the building and redefining of the regional and national identities of Sama-diaspora-communities, and locates this ethnic and religious community in the construction of cultural majorities and minorities. This descriptive and exploratory study aimed to answer the problems: Does a traditional primordial bond exist among the Sama diaspora in Southeast Asia? If so, to what extent has modernization impacted on this traditional bond? This study attempted to reconstruct the olden-day “homeseas” — as that ancestral domain and socio-psychological and physical territory — lived by the ancestors, as remembered by the present generation of Sama elders that remain extant in oral narratives. It revisited the Sama (or Sinama-speaking) diaspora communities inhabiting the Philippine-Indonesian-Malaysian basin from time immemorial to the present, in the process rediscovering the social-economic, ecological-spiritual and politico-communal life as defining elements of a shared ‘primordial bond’. Embarking from the shores of Sulu in southern Philippines and sailing through olden-day routes and stations of contact, this tour was able to re-establish those social networks that re-bonded the Suluan Sama with the rest of the Southeast Asian Sama in Eastern Kalimantan of Indonesia, particularly the City of Tarakan, and part of Eastern Borneo of Malaysian territory. The same social networks and ancestral links have been preserved by language and the common sea of collective memory in everyday narratives and stories.

Research Problem:

The study-tour largely relied on personal contacts and social networks, and attempted to reconstruct the olden-day “homeseas” lived in by the ancestors as remembered by the present generation of Sama elders that remain extant in oral narratives. It revisited the Sama (or Sinama-speaking) diaspora communities inhabiting the Philippine-Indonesian-Malaysian basin from time immemorial to the present, in the process rediscovering the social-economic, ecological-spiritual and politico-communal life as defining elements of a shared ‘primordial bond’. Embarking from the shores of Sulu in southern Philippines and sailing through olden-day routes and stations of contact, this tour was able to re-establish those social networks that re-bonded the Suluan Sama with the rest of the Southeast Asian Sama in Eastern Kalimantan of Indonesia, particularly the City of Tarakan, and part of Eastern Borneo of Malaysian territory. The same social networks and ancestral links have been preserved by language and the common sea of collective memory in everyday narratives and stories.

Research Objectives:

In summary, the general objective of this project was to present a descriptive narrative of the past and present situation of the Sama people in Southeast Asia, particularly in the shared waters of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Specifically, it aimed to present such narrative from the perspective and voice of the ethnic communities themselves, in a format and language familiar and accessible to grassroots communities.

Much may have been written and reported about the ethnic communities in Southeast Asia, and these are mostly social scientific accounts by foreign anthropologists and sociologists who have ventured
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to study ethnic communities in dispassionate, non-engaged and objective academic researches, armed with social theories and scientific methodologies that are out to be experimented and proven. Yet, not much has been heard from the ethnic communities themselves and their candied accounts of everyday life experiences. As an engaged and subjective endeavor, this study hoped to fill this information gap and, more so, to produce a “report” that captured the “voices from the streets” in a language familiar and accessible to non-literate and non-academic communities themselves, which certainly have a lot to do and learn about their history, culture, and their shared narrative of the present.

Research methodology:

The main research method used was participant observation and personal journaling through story-telling and the recording of everyday voices. Since this project was a personal documentation of my journey retracing the route of migration, revisiting the settlements, and, as close as possible, re-living the maritime life of the sea nomadic ancestors, the main research method used was participant observation and personal journaling through recordings with a video camera, my principal means of data gathering and storage.

Secondary data utilization
Data from previous researches and fieldwork provided a secondary information base, not only for backgrounds but for the major text, necessary for an in-depth understanding and reconstruction of the story of the sea-nomadic people. These researches included those conducted under the auspices of Lumah Ma Dilaut Center for living traditions from 2004 through 2007 (November-December) and in the summers (April and May) of 2008, 2009 and 2010. In these studies, substantial data on indigenous knowledge systems, the philosophy of sea-nomadism, and religious beliefs and spiritual practices among the Sama of Sulu seas were collected in three case villages in Basilan (Barangay Tampalan), Sulu (Barangay Laminusa) and Zamboanga (Barangay Si Mariki), all of them provinces located in Southwestern Mindanao.

Through the API fellowship, a subsequent study tour and field immersions (and exposure) were done in Kota Tarakan in East Kalimantan Indonesia, alongside brief visitations to the coastal Bajau village in Sabah, North Borneo, to create a three-country triangulated comparison of the Sama Dilaut in Southeast Asia. Because a researcher’s visa was not granted by Malaysia, however, the Sabahan tryst was excluded from the data presentation, except when a contextual perspective was necessary to bring in the situation of the Sama people in that area.

Previous studies and knowledge on the subject
This researcher built-up on the experiences and knowledge gained from previous research projects [i.e. “Rephotography and History of Sulu Maritime life of 1898 and 1998” for Ateneo de Manila (2000), “Evolving a Development Framework for Sama Dilaut Diaspora” for Hope for Change, Incorporated (2002) and “Sama Dilaut Indigenous Knowledge Systems” for Lumah Ma Dilaut (2007-2008)] was concurrently part of her doctoral research paper in the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies [ICRS] on the social-religious history of Southeast Asian sea-people. The study incorporated related historical documents and archival materials made available at the Ateneo de Manila University and in Philippine national libraries, specifically from collections on the Philippine Islands series by Blair and Robertson's, and accounts in the travelogues of various American colonial government officials in Sulu and Mindanao.

Research Locale
The research locale is limited to purposively chosen sample communities of Sama in Sabah, North Borneo in Malaysia, and East Borneo in Kalimantan in Indonesia. Field immersions and exposure in Kota Tarakan in East Kalimantan Indonesia was done from October 15, 2011 to May 14, 2012 in Indonesia.

Discussion
In discussing the Sama history and identity, one ought to start by describing the ethnonym and enumerate some basic anthropological and demographic information about the Sama. Nimmo
and Cojuanco for the Sama Dilaut, and Nolde and Stacey for the Bajo of Indonesia are among the good sources.

Following the disruptions and progress in history, it must be reckoned that there have been changes and shifts in the construction of the Sama identity and the way their history is being told. Yet what seems salient has been the common understanding that the oldest account of the Sama presence in Sulu, as based on the linguistic studies of Kemp Pallesen (in Cojuanco 2007) and corroborated in the epic account of one of the numerically major groups of Muslims in Mindanao, the Ilanun, that the Sama were aboriginals of Sulu. In the Ilanun genealogy of the epic hero, Bantugan, mention of the marriage of the princely characters of the People of the Lake to an equally revered Sama princesses is projected to have transpired in 840 AD (Monib Abbas, Ilanun epic researcher, posted in “Moro History and Culture”, 2011), which date tallies with that of the M’anao royal informants of Margarita Cojuanco in her book “The Samal” (2007). Other writers such as Harry Arlo Nimmo and James Warren debunk the claims of Sopher who believed in the Johore original dispersion theory. Instead, they support the hypothesis that the Sama are aboriginals of Sulu and their coming predated that of the Tausug sultanate.

On the other hand, basing on genealogical accounts of Sulu and Borneo royalty, some writers believe in the Johore original dispersion theory and support the sultanate claim of Sulu as that of being one hegemonic race or nation, namely the “Tau Suluk” or “Tausug”. They also place the Sama origin to have not happened until later in the 14th to the 15th century. Accordingly, the mass exodus of the Sama people from Johore was associated with their desire to flee from subjection by the Brunei Moro king, to whom a number of Bornean nobilities had removed their allegiance. The Sama were allegedly either slaves or freemen subjects of the Bornean princes, who established the Sulu sultanate. The former in effect transferred their loyalty to the King of Jolo. In one tarsila it is claimed that the Bajao “shifted allegiance” from the Brunei kingship of Johore to the Sulu sultan during the Brunei-Sulu conflict. In mainstream Philippine history, this is usually taught in schools as the “coming of Bornean datus”. While this could indeed be true, neglecting to acknowledge the incidents prior to the Brunei-Sulu royal debacle, results to a careless impression that the Sama or Bajau were not only subjects and corsairs [opportunistic military missionaries] of the Sulu sultan, but were also physically imported by the royalty to Sulu. While there is no way of exactly verifying this, we can only surmise that this view of history seems to have succeeded in blurring and veiling the fact that Sama people were already in Sulu before the sultanate was brought to our shores by the Arab missionaries and Borneo princes. Consequently, this also seems successful in diminishing the Sama people’s stake and prior claims to Sulu, and their centrality to the making of its history, ergo the justifiability of their being subjects of the Sultan. This particular historical slant has been also observed by Nolde and Stacey in their study of everyday politics among Bajo of Indonesia particularly in relation to the local sultanates of Bone, Luwu, Tidore, Bugis, and others. The hegemonic claims of royalty over the territory and its sweeping subjection of minority ethnics into their realms have been widely popularized and reproduced in myths and popular tales of the Sama people around the SEA basin [i.e., Salsila Laminusa and L’Galigo].

In Sulu and Mindanao, there are, presently, at least two contending views of the Sama identity. One supports the hypothesis that the Sama are a distinct and separate grouping belonging to the thirteen ethnolinguistic communities, in the same classification level and category as the Tausug; that the recent nationalist movements have collectively labeled as Bangsamoro nation. In western Mindanao alone, there are at least four such ethnolinguistic communities: namely the Sama, the Tausug, the Yakan, and the Jama Mapun. In this classification, the sea-faring and semi-nomadic subcultural grouping Bajau is held as separate from the land-based Sama. Another ideological view classify the Sama as a subgrouping of the Tausug, therefore, an ethnic classification belonging to a bigger collective of the Bangsa Sug or Tausug nation. This view is popularized and supported in myths like the Johore original
dispersal theory and endorsed by well-loved and much-quoted Moro historians Cezar Adib Majul and also Najeeb Saleebey). It is worth noting that the Johore Original Dispersal Theory however has been debunked in findings of deep ethnography and linguistics, by foreign researchers an analysis also taken by contemporary historians who remind us of the value of the process of history as “long duree”, where the lasting impacts of events making up history in the long run should be more decisive in shaping the narrative landscape of a certain civilization, rather than basing it from an atomistic appreciation of isolated events as the unit of historical analysis. We are also cautioned from being overly passionate, which could risk our turning dogmatic and ahistorical in our appraisal of social changes. But these too are easily dismissed as that of “colonial” vantage, because these historians are mostly western educated and foreign, mainly Americans and Europeans, scholars and Philippine educated local historians usually reading from colonial records and quoting mainstream (i.e., Philippine) history.

**Religious marginalization**

Meanwhile, it is also important to establish the link of the Sama identity to the first propagators of Islam, the Hadrami missionaries from Yemen, consisting of the shariffs and sayyeds, especially since the first known mosque in Sulu was in Bohch Indangan in Simunul island. It was established by a man known only by the generic referent as the “Learned” of “Makdum” (i.e. “Shaikh Makdum”). Up till today, a number of “tampat” or revered graves of local saints are found in traditionally Sama island communities, one of them being that of Tuan Awliya Imam Hassan of Laminusa island. What is interesting to know is that the present strain of Islam that many Sama community still practice is a syncretic variant of the sufi tradition, proof that the old teachings of the early Muslim Sufi saints are still extant and rooted in the Sama religious tradition. The variant of Islam as Sufi influenced is, however, considered by the Ahlus Sunna (i.e., sunni Islam) that majority people in Sulu follow, as “folk islam” and a form or bid’a or innovation, which is also taken to mean a “form of deviance”.

**Economic disenfranchisement**

Another historical gap that needs unearthing consists of the travails of the Sama Ba’ngingi. The conventional view places these fierce marauding and maritime experts to be newcomers in Sulu Zone, gaining fame and attention only toward the end of the 18th century. Before that, they were as common and random as any Sinama-speaking ordinary fishers and slave raiders “infesting” the SEA peninsular waters. Due to the boom of trade and the increasing influence of the Sulu sultan, the Ba’ngingi found their economic use as retainers and patrons, supplying marine commodities and delivering slaves to the Sulu kingdom and serving the naval force of the royal army, earning them the honor “defender of faith” (Majul). Toward the close of the 19th century, however, alongside the decline of the sultanate in what Anne Reber (1966) called “the decay of [maritime] economy” was the gradual marginalization of the Sama raja laut (masters of the sea) and the easing out of the Sama Ba’ngingi and the Ilanun from the center of the maritime political scene. This was helped in no small measure by European and British incursions into the Sulu-Borneo basin, which stigmatized and outlawed slave-raiding and contraband trading as piratical, of which the Portuguese and Spanish religious missions in the Philippines subsequently labeled as unethical and religiously immoral. This has become the justification for Spain to escalate its colonial campaigns and pursued its conquests of the Muslim Sulu kingship society that lasted for 300 years in a so-called “wars with the Moros” that it called “Guerras Piraticas”. The coming of American invaders would ‘resurrect’ the old pride of the Ba’ngingi, as many of its leaders and nobility became coopted into the colonial administration and are now unfairly judged by history as collaborators.

What seems amissed in this historiology was the sustained and enduring autonomous spirit of the Ba’ngingi, who valiantly defended their traditional governance and the social structures vested on the Panglima (chieftain) and the social unit of banawa (community). This culminated in a legal campaign and the authoring of the 1925 Zamboanga Declaration petitioning the American Congress.
to retain the colonial status of the Sama (Moro province) territory and their willingness to be “Americanized”, instead of being part of the independent Philippine Republic. Many of the Moro leaders who signed that declaration were Sama Bang’ngi datus, hadjis, and panglimas.

In the meantime, the present political nomenclature of the Sama people has become even more complex and complicated. While the Sama people have come to be understood by deep ethnologists and anthropologists as different and distinct ethnic, on a parallel footing as the rest of the 13 Moro ethnolinguistic grouping; they are also held to an “autonomous nation” within the realm of polity of the Sulu sultanate. In recent times, a new breed of historians, chroniclers, and intellectual leaders, mostly under the retinue of Sulu royalties, have been advancing the view that the Sama have always been part of the hegemony of the Bangsa suluk or Tausug, and were subjects of the Sultan of Sulu. Any contrary claim is interpreted as a betrayal of national loyalty and, in the extreme case, of Islam. Still, other Moro intellectuals consider the claim for autonomy as ethnocentric and, worse, conveniently supporting the colonialist agenda by its tendency to “divide-and-rule”. In the meantime, anti-colonial and postmodern Filipino and Mindanawon scholars affirm, in the spirit of plurality and diversity, and consider it positive, that ethnic communities such as the Sama should assert their autonomy and emancipate themselves, not only from the master frames of foreign colonialists and homogenizing Filipino majority politics, but also from what Pierre Bourdieu termed a “symbolic violence” of bondage to debilitating cultural dictates and psychical control, by local hegemony and patronage. Regrettably, in the din of all these debates and contending views, the voice of the Sama people remains garbled, if not mummed and silenced.

Oral narratives on the common origin of the SEA Sama

This study was an opportunity to search for a shared origin story common to the Indonesia and Sulu groups of Sama in SEA. Of the few so far that have been made known to this researcher, one version of the Sama cosmogeny can be considered as unique and “unadulterated” by learned scholarships and theories.

The common oral narratives of the dispersed groups of Sama people in Southeast Asia provide initial clues as to how they view the world and how they valorize their self as a people. Common myths on the origin of their peopling and dispersal within the expanse of the southeast asian sea basins of Borneo-Sulu-and-Sulawesi abound. Indonesian inter-religious scholar, Benny Baskara (2010) was able to identify and collect at least five such tales and legends, primarily based on translated versions from the Lontarak Assalena Bajo (translated as “The Manuscript of the Origin of the Bajo People”) of the Bajo of Sulawesi, as made available by his primary reference and also translator of the lontarak to English, Abdulla Anwar (Anwar 2000 in Baskara 2010).

The arts of memory, to which the oral traditions of myths and epics belong, has long been the mode of transference of culture for indigenous communities in Southeast Asia. Orality preceded writing, wrote Nicole Revel (2005), who added that, “oral tradition precedes any attempt to fix a narrative into canonical text”.

And by “knowing nothing”, Revel (2005) reaffirmed the conviction that communal memories contained in stories are not a one-woman repertoire as “the art of orality is independent of individual creativity”. Oral narratives are traditions of the anonymous composition of a cultural community, she notes, where through this, we are able to detect, step by step, and bring to the surface, the hidden structure that underlies the society and culture we have committed ourselves to understand (Revel 2005: 6).

The acknowledged version of the origin of the Sama Dilaut among the Sulu archipelago is similar, but not as detailed, perhaps owing to the fact that the Sulu Sama Dilaut, unlike the Indonesian Bajo people, had no traditional writing system (e.g. similar to the land-based Sulu Sama who had the Jawi
Therefore, the Sama Dilaut’s salsilahs are generally transmitted and preserved orally through the epical katakata or plaintive ballads.

One version of the origin myth is summarized in a royal tarsila of one of the Sulu sultanate claimants. The story talks of the olden days, where it is said that a princess from the Kingdom of Johore was lost or abducted and all the king’s men including the reliable allies, the Bajaus, who were then land-based communities of both agriculturists and fishing societies, were dispatched in search of the princess. The unfortunate searches of both princely nobles and subjects (i.e., Sama and Bajau) resulted to their dispersal in the entire archipelago where many of the contingent failed to return to their kingdom and decided to relocate and settled in the new found territories, consequently forming each of the various kingdoms from Johore to Malakka, Brunei, Sulu, Luwu, and Bone.

As for the Sama and Bajau people, this started the sea-faring societies amongst them, that also brought them scattering all over the region and archipelago; but unlike the princely nobles, they never resettled and instead remained as a society of “floaters” roaming the seas. A similar version is also spoken of in many variants of the same myth, among the land-based [sedentary] and sea-faring Sama in Sulu, where a common tale was of how Sama ancestors went sailing the stormy seas from Johore and were washed away and scattered by big waves. What seems interesting and parallel in the various accounts is that the Johore original dispersal theory purports to strengthen the myth that the Sama people sprang from a centralized and organized polity based and dependent on the existence of a pre-historic Johore monarchy. According to this version, the Sama people were originally land-based agriculturists who were subjects of the Brunei kingship. One time, the Brunei kingdom warred with the Sulu kingdom whereupon the Sama, who were either allies or subjects of the Sultan, defected to the Sulu king and were banished from Brunei. This was similar to the Baskara’s Bajo story where the Sama Dilaut were dispatched by the benevolent Brunei king in search of a lost princess. Meeting strong winds and a storm in the sea, the Sama warriors were lost in the sea and scattered in all directions, and that started the diaspora of communities.

In contrast to the above tales of an unautonomous Sama society, we also hear of accounts that graphically illustrate the free-spirited and autonomous communities of seafarers who stood as co-equal with the rest of the tribes, nations, and sectors of humanity. This version of the origin of Sama ancestors seems to be the strand where Mboh Kuraysiya’s account of cosmogenesis is an example:

“[o]nce upon a time, land and sky were only one. Upon the separation [no explanation why] the sky rose and earth descended. The earth had sea and land. On the land along the coast is placed the masjid. While the people from all nations were praying, many fishes swam by: There was excitement and confusion. Some got their spear guns and went after the fish. Others ran toward the hills. Those who went upland became A’a Releya or the people of the plains. Those who dove into the sea became the Pehak Sama or the Sama people”

(Quiling-Arquiza, Alojamiento and Enriquez1999). Indeed, to reiterate Revel’s (2005) assertion, oral narratives are a kind of “social fresco” where the story weaves a “worldview and a set of values of a given society with traditional ways of life in today’s world are revealed to listeners or remembered by them. It is a way to teach, to transmit a heritage”.

But other researchers wishing to stretch further beyond the historical constructions by centralized governments and established institutions have had to look beyond myths and found their inferences on equally solid, as in literally material, bases to challenge the master frames of these mainstream accounts. And so they resorted to what might perhaps be considered less mythic, but nonetheless oral narrative in nature but are already preserved in recorded forms: the family genealogies or tarsila
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[also salsilah] kept by the first ruling class of society. On acquiring such on hand, Margarita Cojuanco (2005) made use of genealogical accounts not only to corroborate studies by linguists and anthropologists to ascertain pre-recorded accounts of past history of settlement and dispersal of the Sama people of Southeast Asia but also to verify and even dispute well-held beliefs in contemporary and mainstream narratives and popular historians’ accounts. In her foray into various tarsilas for almost two decades now, Cojuanco (2005, 16) noted in her book: “with the intention of verifying information from Saleeby's Studies of Moro History, Law and Religion, and [Cezar Adib] Majul's Muslims in the Philippines, I undertook a search for tarsilas for the truth or falsity of the “Johore Origin Myth”, a recurring oral tradition among the Samal people and the entire Muslimdom!”

Conclusion

Marginality is not solely of minority groups. De Certeau (year) believes that marginality is universal, massive and pervasive. He calls it a “culture activity of the non-producers of culture, an activity that is unsigned, unreadable, and unsymbolized” (xvii).

Marginality is not always a lack in number or attributed to numerical inferiority alone; it is all about inclusion into or exclusion from a so-called mainstream system or official institution.

The process of marginalization is a writing-off of culture and a silencing out of subordinate voices from the major narrative and frame of discourse. Because language and writing are a privilege of institution, marginalization is a form of repression and political discrimination, often resulting from economic disenfranchisement or deprivation of the capital to be able to produce culture.

Helping shed light on the shaping of the identity of Sama people as constructed at different junctures in history, throughout various government and politico-religious regimes, this study not only focused particularly on aspects of religion and culture as the primary shapers of identity, but, perhaps, more important than merely resorting to unrecorded myths and oral narratives, it tried to listen to everyday discourse in the contemporary life and politics of ordinary Sama people.

New religious discourse overwrites, displaces, and erases old ones. Newish religious culture replaces traditional ones.

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Conserving Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity: Lessons from the Chong Language Revitalization Project in Thailand

Toshiyuki Doi

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to input into discussions among public intellectuals (PIs) over critical issues facing Southeast Asia (SEA). The topic I would like to contribute is bio-cultural diversity conservation and its implications. More specifically, I will present a case study of an indigenous community in Thailand which has initiated various activities to protect local linguistic, cultural, and biological diversity.

I will first describe linguistic diversity in SEA. Many of the region’s languages, and linguistic/cultural diversity by implication, are now under threat. Second, I will look at major factors exacerbating decline in linguistic diversity as well as consequences that might result. Third, I will explain global movements to protect linguistic/cultural diversity, highlighting community initiatives and linkages with biological diversity conservation as their strengths. Fourth, I will provide a case analysis on a bio-cultural conservation project led by the Chong people, an indigenous minority group living in eastern Thailand. I will describe how they have implemented the project, as well as its achievements and challenges. The article will end with a list of recommendations to protect SEA’s bio-cultural diversity.

Linguistic/cultural diversity in Southeast Asia

SEA is linguistically rich. In one estimate, 1,461 languages are known in the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (See Table 1). These languages account for more than 20 percent of the world’s nearly 7,000 existing languages and belong to five different language families (Premsrirat 2007, 75). As 9 percent of the world’s population is speaking 21.1 percent of the world’s languages, this indicates SEA’s complex linguistic profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th># of speakers</th>
<th># of languages</th>
<th># of languages with fewer than 10,000 speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>343,195</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>13,511,970</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>222,699,476</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>5,349,894</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>19,465,720</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar/Burma</td>
<td>47,319,800</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>100,221,395</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
<td>3,060,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>51,668,997</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>75,650,099</td>
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</tr>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>539,270,956</td>
<td>1,461</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>5,959,511,717</td>
<td>6,909</td>
<td>3,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN/World</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Linguistic diversity in ASEAN (based on Lewis 2009).
More significantly, SEA’s linguistic diversity relies on a large number of small groups. Table 1 shows the distribution of languages in each ASEAN country whose speakers number fewer than 10,000. They account for 53.3 percent (779/1,461) of all the SEA languages. Although this is considerably less than that for North and South America (77.8 percent and 76.5 percent, respectively) and Australia/Pacific (92.8 percent), it is much higher than that of Africa (32.6 percent), Europe (30.2 percent), and Central America (36.4 percent). The figure is also slightly above the average for the entire Asia region, which is 52.8 percent (Nettle 1999, 114).

While some researchers (e.g., Nettle and Romaine 2000, 9-10) point out that the number of speakers alone is not a decisive factor to predict the survival or death of languages, many are concerned about the future of small-scale languages. Krauss (1992, 7) warns that as much as 90 percent of the world’s languages may not survive the 21st century, as they may cease to be learned by children. After comparing available estimates, Crystal (2000) concludes that 50 percent language loss in the next 100 years is a reasonable guess. About 60 percent of the world’s languages are used by fewer than 10,000 speakers (Nettle 1999, 114). In Crystal’s view, then, most of these languages will go extinct before the turn of the century. Similarly, the 779 small languages in SEA are facing a very grim future. True, languages have always died out and new languages have emerged to make up for the loss in human history. However, the rate at which languages are disappearing seems accelerated (Hinton 2001, 4; Nettle and Romaine 2000, 97-98).

**Threats to linguistic/cultural diversity**

In the SEA context, the most serious threat to linguistic diversity is probably the spread of dominant languages and the prestige value that comes with them. The pressure from prestigious languages can take different forms, the most significant of which is the promotion of national/official languages through the formal education system. While minority children have both the need and right to learn national/official languages, they are often discouraged both explicitly and implicitly by teachers and parents from speaking the mother tongue. Children gradually internalize adults’ view that their ethno-linguistic backgrounds are worthless. This can also lead to non-use of a minority language at home, disrupting its transmission to succeeding generations. Dominant languages can also be promoted through mass media. Movies, music/songs, and other popular cultures help powerful languages spread far and wide. The role of English as an inter-regional means of communication, in addition to its already high status as a global language, is increasing, too. The ten ASEAN countries are moving towards regional integration. The ASEAN Charter declares English as its working language (ASEAN 2007, 29). ASEAN also “promote[s] a “common ASEAN identity” and has a motto, a flag, an emblem, and even an anthem (ASEAN 2007, 29). The lyrics of the ASEAN anthem are in English. In Thailand, at least, as the next cornerstone of the ASEAN integration, i.e., the 2015 formation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), is approaching, not merely educational institutions in urban areas but also local communities, who are already experiencing the increased influx of foreign traders, tourists, and other visitors, are expressing an “urgent need” to learn English. Nettle and Romaine (2000) and Phillipson (1999) have illustrated the detrimental impacts of English over minority languages in many parts of the world.

The second factor contributing to SEA’s declining linguistic diversity is physical displacement of indigenous/minority communities, which is often caused by such events as wars/internal conflicts, natural disasters, outbreaks of disease, and large-scale development (e.g., hydropower dams). Moken speakers in southern Myanmar/Burma and Thailand were struck by the 2004 tsunami. As an already endangered indigenous Austronesian language group, the Moken people, especially those living along the coastal zone, were put into very difficult circumstances. They lost housing and fishing boats, which are indispensable components of their traditional ways of life and livelihood (Skehan 2012). Bradley (1989) also reports a case of Ugong speakers. Ugong belongs
to the Sino-Tibetan language family and Ugong villagers live in western Thailand. They were involuntarily relocated from their original location due to a hydropower project launched by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand. As a result, their coherence as a community was weakened. Bradley (1989) observes that the displacement disrupted the Ugong speakers’ linguistic maintenance and ethnic identity.

What’s lost, and what’s wrong with it?

The traditional wisdom of indigenous/minority groups is encoded in their language. A clear example is ethno-botanical knowledge. A more dramatic instance is the case of 49 Great Andamanese speakers who survived the 2004 tsunami because they had known which trees would not be swept away (Romaine 2007, 129). Such knowledge was presumably accessible through the Great Andamanese language. When minority groups cannot pass their language on to succeeding generations, they also cannot transmit traditionally accumulated knowledge, because such knowledge can often be fully understood only when contextualized within the entire linguistic-cultural system and thus is not easily translatable into other languages. Humans may have developed linguistic/cultural diversity as part of their evolution and survival strategies. Diversity makes available various ways to respond to rapid changes and different conditions. When one solution fails, alternative approaches can help humans survive as a species. In short, linguistic/cultural diversity can be viewed as useful resources.

To maintain or learn a minority language can also be regarded as integral to human rights (Phillipson et al. 1995). Individuals should positively identify with their mother tongue and have that identification respected by others, no matter how insignificant the language might appear to be to the rest of society. Everyone is thus entitled to learn their native language, receive basic education through the mother tongue, and fully acquire an official language. At a collective level, a language cannot be separated out from indigenous/minority peoples’ rights to exist as a distinctive group, presupposing their rights to learn both native and official languages. Language rights, linguistic human rights in particular, evolve from basic human rights, e.g., non-discrimination, freedom of expression, and right to private life, as well as the right of minorities to enjoy a distinctive identity (Phillipson et al. 1995, 1-2). Linguistic/cultural diversity is thus indispensable to any society where human rights are well-respected.

Global movements to conserve linguistic/cultural diversity

The past few decades have witnessed global responses to declining linguistic/cultural diversity. Hinton and Hale (2001) report various efforts to understand the critical conditions into which minority languages have been forced, as well as to delay and reverse the current global trends. Language/culture revitalization projects described by Hinton and Hale (2001) differ in goals, approaches, and attainments, reflecting diverse circumstances where such projects are being implemented. If a minority community is strong and its language is spoken at home, members can try to expand domains of language use into the entire community. In other circumstances, very few native speakers, or none at all, may remain. However, something can still be done. Fishman (1991) has designed steps of language revitalization (See Table 2). This model is based on Israel's experience of reviving Hebrew, which once ceased to be spoken, into a national language. It may not be necessary or even appropriate for every language conservation project to aim at Fishman's Step 9 (i.e., a target language used outside the community). The model is still useful to conceptualize what can be done for endangered languages at different stages.
While languages can be revitalized in different ways, many researchers and practitioners emphasize the central role played by a community. Speakers of a minority language must take the lead and make decisions at major steps along the revitalization processes. Around a strong community initiative forms a network of scholars and experts, school administrators and teachers, artists and writers, (local) government officials, funding agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At a more practical level, good documentation of an endangered language is crucial. Developing orthography, if a target language has never developed one, seems a very common strategy and is needed when the language is taught in school.

One noteworthy approach towards linguistic/cultural diversity conservation is linking with biological diversity protection. This has stemmed from the observation that linguistic/cultural and biological diversity overlaps and is high around the Equator (Maffi and Woodley 2010). Nettle and Romaine (2000, 165) see minority groups as the stewards of diversity. They know how to utilize the natural environment without modifying it irrevocably. The insignificantly altered environment in turn reflects upon their language and culture. Such interactive processes might eventually result in observed bio-cultural diversity hotspots in the world. Maffi and Woodley (2010) list 45 projects to protect global bio-cultural diversity.

I will now turn to a particular language/culture revitalization project. This project has been in practice for more than 10 years. A case study will illustrate how linguistic/cultural diversity can be revitalized. It will also complement the existing literature (e.g., Hinton and Hale 2001; Maffi and Woodley 2010) in which examples from SEA are underrepresented.

### Chong and their language

The Chong people are an indigenous minority that are believed to have lived in eastern Thailand since the time when the area was still under the rule of the Khmer Empire (Premsrirat 2007, 81). Khaokichakhut and Pongnamron districts in Chantaburi province are particularly heavily populated by Chong. Premsrirat (2007, 81-83) explains that the Chong language belongs to the Pearic sub-branch of the Mon-Khmer language family of Astroasiatic languages, alongside Kasong and Samre spoken in the adjacent Trat province on the Thai-Cambodia border. Another Pearic-speaking group, Chung, is found in Kanchanaburi province of western Thailand. Both Chong and Kasong speakers told me that their languages are mutually intelligible.

According to Premsrirat et al. (2009, xvii), the basic word order of Chong is Subject-Verb-Object (e.g., I-eat-lunch). A modifier, such as an adjective, follows the head of a phrase, such as a noun (e.g., house-big). Chong and Thai share quite a few words. Most, if not all of these have presumably been lent to Chong from Thai, which belongs to the Tai-Kadai language family (Lewis 2009).

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**Table 2: Steps to language revitalization (adapted from Fishman 1991; Hinton 2001, 6-7)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Find out linguistic situation of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Use available materials to reconstruct the language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Document the language of elderly speakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop second-language learning programs for adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enhance cultural practices to support use of the language at home and in public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Develop intensive second-language programs for children, especially at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Use the language at home as the primary language of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Expand the use of the language into broader local domains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Expand language use domains outside the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
On the other hand, Thai is a tonal language but Chong is not. Chong has instead developed four different ways to vibrate the vocal cords, called ‘registers’, to differentiate lexical meanings. Thus, saap, when pronounced with creaky voice means ‘bright’ in Chong. When pronounced without creakiness, it means ‘tasteless’ (Premsrirat et al. 2009, xv).

Chong villagers explained to me that their ancestors were hunter-gatherers. They became gradually influenced by the dominant Thai and started cultivating rice. These days, many Chong families still plant rice, but mostly for home consumption. Instead, they grow cash fruits in orchards, especially, durian, rambutan, and mangosteen, and sell them to traders and at local markets. This brings them stable cash income. Unlike some other ethnic minorities in Thailand and elsewhere, the Chong are not facing severe livelihood or economic challenges. Despite considerable changes in their lifestyle, the Chong people, especially elders, retain much knowledge of herbs, plants, and other non-timber products in forests. They grow grasses and trees in home gardens and utilize them for food and medicine. A few Chong people still hunt.

Chong elders can remember 50 to 60 years ago when other ethnic groups were rarely seen in the community. At that time, Chong was the language of village life. Then, Chinese traders and Cambodian workers started to visit and to gradually settle down. After World War II, the Thai government began to emphasize the use of Standard Thai. Thai teachers were sent to the Chong community to teach Standard Thai at local and temple schools. Some Chong can recall that they were explicitly discouraged from speaking Chong at school. Chong parents were also made to believe that using Chong at home would delay their children’s acquisition of Thai and hinder their academic performance. The transmission of the Chong language to future generations was thus disrupted. Premsrirat (2007, 81) estimates that at present “fewer than 2,000 people still speak some Chong” and that “good Chong speakers may not number more than 200”. Most Chong under the age of 20 do not speak Chong.

Chong Language Revitalization Project

In the mid-to late-1990s, linguists teaching at Mahidol University in Thailand visited Chong villagers to research Chong. The linguists also asked Chong speakers to help their students practice transcribing the language. While working with the Mahidol researchers, Chong elders started voicing concerns over their dying language, culture, and identity. The elders also expressed a desire to revitalize the Chong language and culture. The Mahidol linguists agreed to help the Chong community with their expert knowledge and experience. This marked the beginning of “the Chong Language Revitalization Project (CLRP)” (Malone 2005, 213-214; Premsrirat et al. 2007, 33-39).

A committee to implement the CLRP was formed under Chong initiatives. Some linguists at Mahidol University joined the committee as advisors. From June to August 2001, the CLRP committee, as one of its first activities, conducted a survey to find out how strongly community members would support the CLRP. The committee analyzed responses from 1,742 villagers and found that the overwhelming majority, more than 90 percent, had replied favorably on the CLRP (Premsrirat et al. 2007, 42-44). Later in the same year, the committee held a series of community workshops to develop Chong orthography. Chong people used the Thai scripts as a base but modified them to accommodate certain features that are distinctive to Chong, including the four registers. This resulted in a set of Chong scripts. With the newly invented Chong orthography, Chong villagers were encouraged into writing short stories. Chong youths added artworks and illustrations and turned them into basic readers (Premsrirat et al. 2007, 54-117).

The next step taken by the CLRP committee was to approach a sympathetic principal at a local elementary school, who agreed to have Chong taught as part of the school curricula. The committee then tasked themselves to develop a Chong language teaching curriculum by adapting the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach as one of the major teaching methods. The committee also gave trainings to fluent Chong speakers.
who had a strong commitment to the teaching of Chong. Finally, in mid-2002, Chong language classes started at the Wat Klong Phulu Elementary School. Grade 3 children, including some non-Chong descendants, began to learn Chong once a week at school (Premsrirat 2007, 118-139).

**Linkages with environmental conservation**

The CLRP, as the name implies, was originally designed mainly, if not exclusively, to revive the Chong language and culture. It was natural, however, that some CLRP activities were oriented towards conserving the natural environment in the Chong community because that was the subject in which Chong people had much knowledge, experience, and interest. For instance, the Chong class at the Wat Thakiangthong Elementary School, which started in 2007, emphasizes field experience at Grade 6. Children often visit places outside school, including a nearby national park, and learn Chong while enjoying local flora, fauna, and the landscape. In one class I observed, a Chong herb doctor was invited. He took the whole class outside, sampled various plants, showed and named them in Chong and Thai to the students, and explained how useful they were. He encouraged the children to take notes in Chong and Thai, ask questions, and see, touch, and chew some leaves and seeds.

Another venue for environmental education is a community forest located in the Klong Phulu Village. A Chong leader explained to me that any villager could enter the forest and pick plants for food and medicine. Cutting trees is banned, however. If it is unavoidable, villagers have to hold a special ceremony to ask for the tree spirit’s permission. Color-coded ribbons are tied to some trees to alert visitors that they are protected. Children are sometimes brought to the community forest to learn Chong and ethno-botanical knowledge encoded in it from elders. They are also sometimes asked to help plant trees to maintain the forest.

**Sociolinguistic situations in Thailand**

It is useful to place the CLRP in Thailand’s sociolinguistic context. In Thailand, some 70 languages (See Table 1) are hierarchically structured, with Standard Thai at the top (Smalley 1994). Standard Thai is the prestigious national language with a strong tradition of literacy and is used widely in official documents, formal education, and mass media. One below on the hierarchy are four regional languages, which are used in northern, northeastern, central, and southern Thailand. These language varieties function as a tool for inter-group communication across minority groups, too. Finally, at the bottom are various small-scale languages, such as Chong, which are spoken among indigenous and immigrant groups. These people are often multilingual and differentiate their language use depending upon where they happen to be (at home, in the neighborhood, at workplace, etc.). Smalley (1994, 4-5) names such sociolinguistic situations in Thailand as “diversity in unity”. This linguistic ecology might have helped Chong, and other minority languages, survive until today.

For many years, the government of Thailand has adopted an assimilationist policy towards minorities by strongly encouraging everyone in the country towards speaking Standard Thai and becoming Thai (Premsrirat 2007, 80). It is indicative that the current Thai constitution has only one provision, Section 30, directly relating to language, and prohibiting discrimination against a person “on the grounds of the difference in origin, race, language…” (Constitution Drafting Committee 2007, emphasis mine). The constitution does not recognize indigenous/ethnic minority groups. On the other hand, Section 51 states that:

> Children, youth and family members shall have…the rights to survive and receive physical, mental, and intellectual development in accordance with their potentials and environment.
This provision is significant in that it can be interpreted as promoting children's rights to receive education through the mother tongue, including minority languages.

Likewise, Section 79 stipulates that:

(4) The state shall encourage and support power decentralization in education to local administrative bodies, communities,... to enable them to participate in management and develop the quality of education in compliance with the need of each locality...(6) The state shall preserve, revive, and protect arts, culture, and national traditions, good values, and folk wisdom and promote awareness thereof.

Section 79 (6) seems to give legitimacy to teaching a minority language at a state school as part of the subject of local studies. Chong language class in the CLRP is one such case. Other minorities in Thailand, such as the Kasong, Nyahkur, and Mon, are administering language class for children in similar formats.

**CLRP's achievements and challenges**

The CLRP has helped the Chong people regain confidence as an ethnic minority. Chong elders, youths, and children were clear about this. Non-Chong community members, such as school teachers, shared the same observation. Formal interviews and causal conservations with Chong villagers at home, school, and community gatherings all indicated that they held positive views towards the Chong language and culture. At a local wedding party, the emcee announced to the gathering, consisting of Chong and non-Chong, that the bride was a Chong descendant and that the ceremony was a mixture of Thai and Chong styles, when in fact the Chong component was only symbolic, i.e., the offering of a Chong-style basket. A certain level of local acceptance towards the Chong language/culture already existed prior to the CLRP. The project enhanced this attitude.

Being the first project of its kind, the CLRP received some attention in Thailand, especially from other minority groups, including the Kasong in Trat province and the Nyahkur in Chaiyaphum province. Groups whose languages are much less threatened than Chong, e.g., Northern Khmer speakers in Surin province and Malay-speaking Muslims in southern Thailand, also came to visit the Chong community to learn about the CLRP. Mahidol University played a coordinating role to put these communities into contact with each other. All the groups have since then started revitalization projects with necessary modifications to meet their localized needs. The CLRP gave ideas and inspiration to them. Mahidol researchers also provided them with technical support.

The CLRP set its initial purpose to revive the Chong language to the degree that it would be back in use in community life. There was no indication, however, that the language was actively used in domains other than school. A few Chong elders at the Klong Phulu Village told me that they did not speak Chong even with their Chong-speaking spouses. While it might be premature now to evaluate the CLRP vis-à-vis its ultimate goal, I felt a sense of contentment among some Chong leaders that the language's status had been elevated thanks to the orthography development and elementary school teaching program. One school teacher, non-Chong but a strong CLRP supporter, also said that Chong would probably die out but that it was still important to remember that the language once existed. It is not correct to state that Chong people have given up the project's original goal. The ultimate achievement may not be as important to them as the present consensus in the community that Chong is linguistically and culturally valuable. This sentiment is certainly a CLRP product.

Malone (2005, 214-216) observes the following challenges facing the CLRP:

1) The whole community has yet to be involved. A handful of elders take the initiative on the project;
2) Domains in which Chong is used need to be expanded outside school;
3) To what extent Chong is spoken at home, especially by children who have studied Chong at school, is not known;
4) Public support, especially funding, should become stable; and
5) Achievements of some activities, e.g., the use of a community learning center, need to be assessed.

At the Wat Thakiangthong Elementary School, a few 5th graders said that they spoke Chong at home with their relatives. One teacher also shared his observation that more active Chong speakers could be found at the Thakiangthong Village than the Klong Phulu Village. It is important in future research to assess the use of Chong among children who have completed Chong class, as well as to obtain more detailed sociolinguistic data in the community. At a practical level, it is useful to encourage more adults into learning and speaking Chong.

Currently, Chong villagers are individually or in small groups pursuing different directions, including such enterprises as organic farming. Many seem to agree that local resources, bio-cultural diversity in particular, can be utilized to develop community-based eco-tourism. This was voiced at a community meeting I attended in the mid-2011. One Chong leader has invented his own scripts to write Chong with the belief that the modified Thai orthography cannot fully capture Chong’s uniqueness. He uses these scripts to teach Chong in informal settings. How these diverse initiatives can be integrated into the CLRP has yet to be seen. A key is good coordination. The current state of the CLRP suggests that Chong people have started viewing the CLRP as part of community development. Another leader involved in the CLRP agreed with me on this interpretation. In that case, the bio-cultural diversity conservation framework presented here should be useful in guiding the CLRP’s future. After all, linguistic/cultural vitality is a function of vitality of the community.

Implications to globalized SEA

Based on the current state of the bio-cultural diversity in SEA, as well as Chong people’s experiences with the CLRP, the following recommendations are made with regard to SEAs future:

1) Much wider recognition should be established that humans, children in particular, can acquire multiple languages without much difficulty if supportive environments are provided. Suppressing minority languages, especially children’s home language, is detrimental to their identity and educational attainments, among other things;
2) More public support is needed to understand linguistic, cultural, and biological diversity, as well as close inter-relationships between them, in order to view and use them as valuable resources;
3) The significance of bio-cultural diversity conservation should be incorporated into public policies and procedures. One obvious area is education. Another instance might be conducting linguistic/cultural impact assessments, not unlike environmental/social/health impact assessment, in development projects; and
4) Local communities, indigenous or otherwise, should be the locus of any bio-cultural diversity conservation and revitalization.

NOTES

1 PIs are defined as “those…academics, mass media professionals, artists, NGO activists, and others with moral authority…who are committed to working for the betterment of society by applying their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience”. (Nippon Foundation 2011).
2 Languages are often defined socially. As such, the number of languages is always debatable. However, various figures presented here are still useful for an overview.
3 The five language families are Austroasiatic, Austronesian, Hmong-Yao, Sino-Tibetan, and Tai-Kadai.
4 Due to space constraints, discussions on linguistic/cultural diversity below focus on the linguistic aspect.
5 Some researchers claim that languages do not die but only sleep (Hinton 2004, 4).
6 See Crystal (2000) and Nettle and Romaine (2000) for more comprehensive discussions on various threats to linguistic/cultural diversity.
7 See Crystal (2000) and Nettle and Romaine (2000) for more comprehensive discussions on consequences of linguistic/cultural diversity loss.
Linguistic/cultural revitalization is not without its critics. See Malone (2005, 203-5) for a brief overview.

The information and insights here and below are based on my visits to the Chong community between September 2011 and June 2012.

Since then, Chong has been taught at different levels in local schools. As of this writing, at the Wat Thakiangthong Elementary School Chong is taught twice a week at Grades 4 to 6.

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The Representation of Cultural Diversity in Primary Education in the Philippines

Truong Huyen Chi

Introduction

This project continues my pursuit to understand the interaction and contestation of subjectivities among different agents of education at the intersection of state, local, and global forces. My previous research (Truong 2011), a comparative critical ethnography of primary education in multi-ethnic settings of Cambodia and Vietnam, reveals a paradox between on the one hand, the nation-building project through means of nationwide curricula and the use of national language in instruction, and the state-upheld preservation and promotion of ethnic identities and cultures on the other. When I took a similar theoretical framework and set of research questions to the Philippines, I hoped to find a variation in the issues. The research ultimately found significant similarities as well as distinctive ways in which the issues of cultural diversity are perceived and often remain unproblematized in the Philippine context.

The inquiry rests on a number of theoretical premises. I have attempted to go beyond questioning the role of education in nation-building (Anderson 1991, 118) and the role of the state in education (Keyes 1991, Vaddhanaphuti 1991) in Southeast Asia. I believe it is important to go beyond examining the unintended consequences of formal education among groups defined by the Philippine state, and often abbreviated in print texts as, ‘IPs’ (indigenous peoples). Instead, one should bring into focus ‘social agents’ who, as Willis argues, are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation and a partial penetration of those structures (Willis 1981, 175; see also Freire 2000). Following the tradition of critical proactive inquiry, I view schools as neither neutral sites of cultural transmission, meritocratic springboards for upward mobility, nor monolithic purveyors of dominant ideologies. I ask instead to what extent schools in multi-ethnic settings serve to reproduce rather than transform existing structural inequalities among ethnic groups (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This research aims at revealing dynamic agents in education who actively engage in defining their own terms concerning identity (Ortner 2001, Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992). It seeks to uncover how the subjectivity of these agents helps reinforce or challenge state-determined education in preparing youths from different ethno-linguistic groups to become ‘desirable’ citizens of the contemporary Philippines.

