Asian Transformations in Action
The Work of the 2006/2007 API Fellows
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ABOUT THE BOOK

*Asian Transformations in Action*, is a collection of papers by the 2006/2007 Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellows. The twenty-seven papers that comprise the book cover key areas such as heritage, identity, change and conflict; engaging modernity; religion, gender, and art; changing lifestyles and health; the state, development and globalization; empowering the poor and the vulnerable; and social justice, human rights, and civil society. 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 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 currently 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

In its tenth year since its inception, the API Fellowships Program nowadays stresses the continuing commitment of API Fellows who have completed their initial fellowship activities. Through furthering collaboration between Fellows, the Program hopes to build and promote the API Community, which is comprised of over 250 API Fellows. The following initiatives are now being carried out through the Post Fellowship Programs:

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 inter-linkages 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. The project will last three years, involving five sites in the region: Biwako (Japan), Batanes (Philippines), Khiriwong (Thailand), Tasik Chini (Malaysia) and Kalicode (Indonesia). In conducting the Regional Project, the API Community is guided by the values of social relevance, public-policy advocacy, network building, creativity, transparency and accountability.

2) API-Salzburg Global Seminar Collaboration

The Salzburg Global Seminar was founded in 1947 by three graduate students at Harvard University as a means to bringing together young Europeans and Americans from countries recently at war to engage in intellectual dialogue.

In the 60 years since its establishment, the Salzburg Global Seminar has evolved and expanded both the breadth of countries from which its participants come as well as the issues that serve as the focus of its programs. To date, more than 25,000 individuals from more than 150 countries have attended Seminar sessions.

In an effort to flow with the tide of globalization, the Salzburg Global Seminar decided to reach out beyond Europe and the US, to Asia, the Middle East and Africa. In so doing, the Seminar found the API Fellowships Program to be a good quality pool of intellectuals in Asia and began planning a new partnership. As a result, a new scheme whereby selected API Fellows (up to ten Fellows per year) attend the Seminar was created. This collaborative scheme provides opportunities for API Fellows to expand their intellectual capacity by exposing themselves to world intellectual leaders and to convey to a wider audience the messages and voices of Asia.

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.
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WELCOME SPEECH
Yohei Sasakawa
Chairman of The Nippon Foundation

Honorable Professor Dr. Edilberto C. de Jesus, Director of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, Father Antonio Samson, S. J. President of Ateneo de Davao University, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for taking part today in the 6th API Workshop. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the sixth group of API Fellows, who have completed their projects.

The first API Workshop was held on Cebu Island, and was attended by President Corazon Aquino. This year we have returned to the Philippines. I offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Jose Cruz of Ateneo de Manila University and all the people who have worked so hard to organize this workshop here in Davao.

Asia has a long history of exchange involving people, goods and information. Consider Japan and the Philippines. Many of you will know that large numbers of Japanese immigrated to Davao at the beginning of the 20th century. They were received warmly by the local people, and worked alongside them to develop the local abaca industry.

Going back much further, history tells us that groups of Japanese traders called wako reached the Philippines in the 16th century, establishing settlements in Luzon.

In the 19th century, the Filipino national hero Jose Rizal spent time in Japan, and saw for himself the momentous changes of the Meiji Restoration. More than 100 years later, the existence of the Rizal Society of Japan shows he still has many admirers in my country. Though not many people know about it, there is even a statue of Rizal in the center of Tokyo, in Hibiya Park.

Another Filipino revolutionary who went to Japan was Mariano Ponce. He lived in Yokohama as the representative of the First Philippine Republic. While in Japan he had contact with many Japanese political leaders, as well as with Sun Yat-sen, who was then in exile. Sun Yat-sen went on to establish the Republic of China and is often referred to as the father of modern China.

Through his friends in Japan, Ponce obtained weapons for the Philippines’ fight for independence from the United States. Unfortunately, the ship carrying the weapons sank off China and never reached their destination.

These stories exhibit the trust and friendship among people who shared a common cause of nation-building in the region at that time. Later, there would be the sad experience of the Pacific War between Japan and the Philippines. Today, however, our relationship is based on mutual trust. We are witnessing a dramatic increase in the mobility of people, goods and information.

I have been speaking of historical figures from Japan and the Philippines for a reason. They provide examples of our mutual understanding and cooperation. This is what API is all about, and why it is needed.

Today Asia faces a dichotomy between two mutually exclusive trends. The first is very positive. This is the rise of the middle classes, as a result of economic development in each country. The middle classes have been educated to a high level, and have attained a measure of employment and income. This is leading to the development of an Asian-style middle-class consciousness that transcends borders and cultural traditions. The middle classes have a common awareness of issues such as democracy, development, growth and education. They also share common values with regard to popular culture such as music, movies, manga and animation.

But there is another trend, one toward confrontation. The confrontation between the haves and have-nots as social disparities grow. The confrontation based on race and religion. And the confrontation over the distribution of resources. We find such conflict right here on Mindanao.

Given this dichotomy, actions are needed to build peace and promote further development. On the one hand, efforts are needed to enrich people’s lives. On the other, something must be done to resolve confrontations and disputes. But as we all know, there are limits to what the state can do to resolve these issues. Moreover, many
are common to nations around the world. There are countless examples of problems that go beyond borders, and of communities in different countries that face the same problems.

To deal with these difficulties, it is necessary to strengthen the network of people in the region who know each other well, who can learn from each other, and who can freely express their ideas in order to find solutions.

API was created precisely to answer this need. It aims to build a new intellectual community in the region by identifying intellectual leaders, like yourselves, with a strong sense of mission to contribute to the public good. These intellectual leaders are given the opportunity to travel to other parts of Asia, learn from their neighbors and take part in exchange with others with a common grasp of the issues. The aim is for them to cooperate, enriching people’s lives and devising specific solutions to the problems confronting us all.

A number of different intellectual networks exist in Asia. However, until API, there