A number of constraints prevented me from conducting a full inquiry into the whole range of relevant agents, including students, parents, teachers, policy-makers, researchers and community members. Language limitation did not allow me to interact directly with local parents and students, or to carry out effective classroom observations. The demand to cover the demographic diversity of the country within a relatively short period of time could have resulted in a lack of in-depth engagement with any one research site. The research, therefore, focused mostly on local teachers and national-level policy-makers. During two months of the fellowship period, I conducted twelve interviews with primary school teachers and twenty interviews with education policy-makers and researchers. In addition, I carried out six focus-group discussions with primary school teachers involving a total of 23 participants, and one focus group interview with education researchers. I visited eleven primary schools in metro Manila, Cebu city, Davao, Zamboanga City, and Pagadian.

I selected the schools according to demographic criteria, i.e. the degree to which student composition reflected diversity in languages (or ethnicity) and religion. The sampling of respondents at the national level was drawn in a snow-ball fashion, based on the API alumni network. Due to limited time and resources, only primary school teachers who taught social study subjects were selected. In schools where Muslim students were present and Arabic Language and Islamic Value Education...
The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows (ALIVE) programs were available, one or two ALIVE teachers were interviewed. In Davao city, Zamboanga city and Pagadian, I was able to meet teachers and administrators from indigenous groups such as the Mansakas, Tausug, Subanen, and Iranon.

An Overview of Cultural Diversity in the Philippines

The more than ninety million people who call themselves Filipino today by no means share the same ancestry, speak the same mother tongue or practice the same religion. Linguists still do not agree on the number of distinct languages spoken in the country, (Gonzalez 1998), with estimates varying between around 120 and 170. Different ethnolinguistic groups, most of whom live in the uplands, vary in terms of their degree of interaction with and assimilation into the lowland culture. Eighty percent of the population claims to be Roman Catholic and approximately five percent practice Islam. Myriad aspects of indigenous spiritual practice remain salient across a broad spectrum of the population, including followers of different world religions.

This research focuses on cultural diversity, understood broadly as comprised of a range of differences including not only language, religion, and ethnicity, but also everyday practice, or ways of life. More importantly, the research approaches diversity from an emic perspective, i.e. it focuses on a sense of distinctiveness or being different as perceived by respondents about themselves and others.

An Overview of Public Elementary Education in the Philippines

In 2011, fourteen million Filipino students were attending elementary schools consisting of six grades, starting at age six or seven. The 10-year system of general education was due to be replaced by a K-12 system, starting in 2012. At the time of this research, (summer 2011), debate on the benefits or otherwise of the new system remained heated among policy-makers and practitioners at national and local levels. Many national policy-makers believed that a 12-year general education would better prepare Filipino students for a labor market that has become increasingly competitive on the regional and global levels. Many teachers and parents at the local level felt the extension would be a financial burden on the shoulders of poor and middle-class parents. The former side of the debate was captured in a statement made by then Senator Benigno ‘Noyoy’ Aquino III at the National Congress on 11 February 2010. In his speech, Aquino suggested that a 12-year basic education was seen as a way to make the Philippines “globally-comparable”. He also implied that the new system would improve equal access to education for all Filipinos regardless of their socio-economic status (Aquino III 2010). The opposite side of the debate can be summarized in the words of an informant in Davao:

They [policy-makers] said the government has a budget for it [education reform], but who would think of the pocket of every family? We are not ready. We can’t wait until our elder children complete [their education] and get a job to support the family. Two more years seems nothing for the rich, but it is in fact a burden for most of us.

Up to 2011, social study subjects were grouped with Music, Art, and Physical Education to form an experiential education area called makabayan. The term literally means ‘nationalist’ but it is most oftentimes referred to by educators as ‘laboratory of life’. The makabayan learning area aims at creating a balance between individual and societal needs and producing self-reliant and patriotic citizens. Perceptions of classroom teachers of this learning area will be discussed later in this paper.

Obscurity of Diversity in School Physical Setting

I first explored the visibility or otherwise of diversity in the school physical setting. A small survey of eleven sampled schools across the country revealed a homogeneity in architecture, landscaping and interior decoration. A typical school often consists of a set of modern-style buildings laid out in a U-shape. Buildings look out on a courtyard containing a bust of José Rizal at
the foot of the national flag. Rizal (1861-1896) is venerated as the Philippines’ most prominent national hero even in areas such as the south, where history is rich in details that vary significantly from that of the larger nation. In the city of Cebu, for instance, the memory of Datu Lapu-Lapu, a chieftain of Mactan Island who defeated Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, is often celebrated. However, in the schools context he is not as venerated as José Rizal. A teacher explained:

Lapu-Lapu was indeed a hero; we are of course very proud of his battle and we teach about it in the classroom. But his name is only known in this region. We want to teach our pupils about national heroes. Rizal is the most famous of all. Pupils should know about him so that they love their country.5

In the schools I visited, hallway and classroom decoration were predominantly Catholic. Welcome signs on doors and wall posters and paintings, for example, were overwhelmingly Catholic in both language and style.6 Posters of the Virgin Mary adorned many classroom doors as a welcome sign (Plate 1). Banners with explicit religious, in this case apparently Catholic, messages such as ‘Love God by loving one another’ were placed above the blackboard. The only exception was an elementary school in Zamboanga city where there was a wall-painting depicting a Muslim girl student in headscarf (Plate 2). From my field observations, it can be said that the diversity of students’ ethnicity and religions and local cultural and historical distinctiveness are obscured if not rendered invisible in public school settings.

Perceptions of Cultural Diversity

When I presented the topic of my research at both the national and local levels, the first response of virtually all of my respondents was to express some doubt about the concept of (cultural) diversity. An excerpt from a conversation with a staff member at the Department of Education provides an example:

Chi: I am interested in cultural diversity, that is, the existence and perceptions of differences in languages, religions, and cultures, of students and how teachers handle this diversity.

Respondent: Hmm, let me see [pause]. Pupils speak Filipino at school, you know, we teach that in school here.

Chi: I mean, say, if students speak Cebuano or Visayan, for instance, or any other mother tongue, would it matter to the teacher?

Respondent: No, it shouldn't. Whatever the languages the children speak at home or in the classroom, the teacher would encourage them to speak and learn Filipino. Teachers can use Cebuano to explain if pupils do not understand, mostly in the first grade, but the language of instruction should be Filipino.

Chi: I see. How about ethnic identity? I mean, if pupils come from different ethnic groups such as Ilocano or Subanen, what would the teacher do?

Respondent: They will all understand Filipino anyway, you know. The purpose of going to school is for them to learn Filipino, so the teacher should try regardless of differences. In fact, before going to school, they [pupils] already know Filipino. We are more concerned with teaching them English.7

This is where I find a point in Dr. Mary Racelis’ concept paper particular relevant (Racelis 2012, 2).
She advises against simple adaptation of comparative components, without questioning the original configuration. Diversity, in this case, was a concept brought into the project by an outsider who had little or no familiarity with the Philippines situation. During the fieldwork process I learned to adopt an emic viewpoint and to frame questions according to the respondents’ perspective. Nevertheless, I pressed on to uncover what Dr. Racelis suggests, by citing Foster’s pie metaphor, i.e. to investigate the socio-economic structure that underpins this neglect of diversity. As the following section will discuss, it is the urge to produce competent workers for the global market that drives policy-makers’ agendas, and the same motivation marginalizes social study subjects.

First is the question of language. At the national level, education researchers and policy-makers are largely focused on the debate around the use of the English and Filipino languages. As early as the 1930s and 1940s, Tagalog was made to become the Filipino national language. It has since been taught and used as the medium of instruction in basic education. As evidenced in conversation quoted above, the issue of teaching Filipino as the national language is largely seen as unproblematic. Very few policy-makers view diversity as an issue and/or as a site for potential in public education. Classroom teachers tend to share this view by stating that most of their students are bilingual or multilingual in daily communication even before starting school. For instance, primary school students in Cebu would have a functional grasp of their mother tongue, a regional language such as Cebuano, and some Tagalog or Filipino. Teachers tend to use the regional language in instruction more often as a tactic or as a matter of convenience. A teacher in Cebu noted,

Pupils speak Cebuano, or Visayan, and so does the teacher. At the first or second grades, when they do not understand something, we use the local language to explain, to help them learn better. So in fact we can mix our language with Tagalog in our teaching, but it is not bilingual, or we do not really follow any rule on this matter.

Local teachers, furthermore, viewed a strong command of Filipino as a prerequisite for upward social mobility. A teacher from the Subanen ethnic group, for instance, discouraged her students from speaking their language in the classroom. She even deliberately discouraged her own children from using their mother tongue at home and in their community as she thought it was better for them to be fluent in the national language:

I am a Subanen, and so is my husband. My husband is a community leader, so of course he speaks Subanen at home and to villagers. But I encourage my children to speak Tagalog, even at home. They speak Tagalog to their parents, but they understand Subanen. When I hear them speaking Subanen to each other, I tell them to switch to Tagalog. I want them to do well at school so that they can advance.

The second issue that impacts on how cultural diversity is addressed is the marginalized status of social study subjects. A drive to produce competent youths for the workforce, as suggested in the view of the above Subanen teacher, justifies a side-lining of social study subjects. Education researchers in Manila suggest that the makabayan learning area is merely a convenient way to group those subjects that have always been marginalized. Priority is thus more easily given to what is called Tool Subjects (Filipino, English, Science and Mathematics). All classroom teachers in the research shared this view and pointed to a lack of interest among students as well as a shortage of teaching materials. They made little effort to incorporate local materials into teaching. The status of social study subjects can be summarized in the words of one teacher as follows:

All attention is paid to Math and English, as parents want their children to speak English well and be good at Math. History, Geography, and Arts are just subsidiary. You only learn a little to know about the history and the country. But you need English and Math to get a job. We who teach Hekasi are discouraged by that view. We do not feel like trying to find ways to make our lessons more exciting.
When I first started to teach, I wanted to use video [in my teaching]. I borrowed some tapes from the library to show in the class and students were excited. But then there were very few other video tapes available on the topics. I’ve heard that there are CD or CD-ROMs that are like a dictionary, but I do not know how to get them or where to send the request.\textsuperscript{11}

When I shared with respondents my view of children’s right to their heritage, and the need and possibility to incorporate local cultures in education, researchers and policy-makers supported the idea with enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{12} Classroom teachers, however, showed some doubt over the usefulness and the feasibility of that approach. Many of the latter were nonetheless interested in learning of ways to bring local materials into teaching.

In fact, kids love our subjects, because they are easy, and like, storytelling. They like to listen to stories. We follow the budget of work\textsuperscript{13} to draw up our lesson plans. We receive no extra instructions to bring in local materials. Of course, we talk about our place, our city and region, but it is not in the lessons. Kids already know about it [local history], they need to learn more about [that of] the country.\textsuperscript{14}

What you [Chi] described sounds interesting, I’d love to try it. In fact, I often use local examples in teaching, such as I use weaving patterns to teach symmetric drawing. I am not sure if it is helpful for them [pupils] to learn more of the local or the general. And what if I’m running out of the local materials?\textsuperscript{15}

It should be noted that education for indigenous peoples, or ‘IP education’ in official documents, has for long been an important area of education policy. Nevertheless, IP education policies tend to mainstream indigenous populations so as to promote national integration, facilitate cultural assimilation with the lowland population, and emphasize national security.

Efforts to Challenge the Neglect of Diversity

Efforts to challenge the neglect of diversity in education have not come from within. Instead, there have been initiatives supported by international donors or the private sector and/or civil society. The Australian government, for instance, co-funded a project titled Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM, 2004-09), followed by the Philippines’ Response to Indigenous Peoples and Muslim Education project (PRIME, 2011), which worked on providing culturally-relevant learning materials for Muslim and IP students. According to key staff of these projects, especially those who worked in the field, project activities helped raise awareness among national policy-makers and provincial practitioners of the importance of incorporating materials of local cultures and religions, especially of Islamic populations, into formal schooling. The projects compiled supplementary textbooks and teaching manuals for IP and Muslim teachers and held training workshops on teaching. Local Muslim teachers were recruited to teach Arabic Language and Islamic Value Education (ALIVE) programs in schools with significant presence of Muslim students. Partly as a result of the impact of these projects, the Department of Education issued a new National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework, which provides full recognition to the importance of cultural heritage and history of local groups.\textsuperscript{16}

Nongovernmental and civil society organizations have also been active in education for indigenous peoples. The Pamulaan Center for Indigenous Peoples Education (University of Southeastern Philippines, funded by the Assisi Development Foundation), which conducts a minority-directed model of education, is an example of the active involvement of civil society. The Pamulaan Center is the only educational institute in the country that devotes itself exclusively to indigenous students. It offers full-time programs toward Bachelor of Arts or Science degrees in Anthropology, Peace Education, Social Entrepreneurship, Education, and Agricultural Technology.
Local researchers and teachers also have their own ways to bring more local materials into formal schooling. A project led by the Ateneo de Zamboanga Research Center, for instance, is titled Righting History in Mindanao. It aims at rewriting historical textbooks, based on a close collaboration between local historians and teachers, to better reflect local voices in controversial issues in local history. Less known but equally effective efforts include activities carried out by the SaIngponga Ta’ Tanulghanugon Community Center in Davao, or by the Sarang Bangun Learning Center in Zamboanga City.

It should be noted, however, that some of the above efforts may run the risk of mainstreaming IP and Muslim students by, again, falling onto the track of upholding a nation-building agenda, or by pitching a formal religion, in this case Islam, against local culture and local ways of practising religion, or by applying a uniform model of learning across various community settings. Even though my inquiry did not cover parents and community due to resource constraints, interviews with teachers in the ALIVE program provide an impression that some parents still prefer to send their children to local weekend or early morning informal schools, as what is offered there seems more familiar to learners.

Conclusion

In summary, this research finds a paradox: in a culturally diverse country like the Philippines, cultural diversity remains largely unconsidered and unproblematic among both policy-makers and classroom teachers. Cultural diversity seems to be underrepresented in primary education. It remained obscured in the physical makeup of schools and classrooms in the sites of my field research. Materials concerning local cultures were not incorporated into formal classroom teaching. Efforts to do so by some teachers remained on an ad-hoc basis and therefore seemed unsustainable.

There are two interrelated issues that hinder a full realization of a locally- and culturally-related education, namely language and the status of humanities in education. The use and teaching of Filipino as the national language is overwhelmingly emphasized as a means of promoting patriotism among students, as well as preparing competent youth for the workforce. It is also precisely in the name of producing competent workers that social study subjects suffer from being marginalized, with priority given to instrumental subjects such as English, Science, and Mathematics. The core message of this research is that access to and transmission of rich and vibrant local cultures in formal education at the primary level in the Philippines suffers from a double squeeze, that is, the crisis of humanities in the curriculum, on the one hand, and the strong upholding of nationalism on the other.

NOTES

1 I thank The Nippon Foundation and its Asian Public Intellectuals Program offices in Bangkok and Manila, in particular, Mr. Tatsuya Tanami, Ms. Michiko Yoshida, and Ms. Isabel Nazareno, for their generous support throughout the fellowship. My host institute, the Institute of Philippine Cultures, in particular its director, Dr. Ma. Elizabeth J. Macapagal, and Ms. Shyl Sales, provided unfailing administrative support before, during, and after the field research. The research would not have been possible without the kind help, advice, and encouragement of the API community and otherwise, including: Imelda Adante, Tere Atienza, Maria Serena Diokno, Francis Gealogo, Ben Kerkvliet, Virginia Miralao, Myfel Joseph D. Paluga, and Butch Rufino. The two research assistants, Zea Io Ming Correa and Giecel Marie Espia, brought to the project so much creative input. The two readers, Prof. Mary Racelis and Dr. Lisandro Claudio, gave insightful comments on an earlier draft. I also benefit from the comments and questions of participants at The Nippon Foundation for Asian Public Intellectuals 11th Regional Workshop in Tagaytay City, November 24-28, 2012. Among the Vietnamese API fellows, Prof. Pham Quang Minh provided invaluable support even before I took on the fellowship and Dr. Khuat Thu Hong offered warm encouragement throughout the research project and thereafter.

2 North Luzon was not included in the sampled sites due to the active typhoon season during the time of the research. Zamboanga City and Pagadian were added to the site samples, giving a demographic composition of a significant number of indigenous, Muslim and non-Muslim, peoples not representative in Davao city.

3 “Everyday practice” in my understanding is what happens on a daily basis that constitutes a holistic life of a person and a community.
The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows

4 Interview with Mrs. A, Davao City, 9 September 2011. All names are abbreviated or pseudonyms are used instead and locations are at times swapped in order to protect informants’ privacy.

5 Interview with Mr. B, Cebu, 6 September 2011.

6 Something aesthetic was viewed as “Catholic” when it was explicitly based on Catholic elements including words and images.

7 Interview with Mrs. V., Department of Education, Pasig City, 11 August 2011.

8 Interview with Mrs. P., Cebu, 7 September 2011.

9 Interview with Mrs. N., Pagadian, 11 September 2011.

10 HEKASI is an abbreviation of HEograpiya, Kasaysayan at Sibika (Geography, History, and Culture) in Basic Education Curriculum.

11 Interview with Mrs. P., Cebu (above).

12 The three questions I received at The Nippon Foundation for Asian Public Intellectuals 11th Regional Workshop in Tagaytay City, November 24-28, 2012 concerned my views of the relations between mother tongue and regional and national languages as well as the situation in Vietnam. Regarding mother tongue, I believe that it is an important part of the cultural heritage of each child, and by extension each ethnic group. In my view, mother tongue and any other language, regional, national, or global, should not be mutually exclusive. Given a proper backing from the constitution and legal framework, a decent public education that supports bilingual programs, and an increased awareness of rights to cultural heritage of the populace, local languages as well as cultures will thrive. For a detailed discussion of language issues in multiethnic Vietnam, see Vasavakul 2003.

13 “Budget of work” is a term used to describe a detailed guidelines of goals, contents, and methods of teaching for teachers in any subject, set by the Department of Education, in public schools in the Philippines.

14 Interview with Mrs. B., Cebu, 6 September 2011.

15 Interview with Mrs. P., Cebu (above).

16 Department of Education, Order No. 62, s. 2011, “Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education Policy Framework”, 8 August 2011. Special thanks to Butch Rufino for timely access to this important document as it is in fresh ink.

REFERENCES


Introduction

On May 13, 1969, Malaysia was swept by the most horrible wave of ethnic riots. At that time, Malaysia was a plural society created by British colonial economic policies. Ever since the riots took place, the downside of the on-going negotiations between ethnic interest groups in Malaysia grew more evident. The potentially negative and divisive ethnic fault lines were largely based on the very significant differences in the various ethnic groups religion, language, dress and diet. (Baharuddin 2008, 4)

Thirty-three years after learning a bitter lesson from the riots, Malaysia found a reliable solution to settle ethnic differences: turning the biggest challenges into potential assets. Instead of living in a society dominated by many contradictions, Malaysia opted to transform this diversity into a selling point for tourism. By launching the campaign called “Malaysia, Truly Asia”, the country is currently “selling” its multiculturalism and cultural diversity which represent all the major civilizations in Asia. The positioning of the “Malaysia, Truly Asia” brand campaign gives a true reflection not only of Malaysia’s ethnic diversity, but also of its natural, cultural and historical make-up.

This research reviews how Malaysia is “selling” its multiculturalism and cultural diversity representing all the major civilizations in Asia as projected by the promotion tagline, “Malaysia, Truly Asia”. During the past 10 years, Malaysia has attempted to serve a unique example of how people of diverse ethnic origins and cultures could come together and fuse into a nation. Many elements in Malaysia’s indigenous as well as “fusion” cultures have attracted international attention, and in doing so have brought Malaysia global recognition. Having consolidated its national and cultural identities, Malaysia has begun making its contribution to the world tourism industry through its tourism branding “Truly Asia”.

By combining literature study and fieldwork, this research wants to take some lessons from Malaysia’s unique experience on managing daunting tourism challenges with appropriate policies. The fieldwork conducted in Malaysia for nine months (November 21, 2011-August 15, 2012), was mostly done in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Melaka. The selection of locations was purposively based on the following considerations: a region with a melting pot of major Asian culture (Malay, Chinese and Indian), a region with cultural, historical and religious diversities that could be potential tourism assets, and a region practicing multicultural understanding within a plural society. During my fellowship period, I took my time visiting cultural and historical sites, and places of worships in Kuala Lumpur, Melaka and Penang.

Malaysia’s multicultural society enables it to have many celebrations to showcase the uniqueness of the different customs and traditions. As such, this research also covered major cultural and religious festivals like Thaipusam, the Chinese New Year, Wesak Day, Citrawarna and Floria. In addition, a literature study was conducted in Perpustakaan Tun Sri Lanang UKM and in Tourism Malaysia’s internal library in Putrajaya, focusing on the National Tourism Policy and the development of Malaysia’s tourism industry for the past ten years. Hopefully, this study could contribute to the literature of ethnic studies and the development of the tourism industry.

Malaysia: A Nation in the Making

Malaysia is a nation of tremendous ethnic diversity. The multicultural nature of the population, often described as ABC1 (Ais Batu Campur, typical Malay mixed ice) – goes back a long way, to the earliest habitation of the Peninsula. Since then, there have been continuous waves of immigrants from virtually all directions. Over time, increasing
interethnic contacts and influences have resulted in a polyglot nation of ethnicities, religions, cultures and traditions. (Salleh 2006, 8)

The Malaysian population is made up of over 70 distinct ethnic groups, some with their own internal variations and sub-groups which add to the complex social and cultural mosaic. The earliest inhabitants of the country were the Orang Asli (aborigines)—who are linked to the Hoabinhians of the Middle Stone Age—and the indigenous groups of Sabah and Sarawak, followed by the Malays. Traders from China, India, Sumatera and Java visited the Malay Archipelago from at least the 5th century, bringing with them Buddhist and Hindu influences, while Islam was introduced in the 14th century. Traders in the later centuries established settlements in the Malay Peninsula. Indeed, cosmopolitan communities are believed to have existed in the Peninsula since the earliest recorded times. The Melaka Sultanate (c. 1400-1511) during its heyday represented an early example of the multiculturalism that now prevails.

During the colonial period that began with the Portuguese defeat of Melaka in 1511 and was followed by the periods of Dutch and British colonization, a second wave of foreigners, mainly from South Asia and China, arrived in the Peninsula. So too did Western influences. In 2006, in addition to the main ethnic groups, there are spread throughout the country people from South and East Asia: the Javanese, Acehnese, Mandailing, Banjarese, Filipinos, Thais, Myanmars and Chams among others. There are also the mixed ethnic groups such as the Eurasians and the Chinese Peranakan (or Baba), and many inter-marriages. The fluid ethnic and cultural environment contributes to the intriguing cosmopolitan character of the nation, as cultural assimilation through inter-marriage and conversion to other faiths continue to blur ethnic boundaries. They also produce new “hybrids”, whose appearance, including the much touted “PanAsian” look, often beliefs their mixed racial backgrounds (Salleh 2006, 8).

The various ethnic groups have their own social, cultural and religious heritage. Most of the world’s great religions—Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism—are found in the country. The Malay culture, which forms the core of the national culture, has been enriched by Arabic, Indian and other foreign elements, as well as by animistic traditions. At the same time, the cultures of the immigrant communities have undergone changes and have become localized, particularly in traits such as dress, language and food. The indigenous cultures of Sabah and Sarawak, on the other hand, have not undergone drastic transformation under foreign pressure, although modernization, development, and religious influences have had an impact on the practice of some traditions (Salleh 2006, 13).

Malaysians live in harmony and accept the principle of sharing political and economic power: yet, the cultural lives of the people generally remain confined to their respective ethnic groups. While cultural and religious differences tend to perpetuate the heterogeneous nature of the population, shared values and a willingness among the communities to participate in one another’s festival create an identity that is based not on one culture, but on multiculturalism. Indeed, the government encourages multiculturalism as a means of fostering national unity in this plural society (Salleh 2006, 13). Through the years, Malaysia has continuously made constant attempts to achieve social and cultural consolidation. It has done this through several efforts by each ethnic group to come to terms with the other communities and as a result of the acceptance among the various communities of each other’s religions, traditions, and customs.
Here is one example: Puan Josephine, an elderly Melaka Portugis woman, uses this representation in her description of social relations in Melaka:

All the races I have seen and mixed with are good, from whichever race, Malays, Chinese, Indians; all are good. There are no problems or conflicts. We are all like family... All of the people I mix with, my neighbors who live close by, from what I remember are good. What they speak about we understand and what we speak about they understand... People have their own races and their races have their own ways to pray or types of food, and some do not eat this or that. It is like, you don't eat this and we do not eat this. These are the things we have to ask and talk about. It is like this: you, you have your ways-lah, and we, we have our ways-lah. There are even those who do not mix it when it comes to food. We are all like family, like brothers and sisters. We understand what particular people do not eat. Like Muslims do not eat pork right, so we do not offer them pork; it is just like that lah.

Religious Diversity in Malaysia

During my research period, I tried to experience religious diversity in three different cities in Malaysia. I encountered religious diversity in a very closed neighborhood where places of worship have been built and are customarily used. To make a comparison of this religious diversity, I went to Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling in Penang, Jalan Tukang Emas in Melaka and Brickfields in Kuala Lumpur. Evidence of religious diversity in each city is practically diverse, but of all the cities that I visited, I found religious diversity in Penang the most memorable.

When the Chinese New Year was being celebrated in Penang, I went to Kuan Yin Temple one of the oldest Buddhist temples in the area. This temple is located in Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling, near St George’s Church and Masjid Kapitan Keling, thereby making Georgetown, Penang a perfect place to experience religious diversity. I found this temple to be the most humble and crowded in the neighborhood. It simply belongs to the people in the street. I saw noodle hawkers, trishaw riders and workers building cupboards, repairing bicycles, and selling sundry goods mingled with worshipers from the middle class. In the temple shrouded in incense smoke, I easily found monks alongside many devotees who were burning their joss sticks and praying for blessings.

Meanwhile, in the street corners, I saw a few Christian devotees coming out of St George's Church where they had attended Sunday service. As I walked farther, I found the small Indian temple called Sri Mariamman Temple sitting across the Masjid Kapitan Keling building. I purposely chose a strategic place from which to observe how these people from different religions interacted with each other. In the late afternoon, a call to prayer faintly echoed from the mosque, signifying that it was the time for the Ashar prayer of the Muslims. People continually walked into the mosque to do the prayer. Almost simultaneously the Indian temple keeper, who looked busy sweeping the street, greeted some Indian devotees who had just finished their rituals and were about to leave the temple. I was stunned by this beautiful sight of people from different cultural and religious backgrounds sharing the same neighborhood where they did their ritual prayers harmoniously, with tolerance and understanding. These people in Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling definitely knew how to embrace their religious diversity and transform it into a positive act of tolerance that remained peacefully diverse.
Similarly, Muslim festivals and observances in several “sacred sites” that are also integral part of the inter-communal festival cycle in Melaka exemplify multicultural interaction. Chinese Buddhist-Taoists and Indian Hindus would join Malay ritualized feasts and prayers at Malay keramat, or old Muslims graves of great Islamic teachers, missionaries and holy men, whom they have come to regard and refer to as Dato (a honorific title). Malays regularly go to these sites to sacrifice goats and cows, and would invite Chinese and Indians to participate in the festivities that used to include communal meals, music and dancing. Some Chinese and Indians would also sacrifice goats and chickens at the Malay keramat and other groups would join in the prayers and festivities. These take place during the eighth month of the Chinese calendar, the month of the celebrations at the Malay keramat Pulau Besar, and in the island lying around five kilometers offshore from the urban area of Melaka. In the past, when Chinese Buddhist-Taoists and Indian Hindus held events at Keramat, they used to invite a Malay Muslim whom they paid to officiate at the ancient graves, to perform Islamic prayers of supplication and the recitation of the Holy Quran.

The experience of religious diversity in Malaysia has been equivalently described by Steven C. Rockefeller (year, 97) in his comment on Charles Taylor's Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”:

The call for recognition of the equal value of different cultures is the expression of a basic and profound universal need for unconditional acceptance. A feeling of such acceptance, including affirmation of one’s ethnic particularity as well as one’s universally shared potential, is an essential part of a strong sense of identity. As Taylor points out, the formation of a person’s identity is closely connected to positive social recognition—acceptance and respect—from parents, friends, loved ones and also from the larger society. A highly developed sense of identity involves still more. Human beings need not only a sense of belonging in relation to human society. Especially when confronted with death, we also need an enduring sense of belonging to—of being valued part of—the larger whole which is the universe. The politics of recognition may, therefore, also be an expression of a complex human need for acceptance and belonging, which on the deepest level is a religious need.4

Through religious and cultural festivals like Wesak Day, the Chinese New Year, and Thaipusam, this nation wants to build a brand image that will create the perception that Malaysia is a country which allows freedom of beliefs, honor and respect for different religions. These ceremonies are perfect examples of religious diversity turning into tourism products that could be massively consumed by tourists visiting Malaysia.

The Development of Malaysia's Tourism Industry

The tourism industry in Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds since the early 1990s. Over the years, the tourist image that Malaysia portrayed had changed from “Beautiful Malaysia” to “Only Malaysia”, followed by “Fascinating Malaysia” and currently “Malaysia, Truly Asia”. This latest image reflects the government’s seriousness in promoting tourism as the second major income earner of the country after manufacturing. To strengthen this venture, the campaign’s promotional materials show a bevy of local beauties representing Malays, Chinese, Indians and other ethnic groups. In essence, Malaysia is currently “selling” its multiculturalism and cultural diversity representing all the major civilizations in Asia as its tourism image, as projected by the promotion tagline, “Malaysia, Truly Asia” (Amran 2004, 2).

As stated by Malaysia’s Prime Minister, Najib Razak: “What makes Malaysia unique is the diversity of our peoples. This unity in diversity has always been our strength and remains our best hope for the future”. This statement supports by the Second National Tourism Policy (2003-2010), which designates Malaysia’s unique multiculturalism as its major selling point. Turning this diversity into a selling point, the Malaysian government decided to promote Malaysia as a melting pot of three major Asian cultures (Malay,
Chinese and Indian), thereby conveying the idea of unity in diversity. With this tremendous ethnic-diversity, Malaysia has moved towards a pluralist culture based on a dynamic and interesting fusion of Malay, Chinese, Indian and indigenous cultures and customs. This joint Malaysian culture can be seen in the symbiosis of the cultures of the people within it that reflected a vibrant color of Asia. As a destination of never-ending festivities and merriment, “Malaysia, Truly Asia” captures and defines the essence of the country’s unique diversity.

Cultural tourism has emerged as a potential form of alternative tourism among both international tourists and domestic travelers. Cultural tourism in Malaysia has had wide publicity, as attested to by the increase in the number of incoming tourists annually. Malaysia has marvelous cultural tourism resources that include multi-cultural, historical buildings, colorful lifestyles and a friendly atmosphere (Mohamed 2004, 1).

As a major campaign created by Malaysia’s government, “Truly Asia” has transformed the country into a popular tourist destination. Both the natural beauty and cultural vivacity of this Southeast Asian nation may now be enjoyed by visitors from around the world. Tourism development in Malaysia has been proceeding at a tremendous pace.

In the last ten years, tourist arrivals in Malaysia registered a significant rise. In 2011, the country attracted 24.7 million foreign tourists, generating around RM58.3 billion for the country. The major tourist markets of Malaysia have been its ASEAN neighbors, like Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia and Brunei. Its other main foreign markets include China, Japan, Sweden, Australia, Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia.

Malaysia started to realize the value and importance of culture and heritage tourism when more and more tourists began coming to check out its cultural heritage. In Malaysia, heritage and culture have also been identified as new niche products to be developed extensively in line with tourism development. Cultural vibrancy is clearly manifested in the ongoing and successful “Malaysia: Truly Asia” promotional drive. In this promotion, Malaysia boasts of hosting a wide variety of Asian ethnic groups that have made it a “little Asia”. Malaysia also has a distinctive multicultural architectural

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<td>1998</td>
<td>5.5 Million</td>
<td>8.6 Billion</td>
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Table 1: Tourist Arrival and Receipts to Malaysia

In the last ten years, tourist arrivals in Malaysia registered a significant rise. In 2011, the country attracted 24.7 million foreign tourists, generating around RM58.3 billion for the country. The major tourist markets of Malaysia have been its ASEAN neighbors, like Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia and Brunei. Its other main foreign markets include China, Japan, Sweden, Australia, Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia.7

Malaysia started to realize the value and importance of culture and heritage tourism when more and more tourists began coming to check out its cultural heritage. In Malaysia, heritage and culture have also been identified as new niche products to be developed extensively in line with tourism development. Cultural vibrancy is clearly manifested in the ongoing and successful “Malaysia: Truly Asia” promotional drive. In this promotion, Malaysia boasts of hosting a wide variety of Asian ethnic groups that have made it a “little Asia”. Malaysia also has a distinctive multicultural architectural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Receipts (RM)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>24.7 Million</td>
<td>58.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24.6 Million</td>
<td>56.8 Billion</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>23.6 Million</td>
<td>53.4 Billion</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>22.0 Million</td>
<td>49.6 Billion</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>20.9 Million</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>17.4 Million</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>16.4 Million</td>
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<td>2004</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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heritage characterized by strong Islamic, Chinese and Western influences; these are portrayed in its heritage buildings. The major heritage elements—historic buildings, historical sites, and unique local cultures—are commonly found in many cities throughout Malaysia (Mohamed, 2004: 2).

In Southeast Asia, Malaysia needs to compete closely with Singapore and Thailand on fairly similar grounds, although on different levels. With Thailand, the competition is on cultural and environmental aspects whereas with Singapore, the competition lies on the two countries’ urban lifestyle and business features. That Malaysia is geographically located between two leading tourist destinations like Singapore and Thailand explains why it has often been overlooked as a tourist destination of choice.

The branding of Malaysia as “Truly Asia” has finally set the country apart from other competitive tourist destinations because it is a distinct and differentiated signature campaign. It is vital that the “Truly Asia” facet of Malaysia and/or “value for money destination” thrust is captured and embodied in tourist products and services. The ability to do this well has a direct bearing on the quality of products and service has a direct bearing on tourist arrivals.

To this end, Malaysia faces a number of challenges: a fragmented tourist industry, poor communication of the marketing themes to local players in the private sector, and the rise in homogeneous products which cater to mass tourism and have led to the lack of innovation in products development. To obviate this situation, the industry should adopt a “theme-based” approach in developing and delivering tourist products and services. As stated by Mrs. Shanina, “The campaign has set Tourism Malaysia as an example for every other country. As it has already been 10 years since it launch, people have grown familiar with the “Malaysia, Truly Asia” branding; but, for certain markets in the region we have also come up with specific themes for the campaign”.

The “theme-based” approach should conceptualize messages and images associated with “Truly Asia” and/or Malaysia’s being a “value for money destination”. Products and services should be packaged to offer a unique experience for the customer. The theme-based approach has already been applied in the Tourism Malaysia Campaign for the AERO (America, Europe and Oceania) market. As mentioned by Nasrun, “Malaysia, Truly Asia” has been the main brand for the past 10 years, but for the AERO market the agency specifically used the proposition, “Marvelously Malaysia”. This means that the agency was told to retain the “Truly Asia” thrust, but the entire guideline of the tourism campaign still revolves around Marvelously Malaysia.

The “Malaysia, Truly Asia” branding campaign is a positioning that is a true reflection not only of Malaysia’s ethnic diversity, but also of its natural, cultural, and historical make-up. Malaysia is one of the countries with many holidays that cater to the diverse populace. As Malaysia is a destination of never-ending festivities and merriment, the “Malaysia, Truly Asia” campaign captures and defines the essence of the country’s unique diversity. The cultural practices of the Malays, Chinese, Indian and other minority groups are also encapsulated in the harmonious creed “Satu Malaysia”, meaning “One Malaysia”.

The concept of 1 Malaysia has been abusively used by Najib to win Malaysia’s vote in the elections, however PM Najib Razak and other politicians, national and local officials, use Malaysia’s numerous public holidays as prime opportunities to propagate their political ideologies. They deliver speeches in local and national venues, especially during the four major public holidays,—Deepavali, Christmas, Hari Raya Aidilfitri and Chinese New Year—and these are often broadcast to the masses via television and print media. In particular, the three national television stations and the national pro-ruling
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Alliance government press routinely feature portions of speeches and statements made by national officials. These nationally-distributed Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil language daily newspapers provide Barisan Nasional political leaders and the Malay sultans a national medium for consistently broadcasting their messages to the national audience.

Just like other politicians, Najib is chasing votes along ethnic lines by overplaying the “race-card”. However, people are not simply voting on that basis. Almost two years later, after the launch of the concept, the public based on an opinion poll in July 2010, appeared wary of the concept. In particular, the non-Malays surveyed, according to the July 9, 2010 issue of The Malaysian Insider, “were almost split on the Najib administration’s national unity agenda with 46 per cent of the respondents believing that the 1Malaysia concept is only a political agenda to win the non-Malay votes”. It also reported that “only 39 per cent of the non-Malays believed that the concept introduced by Najib after he took over the government was a sincere effort to unite all races in Malaysia”.

I will now compare “native tourism product”, which are derived from the authentic culture of ethnic groups and “organized tourism product”, which emerge as government’s initiative program to promote cultural tourism in Malaysia through its annual festivals. To this end, I have chosen to compare Thaipusam as the “native tourism product” with Citirawarna (Colours of Malaysia) as the “organized tourism product”.

Thaipusam as “Native Tourism Product”

Thaipusam, as a “native tourism product” could be categorized as ethnic tourism. With its concern for the quaint customs of an indigenous or a particular ethnic group, the focus on “ethnic tourism” is the cultural practice that defines uniqueness within ethnicity. Thaipusam is a Hindu festival celebrated mainly by the Tamil community to commemorate both the birth of Lord Murugan and the vanquishing of an evil demon. It is celebrated by Hindus during the full moon in the Tamil month of “Thai”, usually in January or February. This festival has been celebrated at Batu Caves since 1892, one year after a temple was constructed and the statue of the deity installed by K. Thamboosamy Pillai, an Indian trader.

In recent years, Thaipusam has gained prominence as a major Hindu festival in major cities in Malaysia, such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Ipoh. This festival has successfully attracted not only hundreds of thousands of Hindu’s devotees, but also local communities like the Chinese and Malay, together with foreigners. Although it is not very popular in its country of origin, the Thaipusam festival has become an annual major tourist attraction in Malaysia. In 2012, some tens of thousand of devotees are walked barefoot from the Sri Maha Mariaman temple in Jalan Petaling, to Batu Caves. During the festival, Batu Caves became a massive bazaar which offered everything from various Indian food, traditional clothes, and accessories, to head-shaving service as a form of sacrifice, while devotees availed of as a form of sacrifice. Although this bazaar was very crowded, it did not detract from the religious essence of Thaipusam.

Representing Ethnic Groups, Performing Multiculturalism

Tourism, as an expression and experience of culture, fits into this form of historical contextualization and also assists in generating nuanced forms of culture as well as new cultural forms. As John Urry (1995) suggests, tourism is simply “cultural”, with its structures, practices, and events which are very much extensions of the normative cultural framing from which it emerges. Cultural tourism is tourism, and clearly it is far more than the production and consumption of “high” art and heritage (Smith and Robinson 2006, 1).

In the development of its tourism product, Malaysia continuously uses this cultural diversity as its unique selling point. However, based on the process of its construction, Malaysia currently sells two different types of tourism products. In this paper, I prefer to categorize them into “native tourism product” and “organized tourism product”.

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As far as I could see, many devotees had a kavadi (offering) attached to their body with metal hooks or spikes, while others carried a pot of milk on their head. This ceremony continued with a procession that entailed climbing up the 272 steps leading to the Sri Subramaniyar Swami temple, the main grotto at Batu Caves. Once they reached the temple, the devotees offered their Kavadis and Pal Kudam (milk pots) to Lord Murugan, while the priests were chanting their prayers. Those devotees with metal implements attached to their body had them removed, and their wounds were treated.

Over the years, Thaipusam has naturally become a tourism product that attracts foreign tourists through the uniqueness of the culture it represents. This festival is a tangible manifestation that every Hindu celebration in Malaysia is clearly supported and shared by all ethnicities.

Citrawarna (Colours of Malaysia) as an “Organized Tourism Product”

Special events such as annual festivals with cultural themes, like Citrawarna, have a significant impact on the development of tourism. Citrawarna has become a major gathering event that showcases the country’s rich kaleidoscope of arts, culture and traditions nationwide. Ever since Citrawarna Malaysia was introduced, it has officially begun with a street parade staged at Dataran Merdeka (Merdeka Square) Kuala Lumpur. Citrawarna is an example of a planned tourism product organized by Tourism Malaysia to attract local and foreign tourists alike.

I personally admired the strong faith and willingness of the devotees who participated in this festival. They carried Kavadi which could weigh between 50kg and 80kg, to implore the help of Lord Murugan. As earlier mentioned, they shaved their heads as a symbol of sacrifice and pierced their bodies with metal skewers as a display of faith and mind over matter. During the festival, I spotted a wide range of tourists from Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa. Some of them were curious to follow the entire procession of the Thaipusam festival and seemed very enthusiastic about climbing up 272 steps to the top and capturing all of the sacred moments during the festival.

Over the years, Thaipusam has naturally become a tourism product that attracts foreign tourists through the uniqueness of the culture it represents. This festival is a tangible manifestation that every Hindu celebration in Malaysia is clearly supported and shared by all ethnicities.
of traditional music. Organizers of the event explored all corners of Malaysia, from the north to the south of the peninsula and east to Borneo, to bring together the best examples of exciting traditional and contemporary Malaysian dances to the audience. The parade also showcases Chinese and Indian dance performances, which are usually staged during these ethnic groups’ annual celebrations, like the Chinese New Year and Deepavali.

Africa. Through interviews with these visitors, I found out that most of them enjoyed the multicultural performances the most.18 Some of them admitted that they were there because Citrawarna was part of their package tour. First timers considered the event as a good way to learn about Malaysian culture and to promote Malaysia to the world. This event was clearly organized by government to expose the colorful culture and traditions of Malaysia to the world and to welcome visitors to Malaysia.

Fostering National Unity in Plural Society through Tourism Industry

At this point, I would like to give an analytical review of how government is transforming cultural diversity into tourism products using two different approaches. This section will clarify the government’s strategy of treating Thaipusam and Citrawarna as potential tourism products using completely different approaches.

By preserving the authenticity of Indian culture, Thaipusam has effortlessly attracted local and foreign tourists through its unique rituals. Thaipusam is an outstanding example of how cultural diversity could naturally turn into a tourism product. This kind of tourism product will endlessly survive as a tourist attraction because through unique festivals like Thaipusam, people will eventually find the comprehensiveness of its culture.

Through the years, Malaysia continuously and constantly striven to achieve social and cultural consolidation. It has done this through various efforts by each ethnic group to come to terms with other communities and to accept their religion, traditions, and customs. By giving ethnic groups the freedom to celebrate their beliefs, the government has provided room for potential multicultural engagement to grow and naturally develop it into a “native tourism product”. This festival is a tangible manifestation that every Hindu celebration in Malaysia is clearly assured of and is shared by all ethnicities.

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Through the years, Citrawarna has always had a unique theme to attract more visitors. In 2005, the government designated a greater mission for Citrawarna. By opting for “Colours of Asia in Malaysia” as the festival’s theme, the government intended to reinforce Malaysia’s positioning as a miniature of Asia. Therefore, the event not only featured songs and dances from Malaysia, but also the cultural and folk dance performances from invited countries in Asia as well, especially those from Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, China and Korea.

Every year, people purposively come to Dataran Merdeka to watch a massive celebration of the cultural diversity in Malaysia. Among the audiences, I saw locals mingling with foreign tourists from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Australia, and
image that this is a country which allows freedom of beliefs, honors and respects various religions. These ceremonies are perfect examples of how cultural and religious diversity can turn into a "native tourism product" that could be appreciated by tourists visiting Malaysia.

In comparison with Thaipusam, a well-organized event like Citrawarna clearly has different mission and implementation process. In this case, a solid collaboration between Tourism Malaysia and the Ministry of Culture to organize well-planned annual events like Citrawarna, not only aims to achieve a commercial target, but also has a national intention as well. Its tasks are to engender local awareness of cultural matters and national identity and heritage, and to enhance national pride and commitment. As Wood says, "the role of the state in marketing "cultural meanings" the choice of which parts of a country's cultural heritage to develop for tourism constitutes a statement about national identity, which is conveyed to both tourists and locals" (Wood 1984, 365).

Here I could foreseeably assume that Citrawarna, as an "organized tourism product" planned by the government, is a cultural extension of "1 Malaysia" (a slogan promoted by PM Najib Razak) to reinforce his intention of Malaysia as a nation which encourages its citizens to live harmoniously by preserving the mantra "Unity in Diversity". This condition was equivalently described by Shazlin Amir Hamzah in her journal *Branding Malaysia through Tourism: When Ads Permeate our Consciousness, What Happens to our Identity*, thus:

> The public sector, particularly governments around the world, has taken on the concept of branding as part of nationalistic strategies, especially in the area of tourism. Increasingly, Malaysia is using advertising as a branding tool to achieve various objectives not only in relation to tourism promotion, but in a more ideological sense. Malaysia through advertising over the years, has managed to brand itself as an entity with an attitude and identity

> (Hamzah 2010, 1112)

If we only see Citrawarna from the surface, we might easily conclude that it is one of the examples of successful tourism products organized by Tourism Malaysia to generate revenue for the tourism industry. With its street parade concept, it resembles a well-established cultural festival like “Mardi Gras” or “Rio De Janeiro Carnival”. By combining the best cultural and artistic manifestations of ethnic groups in Malaysia dressed in colorful costumes, with contemporary and traditional dances, to the melodious strains of traditional music, this event explores all corners of Malaysia to present the brand “Truly Asia”.

Citrawarna, as the extension of 1Malaysia, clearly has a hidden political agenda: to build among outsiders a positive impression and a strong perception of Malaysian society as one characterized by “unity in diversity”. It also expresses the goal of presenting a united image of “our” national selves to outsiders. Multiracial open houses where members of each race and religion visit members of all others on their respective festive occasions are projected as models of unity, “one way to bring Malaysians together”.19

In an attempt to achieve its commercial target, Citrawarna might make a tremendous contribution on generating tourist traffic that converts into revenue for the tourism industry. In interview with Mrs. Shanina, she described the contribution of Citrawarna thus: “For the ASEAN market Citrawarna has been well known already. It is one of the longest tourism products that we have. Even if it doesn’t really attract the ASEAN market so much, Citrawarna nonetheless attracts more visitors from European countries”. It is interesting to know that some of the travel agencies in the country have included Citrawarna in their package tours. This proves that the government’s efforts to put its country on the world tourism map and to get global recognition for the brand “Truly Asia” are definitely noteworthy.

However, if we analyze government’s approaches to develop tourism products like Thaipusam and Citrawarna further, we would definitely see a greater purpose. My point of departure will
begin with a note from Professor Shamsul Amri Baharuddin on his journal *Many Ethnicities, Many Cultures, One Nation: The Malaysian Experience*:

Malaysia, since Independence, had been in a state of “stable tension”, which means that we have been living in a society dominated by many contradictions but we have managed to solve most of them through a continuous process of consensus-seeking negotiations, sometimes the process itself became a solution... The downside of the ongoing negotiation between ethnic interest groups in Malaysia is that the potentially negative and divisive ethnic fault lines, based on very significant differences in religion, language, dress and diet, have become highlighted more so than ever before. To the prophets of doom, notably foreign journalists, Malaysia has been perceived as a society facing an imminent danger of breaking down for the slightest of reasons. In general, Malaysians remain more optimistic and believe that they have learnt the bitter lesson that nobody gains from an open ethnic conflict manifesting in violence. But they remain sociologically vigilant and chose consensus, not conflict, as the path for the future. (Baharuddin 2008, 46)

From his notes, we can conclude that Malaysia will find a new way to develop this diversity into something more beneficial for the country. Within 10 years, “Truly Asia” has become one of the most sought-after tourism brandings in the region. This fact has triggered the government to perpetuate its hidden political agenda for tourism, namely, to blur the ethnic differences in favor of a united image.

Tourism is an external global value, which has not only brought cultural value, but also economic value. When the tourists first came to Malaysia, 3 different ethnic groups (Malays, Indians and Chinese) that previously competed against each other slowly saw the need to collaborate in order to serve the demands of the tourism industry. There is a pseudo-ideology factor in tourism that could force these ethnics to work together to serve the tourists. Because once this ethnics work together to provide tourism value, it will generate more tourism demand. So we can say that tourism has economic and social merit as it not only contributes to GDP, but also helps dissolve ethnic tensions. In conclusion, their economic demand indirectly controls their ethnic tensions.

My point here too is that government’s effort to promote Malaysia’s tourism industry is not solely for attaining national economic growth. The government has also established a systematic industry that showcases artificial culture by incorporating tourism with creative industry. In terms of reducing ethnic tension, I personally think that tourism potentially creates a convergence of cultural differences. However, the discrimination resolution is a matter of political policy. Tourism is not intended to be an instrumental policy, but tourism could mediate “political ambiance” in order to relieve cultural tensions. As for the government’s hidden agenda, Truly Asia was conceived to nurture the potential of multicultural engagement, while tourism itself is a political psychology tools owned by the government to maintain harmony and peace in the region.

At this point, we have to admit that Malaysia has successfully transformed diversity, which was formerly become its greatest challenge to foster plural society, into its greatest asset by gaining global recognition for its tourism branding “Truly Asia”. Malaysia has succeeded in elevating the possibility of realizing a worldwide moral community with multiple cultural values into a unique selling point for its tourism product. I will put my finishing touch to these remarks by quoting Peter Caws statement: “We live in a world that is irreversibly plural where culture is concerned, but a basis for the harmonious coexistence of cultures can be found in the mutual sharing of what is convergent in the sense specified above and in a mutual respect for what is divergent”—where this does not involve the oppression of individuals or groups” (Caws 1994, 385).

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Conclusion

It is beneficial for a country like Malaysia to have marvelous cultural tourism resources that are readily available to be explored: such as the existence of multi-cultural, historical buildings, colorful lifestyles and a friendly atmosphere. In Southeast Asia alone, Malaysia needs to compete with Thailand on cultural and environmental aspects, whereas with Singapore, it has to compete in terms of urban lifestyle and business features. To differentiate itself, Malaysia has tried to create a home for its immigrants to comfortably live and developing their culture to enrich the nation’s diversity. By giving a freedom to ethnic groups to celebrate their beliefs, the government has made room for the potential multicultural engagement to grow and has naturally developed it into a “tourism product”.

As Wood says, “the role of the state in marketing ‘cultural meanings’ the choice of which parts of a country’s cultural heritage to develop for tourism constitutes a statement about national identity, which is conveyed to both tourists and locals”. (Wood 1984, 365). The government’s effort to promote Malaysia’s tourism industry is not solely for attaining national economic growth. On the government’s hidden agenda, Truly Asia was conceptualized to nurture the potential of multicultural engagement, and tourism itself as political psychology tools owned by the government to maintain harmony and peace in the region. This nation wants to build and aim to perceive the brand image that Malaysia is a country that allows freedom of belief, honors and respect religions.

Malaysians live in harmony and accept the principle of sharing political and economic power: yet the cultural lives of the people generally remain confined to their respective ethnic groups. While cultural and religious differences tend to perpetuate the heterogeneous nature of the population, shared values and a willingness among the communities to participate in one another’s festivals creates an identity that is based not on one culture, but on multiculturalism. Indeed, the government encourages multiculturalism as a means of fostering national unity in this plural society.

This research concludes that tourism as a cultural extension of the “1 Malaysia” slogan not only used as the biggest asset to develop Malaysia’s tourism industry, but also continually used to nurture the multicultural engagement among these ethnic groups. Even though the slogan 1Malaysia itself clearly has a hidden political agenda: to build a strong perception on the part of outsider who consequently acquire a positive impression of Malaysian society, given its “unity in diversity”, still we can say that Malaysia has succeeded on elevating the possibility of realizing a worldwide moral community with multiple cultural values into a unique selling point for its tourism product.

Malaysia will remain one of only a few nations in the world today, whose experience and track record in dealing with many ethnicities and many cultures are useful. The Malaysian experience is not to be easily replicated but it can be useful for other states to study closely and, perhaps, gain some useful insights from it. Malaysia has successfully transformed diversity, which was formerly became its greatest challenge in fostering plural society, into its greatest asset in its quest to gain a global recognition for its tourism branding “Truly Asia”. This experience shows that it is possible to manage daunting tourism challenges with appropriate policies. I end, therefore on a note of hope that this study could contribute to the literature of ethnic studies and to the development of the tourism industry.

NOTES

1 Ais Batu Campur perfectly described the multicultural condition in Malaysia. Just like Malaysia, Ais Batu Campur is a traditional dessert where a lot of ingredients with different color, taste and texture mix together.

2 Most of the religious diversity that I’ve experienced were happening on a religious celebration. I purposively went to Penang to experience the religious diversity on Chinese New Year celebration on January 23, 2012. As for the religious diversity in Brickfields KL, I’ve experienced it during the celebration of Wesak on May 5, 2012.

3 The Chinese New Year was celebrate on Sunday, January 23, 2012, when most of the temple at the streets are filled with devotees who want to do rituals and prayers, the most unique view was happening in Kuan Yin Temple which located on Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling, Penang.
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4 Steven C. Rockefeller, “Comments”, in Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition, p.97.
5 I prefer to use the definition from Stebbins (1996:948). He writes, “Cultural tourism is a genre of special interest tourism based on the search for and participation in new and deep cultural experiences, whether aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, or psychological”.
6 Source: Tourism Malaysia in cooperation with the Immigration Department.
7 National Tourism Policy 2004-2010, Ministry of Tourism, page 94.
8 Ibid. page 30
9 Ibid. page 55
10 Theme-based approach generates specific theme campaign in each region to trigger foreign tourists to come to Malaysia. Theme-based approach is an initiate campaign for each region to meets target market's interest and demands
11 Mrs. Shamina is one of the staff in advertising division who handles ASEAN market. I interviewed her in her office Departemen Pelancongan Malaysia in Putrajaya, on June 4, 2012.
12 Mr. Nestor is the Account Manager for M&C Saatchi, his agency was appointed to handle AERO (America, Europe and Oceania) market for Tourism Malaysia's advertising campaign. I interviewed him in his office in Damansara on May 25, 2012.
13 Marvelously Malaysia is a theme-based campaign implemented on AERO (America, Europe and Oceania) market. Based on their research study, tourists from this region are keen to try adventurous trip in Malaysia, that suits with the campaign title “Marvelously Malaysia”.
14 Aside from becoming a theme-based campaign for AERO market, Marvelously Malaysia and Undeniable Malaysia later become the title of the TVC.
15 http://www.slideshare.net/simer1319/1-malaysia-concept
17 Interview in Batu Caves, Gombak on February 7, 2012. Based on my short interview with several devotees, those who were taking part in the whole procession was expressing their gratitude to Lord Murugan for answering their prayers and fulfilling their vows. Besides, they are also seeking for forgiveness for their failure on the past.
18 Interview in Dataran Merdeka, during Citrawarna celebration on May 19, 2012 to 50 correspondents. Mostly foreign tourists from varies countries.
19 Margaret Sarkissian (2000:12) notes that these images of “happy multicultural coexistence” are directed at outsiders, visiting dignitaries, businessmen, and tourists, and at insiders as representations of “established reality”. She questioned whether these images are mere “glittering illusions” and observes that cultural troupes are generally organized along “ethnic” lines and very little interaction occurs between groups of different cultural categories that share stages and dressing rooms (ibid: 177).
20 Caws borrowed this formulation from his article “What World Philosophy Might Do for World Culture”, in Philosophy and Cultural Development, eds Ioanna Kucuardi and Evandro Agazzi (Ankara: Turkey, Editions of the Philosophical Society of Turkey for the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, 1993), p.105.

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Participatory Governance of Land and Water Resources: The *Satoyama* System of Japan

Mochamad Indrawan

**Introduction**

Socio-ecological systems (as defined by Berkes et al. 2003) emphasize four important elements: ecosystems, local knowledge, people and technology, and property rights institutions. These systems are geared toward meeting the objectives of sustainability, especially the capacity to cope and adapt (Lebel et al. 2006), and are therefore a function of governance capacities. Here, governance is defined as “the management of natural resources, as well as the structures and processes that provide the social and institutional environment in which that management can take place” (Bodin and Crona 2009). Governance attributes include participation, representation, deliberation, accountability, empowerment, social justice and organizational features (Lebel et al. 2006).

This paper seeks to explore the concept of participatory governance using the Japanese socio-ecological landscape system known as “satoyama”. *Satoyama* refers to communities in montane forests or grasslands that use “the gifts from the forest”. Wetland resource use by rivers, lakes, and coasts is referred to as *satoumi*. The *Satoyama Initiative* defines *satoyama* as: “a traditional Japanese multi-functional land use system in which agricultural practices and natural resource management techniques are used to optimize the benefits derived from local ecosystems” (http://satoyama-initiative.org/en/about).

To explore the diversity of socio-ecological systems that characterize satoyama, a wide variety of locations was sampled and will be described. This essay frames *satoyama* within a landscape level approach instead of an ecosystem level approach (Dumbrell et al. 2008) to allow for an appropriately scaled response and to avoid catchall phrases. Emphasis will be given to the *satoyama* and national park at Aso for a number of reasons: (1) Aso’s grasslands are rare in *satoyama*; (2) Aso is not near larger cities, so it is not managed as part of urban areas like most contemporary *satoyama*; and (3) Aso’s management is not typical of a park’s nor *satoyama*’s since it was not originally intended as a park.

This paper will start with descriptions of relevant national policies. Case studies will be presented, and their diversity, as well as common threads, will be highlighted. Social networks will be considered to emphasize the notion that social network perspectives harness important potential in analyzing cross-scale interactions (Bodin and Crona 2009).

**Japan’s contemporary agriculture, landscape and protected areas**

Once mainly self-sufficient in food production, in 2001, Japan imported 72% of its grains and 60% of its food calories. Farming has been increasingly undertaken only on a part-time basis. Although Japanese law prohibits development on prime farmland, and rural people consider it shameful to sell ancestral lands, exodus from farms has been stemmed only to a certain degree. In the last two decades, the total agricultural income has been halved, and profitability decreased (MMAF 2010). The number of farmers is falling and most that remain are over age 65. The declining farming business is attributed to two main trends. Firstly, the diet preference of the Japanese has been shifting from rice to wheat (Bauzon 1979). It used to be that the annual rice consumption was 60 kg per capita, but now it is much less. Secondly, Japan is undergoing population decrease and aging of the population, which means the proportion of older people is rising (Yamashita 2006).

Government countermeasures to reverse the trend include: more effective use and acquisition of farmland, financial assistance programs to meet the needs of different farmers, and increased agricultural assistance. Rice cultivation is government regulated to protect market prices. Government programs help increase sales prices, increase...
sales volumes and reduce costs (MMAF 2010). Simultaneously, the government, recognizing the importance of agricultural biodiversity, has been supporting policy schemes, such as: direct payment for cultivating in less favorable areas (LFA); measures to conserve and improve the environment; and an agri-environmental payment scheme (Nomura et al. 2012). The degree of effectiveness of these recent initiatives has yet to be seen.

Japan’s land use policies are influenced by rice farming politics led by the government and the Japanese Agricultural Association (JA), the nationwide farming association, and controlled through strict regulations. Police regularly check the harvest time and rice trade outside permissible JA routes are investigated. Since the early 1990s, partly due to domestic incentives, free trade has been developing in Japan. The transition is marked by the rice policy reform charter of 2002, which encouraged minimum acreage for subsidies and the exclusion of smaller acreage farms from the protection package (Horiuchi and Saito 2010).

In 1996, food security laws changed: multiple options became available, be it fixed prices (through JA) or market prices (through private channels) (Horiuchi and Saito 2010). The government also limited the use of pesticides to twice a year and farmers who used them only once a year could obtain special certification (toko betsu saibai mae).

Japan does not have vast areas for establishing state-owned parks. National parks must be mixed in with farmland in densely populated prefectures and a balance between the needs of the environment and the people must be struck. Park management is decentralized to the prefectural government, with the designation process accorded to the Ministry of Environment (MoE). The government does not necessarily regulate the commons, which are often subject to traditional rules. However, parks have a zonation system, with the core entirely government-owned, whereas the rest may belong to the local government or individuals (Naomi Kibe, personal communication).

Most of the lands on which satoyama are located are private property. This complicates satoyama management more than if they were owned by the government.

CASE STUDIES

Methods

Observations were made through multiple visits and interviews at 12 sites throughout the three main islands of Japan: Aso, Uehimari, Mount Iwara, Mount Hiyama, Kounosuyama, Ikoimomori, Mizurogaike, Ohara, Ryokoku, Lake Biwa, Kama-kura and Shimokawa (Table 1). About 40 people were approached with semi-structured interviews to determine the local perspectives on the socio-ecological features of each satoyama.

Aso Mountain, an unusual and complex satoyama

Resting in the middle of Kyushu, Aso Mountain is a mosaic of grasslands, forests and cultivated land. Along with the nearby Kuju mountain range, it is protected as the Aso-Kuju National Park. Aso has the world’s largest caldera and is part of a glacial relict, resulting in an ecosystem with unique vegetation and endangered species.

A heterogeneous landscape is maintained by differing management practices among farms and a recent rice production regulation (MMAF 2010), keeping biodiversity high. Biodiversity is not necessarily considered important by individuals since wildlife rarely provides direct economic benefits. However, local communities are interested in conservation, with annual values estimated at ¥255 million (approximately US$2.3 million) (Yabe 2007). This common objective of all stakeholders in Aso does not conflict with agriculture and forestry there (Iiyama et al. 2005, Keiji Nakahima personal communication).

The livelihoods of the inhabitants come from the cultivation of staple foods, cattle ranching, dairy production, and limited forestry activities, but are increasingly supplanted by a growing tourism industry. The latter emphasizes the volcanic landscape, hot springs and grasslands. The grasslands are communally managed and owned mostly by the government with, to a lesser extent, some members of the community. Farms are largely owned by individuals.
Traditionally, the community shared inherited rights and maintenance duties, such as the regular cleaning of irrigation channels. Cleaning duties were exchanged for access to water, thus unpaid. Now, under a new direct payment scheme, outsiders are allowed to partake of these resources.

Ranching is skewed toward the older generations and the government is providing farming subsidies to encourage recruitment of younger generations. The government also subsidizes forestry activities since local labor has become expensive, while wood prices have stagnated.

The forests are predominantly comprised of the widely planted Japanese cedar (sugi) and the native oak, with natural beeches on the decline. Oak trees that were planted are used for charcoal and firewood, making them an element of satoyama. Cedars were used only for timber, but could not compete with cheaper and better quality timber from the tropics.

The grasslands undergo regular management such as prescribed burning (noyaki), to prevent succession into areas occupied by Japanese pampas grass (susuki). Interest in grassland management is declining, especially since ranchers consider rice feed as more cost effective than grasses. However, grasslands are effective at controlling loss of water to the atmosphere through the mechanisms of evaporation (from soil and plant surfaces) and transpiration (from plant tissues). Because of Aso’s grasslands, Kumamoto can provide underground freshwater for its 700,000 inhabitants and one million others in the surrounding areas. In the coming decade, water fees and levies may be applied.

In 2007, no fewer than 19 million people came to visit Aso. However, visits were often rushed and emphasized sightseeing, limiting their economic impact. Although tourism should benefit locals, ranchers sometimes disagree. An outbreak of foot and mouth disease in nearby Miyazaki in 2010 was a risk emanating from tourism. The ranchers had to rope in their cattle to avoid potential disease transmission.

Farmers have clear rights to access and manage natural resources. The city of Aso manages the national park lands. Ranchers are given tenurial rights to the area, which encompass grassland slash and burn, and the maintenance of roads. Correspondingly, the benefits are accruable to these communities.

Mountain tradition is still very strong in Aso, including medicinal knowledge (sempuri). The forests are thought to have therapeutic properties and patients who work on the mountain are believed to be healed. The owner can have the visitors cut trees and pave roads in exchange for access to the mountain, making it a win-win situation.

Uchinari, a rice paddy that emphasizes satoyama

Located in the outskirts of Beppu, paddy fields interspersed with forests in Uchinari have long been traditionally managed. The satoyama provides rice and vegetables for both market and local consumption. Although forests are abundant, they are not used for their natural resources because of depopulation. Charcoal is primarily imported from nearby producers. Bamboo is also becoming difficult to control. Only some species can be used for handicrafts, limiting its economic value.

An aging population remains but they cannot continue with an agrarian lifestyle any longer. Discussions on how to attract people back to Uchinari have been held, but the actual change, if at all, may take years. The landscape may be gone by the next generation, reverting to forests now rife with invasive bamboo.

Mount Iwara, depopulation impacted forests

The satoyama in Mount Iwara, Itoshima, is recognized as public land that belongs to the local community and provides basic subsistence needs. People move periodically to accommodate the regeneration of forest products such as charcoal. The forest is predominantly cedar, with occasional oak, chestnut, gingko, and...
bamboo occurring, as well, and actively main-
tained. Cedar thinning is necessary to allow
the growth of other desirable biota, such as
mushrooms. The level of maintenance required
cannot be sustained since only a third of the
traditional population remains, changing the
quality of the forest ecosystem. For instance,
overly dense cedar forests limit the growth of
individual trees and cause severe pollen allergies.

Mount Hiyama, a local knowledge harnessing
satoyama

Hiyama, one of the better-managed satoyama
around Itoshima, is surrounded by mixed
broadleaf-coniferous forests. In the early 1990s,
sakura dominated the landscape, but recent
invasions of bamboo and pests have altered
the ecosystem.

The local community manages the forests but
does not prioritize conservation and cannot
live off the satoyama. Traditional ecological
knowledge to realize better silvicultural
techniques have advanced accordingly. In order
for plants to be properly rooted in the ground,
dango (small ball, made of local red soil) have
been used. The ball contains seeds which can
naturally germinate (Eiji Yoshimura, personal
communication).

Planting of sakura has now been replaced by
“Tarayou” Ilex latifolia (which is naturally
distributed in eastern China and southern
Japan). “Tarayou”, considered a sacred tree
in Buddhism, is thought to occur only in
sacred places.

Plant propagation occurs using a method
called coppicing whereby, after two years, the
plant grows a clone. Another propagation
technique uses small trees from nurseries, but
this is not ideal because the bottom part of the
trees must be cut for easier transport when
sold. On-site seed germination is another
option resulting in longer-living plants, but
takes as long as nine years.

To fight bamboo invasions, locals use it for
charcoal and handicrafts. Charcoal is used in
recycling as a purifying substance or as fertilizer.
The advantage of bamboo-based biochar is
that it does not yield dioxine. Bamboo older
than seven years emits carbon dioxide, which
is bad for the environment (Michael Hall,
personal communication).

Kounosuyama, a sakura conservation area in
the middle of a satoyama

Near Kounosuyama, Fukuoka, is a satoyama
forest on a granite and sedimentary landscape.
The occurrence of steep granite makes residential
development difficult, leaving the area a primarily
sakura forest with planted oaks. Tombs dating
probably before and since the Meiji era (150
years ago) border the satoyama (Jin Ono, personal
communication).

The satoyama forest is owned by the city council
of Fukuoka. In the 1950s and 1960s, oak was
used for firewood and charcoal. The locals later
abandoned the forest, and it became dark and
unattractive. However, in recent years, the locals
came back to manage the forest, particularly
by thinning trees to allow more sunlight in for
the undergrowth.

The residents of Fukuoka recently formed a
satoyama club to preserve and maintain the
satoyama, mainly the culturally important
stands of sakura. The satoyama now functions
as a recreational forest where people take
walks, and children play and learn. A favorite
pastime of the children is collecting bugs.
However, strictly speaking, collection of
biodiversity specimens is not allowed. In
nearby Itoshima, which consists of mostly
private lands, visitors have collected ferns,
fruits, mushrooms.

The forest is culturally important since it is
believed to protect the mountains where the
gods live. The city council forbids cut trees
from being taken out of the forest. The cut
trees may be used as local fertilizer, or for building fences to protect certain places, such as nursery areas. Tree trunks may be used to mark paths or as benches for resting. Invasive bamboo from China is cut every year to preserve the state of the forest.

Evidence of the practice of satoyama, particularly coppiced trees, can be seen in the tree trunks that appear to be united at the base. There are also signs of charcoal ovens from approximately 50 years ago.

Ikoinomori, providing both fuel wood and recreation functions

Ikoinomori, on the outskirts of Hiroshima, harbors a semi-natural forest landscape which is maintained by the local communities. The forests provide recreational opportunities for locals, and pathways and facilities have been established for this purpose. The forests also allow for wood chip collection from dry branches and have specific collection points designated for trucks.

Mizurogaike, a small pond in town

The pond of Mizurogaike in Kyoto was designated a National Designated Natural Monument on 12 June 1927 because of its unique ecological properties, specifically the aquatic plant colonies. When further studies found more rare insects and other species, a strengthened decree was enacted on 24 December 1988. The pond consists of a cool temperate zone similar to the upper marshlands in northeastern Japan, which is different from the local Kyoto basin that has been classified as a warm temperate zone.

Active satoyama management through regular cutting allows the riparian ecosystem to be restored. Reeds are regularly removed from the pond to control the levels of crucial nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorous, kalium and natrium. The satoyama committee also handles issues related to forest thinning and illegal recreational fishing.

Ohara, a satoyama on forests lands owned individually

In Ohara, on the outskirts of Kyoto, are extensive citizen—or community-owned forests. Because forests are owned personally, the satoyama forests are small and patchily distributed. Collaborations are often difficult, despite their importance to successful satoyama management.

One of the current priorities of the satoyama is the use of indigenous wood. However, it will take a long time to reverse current trends in Japanese forestry. Japanese wood is expensive and forestry infrastructure is insufficient, resulting in carpenter’s preferring cheaper, imported wood. Future management can be facilitated through education. Children can be taught and encouraged to cut ropes, make charcoal, cut logs and plant native wood.

Ryokoku forest, a satoyama that is also a university research center

Ryokoku forest, on the outskirts of Kyoto near Lake Biwa, is comprised of konara oak (which responds well to coppicing), planted sugi, as well as natural red pine (akamatsu). Akamatsu was formerly the main timber product of the satoyama. Shiitake mushrooms are cultivated on the konara trees, whereas matsutake mushrooms are cultivated on the akamatsu.

There was once a takeover attempt by a golf course, but the area was deemed unsuitable; and, now, the Ryokoku University co-manages the forest with the local community. The forest is equipped with educational and research-related structures, such as observation towers with climate loggers, artificial wells, composting infrastructure, leaf litter traps, camera traps, and nest boxes. Compost must be made because the soil is very poor but yields important byproducts, such as grubs of Japanese rhinoceros beetles.
POST-DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS IN ASIA I

Lake Biwa and its satoyama-satoumi

Lake Biwa (-ko) is unique in having not only a managed forest satoyama, but also a satoumi, representing a strong connection between mountains and water. Biwa-ko is surrounded by smaller lakes with waterways that can be used for tourism.

Shaped like a biwa musical instrument, Biwa-ko is the largest lake in Japan. It is a basin surrounded by forested mountains. The water catchment area covers 80% of Shiga Prefecture. No fewer than 460 rivers flow into the lake, with only the Seta-Uji-Yodo River and the canal of Biwa-ko flowing out. The lake provides water for households and industries in the Kinki region, which is populated by over 14 million people. The satoyama is characterized by rich biodiversity, with 600 species of animals and 500 species of plants, including 50 endemics.

The forest provides vegetables, fruits and mushrooms. Interspersed grasslands also yield important products such as thatch. People live and farm at the foot of the mountain. Firewood, bamboo for baskets and chopsticks, charcoal, and game species from the forest are plentiful.

The management of paddy fields is also important to species that require open habitats, such as the itotombo (dragonfly) and sashiba (see also Katoh et al. 2009). Villagers sell or trade forest products in town for goods that are not found in abundance on the mountain.

After WWII, at the expense of other tree species, the government encouraged monocultures of sugi, leading to a loss of biodiversity. Sugì turned out to be unprofitable as trade of tropical timber increased, so it now overruns the forest.

Of special interest is the village of Ogi, which is the subject of the NHK film, Japan’s Secret Watergarden. Prior to the documentary, Ogi was already a household name for satoyama because it highlighted the diverse interactions between humans and nature. Trees in it were planted in rotation, not unlike slash and burn cultivation. These habitat enrichment activities are similar to “gap dynamics”, which provide patches of open areas crucial to insects, birds, and mammals.

Tanada or terraced paddy fields are an important part of the satoyama landscape, especially where land is hemmed in by mountains. In Iko, mountains are very close to the lake and paddy fields must be terraced. In Koka, mountains are far away and land is plentiful, so the paddy fields which encroach on natural forests are flat (yatsuda).

Interest in satoyama management by younger people is weak because of the influence of urbanization. However, ecology students interested in sustainability may serve as an important key to the future maintenance of satoyama.

Kambatsu or thinning is very important to the management of forests. Trees are planted rather densely, but the smaller ones are removed as they grow. An example of this in practice is a restoration project nearby, at Hakuo-cho, Omihachiman where invasive bamboo stands also harbor boar as pests. The bamboo stands have been thinned as part of an endeavor to allow deciduous trees to grow again and recreate the satoyama landscape. The project is a collaborative effort by local communities and Shiga Prefectural University.

Kamakura, urban use of the forest landscape

Kamakura, on the outskirts of Tokyo, is a popular tourist destination because of the sitting Buddha. A “natural” environment has been created within the local vicinity. However, its focus is not on traditional satoyama activities; instead, it uses the ecosystem indirectly by emphasizing its cultural, historical and recreational significance.

Local farmers may each develop their own perceptions regarding resource use in the nearby mountains. Urbanites, particularly those from...
Tokyo, visit and enjoy the foliage and wildlife due to Kamakura’s proximity. Unfortunately, locally urbanized environments are also encroaching on the satoyama. Tourism activities have driven up property values, but some residents feel a loss of tranquility because of the accessibility of the place to crowds of visitors from Tokyo.

Shimokawa, an eco-model town, as a new satoyama

Shimokawa is in the relatively cool northern reaches of Hokkaido Prefecture, three hours from Sapporo by train. Shimokawa, 90% covered by forests primarily karamatsu (large Japanese spruce), has a population fewer than 4,000 people. Timber derivatives, especially wood chips, are used to generate energy.

Shimokawa acts as an eco-model town for the future of satoyama by emphasizing strategies based on sustainable forest management and the progressive development of local forestry resources. Economic growth is fostered through a resource cycle that sustainably develops and maintains the forest, while providing jobs and timber products. People can get certification for forest management and create a chain of custody. Energy independence is fostered by employing biomass boilers to generate heat locally. Additional income for forest management is provided by J-VER, a verification scheme for credits generated through the reduction of emissions. Subsequent certification by the Ministry of Environment allows carbon credit to be obtained. By channeling funds back to emission reduction, the scheme promotes local industrial growth.

Discussion

The socio-ecological system, especially the site-specific ways in which resources are being used, has a strong influence on the landscape. Satoyama also comes with invaluable traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).

Traditional satoyama, as defined by Takeuchi (2001), were found in Hiyama and Iwara; TEK featured prominently, although TEK was also on the decline.

Alternatively, new satoyama in Shimokawa, and to some extent, Kamakura and Ryokoku, use the landscape in new ways, such as recreation and energy production. They are still satoyama since local stakeholders manage them with sustainability and efficiency in mind by introducing new uses for available resources.

Landscapes with a long history of socio-ecological systems may provide the vision of “agricultural landscape as part of cultural landscape” (Nobukazu Nakagoshi, personal communication). For instance, Aso has places that have distinct ecological and historical values, and require protection.

This study emphasized social networks as a common and effective denominator for calling different stakeholders to collectively tackle issues of resource use (Bodin and Crona 2009). The social structure that governs the system, coupled with clear rights and obligations, is especially important.

In contemporary times, people may not use their rights but, nonetheless, are subjected to communal responsibility for the landscape, such as paying dues. With decreased reliance on satoyama, an increasing number of people only see satoyama as a cumbersome obligation and do not benefit from the system. Responses needed include economic enhancement of ecosystem services and local biodiversity. Revitalization of local agricultural resources should be based on the concept of chi san chi sho, which means local production for local consumption (Kurita et al. 2009).

Communities serve as the effective unit to maintain a given area, with each and every one of them coming to a consensus and deciding what to do. When compensation for less favorable areas (LFA) was introduced, subsidies were given for redistribution to communities instead of individual farms, leading to the more effective maintenance of LFAs.

Relevant stakeholder groups should be effectively identified, including regional governments and outside users. The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries should work together to maintain national parks and zoning regulations.
Conclusions

Despite grave challenges from depopulation and urbanization, there is potential for maintaining and even revitalizing the satoyama. Future satoyama may harness the development of wood-based energy. Presently, Japan is taking measures to shut down its nuclear plants, and wood biomass can be considered as a sustainable alternative (Yamazaki Toru, personal communication).

The future of the satoyama cannot be left only to the locals. Beneficiaries need to be mobilized to gather mechanisms of support from both within and beyond the satoyama. It is encouraging that the government is facilitating non-profit organization and volunteer involvement for landscape revitalization.

Still, the measures are incomparable to the previous levels of use. Above all, depopulation removes the crucial ingredient of the satoyama—“rule making” or iriai-chi. Rule making will be the greatest challenge in maintaining effective participatory governance.

NOTES

1 The integrated concept of humans in nature is emphasized. It is reasoned that since social and ecological systems are interlinked, differentiation between the two is artificial and arbitrary (Berkes et al., op. cit.).

2 http://newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/international/features/0404/selkei/index.htm


4 The case would be different from Okinawa, where a non-government organization is more likely to oppose agricultural activities since fertilizers and pesticides may run off and pollute coral reefs lining the shores.

5 The cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down throughout generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment (Berkes 1998).


7 http://docwiki.net/index.php?title=Satoyama_Japan%27s_Secret_Watergarden

REFERENCES


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Global Environmental Resources


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Table 1. Examples of contemporary tenure that provided innovative responses
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Panel 5

Re-building Japan: Still-photographic Documentary Project on the Resilience of Rice Cultivation

Tawatchai Pattanaporn

Introduction

It has been a year and a half (at the time of this report’s completion) since the 2011 tsunami incident, which took place and destroyed much of the northwest regions of Japan. Apart from the twenty thousand lives lost, the damaged area devoted to rice cultivation is still under rehabilitation. From the field research, it was found out that there are many problems arising from damage to land and properties which, over time, have become social issues, among them salt and radioactive contamination of farmlands, migration, insufficient incomes. The Japanese government has planned for the rehabilitation of agricultural areas from the tsunami to take place between three and five years, while the leaked radioactive materials from Reactor 1 of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant has not been contained to a safe level. The associated health effects on the nearby population, especially on children, and the loss of land and properties inherited from many generations ago brought about the need for evacuation from the contaminated area, which move could last for 30 years. The government’s inspection of food materials for radioactivity has proven inadequate and has thus brought about a loss of confidence in the safety of agricultural products within the area. The fear generated has expanded into the trust of the entire nation’s population in electricity generated from nuclear power plants. This safety issue had never been in question ever since the first nuclear power plant was established in the 1960s. The mistrust and fear of the Japanese population of late was manifested via the demonstration by tens of thousands of people in front of the Japanese Parliament in Tokyo. This report aims to summarize the damage inflicted upon rice cultivation by the tsunami and the subsequent leaking of radioactive materials from the nuclear power plant. Also included are the issues that arose from the incident, and the rehabilitation program which has just begun. The other result of the project, the photographic essay, will be presented at the 11th API Regional Workshop.

At 2:46 pm of March 11, 2011, some 130 km off Ojika Peninsula in Miyagi Prefecture, an earthquake of magnitude 8.9 on the Richter scale took place. One hour later, a tsunami with a recorded height of 40.5 meters struck and traveled 10 km inland, causing massive damage to lives and properties. In Minamisanriku, over a thousand deaths were reported. Large parts of Kuji and the southern section of Ofunato, including the port area, were almost entirely destroyed, rendering 23,600 hectares of cultivation areas useless. Of these, about 20,000 hectares were rice cultivation areas. The Prefectures most impacted were Aomori (76ha, 0.1%), Iwate (1,172ha, 1.2%), Miyagi (12685ha, 11.0%), Fukushima (5,588ha, 4.0%), Ibaraki (525ha, 0.3%), Chiba (105ha, 0.2%). The Miyagi Prefecture was the prefecture with the most damaged area, with two-thirds of the total land impacted. In Shichigahama and Watari, damaged agricultural lands were in the vicinity of 93% and 79%, respectively. However, despite such extensive damage, it is estimated that only 1% of total rice production, or about 100,000 tons, were affected. The damage can be classified according to the type and magnitude of the destruction as follows:

1. The agricultural area that was heavily damaged by the earthquake and the tsunami. The area is full of debris. It is unlikely to recover.
2. The agricultural area that was mildly damaged from the earthquake and the tsunami. It is likely to recover.
3. The agricultural area that was not damaged directly by the earthquake and the tsunami, but radioactive contaminated. The agriculture produce in the area could not be sold or distributed.
4. The agricultural area that was not damaged and not considered as contaminated, except...
that the market lacked confidence in the safety of the products.

This report aims to present the second, third and fourth findings just mentioned, since the operations were commencing during the project’s duration (2011-2012), while the rehabilitation of the damaged cultivation area (item 1 in the list) had yet to take place (Begin?) during that period.

When the water receded, it left huge volumes of debris from buildings and construction. Salt and chemicals from seawater, various debris, and rubbish covered up the entire area. At the end of July, or four months after the incident, I had a chance to investigate the area for the first time at Minamisanriku, a town in Miyagi Prefecture.

I saw that most of the land was still covered in medium-sized debris, and only the road was functional, almost at the normal level. Big pieces of debris, such as boats and cars, were segregated and removed by the workers. A local person whom I interviewed was very much impressed by the hard work done by the government officers. She said that right after the incident, things were a lot worse than what I saw. The area where there used to be a city was rendered into heaps of materials many meters high, covered in snow. The Self-Defense Forces began the recuperation process by first reclaiming the roads, so that other agencies could access the area.

When compared to the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004 in Thailand, the tsunami that struck Japan in 2011 brought about greater devastation. In my opinion, it will take at least three years to rehabilitate the area for resettlement (if the population is willing to return, given that there still are safety issues to be concerned about). When the community can reestablish itself, the agriculture activities can also resume.

The problems with the agricultural area can be classified as follows:

1. Debris: The destruction caused by the tsunami created a huge amount of debris covering most of the land. The central government is trying to clean up the debris systematically by separating them according to types. Apart from the large debris that can be removed by heavy machinery, smaller debris requiring manpower still represents an obstacle for the agricultural area, especially for rice cultivation.

2. Soil salinity: The salinity level depends on the duration seawater remains on land. In the short-term, after a tsunami or seawater inundation, soil salinity is the main limiting factor for agriculture. The effects of salinity and sediments on soil chemistry and the availability of nutrients in the longer term will require attention.

3. Land subsidence: The 9.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Japan caused land subsidence in large parts of Tohoku. In most areas, the ground dropped only a few centimeters, so the change was hardly noticeable. However, according to a report filed by Asahi newspaper and TV from Japan National Geographical Survey Institute, some coastal areas have sunk to below sea level, leaving the area permanently flooded. Some of these areas were agricultural lands.

4. Pests: Apart from salinity, seawater also carried with it soil and pests from other areas. Insects and weeds have become an obstacle for rice cultivation. Because of them, farmers in a town in the city of Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture, were not able to farm rice and had to allow the cultivation area to be covered with weeds, something that had never happened before.

5. Water quality and assessment: In some areas, delays in reconstructing irrigation/drainage channels meant they remained waterlogged or were unable to access irrigation water. This waterlogged condition was due to earthquake-caused subsidence. Some sites needed pumps to remove saline water and bring fresh river water to the dams, and some dams needed cleaning and deepening. In some areas, saltwater entered freshwater aquifers, so freshwater was not available.

6. Drainage: After the earthquake and tsunami, coastal drainage patterns changed. Some land rose and other areas subsided. In areas with poor drainage, improving the irrigation and drainage systems...
The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows was a key first step for successful agricultural production, thereby making drainage improvement an important priority for local government and NGOs.

7. Tidal inundation: The earthquake and subsequent tsunami changed the coastline dramatically. Areas that were once freshwater catchments became affected by high tides and saline groundwater, making them permanently unsuitable for agriculture. Apart from the aforementioned damage, the loss of lives and property—machines and agricultural tools—also presented obstacles to the rehabilitation of agricultural activities. Farmers experienced severe losses and were forced to move into temporary housing or government-provided housing. They were additionally pressured by the losses and the readjustments they had to make. Some aged family members in the new environment faced uncertain futures since they might not be able to resume agricultural activities again. Younger generations were choosing, instead, to live and work in cities. All this, coupled with the lack of supporting capital, is severely compromising the chances of agricultural activities to resume once again.

From the aforementioned situations, it can be seen that there are many levels of damage, and this damage covers a very large area.

In addition to government officers, volunteers from all around Japan have also been an important factor contributing to the recovery process. This, I see, as a very inspiring thing to have emerged from the losses.

On another note, there is a systematic study of the rehabilitation process of damaged agricultural areas resulting from the tsunami in Aceh province in Indonesia. This can be applied to the situation in Japan as follows:

**Immediate activities**

A number of actions can immediately be taken toward recovery:

- **Clean up:** Remove debris and sediments that cannot be incorporated into the soil. The debris left by the tsunami on agricultural land was substantial, but the debris overall also included building materials from destroyed houses, trees, vegetation, and dead animals. For the rice cultivation area, small debris left in the soil should be removed by manpower using simple tools such as a mattock and a shovel. I had a chance to join a volunteer group for this activity and found that one person can clean up the area of about 30 meter squares in eight hours.

- **Manage salinity:** Seawater inundation introduced salinity into areas where it had never before been a problem. The longer the soil was inundated, the greater the chances that there were salts infiltrating the soil. The highest salinity levels occurred in areas where seawater stayed on the soil for weeks after the tsunami, allowing salts to penetrate the soil and attach to clay particles. Land inundated for more than three days was usually too saline for most crops to yield well in the first year or so. Flushing fields with irrigation water and natural rainfall is possible, once drainage and irrigation channels are cleared of sediment and a through flow of water is available. Where farmers had access to irrigation water, surface salt was easily flushed away and rice crops appeared unaffected by the tsunami seven months later, even where tsunami deposits were still present.

*Figures 1: The coastal area in Miyagi prefecture, four months after it was hit by a tsunami*
POST-DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS IN ASIA

- Survey land levels: When there is an earthquake before a tsunami, land levels may be altered, so surveys will be needed to establish levels and direct rehabilitation of drainage lines and irrigation channels. Some coastal areas may no longer be suitable for agriculture due to subsidence and the high frequency of tidal inundation.

- Repair infrastructure: Assessment and the repair of irrigation and drainage infrastructure are priorities for successful agriculture recovery.

- Train agricultural staff and farmers: Provide them with the right knowledge and skills to combat the issues. From being in the area and conducting interviews with farmers who faced the problem of salinity in a rice cultivation area, I heard one farmer say in October 2011 that he tried to remedy the problem by following a fellow farmer's advice to grow plants such as sunflowers to remove salt from soil. The sunflowers grew well but, from research, it has not been found that sunflower can rid the soil of salt at all.

Short-term activities

- Coordinate with the farming community: Conduct participatory surveys with the rural community to understand the immediate and long-term needs of farmers and their families. This will help avoid misdirected and wasted aid efforts.

- Establish income-generating opportunities for the farming community: In the short term it may not be possible to generate income from farming activities. Therefore, temporary jobs or the growing of salt-tolerant plants may be recommended. These activities will provide income and help return the farmer's lands to production (their productive) state. They will also promote independence among the farmers from food aid. Microfinance to help groups of farmers may be appropriate.

- Provide high quality planting materials and agricultural tools: Supplies of seeds, planting materials, small machines and tools may be scarce. It is vital that only government certified quality seeds are supplied to farmers to ensure that the first post-tsunami crops do not fail. Japanese farmers employ small machines to save energy and improve efficiency, and these may have gotten lost in the tsunami? (was this what you meant?). Providing funds or lending out expensive equipment is as important as the provision of implements for farming.

- Avoid farming saline land: Most crops struggle to be productive in saline soils. Successful crops are an important part of the recovery process after a tsunami. Salinity surveys will identify areas unsuitable for farming. Periodic monitoring ensures that farmers do not commence cropping before salinity levels have dropped to acceptable levels.

- Grow salt tolerant crops where possible: Varieties of rice and other crops that can be grown in saline soils need to be identified and recommended to farmers while there is still a possibility of salt in the soil. The recommended crop is cotton (there is a program to introduce cotton to be farmed instead of rice in Arahama and Natori in Miyagi Prefecture. See: www.tohokucottonproject.com). Salt disrupts crops by hindering their ability to absorb water and other nutrients such as potassium but cotton has more than double the saline tolerance of rice. This recommendation means to provide farmers with income during the time when rice cultivation is still not possible.

Long-term activities

- Transfer technology and knowledge to the farming community: As information on farming on tsunami-affected soils becomes available, it needs to be passed on to the farming community as quickly as possible, to ensure they receive up to date information. Farm demonstrations and field days show farmers what methods work best.

- Continue to build the capacity of farmers, extension staff, and NGOs to manage soils. Networks need to maintain contact between farmers, agronomists and NGOs. Demonstration sites are important for bringing groups together for updates on farming practices, rehabilitation efforts, and possible collaboration.
The damage to agricultural production is generally the same in all affected areas in that the cultivation zones can no longer function, or can function but with reduced productivity for the aforementioned reasons. However, these are problems that are visible and categorizable, with defined and static affected zones. Rehabilitation can begin once the condition is favorable.

The explosion and the subsequent leaking of radioactive materials from Reactor 1 of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant present a different issue from salinity and widespread destruction. Radioactive materials that leaked out along with hydrogen, iodine, plutonium, strontium, and cesium have been detected to contaminate air in areas hundreds of kilometers away. Contamination has been detected as far away as the Kanagawa Prefecture, which is situated 300 kilometers south of Fukushima.

After the incident, the surrounding areas became an exclusion zone. The population of around 100,000 that mostly worked in agriculture such as rice cultivation, vegetable and mushroom farms, or dairy farms had to emigrate. Even though the emigration is not permanent, that the half-life time of cesium is 30 years means it will take 30 years for the former settlement to be safe for habitation again. Most farmers have decided to move permanently to Central Japan to begin anew. They learned that to farm in a new environment, where the soil and the weather are different, is difficult. The situation differs from their previous settlement where soil quality had been refined and developed over many generations.

While the government pays monthly compensation to those forced to move due to radiation up till the time they can return to their previous houses, agricultural compensation is paid by the Tokyo Electric Power Company. The farmers have to request compensation themselves and this involves complicated documentation. Sometimes, the smaller farming operations cease to apply for compensation altogether.

One week after the explosion, it was reported that the public water reservoir in Tokyo (238.34 kilometers away from Fukushima), which is the main reservoir of consumable water of the city, had been contaminated. Afterward, they detected contamination of dairy products, causing panic and concern among the entire country's population. Part of the reason why this was so was that this new problem represented an invisible threat. It was also a threat which manifested itself only over a period of no less than ten years, with repeated exposure, especially for children whose bodies were still growing and developing.

We didn’t know what was dangerous, what was safe to eat. The government has relaxed radiation targets for food, nuclear workers, school playgrounds, and discharges into the sea. What was considered dangerous a year ago is now deemed safe and legal.

- A Tokyo citizen expressing his concern over the radioactive leakages from the nuclear power plant.

In a country long famous for safety, hygiene, and raw food, millions of people are now being asked to accept a small but persistently higher health risk. Individuals are being forced to make decisions about what is safe to eat and where it is safe to live. They have not received data to prove that 10 becquerels is safe, or 100 becquerels is safe. There is no clear evidence.

In the case of rice, when hydrogen explosions tore through reactors at the Fukushima plant and released radioactive materials following the March 11 earthquake, rice planting had not yet started. In the 17 prefectures of Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Chiba, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tokyo, Yamagata, Niigata, Nagano, Yamanashi, and Shizuoka, 2,500 rice paddies have been inspected at the behest of the central government in the aftermath of the disaster at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant. The test was started in early August 2011. Ninety-six percent of all rice paddies or 2,429 fields under cultivation were found to be cesium-free. Even among the remaining 98 rice paddies where varying radiation levels were found, the highest measurement was only 136 becquerels of radioactive cesium per kilogram. This was in Fukushima City. Three other rice paddies—in Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures—had levels
exceeding 100 becquerels. However, the figure is well below the government’s safety standard of 500 becquerels per kilogram. On October 2011, the Fukushima prefectural government declared that all newly harvested rice [harvested in year 2011] in the prefecture passed inspection tests for radioactive substances, thereby giving the go-ahead for the rice to be sold nationwide.

Radiation above standards found in rice from five farms

Fukushima prefecture, the fourth-largest rice producer in Japan in year 2010, accounted for about 5 percent of the harvest. After the municipal government’s declaration of safety, contaminated rice was discovered when a farmer who lived in Fukushima farm brought his harvest for testing, since he thought that the government’s testing was not thorough enough. He found a trace of radiation of more than the safety level of 630 becquerels per kilogram. In this case, the contaminated rice had not yet reached the consumer; but in a similar case in the town of Date, contaminated rice of 700 becquerels per kilogram was found after 10.5 kilograms of the said rice had been sold to the consumers. Afterward, rice exceeding the government’s cesium threshold of 500 becquerels per kilogram was found in five districts in the cities of Fukushima, Nihonmatsu, and Date, which had been known as “hot spots”. An area was considered a “hot spot” if its annual exposure exceeded the 20-millisievert limit. No rice over that limit has been found in other prefectures so far. The highest contamination of cesium-134 level so far is 1,240 becquerels per kilogram of unpolished rice grown in Date.

Experts say that cesium levels will decline quickly as the rice is polished. About 70 percent of the cesium ends up in the straw, with another 10 percent ending up in the bran and 7 percent in the chaff and the rice itself.

Most consumers rejected rice from the 2011 harvest season of Fukushima. The selling price fell by 40%, whereas the overall nationwide price increased by 10% to 20% when compared to the price in 2010. Fukushima is a very good cultivating area for the light and sticky Koshihikari strain of rice preferred by many Japanese.
The concern over the safety of rice, the main food staple, led many families to stock up on rice cultivated before 2011, and only choose to consume rice cultivated in 2011 from Western Japan. For most consumers, especially for families with small children, a contamination of one becquerel is enough reason to avoid consumption altogether. Even the scientific information provided to the public is divided into two camps, one of which says it is safe and the other which says it is unsafe to consume contaminated foods for a prolonged period of time, causing much confusion and lack of confidence among the general public.

The following factors contribute to the contamination level of rice, especially by cesium, one of the leaked radioactive materials, which is light, transportable by wind and water, and has a half-life of more than 30 years (The half-life of iodine-131 is about eight days. Cesium-134 has a half-life of about two years, cesium-137 a longer half-life of about 30 years).

1. Distance from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. The 20km radius around the plant has been declared an exclusion zone.

2. Wind. The wind direction directly after the explosion blew was northwest, causing the area around Iitate, which is about 39 kilometers (24 miles) northwest of Fukushima I Nuclear Power Plant, to become a highly contaminated area that is prohibited from habitation. The wind also relocates radioactive contamination from around the incident zone to elsewhere. For instance, contamination can emanate from pine trees up in the mountain, downhill to the agricultural zone.

3. Water can also carry radioactive materials and spread them along irrigation networks and natural waterways. Radioactive materials trapped on hills, in trees on soil, can also be washed downhill by rainwater to the reservoir and the cultivation zones, respectively.

4. Geography. A valley or mountain range directly in the way of wind blowing from the incident zone stands a higher chance of receiving contamination. This has caused some area to become a contamination hotspot, while an area directly adjacent to it could receive very little contamination in comparison. The Fukushima Prefecture’s geography is composed mainly of complex mountainous regions; as such, the random rice test procedure of every 15 hectares is not effective in such a region.

**Situation after the detection of contamination (after November 2011)**

I feel a sense of crisis over food safety and I cannot trust the government. I have to set my own standards and make my own choices. My priorities have changed. My child comes first now. When it comes to radiation problems, our only option is self-protection.

- *Tokyo citizen (Interviewed by me)*

The ineffectiveness of the government’s rice testing made the population’s concern over food safety even stronger. People chose to purchase food produced as far away from Fukushima as possible. As for rice, they would choose to purchase that produced in 2010, instead of the regular practice of buying the newest rice produced within the year. This concern caused products from Fukushima to become unsellable, even if these products had gone through safety testing procedures. Big, a super-store type of department store such as Aeon, adopted thorough testing procedures and clearly stated the contamination level on each product’s label, whereas a food franchise giant with a nationwide network, Ootoya, which received much of its rice from Fukushima, has had its sales greatly affected from the incident.

The Fukushima municipal government has confiscated the municipalite’s rice stock with high risk of contamination, for further testing. The rice now on sale in the market should, therefore, be safe for consumption but is still being rejected by the consumers.

Farmers left in Fukushima are all affected by the lower sales and even the farmers from adjacent Ibaraki Prefecture are also affected by a similar...
situation. Farmers who grow their rice using the organic method without relying on any chemical means are especially affected. They sell their products directly to customers and are very much concerned about the safety of their rice (hence the organic method); but they still have to answer to the question of contamination. The contamination level detected ranges from none at all to 20 becquerels per kilogram only, but their products are still being rejected by the customers.

Problems to be solved for the preparation of the 2012 growing seasons (the second growing season since the incident)

In March 2012, the Farm Ministry and the municipal government announced the ban on rice cultivation on 10,500 hectares of paddies in Fukushima Prefecture, or on about one for every eight of the total land cultivated. This banned zone included the no-entry zone within the 20 kilometer-radius around the power plant and in the cities of Fukushima, Date, Nihonmatsu, and Soma. Apart from this, the cultivation area of 4,000 hectares covering 30 districts in Fukushima, Sate, Nihinmatsu, and Motomiya, as well as four districts in Kori and Kunimi towns, may only begin growing rice under the conditions that the soil pass the contamination management plan, the farmers allow inspections at every point of the cultivation process, and the final products be submitted for contamination detection before sale.

In March 2012, Seiyu, a supermarket chain with the most stores in Central Japan, started importing rice from Jilin Province in China. The 5 kilogram bag was priced at 1,299 yen, or 30 percent cheaper than the lowest-priced domestic rice. The importation of foreign rice to sell in supermarkets is an unconventional act for Japan, a country that imposes high duties on imports to protect domestic rice production. The last time there was an import of rice was in 1993, when rice production countrywide was down. The importation of rice this time clearly demonstrates the lack of confidence in the safety of domestic rice in a very profound way.

In 2012, based on orders from the government, rice farmers sprinkled zeolite, a mineral that traps cesium, in natural waterways that flow into paddies, and added fertilizer with high potassium levels, in efforts to prevent seedlings from absorbing cesium through their roots as they grow. Farmers have had time to prepare and understand the situation more; there is greater exchange of information and facts from government officials and academics nationwide. Farmers are finding ways to resolve the issues in the most effective manner. A research
from the University of Fukushima states that the cesium absorption level of rice is unstable. Rice absorbs less cesium in soil with high organic content, than does rice in soil with low organic content (in effect, paddy with artificial fertilizer). Farmers who face the problem of contamination believe that improving the organic content of the soil, adding potassium, and ploughing the land deeper than before to reduce the concentration of cesium in the upper surface of the soil, will solve the problem. But a bigger problem than paddy management is the lack of confidence among buyers in products from Fukushima and parts of Ibaraki. The problem lies in the restoration of confidence in the product from the area previously contaminated with radioactive materials. Some farmers in Fukushima have adopted a more direct-sale approach of meeting the buyer face to face, thereby creating more trust in the safety of the produce. In addition, another group of scientists is experimenting with different rice strains from around the world to find one that is suitable for growing on cesium-contaminated soil. They look for rice that has a low level of cesium absorption, or none at all. A news agency reports that the experiment is going well, but the taste of the rice is still not accepted by the Japanese people.

Conclusion

The problem involving rice in the aftermath of the tsunami and the subsequent leakage of radioactive materials is a big one that has caused the Japanese people to lose confidence in their own nation for the first time since World War II. Factors that will bring Japan out of this crisis are the ones that have accumulated in a time of peace: research, civil society networks, economic power. The chaos resulting from contaminated food in the first year has now been largely reduced by the knowledge passed down from the scientific community. The communication between the rice producers and the consumers is expected to create trust and confidence. Those heavily affected by the incidents will receive support from the state and the strong civil society networks. Japan might be an unlucky nation that has faced the most number of nuclear-related problems in the world, but the Japanese will once again show the whole world that they will always find a way to bring their country out of the crisis.

One Japanese told me, as a man from a country that has not yet relied on nuclear-generated electricity, “Let your country take a lesson from the problems that we are facing. Do not make the same mistakes that we made. Let us be the last country to face nuclear-related problems”.

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The Dynamics of the Mining Industry in Asia and its Impacts on the People and the Environment: A Photo Documentary Project

Henri Ismail

Introduction

As a photographer, I have been working on mining issues in my country, Indonesia, for the past four years. For the API Fellowship, I proposed a photo documentary project that would record what the mining practice has brought to the local people and their environment.

The project was conducted in Thailand from October 2011 to February 2012, and in the Philippines from February to May 2012. I visited several mining sites in both countries, and met with the local people and related activists or organizers. I talked with them, interviewed some of them, and took pictures.

The objective of this project is to make use of visual texts (in this case: photographic images) as a medium to document the dynamics of the mining industry. Visual text has some advantages compared to written text in that it could speak to people regardless of their mother tongue. Yet, the use of photographic images is still underdeveloped. Therefore, the significance of the project lies in the utilization of this rarely used medium. The photographic images could allow the stories and experiences of common people to be known and heard by a wider audience as the images could “travel” around the world and would be relatively easier to understand compared with written texts.

The paper describes the main lesson I learned during the Fellowship. It has two main sections. I will begin the first section with the fieldwork I did in both countries and will highlight the important case I learned about while there. It will be followed by the similarities and differences as I observed them. The second section discusses the photo documentary and the role of photographers. In this section, I will talk about my experiences in utilizing photographic images to convey messages to different people during the fellowship and the post-fellowship periods. In the conclusion I will briefly reiterate the lessons I gathered from the Fellowship project.

Fieldwork findings

Thailand: Lesson learned from Non Samboon

Among the several mining sites I visited in Thailand, the case of Non Samboon stands out in terms of community-based initiatives. Non Samboon is a village located in Udon Thani province, northeastern Thailand. This village, along with 23 other villages, refuses to host the mining industry. Originally, the movement did not start with the mining issue, but with the environmental damage resulting from the development of the dam along the Mekong River. There were four leading activists who initiated the campaign and advocacy for the issues, and succeeded in building networks among the locals. However, ever since the geological surveys in the 1970s found the richest potash deposit in Southeast Asia in the area, investors began to target it for exploitation. Then the movement shifted its focus to the worst potential damage that could arise from the exploitation of potash. The networks established earlier made it easier to disseminate information on the interest in potash mining and its impact on the environment, particularly on the people in the area.

The inhabitants in the area are primarily into agriculture, but are also familiar with the service industry. Besides farming, many of them also work as temporary labor in the construction sector, either outside the town or abroad, especially in India and Kuwait. From such work, the people obtain sufficient income to keep their economy afloat. This is evident in their real estate properties, possession of vehicles, wealth, etc. In short, they do not fall under the category of “poor”. Their economic status makes their resistance against the mining practice stronger as they do not seek for more money which they can get if they sold...
rejection of the mining practice. They also hold education programs on local wisdom and values for the young generation. The curriculum includes introductions to soil, plants, climate, and agriculture, among others. To reach more people and keep them updated on the developments, the organizations also run a community radio and issue regular publications.

The financing of all these initiatives comes from among themselves (the local people). They have, thus far, managed to develop three main mechanisms to generate funds. Firstly, they organize an annual event called Bunkum Kao Yai. It is a ceremony to express gratitude for the harvest. It is usually held in a temple in each village. In this event, members of the community contribute and collect some part of their harvest to sell. The proceeds from the sale of the harvest go to the organization's account. Besides collecting the harvest, people also contribute some amount of money to add to the fund.

The second mechanism is the arrangement of collective rice paddies. The villagers hold a draw to decide whose paddy to use for the organization. The owner of the paddy lets the organization use the field and divide the harvest into equal portions. Lastly, the local people also cooperate with NGO networks to raise funds for their operations. However, the portion of the funds generated from this method is small as there are only a few NGOs in the area.

Isan is the ethnicity of the local people here. When I asked what makes them willing to support the movements, they gave three main answers. One of them said that the land is their homeland and they are Isans, who have a special gift in farming and fishing. So, for them, the land is their life and something they had inherited from their ancestors. If one goes to their house, one can easily find the symbolization of this in the buffalo head's skeleton. This skeleton is that of the dead plowing buffalo's they cared the most for. They put it on the wall of their house or barn. It symbolizes a close connection between the farmers and their fields.
Some have said that the people would not be capable of working in the mining company once it began to operate, because most of them are already in their forties or older. They do not have adequate educational backgrounds for the company’s needs either, although the company has promised to give jobs to the locals. On the other hand, most of the younger generations have wandered about in the cities to work. Therefore, the demographic character of productive labor in the area has been taken into consideration.

The last one said that it is the trust they have in the initiators of the movements that has convinced them to side with the movement. Their consistency since the 1970s until the present is key here.

The local initiatives to defend their land and refuse the mining companies or investors have been running for more than 10 years now. According to the local people, government behaves as though it were neutral to the issue. But I was not able to confirm this directly, because of my limited access to the government. However, the people themselves said that, in fact, the companies have bought some property in the area, that is projected to be the entrance door for the underground mining. They have even erected an office building in the vicinity. These developments have made the people think that government facilitated the coming of these companies to the area.

The Philippines

Unlike in Thailand, I did not meet with so many local people directly affected by mining in the Philippines. I did meet with different groups and NGOs in the country, but most of them were activists or community organizers. Indeed, the movements at the mining sites I visited were mostly driven by NGOs or the Church. For example, that in Rapu-rapu was organized by the Church, while that in Tampakan was organized by the NGO, the Church, and the B’laan people. Meanwhile, that in Palawan, which has been able to capture the public’s attention, was pioneered by Gina Lopez, the activist behind the Save Palawan Movement.

The main difficulty I faced in personally meeting the affected people in the Philippines was the peace and order situation. Their location was always said to be unsafe as a result of various conflicts. Indeed, the Philippines has a high death toll arising from mining conflicts on record. I also received some rejections from the affected people because although their situation had been publicly exposed many times before, their problems remained unresolved. Therefore, they tended to dislike the idea of being exposed again.
There are at least three reasons that create a situation which tends to stop outsiders from entering the community. First, the terrain in the Philippines is indeed more difficult than in Thailand. The infrastructure is also less adequate. Second, the open armed conflict makes it much more complicated in the Philippines. Third, besides the Church, civil society organizations that have mushroomed have created confusion among the people to some extent.

**Differences and similarities**

Observing the situation of mining sites in Thailand and the Philippines, I found some similarities and differences.

The mining practices in Thailand and the Philippines are similar in terms of the following:

- Most of the mining industry has necessitated sacrificing a huge portion of productive farming fields and fisheries. One example is the case of Rapu-rapu in the Philippines. The added value of mining for the locals is not significant because they could only get low-paying jobs in the company and live like the average people in the area, whereas the added value from minerals is enormous. In fact, such situation is also evident in Indonesia.

- The locals/affected people show some resistance to mining operations in their area. The resistance usually surfaces when the operation is about to start or is already running.

The differences between the two settings outnumber the similarities, as follows:

- The Philippines is rich in mineral content, especially gold. Therefore, mining operations in the Philippines are much more extensive than in Thailand.

- In terms of the law, Thailand already has legislation on minerals, which is quite progressive: Community Health Impact Assessment (CHIA) conducted by the National Health Commission is required in addition to the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). Further, to some extent, the Law is quite effective in justifying the rejection of mining operations in a particular area.

- For its part, while the Philippines does not have a law on minerals, it has legislation recognizing indigenous peoples, which is said to be quite progressive even among ASEAN countries. It also has the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. However, in practice, the internal frictions in the Commission are so sharp that it could not perform its function as effectively as expected.

- Mining conflicts in the Philippines are much more visible and often end up in violence. Perhaps, this is because of the loose rules on arms possession, making them easy to access. Moreover, the issue of rebellions in the Philippines has justified the military’s entering conflict areas, which have mining potentials. In Thailand, on the other hand, the military is not present at the mining sites. In this sense, the situation of the Philippines is quite similar to that of Indonesia.

- As for the character of the locals, I learned that in some places in Thailand, the bond between the people and their land is very strong. This makes the locals come up with solid and continuing community initiatives like that in Non Samboon. In the
Philippines, the bond is relatively more loose. Although I still doubt the following account, it seems that ‘modern’ religions (in this case: the Church) also influence the shift in the relation between the people and their environment (including land, properties, inheritance, etc.), from the traditional to the “modern”. I also found this phenomenon in Indonesia, for example, in Molo, East Nusa Tenggara where the Protestant Church dominates, and in Porong, East Java where Islam values dominate. In many cases, the old traditional local values have managed to maintain the strong bonds between the people and their homeland. For instance, traditional beliefs often guide the people to practice regular rituals and ceremonies to honor the spirits of nature (the cave, land, mountain, stones, trees, forest, corps, etc). Such practice is often disallowed in the ‘modern’ religions as it is considered idol-worship when the honoring practice is, in fact, an attempt to preserve nature and the connection between people and nature. The people are afraid that if they do not do the rituals to honor nature, then nature will be angered and will give them bad luck.

As mentioned previously, there are more differences than similarities between the conditions in Thailand and the Philippines. These indicate that localities exist and we cannot just generalize the situation in Asia. However, if I look at the situation in my country, it seems that the situation in the Philippines is quite similar to that in Indonesia: land conflicts result from unclear property rights; the poor economy gives rise to weak bargaining positions; and so many interest groups partake in an issue and sometimes fight with each other, thereby confusing the common people.

**Photo documentary and the role of photographers**

The mining industry is an extractive industry that damages the environment and drastically changes the contour of the land. Its most noticeable impact is in the form of physical change. A photo documentary can document the changes well. If done properly from time to time, it could have recorded the presence of Mountain X that has since disappeared, for instance.

Besides serving documentation requirements, visuals could be the medium for conveying or exchanging messages effectively, notwithstanding language barriers. I had an experience in a site in Thailand that had problems with gold mining. I happened to bring some pictures of mining sites in Molo, East Nusa Tenggara and East Kalimantan (coal mining) with me. The locals asked me if mining was practiced in Indonesia and whether the people in Indonesia had similar problems. I showed the pictures to them and told them the stories of people in Molo and East Kalimantan, including the conflicts they experienced. They were surprised and realized that they were not alone in their problems. They told me that if one day they could meet the people in Molo or East Kalimantan, it would be interesting if they could talk and share the problems they were facing. But what happens is that it is I who travel here and

![Figure 8](image-url)

Disputes on land ownership complicate mining conflicts in the Philippines. Unlike in Thailand, most locals in the Philippines do not have legal proof of land ownership. On the other hand, most mining operations take place in the customary land for which the locals do not have certificates. In contrast, in Thailand, meanwhile, people usually have certificates for their land so that their bargaining position is relatively stronger in terms of land ownership or property rights.
there to deliver the message, like a courier would, to the affected people using visual images.

Similar things occurred when I was back in my country after the Fellowship. I stayed for quite some time in Molo. I met with the locals, showed them pictures, and told them stories of the people in Thailand and the Philippines, including the initiatives they had undertaken. Although it was not really concrete, I could sense the solidarity they felt towards people here and there, with whose experiences they were familiar.

I had another experience when I took pictures of oil and gas accidents in Porong, after the Fellowship. I stayed in a village that is soon to be relocated because it is going to be soaked in the mudflow. After I spent some time taking pictures of the local people, I started to show them pictures of the village and engaged them in some discussions. Thereafter, they started to appreciate knowing about what had happened to the people in other villages: that because of the forced migration due to the mudflow, other people also lost their jobs and had no other choice but to do whatever they could to earn money and make a living. From this, they gained some insights and reflected on what could happen to them in the future.

All this time, I have always thought that, as a photographer, I have become a witness to what has been happening in my surroundings. However, whenever I meet with a community, especially those in remote areas, I am no longer a witness but a messenger. I convey the message that, perhaps, the people in remote areas could not receive because they do not have the privilege to travel and see another world like I do. I am still not sure where all these will lead me to.

Perhaps, this workshop is a good venue for discussing this phenomenon with the other Fellows. Until today, I am still in touch with some contacts in Thailand and the Philippines, and they can appreciate what has happened in Indonesia through the images I produce.

I am not intending to say that this is the best idea but, at the moment, I find this the most effective way for me to communicate with the people affected by mining. Until today, I am still in touch with some contacts in Thailand and the Philippines, and they can appreciate what has happened in Indonesia through the images I produce.

Conclusion

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the API Fellowship. From my experience in Thailand and the Philippines, I have learned a lot: that the key to the success of the movements lies in the consistency of their words with their actions, as well as in their independency, both in the financial sense and their essence. It is an important lesson for me in viewing the mining areas in Indonesia.
There are not many photographers who focus on documenting the social impacts of this extractive industry. I believe that, in the coming years, the trend of investments in the industry will escalate and will entail even more complicated and greater social impacts.

What I learned from Non Samboon about the School of Homeland Lover, for instance, is very inspiring. Upon the completion of the Fellowship, I talked about this with the indigenous elders in Molo and with some environmental activists in my country.

They are interested to do the same to their offspring because they also feel that the formal schools do not effectively teach the young generation about respect and manners vis-à-vis their own customs. An environmental NGO in my country even visited Non Samboon to get some exposure and learn the lessons that I had. I believe that the knowledge they have gained will be useful in places with mining concerns in my country, where I can spend a relatively longer period disseminating information among the affected people thereat. Of course, this undertaking should be treated with careful consideration of their own living values.
Alternative Power Production for Sustainability and Justice for Local Communities

Pornsiri Cheevapattananuwong

Introduction

As the construction of power plants increases to meet rising demand for electric power, debate is also increasing over the relative merits of conventional power plants (CPP), including large hydropower dams and nuclear power stations, and new renewable energy power plants (NREPP), such as wind power, solar PV, biomass, and micro hydropower plants. All power sources impact on the production of greenhouse gases (GHG) and all have impacts on the lives of local people. This paper focuses on:

1. A comparison of the social, economic and environmental aspects of power management in Indonesia and Japan.
2. The search for solutions and policies that are both just and help manage conflict in relation to the effects of plants on local communities.

The researcher conducted a desk review and visited local communities around power plants in both countries. The positive and negative effects of CPP were compared to NREPP. In order to protect the privacy (and in some cases the safety) of respondents, most sources remain anonymous.

INDONESIA

Power production in Indonesia

In 2009, the population of Indonesia was more than 240 million. The country’s energy needs were met by coal (41 percent), oil (29 percent), gas (16.3 percent), large hydropower dams (7.8 percent), and other (5.8 percent). In 2011, the Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN) or State Electricity Company, which has a monopoly on electricity distributor in the country, stated that Indonesia had a total potential capacity for electricity production of 28,462 MW, including from coal (42.2 percent), diesel (23.7 percent), natural gas (22 percent), large hydropower dams (6.7 percent) other renewable energy (5.4 percent).

The Ministry of Energy stated that only 70 percent of the population had access to electricity. If current plans bear fruit, this would increase to 80.24 percent by 2014. Economic growth and demand from the expanding industrial sector as well as the general population is pushing the government towards the construction of large-scale power plants.

In 2009, Indonesia had the highest emissions of greenhouse gases in Southeast Asia and was the 16th highest producer in the world. In the same year President Susiro Bambung Yudoyono announced at the G-20 and COP15 conference that Indonesia would aim to decrease the rate of greenhouse gas emissions by 26 percent by 2020, through the development of alternative energy sources and improved power conservation. Thus Indonesia now plans to support the establishment of many large and small power plants.

In order to examine the local contexts for such plans, the researcher conducted field work among the Kanci-Kulon and Waru Duvur village communities near the Cirebon coal power plant in Cirebon City, West Java, and among the communities around a micro hydropower plant at Cinta Makar village, Subang, West Java and a solar power plant at Banyumeneng, Yogyakarta.
Case study (CPP): Coal power plant at Kanci-Kulon and Waru Duwur villages near Cirebon City, West Java

This coal power plant is situated 240 kilometers east of Jakarta and is operated by Cirebon Electric Power, a private company. The project was started in 2007 and it is expected to be completed in 2011. Production capacity is 660 MW.

Relationship with community

The power plant is run by a private company which communicates with local villagers mainly through community leaders and local government officials. There have been a series of difficulties in the relationship between the company and locals, and the Gatoroyong system (a local community support system) has broken down. Staff turnover at the plant has been high. Migration into and out of the community has also been high. This has had negative effects such as an increase in local “widows” (of men who came to the plant and then left) and an increase in the rate of single mothers. The incidence of HIV has risen and there are an increased number of sex workers working in small public houses (bars and restaurants) near the plant.

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
Case study (NREPP): Micro Hydropower plant at Cinta Mekar village, Subang, West Java

The community-operated micro hydropower plant in Cinta Mekar, 150 kilometers southeast of Jakarta, has a production capacity of 120 KW. The plant was established in 2004 as a result of community demand. Previously, the area had no electricity supply and was one of the poorest villages in Subang. The plant is operated by PT Hidropiranti, a community organization which promotes local social and economic development and is also supported by the social empowerment organization IBEKA (Institut Bisnis dan Ekonomi Kerakyatan).

**Relationship with community**

The plant operator coordinates with the local people and manages the plant together with locals through a cooperative system which includes a local committee. IBEKA has supported mutual understanding between both sides from the beginning. The cooperative will distribute income from the sale of electricity to the local people and offer soft loans to local businesses in order to promote the local economy and reduce poverty.

**IBEKA: Structure for working with the local community.**
Structure of the cooperative of Cinta Mekar

Case Study (NREPP): Electricity Production from Solar PV at Banyumeneng village, Yogyakarta

The Solar PV power plant at Banyumeneng, 30 kilometers west of Yogyakarta, has a production capacity of 1000w. It is under the coordination of the Kamase group, a student body from Gajah Mada University (UGM). The engineering students received a Mondialogo Award (2006-2007) to promote the venture as a cooperative effort between students and the local community. Students began by researching local power demands, and found that this village had a strong and enthusiastic leader who was keen to cooperate. In 2008, the students set up a project to improve local water quality in the community. In 2009 the students then installed a solar PV unit together with a pumping system in order to distribute water within the village. Then, they began training locals in the operation of the system.
Structure and Management

The plant structure and management system included students and community members. A student committee assisted the locals with technological know-how in how to operate the system. The community was responsible for the financial management of the system and for maintaining it.

Structure of OPAKg

Structure of Kamase Group
JAPAN

Power Production in Japan

Japan is one of the most modern countries in Asia and electricity is almost universally available. In 2010, Japan had a power capacity of 282 GW, the third in the world after the United States of America (USA) and China. Power provision was controlled by 10 private companies which operated in different regions of the country, under the law and supervision of the government. However, 96 percent of the sources of power energy were imported. In 2010, sources of energy included coal (26.8 percent), natural gas (26.3 percent), nuclear (24 percent), oil (9.7 percent), water (7.1 percent) and others (6.1 percent). The ratio of CO2 emission was the fifth highest in the world and the third highest in Asia after China and India. In 2011, Japan had the second highest electricity usage in the world after China. Before the Fukushima nuclear disaster on 11 March 2011, Japan planned to increase power supply allocation by 2019 as follows; nuclear (41 percent), oil (5 percent), natural gas (22 percent), water (9 percent) and renewable energy (2 percent).

After the Fukushima disaster, the Japanese government set up a special committee to reconsider the country’s energy plans. By August 2012, it had yet to report on its findings. Civil society groups were pushing for the following allocation for energy supply source by 2030; promote energy efficiency (25 percent), fossil fuels (40 percent), renewable energy (35 percent). It was claimed that this would decrease the CO2 emission rate by 16 percent.

The business and industrial sectors pushed to increase energy efficiency by 10 percent by decreasing the use of fossil sources of energy as much as possible, and promoting renewable power plant to 25-30 percent. This sector proposed keeping power from nuclear energy at 15-25 percent in order to fulfil the target to decrease CO2 emission rate to 23 percent.

Structure of electricity companies

The researcher studied documents and conducted fieldwork to assess the effects on local communities of the CPPs operated by KEPCO (Kyushu Electric Power Company), i.e., the Kenkai Nuclear Power plant and the Matsuura Coal Power Plant; and private NREPP, i.e. the micro hydropower plant of the New Engineering Development Co (NED) in Tabuchi Ichihara, Chiba prefecture, and the Solar PV plant operated by the Tampopo group in Fukuoka prefecture.

Case study (CPP) Kenkai Nuclear Power Plant, Higashimatsuura Imanura, Genkai Oaza, Saga Prefecture

This power plant is under the management of KEPCO. It is among the first generation of nuclear power plants in the country, and is the largest power plant in Kyushu. It was established in 1960, started to generate power in 1975, and will continue to generate power until 2033. At present, production capacity is 3478 Mw and electricity is distributed through the southern part of Japan, mainly for cities in Kyushu island.

Structure and Management

The plant is a private company. An interview with a staff member of the KENKAI Nuclear Energy Education Center indicated that the plant was established as a result of Japan’s economic and social development after World War II. The plant establishment was approved by central and local government. The land was bought from local people and there was no conflict. Income from the plant was distributed to the local community and partly
used to develop public facilities. The education center was created to educate people and train staff about nuclear power, under a sub-contracting system. This system also meant the people had jobs and earned income. The staff member said that after the Fukushima disaster, visitor numbers declined as concerns about nuclear power and safety rose.

**Case study (CPP): Matsuura Coal Power Plant, Nagasaki, Japan.**

The power plant in Matsuura consists of two plants. Matsuura Kyushu coal power plant is under the operation of KEPCO and is a first-generation plant. It was established in 1989 with a production capacity of 700 MW. Matsuura EPDC coal power plant located nearby is operated by J Power Co., Ltd and has a production capacity of 2000 MW. The total capacity of power plants in Kyushu is 2700 MW, which is the second biggest plant production capacity in Japan after the Tachibana-wan Coal Ultra Supercritical Power plant with a production capacity of 2800 MW. Both Matsuura plants are the main electricity sources for the southern part of Japan.

**Structure and Management**

The production, operation and distribution system is the same as that of the KENKAI Nuclear Power Plant as it is under the control of KEPCO.

**Case study (NREPP): Micro Hydropower Plant in Tabuchi Ichihara, Chiba prefecture.**

The micro hydropower plant of the New Engineering Development (NED) company started operations in 2010 to produce renewable energy, to reduce the CO2 emission rate.

**Structure and Management**

This micro water power plant is managed by New Engineering Development (NED), a private company research team. The company has tried to promote the scheme among the local community and the government. The company will sell and maintain the system for the community. Local interest in the scheme has increased as local people can earn income from selling the electricity they produce to the larger company. The plant has a production capacity of 5.5 MW, which was able to serve only office buildings and was not able to feed into the electricity grid system as there was not enough steam power.
Case study (NREPP): Solar PV of Tampopo at Kusagae School and Futabayouchien School, Fukuoka prefecture.

Structure and Management

The Tampopo project started in 1989, three years after the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The project began as a result of discussion among some women in the community who wished to test the production of environmentally friendly electricity. They started at the Fukuoka prefecture area. A small group began in 2000 by investing donated community money to install a Solar PV for the village temple. Solar PV was selected because it is easy to maintain and the supplier guaranteed maintenance for 15-20 years.

Community members found the system practical, and membership increased. In 2005, the group was registered as a non-profit organization (NPO) in order to promote Solar PV usage and to install systems at kindergartens and temples in the community. Different committees were formed to operate and promote the scheme. Meetings were held in villages every three months to report on progress. In 2012 there were 60 members and they had installed a Solar PV to one temple and two kindergarten schools. In each place, it took between one and two years to establish the right understanding among people in community before installation. At present, solar PV of Kusayaka school and Futabayouchien school had a production capacity of 10 Kw.

Table: Comparing impacts on local communities of coal power plants in Indonesia and Japan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>Ceribon coal power plant in Indonesia</th>
<th>Matsuura coal power plant in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity / Location</td>
<td>660 MW. / In the community</td>
<td>2700 MW. / 2 Km from the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>The majority of local people were not informed about the construction of the power plant. Many villagers have not received compensation. People have lost their trust in community leaders.</td>
<td>The local government and local people have a right to stop the operation of the power plant, if it causes trouble to the people. The power plant must immediately pay a large amount of compensation to the people in the event that they are negatively affected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows

### Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceribon coal power plant in Indonesia</th>
<th>Matsuura coal power plant in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Loss of friendship in the community. People do not trust each other as in the past. Locals have divided into two groups.</td>
<td>- Representatives from local community and local government will inspect the power plant operations regularly, according to a schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Many locals have relocated to work at other towns. Family members are separated. The number of immigrants has increased. The relationships among people in the community have been affected as the newcomers have less sense of belonging to the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prostitution has risen to serve the newcomers. The number of teenage pregnancies has increased as many women were abandoned by husbands that come to work in the plant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The local's requests for justice and compensation have not been responded to.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceribon coal power plant in Indonesia</th>
<th>Matsuura coal power plant in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The power plant is equipped with a pollution control system. It aims to control emission of sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide. However, villagers have complained about eye irritation and black smoke during the power plant's operation.</td>
<td>- The power plant is equipped with an effective sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide emission control system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The operation has caused a high level of noise which badly disturbs people at night.</td>
<td>- The power plant is equipped with an effective noise control system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Uncontrolled coal dust has blown into the community.</td>
<td>- Coal is transported via pipes to prevent air pollution. However there were instances in which coal dust in the process blew into the air. The power plant accepts that it is difficult to control and has received some complaints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Output from farms such as rice and fruits are reduced from the previous year.</td>
<td>- Waste water is treated before being released to the sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There was a case in which farmed fish and green mussels in the coastal zone died as a result of drainage waste water entering the sea from the power plant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceribon coal power plant in Indonesia</th>
<th>Matsuura coal power plant in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fishermen have reduced income, they have to travel further away to catch fish. Their expenses have increased.</td>
<td>- Most locals do not work in the agricultural sector; instead, they work in a city. Only a few people work in the power plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Salt pans can no longer operate. Salt pan farmers have lost their jobs.</td>
<td>- There were no fishing activities near the power plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In many families, members have to work at other towns due to loss of income from fishing or agriculture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Many locals have to find jobs outside their own community, since they have no skills to work in the power plant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table: Comparing impacts on local communities of micro hydropower plants in Indonesia and Japan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>Micro Hydropower plant at Cinta Makar Village in Indonesia</th>
<th>Micro Hydropower plant at Tabuchi Ichihara in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity / Location</td>
<td>120 Kw / Next to the community (in the village)</td>
<td>5.5 Kw / More than 1 km away from the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Social    | - The locals have worked with a power company and an NGO in power consumption planning and on economic problems of the local community.  
- No family members have to work outside the community.  
- Wife's roles and opinions are respected because they have income to contribute to their family.  
- Women and children of the community have received a certain amount of financial support (medical fees) and vaccines against diseases.  
- Students have received educational funds, which has reduced the financial difficulty of families. | - The local government must conduct a public hearing and take community representatives to observe the technology before investing in this kind of power plant. However, this micro hydropower plant is operated by the New Engineering Development (NED) company for promote renewable energy |
| Environment | - Power generation does not produce CO₂ and other kind of pollution.  
- Good water management enables higher agriculture output, i.e., rice farms can plant three times a year instead of twice as previously.  
- Forest and streams around the mountain are protected as they are the only source of the power plant's water supply. | - Power generation does not produce CO₂ and other kind of pollution. |
| Economy   | - There is co-investment between a private company and the locals. Profits from the cooperative will be shared by the members. The cooperative also grants loans to local businesses.  
- Although this type of power plant does not have a high capacity as others, the amount of power generated is sufficient for the local consumption.  
- The locals were trained and hired by the company to maintain the plant.  
- Some locals earned additional income doing temporary work for the company. This allows them to continue to work in their own community. | - If the power plant is built by the decision of the local government, then they have to pay for the installation fees. If the power is sold to a power company, the income goes to the local government.  
- The amount of power generated is not sufficient for the needs of the community. However, the objectives of this power plant are to (1) create an electricity reserve system for the community in case of an unlikely event and (2) demonstrate the company's technology. |
### Table: Comparing the impacts on local communities of solar power plants in Indonesia and Japan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>Solar Power Plant at Banyumeneng 1 in Indonesia</th>
<th>Solar Power Plant Kusagae school and Futabayouchien school, Fukuoka, Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity / Location</td>
<td>1000 w / More than 1 km from the community</td>
<td>≥ 10 Kw. / On top of a school building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>- The local people were brainstorming in this project at the very beginning – before any installation.</td>
<td>- Children have a great opportunity to learn the benefits of solar energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The locals, students and sponsors had worked together by donating their money and/or manpower to this project.</td>
<td>- Parents can participate in this learning group and can install the system in their own home if they wish. Some families are doing this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Local children were inspired by volunteer students who contributed to the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>- Power generation does not produce CO₂.</td>
<td>- Power generation does not produce CO₂.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- As the Solar PV generates electricity to pump clean water from the mountain to the community, this has led to an</td>
<td>- Reduction of use of electricity from a large scale power plant that causes major pollution such as dust and waste water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agreement to preserve the forest and water source.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>- The Solar PV does not generate a large amount of electricity; however, it is sufficient to run the pump that supplies water to the community.</td>
<td>- Reduces school's electricity expense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- People no longer buy water from other towns during the dry season.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There is income management from the water trading. They will invest in more Solar PV to produce electricity. It will distribute water to the whole village.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nuclear power plant can generate a large amount of electricity by using a small amount of energy resources. However, the power plant must be located at a distance from communities.

- Capacity

- Social

- Environment

- Economy

- Support nuclear power plant

- Do not support nuclear power

Although it can generate a large amount of electricity, in unlikely events it is not possible to control the direction and scope of contamination.

- There are not enough shelters for evacuation, if there are leakages like in Fukushima.

- An accident might lead to family separation.

- As nuclear radiation is colorless and odorless, it is easy to be exposed to it without realizing. Exposure to nuclear radiation leads to long term health effects such as blood cancer, thyroid, etc.

- There is a concern that if the nuclear waste is used for military purposes, it could lead to political conflict and war.

- If water or soil are contaminated with nuclear radiation, agriculture produce will also be contaminated and not be safe to eat.

- There is not much capacity left to store the nuclear waste. In addition, policies around nuclear energy are still unclear.

- Releasing contaminated cooling water to the ocean will affect marine life. The ocean food sources will be contaminated. It is difficult to check on this process.

- People who live near the power plant are exposed to a high risks in their accommodations, food and health.

- The government has to pay a tremendous amount of compensation to victims including short and long term medical care. In fact, this has already been the case.

- Household income will be affected, as some families or new members have to migrate or find jobs in other areas.

- Electricity fees could be more expensive as the company needs to generate more revenue to cover the massive compensation.

Table: Comparing local people’s opinions of nuclear power plant at Kyushu area in Japan.
Conclusion and Summary

Structure and Management

The management of electrical power is very different in Japan and Indonesia. Indonesia’s electricity provision is considerably lower than that of Japan. Power plants in Indonesia are not widely distributed and are not operated with the strong cooperation of local communities. As a result, there are often conflicts between the plants and communities. Operators must receive a license approval from the PLN, Ministry of Energy as well as local government. The approval procedure is complicated. The high operating costs and short concession terms also contribute to creating conflict within communities as investors seek to maximize gains quickly, often failing to work with local communities in the process. Often local people do not know in advance that plants are to be built, and can only protest after construction starts. Local conflicts arise over unfair land prices, evictions from land, etc.

In Japan, electricity is managed by ten private companies which are under the control of the government. These companies are able to set the buying and selling electricity rate to the public and they are also authorized to define the area of electricity distribution and management within their concession areas. However, after the Fukushima disaster, the government has instructed these companies to buy more electricity from small enterprises and from renewable energy sources. A potential weakness is that the policy may allow buyers to buy the electricity from enterprises they are close to, and at a high cost, which may increase the cost of electricity for consumers.

The research found that in both countries government control and private concessions have strong and weak points. In order to increase justice around electricity consumption, every part of the society should recognize the necessity of local cooperation. Locals should be enabled to check the government and private company management in order to increase good governance. Laws and penalties should apply to all entities lacking in good governance. The study found that the more that locals have participation in the setting up and operation of power plants, the fewer protests there will be.

Environment and Economy

Both Indonesia and Japan have environmental laws to support the operation and management of power plants but law enforcement in Indonesia is weak and license complications exacerbate the problems. These problems reduce the quality of life of local people. One issue is that the locals sometimes do not realize that pollution is a long-term problem. This causes conflict later in the form of protests. Long-term social problems can be the result. In order to avoid these problems, power plant management should include local participation.

In Japan, law enforcement as well as penalties to concession companies are very strong. However, the researcher noticed that as the companies pay a lot of taxes and these taxes become a benefit to the communities, for example a library or a meeting hall, or in subsidies for local projects, the companies earn the trust and support of locals.

Mental and Social Relations

In my short time living among people who work on environment and renewable energy promotion, I found that Japanese people place great importance on the concept of “time”. If somebody makes one lose time, this is a great disturbance. In addition, there is a very good public transportation system in Japan. The Japanese lifestyle necessitates a large usage of electricity. In contrast, people in Indonesia often feel that people need only basic amounts of electricity to serve their daily life, like light for reading and working. Many people live agricultural lives in rural areas, and also depend less on electricity. Electricity consumption is much less than in Japan.

Japanese people also place great importance on ‘harmony’ and “unity” and people often do not dare to express their opinions or their frustrations. This creates stress for those who must conceal their opinions. For example, a teacher in Fukushima would like to move after the disaster but cannot move out because this would make students feel bad. Lots of people in Fukushima would like to move but cannot because of opinions that will
condemn them as bad people who do not care for the community. This also affects their expression of opinions about the nuclear power plant.

Regarding the opinion of people about the environmental effects of $\text{CO}_2$ emissions from power plants, people of both countries agree with policies to decrease emissions and are confident that the improvement of technologies in renewable energy will be a better solution in the long run than building more CPP which release lots of $\text{CO}_2$.

NOTES

1 Conventional power plants (CPP) include large-scale power plants which use fossil fuels (e.g. oil, natural gas, and coal), nuclear power plants, and huge hydropower dams.

2 New renewable energy is generated through renewable sources or abundant materials available to local communities. They include solar PV, wind power, biomass and micro hydropower plants.

3 [Organization for Water Maintenance of Ged river] (OPAKg)

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Sanctuary: Genius Loci and Empowerment in Community-based Tourism
An Investigation of Community-Based Theater, Tourism, and the Creative Industries in Thailand, Japan, and Indonesia, as Emerging Models of Social Entrepreneurships

Lutgardo L. Labad

Introduction: The Problematique

This artist-researcher has been involved with the establishment of community theater groups in Bohol and in the Visayan region, loosely organized as the Lihok Bisaya Network, jumpstarted under the auspices of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts of the Philippines or the NCCA, the local governments, and community-based NGOs and people’s organizations. Selected on the basis of the presence of vulnerable but rich heritage assets in the area, of economic dislocation, and of potentials of community cultural tourism as an engine of growth, these newly formed groups were comprehensively trained in a specially designed and multi-faceted curriculum for community theater, addressing the major Millennium Development Goals. However, in reality, these amateur groups performing by the riverbanks, by the sea coast, or in hillsides and forest areas, are still striving to assert their presence in the tourism loop of their respective provinces. Still far from being sustainable, they find themselves fighting for recognition, resources, and participation in the burgeoning tourism value chain.

Various local development players have bewailed the economic imbalance which mainstream popular tourism packages had engendered. Sales and profits went mostly to city-based travel agencies and tourism establishments, with little trickling down to the basal communities. The participation of local artists and cultural groups, an essential factor in a tourism agenda boasting of “people at the heart of development”, was found wanting. To address such imbalance, new tourism circuits were launched in the last four years to engender more community participation. One of these was the birthing of the Abatan River Community Life Tour in the province of Bohol, organized by five municipalities thriving by the banks of the winding and nipa-swamped Abatan River. However, in the past two years, the effort has yielded far from impressive results. Was there something wrong with our package? Was community-based tourism then a mere pipedream? Is there any other country in Asia from which I can learn?

Beginning Constructs as Paradigm Guides

Before leaving for my research, I had already been enamored by the following constructs which I considered to be the key themes along the way: Genius Loci, Imagining Communities, Social Entrepreneurships, Community-Based Tourism, Creative Industries, and the Creative Economy.

These six constructs form a cluster of satellite themes, a prism of ideas, through which a major phenomenon is to reflect on or to refract back to: Community Theater: Where and who are these community arts and theater groups consciously engaged with the use of the theater arts within the context of tourism? How do the five constructs or themes interplay in the world of contemporary community theater in Asia?

ACT I: THAILAND—SURVIVAL AMIDST TOURISM FLOODWATERS

The Landscape

Thailand abounds in a spectacular range of tourism varieties, of almost every shape, dimension, or configuration. This magnitude has been considered both a boon and a bane.

One witnesses different tourism perspectives in the droves of tourists trooping to the Siam Niramit Theater in Bangkok, a Las Vegas-inspired performing arts space where one is feted with almost two hours of theater pyrotechnics of Thai history and culture, after being doused with a 10-course Thai dinner at the cost of $75.00. Or one could buy packaged tours all around the country, shuttling through temples and heritage sites, through beach resorts and elephant tours, eco-adventures of
almost any kind. Anything which can be fabricated, manufactured, designed, is sold to tourists.

I had the unique experience of witnessing how a piece of genuine Thai culture was being transformed through the conveyor belt of mass cultural tourism. Joining a community-based tourism exposure for students from Silapakorn University led by Professor Jittasak Putjorn, I participated in a home-stay tourism program in the heartland of Mae Hongson province, in the village of Baan Mae La Na. In the evening, the indigenous Shan community shared some of its cultural traditions in music and dance, enthralling the student audience with their simplicity and gentleness. Young dancers accompanied by elder musicians on traditional instruments shared a Buddhist-inspired folk dance which involved the imitative but unaffected movements of a donkey/deer, played in glee by two boys chasing after a group of winged creatures symbolizing peacocks, danced by girls costumed in simple folkloric attire. The performance exuded an air of simplicity and reverence. On another occasion, I saw this same dance as a major production number at the Old Chiangmai Cultural Center and as part of the highly popular “Kantoke”, a dinner-theater presentation. However, the same dance was altered a bit to fit the perceived tastes of foreign tourists. These extra effects were more tremendously transmogrified in yet a bigger Kantoke Complex in Bangkok, where dancers, with more garish wings as though popping out from a Brazilian Mardi Gras Carnival, broke their dance routine to directly approach the seated audience to solicit tips. The original performance tradition had lost its true context as it got transformed through the tourism mill as a cultural commodity.

In such a picture of commercialized tourism, where lies the creative spirit, the Genius Loci? Small but increasingly significant miracles do happen.

**In Focus One: Makhampom**

The Makhampom Theater Organization in Chiang-dao, with headquarters in Bangkok, was founded in the early 1980s by Thai activists out from whom renowned theater artist and API Fellow Tua Pradit Prassarthong became artistic director. It focused on theater as a form of people’s media, and included the revitalization of Thai traditional theater as one program element. After 25 years with Bangkok as its base, it moved its base of operations for community and international programs to the rural northern countryside of Chiang-dao where it built a community-based Living Theater Center, providing integrated programs of workshops, training, and performances for local, regional and international artists and cultural development workers. Its facilities include dormitories, a theater space, meeting rooms, open workshop areas, and a resource center built with simple construction materials on a five-hectare area surrounded by idyllic rice paddies.

Makhampom, through the current leadership of Pongjit Saphakhun, Paluhad Paholkulbutr, Yada Kriangkraiwuttikul, and Richard Barber, has slowly developed a community-based cultural tourism project borne out of its direct participation in a unique struggle of a group of indigenous peoples from Burma, who had decided to migrate to Thailand. The Dara-ang community created a theater piece based on their indigenous folklore, using their own artistic methods, enhanced with other Thai traditional cultural expressions. The community gradually became an exposure site for alternative tourists wishing to have an idea of the life and culture of ethnic communities, prompting Makhampom to establish a new program: educational travel for Australian students and development workers providing lodging in the center, outreach visits in the Chiangdao areas, interactions with the Dara-ang community, and workshops in people’s theater and cultural development work. Earnings from this alternative educational tourism are spent on running Makhampom’s operations and underwriting development projects for their Dara-ang neighbors. A similar program is also being developed at the Mirror Foundation in Chiangrai.

**In Focus Two: A Community-based Tourism Institute**

Another edifying inroad in local tourism is the emerging impact of an NGO, the Thai Community-
Based Tourism Institute, popularly known as CBT-I. Ably steered by Pojana Suansri or Noi, this organization has a track record of training almost a hundred communities in various ecological settings and ethnic backgrounds. CBT-I has synthesized and curricularized its formidable experience in providing tools for disadvantaged communities through manuals, handbooks, and booklets that are handsomely laid-out and cogently written.

This reader had the distinct experience of joining exposure tours organized by CBT-I in two villages of Mae Hong Son Province: Baan Mae Lana and Baan Ja Boo. In both communities where we spent a day and a half each, we were guided on an environment tour (mountain treks and cave exploration in Ja Boo; forests and rice and cornfields in Mae Lana) by proficient and engaging tour guides, on visiting households where we interacted with families as they did their home cooking and daytime chores, learned to weave or play traditional instruments, and saw homegrown industries like organic sesame oil and sugar-cane juice processing with the aid of indigenously constructed machinery. Dinner served in an open hall or a temple was prepared by the local women's organization. The experience was capped each night with cultural sharing without the artifice of theatrical technology. The breakfast and lodging home-stay tourism package featured the local mountain cuisine of herbs and wild vegetables, and sleeping in clean and comfortable rooms with simple amenities of blankets and mosquito nets. Family hospitality was the warmest I had ever felt. Tour guides were distributed amongst 30 students, and overnight lodging amongst 15 households. The gross income from this activity was distributed among all participating local suppliers, guides, and hosts, with a percentage set aside for the upkeep of the local tourism organization.

Training for both village communities ensued almost at the same time three years ago and yielded members drilled in visitor relations, story telling, the organized and synchronized implementation of tasks, and open audit of expense and revenue. Trained villagers were visibly beaming with self-esteem and pride in their natural and cultural resources.

Analysis

In a scholarly examination of community-based tourism, Chiang Mai University, in cooperation with the Rockefeller Foundation, launched a series of research projects to investigate the impact or results of a number of community-based tourism projects in 2008-2009. In the book *Mekong Tourism*, it laid out six areas relating to the implementation of community-based tourism projects, and against which achievements would be assessed. Achieving good practice for each criterion requires an average score of 3 out of 4, or 75 percent. In the last two columns, I attempted to do my own assessment of the two villages which I visited together with the Silapakorn students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>Baan Mae Lana</th>
<th>Baan Ja Boo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Organizational Structure and Community Participation</td>
<td>grouping of stakeholders, proportion of villagers involved in community tourism, ability to make contact with the village, and benefit sharing.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>brochure, website, publicity in newspapers/magazines/ television, marketing team, and fees</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Product Development</td>
<td>product development assessed using six indicators: tourist activities, hospitality, home-stay service, tour guide skill, community and souvenir shop, and application of local wisdom and knowledge.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
On the other hand, in an interview with one of the major writers of the research, some negative tendencies that went counter to the avowed ideals of CBT were identified.

In general, community-based tourism is not well managed by the local people. It still depends on the assistance of external agencies, in particular NGOs. Most communities imitate the management systems of successful communities without developing their own management capacity. This also leads to duplicate activities and products. Few villagers are involved in tourism activities. Income is concentrated among a limited number of villagers. To ensure steady income, villagers concentrate on their primary careers as income from tourism activities is secondary and unstable. This discourages the community from improving tourism attractions.  

These observations, however valid, have not allowed the fire of enthusiasm burning in the other leaders of the Thai CBT to die, but rather, stoke it all the more. Ms. Wasanee in Huay Reng Village leads a homestay program which was recently awarded by TAT or the Tourism Authority of Thailand, as a Regional Model of Excellence. The local organization continues to develop local soap, liniments, jams, juices, and beauty and medicinal products out of their local mangosteen orchards, alongside its well-organized homestay tourism.

In Salakphet village in Koh Chang Island, which was once a pristine environment of white beaches and green forest, ardent CBTI-trained youth leaders Fluck Tungchai and Ju Panichsukohto doggedly organized youth cultural organizations by holding annual centennial trees festivals, kayaking competitions, band concerts, and eco-treks with youth guides, to advocate continued sale and overdevelopment of the fragile island.

**In Focus Three: Other Emerging Models of Empowerment through Genius Loci**

The Family Tree is an arts and crafts fair trade shop in the high-end tourism city of Hua Hin. Proprietress Premruethai Tosermkit grew up in Northeast Thailand, where she learned the ancient art of creating silk with indigenous natural dyes and weaving fibers using these dyes. Her shop is a venue for selling excellently crafted handmade arts and crafts focused on the use of local dyes.
Earnings go back to the local weavers who are also deeply committed to planting more trees in their community.

The Hua-Hin Artist’s Village is a two-hectare community of twelve prominent Thai visual artists and sculptors, each having his or her own personally designed studio for exhibition, also serving as a workshop area for teaching art, as well as a shop for selling their art.

The Vic huahin Patravadi Arts School and Theater, owned and led by legendary cultural visionary theater director Mejhudon Patravadi, is a haven for talented and gifted youth where they are able to train under the best of drama, music, and art teachers. The students stay in modern dormitories fully equipped with facilities and amenities.

The Thailand Dramatic Institute in the different regions of Thailand takes pride in producing artists who find jobs teaching traditional dance drama technologies in other local drama colleges or performing in many tourism establishments.

The PETA Mekong Partnership Program under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation conducts workshops for theater and performing arts practitioners from the Mekong River countries, providing skills and resources to harness the potentials of theater for development work, especially in the areas of gender, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS.

The Bangkok Theater Network is a 10-year theater alliance of contemporary theater groups. Problematized by dwindling resources and the lack of theater venues, many of these groups rent or occupy small experimental “black box” theater spaces, just to be able to assert and develop their bursting creativities.

These Thai artists, together with other excellent community-based tourism leaders, are indeed cultural champions and artistic warriors in their own right, as they fight in a world run by profit in order to assert their countrymen’s Genius Loci.

ACT II: JAPAN—ASSERTION OF THE SIGNIFICANT MINORITY IN MEANING CREATION

The Landscape

The landscape of cultural tourism in Japan left me stunned by its level of systemic organization and organic sense of aesthetic order or hierarchy.

The astounding cultural programming of Japan’s various World Heritage Sites like Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima, Hiraizumi, and even as far south as Okinawa, evinced a most assiduous and scientific process of restoration, research, conservation management, information delivery, promotions and marketing. Japan’s national cultural treasures in the theatrical art, like the Noh and the Kabuki, have enjoyed years of infrastructural support and progressive development. Cultural heritage districts exhibit Japanese ingenuity in product development and, most especially, product packaging. One cannot miss out the role of the Japanese government in these arduous tasks of cultural preservation, development and promotions, as a basic component of tourism.

Despite these efforts at specialized cultural tourism development, however, profit-driven mass tourism is as highly organized and thought through. Trips to Japanese public baths, gambling casinos, sleazy nightspots, nature spots, and pop entertainment centers are as rampantly patronized as the latest cultural inventions of the Japanese mind and imagination.

In Focus One: Revalidating Community Creativity - The Japanese Public Theater Space

Theater director and producer Sato Makoto led a core of kindred artists-leaders in the years 1997-2002, in building the first model of a community-styled public theater, the Seragaya Public Theater. In 2003, he designed and built a second public theater space, the Koenji Public Theater for the Koenji district community in Tokyo. The Koenji
Public Theater has multiple theater spaces and workshop facilities within its modernist little complex, complete with modern theater facilities, all of which aim to enhance dynamic interaction with the Koenji community, a district known for small stores and marketplaces. Activities inviting public dialogues, children’s theater workshops, an actor’s training academy, and the production of new plays by budding playwrights make the Koenji an animated place for public discussion and engagement. Its most consistent claim to public accountability is its adopting an annual Koenji community cultural festival, the Awadori Festival, for which it opened its doors for rehearsals and meetings to about 30 groups from the entire community, even months before the event. The Awadori Festival harnesses the creativity and imaginative prowess of smaller sections in the Koenji district and is a major example of a seasonal community creative industry. In 2010, about 150,000 people visited this new haven of communal creativity.

In Focus Two: Reclaiming Sense of Community: The Kominkan

Theater actress and director Natsuko Kiritani, or Nacco, a founding theater artist of the Black Tent Theater or BTT, led me to a suburban district in Gumma prefecture where still exists a community arts center, or what Japanese society refers to as Kominkan, or the Community Learning Center. Middle-aged volunteers take turns offering workshops and cultural skills in various fields, from traditional to modern dances and music, and from children’s art activities to senior citizens cultural activities, at a very low price. Here clients enjoy the company of community members, otherwise walled from each other by the stresses of industrialized life. The Kominkan in Morioka City in Iwate Prefecture is a bigger physical structure with more iconic cultural offerings, like workshops on the tea ceremony, Zen, Yoga, furniture making, and local traditional cuisine, also at a minimal fee. These kominkans provide the essential safety nets or cultural sanctuaries for communities otherwise beholden to the latest of impersonal cultural technologies, prevalent in commercial mass tourism.

In Focus Three: Reclaiming Cultural Sovereignty amidst Mainstream Tourism - The Okinawan Experience

None resonated more strongly with my Philippine socio-political experience than my experience with the people of Okinawa. Visits to the prefectural museum, the peace memorial, the underground Navy headquarters during the war, the traditional arts and crafts center, navigating through layers of cultural memories from the original Okinawan nation of the Ryukyus who continue to struggle for identity and historical pride, reminded me so viscerally of the Philippine colonial experience with Spain and the United States.

The new National Theater of Okinawa, a toast to Okinawan cultural pride, was built by the Japanese government for this once archipelagic nation to showcase whatever was left of their vanishing cultural traditions. Many Okinawan cultural scholars and artists lament the predominance of mainland Japanese cultural goods in the tourism and culture markets. This phenomenon has become an impetus for Okinawan artists to revitalize their performing traditions like the well-loved kumi udai and the shibai, reinforcing the Okinawan or Ryukyuan cultural identity.

Concerned woman playwright and theater critic Shoko Yonaha opines that despite the cynicism brought about by the continued effects of the Japanese and the American presence, Okinawans have realized that their unique cultural norms and practice could exist side-by-side with other shared national values, goals, and institutions. In an essay written for a book entitled Ethnicity and Identity, she claims that “cultural pluralism is occurring in Okinawa, and cultural differences are seen to be an asset rather than as a defect”.

Okinawa’s “The Islands Festival” demonstrates an outburst of local ingenuity in products such as seafood, teas, cereals, toys, clothing, fabrics, sweet delicacies, sauces, herbs, and island-hopping tourism packages for the many islands of the small archipelago, including Taketomi Island, which has been in the list for World Heritage Inscription.
In Focus Five: Creating a Niche in Tourism: Spirit of Japan Travel

Amidst the din of mainstream mass cultural tourism, one sole warrior in the advocacy for authentic community-based tourism is Masaru Takayama, through his Spirit of Japan Travel. He has designed and managed several tour experiences-packages that put the community up-front as managers, beneficiaries, and co-creators of the experience. He believes that “the basic communities distant from the mega-cities have little chance to gain from main mass tourism. Operators tend to undersell; there is no capital for smaller communities; Japanese mass tourism has always been luxury travel tourism; popular bus tours which are cheaper ferry tourists to low-quality forms of entertainment”.

Touchstone Reflection:

I gaped at the beauty of a Noh, a Kabuki, a Butoh performance or at a Sato Makoto multi-Asian experiment. I marveled at the wondrous Hiraizumi medieval temples and the Osaka Castle. I was held breathless by the multi-media installations at the Hiroshima and Okinawa Peace memorials and the beautiful Mt. Fuji. Indeed, mainstream and majestic cultural tourism is here to stay in once imperial Japan.

However, two ineradicable experiences uncontrollably brought tears to my eyes. If tourism meant opening one’s home, one’s heart and mind to another person, then my visit to artist teacher Hitoshi Hoshino, founding director of an alternative Junior High School, the Sangosya School in Naha, Okinawa, and the performance tribute for deceased friend and playwright Gen Yamamoto in Morioka in Iwate prefecture, were matchless in profundity in meaning. Hitoshi showed me the area where he and his high school students were literally digging the ground and heaping stone upon stone to build the foundation of an integrated arts school with the Okinawan culture and environment as a core subject of interactive learning. In a moving production tribute to playwright Gen Yamamoto mounted by the BTT, various different leaders from different cultural sectors in Morioka came and paid their last respects to him, who had continually come to Morioka to share his talents with the community. An atmosphere of love and solidarity suffused the entire production even until the cast party, where all took turns delivering their moving eulogies with utmost warmth, friendship, and love.

For one brief moment, I stepped into the interiors of their culture and was allowed to experience the depths of their humanity. This was indeed an example of a heartfelt travel to a humanizing and selfless “imaging community”.

ACT III INDONESIA: UNBROKEN HERITAGE AS A SANCTUARY BE QUEathed

Culture Capitals in the Island of the Gods

The artistic genius of this enviable nation is as vast as its geographic magnitude. “Ubiquitous” is but a lame word to describe the cultural phosphorescence of the Indonesian Genius Loci. In Jakarta, whether in the Wayang Kulit Museum in Jakarta, or at the TIM, where there is a monthly round of artistic activities organized by the Jakarta Arts Council, including special performances of the 100-year old folk comedy Ms. Tjih Tjih, of theater gurus like master theater directors Sardono, Riantiarno, and Putu Wijaya, of new and traditional dances and music from the other parts of the country, of tari topeng (masked dances) recitals from Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, Sarawak regions—the list seems insanely endless.

The twin royal cities of Jogjakarta and Surakarta or Solo are two cultural planets of the creative industries. One can only gasp at the cultural eloquence of the Royal Museums of both the Jogja and Solo Kratons, and how royalty and aristocracy had played an enormous role in cultural patronage and creation. Along the span of the immensely popular Marlioboro street and environs, are museums, galleries, shops, eateries, literally awash with Indonesian cultural icons, transformed into merchandise, from kitchenware to clothing, from décor to food, toys to accessories, from paintings to miniatures. Here, the innards of creativity, so to speak, are laid out on the streets for all to see, buy, and enjoy.

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Bandung City boasts of its Angklung Orchestra at the Saung Angklung Udjo Village. Surakarta is one haven of batik art, another cultural icon inscribed by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of World Intangible Heritage. Batik production processes displayed at the elegantly restored aristocratic palace, the Museum Batik Danar Hadi, climaxes in a sweatshop of nearly a hundred workers bustling in a human conveyor belt of batik production: pattern designing, stenciling, waxing, and dyeing.

Ubud District, one major cultural nexus in Bali Island, with adjoining Peliatan, Gianyar, and Bona districts, spills out high-end and popular art museums exhibiting generations of Balinese aesthetics in sculpture, murals, and oils; temples with nightly cultural shows from the Hindu epics and Balinese folklore, including the newly devised kecak dance dramas; resorts, hotels, inns, and home-stays designed in the characteristic Balinese style; bookshops and markets selling folk, native, ethnic crafts and merchandise. At every bend and corner runs a lane of sculpture garden stores, with religious and mythical figures cast in stone in every conceivable size and weight. And if one chances to bump into a cremation ceremony in the streets, or get invited to a wedding or a temple ritual in one remote village, the experience is sheer phantasmagoria.

Performances and festivals abound in these cultural megalopolis. And the artistic menu is legion. Each major city offers its own series of festivals each year. Jogjakarta, among others, has its International Carnival, Solo its SIPA Festival, and Bali its Ubud Writer’s Festival.

At the Prembanan Theater Complex, the well-loved Ramayana epic is enthralling with the elegantly lighted temple spires glistening in the panoramic and natural sky cyclorama. Different troupes from Jogjakarta and other theater academies in Java take turns in interpreting this tale. At the theater shows in Ubud Raya in Bali, different community groups of Balinese dancers and musicians rotate in about twenty heritage venues around the Ubud Raya area, providing short, but engaging, theatrical medleys of Balinese dances and music resulting from generations of theatrical curating by masters of the craft.

**Government in Cultural Education**

What provides a modicum of stability and a promise of sustainability is how the Indonesian government supports the training and promotion of artists in almost all facets of the cultural profession. Each major region or province has its own Institute of the Arts or *Institut Seni Indonesia* (ISI), providing college degree courses in various disciplines, the most outstanding of which are the ISIs in Jakarta, Jogjakarta, Bandung, Solo, and of course, Bali. A visit to all these institutes reveals an accomplished faculty of artists, a wide, eco-friendly space for learning with impressive facilities, and a programme of study that drinks from the wells of actual masters until students find their own original creative voice.

**Government as Cultural Harbinger**

This writer had the unique privilege of having interviewed top officials of Indonesia’s cultural governance: Dewi Noviami the Drama Head of the Jakarta Arts Council, Tazbir of the Jogjakarta Provincial Tourism Authority, and Suastika of the Bali Tourism Office, to name a few. The most eloquent and comprehensive articulation of the new emerging agenda in Indonesia’s cultural tourism comes from Henky Hermantoro, who laid out the ideas on the new Creative Economy program of Indonesia in his pioneering book entitled *Creative-based Tourism*.6

But contrary voices are also heard.

**In Focus One: A Community Tragedy in the Making: The Wayang Orang Theater**

The Wayang Orang Theater in Solo, a seventy-year institution in this royal city, features a theatrical depiction of ageless stories from Indonesian Indian-inspired epics. All the performers and production staff are government employees, whose main job is to provide wayang orang entertainment six days a week. They also come from the same community areas and families or clans of the wayang orang lineage.

The experience is a baffling encounter with the shackles of tradition. Actors are given their
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roles two hours before the show; perform their assigned characters using stock and codified movements, dialogues, chants, and gestures; portray different plays each evening for two and a half hours out of a selection of about seventy storylines or scripts whose scenarios are well-sequenced in the mind of the director; are aided with a defined set of costumes, make up, and music cues from a live gamelan orchestra.

“And this is where heritage ceases to be creative”, say concerned theater artists like Hinundayan and Yosephat. Everything is repeated routine, unchanging in its repetitiveness, cruelly stuck in its fossilizing mold of codes. Audiences in the Wayang Orang Theater have dwindled in the past decade, leaving the venue a curiosity to tourists and a source of nostalgia to old and aging loyal fans.

In Focus Two: The Courage to Rebuke Cultural Elitism—Sutanto and the Communitas Lima Gunung

A jazz musician on the piano by training, an arts connoisseur by avocation, a visual and literary artist by vocation, a committed cultural organizer by choice, a biting critic of government, and an iconoclast by temperament—these are how I would describe the enigmatically imposing Sutanto, owner of the famous Mendut Studio in Magelang. One is deeply touched by his care of and solidarity with the peripheral communities of the mountains of Java.

Sutanto leads the now iconic Lima Gunung Festival or Five Mountains Festival, a festival of people’s art and culture participated in by communities from a network of mountains in Central Java: Mount Merapi, Mount Merbabu, Mount Andong, Mount Sumbing, and the Menoreh mountain range. Sutanto states that

“the mountains serve more as a symbol of rural groups that have long been sidelined by government institutions rather than a mere indication of origin. It aims at affirming that outside the government and political elite with their frequent mismanagement of the population, there is an ongoing process of artistic creation in villages, or in mountain slopes, to maintain traditions and instinctive abilities. The festival provides opportunity and trust to art communities to manage their own affairs, which have been previously been in the hands of other circles.

The festival rotates every year from one mountain to the other. Sutanto takes pride in the fact that the festival has not sought a single rupiah from the government since its existence. Sutanto continues the Indonesian breed of progressive cultural visionaries like Rendra, eschewing authority over cultural integrity and artistic freedom”.

In Focus Three: Communal Heritage Anchored in Spirituality whilst Embracing the Industry

KELOLA, an Indonesian NGO devoted to enhancing cultural development and excellence among Indonesian artists, brought me into contact with many community-oriented theater groups like Celah Celah Langit of Iman Soleh in Bandung, the theater networks in Jogjakarta, and the cultural forces in Bali. One important encounter was with the artistic progeny of the Sidia clan.

I Made Sidia is one of seven siblings of the 80-year old master guru I Made Sijo. This cultural patriarch has taught all his children a multi-art tradition of the Balinese performative act: carving for the masks, wayang kulit and golek puppets; dancing for the topeng and other tari; and playing the gamelan instruments. I Made Sijo deemed it their destiny to bequeath a heritage of cultural expressiveness as everyone’s birthright. Trained with the best of contemporary Indonesian artists and in the United States for advanced theater studies, I Made Sidia experimented on fusing modern media technology with the Balinese traditions at the Bali Safari and Marine Park Theater Complex with his production of the Bali Agung.

This is a theatrical production of the legends around Balinese Goddesses, involves close to 150 performers, and runs for five to six times a week. It utilizes all forms of Balinese cultural expressions,

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synthesizes these in a narrative format that is totally absorbing, fusing modern theater technologies including acrobatics, gymnastics, and forms of physical theater associated with Cirque du Soleil.

This event has deeply changed the lives of many of the Balinese performers. Chosen from I Made’s community of neighbors, friends, and relatives, the group has virtually developed into a closely-knit community theater engaged in cultural tourism. The performers, who are paid professional fees, set aside a percentage for maintaining a dance and music school for children in the home of I Made Sidia. After a matinee performance, the entire troupe would travel to the nearby beach for a two-hour training session in voice, movement, improvisation, and acting drawn from both Balinese and Western theater pedagogies. What a whirlwind of income-generating cultural activities for a 150-member community theater force!

But what struck me as a blast was how this community of artists regards art and religion in much the same way as all Balinese do. In a special thanksgiving and propitiation ceremony in the home of I Made Sidia, the entire Bali Agung ensemble transformed his abode into a multi-sensorial environment of music and dance offerings. When asked why he did not mind the absence of an audience ogling at his masked performance in the ceremony, I Made Sidia quickly quipped, “It was not a show. It is my own prayer offering to the gods, thanking them for blessings received”.7

Conclusions

These performances in tourism in Thailand, Japan, and Indonesia exemplify “the art of presence” and the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary” which Dr. Mary Racelis pointed out from the work of anthropologist Asef Bayat, and which she underscored as “an engagement in new paradigms, done in interaction with the people whose lives are most affected”. This research into the interiors of cultural tourism in three countries brought me to such a higher plane of realization and insights.

For community-based cultural tourism to prosper, the communities must be able to fathom and celebrate the wisdom and ingenuity of their history and culture. Lessons from Thailand underscore the threats of a merely profit-driven orientation. In Japan, I saw the dangers of the homogenization of creativity’s taking a toll on smaller but engaged communities envisioning their own parameters of creativity. Indonesia unmasked the other face of tradition and governance stultifying creativeness and artistic freedom.

One major instrument to offset these trends is the presence of passionately committed cultural visionaries who are able to see their historic role in cultural and social transformation. Another would be the level of awareness of the communities as to their own significance in this changing world, of their Genius Loci and its power to transform a tourism landscape insensitive to the real stirrings of a people’s culture.

The experience also stressed the need to be scientific in the process of developing social entrepreneurship. The pedagogy reaped by the experience and expertise of groups like the Community–based Tourism Institute and the Makhampom of Thailand; the models of the Kominkan and Taketomi Island Communities in Japan; and aesthetic education profiled by the Indonesian ISIs or academies of arts and culture—all these reinforce my belief in the solid values of human resource development, capability building, and social preparation in community organizing. The process of ownership and internalization of the values of social entrepreneurship can only be sustained through a long-term and strategic look at cultural and social change. Nothing changes overnight.8

Select community cultural and theater groups in Asia hold a key to enhancing Philippine knowledge of and skills in community-based cultural tourism. It is highly recommended that a network of kindred spirits be launched for a cross-cultural and inter-regional exchange and resource-sharing in the area of community theaters as social entrepreneurships in the domain of tourism. Such a program which I entitle “Likha Asya”, a convergence of minds and hearts passionately engaged with the Creative Industries, Community Theater, and Community-
based Tourism, a fellowship of Asian cultural creatives, will further broaden and deepen the ongoing discourse on Community-based Tourism for the Creative Economy.

NOTES

1 Genius Loci is essentially the “character of place”, or the “spirit or genius of place” bringing about the authentic integrity of a community’s creativity. *Imagining Communities* are proactive and reflexive communities, directly engaged in social transformation of their *habitus*, having come out from dehumanizing conditions, and now fabricating meaning from new possibilities and resources “grasped within new social configurations”. Social Entrepreneurships are business enterprises that consider the following bottom-lines for authentic implementation: (a) ecological preservation and cultural integrity; (b) leadership and management by an organized community; and (c) equitability in the sharing of revenues among the enterprise stakeholders. Planet. People. Profit. Community-based Tourism, as a specific example of social entrepreneurship, is that mode of sustainable tourism led, managed, and owned by a defined community, usually disenfranchised from the sources of power and capital, but devoted to the preservation of their natural and cultural heritage as it promotes and markets its local tourism destination or experience. The term *creative industry* refers to those contemporary modes of production utilizing the individual’s creative resources, or a community’s assets as sources of cultural capital for product development such as publications, fashion, media, furniture, and cultural tourism. Lastly, the most recent over-arching construct that intends to describe the impact which creativity and culture have impinged on local or national development is the term *Creative Economy*. See section on References below for books which deal with these themes.


3 Interview with Korawan Sangkakorn, researcher, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University – (convert to a parenthetical reference)

4 Interview with Ms. Yonaha elaborating on issues discussed in her essay “Okinawan Drama: Its Ethnicity and Identity Under Assimilation to Japan”; written for same book, referenced in Section on References. (convert to a parenthetical reference)

5 The Black Tent Theater of Japan or Kuro Tento has been a major model in bringing theater to the communities outside Tokyo, even to the farthest isles of the Japan archipelago, especially from the 1970s to the 1980s.

6 All these tourism officials took pains in facilitating field visits to their respective heritage tourism sites. A major offshoot of this networking activity was the invitation from the Surakarta City Office to this writer and his group (Bohol and NCCA artists) to perform at the Solo International Performing Arts Festival in September 2012. The contingent was accompanied by officers from the Philippine NCCA, who saw for themselves the wealth of Indonesian culture in Java and Bali in a side cultural exposure trip.

7 Aside from permitting the writer to see his production of Bali Agung, I Made Sidia brought me to temple rituals and local activities, where nary a tourist was present except for me, who saw first hand the union of art and spirituality in the lives of the Balinese, distinctly apart from the presentational aesthetics of his and his friend’s performances for tourists. The community-oriented Kechak group of I Ketut Rina of Gianyar was an example of authentic solidarity and fellowship among the Balinese.

8 Cultural leaders from the Makhampom Foundation and the CBTI in Thailand, PETA in the Melong, Koenji and the BTT Theaters, the Japan ITI Center, KELOLA in Indonesia, API colleagues in Jogjakarta, the members of the once PETA Asian Theater Forum in the 80s, aside from the Philippine embassies in Thailand, Japan, and Indonesia, and the API Partner Institutions in those countries, made the writer’s research and connection with local respondents so much easier, livelier, touching, and more humane. This writer’s weight loss of almost 20 kilos during the six-month duration of this whirlwind of a journey is outbalanced by the weightier, invaluable, and matchless gains of love, solidarity, knowledge, and friendship with kindred spirits in the search for our Asian identities.

REFERENCES

General


**Thailand**


**Japan**


**Indonesia**


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The Small Theater, Soft Power: The Means to Build an Ideal Society

Pradit Prasartthong

Introduction

During my one year in Tokyo, I did not only gain a deep-dimensioned understanding of the small theater situation in this city, but also learned its ways and means, as well as the artist's own. These experiences helped me enlarge my new perspective, see many possibilities, strengthen my friendship with good old friends and build new ones, and get significant inspiration, all of which will definitely and markedly benefit the next step of the small theater in Bangkok.

Project activities and their outcomes

In order to help me understand this theater culture more, I got involved in many activities pertaining to developing and ensuring the survival of the small theater in the city of Tokyo. I took part in temple festivals and shrine worshipping ceremonies, and experienced many of such traditional theaters as the Kabuki theater, Bunraku puppetry, Taichu Enki theater, and Noh theater. I also visited museums of art, history, economics, society, and politics. Moreover, I participated in several workshops on theater skills, rehearsals, and post-productions in many different studios. I also observed discussions at first performance celebrations, where performers exchanged opinions and views. I visited bars and places where artists hang out, as well as flea markets and second-hand markets, from where most props used in the shows were bought.

Actually, there are many more aspects to share, but in this paper, I will be focusing directly on just the theater spaces, with their activities as the main emphasis.

Data collection

I went to see, observe, and interview many people involved in different theaters around Tokyo and other cities, where there were 58 venues altogether:

8 Government and Public Theaters:

- New National Theater, Hatsudai
- Tram Theater /Setagaya Public Theater, Sangenjaya
- Za Kohenji Public Theater, Koenji
- Tokyo Metropolitans Arts Space, Ikebukuro
- Suitengu-pit, Suitengu Mae
- Kanagawa Theater, Kanakawa
- Shizuoka Performing Art Centre SPAC, Shizuoka
- Neko Theater, Matsuyama

31 Small Theaters

Run by artists

- Store House, Ueno (belongs to Store House Company)
- Store House, Ekoda (belongs to Store House Company)
- Umegaoka box, Umegaoka (belongs to Yoji Sakate)
- Agora Theater, Komaba Todaimae (belongs to Oriza Hirata)
- Actore Theater, Nagano (belongs to Wada Yoshio)
- Space Waseda, Waseda (belongs to Ryosanji Company)
- Proto Theater, Takadanobaba (belongs to DA-M Theater Company)
- D-Soko Theater, Nippori (belongs to OM-2 Company)
- Space Canvas, Ochanomizu (belongs to Gengidan Kaitaisha Company)
- Iwato Theater, Kagurazaka (belongs to Black Tent Company)
- Gendaiza Theater, Higashi-Koganei
- Terpisichore Theater, Nagano

Runs by private organization

- Pocket Square, Nakano
- Bon Bon Theater, Nakano
- Hope Theater, Nakano
- Momo Theater Nakano
- Akashi studio in Koenji,


Workshop and lecture

- For Mirai Kan Cultural Centre
  - “Let the Body Talk”, a creative body movement and writing workshop
  - “Thai Classical Theaters”, a lecture and demonstration
  - “Thai Sounds and Songs”, a lecture and demonstration

- For the Japan Directors Association
  - “Thai Likay Theater Techniques”, skills training workshops
  - “Journey of Modern Theater in Thailand”, a lecture
  - “Pradit and His Theater Works”, a lecture
  - “Japanese Modern Theater through My Eyes”, a lecture

Significant point of new knowledge

The role of the small theaters in Tokyo

Apart from being the so-called “Got Talent Space” of the local artists, these small theaters are where people gather around and see a variety of plays at an affordable price. The small theaters indicate how stressful or relaxed the metropolitan lifestyle is. Besides these mentioned roles, small theaters are also being appreciated for the following reasons:

The small theater - It is a space for the infinite variety of uniqueness where artists can express their own selves and is a get-together place for people who share the same artistic taste. Modern theater started to play an important role in Japanese society ever since the era of political reform and has sustained this role through the years, insofar as people of any age and status are concerned. Despite the Japanese people’s prosperous experience and the popularity of mainstream theater nowadays, the alternative theater and its specific audiences are still alive, continuing to be a home for the uniqueness of the theater itself, the artists, and the audiences. This is the reason why Tokyo is so attractive and charmingly full of cultural diversity.

The small theater - It is a space of social communication where people sit closely, laughing, crying, absorbing,
empathizing, realizing, and inspiring each other. This leads to a sense of community where one can learn how to assimilate and enhance communication skills, perception, and understanding, in both individual and social dimensions.

The small theater – It is a space for strengthening democratic development. After a play ends, a familiar sight every time is that of the director and the actors chatting with the audiences, most of whom are still around to cheer and exchange opinions. A post-show talk and discussion of the play are sometimes arranged by some venues. These cozy relaxing activities in the small theater obviously initiate a proper public discussion and respect for other people’s points of view, which could be diverse. This is unquestionably a significant pathway to democratic creation.

With its above-mentioned roles, the small theater is still flourishing in metropolitan societies like Tokyo. However, the survival of the artists who dedicate themselves earnestly to this kind of small-income art is threatened. Therefore, there must be other factors that should ensure the upkeep of minor theaters for as long as possible.

The demand for small theater spaces

The alternative theater situation is very active in Tokyo. New groups come and go. There are roughly around 3,500 groups in Japan today. So, there is a high demand for small theater spaces.

There are about 30 of them in Tokyo, some of them owned by government; private organizations, foundations, and artists own the rest. They are all in great demand. Many are open all year round with no proper programming, while some try to organize their own curated programs with the purpose of upholding the concept of their space; sometimes, they do allow the artist to use the space while exercising creative freedom.

Financial management of small theater spaces

Profit:
1. Renting out the space brings in good income, since there is always high demand for small theaters.

2. Applying for grants from government or private organizations when arranging such activities as theater productions, workshops on theater developments, seminars on theater, the publishing (publication) of play scripts and theater manuals. Grants may be (?) the main source of funding for many theater spaces.
3. Ticket sales, even though this is not the main source of income but is an important source nonetheless.
4. Annual support from theater membership and such items as yearly packaged tickets that cover payment for watching every show in the theater.
5. Donations for future developments.

Costs
1. Rental for the space. Rates vary depending on the size and location of the space. This is the main expense item for which management teams or artists must be responsible. They can find (generate) some support from private cultural organizations, but not from government, which does not have any policies (funding? Budget) for matters such as this.
2. The small theaters are normally run by a small staff whose main responsibility is to take care of the space, in general. More specialized undertakings that have to do with lighting, sound, and public relations are usually put in the hands of invited experts. Most of the time, the theater space lets the artists handle their own management requirements.
3. High tax rates for the legal venues. This burden is so heavy for the artists that they have to constantly keep calling for tax discounts from the government.

The effect of government support

Funding support from the government stimulates competition between small theater venues to create more projects, so that they might have a chance to receive such grants. A positive outcome of this race is the emergence of many ideas and activities. But, at the same time, there is also a possible negative impact that may arise from a conflict of ideas.
among the spaces and artists. This sometimes limits the possibilities of their project's contents.

**Small theater networking**

Even if there is no official networking across theater venues or between theater venues and theater artists for that matter, they instinctively help out each other by way of distributing each other's brochures, attending each other's performances and festivals hosted by another group. These kinds of indirect support constitute another important factor for maintaining a strong theater society.

**Conflict and innovation**

There is a conflict between traditional theater artists who favor classic literature and new age artists, especially those in the small theater scenes, who are more interested in finding new techniques for telling stories and try to avoid classic arts. This has, however, given way to new possibilities in Japanese contemporary theater and to the birth of many new age directors of different styles. But it has also caused a decrease in language skills development concerns and proper standard pronunciations among new wave actors. Still, on a positive light, it has also fostered new artistic styles that might bloom into something outstanding in the future. But, destructively as mentioned, the art of the language might be forgotten and could decline sooner than expected.

**Modern theater and Japan's development**

We have already recognized that theater is a product of social movement, while the manner by which theater spaces emerge and how they are sustained are activated by the demand of audiences in the area. Therefore, the study of theater and its existence must focus on these kinds of social features. Following are some conclusions from my observation of theater arts in Tokyo.

1. **Japan’s modern and democratic society**

This is the most important factor behind theater development and its existence. Over time and across conflicts, Japanese society has been reforming itself, moderately and progressively, from its long-standing monarchical regime to democracy. Until now, with democratic notions already settled and deep-rooted, the growth of democratic awareness, the acceptance of differences, and respect for community rules, alongside the constitution, continues. This democracy-based society, as a result, brings about awareness of the equality of all eligible citizens. This quality of life, in terms of sensibility, discipline and morality, is the fundamental basis that motivates the new pathway for theater art's issues. Accordingly, the issues may vary further than such primary subjects as ancient beliefs or noble-class praising. Doubtlessly, some Japanese may be displeased with the occurrence but, in spite of this, they realize well enough how necessary theater art is to their lives. This acceptance, as a matter of fact, is another essential dynamic for modern theater's development factors.

Looking back, in Thai society, political reform is just a form, since most people still lack understanding of democratic schemes. They perceive the definition of democracy to simply be “an election”, which would eventually bring them a god-like hero who could rescue them from poverty. They are incapable of constructing a path to democratic structure by themselves, so, in point of fact, the modern theater arts in Thailand is so frail.

Thus, the artist's mission is to create a piece of work which could constantly initiate the democratic way of thinking, especially for the next generations. Once democratic perception has been seeded sustainably, there will be hope for modern theater arts to grow in Thailand, as it is growing in other countries.

2. **The New National Theater**

The New National Theater is considered a symbolic image of theater art's existence and the acceptance that the art of contemporary theater is as equally important as the other traditional arts in Japan. The symbolic image is like an inner strength that makes the Japanese feel recognized and properly accepted in society.
Established by the Japanese government, the New National Theater is a theater complex in the center of Tokyo. Consisting of an opera house that can seat 1,800, a play house that seats 1,000 and a small hall that can accommodate 350 to 500 seats, it is meant especially for contemporary performing arts. The venue has been welcoming both local and international performances, and even theater performances for children. Initially, this theater complex was a project presented to the government by a group of artists in 1966. It was opened to the public in 1997, after 31 years of struggle. Looking back again to Thailand, if we actively make a real effort from today onward, we might just have our own national theater within the next 30 years.

3. NNTT Drama Studio

This place is proof of the government’s thoughtful vision of producing more new-fangled artists, for them to be among the next-generation powers, apart from those from the fields of technology and athletics.

NNTT Drama Studio, which is operated by non-profit organizations and supported by the government, has been producing such qualified artists for the theater world since 1995. Kuriyama Tamiya, the former Artistic Director of New National Theater, Tokyo, who is presently director of Drama Studio, believes that Japanese modern theater is obviously categorized according to its style, its origin, and the artist’s stage of development. During the period 1961-1979, the small theater’s movement became the crucial clue to the artist’s recognition and the foundation of a much stronger base for theater development policy. There were several new theater venues being founded in many major cities. Support grants, artist’s welfare initiatives, and funding for artists-in-residence were also plentiful.

4. The Theater Museum, Waseda University

The Theater Museum, Waseda University was established in October 1928 with the support of people from various sections of society, on the occasion of the 70th Birthday of Dr. Tsubouchi Shooyo, a famous writer known for his work in theater and his translation of the collected works of Shakespeare into Japanese. The museum has been gathering a large collection of literary works, prints, and other objects related to drama and theater from all over the world, for the purpose of fostering a comparative study of world theater. Apart from collecting and displaying the history of theater arts, the theater museum, as its main responsibility, also lets the visitors see the overview of the theater route from time to time. In so doing, it can link the past to the present, and perceive how this influences the future.

It can be said that the theater museum is a place of learning and inspiration. It is a delightful achievement for theater artists and all art followers. History can prove how much influence theater has had on Japanese society and how the whole nation treasures it. Doubtlessly, it is an art form that should always be nurtured and sustained.

5. Public theater

Public theater is a space run by the government and private organizations. It serves as a public space for artistic recreation for the mind and soul. It is as equally important as other necessary utilities like roads, schools, and hospitals.

Actually, public theater has a variety of meanings in Japan. In this paper, I will narrow it down to “a public space, which is run by the government and non-profit private organizations and granted by the government”. Below are some examples of public theaters that I visited in Tokyo.

Setagaya Public Theater: This is the most familiar space for me and some Thai theater artists, since we had chances to participate in some theater activities, for example the play Red Demon in 1997 and 1999, the project Lohan’s Journey from 2002 to 2007, the play Mobile in 2006. It is the most successful venue with a pile of many eligible play productions. It is also recognized for its program-curating and its packed audiences in almost every show.

Tokyo Metropolitan Arts Space (TMAS): This is another familiar space for me since my first
performance in the project Cry of Asia II in 1995 took place here. A recent collaboration saw Mr. Noda Hideki become the artistic director. He offered his play’s scripts for Bangkok’s theater network to make adaptations using the Thai context. Adaptations included The Girl from Soil directed by Nikorn Saetang and the Likay Theater’s version of Red Demon directed by Pradit Prasarthong, both of which were performed during the Mekong Project, 2009. Tokyo Metropolitan Arts Space was established and granted by the government of Tokyo. It is run by a non-profit private organization. This space is what we take as an aspiring model for our Bangkok arts and culture center.

Za Koenji Public Theater: Founded with the cooperation of local artists, writers, and the government in Uginami, it opened in 2008. The space was formed by many various sections of society. This group effort inspires public theaters about to emerge all over Japan so much.

6. Small theaters founded and run by artists.

Shimo Kitazawa: A community of small theaters

Same as other districts, Shimo Kitazawa was a decadent area following the growth of politics, the economic crisis, and a decade-long war.

Mr. Honda Kazuo, a stage play actor, used to conduct illegal business in this area but finally gave it up after his own daughter asked “Father, what do you do as a profession?” For his daughter’s sake, he changed his career path from such illegal stuffs to that of a full-time actor and founded his own self-funding small theaters: Honda Theater, Off Off Theater, Ekimae Theater, Genki Syo Theater, Rankuen Theater, Suzunari Theater, and 711 theater. Shortly after, Shimo Kitazawa became a theater district, where stage theater artists, directors, actors, and critics loved gathering around. It is usually considered one of Tokyo’s most famous areas for small theaters and as a theater artist’s community. Nowadays, Mr. Honda has turned out to be one of the most remarkable persons in theater society, having successfully transformed the area of Shimo Kitazawa into a lively center of alternative theaters.

Proto Theater: Small but lively

A tiny little theater in the area of Takadanobaba is another familiar venue, where I performed during the Asia meets Asia Festival 2000. In it, as well, I collaborated with international artists for the Asia meets Asia Festival 2012.

Mr. Hiroshi Ohashi is a director and the founder of DA-M Theater. He opened a 30 to 50-seat playhouse in 1983, for his own group’s experimental works and those of other theater groups. He intended not to use his theater group’s name, but PORTO Theater instead, so that the other groups could come utilize the space. He preferred this kind of small theater to government-funded spaces because it was devoid of any conditions and restrictions, thereby making it possible for artists to create their works at liberty.

Despite its small size, it is not easy to run this kind of theater. In the past 30 years, Mr. Ohashi gained major income from government funding and from some business sectors. Using these funds, he hosted such projects with international artists as the festival “Asia meets Asia”. Another source of income, apart from that derived from exchanging and collaborating with other artists, is space rental. The wages of the person who takes care of the space are also derived from the above-mentioned budget.

Apart from managing this theater, Mr. Ohashi does take part in many other activities, not spending all his time and energy on the space. His interesting vision on space management is not to treat space as a burden, but with ease, in the belief that doing so will ensure its long-lasting existence.

D-Soko Theater: For so long as the theater groups constantly produce theater works, this space might well exist.

Mr. Shigeo Makabe, the artistic director of D-Soko Theater and the director of the OM2 Theater Group, revealed that he started renting a goods-storage in Higashi-Nippori and adapted it into a theater space open to the public in 2008. He has had 25 long years of taking care of many theater spaces.
The theater has two full-time personnel taking care of it. The space is being promoted through public relations efforts via websites and emails. Apart from such, the rest of the tasks are the theater group’s responsibility. In addition to rental, the space generates income from a small coffee shop and government grants.

All over Japan, there are approximately 3,500 professional and amateur theater groups, but only 30 small theaters are available in Tokyo. Therefore, the spaces are always in high demand. However, the space owner must struggle with the payment of taxes, which Mr. Shigeo finds to be so high that he thinks all owners should coalesce and call for a reduction.

He is certain that the small theaters are always necessary for new generation practitioners. Although, there are a number of not too well-trained theater groups, he believes that one day, as long as they keep on doing theater work, they will become more and more well-polished.

Space WASEDA: Theater is a vivid classroom.

Walking from the subway station along Waseda Dori Street and after just a short turn, one sees a small theater venue in an underground location, beneath a Chinese restaurant. This is Space Waseda, run by Mr. Show Ryuzanji of the Ryuzanji Theater Group. It was opened in 1997 with a theater space that could seat 30.

This theater group is famous and has quite a few regular fans. It has the reputation of being a mobile theater, giving performances in many local areas and abroad. A prominent distinction of this group is the location of its performance space, which is not necessarily a proper theater but could be a temple, a park, or a museum, among others. However, the group still needs that tiny immobile space, to be able to run the rehearsals and, sometimes, to perform in. Mr. Show does agree with this, acknowledging that having its own space would help the audiences know where to keep in touch with the group.

The group’s major income comes from its 30 core members, from ticket sales when it performs at the space, from international shows, and also from government grants.

This theater venue is not far from Waseda University, one of the most prestigious universities in Japan, which also offers degrees in theater. There is, in spite of this, a very rare connection between these two places.

Most departments of theater in Tokyo universities usually provide a full-facility theater so that the students do not need to make a connection with any other public theaters. Such a set-up leads to the student’s lack of a real experience and relationship with the outside world, from which they could learn something new apart from what they learn from books. They could also have adjusted themselves to real situations, gained inspiration to create works and, most importantly, enjoyed the opportunity to work with professional artists. Had the set-up in universities been different.

Gendaiza Theater: Theater is a hangout place with friends.

Gendaiza Theater is located not far from the Higashi-Koganei subway station. Like many theaters in Tokyo, it hides itself in the underground zone, where the 100-seat space has been run by Gendaiza Theater Groups for more than 40 years.

The first view I had of it revealed a hundred elderly people sitting closely together in a small guest room, waiting for the show. The scene reminded me of a New Year sensation, where friends would gather around and make Moji rice cake together.

When the usher escorted the audiences to the seats inside, the theater took me completely by surprise. The space was designed in an ancient style with a painted canvas as backdrop, similar to the Likay and Khon sets in our national theater in Bangkok. The props were realistic, and could include even a house and a tree.

Takahiro Sakai, a former member of this theater group, took me on a backstage tour after the show. He said that this theater group has been renowned among its regular fans for 40 years. Interestingly, apart from rental as major income, the group has
another source of income: the membership fees of 1,000 individuals from all over the country. This long relationship between the theater group and the audience has apparently been facilitated by good management, diligent attention, and sincerity.

Suddenly, I felt that this friendship and the long affiliation between artists and audiences are the main reasons why people still keep on watching stage plays, despite the easy availability of television and online movies. The prevailing relationship among these people keeps one from feeling alone in this cruel world.

Iwato Theater: As long as we keep on dreaming, we can create an endless legend.

This 100-seat playhouse in Kakurasaka is run by the Black Tent Theater Group, a long-standing theater group that once enjoyed considerable influence on Japan's social movement. The place that they have been renting since 2005 is now partially ruined. It will be fully renovated in 2012.

Mr. Hiroyuki Muneshige, the group's manager, said that the space has very high monthly maintenance costs. Besides the rental expenses and taxes, the theater group also pays wages to two personnel. The major income is derived from shows, membership, such theater activities as acting workshops and from sub-rentals. Thus, the rental is divided into two periods—four months for the group and another eight months that the latter is paid by other groups. The total income can reasonably cope with the expenses, so that the space is still ongoing, neither too contemptible nor too well-off.

The Black Tent Theater Group refuses to seek government grants, since it feels worn-out by the procedures involved and would rather avoid the limits to creative freedom. Whenever a play is showing, the space helps contribute to the production through public relations efforts via emails, leaflets (this country really overuses those leaflet brochures), newspapers, magazines, and direct sales promotion efforts. For example, tickets can be directly purchased from the actors at a discount.

It is necessary for theater people to make as many friends as possible, for the sake of ticket sales, and to have a good relationship with bistros and coffee shops.

Black Tent has a long-standing history of creating plays on social topics. Since 1968, it has been using a black mobile tent in which to perform its various works all over Japan. It has continually pursued its existence amidst a vague dream, in accordance with the changing society and times. Currently, the younger generation of the group prefers international tours, while the old favors mounting its social topic plays in a small theater, since the latter group believes that this is the core reason why people gather in this place.

Before the conflict between the old and the new generations grew more serious, the group decided to discontinue the space for a while. The temporary closing down of Iwato in 2012 offered a good chance to reorient everyone on their original self once again.

No matter what kind of performances they prefer, whether it be an outdated topic play or a lively international level one, with understanding obtaining from self-realization, the new age of the group will come to life at another time. As long as the members keep on dreaming, they can unquestionably create an endless legend.

Store House: Networking as another way to survive.

Another long-standing small theater, this was founded by Mr. Shingo Kimura. He once opened a studio in Nerma-ku in 1984 and named it after his theater group, Shichitensha. Ten years later, he started the Store House theater studio in Ekoda, but it was closed down in 2009 because of the inadequate fire escape. The space was instead used as a rehearsal room. The STORE House theater space was once again opened in June 2011, in the underground portion of a building in Ueno. Its major income comes from space rentals from the theaters in Ueno and Ekoda, and from the theater as institution. Apart from these, it receives government grants for some theater activities.
What has made Mr. Kimura a longstanding theater person is, partially, his having continual work, ranging from directing his physical-based play, to doing performances in many countries, giving acting classes, and holding international festivals. All these activities connect him with people and yield beneficial results.

The most serious difficulty in running theater space is the high tax rate, he confessed. Mr. Kimura suggests that space owners should form a group and call for a tax reduction for non-profit theaters. But this is not expected to happen because of the absence of an official connection among the 30 theater spaces. There is, in reality, only a personal level of relationship between them.

7. Small theaters founded and run by government or private organizations.

Theater Green, a temple theater: Since theater arts could bring about a virtuous society.

Not far from east of the Ikebukuro subway station is a small path called Theater Green Road. It is considered a theater complex, comprising three small studios in one place. This has influenced the development of the Toshima-ku area a lot. There are two extremely different groups of residents living in this area: the Tokyo upper-class patricians and the immigrants from all walks of life, including Thai people. Theater Green, founded by monastic monks, has been existing in Ikebukuro for more than 40 years.

After the Second World War, Ikebukuro fell into decadence with homeless people and criminals abounding. Yasunari Asahina, a monk from Sengyoji temple east of Ikebukuro, initiated art activities in the nearby community, in the belief that art was capable of purifying people’s minds and healing the area. Theater was one of those activities. At the start, the artists used the temple as a rehearsal space, but this caused annoyance to the neighbors; hence, the monk built a space within the temple area as a replacement.

Besides the rehearsal room, the building also consisted of a small theater inside. In 2003, the building was knocked down as it grew so ruined with the passage of time. A new six-storey building with three small theater spaces was once again opened in 2005 under a new director, a monk named Asahina Bunsui, who is the son of Asahina. This young and energetic monk also has the same mission of creating an ideal society through the art of theater. With his long, continual and considerable effort to carry out the mission, Theater Green has undeniably become a time-honored and a significant model for other small theaters in Tokyo.

To expand its audience, the space holds a constant theater festival, to which the attending theater groups bring more fans. As the space does not have any regular members, more efforts in raising income are not necessary.

The monk Asahina dreams of seeing some more temples in Japan shifting their main focus to theater activities. There are thousands of temples in Japan, but only four to five of them support theater. Asahina wishes that, one day, people would, as a priority, prefer watching theater performances to movies during their spare time.

Oji Theater: Step board for young theater artists

With 80 to 100 seats, this 8 x11 x 5.2 m space hosts 45 productions a year. Located in OJI since 1998, it is run by Sato Denki, a small electronic private company. The company is an award-winning one, bagging the Mesena Award five years ago. This award once went to the huge company Toyota.

Besides funding from the company, Oji Theater’s income also comes from the annual membership fees of its 40 members who enjoy such membership privileges as unlimited access to every show all year round, and being part of curating processes twice a year.

Oji Theater is the place where young theater artists strive to perform, despite its highly rated rental. It has proven popular as a path to success in a theater career because of its high standard of curation processes and its being a center of attention among the press and critics.
Mr. Satoru Tameyama, the Artistic Director of this space since its opening, said that in accordance with the space’s image of being a pathway to success, he has to ensure that the featured works must be outstanding. These need not be the best nor need they have the best director, but the work must be developable as to become striking. Each year, he watches around 200 to 250 plays to ensure that he does not miss a distinguished work of the youngsters.

Before opening the space, he spent 15 years merging efforts with the network of critics with which he has since developed a very close relationship. These critics regularly help release previews and reviews about his theater.

Apart from watching new plays, he spends most of his time writing and reviewing the works of the young directors invited. He also constantly remains in touch with critics, directors, and art directors, meeting up with them once in a while. Although he could do this more easily through an online social network, he believes that “Words from mouths are much more valued than information from websites”.

8. The Japan Director’s Association

The Japan Director’s Association was established in 1960 with a view to becoming a medium to unite Japanese directors of all generations, enhancing their social, economic and artistic status, and establishing a network between them. In 2012, the Association had approximately 600 members, of which 60 were professional theater groups. The executive board is composed of seven invited individuals qualified in the field and another 14 chosen via voting. A board member’s work is voluntary as it comes without a regular salary, but with wages depending on each project. I had a chance to meet some of the board members like Mr. Yoshio Wada, the chief director (Rakuten-dan Theater Group); Yoji Aoi, Vice Chairman (Company One Corporation Theater Group); and Show Ryusanji, Vice Chairman (Ryuzanji Theater Group).

The head office is located in the same building as NNNT Drama Studio, a school formerly located in West Shinjuku. The space consists of a workroom, a meeting room, and a studio for holding workshops and theater activities. It is considered a practical place for young directors to exchange experiences and for a variety of such international activities as the Japan-Korea Director’s Conference.

It can be said that The Director’s Association brings about prosperity and security to the profession. It also helps improve the craft’s development and creates a network among contemporary artists, through which a society under the government’s support is formed, just like those of other well-respected professions. Besides, it provides members equal rights and inspires artists to exert greater effort toward professional creativity.

9. Performing Arts Producer Networking in Japan

During my one year stay in Japan, I interviewed many small theater owners about creating their connection network. Most of them found it unnecessary, since it might require excessive work. In their opinions, the spaces were capable of supporting themselves without relying on external aid. A number of the theaters in Tokyo are another factor that creates a competitive situation, especially with regard to the limited government grants. They experience competition more than they do cooperation as a network. However, there do exist some kindhearted theaters that help each other when necessary, just as friends in a tiny little community do. An obvious assistance is that they help distribute posters and leaflets of other theater spaces at their front desks. They also release theater news of their allied theater groups.

Just two days before I came back to Thailand, I had a chance to meet a former actor and playwright, Mr. Satoshi Kawagoshi. He is a member of a small theater group and has been working as a producer in Osaka for five years. The 40-year old Mr. Satoshi brought me good news about the network to be established among theater producers within the year.

After the massive earthquake hit the northeastern part of Japan in March 2011, causing the collapses...
of electrical lines, telephone and subway systems in Tokyo City to darken and freeze for many hours, several play productions were postponed, while some were cancelled. One problem that arose as a result was the handling of expenses forthcoming and the issuance of refunds for purchased tickets. The New National Theater finally came up with problem-solving mechanisms and gave refunds to all audiences. This range of occurrences taught a group of theater producers to reconsider the matter of creating a connection network among themselves, apparently for solving what problems might arise in the future.

Also, some producers of small theaters sensed the lack of a new group of theater audiences in the forthcoming years because, while Japan has the oldest life expectancy rate, it has a very low life expectancy at birth. Moreover, the radiation leak as a consequence of the March 2011 earthquake is expected to result in a significant rise in child mortality in the 10 years following. Still, those producers believe that the theater artists will be pursuing their work no matter what happens.

In 2008, there was an attempt to establish an international scale connection network among Japanese producers. To be called the “Tokyo Performing Arts Market” (TPAM), this turned out to be unsuccessful since there was very little response to its marketing during the recent economic crisis. The project was then changed to the Tokyo Performing Arts Meeting.

This was another effort to create a theater producer’s connection for which Mrs. Maruoka Hiromi from TPAM created a model, whereby three groups were joined together and representatives, including a new generation producer aged 30-40 years. Then, the group had to find specific sustainability methods for theater arts in Japan. This project has been well supported by Saison Foundation with Mrs. Hisano Atsuko’s backing, for the approval of the first three years of fundamental funding. This project has a temporary name: “Japan Performing Arts Producers Network”.

The network setup processes during the initial period consist of:

1. Setting up a selection committee team made up of 10 new generation producers from all over the country. This initiative for network integration will bring a more concrete direction and policy towards sustainability issues for theater arts. The brainstorming process is being discussed among the selected groups on the way to policy outcomes and a membership handbook, whose completion is assumed to take place by July 2012. The committees have the right to meet up with the government directly, without any re-examination from such senior artists who have bargaining power over the government. This conception will strengthen the power of the team rather than an individual person.

2. Fundraising for project management by requesting donations from the network instead of asking the government for contributions. This self-supporting mechanism is more stable and sustainable than government’s help. Moreover, it brings the real feeling of ownership among the producer-members.

3. The structure is made up of a so-called horizontal organizational structure, in which every committee is equally treated. The policies are managed by the secretariat. The overall structure is not a typical system based on the preference of those with the most number of years of service at the place. Committee members are selected from among the new generation producers, who have time to contribute to the project. There is also a provision of wages for all of them. Such senior producers or renowned artists, who have bargaining power but do not have time to devote to the endeavor, are not preferred. This stipulation would make the project effective in real circumstances and could keep the seniority system at bay.

Although only recently established, this network connection has a good strategic vision. It has made me look back at the 11 years of Bangkok Theater Network’s existence. I realized that our
The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows

network has grown by moderate movements forward, and it has been structured through a similar strategic model as the Japanese one. Our network also avoids being dependent on government’s help and would rather do the fundraising among the members. Despite the small amount of money we can gather, the ownership and the feeling of ownership are successfully created. Although our network structure was initially established with a renowned person as chief, the internal structure has been a horizontal organizational one consisting of 11 regular members. These core members serve as the decision-making board in charge of policy management. By managing this, they will heed advice from the irregular members and the university members. And then, at the final stage, the secretariat office, run by myself, will take further action based on the selected policy. This kind of structure model is quite unfamiliar to our country, though, and may be somewhat incomprehensible to other people and the members themselves. Then again, everything needs time to become perfect.

The obvious difference between theater network development in Japan and Thailand is that theaters primarily depend on the support of non-governmental cultural organizations, while we are totally self-supporting. In addition, according to their social and cultural context, the Japanese audiences are better prepared to support theater arts—there may not be too many of them, but they are also not too few. In contrast, the size of the audience in Thai society is very small.

Over the past 11 years, the Bangkok Theater Network has made quite significant strides forward, but what we still lack is the sustainability of the small theaters. Moreover, the network committees, especially the secretariat, are still needed for each term. Such committees from society and the press must be accepted according to their “position as stated by the network structure”, rather than based on their reputation. If one day we could really strive to achieve this structural model, our network will be considered one of the first successful structured networks in this crippled unstructured country.

10. Information databases and public relations.

Although small-space theaters in Tokyo are not a moneymaking business, public relations need to be provided in order to persuade the public to keep in contact with them and maintain their acceptance in the existence of theater art. This is why information databases and public relations are essential.

Website

This source provides a basic and necessary database; it makes information easy to find. Such a website that systematically gathers all small theater news in Tokyo is available, but is mostly written in Japanese. This monolingual webpage has much more significance for local audiences than for international ones, just like small theaters have in many countries.

Documents, magazines and journals about small theaters

Leaflets, books, and magazines containing theater information are necessarily available, both free of charge and for sales. Some government and private organizations have launched an annual journal with a collection of statistics and theater information, critiques and a review of the general situation. Scripts and play analysis papers are also published. This publishing of news provides not only overall information, but is also a significant record for theater art’s existence.

Play posters

This kind of printed media is always seen in public, even in a big city like Tokyo, where commercial plays claim superiority.

Leaflets

This is the most popular printed matter. It is distributed in every theater, put on the audience’s seats, and can be taken home or given to friends. It is such a personal level of spreading the news. In every theater, a pile of leaflets from a variety of play productions is available. Apart from being
an important printed form of media, leaflets are also considered as theater souvenirs and records of each theater production.

11. Funding and government support

Government funding is available to support theater activities such as play production, for work study, in the form of loans for investment, awards, competitions for unique works, and theater festivals. All these play a very important role in sustaining contemporary theater arts and all of the small theaters in this country.

Government support has its own advantages and disadvantages. It could give opportunities to create more theater works without any financial distractions. But it could also create a more competitive situation among artists and impose limitations on their work’s contents.

Inspiration and direction for the development of contemporary theater towards the ideal society

Lessons and experiences I learned from this visit could be adapted and expanded as knowledge for our small-spaced theater’s development in Bangkok. These lessons could be summed up as follows:

1. Promoting the artist network and the spaces is necessary to make the proceedings flow within the group. This would cause contemporary theater in the small theater community to grow significantly so that bargaining power, in terms of policy negotiations, would be enhanced.

2. Holding a forum / activity could increase support from the public sectors, government organizations, private groups and institutions that could help in the upkeep of the art of contemporary theater. So could initiating basic structures for its sustainability such as public theaters, museums and libraries about theater, grants for small theater spaces to host activities, grants to support festivals and other similar projects. This would eventually lessen the need for help from our incompetent government.

The most urgent requirement is to set up an information center for contemporary theater or a kind of Thai theater museum, which could be supported by either government or private organizations.

This kind of information center would make information and theater news accessible to all audiences. And that kind of theater museum would create a more concrete image for theater art as one of our national art forms. This would finally bring us a feeling of possession and pride, from which the sustainability of theater art would grow by leaps and bounds.

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
Linking the Movements of the Urban Poor in ASEAN and Japan to Create Land and Housing Justice

Abbhayuth Chanrabha

Introduction

This paper summarizes the results of my research with urban poor movements in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan, which I conducted as an API Fellow from July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012. The paper is divided into three parts, detailing first the problems of insecure housing and evictions stemming from the dominant neoliberal model of development experienced by the urban poor in all four countries; then the creative responses to these problems devised by the urban poor themselves, who are struggling to build a better future; and finally, my approach to linking the urban poor movements in each country with each other in order to create a form of ‘grassroots globalization’ carrying the potential to counter the injustices of neoliberalism through concrete joint action based upon genuine solidarity of the urban poor.

Neoliberal development: The root of the problems of land and housing injustice

Eviction of Slums in the Philippines

The Philippines is a country in Asia that has rather large economic and social disparities. A concrete example illustrating this fact is the number of urban poor living in settlements that are unfit for human habitation. According to official statistics, there are as many as 14 million urban poor in the Philippines. In the area of Metro Manila alone, there are around 558,800 urban poor families, or more than 3 million people living in slums.

Aside from economic problems stemming from having to earn a livelihood as labor in the informal sector, the problem of not having access to basic services and having to tap electricity and water from third parties at high prices, and lacking physical upgrading of communities, it may be said that the problem of evictions is an important problem of slum dwellers in the Philippines.

At the beginning of the 1970s, during the Marcos era, there were around 30,000 slum families living in the Tondo slum along the Manila Bay. These families were targeted for eviction due to a project of the Philippine government to expand the port. But by setting up a system of mass struggle, the slum dwellers of Tondo were able to build up negotiating power with the government.

The slum dwellers came together to establish ZOTO, or Zone One Tondo Organization, in order to resist eviction. With the support of the Philippine Ecumenical Committee for Community Organization (PECCO), ZOTO used community organizing as the primary means of organizing the people and mobilized on the issue of housing rights until they achieved victory. The Philippine government had to allocate 430 hectares in and close to Tondo for a relocation project to accommodate around 30,000 slum families.

After toppling the Marcos dictatorship through people’s power in 1986, the government of President Corazon Aquino rewarded the urban poor for their role in the struggle for democracy by allocating land on the original location to the SAMA-SAMA community and squatters in Taguig, Metro Manila. But after that, President Aquino let the market mechanism take over in determining the disposition of the urban land of the poor.

Even though the urban poor movement, under the banner of the Urban Land Reform Task Force, and the civil society sector, such as the Bishops-Businessmen’s Conference, as well as Cardinal Jaime Sin, helped each other in pushing for the House of Representatives to pass the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), which was then signed into law by President Aquino in 1992, compromise with capitalist groups and the free market mechanism turned UDHA into a law that did not serve the purpose of urban land reform for Philippine slum dwellers. In the
end, slum dwellers were still frequently evicted to distant areas outside of the city. UDHA has a loophole for evictions without having to wait for a court order in the case of communities residing in areas that the state considers to be danger zones, public places, or areas where infrastructure projects will be constructed.

Therefore, even though there is an Urban Development and Housing Act, Filipino slum dwellers are still faced with evictions and resettlement to areas outside of the city. It might be said that the important force causing slum evictions in Metro Manila is the neoliberal development model, which emphasizes large-scale investment by the private sector and urban beautification to make livable cities.

In 2007, the Chairman of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Bayani Fernando, was excessively committed to removing slums from the city. Communities residing alongside canals, rivers, and roadways were put under pressure for their buildings to be demolished and the inhabitants moved.

Urban Poor Associates monitored the situation and found that from 2004 to 2008, more than 90,000 slum families living along the railway had their houses demolished and were relocated to resettlement areas outside of the city in order to make way for the North Rail-South Rail Linkage Project, which has become notorious for corruption and, in mid-2012, had not yet moved forward in implementation.

There were also communities that were likely to be evicted in 2012 such as R-10 Community and Delpan Community. In R-10 Community, close to the Port of Navotas, more than 1,500 families were being notified by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) that they must demolish their homes and move away to make way for a road widening project, even though the DPWH could modify its plan and construct the project on the opposite side without having an impact on the community.

In Manila, Delpan Community, which has been located on the Pasig River for over 20 years, received a notice of eviction from the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, because the government wants to beautify this area.

Urban development of the elites and the impact on the poor in Indonesia

After the end of the Second World War and the declaration of Indonesian independence in 1945, Jakarta and big provincial cities became a magnet, attracting people who were trying to escape rural poverty by going to the city to find work as laborers.

UN-Habitat analyzed the urban population growth in Indonesia and found that “In Indonesia it has grown from 20 percent of the total population in 1975, to 40 percent today, constituting about 90 million people. By 2025, our research projects that 60 percent of all Indonesians will be living in towns and cities”.

Rapid rural-to-urban migration eventually resulted in the problem of a shortage of housing. When workers from rural areas were unable to find any land of their own in the city due to high prices, they had little choice other than to pioneer settlements on plots of land that were not being used, such as reclaiming coastal areas and swamp land, subdividing unused lots, plots in public spaces along railway tracks, canals, rivers, roads and under bridges.

According to estimates by the Urban Poor Consortium, there are approximately 877,190 families living in slums in Jakarta, or around 3 million people. At the national level, data from 2009 indicates that Indonesia has as many as 8 million people living in slums.

The community settlements in which these slum households live are not recognized, and hence remain excluded from the government’s official urban development plan, even though as early as 1968, then President Suharto initiated the Kampung Improvement Program specifically in order to physically upgrade urban communities,
such as by building roads and footpaths and laying drainage pipes. However, because this program emphasized physical improvements in the environment rather than giving secure land rights to urban communities, many times, “upgraded settlements were later demolished in favor of new business and commercial facilities”.4

The economic growth of Indonesia in the 1970s that began with the rise in oil prices on the global market resulted in large-scale investment in land and construction. By the 1980s, the real estate sector had greatly expanded, facilitated by the easing of financial banking regulations and the expansion of the middle class.

This situation led to the hoarding of land for speculative purposes in the 1990s, especially in Jakarta, where speculators held 40 percent of all land in the central part of the city.5

Liberal economic development, combined with a vision of the elite that demanded modern urban development, became the main factors causing urban land use conflict between the state and business interests, on the one hand, and slum dwellers, on the other, leading eventually to the eviction and demolition of slum communities.

In the opinion of Sutiyoso, the Governor of Jakarta from 1997 to 2007, “The Regional Government for the district of Jakarta holds the mandate to create a capital city which is orderly, safe, comfortable, clean and beautiful, so that Jakarta is representative of a capital city. However, the regional government faces the obstacle of unhindered urbanization and it is mostly the people with social welfare problems who obstruct the [public order laws]. Because of that, the regional government has chosen the means of law enforcement”.6

The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights has found that from 2001 to 2003, 10,321 urban poor households, or approximately 50,000 people, were adversely affected by evictions that took place in Jakarta.7

Furthermore, Human Rights Watch, which has collected data on the eviction of communities in Jakarta that took place from 2001 to 2006, has found that “[t]he government has used excessive force to conduct the evictions and failed to provide alternative housing or other assistance to the displaced”.8

The eviction and demolition of slum communities did not just occur in Jakarta. The urban poor in various other large cities were also confronted with this phenomenon. Surabaya is the second largest city in Indonesia. In 2002, the Mayor of Surabaya evicted communities along the Wonokromo River in order to beautify the areas alongside the river. This eviction caused hundreds of urban poor households to be displaced and dispersed from their original location.

Makassar, a provincial city in southern Sulawesi, was full of eviction problems because it was a target of capitalist groups that were grabbing land away from the poor. Karuwisi Community was evicted by a private individual in 2004 after the High Court issued a verdict against the people. Thirty-five families had lived there together for more than 30 years, having purchased the land from the original settlers. But the fact that they had pioneered the land was meaningless in the absence of legal documents that could be submitted to the court.

For the poor in Makassar, the nightmare did not end there, since many other communities were forced to follow in the footsteps of Karuwisi. Lepping, Bontuduri, Kasikasi, Bontoala, and Bulogading are all poor people’s settlements over which private parties are trying to claim ownership. Some of them are now already in court, and if one considers the fate of Karuwisi, it seems that the community’s chances of winning in these cases are not very high.

Lampung is a seaside city in southern Sumatra. But on the beach that stretches 27 kilometers long, the peace and quiet, livelihoods of fisherfolk, and contentment of the communities are disappearing. This is because the local government and foreign capital are pushing for their Waterfront City Project which, if implemented, will change the face of Lampung into an economic zone and tourist city.
At present, many land development companies are claiming possession rights over land along the coast, which is where the communities are settled. If they are not demolished and removed, it is truly difficult to imagine where the original settlements of the poor could be inserted along the seaside that will be full of commercial centers, business districts and entertainment areas in the future.

Based on the above-mentioned information, it might be concluded that the problems of land grabbing and evictions are still the number one enemy of the urban poor in Indonesia.

The violation of housing rights of the urban poor in Malaysia

The history of the urban poor in Malaysia goes back as far as the post-Second World War period after Malaysia received its independence from Britain in 1957. With Kuala Lumpur as the government administrative center and the commercial and industrial center of the country, the capital became a magnet attracting people into the city.

In addition, the ethnic conflicts between the Malays, Chinese and Indians that led to the bloody race riots in May 1969 was another factor that resulted in moving people into the city, since the Malaysian government adopted a policy to have rural Malays move into urban areas in order to create an ethnic balance in the population of the large cities.9

Therefore, Kuala Lumpur and the large cities became destinations for putting down new roots. But the number of homes was insufficient. Land in the city and houses, both for purchase and for rent, were expensive. The newcomers therefore had to struggle to find their own housing. Some set up houses in communities that already existed, while others pioneered new settlements in vacant areas, most of which were located on state-owned land.

The squatters formed local branches of the ruling parties, and were protected by these parties and provided with facilities like water, electricity, health and education.10 When their lives began to settle down, the communities of the urban poor gradually began to form and became a resource base for labor to develop the modern economy of Malaysia.

According to data from 2001, the urban poor in Malaysia numbered between one and two million people, or 5-10 percent of the country’s total population at the time. Because the existence of this group of the poor played a role in helping build up urban prosperity and economic growth for Malaysia, they enjoy a status as “urban pioneers”. This definition is accepted among community organizers, who began using the term to refer to urban poor communities since the 1990s.

But for the ruling class, the term “urban pioneers” was meaningless. The urban poor were like pawns on a chessboard, who were sent to create economic prosperity. But once the city grew, land became expensive and investment waited ahead, the pioneers lost their value and had to make way for the interests of the capitalists, which came in the form of the discourse of development.

Or put more simply, urban poor communities were often forcibly evicted when the government and investors wanted to implement commercial development projects.

Mahatir Mohamad became the prime minister of Malaysia in 1981 and held power up until 2003. The goal of this leader was for Malaysia to build up and achieve economic might in the ASEAN region. Therefore, the city was a base for trade, investment and industry.

In the 1990s, the need to eliminate squatter areas became an important policy of Mahatir, especially in the areas under the jurisdiction of Kuala Lumpur City Hall and the Selangor State government. This was to open the way for all kinds of commercial projects that were waiting to be implemented.

A large number of hotels and condominiums appeared. The Petronas Towers were built in order to declare the country’s material progress. Road expansion projects and railway track-laying projects popped up around the city. Added to the cost of construction of the new city Putrajaya and the
investment in communications technology such as the Cyber City project, the total budget used came to US$ 32 billion.

However, this development path represented an insult to human dignity. Even though these various projects costing hundreds of billions of ringgit were the direct cause of the eviction of urban poor communities, the Malaysian government claimed it did not have enough budget to arrange for the resettlement of the evictees.

The case of Jinjang in Kuala Lumpur and Rawang in Selangor State concretely reflect the aforementioned problem. These two locations are temporary resettlement areas for people evicted due to railway projects in the early 1990s. Residents have had to live in temporary long houses in both locations for 20 years (1992 to present), even though the government promised it would only have them live in this temporary housing for six months to two years, after which it would arrange from them to move into low cost flats, which they would rent to own, thereby gaining secure housing.

The problem of the homeless in Japan

The origin of the problem of homelessness

It is generally accepted that homelessness became a social problem during the 1990s. Changes in the socioeconomic structure created factors of insecurity in many areas. In turn, these factors of insecurity are all causes of the problem of homelessness in Japan.

1. Factors of job insecurity

Survey results from 2003 found that construction, manufacturing and services are typical occupations taken by people immediately before they become homeless. More than 50 percent of the respondents were, inter alia, engaged in construction-related business immediately before they became homeless. The survey found that more than half of the homeless people were former “daily employees”, or “temporary employees and part-timers”, which means that in the process of falling into homelessness, their status in employment had deteriorated and become unstable.11

After the bubble economy burst, construction companies have switched from employing laborers from the Yoseba (Yoseba is the open air day labor market in large cities in Japan) to others such as illegal workers or students, who are employed directly or through magazine advertisements. Therefore the decline of the employment function of the Yoseba has resulted in rough sleepers massing in and around the Yoseba.12

2. Factors of housing insecurity

The government expects most people to get houses in the housing market by themselves and does little to provide public welfare housing for people who are not able to get housing on the housing market.13

The amount of public housing is low, and there are strict criteria for eligibility for public housing, which means few people can access it. These conditions are in line with results of a 2003 survey, which specified that most respondents (805 or 37.5 percent) lived in “privately-owned rented accommodation”, followed by 299 (13.9 percent) who lived in “laborer’s lodgings”, and 297 people (13.8 percent) who lived in “dormitories and company-run houses”—arrangements where the user has to vacate the room on leaving the company. Hence it can be said that a number of homeless people were in an unstable housing condition before becoming homeless.14

3. Factors of family insecurity

The instability of family structures has been rising due to decreasing family size and an increasing rate of divorce.15

Decreasing household size has also resulted in a crisis of family care. These changes increased the numbers of people beginning to sleep “rough”.16

In summary, the reason for a person becoming homeless in Japan probably does not stem from any one single factor, but it is because they face
many problems at the same time such as losing a job, lack of support from family, or debt. Particularly, a poor financial state drives them to be homeless.17

However, the various factors that lead to a person becoming homeless are all structural issues. Therefore, the problem of homelessness in Japan is a direct product of socioeconomic change.

The point of view of the state and solutions that do not get to the root of the problem

The Japanese central and local governments began to be interested in the problem of homelessness in the early 1990s. However, the point of the view of the state sector on this matter does not reflect an understanding of the socioeconomic structural change in Japan, which is the underlying cause of the problem.

Therefore, the various policies and measures that have emerged more importance on moving the homeless out of public spaces than solving the problem at its origins, whether unemployment, job insecurity, insufficient public housing, or family problems.

In Tokyo from 1992-1997, the homeless were managed by evicting them from public areas; especially when the homeless spread from Sanya, on the northeast of Tokyo, to Shinjuku Station and other business areas.18

But after the eviction of around 200 homeless people from Shinjuku Station in 1996 ended in violence, the public criticized the Tokyo Metropolitan Government’s (TMG’s) solution to the problem. As a result, the state sector had to change its method of solving the problem.

In November 2000, the TMG initiated a program to establish a Supporting Self-Reliance Center (Jiritsu shien), whereby the goal was to get the homeless to come in and use the center to prepare themselves to go out and work and lead a self-reliant life. The center had a process to screen the homeless who had the ability to work and provided advice on finding work. However, it was not as successful as expected. Of the 4,652 who entered the Jiritsu shien center, only 2,152 persons or 51 percent found jobs. The homeless supporters who followed up the group shared that these persons only got part-time jobs in which the pay could not cover apartment rent.19

Later, measures to solve the problem of homelessness were elevated into a law. In August 2002, the Law Concerning Special Measure to Support the Self-Reliance of the Homeless was passed by the Japanese parliament. The law was designed to have local governments find measures to help the homeless become self-reliant, with the central government providing budgetary support. However, this law has been criticized for being a tool to evict the homeless from public spaces.

Article 11 of the Law allows the manager of any public institution/facility, such as municipal government and public park, to take necessary actions to protect the facilities for appropriate use. It means that this law allows public authorities to evict the homeless for “appropriate use” according to their own definition.20

Intent on preserving order and a beautiful city, the TMG came up with a new measure in 2004 to increase the efficiency with which the homeless could be evicted from public spaces. This measure was the Cheap Apartment Policy, which aimed to demolish the tents of the homeless in five main public parks in Tokyo. With this policy, the TMG coordinated with non-profit organizations to arrange for the allocation of apartments with rental rates of approximately 50,000 yen per month for the homeless for a period of two years, whereby the homeless would have to pay monthly rent of 3,000 yen, and after two years, be responsible for paying the full rental rate by themselves. Moreover, during the first six months, the TMG would find work for the homeless.

However, there is a serious criticism with this program. Some think that the real objective of the government to move homeless people from the parks was to maintain the cleanliness of the parks rather than to lift their quality of life.21
In interviewing a TMG official, the researcher found that the TMG did not dare to assert that the Cheap Apartment Policy was a success and had no statistical data indicating the number of homeless people who could pay their apartment rent by themselves after the first two years. The TMG official only said that this program was able to reduce the number of homeless people in public parks.

The policies and measures to solve the problem of homelessness in Japan fail to place importance on solving the problem at its origins. There has been no implementation of the provision of employment, employment guarantees, or low cost state housing programs. Instead, the various policies and measures are merely tools used to evict the homeless from public spaces in the name of order, beauty and livability of the city.

The response from below: Actions by the urban poor to demand land and housing justice.

Advocating for on-site upgrading and in-city relocation in Metro Manila

In order to bring about genuine urban land reform in Philippine society, Task Force Anti-Eviction, which was established in 2007 through the coming together of COPE, UPA, COM and the people's organizations in their work areas, has campaigned and mobilized to stop the eviction of communities and demand that the government arrange housing in the city for the poor, whereby it might be construction on the original site, or finding in-city resettlement areas for the construction of housing projects.

The Task Force Anti-Eviction reached an important breakthrough in the period during the presidential election campaign in 2010, when they joined together with many other urban poor organizations and established the Urban Poor Alliance (UP-All) to demand that presidential candidate Noynoy Aquino sign a covenant with the poor on the issue of policy, to solve the problems of the urban poor.

On 6 March 2010, more than 10,000 slum dwellers packed into the Delpan Sports Center. Their ten demands were handed over to Noynoy to sign. These demands included proposals to stop evictions, create land security by building on-site housing, and in-city relocation.

When the poor work hard, it is difficult for politicians to campaign irresponsibly. After being elected president, the Urban Poor Alliance followed up by holding Noynoy to his promise, leading to a meeting with the president on 23 December 2010.

On 10 August 2011, the policy on constructing on-site housing and in-city relocation became clearer when President Aquino announced the provision of 50 billion pesos in budgetary support for a five-year housing project for 100,000 slum families in Metro Manila.

For 2011-12, the government authorized a budget of 10 billion pesos for 20,000 slum families residing in danger areas, such as alongside canals or rivers. The budget was set to support housing projects in pilot areas in three cities, namely Manila, Quezon City, and Pasay, and the Department of Interior and Local Government was to take the lead in coordinating with people's organizations and NGO groups.

With the policy proclaimed and the budget arriving, what remained to be done was to make people's settlement plans that can be submitted to the government for approval.

The process of making settlement plans begins with gathering the views of the people regarding their housing needs, such as the characteristics of the houses they want to have, the physical environment, and flood prevention mechanisms.

One community that was considered to have a rather complete settlement plan was San Miguel, Barangay 412, Zone 42, which is situated on a limited area alongside a canal. Together with Palafox Associates, residents of San Miguel designed new two and three-story model houses to accommodate
approximately 128 resident households. Implementation would involve a budget for construction of around 282,000 pesos per unit, which would be repaid by the residents at a rate of 940 pesos per month for 30 years.

However, it is not the case that the path of the disadvantaged is smooth now that they are designing their settlements. In 2012, the Philippine National Housing Authority was also busy with presenting its settlement plan to the government. Its plan proposed only resettlement, involving the construction of five-storey medium-rise buildings with 24 square meter units. The average cost per unit is 500,000 pesos, which would be repaid over 30 years.

In addition, the local government’s approach to solving the problem appears to be in opposition to the national government’s policy. According to a report in the Philippine Inquirer dated 5 November 2011, Quezon City had a plan to demolish the houses of more than 4,000 slum families living alongside canals and rivers and near roads, and relocate them to Montalban in Rizal Province and San Jose del Monte in Bulacan Province, which are both outside of Metro Manila.

The question is therefore to what extent will the Philippine government’s policy to construct on-site housing and have in-city relocation be possible in practice? This is still an obstacle that blocks the way.

However, slum dwellers who are committed to the principle of housing rights will not just wait around to be given directions by the state. Instead, they will try to determine their own future, a future that is built upon the foundation of land and housing justice. As declared by Filomena G. Cinco, Chairperson of San Miguel Community, Barangay 412 Zone 42, “If the president will not allow us, we will not allow this to happen. We will mobilize, we will let the government know this is what the people want. We will make the media to be heard. This is what the people want. We want this housing project to come into reality”.

Alternatives to solve the problem of housing of the urban poor in Indonesia

Suharso Monoafa, the former Minister of Public Housing, has stated in an interview that “in 2009, Indonesia had 8 million homeless families, families who had no proper health care and housing. With the assumption of building 500,000 houses for them per annum it would take 16 years to provide poor families with modest living quarters”.22

Nevertheless, in regard to this situation, Suharso Monoafa proclaimed the commitment of the government to resolve this matter, stating, “The government’s target was to make 30 percent of Indonesian cities free from slums by 2019”.23 According to Suharso, the plan for the construction of housing for the poor was in accordance with the work plan that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono initiated in 2007, which stipulated that within five years (2007-2012), the government would support the construction of 1,000 high-rise buildings containing low cost flats to serve as housing for the urban poor, whereby the government would provide a subsidy for the value-added tax.24

However, relocating the poor in slums to low-cost flats in high-rise buildings allocated by the government may not be a very smooth solution, because this approach negatively affects the way of life of the poor, both economically and socially.

A report by the organization LOCOA on a visit to communities relocated to government flats in Marunda in 2009 states,

“This resident, who operates a small kiosk in the open space on the ground floor below her building, Blok Bawal, was one of only about 25 families out of a total of around 1,000 families who used to live in a community called Warakas, under the tollway, who voluntarily accepted relocation to Marunda in 2006. Of the 25 families from Warakas that moved to Marunda, only ten remain here today. The fact that so few poor families remain in Marunda reflects the overall non-viability of the site as an adequate relocation area, as there are no
livelihoods in the area, no schools or medical facilities, and insufficient transportation alternatives for those who do not own their own vehicle”.25

The negative socioeconomic impact on slum community residents resulting from relocation to low-cost government flats has created no small degree of concern on the part of the administration, as reflected in the opinion of Fauzi Bowo, the Governor of Jakarta who, in reference to the relocation of communities along the Ciliwung River to flats currently being constructed by the government, stated, “We will study a number of aspects in conducting resettlement and the administration would do its best to minimize damage or disruption to the resident’s jobs and schooling”.26

However, in regard to the solution to the problem of housing, it is not certain whether the urban poor in Indonesia are thinking in the same way as what the government is proposing for them.

At a meeting to keep abreast of the situation of relocation of communities along the Ciliwung River in Sanggar on 15 February 2012, there were residents from Bukit Duri RT 05, 06, 07, 08, RW 012, and Kampung Pulo RT 09, 10, 11 RW 03 in attendance. Some of them expressed the following views:27

“The government thinks our communities are illegal, so it wants us to move”.

“My life is here. The people have helped to develop the area and make roads. I don’t want to move to anywhere else”.

“If we move to a flat, we won’t have any land and will have to pay rent. Our land is here. We want to live here. We want to upgrade our community”.

“Living in a flat, you have to pay high expenses, rent, water, electricity and transportation. We will pay less if we stay here”.

“We can upgrade our houses so that there is a high space under every house that can be used as a communal area, and when it floods, we will be able to stay here”.

Aside from Jakarta, communities in other cities also have alternative recommendations to solve the problem of housing. With the coordination of Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), various urban poor organizations have adopted approaches and taken action to solve their own problems of land and housing.

In Surabaya, an organization of communities along the Surabaya River has been established called Paguyuban Warga Strenkali Suabaya (PWSS). Since 2003, with the support of UPC and civil society, such as universities in Surabaya, architects and lawyers, PWSS has undertaken many actions to make the local government accept the existence of communities along the riverside.

In line with the slogan “Relocation: no/ Renovation: yes” that rejected demolition and resettlement and proposed the alternative of onsite upgrading of communities, PWSS gathered information about the establishment of community settlements, made alternative plans, and also mobilized in a campaign to get the government to accept its proposal.

In addition, they took action to upgrade their settlements and the environment by shifting their houses inward from the riverside by five meters in order to clear this space for the development of public infrastructure and beautification by the community.

PWSS persuaded the government to see that demolishing and relocating communities creates tremendous loss, while the community upgrading approach is more worthwhile in many respects, such as saving on capital investment, as well as socioeconomically. This is because people live close to their place of work and hence have economic security. In addition, social relations are not disrupted and broken as they are when communities are demolished and relocated.
The efforts of PWSS finally resulted in the provincial legislature of East Java consenting to pass bylaw 9 in 2007, known as PERDA No. 9/2007, in order to enable communities along the riverside in Surabaya to carry out settlement and environmental upgrading within five years, after which an assessment would be conducted to determine whether these communities should be permitted to establish permanent settlements.

In Makassar, an urban poor organization called Komite Perjuangan Rakyat Miskin, or KPRM, has responded to land grabbing by capitalist groups. Their strategy was to reach a political agreement with the mayor before the election in 2008, in which the issue of stopping evictions was one important part of the deal.

After the election, they used the situation in Kampung Pisang Community, which was being evicted by a private individual, in order to hold the mayor to this agreement. On 29 August 2010, the mayor of Makassar, along with local government agencies, came to Kampung Pisang to listen to the proposal of the residents.

With the technical support of a group of architects, a new community plan was drafted for a space of 7,000 square meters out of the original area of 3.7 hectares. This plan was proposed as a concrete alternative for the mayor to take and negotiate with the private owner in order to share the land with the 33 resident families. As a result, at present, the owner has consented to the principle of land sharing, but in mid-2012 there was still no agreement on the size of the land.

Kendari is another city in Sulawesi that has concretely seen the poor engage in settlement upgrading on the original location.

Bungkutoko is a community along a bay that has been established for more than 30 years. Fifty-five families have rented land from the private owner and built houses on their own. Their occupation is buying fish from the fish port and taking it to hawk in communities.

The residents of Bungkutoko lived like this up until February 2011, when they discovered that the land owner was going to sell the land to an investor to build a container terminal and the community would have to be demolished and its inhabitants move away.

At first, the residents had many different views. Some wanted to find new land elsewhere, while others planned to move into rented rooms. But after receiving advice from Germis, the organization of the poor with which UPC is working, the residents of Bungutoko decided to come together as a group and negotiate with the state.

The residents of Bungkutoko proposed that the City of Kendari buy a plot of land for the community located not far away from the original location in order to carry out a new settlement project. By mobilizing, campaigning, coordinating and cooperating with the City of Kendari and the Ministry of Social Affairs, the proposal of the residents was finally accepted.

On the piece of land measuring 1.8268 hectares that the local government purchased and gave to the community, each family was to receive a 10 x 15 meter plot as well as budgetary support for housing construction from the Ministry of Social Affairs amounting to 10 million rupiahs per house. The people have set up a system of financial management themselves.

Construction of the new houses of the people of Bungkutoko was due to be completed in 2012. Therefore, this is another concrete case that UPC hopes will be a model for solving the problem of housing of the urban poor.

The advocacy of PERMAS for housing rights in Malaysia

The urban poor in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor State have come together to establish an organization called Persatuan Masyarakat Selangor of Wilayah (PERMAS) in order to protect the housing rights...
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of community residents. PERMAS has worked to organize communities, build grassroots leaders, hold training in human rights, as well as support resistance to the eviction of urban poor communities. The following accounts reflect one part of what PERMAS is doing.

Long Houses and the Distance Dream in Jinjang Settlement

Jinjang is an area that Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) arranged to serve as a resettlement area for urban poor communities in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor that were evicted due to a government railway construction project.

The first group of 1,600 families moved to the area in 1992, and occupied long houses that were built out of wood and low quality materials. The dream of the residents here is to gain the right to be able to rent-to-own low cost government flats, because DBKL had promised them that they would not have to live in the long houses for more than two years, and after that, everybody would be able to move into flats.

But the painful truth is that the temporary long houses have become the permanent residence of the people of Jinjang for the last 20 years, and the government project to build flats for the people has remained a distant dream for them. Therefore, in order to help them reclaim their human dignity, PERMAS has gone to work with Jinjang Community in demanding their housing rights.

On March 18, 2012, PERMAS held a forum to follow up on the solution to the problem of housing in Jinjang Community. They invited representatives of DBKL and the construction company to come and answer questions about the construction of the flats to accommodate the residents. At this forum, they reached the conclusion that the company would expedite the construction of the flats for the residents, who would rent-to-own at the price of 42,000 ringgit. However, the residents want the price to be 35,000 ringgit, so negotiations on this issue was likely to continue.

An Empty Promise in Rawang Community

When the government came up with a project to build double railway tracks, 229 railway families from Sungai Buluk were evicted and sent to live in temporary long houses in Rawang, Selangor State, beginning in January 1992.

The promise made by Selangor State to Rawang Community was that the people would only have to live in the long houses for six months. After that, the state would arrange for each family to be given a free plot of land measuring 40 x 60 feet, as well as develop the public infrastructure system for the community, whereby the people themselves would have to build their own houses. But after six months, Selangor State did not fulfil its promise. In 1995, the residents of Rawang followed up with Selangor State on the issue of land, but two years later, what they found was that Selangor State had a plan to construct low-cost housing to sell to the people at a price of 17,000 ringgit per unit.

Therefore, in August 1998, the residents went to negotiate with the Chief Executive of Selangor State in order to demand that the local government procure land for them in accordance with the promise made in 1992.

The conclusion reached was that there were two alternative solutions: for the residents who still insisted on their right to land, Selangor State would provide them with land; for the residents who wished to buy houses, they would have the right to buy low cost houses that the government would build. But this conclusion did not give way to an actual solution in practice.

In 2008, there was a political change when the opposition party won the elections and came to power in Selangor State. Consequently, the hopes of the residents of Rawang Community brightened once again. On 16 April 2008, community residents went to meet with the Chief Executive and signed a new memorandum of agreement with Selangor State on solving the land problem. There were signs that the dreams of the residents would be realized.
But who would have thought that political power could play games with the people to this extent? After almost four years under the administration of the former opposition party, the problem of the residents of Rawang Community had still not been solved in mid-2012.

On March 19, 2012, the residents of Rawang Community joined together to protest at the Office of the Selangor State Government in order to demand that the power holders procure land for them in accordance with the still unfilled promise made to them 20 years before.

The fate of urban pioneers in Kampung Sentul Railway and Bukitjaril

Kampung Sentul Railway has been an Indian settlement for 120 years. The first generation of residents were workers on the British colonial Malayan Railway. They pioneered land that was still jungle, or land that was abandoned mines and gradually built their homes, creating Indian Hindu communities. However, under capitalist development, the path of the urban pioneers often ended with evictions, and it looks as if Kampung Sentul Railway is about to meet this same fate.

On October 24, 2011, community residents received a legal notice from Yong Teck Lee Company advising them that they must vacate the area, as the company claimed that it possessed rights over the land and wanted to use it for commercial development.

In mid-2012, 31 families in Kampung Sentul Railway Community, who are the descendants of the first generation of residents, were joining together to resist the eviction. The case has now gone before the court for it to decide whether Young Teck Lee actually has rights over the railway land. Moreover, the residents are also demanding that DBKL open up negotiations and issue land title deeds to the people, since their ancestors were the original pioneers of Sentul Railway and were railway workers who played a role in creating economic prosperity for Malaysia for over 100 years.

In Bukitjaril, the fate of the residents is similar to Kampung Sentul Railway. This is because the 41 resident families, who used to be workers on the rubber plantation estate, where they also lived for around 80 years, are being evicted by the government, which wants to use the land as a Muslim cemetery.

The residents of Bukitjaril Community are not asking for anything more than social justice. As those who pioneered the land and were workers who devoted themselves to the Malaysian rubber industry for 80 years, the former workers and their families want to ask for land sharing, requesting only four acres out of the total area of 26 acres to use for a housing project. The government could use the remaining 22 acres for other development purposes.

Resisting evictions in Tokyo

From Miyashita Park to Mitake Park and the struggle of Nojiren

Nojiren, or the Shibuya Free Association for the Subsistence and Well-being of the Homeless, has been working with the homeless in the area of Shibuya Ward since the 1990s. When Shibuya Ward evicted the homeless from Miyashita Park in order to open the way for Nike Inc. to come and construct a Futsal pitch, a skateboard area and rock climbing wall in 2010, Nojiren joined together with the homeless to resist the eviction. Even though they were not able to hold off the eviction, in the end, Nojiren was able to persuade Shibuya Ward to arrange for the area next to Miyashita Park to be used by around 40 homeless people to set up tents in which to live.

Nojiren opposed the erection of a fence to close off the Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Hall in 2011, since it affected the homeless who lived in the area, and it set up a public kitchen there. More recently, in June 2012, Nojiren resisted the closure of Mitake Park, since the park closure would force ten homeless people to move from the area. In addition, Nojiren also resisted the eviction of homeless people from the underground parking garage of the Shibuya Ward Office.
In a press release issued in regard to these most recent cases, Nojiren stated, “We demand of the Shibuya Ward the following three items: (1) Immediately stop the process of removing the tents that belong to the homeless from the Mitake park; (2) Allow them to relocate within the park while the public work project can still go on; and (3) Re-open the underground parking lot so that the homeless people can rightfully regain access”.

Standing up to fight in Tatekawa

The eviction of homeless persons from Tatekawa River Bed Park (Tatekawa-Kasenjiki Park) in Tokyo's Koto Ward since January 27, 2012 was grounded in deceit and discrimination. The park's 60 residents have had to face a number of brutal evictions for the sake of local redevelopment and an “environmental clean-up” in line with the construction of Tokyo’s newest record-height tower, the Tokyo Sky Tree.

But the homeless in Tatekawa were not willing to accept defeat. In a statement made to Koto Ward, they said, “We cannot allow this eviction, or any other, to ever happen. We are taking a stand to protest the shameless acts of violence and prejudice carried out by Koto Ward, Tokyo, and the country of Japan. We demand that the fence be taken down, the evictions be put to an end, and homeless person’s rights to live be recognized”. In order to compel the authorities to act in accordance with their demands, the homeless in Tatekawa dug in their heels to stage resistance against eviction from the park.

Life with dignity in Arakawa

In Arakawa City, around the Arakawa Riverside area near Horikiri Bridge, the government is implementing the Sumida Nature Conservancy and Onagigawa Weeding and Maintenance projects. After being subjected to heavy pressure by the state, around 40 people in the Arakawa Riverside Area moved away. Some of them went to receive social welfare benefits from the state, while others went to find other public spaces in which to set up their tents and live.

However, there are eight homeless people who are persistently struggling to remain in their tents in the area. They have come together and established a system for living together like a community. They hold meetings every Saturday to assess the situation of eviction and find a way to solve their problems. They have set up a food pantry for members, and help to buy dry foods to keep in this pantry. When members do not have any work or any income from collecting recyclable goods, they can come and take food from the pantry to eat. In addition, they are growing vegetables to eat.

Another important point is that the homeless in Arakawa are acting to counter and confront the state officials who come to pressure them to move away and enter social welfare programs. They are confronting these officials in the area where they live, as well as going to negotiate and press their demands at the offices of state agencies because this group of homeless people does not want to dismantle their community and move way, or accept social welfare. They are able to earn their own livelihood and they like living in a mutually dependent way, which they feel is a life full of human dignity.

Linking the movements of the urban poor in ASEAN and Japan to create land and housing justice

Neoliberal development emphasizes large-scale investment, using urban land to increase economic value, and creating order for the beautification and livability of the city. It has adversely affected the poor in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan by causing forced evictions and preventing the poor from being able to access appropriate housing in the case of the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as created the problem of homelessness in Japan.

However, the negative impact of neoliberal development has also caused the urban poor in all four countries to stand up and demand their rights. They have established urban poor movements to resist eviction, campaign on housing rights, and
propose concrete alternative solutions to solve their own problems. However, it is necessary to strengthen the struggle of urban poor movements in ASEAN and Japan by raising the level of their cooperation to the international level through globalization of the poor.

During my year of research (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012), I attempted to link together the movements of the urban poor in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan, as well as Thailand, which is my own country. I undertook this effort so that the urban poor movements in these countries would have processes to exchange knowledge and experience among themselves, provide assistance to each other, and take action to strike back against neoliberal urban development, which adversely affects the urban poor. My efforts resulted in concrete linkages developing while I was doing research, as well as issues identified around which linkages can be built in the future.

Concrete linkages developed while doing research

1. Presentation of the experiences of the urban poor in different countries mobilizing on housing rights in order to create understanding and promote mutual exchanges of learning.

The researcher presented the experience of struggle of Four Regions Slum (FRSN) Network in Thailand to the urban poor movement in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan. FRSN’s experience stands out insofar as they have established an organization of the urban poor at the national level and achieved success in pushing and compelling the state to allow slum communities located on land owned by the State Railway of Thailand to carry out housing projects on their original location without having to be evicted.

The researcher distilled lessons learned from the mobilizations and advocacy of the urban poor in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia in videos the researcher made called *The Struggle of the Poor for Urban Land in Metro Manila*, *The Path of Dreams and the Day of Struggle: The Experience of Advocacy of the Urban Poor in Indonesia*, and *Neoliberalism and the Life of the Urban Poor in Malaysia*. Furthermore, the researcher presented these videos for the purpose of dissemination to the urban poor, NGOs, academics and students in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan and Thailand.

2. Encouraged the urban poor movement in the Philippines to take action on World Habitat Day

The researcher provided information about World Habitat Day, a day on which slum dwellers in many countries around Asia mobilize, resulting in Filipino slum dwellers and NGO workers from COPE, UPA and COM organizing a World Habitat Day campaign activity on October 26, 2011 with around 1,000 participants. This was the first time that this group of the urban poor movement organized an activity on World Habitat Day.

3. Arranged for a show of strength in support of resistance to the eviction of the homeless in Japan

In June 2012, while in Tokyo, the researcher learned of the closure of Mitake Park and the underground parking garage of the Shibuya Ward Office to force the homeless who resided in these locations to leave these areas. The researcher communicated with the Homeless Network of FRSN in Thailand and encouraged them to come out in force to show their support for the affected homeless people in Japan.

On June 25, 2012, 80 people from the Homeless Group in Thailand held a march to the Japanese Embassy in Bangkok in order to submit a petition to a representative of the embassy condemning the de facto eviction of the homeless from both places in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo, and demanding that they be allowed to return.

Issues around which linkages can be built in the future

Several issues exist around which linkages might be built in the future. Tentative work is already underway on the following issues, perhaps leading to concrete action in the not too distant future:
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1. Coordinated planning leading to regional support for resistance against evictions of communities along rivers in the Philippines and Indonesia

2. Building relations between the homeless in Japan and Thailand

3. Creating forums for grassroots learning exchanges among urban poor movement leaders and activists from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, and Thailand.

NOTES


4. Human Rights Watch, Condemned Communities.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. Human Rights Watch, Condemned Communities.


10. Ibid.


26. Quotes based on researcher’s notes from meeting in Sanggar Ciliwung, 15 February 2012.
Social Movements and Democracy: Experiences from the Philippines and Thailand

Somchai Phatharathananunth

In recent years, civil society has become broadly considered to be the “cradle of democracy”. (Purdue, 2007:1). Civil society-based social movements have been pointed to as important elements in the democratization process.

From the late 1970s onwards social movements have played an important role in the ending of authoritarian regimes in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Teorell, 2010: pp. 100-101; Schoek, 2005: 1-5). However, in the period after the achievement of a democratic breakthrough, the relationship between social movements and democracy is complex. Social movements can act as maintainers and as challengers of democracy (Ibarra, 2003: 1). The objective of this article is to examine such complex relationships in the Philippines and Thailand.

The Contribution of Social Movements to Democratic Breakthrough

According to the transition paradigm, a major school of thought in democratization studies, “democratization is largely contingent on what elites and individuals do when, where and how” (Potter, D et al 1997: 17). As Carothers put it, “all that seemed to be necessary for democratization was a decision by a country’s political elites to move toward democracy and ability on the part of those elites to fend off the contrary actions of remaining antidemocratic forces” (Carothers 2002: 8).

But social movements rather than elites were decisive forces in democratic breakthrough in the Philippines and Thailand.

The Philippines

On 21 September 1972 Ferdinand Marcos signed Presidential Proclamation No. 1081 declaring martial law. During the night of 22 September 53 leading opposition members were arrested and the next day the military padlocked the Congress building and shut down the media. Such actions signaled the end of electoral democracy which had been in effect in the Philippines since the Second World War (Timberman 1991: 66). Under the dictatorial regime of Marcos, the following decades witnessed widespread human rights violations. Students, academics, journalists, businessmen, laborers and peasants were arrested, tortured and killed. In addition, the regime also plundered the Philippines’s economy through the use of various kinds of corrupt practices (Abinales and Amoroso 2005: 193-211; Aquino 1999). The brutality of the regime drew strong opposition from variety social groups and movements, especially from the National Democratic Front (NDF). Opposition to the Marcos regime escalated after the killing of opposition member Benigno Aquino in 1983. The opposition culminated in a massive popular uprising widely known as EDSA 1 (after the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue or EDSA where the majority of protests took place) that toppled the Marcos regime in February 1986. Ironically, it was moderate social movements and disaffected military officers, not the Left, that fought Marcos before martial law all the way up to the uprising and that, through its leading role in “people power” brought back democratization to the Philippines (Timberman 1991: 154).

Thailand

Democratic transition in Thailand was more complicated than in the Philippines. In 1973 Thailand witnessed its first popular uprising, which eventually toppled the authoritarian regime. The uprising marked a turning point in Thai democratic development. According to Anderson, during the “democratic period” of 1973-76 “Thailand had the most open, democratic political system it has experienced, before and since” (Anderson 1998: 289). However, the “democratic period” was ended by a bloody coup that killed more than 100 people in October 1976. The violence ended hopes for peaceful change. After the coup, some 3,000 activists joined...
the armed struggle of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) (Wedel and Wedel 1987: 150). In response, Bangkok adopted new policies to win over the left, and so isolate the CPT. Political activities were allowed and general elections were held in 1979. A year later amnesty was granted to those who had joined the armed struggle. The return to electoral politics and the introduction of the amnesty started a new round of limited democratization popularly known as “semi-democracy”. Semi-democracy was a form of parliamentary rule dominated by the military (Somchai 2006: 55-58). In February 1991, Thailand experienced another coup. However, in May 1992 there were massive popular protests that finally ousted the military from power (Tamada 2008: 25). After the events, according to Tamada, “the military….suffered a particularly severe setback and was rapidly displaced from the political center stage” (Tamada 2008: 69). The diminishing of military power opened the way for political reforms in Thailand.

Social Movements after the Democratic Transition

The Philippines Case

In the Philippines, members of some moderate social movements, including social democrats, worked closely with Corazon Aquino during the anti-Marcos campaign. After Aquino came to power, she appointed some of their leaders to several important cabinet posts, including labor secretary, executive secretary, and presidential spokesperson. In addition, Aquino set up the Presidential Social Fund to finance NGOs directly. NGOs also participated in the design of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (1987-1992). More importantly, apart from radicals who boycotted the 1986 election, NGOs played a prominent role in the writing of the new constitution. When Aquino appointed a fifty-person commission to write the new constitution, nearly half of its members were activists who had experience of social issues such as land reform, ethnic conflicts, and gender issues. The major aim of the commission was to prevent “another Marcos” by imposing the no-re-election clause. Other measures involved constraints on presidential power vis-à-vis the congress and language that would make it more difficult to declare martial law in the future. An important secondary aim of the constitution was to expand the political system to include formerly excluded actors. It stipulated that 20 percent of the 250 House seats would be filled by a party-list system via proportional representation (Eaton 2003: 475).

These changes had significant consequences on government-social movement relationships in the Philippines. Firstly, the policy of recruiting individuals from social movements into the Cabinet or other organs of the government initiated by Aquino was followed by most of the following presidents. There were a number of changes that shaped government-social movement relations. According to Reid, the changing situation after the downfall of the Marcos regime required a new strategy toward social movements. He points out that “the contradictions between the appearance of democratic rule and the lack of substantial benefits to the poor, combined with high levels of social movement activism, meant that the state and the historical block had to respond in new ways” (Reid 2008: 19). At the same time, there were also changes among social movements. The setback of radical social movements associated with the revolutionary Left opened the way for a proliferation of moderate social movements. Moderate social movements did not aim at total social transformation. Their alternative vision of political and social development appeared to fragment into a succession of projects. Because the activities of these movements usually centered on aspects of livelihood promotion, and service delivery, they needed to cooperate with the state rather than oppose it. These trends, argues Reid, were evident in the broad spectrum of development-centered NGOs and even among left-leaning social movements (Reid 2008: 19-20).

To illustrate the above argument we will look at types of “crossover” of social activists into the government. The first example is the case of the Movement for Popular Democracy (PopDem). Initially, PopDem was a trend within and then breaking from the Communist Party of the
Philippines (CPP). In the early 1990s, they entertained the idea that the goal of PopDem could be achieved through alliances with the most appropriate political clan with an interest in enacting substantive social reform (Reid 2008: 20). In 1998 when Estrada won an election, Horacio Morales and Edicio de la Torre, leaders of PopDem joined his government. Morales, who was appointed secretary of the Department for Agrarian Reform, justified his decision to join the government on the ground that it would help to accelerate the process of land reform (Reid 2008: 22).

When Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became president after Estrada was ousted in 2001 by EDSA II (Hedman 2006: 167-183), prominent NGO leaders, who had played an important role in the event, were appointed to the new Cabinet and other posts. The chairman of CODE-NGO, Corazon Soliman, was appointed the secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The National Coordinator of CODE-NGO, Dan Siongco, was appointed to the Board of the Development Bank of the Philippines, the representative of the National Peace Conference and Gaston Ortigas Peace Foundation to CODE-NGO, Teresita Quintos Deles, was appointed vice-chair of the National Antipoverty Commission. Ayala Foundation Executive Director and CODE-NGO Council Member Victoria Garchitorena was appointed head of the National Antipoverty Commission and the Peace Process respectively. In addition, prominent figures from Akbayan (see below) were also presented in the government. Ronald Limas was appointed Presidential Political Advisor, Loretta Rosales was appointed the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, and Joel Rocamora became the Lead Convenor for the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC).

Secondly, the expansion of the political system to include formerly excluded actors or the party-list system encouraged social movements to set up political parties to compete in the election. The most important development on this issue was the setting up of political parties to compete in the elections by the Left, prominent among them are Akbayan and Bayan Muna. In January 1998, the leftists groups and those who split with the CPP, Bisig, Pandayan and Siglaya formed the political party Akbayan. ND founded another political party Bayan Muna in September 1999. Apart from these two, there are smaller leftist groups, such as Sanlakas, AMIN, ABA, PM, and Abanse Pinay, compete for party-list seats (Quimpo 2008: 143, 173).

Thirdly, the cooperation between social movements and sections of elites in EDSA I had become the repertoire of protest in the Philippines. During times of political crisis, protesters seemed to try to imitate EDSA I as a solution to the problem. The ouster of Joseph “Erap” Estrada in January 2001, later known as EDSA II, is an example. Estrada was elected to the vice presidency in 1992 and to the presidency in 1998 by the largest vote margin in Philippine history. His popularity, especially among the poor, came from his long time movie superstardom, his “underdog” image, and the styling of his campaign under such slogans as “Erap for the poor” (Hedman 2006: 172). However, roughly a year in office, the popularity of Estrada dropped significantly as reports of cronism, factional infighting, feuds with the media, the apparent failure of his anti-corruption campaign and the slow implementation rate of his antipoverty programs increased public cynicism (Abinales 2001: 158).

Moreover, Estrada's personal habits alienated himself from the elites. His gambling, drinking, and womanizing habits offended the sensibilities of the Catholic Church leadership and many middle and upper class circles. His national lottery scheme caused dissatisfaction among congressmen, provincial governors, because it was awarded to a close presidential crony. In addition, many businessmen were worried about his populist promises and the slogan “Erap for the poor” during the 1998 election campaign.
After he became the president, their resentment against his management of economic policy increased (Hedman 2006: 168-169). Actually, the economic performance of the Estrada government was not so bad. In 1999, the Philippines witnessed a 20 per cent increase in exports that helped to turn the trade deficit into a US $4 billion surplus. The Philippines also experienced positive economic growth. Moreover, the cronyism of Estrada did not have the same devastating impact as Marcos’s. Although, his family became richer after he became president, most of their businesses were not in the manufacturing, finance, or agricultural sectors and did not have the effect on the economy that the businesses of the Marcos’s did (Abinales 2001: 158).

In 2000, the anti-Estrada campaign gained momentum in Manila and other major Philippine cities, calling for him to resign. The protests picked up additional steam and mass support in October of that year following the revelation by Luis “Chavit” Singson, a drinking and gambling buddy of Estrada, that the president has been accepting hundreds of millions of pesos in “protection” money from *jueteng* (illegal numbers game) operators. Estrada, declared Singson, was the “biggest *jueteng* lord in the country”; from November 1998 to August 2000 the president had received bribes amounting to P414 million out of the P545 million *jueteng* collection nationwide (Hedman 2006: 173; Doronila 2001: 13). According to Abinales, *jueteng* is the centerpiece of the informal economy. It is operated nationwide by networks of operators, politicians, and law enforcement agencies. Politicians and lowly paid military officers alike had come to depend on *jueteng* money as part of their income. It was no surprise that a national leader wishing to be always resource-ready for any electoral competition would get involved in *jueteng* (Abinales 2001: 160).

The anti-Estrada forces were composed of the elites and social movements. According to Reyes, the Resign/Impeach/Oust Erap campaign (RIO Erap) was composed of broad and diverse forces representing various social strata and institutions, such as, the Catholic Church (The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines), business circles (The Makati Business Club), political parties (The United Opposition organized by the Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo). RIO Erap also included former President Corazon Aquino (Reyes 2001: 3, 6). These groups represented the elites who opposed Estrada. Additional to the elites in the anti-Estrada campaign were a variety of moderate and more radical social movements. The best known moderate social movement was the Caucus of Development NGOs (CODE-NGO). For the radicals there were Bayan, Akbayan, Sanlakas, and others (Reyes 2001: 7-10). It should be noted that not all anti Estrada groups worked in the same coalition. According to Arugay, there were two grand coalitions of civil society organizations during the RIO campaign: the Konggresong ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kompil II) and Erap Resign Movement (ERM) (Arugay 2004: 240). Kompil II was composed of NGO networks (CODE-NGO), issue-based and sectoral coalitions (Freedom from Debt Coalition and the National Peace Conference), church-based organizations (Gomburza), Leftist groups (Bisig, Social Democratic Caucus, Sanlakas), party list groups (Akbayan), business groups (Makati Business Club), and individuals, while ERM comprised of Bayan, Gabriela, the Promotion for Church’s People Response (PCPR), KMU, TUCP, KMP, COPA and known progressive individuals (Arugay 2004: 265, 270; Bautista 2001: 5). These two coalitions worked closely with Arroyo (Arugay 2004: 295). Both Kompil II and ERP supported Arroyo to replace Estrada as the president by citing the constitutional succession. Within Kompil II only Sanlakas and the Bukluran ng Manggawang Pilipino (BMP) and allied groups under the coalition PARE advocated a more radical solution under the slogan “Resign All”. They adopted a hard-line stance against not only Estrada but also Arroyo and the constitutional succession (Reyes 2001: 12). Their position was rejected by others on the grounds that it would threaten the fragile united front which would benefit only Estrada (Casino 2001: 253). For Sanlakas, such an argument was hopeless. “Why did we risk our lives to replace one corrupt politician with another corrupt one?” (Wilson M Fortaleza, interview, 24 May 2002). However, those who supported Arroyo hoped that when she came to power she would recognize the role of civil society in governance. As Velasco recounted:
“Perhaps less known to the public, Kompil II leaders also started dialoguing with then Vice-President Gloria Makapagal-Arroyo, parallel to its public campaign. Kompil II’s Steering Committee presented its civil society agenda in a post-Estrada scenario to Arroyo as early as 28 November 2000... Engaging Vice President Arroyo on her platform was part of Kompil II’s concerns from the very beginning. At the second Coordinating Council meeting on 9 November 2000, there was an extensive discussion on Kompil II’s framework vis-a-vis Arroyo. The minutes of the meeting reflect that “while some view her as a traditional politician, the need for her substance on her positions, however, can be viewed as a starting point for discussion”... Kompil II would urge her to “recognize the importance of civil society in governance” (cited in Arrugay 2004: 295).

The anti-Estrada campaign escalated when senator-jurors voted against the opening of the “second envelope” which allegedly contained supporting evidence regarding Estrada’s corrupt acts (Arrugay 2004: 297). On 18 January 2001 hundreds of thousands Filipinos poured into the EDSA shrine area. When the numbers of protesters reached a million the next day, the leadership of the military and police withdrew their support from Estrada and expressed support for Arroyo. This act signaled the end of Estrada’s presidency.

The January 2001 revolt, which was widely known as EDSA II, on the surface appeared to be a spontaneous popular mobilization but actually there were some sort of elite maneuvers behind it. As early as October 2000, there were several meetings between Arroyo and prominent figures from the military about withdrawing support from Estrada (Joaquim 2002: 225). However, military and police authorities would move only with sustained massive popular mobilization. As Carroll revealed; “the military was watching and was said to be asking for 1,000,000 warm bodies as proof that there was a critical mass behind the move for resignation or ouster of the president” (Carroll 2001: 242). It was social movements that provided “warm bodies”. Carroll’s account also showed how the course of action against Estrada unfolded. He wrote that when the masses began assembling at the EDSA shrine “former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, aide to Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo, met some of the opposition leaders there. It was decided to wait 48 hours to see whether the reaction would last, and if it did, to move” (Carroll 2001: 244). On 20 January, while there was a negotiation between Estrada’s people and those of Arroyo, the Supreme Court made the decision to recognize Arroyo as president which led to her oath-taking (Carroll 2001: 245). This move finalized Estrada’s fate and sealed the victory for EDSA II.

After EDSA II, Estrada was arrested on 25 April 2001. His arrest caused anger among the urban poor, who supported Estrada. On 30 April hundreds of thousands of urban poor in Manila came out to the EDSA shrine. The next day the protesters stormed the presidential palace. The event was more or less known as EDSA III, although the terminology was disputed. This EDSA was the protest of the poorest of the poor. As Reyes points out, “Estrada’s base is among the more marginalized sections of the working people. They belong not to the lower rungs but to the basement of society, usually ignored and with the least protection from the laws” (Reyes 2001: 27). The protest faced negative reaction from the middle class. The protesters were branded “hakot force” paid by pro-Estrada politicians (Melencio 2010: 172). There were text messages, opinion columns and media statements showing their contempt for the EDSA III masses. They claimed that people who joined EDSA III were ignorant and stupid (EDSA 3 2001: 4). It is interesting that social movements, who declare that they work for the poor, also adopted hostile attitude toward the poor of EDSA III (Melencio 2010: 173).

The Thai Case

Following the collapse of the military-dominated government in 1992, there were attempts to reform the political system in a more liberal direction, eventually resulting in the promulgation of a new constitution in 1997. The new constitution addressed three important areas: extending rights and freedoms and limiting the arbitrary power of the state, creating a mechanisms of checks
and balances to make bureaucrats and politicians more accountable, eliminating money politics and restoring legitimacy to the political process (Connors 2002: 39-44). In the process of constitution drafting, NGOs got involved in the issues of decentralization, participation and empowerment. They successfully incorporated into the 1997 constitution the concept of community rights over natural resources, which in essence means giving people the right to self-government, and the right to manage local resources at all stages of development. Such success led to an optimistic view of the strength of social movements in building grassroots democracy and providing necessary forums for the "voice of the people" to be heard and taken into account by government (Naruemon 2002: 194-195). In line with this expectation the 1997 institution was dubbed the "people's constitution".

There were three elections under the 1997 constitution, in 2001, 2005 and 2006. All of these elections were won by one political party, the Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT) of Thaksin Shinawatra. The victory of TRT partly came from the popularity of the party's pro-poor policies. TRT won more seats than any other political party. In the 2001 general election TRT won 248 of the 500 parliamentary seats and in the 2005 general election TRT fared even better when it won 377 out of 500 seats. This was an unprecedented parliamentary majority (Somchai 2008: 106). Up to the 2001 general election social movements in one way or another tacitly supported Thaksin because they wanted to get rid of the Democrat Party, which had conflicts with movements. However, after Thaksin came to power, conflict between both sides developed. policies (Kewin and Kengkit 2010: 454-459).

The Thaksin-social movement conflict mentioned above tangled with intra-elite conflicts, resulting in the social movement-elite alliance against Thaksin under the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). On the one hand, PAD was made up of groups who could be described as urban elite or as conservatives, while on the other side, stood social movements. Under the common slogan "Thaksin Ok Pai" (Thaksin Get Out!), PAD was able to organize protests against Thaksin in Bangkok, the South (Chumphon, Surat Thani, Hat Yai, Songkhla, Patthalung, Pattani and Trang), and the Northeast (Ubon Ratchathani, Surin, Khon Kaen and Nakhon Ratchasima). Sometimes the number of participants in Bangkok reached hundreds of thousands (Pye and Schaffar 2008: 40).

Despite the common slogan, factions within the PAD had their own agendas. Elites, they wanted to get rid of Thaksin by royal intervention. Royal intervention meant having the monarch replace Thaksin with his own man as interim prime minister. The agenda of social movements was based on concrete demands, such as, no patenting of medicines via free trade agreement, pensions, land reform, the situation in the south, democratic media, etc. However, on 23 March 2006 royal intervention had become the slogan of the PAD. It argued for royal intervention based on Article 7 of the constitution as the only way to solve the national crisis and to initiate the process of political reform. It should be noted that royal intervention was the choice social movements chose as a means of ousting Thaksin instead of an election contest. The reason for this was that Thaksin's electoral power was so strong, it was impossible to defeat him via the ballot box (Pye and Schaffar 2008: 54-55). The anti-Thaksin campaign ended when the military staged a coup on 19 September 2001. According to Pye and Schaffer, the coup was "indeed a repeat of this royal intervention, but this time backed by military force" (Pye and Schaffar 2008: 56). For Thongchai, the 19 September coup differed from any previous coup because it was "carried out by the military but probably not for the military themselves. As it is widely known now, the coup was engineered by Prem, the President of the Privy Council...It was a royalist coup with support from the 'people's sector' movement" (Thongchai 2008: 30). Kengkit and Hewison commented on the role of social movements on this issue that “in this sense, the activists became the willing allies with the most conservative forces in Thai society” (Kengkit and Hewison 2009: 469). The decision of social movements to assault parliamentary democracy is astonishing if we keep in mind that it was social movements that led the way in the struggle against military dictatorship in Thailand from the 1970s onwards.

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
While social movements supported the coup, millions from the rural masses came out to oppose the coup under the banner of the Red Shirts on the grounds that it was against democratic rule. The Red Shirts were rural/urban voters who supported Thaksin and/or opposed military dictatorship. The main group of Red Shirts is the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD). Apart from the UDD, there are numerous smaller Red Shirts groups and also independent individual red shirts. All of them worked together in the form of networks; they did not have a centralized organization.

It was like “things turned upside down” because for decades villagers have been blamed for the failure of democracy in Thailand. Now they were coming out to defend democracy. The attitude of villagers towards a military coup was clearly shown in the 2007 referendum. In August 2007, the coup-installed Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanonth, a former army chief and privy councilor, wanted to hold a referendum for the 2007 draft charter. Even though state officials, including the military, tried hard to pressure villagers to vote for the referendum, the majority of them still voted against it (Thai Politics Research Center 2007).

What were the factors behind the changing attitude of villagers? For Thai mainstream media, because of their ignorance and greed, villagers were lured to support Thaksin (Pravit 2010). Some even considered them barbarians (The Nation 7 April 2009). Most urban intellectuals, middle classes and social activists believed that these rural dwellers were the victims of Thaksin’s populist policies (Chairat 2009: 50). Their attitudes echoed the opinions of the Bangkok elite who regarded their rural folk as uneducated and uninformed and needing to be guided by them (Chirat 2010: 7). Apart from political bias, such ideas failed to grasp structural changes in Thailand’s countryside that released villagers from traditional bonds and enabled them to engage in a new form of political mobilization.

After the Second World War up to the 1970s, the subsistence economy in the rural areas was gradually integrated into the market economy. Agricultural commercialization was facilitated by the construction of roads in the countryside from the 1960s onwards. The roads gradually linked most districts and sub-districts to towns and connected villages to the outside world. Town-village interaction opened the door for acquiring cash income via other kinds of economic opportunities, including migration to towns. From the 1980s onwards, the subsistence economy in rural societies was fundamentally transformed to the market economy. Such transformation was marked by the intensification of migration to the city and foreign countries, the increasing engagement in non-farm economic activities inside the village, the rise of commercial farming, and, more importantly, the introduction of electricity and communication technology to most rural communities.

The rural transformations mentioned above had significant impacts on mass mobilization in rural areas on a number of ways. First, the transformations undermined the centrality of the village to rural dwellers, and, as a result, encouraged individualism among villagers (Field notes, 31 November 2009). Growing individualism among villagers and political competition within the village as a consequence of democratization (see below) tended to weaken village authority and village social networks. Second, town-village interactions and the spread of communication technologies, with television, newspapers, magazines, internet, satellite dish and mobile phone led to what Shanin called “acculturation”, “the process of disintegration of traditional and specific peasant cultures under the impact of mass communication” (Shanin 1971: 299). The disintegration of traditional culture helped to nurture new values and norms within the countryside. Third, town-village interactions and the spread of mass communication also enabled rural dwellers to learn about the outside world. As a result, villagers were not blind to what was happening in society. Because they were better-informed, villagers demanded a greater voice in national affairs.

The above account showed that rural transformations led to changes in the consciousness of rural dwellers. The new consciousness had played a key role in...
facilitating popular participation in the anti-dictatorial rule campaign. Nevertheless, there was another factor that was crucial to popular mobilization in rural communities: democratization. Democratization between 1979 and 2006 had a positive effect on popular mobilization in a number of ways. First, after an amnesty was granted to armed insurgents in 1980, political-related violence committed by the state in rural areas gradually decreased. Second, partial de-centralization undermined traditional power structures within the village. Third, political experience under parliamentary democracy for nearly three decades helped villagers to understand some basic principles of democracy such as the political equality of one person one vote and the principle of majority rule. After the referendum new elections were held in December 2007. Although TRT was dissolved and a new constitution was designed to undermine the political influence of Thaksin, People’s Power Party (PPP), as the successor to TRT, managed to win the elections comfortably. In May 2008 the PAD came out to launch a “final war” against the government and a month later occupied the Government House. At the end of 2008 the PAD increased its pressure by occupying the domestic (Don Muang) and international (Suvarnabhumi) airports. A few days after the airports occupation, the PPP was dissolved by the Constitutional Court. A new government was formed by the Democrat Party with the support of defectors from PPP, backed by the military (Kanokrat 2012: 230-231).

The concerted efforts by the PAD, the military, the Constitutional Court and the Democrat Party drew strong responses from the Red Shirts. In April 2010 the Red Shirts organized a massive protest in Bangkok, demanding new elections. They put pressure on the government by mobilizing at the heart of the capital city’s business district. The two-month long protest ended in bloodshed, with nearly one hundred dead and more than two thousand injured. Most of them were redshirts, shot by military snipers (Human Rights Watch 2010). The event was among the worst human rights violations to happen in Thailand. However, Thai social movements who portrayed themselves as the champion of human rights protection did not even bother to issue a statement, not to mention take any action, on the event.

Social Movement and Democracy

From the above account, we can see that social movements in the Philippines and Thailand are crucial to democratic transition. They are the main forces in the mobilization against authoritarian regimes. However, after parliamentary democracies were restored in both countries, the relationships between social movements and democracy have become more complicated. Re-democratization brought in new actors, new interests and new channels for political mobilization that resulted in various kinds of political alliances. In both countries, we see social movements forming alliances with elites, conservatives and military against an elected president/prime minister. They justified their unconstitutional acts on the grounds of tactical maneuvers to achieve more lofty goals. These are desperate moves rather than well thought ones. Is this kind of argument justifiable? In Thailand, the coup put the country into the worst political crisis in Thai history. In the Philippines, many believe that Arroyo is worse than Estrada. In hindsight, the effort to achieve democratic goals through undemocratic means does not work for social movements in the Philippines or Thailand; it would be better if they followed constitutional rule and let people learn the lessons by themselves. Another interesting point on the role of social movements after democratic breakthrough is that while they claim that they represent the poor, many of them tend to stand on the opposite side of the poor. Moreover, activists, like elites and middle classes, look down upon the poor who disagree with them; they keep accusing them of stupidity, ignorance and greed. Such disagreements lead to another unacceptable stand on the part of social movements; they ignore human rights violation against the poor.

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Strengthening Self-determination for Social Transformation through Participatory Approaches in Pro-poor Agri-environmental Research and Development: Case Examples from Thailand

Kam Suan Pheng

Introduction

Asian agriculture is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by increased commercialization of food and cash crop production and the globalization of trade (von Braun and Diaz-Bonilla, 2008, 4). At the same time it faces challenges such as increased competition from industry for land and water resources. Environmental degradation and climate change pose additional challenges to the stability and future prospects of agricultural production (Johnston et al., 2010, 4-10), particularly in the production of food to meet the growing demands of increasing populations. In this context, there are increasing calls for sustainable agricultural development.

An imperative for securing economically, environmentally and socially sustainable agriculture is ensuring that the poorer among the agricultural communities are not increasingly disadvantaged and marginalized in the process of agricultural transformation. Chambers (1987, 15-25) argues that sustainability depends upon starting with the poor and putting their priorities first. These priorities include short-term satisfaction of basic needs and long-term livelihood security. This, he argues, calls for research and development (R&D) approaches that shift the focus and initiative to the rural people themselves. The approaches should seek to create and maintain conditions in which poor people attain sustainable livelihood levels and see benefits for themselves in enhancing long-term productivity through having a stake in stabilizing the environment.

Implicit in such approaches is the active engagement of target communities in participatory ways that elicit and use local knowledge to complement scientific or “external” knowledge in specific problem-solving contexts. Participatory approaches to agricultural research and rural development take many different forms and are conducted for different purposes, ranging from increasing efficiency in technology development to empowerment of communities for self-determination in sustainable agricultural development (Neef, 2005, 8). The effectiveness of participatory approaches is varied. Most experiences with participatory initiatives are still considered mere “islands of success” (El-Swaify et al., 1999, 37). In relatively few cases self-sustaining processes have been fostered for continuity beyond the project duration (Neef, 2005, 10). It is important to derive lessons from and build on such experiences.

Study objective, approach and methodology

In this study, I developed an evaluation framework for participatory approaches with emphasis on assessing how and to what extent such approaches enhance the potential of target communities to make informed choices about their livelihood activities, meet contingencies and adapt to changes.

The analytical framework (Figure 1) uses the Theory of Change (Anderson, 2005, 2-9) to provide the overarching structure for identifying specific program/project goals, pathways of change, desired outcomes, interventions and assessment indicators. Other analytical tools used include the social network mapping tool (Clark, 2006) to conduct analysis of institutional and power relations among key players (Matsaert, 2002, 7), most significant change identification (Davies and Dart, 2005, 8-9) and outcome mapping (Earl, et al., 2001) to evaluate outcomes and measure indicators. The assessment indicators focused on the learning and empowerment of key stakeholders, most importantly the target rural communities.

This evaluation framework was applied to three case studies (Figure 2) that illustrate the use of various participatory methods employed by different research projects to address specific livelihood and natural resources management issues (Table 1).
Figure 1. Conceptual framework for analyzing and evaluating project outcomes.

Figure 2. Location of the three case studies in Thailand.
Analysis of each case study involved review and distillation of information from project documentation (reports, papers), interviews with key project implementers, and field observations and interviews with target communities (Table 1).

Table 1. The selected case studies and assessment interviews conducted

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>CS1: Mae Hae</th>
<th>CS2: Mae Sa</th>
<th>CS3: Mae Rumpheung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project proponent</td>
<td>PhD researcher</td>
<td>The Uplands Program</td>
<td>SEAFDEC/TD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem focus</td>
<td>Land and water management within watershed in ecologically-sensitive highlands</td>
<td>Alternative marketing channels for lychee produce to sustain tree crop cultivation on sloping land</td>
<td>Operation and management of set net fishing as an eco-friendly technology for sustainable coastal fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory approaches used</td>
<td>Role-playing games (with individual farmers); Facilitation support to collective problem diagnosis and negotiation (with Village Network)</td>
<td>Participatory action research to: - extend technical skills for good agricultural practices to farmers; - inculcate marketeering intelligence and skills to farmers</td>
<td>Participatory consultation and forging of multi-party alliances; Participatory action research to: - install, adapt and operate set net - establish group operational procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment interviews conducted with:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project implementers &amp; associates</td>
<td>Project leader Former project assistant</td>
<td>Project leader PhD student Market chain advisor</td>
<td>Project leader Japanese technical advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target community</td>
<td>3 Village Network members 7 villagers from 4 villages</td>
<td>3 Hmong group leaders 11 Hmong group members from 4 villages 2 Hmong non-members</td>
<td>5 members of the set net fisher's group Municipality Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This paper focuses on the complexities that confront such participatory R&D efforts, particularly the institutional and social processes that impinge upon the ability of marginalized communities to benefit from agricultural innovations. The use of various participatory approaches is appraised in terms of how these approaches might help target communities to better realize these benefits.

**Case study 1: Land and water use and management in the Mae Hae watershed of Chiang Mai province.**

**The context**

The mountainous areas of northern Thailand are home to diverse indigenous groups who now mainly cultivate food and cash crops as substitutes for opium, resulting from programs for agricultural production, processing and marketing established since the early 1980s by the Royal Project Foundation (RPF) (Williamson, 2005,10-11) and several other internationally-funded initiatives (Suraswadi et al., 2005, 374).

In the Mae Hae watershed the hill-slope land traditionally cultivated by the Hmong and Karen communities was placed under legal protection as watershed or forest reserve by the Thai government. However the Royal Forest Department (RFD) tolerates the continued controlled use of these lands by locals on account of their established occupancy pre-dating the legislation.

Population pressure and the quest for more land for cultivation result in encroachment by locals as well as outsiders, giving rise to tensions among villagers along ethnic lines as well as with the
RFD. A Village Network (VN), set up since the mid-1990s as a coalition of village heads (VH) and other representatives, acts as an intermediary between the Mae Hae villagers and the state on land management issues. The VN crafts local management rules for handling “offenders” to avoid official sanctions and earn the tolerance of RFD officers. Tensions mounted in 2007 when Hmong farmers from outside the watershed opened new plots in the upper forest and diverted water to irrigate their crops, at the expense of downstream farmers who depended on the same water sources.

The intervention

A Ph.D. researcher from Chiang Mai University happened to be on the scene since late 2003 conducting his thesis research on land and water resources management issues in the watershed (Promburom and Bousquet, 2008, 1). He had been using role-playing games with groups of farmers to create awareness and stimulate collective thinking and action towards improved land use and water management, to minimize environmental degradation and to cope with drought-induced water shortages.

His constant presence in the area earned him acceptance among the VN members as a neutral academic who could potentially help them resolve the issue of water use conflict. He applied participatory techniques to help the VN seek a workable solution. Using photographs taken during collective field investigations and computerized map overlays as objective evidence, and employing facilitation techniques, he helped the VN mediate a series of complex negotiations. From a “free-for-all” and “first-come-first-served” situation of water withdrawal, the VN negotiations arrived at a collective agreement that upstream farmers would limit the pipe size used for water diversion in order to allow sufficient water flow to supply downstream farmers (Promburom, 2010, 98).

Outcomes

A year passed before the collectively-agreed rule was implemented by the concerned communities. The delay was largely due to the unclear structure of authority within the VN with regard to implementing the pipe size rule. The researcher’s former project assistant was subsequently employed at the local RPF office and was entrusted by the VN to coordinate the implementation of the pipe project. She helped the villagers to secure resources for installing the pipes. She also continued engaging with the VN over the subsequent four years (2007-2011) and put into good use the facilitation and participatory methods she had learned to help the VN resolve various other issues. Her elevation to a supervisory position in 2011 to oversee village social strengthening projects in 38 areas within Chiang Mai province provided the opportunity for her to train and encourage junior field staff to use participatory and group-dynamics approaches in carrying out their work.

In 2012, the VN continued to grapple with existing and emerging issues as demands on water and land resources persisted and changed. VN members interviewed acknowledged having learnt facilitation and mediation techniques from the researcher. Yet they expressed ambiguity about resolving issues on their own. They raised the need for mediation intervention by neutral outsiders and for the support of authoritative government personnel. This was because, they said, the VN did not have legal authority to enforce rules. The VN can only exercise moral authority. This breaks down when village heads are expected, but reluctant, to act on collective decisions that are construed by village constituents as betraying ethnic and kinship loyalties.

Individual farmers interviewed expressed general awareness of the natural resource management issues within their local context. They reported having used environmentally-friendly practices on an individual basis, including planting trees rather than annual crops on slopes to minimize soil erosion, and reducing pesticide use. At the collective level some farmers reportedly implemented localized water-sharing scheduling among neighbors. There were cooperative efforts in constructing fire breaks for fields and property. They attributed their learning to the role-playing games conducted by the researcher and to their exposure to many other R&D interventions the area has attracted over the years.
Such small “successes” are still fragmented and their sustainability is uncertain. Farmer's decisions on what to plant are largely driven by commodity prices. The recent introduction of strawberries as a lucrative crop is worsening problems for water management, soil conservation and contamination with agro-chemicals. Solutions aimed at reducing the environmental impact of farming on hill slopes must also address challenges that continually confront upland farmers as livelihood opportunities change, as exemplified by the next case study.

Case study 2: Lychee Marketing in the Mae Sa watershed of Chiang Mai province.

The context

Growing tree crops on steep slopes is environmentally more sustainable than growing short-term annual crops, as trees are more effective at intercepting and regulating the flow of rainwater and preventing soil erosion (Thomas et al., 2004, 72-75). The cultivation of various temperate-zone fruit trees is economically important in northern Thailand (Williamson, 2005, 10). Yet small-scale growers have neither had influence in determining the selling price for their crops nor the capacity for adding value to the products. For example, the lychee growers of the Hmong ethnic minority had been selling their fresh produce to middlemen who dictated the farm-gate price. They also entered into contract farming arrangements with large agro-processing companies as assured buyers, but at depressed prices. The declining price of lychee since the late 1990s due to the expansion of orchards had reduced profitability for small-scale growers (Schreinemachers, et al., 2009, 3). Consequently lychee orchards were being abandoned or replaced with more profitable vegetable and strawberry cultivation, which entailed frequent land clearing and soil disturbance.

The intervention

Concerns over sustainable livelihoods and land use prompted a team of German and Thai researchers from the German-funded Uplands Program to conduct action research with Hmong lychee growers in the Mae Sa watershed (Figure 1) to help them engage in post-harvest processing of lychee and to seek alternative marketing channels for both their fresh and processed produce that would by-pass the middlemen. Figure 3 illustrates use of the Theory of Change (ToC) framework to capture the intervention pathways described by Tremblay and Neef (2009, 225-230) that produced the series of outcomes to achieve the goal or overall objective of this particular project.

Figure 3. Participatory action research interventions in lychee marketing in the Mae Sa watershed
Outcomes

Within the duration of the project, which ended in June 2012, the researchers succeeded in getting the Hmong growers organized as a group and establishing a domestic marketing chain to supply fresh lychee to a large supermarket chain (LSC), thus bypassing the middlemen. The marketing was carried out through a lowland farmer's cooperative (LFC) as an intermediary that undertook to collect and pack the produce of the Hmong grower's group (HGG) and deliver sufficient volumes of fresh fruit to the LSC. HGG leaders and members interviewed expressed satisfaction with this arrangement. Their confidence had increased as their continued engagement and negotiation with the LFC had resulted in prices that were on average 20 percent higher than the middlemen's offered prices, over a period of at least four seasons. The project also provided training to HGG members to adopt crop management techniques that complied with and qualified for the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification of the Thai government (Neef et al., 2012, 6). While most HGG members did get GAP certification, those interviewed stated that it was not among the main criteria for acceptance of their produce by the LSC, which included fruit size and color.

Of the various post-harvest processing experiments with the Hmong villagers, dried lychee proved the most promising product. However its domestic marketing is hampered by a government requirement that to get the mandatory Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certification the processing facility must be located in legally-titled premises, which the Hmong communities in the highlands do not possess. That the Hmong have traditional right of occupation on state land was not accepted as an exemption to this rule (Neef et al., 2012, 9-10). The research team helped the Hmong growers seek export channels for the dried lychee to European markets—natural food retailers and fair trade organizations—that do not require Thai GMP certification. However issues of strict compliance with international food safety standards and associated costs, and the capacity of the Hmong growers to produce the required volumes, still need to be addressed, as expressed by the group leaders interviewed.

This case study illustrates how, through participatory action research approaches, a multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary team of researchers fostered collaboration among small-scale producers and large trading entities in developing marketing strategies that are economically, socially and environmentally more sustainable. The researchers brought knowledge about market networks, quality standards and associated farming practices. Through participatory interactions, they gained insight into local power relations, earned the trust of the Hmong growers and moderated their expectations while encouraging them to take the major role and initiative in the negotiation and marketing processes. This local capacity-building is imperative for the Hmong to continue pursuing marketing strategies that are advantageous to them so that they can maintain their lychee orchards on sloping land, thereby contributing to environmental protection of the fragile highland ecosystem.

Case study 3: Piloting set net technology transfer for sustainable coastal fisheries in Rayong province of Thailand

The context

Tropical fisheries, characterized by highly diverse species caught using a variety of fishing equipment ranging from artisanal to commercial fishing, poses difficult challenges for sustainable fisheries management (Beddington et al., 2000, 13). Improved coastal fisheries management is urgently needed to sustain if not rehabilitate the declining coastal fish stocks in Southeast Asian waters (Silvestre et al., 2003,1), the livelihood impacts of which are most severe on the high numbers of small-scale fishers (SSF). The SSF face competition in congested coastal fishing grounds and conflict with commercial fishing fleets, despite the delineation of fishing zones for fishing vessels of different capacities and using different equipment. This case study focuses on a pilot project to introduce set net fishing technology to Thai SSF as a technological intervention aimed at promoting the sustainability of coastal fisheries. The pilot site is
located at the eastern seaboard of the Gulf of Thailand in Rayong province (Figure 1).

The intervention

The set net, introduced from Japan, is a stationary fishing apparatus that operates in a similar way to the Thai traditional fish stake, *poh* (Indrambarya and Thiemmedh, 1963, 32-34), whereby nets are installed instead of wooden stakes to guide fish into inner compartments where they are trapped and selectively harvested, alive and fresh. The set net project initiated in 2003 by the Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center Training Department (SEAFDEC/TD) attempted to demonstrate multiple benefits of the technology and its potential contribution to sustainable coastal fisheries management (Munprasit et al., 2005, 254-267) (Figure 4).

The main proponent from SEAFDEC/TD started with consultations involving target fisher communities along Mae Rumpheung beach and the Department of Fisheries (DoF) and its Rayong-based Eastern Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center (EMDEC). The parties were brought together to collaborate in the pilot venture. Supported by technical and in-kind assistance from Japanese scientists and experienced set net fishers from Himi City in Japan (Anonymous, 2008), the pilot project engaged with SSF from seven villages in a collective effort to install, adapt and operate the Otoshi-ami set net off the Rayong coast (Figure 5).

Challenges in technical and social engineering to attain an optimal harvest demanded close collaboration among the researchers (international, regional and local) and the fishers. Relationships of trust needed to be fostered. The researchers facilitated the formation of a set net fisher’s group (SNFG) to handle all aspects of operating the set net. To the Thai fishers accustomed to individual operation of their traditional fishing operations, the set net was an alien item that required the learning of new technical skills and also learning how to function as a team to operate it.

![Figure 4. Set net: an eco-friendly fishing gear for the future. Source: Munprasit, Aussanee (personal communication, 2012)](image-url)
Outcomes

Nine years later, 15 SNFG members who benefited from the training and mutual learning-by-doing experiences with local and international experts are profitably operating two set nets installed 4.8 km from the shore. The operations are limited to the off-monsoon season (October to April), and the members supplement their income by operating other fishing equipment and targeting different species (such as crab and squid). Despite this, the group members interviewed expressed appreciation of the various benefits of their set net installation. These included deterring commercial fishing fleets from approaching close to shore (Figure 5), thereby protecting the fishing grounds of the SSF.

The group members also showed a genuine camaraderie that has developed through working together. There were early misgivings among members about non-transparency in financial accounting (Suanrattanachai et al., 2008, 21). However since its official registration with the Ta Phong sub-district administration as a micro-enterprise, the SNFG is now obligated to keep and submit proper annual financial accounts. Its most recent financial records (2010-11) show that from the annual net profits, 38 percent was distributed as dividends to members and 2 percent set aside as public fund to support village schoolchildren (Munprasit, personal communication, 2012). This gesture reflects the group’s collective desire to contribute to their community.

Despite its nine-year presence, the set net technology has yet to make an impression on the fishing community at large. A program with seed funding to launch a similar venture in nearby Ban Phe by the municipality’s enthusiastic director was not well-received by the local SSF, on account of perceived low profit per capita and restricted operation of the gear to the off-monsoon period. The greatest obstacle thus far has been reluctance at official levels towards acceptance of set net technology.

Figure 5. Effect of set net installation in Rayong, Thailand, on protecting coastal fishing ground
Under the Thai National Fisheries Management Policy, deployment of passive fishing gear is allowed only in officially-approved areas. High-ranking fisheries officials, unconvinced of its benefits, refrain from endorsing the set net as a legal fishing method. Its proponents need to furnish solid scientific evidence of the ecological benefits to augment the empirical evidence from visual observations and from before-and-after photographs showing increased aquatic life in the vicinity waters and seabed, which attracts sea birds and fishers alike (SEAFDEC/TD, 2005, 29). Continuing scientific collaboration between Thai and Japanese researchers could provide such evidence in due course. There is also a need to formulate clear guidelines, such as the Set Net Code of Practice of New Zealand, to avoid malpractices that prompted the restrictions on passive fishing gear in the first place.

Through participatory action research this set net pilot project saw the transformation of some individual SSF operators to practitioners of collective action. The transfer of ownership of the project from SEAFDEC/TD to the EMDEC in 2005 strategically brought the Rayong-based researchers closer to the fisher communities and acquainted them with participatory approaches in problem solving. Fostering such transformations to reach a critical mass that would make a positive impact towards sustainable fisheries management, be it through set net or some other eco-friendly technology, requires not only concerted efforts of enlightened R&D personnel but also enabling policies and clear guidelines.

Conclusion

These three case studies represent a diverse set of challenges faced in implementing pro-poor and pro-environment strategies for agricultural development. Yet the cases share some common characteristics that provide a basis for comparison. All three are R&D projects to introduce agricultural technology, environmental knowledge and marketing avenues to target groups, in ways that foster experiential learning through collaborative efforts to make informed choices and seek workable solutions.

The studies demonstrate that collaboration among participating parties as disparate as professionals (academics, government and non-government), business enterprises and rural folk needs building relationships in which different contributions of knowledge, experience and skills are recognized and valued. Fostering such relationships is not easy. Skills in participatory, facilitation and negotiation techniques are not the forte of agricultural researchers, largely because of their technical training. Acquiring such skills requires commitment and belief in mutual learning. An entrenched top-down mindset that manifests in unequally-skewed interactions between researchers and extensionists, and between extensionists and farmers, is particularly strong in sectorally-defined government agencies. Policies and highly-institutionalized agricultural and related support services meant to help rural communities also sometimes work at cross-purposes and hamper innovative strategies to help the poor, as illustrated by the lychee marketing and set net fishing cases.

The case studies illustrate that technological interventions aimed at enhancing agricultural sustainability must be accompanied with improvements in capacity for self-determination among poor and marginalized farmers and fishers, not only to embrace innovative and environmentally-friendly technology but also to work around institutional and policy obstacles. The comparison in Table 2 focuses on key aspects of this capacity improvement and evaluates, in a qualitative manner, the extent to which each project has been able to influence these aspects (itemized 1 to 10) through the use of participatory approaches. Item 3 reflects individual capacity (power within, in the parlance of empowerment (Charlier et al., 2007, 10) while items 4, 5, and 6 reflect collective capacity (power with) to bring about change (power to), at the personal (item 2) and social (item 7) levels. Change at the social level desirably shifts power relations away from domination (power over) to more equitable terms, as demonstrated by the lychee marketing case of the Hmong growers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>CS1: Mae Hae</th>
<th>CS2: Mae Sa</th>
<th>CS3: Mae Rumpheung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the project in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Fostering inter-agency collaboration</td>
<td>No direct partnership; project proponent operated as an individual</td>
<td>German and Thai university research partners from multiple disciplines</td>
<td>Regional fisheries training and national fisheries research partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Developing technical skills for innovative technology</td>
<td>Not a priority intervention of the project</td>
<td>Hmong growers learnt GAP and post-harvest processing techniques</td>
<td>Fisher group members learnt set net operation, maintenance and harvesting techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Developing/enhancing facilitation and mediation skills for conflict resolution</td>
<td>Through use of facilitating techniques and proper documentation</td>
<td>Not a priority intervention</td>
<td>Not a priority intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fostering collective agreement and action</td>
<td>Collective agreement reached and action taken, albeit delayed, on managing water diversion across the landscape</td>
<td>Collective agreement and action of Hmong grower’s group (HGG) members in supplying fresh lychee to supermarket chain annually at negotiated prices</td>
<td>Collective agreement on scheduling of duties for set net operation; Collective action in teams to carry out operational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Group formation and self-organization</td>
<td>Extant Village Network (VN) predates the project</td>
<td>Hmong lychee growers formed groups for marketing fresh and processed lychee</td>
<td>Formation of operational group among set net fishers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>CS1: Mae Ha</td>
<td>CS2: Mae Sa</td>
<td>CS3: Mae Rumpheung</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the project in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Building capacity for cooperative administration and management</td>
<td>Functioning of VN already in place, no clear evidence of enhancement through project intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Enhancing collective bargaining power</td>
<td>No clear evidence that VN members feel more empowered in negotiation with government authorities</td>
<td>Not intended as a direct project intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Raising environmental awareness</td>
<td>Through role-playing games (with selected individual farmers); field visits and observations (with VN)</td>
<td>Through direct observation of ecological changes in vicinity of set nets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dissemination to wider target community</td>
<td>Limited dissemination among individual farmers; departure of project proponent and leadership changes within VN may dilute acquired skills</td>
<td>Membership in the marketing group expanded within a year from 26 to 119 members from five Hmong villages</td>
<td>Initial involvement of the broader fisher's community provided exposure of other fishers; no clear evidence that subsequent learning of the fisher's group has been effectively transmitted to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Engendering sustained impact on social transformation</td>
<td>VN presence continues but further strengthening of power relations to its advantage is uncertain</td>
<td>Hmong grower's group likely to be able to continue seeking alternative marketing channels, if not strengthen or sustain the established channels</td>
<td>Restricted membership of present set net group is a limitation; continued presence of researchers through a follow-up project may strengthen the set net case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Case study comparison of learning and capacity enhancement outcomes resulting from project interventions
The Mae Hae project had a more abstract objective of inculcating environmental awareness to spur collective decisions and action at the VN level on managing land and water resources. The other two projects had more definite objectives of introducing specific livelihood-related innovations, drawing upon collaborative partnerships to tackle multiple issues that necessitated collective action by target farmers and fishers. For the Hmong lychee growers in Mae Sa, collective action was motivated by prospects of better financial benefits; less so in the case of the fishers of Mae Rumpheung. There was more “learning-by-doing” at the grass-roots level for these two cases.

Raising environmental/ecological awareness was most explicitly manifested in the Mae Hae case, circumstantially for Mae Rumpheung, and only as an indirect motive in Mae Sa. Instilling conviction for pro-environmental actions linked with livelihood activities remains a challenge. Environmental changes are incipient and are generally perceived as less pressing than the exigencies of daily living struggles, except when major environmental disasters occur that impinge directly on lives and livelihoods.

Researchers have multiple roles to play. Their targets are not only the farmers and fishers but also personnel from organizations responsible for promoting rural development – government, non-government and the private sector. Increasingly decentralized governance in many Asian countries provides opportunities for engaging local government bodies in solving problems with affected communities and, in the process, ideally, enhancing sensitization towards more people-oriented approaches. Training the next echelons of R&D workers in pro-people approaches constitutes investment in human resources as catalysts of change to help the ultimate targets—the farmers and fishers. Their increasing numbers and insertion into government and non-government institutions and programs will provide the opportunity and space for sustained engagement with communities and/or influence policy and decision-making. A multi-pronged strategy of strengthening capacities at both fronts—the service providers and target groups—would hopefully, with persistence of time, bring about the eventual structural and social transformations that time-bound R&D projects are generally constrained to achieve.

NOTES


2. Abbreviation for the “Sustainable Land Use and Rural Development in Mountainous Regions of Southeast Asia” research program led by the University of Hohenheim of Germany; https://sfb564.uni-hohenheim.de/8366

3. From lychee growers to lychee entrepreneurs https://sfb564.uni-hohenheim.de/8371


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Panel 6


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Appendix I

Workshop Schedule

The Eleventh Regional Workshop of the API Fellowships Program
November 24-28, 2012, Tagaytay City, Philippines

Day 1, November 24, 2012
Opening Ceremony

18:20 – 18:30  Welcome Address: 
Surichai Wun’Gaeo, Program Director of API Regional Coordinating Institution

18:30 – 18:40  Introduction: 
Tatsuya Tanami, Executive Director, The Nippon Foundation
Welcome Speech: 
Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman, The Nippon Foundation
18:40 – 19:00  Introduction of Keynote Speaker: 
Jose M. Cruz, S.J., Program Director of API Partner Institution-Philippines

19:00 – 19:30  Keynote Address: 
Resil Mojares, Professor Emeritus, University of San Carlos, Cebu City

19:30  Dinner Toast: 
Filomeno Aguilar, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University

Day 2, November 25, 2012

8:30 – 11:45  Workshop Introduction and Introduction of Participants
Chairs: Tatsuya Tanami and Surichai Wun’Gaeo
Workshop Overview: 
Mary Racelis, Professorial Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Graduate School, University of the Philippines, Diliman and; 
Lisandro E. Claudio, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Ateneo de Manila University
Self-Introductions of Workshop Participants

11:45 – 12:45  Lunch

13:00 – 14:45  Panel 4: Cultures and Identities in Transition II
Discussion Leader: Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu, Director of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University

Panel 5: Post-Development Paradigms in Asia I
Discussion Leader: Alma Maria Salvador, Chair of the Department of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University

14:45 – 15:30  Open Forum
15:30 – 15:45  Coffee Break
15:45 – 17:10  Panel 2: Expanding Space—From Exclusion to Inclusion
Discussion Leader: Agustin Rodriguez, Chair of the Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, Ateneo de Manila University

Panel 6: Post-Development Paradigms in Asia II
Discussion Leader: Leland de la Cruz, Director of the Development Studies Program, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University

17:10 – 17:55  Open Forum
19:00  Dinner

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
**Day 3, November 26, 2012**

8:30 – 10:15  **Panel 1: Violence, Memory and Social Catharsis**  
Discussion Leader: Meynardo Mendoza, Assistant Professor, Department of History, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University  
**Panel 3: Cultures and Identities in Transition I**  
Discussion Leader: Danilo Francisco Reyes, Assistant Professor, Department of English, School of Humanities, Ateneo de Manila University

10:15 – 11:15  Open Forum  
11:15 – 12:00  Lunch  
12:15 – 14:00  **Panel 4: Cultures and Identities in Transition II**  
Discussion Leader: Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu  
**Panel 5: Post-Development Paradigms in Asia I**  
Discussion Leader: Carmela Abao

14:00 – 14:45  Open Forum  
14:45 – 15:00  Coffee Break  
15:00 – 16:25  **Panel 2: Expanding Space—From Exclusion to Inclusion**  
Discussion Leader: Agustin Rodriguez  
**Panel 6: Post-Development Paradigms in Asia II**  
Discussion Leader: Leland de la Cruz

16:25 – 17:10  Open Forum  
17:10 – 18:30  Orientation for the field trip on November 27  
19:00  Dinner

**Day 4, November 27, 2012**

9:00 – 17:00  Field Trip: Learning with Local Communities  
1) Barangay Paliparan, Dasmarinas City, Cavite Province  
2) Barangay Muzon 2, Municipality of Rosario, Cavite Province  
3) Municipality of Talisay, Batangas Province

**Day 5, November 28, 2012**

8:30 – 10:15  **Panel 1: Violence, Memory and Social Catharsis**  
Discussion Leader: Meynardo Mendoza  
**Panel 3: Cultures and Identities in Transition I**  
Discussion Leader: Danilo Francisco Reyes

10:15 – 11:15  Open Forum  
11:20 – 11:45  Overview and Reflection  
Chairs: Jose M. Cruz, S.J. and Lisandro E. Claudio  
11:45 – 13:00  Lunch  
13:15 – 15:00  Reflection (continued)  
Moderators: Mary Ravelis and Lisandro E. Claudio  
15:00 – 15:15  Coffee Break  
15:15 – 14:45  **Concluding Panel**  
Chairs: Jose M. Cruz, S.J. and Mary Ravelis  
15:45 – 16:00  Closing Remarks  
Tatsuya Tanami  
16:00 – 19:00  Break  
19:00 – 21:30  Closing Dinner and Cultural Night

*The Work of the 2011-2012 API Fellows*
APPENDIX II

Workshop Participants

The Eleventh Regional Workshop of the API Fellowships Program
November 24 - 28, 2012, Tagaytay City, Philippines

FELLOWS

INDONESIA

Albertus Yustinus Imas, Researcher
Firly Afwika, Digital Strategist, Magnivate Group
Henry Ismail, Photographer
Lambang Trijono, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Gadjah Mada University; Director of Peace and Development Initiatives Indonesia (PADII), Yogyakarta
Mochamad Indrawan, Executive Secretary, Center for Biodiversity Strategies, Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences (FMIPA), Universitas Indonesia
Wahyudi, Researcher, Research Center for Culture and Society, Indonesian Institute of Sciences

JAPAN

Noriko Ishimatsu, Ph.D. student, Kyushu University
Toshiyuki Doi, Representative Director, Mekong Watch
Yuria Furusawa, Doctoral student, School of Cultural and Social Studies, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI), National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka

MALAYSIA

Fadzilah Majid Cooke, Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Universiti of Malaysia Sabah
Kam Suan Pheng, Senior Scientist, The WorldFish Center; Geographical Information Systems Specialist
Norhayati Kaprawi, Muslim Woman Activist and Documentary Filmmaker
Susanna George, Consultant
Too Chee Hung, Conceptual Artist

PHILIPPINES

Lutgardo L. Labad, Head, Committee on Dramatic Arts of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts; Artistic Director, Bohol Cultural Collectives
Mucha-Shim Lahaman Quiling Executive Director, Lumah Ma Dilaut Center for Living Traditions; Educator Researcher, Ateneo de Zamboanga University; Culture & Social Development Specialist; cultural and community development worker
Vicente Callao Handa, Associate Professor of Science Education and Qualitative Research, West Visayas State University, Iloilo City

THAILAND

Abhayuth Chanrabha, Coordinator, Community Organization for People’s Action (COPA)
Patporn Phoothong, Researcher, The Initiative of Museum and Library for Peace, Peace Information Center and Asian Muslim Action Network

The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows
Pornsiri Cheevapattananuwong, Lecturer, Mahasarakham University
Pradit Prasartthong, Artistic Director, Anatta Theatre Troupe
Somchai Phatharathananunth, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University
Tawatchai Pattanaporn, Documentary Photographer; Darkroom Specialist

CLV

Khuat Thu Hong, Co-Director, Institute for Social Development Studies, Vietnam
Nguyen Trinh Thi, Independent Filmmaker; Director, Hanoi Doclab, Vietnam
Syvongsay Changpitikoun, Researcher, Laos

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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WORKSHOP DIRECTOR

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Appendix III

Abstracts of Papers

Panel 1: Violence, Memory and Social Catharsis

Remembering the Legacies of the Marcos Dictatorship: The Formation of Historical Memory and the Struggle for Justice in the Post-Marcos Period

Wahyudi

Memories of the regime of Ferdinand Marcos still remain in the minds of many Filipinos, especially those who were the victims or relatives of victims of human rights abuses. This study examines transitional justice in the post-Marcos period. It seeks to understand post-Marcos government’s handling of human rights violations, and to explore the ways in which many Filipinos remember the Marcos legacy of human rights violations, as a form of continued resistance. The study is based on both fieldwork and a literature review. The fieldwork entailed conducting interviews with a number of people in relation to martial law, observing monuments, and visiting museums. The literature review focused mainly on the policies of President Cory Aquino’s government on human rights violations. The study aims to understand the collective memory of the Filipino people regarding martial law issues as well as to find out the challenges facing Filipinos in bringing human rights violations to court.

Pika-Boo: Public Performance Art works as an Act of Mutual Forgiveness and Understanding of the Second World War and the Atomic Bomb Incidents.

Too Chee Hung

The Second World War was a traumatic period for many people living in Southeast Asia, where it is mainly remembered in terms of Japanese occupation and Japan’s imperial goals. Unfortunately, the horrors of the past surrounding this era have never been resolved. The aggressed parties who suffered and lived through the war were not accorded closure, as neither compensation nor apology was offered to them by the offending parties. At the same time, those who lived through the war in Japan have been encouraged to believe, through national indoctrination, that they themselves are the ultimate victims of the war. This paper examines my attempts as an artist to use performance art to heal the wounds of war and to bring back memories of the past, so that we can begin to understand the truth and never repeat the mistakes of former times again.

Towards Peace and Reconciliation: Case Studies of Peace Museums in Japan and the Philippines

Patporn Phoothong

To what extent can a peace museum achieve the ultimate goal of peace education? Examining peace museums in Japan and the Philippines, I argue that if we were to consider peace museums in term of body politic, we find that these museums represent diverse and collective memories. The existence of peace museums reflects the abilities of different segments of society to utilize public space and get involved in social and political activities. It also reflects the societal generosity of offering space for experiences, memories, perspectives, and demands. The exhibitions and activities in peace museums demonstrate the peace museum’s role as a social and political space—which key element contributes toward the emergence of the peace process.
Post-Conflict Institution in Support of Reintegration and the Peace Process: Notes from a Field Research in Mindanao of the Philippines

Lambang Trijono

Rising awareness on human security issues affected by conflict and peace deterioration will significantly reduce conflict and bring about a new prospect for building peace in conflict-prone regions. This is especially true for Mindanao, where conflict and peace are simultaneously protracted. In such a situation, it is not only conflict, but also peace deterioration and its impacts on human security issues, that should be the main concern. This paper raises a critical issue on how to tackle peace deterioration to prevent its negative impacts on human security and promote the democratic peace process. Based on the three months of field research done in Mindanao, the paper comes to the conclusion that a visionary peace process is highly required to promote reintegration, strengthen peace process, and find a viable democratic solution to transform conflict and rebellion. In this respect, a visionary democratic imagination would help foresee the future of peacebuilding in Mindanao. While the existing post-conflict institutions have to be supported, visioning the future of peace process by looking for any possibilities to transform the rebel groups to be democratic political institutions after a peace deal should be the main concern.

Panel 2: Expanding Space—From Exclusion to Inclusion

In the Name of Civil Society: Land, Peace Initiatives and Environmentalism in Muslim Areas of Thailand and the Philippines

Fadzilah Majid Cooke

Community initiatives aimed at achieving peace in the southern Philippines and in the south of Thailand are analyzed in this paper, through the conceptual lens of “slow violence” and “environmentalism of the poor”. “Slow violence” describes the effects of long-term historical and geopolitical processes of socioeconomic marginalization through covert or overt practices, often sanctioned by law. “Environmentalism of the poor” describes how communities mobilize in defense of the natural resources and the environment upon which their livelihoods depend. The paper explores how, in order to endure, community mobilization requires special forms of leadership, including transparent leadership and wealth-sharing (not wealth accumulation as is the recent trend). Genealogy tracing among Maranao in Mindanao and involvement in a community research project concerned with the environment in southern Thailand are explored as grassroots activities with the potential to support peace-making, that could be strengthened with policy support.

Documentary Film on Progressive Islam in Indonesia and its Impact on Muslim Women

Norhayati Binti Kaprawi

This paper is the result of a project in which the researcher spent a year in Indonesia, researching and filming for a documentary film on progressive Islam and its impact on Muslim women in that country. The project sought to examine the diversity of Islam in Indonesia and, in particular, to highlight progressive discourses of Muslim scholars and activists and their potential positive impact on Muslim women in Indonesia, Southeast Asia and internationally.

Susanna George

As feminist organizations grow and evolve in response to different socio-cultural and political realities they emerge from, many have shifted from more informal, collective, campaign-based structures and processes to more formal and institutionalized entities. This research aimed to examine how feminists working in these organizations enact their core values in their internal organizational processes and practices. Feminist perspectives on collective and non-hierarchical processes were sought, as this appears to be a touchstone to creating organizations that are alternative to mainstream (patriarchal) organizations. Using a more dialogic, facilitative approach, the research itself has been used as an opportunity to open spaces for more reflective discussions between feminists within organizations. When assumptions, hidden norms and meanings are uncovered and understood, and values are negotiated by all those who make up an organization, there is a greater chance of the organization being aligned, supportive and a productive workplace.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Promoting Child Rights: Comparisons between Thailand and the Philippines

Syvongsay Changpitikoun

In 2009, the government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) approved a decree for the regulation and operation of non-profit associations (NPA) or civil society organizations (CSO). However, such organizations are still little known in the country. This study seeks to identify models from Thailand and the Philippines, where CSOs have significant roles in promoting child rights, which might be useful in the Lao context. Important issues for CSO effectiveness in LAO PDR and elsewhere include capacity building, moving from volunteerism to professionalism, and ensuring members are committed to connecting with the vulnerable, governments, international agencies and donors.

Panel 3: Cultures and Identities in Transition I

Shifting Phases of the Art Scenes in Malaysia and Thailand: Comparing Colonized and Non-colonized countries

Noriko Ishimatsu

Nowadays, contemporary Asian art is showcased in international art fairs and exhibitions. But modern and contemporary Asian art existing before the 1980s is hardly shown or discussed outside Asia. It could be suggested that there is an imbalance of understanding between Western art and Asian art. Actually, the West-centric value including notion of art was introduced in Asian countries through the western modernization and colonialism in the 20th century. While accepting the Western art value, artists from Asia have been producing their own artworks that reflect their society, politics, history and daily lives. I explored the development of art in Malaysia and Thailand by looking at the shifting phases of art scenes from the 1960s to the 1990s. Moreover, in comparing the two countries, I also examined the different processes of developing visual art in the colonized and non-colonized countries in order to see how colonialism has or has not influenced the art scenes. To do so, I paid attention to art institutions and systems that played an important role in the development of art in each country.
Image and Identity: A Study on the Images of the Virgin Mary Clad in a Local Dress in the Philippines

Yuria Furusawa

This study is on images of the Virgin Mary depicted as a local lady in a local or ethnic dress, which are found in modern and contemporary artistic expressions and religious images in the Philippines as well as in other parts of Asia. It focuses on the creation and development of these images, explores the idea behind them, and tries to position them in the context of the expression of identity in visual representations and the localization of Christian iconography. The paper consists of three parts. First, it discusses the backgrounds, such as the localization of the image of Mary in Asia and the ethnic costume as the representation of tradition and culture in the modern nation state. Then, it overviews the history of Marian images and devotions in the Philippines, and classifies the images according to their origin and style. Last, it looks into five instances of local Madonnas: the Virgen sa Balintawak, the Brown Madonna, the Virgen sang Barangay, Our Lady of the Philippines, and the “Filipina Madonna” series and thereafter concludes that some are expressions of the people's yearning for freedom and salvation, while others are expressions of the image of identity and cultural value.

The Aesthetics of Filmmaking as Ways of Seeing in Asia: Experimental Documentaries in Japan and Thailand

Nguyen Trinh Thi

In Vietnam where society remains dominated by state-controlled media and education, the arts is still largely controlled by the government. Although films and the arts in the country continue to lag behind the rapid changes and transformations that society is going through, they should, however, play a much more important role in the formation of civil society. New initiatives in the arts and art education are very important for Vietnam; and best practices, models and strategies for development and sustainability in the region need to be learned and shared. As a filmmaker and video artist working in Vietnam which has virtually no history of independent documentary and experimental films, I am particularly interested in learning about the history of and current developments in independent documentary film and video art works in the region, particularly the art and aesthetics of film as ways of seeing and perceiving. The encounters and discovery of the many independent documentary films and filmmakers in Japan and Thailand during my 2011-2012 API stint have given me tremendous inspiration for my work as an independent filmmaker, as well as a film/art organizer in Vietnam.

Understanding the Indigenization and Hybridization of the Science Curriculum: The Model of Culturally Relevant Science Education in Thailand and Japan

Vicente C. Handa

This paper focuses on a research project aimed at generating models of culturally relevant science education through an in-depth understanding of how indigenization and hybridization of science curriculum take place in Thailand and Japan. It highlights findings drawn from a six-month, multi-site ethnographic study in each host country. The research project generated a corpus of data drawn from interviews, focus group discussions, participant and nonparticipant observations, photographs, video clips, and documents from teacher-preparation universities, local elementary and secondary schools, and their surrounding villages. Summarized in an Integrated Model of Culturally Relevant Science Education in Thailand, the project has documented hybrid spaces in school science—where local wisdom stands alongside Western science—and in three (3) pillars of cultural relevancy in Thai science education. The Japanese model of science education meanwhile presents a holistic perspective of Rika-sans the
local knowledge and Western science dichotomy—thereby showing the co-existence of uniformity and individuality in the science curriculum, the reproduction of scientific knowledge in classrooms, and the goal of education for citizenship training.

**Acculturation Between Two Societies: Vietnamese Contract Migrant Workers in Japan**

Khuat Thu Hong

This paper inquires into the acculturation of Vietnamese contract migrant workers in Japan and their reintegration upon returning to their home communities. Data is drawn from interviews and focus group discussions conducted in Japan and Vietnam in 2012. The research findings suggest that acculturation paths experienced by migrant workers in both the host and home society are defined by a complexity of determinants, including cultural traits within the countries, institutional factors related to labor migration programs, migrant peer influences, and individual-level variables operating prior to and during acculturation. The paper confirms the importance of acculturation in the entire migration process. Migrants often experience a double “identity crisis;” one in the receiving country and one in the society of origin. Better acculturation will help lessen these crises, and some aspects can be influenced to produce better migration outcomes.

**Panel 4: Cultures and Identities in Transition II**

**The Reflection of Indigenous People's Changing Identity in the Social, Cultural and Historical Contexts in the Cities of Sarawak**

Albertus Yustinus Imas

Dayak is the collective name for the indigenous peoples of Borneo. In Sarawak, Dayak consists of Iban, Bidayuh, and Selako. In the olden times, their way of life and related culture were regarded as primitive, old-fashioned, cruel, paganistic, backward, and revolving around headhunting practices. These caused them to experience torture, humiliation and harassment in the hands of outsiders. Such treatment, in turn, made them feel inferior, marginalized, indifferent, underestimated, and even aggressive. Moreover, being inland people, they had direct contact with nature, consulted and related with natural elements such as omens, the spirits of ancestors, and deities. These aforementioned conditions enhanced “a shared us feeling” among them as a consequence of having the same fate and destiny shaped by natural elements and bad treatment from outsiders. In the colonial era, these groups were better known as either Land Dayak or Sea Dayak. The Land Dayak, were described as docile, meek, weak, friendly, introverted, timid, and tender persons who spent most of their lives in the upper rivers and mountainous areas. The Sea Dayak, were described as extroverted, brave, cruel, and aggressive persons who practiced the *bejalai* (walk and adventure) tradition which was the symbol of the Borneo headhunter. The commencement of the Brooke era (1841-1941) provided opportunities for Dayak to move from the rural to the urban area. In the urban area, Dayak started to adjust to the new environment through self-reliance. It cannot be denied that the urban lifestyle had positive and negative influences on Dayak’s culture, local wisdom, and way of life. To scrutinize Dayak’s identity and the possibility of its changing, some interviews were conducted and their results are presented here. Several theoretical perspectives from scholars will be quoted.
The Work of the 2011/2012 API Fellows

MBAL ALUNGAY BISSALA: Our Voices Shall Not Perish

Listening, Telling, Writing of the Sama Identity and Its Political History in Oral Narratives

Mucha-Shim Lahaman Quiling

Mba’ Alungay Bissala (Our Voices Shall Never Perish) retells the everyday politics of the Sama people in the shared borders of Southeast Asia. Through their narratives and testimonials, the Sama people’s stories in the shared borders of the Philippines, the Indonesian and the Malaysian Borneos, are woven in ordinary people’s discourses into a new perspective toward understanding the sea-nomadic existence and the sea-faring people’s experiences of war, migration, and the challenges to social integration as that, rather than purely descriptive ethnography, is a political discourse. Historical memory especially of pre-colonial Southeast Asian maritime society aided in the building and redefining of the regional and national identities of Sama-diaspora-communities, and locates this ethnic and religious community in the construction of cultural majorities and minorities. This descriptive and exploratory study aimed to answer the problems: Does a traditional primordial bond exist among the Sama diaspora in Southeast Asia? If so, to what extent has modernization impacted on this traditional bond? This study attempted to reconstruct the olden-day “homeseas”—as that ancestral domain and socio-psychological and physical territory—lived by the ancestors, as remembered by the present generation of Sama elders and traditional leaders, and culture-bearers. It revisits the Sama (or Sinama-speaking) diaspora communities to rediscover the social-economic, ecological-spiritual, and politico-communal life as defining elements of a shared “primordial bond” among Southeast Asian Sama diaspora. This work assumed a subjective-reflexive perspective, relying largely on personal contacts and social networks.

Conserving Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity: Lessons from the Chong Language Revitalization Project in Thailand

Toshiyuki Doi

Of 1,461 languages known to Southeast Asia, 779 or 53.3 percent are used by groups of fewer than 10,000 speakers. These languages may not survive the 21st century. In other words, minority people’s culture and identity are under threat. The spread of powerful national and global languages, such as Chinese, English, and Thai, through the education system and mass media, as well as disintegration of local communities by natural disasters and large-scale development, are major causes of declining linguistic diversity in Southeast Asia. Language death can also mean loss of traditional knowledge and violation of human rights. In fact, loss of linguistic/cultural diversity is taking place in many parts of the world. In response to this alarming situation, worldwide efforts to protect linguistic/cultural diversity have started. These efforts are often linked to biological diversity conservation, leading to various projects to protect ‘bio-cultural diversity’. One such case initiated by an indigenous minority in eastern Thailand, the Chong, shows how local natural and cultural environments can be revived. Chong people have carried out a number of activities, including orthography development, language teaching for children, and community forest management, which have contributed to strengthening their confidence and identity as an ethnic minority.

The Representation of Cultural Diversity in Primary Education in the Philippines

Truong Huyen Chi

This paper describes aspects of cultural diversity in primary education in the Philippines. It explores the visibility or obscurity of diversity in the school setting, awareness of diversity among primary school teachers, and perspectives on diversity of education among researchers and policy-makers. The paper finds that while most teachers are aware of the diverse backgrounds of their pupils, they seem not
to incorporate diversity awareness into teaching practice. For example, the intermittent use of local dialect in early grades is often a tactic rather than a consistent medium of instruction as part of bilingual education. Little effort is made to incorporate local content in social study subjects. The paper suggests that access to local cultures in education suffers from a ‘double squeeze’. This is a result of a crisis of humanities in the curriculum and a strong upholding of a form of nationalism on the other. Toward the end of the paper, I provide information on the role of the private sector and civil society in promoting local cultures in education.

Diversity That Sells: The Success Story of Malaysia’s Tourism Branding “Truly Asia”

Firly Afwika
Thirty-three years after the ethnic riots of 1969, Malaysia finally found a formula to reduce ethnic tension: convert diversity into a promising tourism product. Ever since it launched the campaign “Malaysia, Truly Asia” in 2002, the country has been “selling” its multiculturalism and cultural diversity, which represent all the major civilizations in Asia. Its brand positioning reflects not only Malaysia’s ethnic diversity, but also its natural, cultural and historical make-up. After 10 years of this consistent campaign, “Truly Asia” has become one of the most sought-after tourism brandings in the region. This campaign is considered a huge success, not only because it has made Malaysia the biggest competitor of China as tourism destination, but also it has made tourism the second major contributor to Malaysia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This study wants to elicit some lessons from Malaysia’s bold experience of developing its tourism industry by using its diversity as a unique selling point.

Panel 5: Post-Development Paradigms in Asia I

Participatory Governance of Land and Water Resources: The Satoyama System of Japan

Mochamad Indrawan
The Japanese satoyama epitomizes a form of participatory governance of land and water resources. The aim of this paper is to explore the diversity of socio-ecological systems that characterize the satoyama system. Several satoyama (here defined as “socio-ecological landscape of productivity”) throughout Japan were visited and on-site interviews conducted. Satoyama landscape patterns were dependent on the socio-ecological systems. Satoyama could have multiple forms, such as that in the national park of Aso, where grassland and forest satoyama co-occur, or that in Lake Biwa where satoyama co-exists with satoumi (wetlands form of satoyama). Rights and obligations drive the social networks, thus realizing participatory governance. Traditional ecological knowledge is an important element that helps govern the system. Unfortunately, due to chronic problems of depopulation, aging, and changing lifestyle preferences, the satoyama system is on the decline. Suggested responses include socio-economic enhancement of ecosystem services and local biodiversity, the identification and effective involvement of relevant stakeholder groups.

Re-building Japan: Still-photographic Documentary Project on the Resilience of Rice Cultivation

Tawatchai Pattanaporn
This set of photo documentaries documents problems and agricultural rehabilitation efforts, particularly relating to rice farming in areas damaged by the tsunami and radiation leak in the northeast of Japan. The presentation will be made through the use of monochrome, color photography, and information collected from areas affected by the unprecedented challenge that the Japanese had never experienced...
previously. Undeniably, nature has been issuing signals, warning of impending disasters which are expected to become more frequent in the future. Disasters can happen anywhere, including in places that had never before been affected. It is unavoidable that our global community revisits our development approach which will have to address the uncertainty. It is hoped that this documentary will transfer the wisdom, experiences, and challenges for the learning of the wider society.

The Dynamics of the Mining Industry in Asia and its Impacts on the People and the Environment: A Photo Documentary Project

Henri Ismail

As a photographer, I proposed a photo documentary project that would record what the mining practice has brought to the local people and their environment, for the API Fellowship. I went to several mining sites in Thailand and the Philippines from October 2011 to May 2012. The objective of this project is to use visual texts (in this case: photographic images) as a medium, as these could speak to people regardless of what their mother tongue is. Therefore, the significance of the project lies in its utilization of this rarely used medium. While doing the fieldwork, I found differences and similarities between both countries. However, I will highlight the case of Non Samboon that I perceive to be an excellent example of generating community-based initiatives. These initiatives have endured for more than 10 years now, and I found that keys to their survival are consistency and independence. I am using the pictures I produced to share the stories, lessons, and my experiences of Non Samboon, particularly with the affected community in Molo, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

Alternative Power Production for Sustainability and Justice for Local Communities

Porrsiri Cheevapattananuwong

This research is a response to ASEAN-wide policy debates over the use of conventional and renewable energy sources to reduce global warming. The paper examines benefits and challenges around different energy development options for local communities in Indonesia and Japan.

SANCTUARY: GENIUS LOCI AND EMPOWERMENT IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

An Investigation of Community-Based Theater, Tourism, and the Creative Industries in Thailand, Japan, and Indonesia, as Emerging Models of Social Entrepreneurships

Lutgardo L. Labad

Tourism has grown in leaps and bounds in the Asian region, but has also reared its upside (economic boost) and downside (loss of cultural and ecological integrity) results, especially from the hype that it has become a major vector of growth in several developing economies. In the Philippines, I have been engaged in developing community-based cultural collectives to address poverty alleviation and benchmark cultural tourism, but found areas for improvement which might be answered by observing and studying the best practices of community tourism in Thailand, Indonesia and Japan. The journey to both cultural tourism hotspots and alternative tourism destinations led me to a number of inspiring and enlightening discoveries: the excellent pedagogy of community-based tourism in Thailand, the thriving alternative public theater spaces and community learning centers in industrialized Japan, and the dynamic creative industries in Bali and Jogjakarta specializing in mainstream tourism, as well as ensuring local integrity within their communities. These initiatives point to how the sustenance of the proverbial Genius Loci and pride of place (ecological and cultural) are ensured, while fostering economic prosperity in the local levels by becoming social entrepreneurships, thus indicating how my own province and, hopefully, my country, can realize a truly community-based Creative Economy.
Panel 6: Post-Development Paradigms in Asia II

The Small Theatre-Soft Power: The Means to Build Up Ideal Society

Pradit Prasarthbhong

This paper presents the whole picture of small alternative theaters in Tokyo, Japan. It also discusses the demands of small theaters, their management, obstacles, challenges, and the factors behind their existence, as well as their interlink. The paper gives readers some examples of small theaters reflecting diversities and inspirations. Factors supporting modern theaters in Japan may be adopted in theaters in Thailand to secure their development. There may not be any fixed formula for how small theaters can create dream societies, however. Yet, the invaluable experiences and learning during my Fellowship activities gave me inspiration and a guide to possibilities. These will be applied to my future work for the ideal world of theater arts, which I will elaborate on later in this paper.

Linking the Movements of the Urban Poor in ASEAN and Japan to Create Land and Housing Justice

Abhayuth Chantrabha

Based on the researcher’s fieldwork with urban poor movements conducted in 2011-12 in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan, this paper relates the problems of evictions in all four countries resulting from the dominant neoliberal development paradigm, as well as the responses mounted thereto by the organized urban poor in the different national contexts. The research suggests the necessity of linking the urban poor throughout the region to realize what might be termed genuine “grassroots globalization” that has the capacity to bring about justice through international solidarity-based collective action.

Social Movements and Democracy: Experiences from the Philippines and Thailand

Somchai Phatharathananunth

This article investigates the relationships between social movements and democracy in Thailand and the Philippines in the period of post-authoritarian rule. Social movements have been singled out as important components of civil society that enhance democracy and as champions of social justice, human rights and participation. Few would question the central role held by social movements in democratic development. However, social movements take different attitudes to democracy. Some support the contemporary practice of representative democracy, while others prefer the direct participatory model. This paper examines conceptions of democracy among social movements in the Philippines and Thailand and analyses their implications.

Strengthening Self-determination for Social Transformation through Participatory Approaches in Pro-poor Agri-environmental Research and Development: Case Examples from Thailand

Kam Suan Pheng

An evaluation framework to assess the extent to which participatory approaches help to foster pro-poor and pro-environment agricultural development was tested on three agriculture-based projects. One project attempted to foster collective action on land and water management among highland communities. Another project assisted Hmong lychee growers to fetch higher prices through finding new markets for their improved fresh and processed products. The third project piloted the introduction of eco-friendly fishing gear to artisanal fishers facing increased competition and depleted coastal fish stocks. The test projects needed target farmers and fishers to acquire new technical skills and to self-organize.
collaboratively. Participatory techniques aimed at fostering mutual experiential learning and increasing participant’s capacity in making informed choices and tackling institutional and policy obstacles. Analysis of the case study outcomes indicates different extents of achievement and points to various roles and strategies that researchers can undertake in efforts in which short-term projects are expected to contribute to longer-term social transformations in the rural sector.
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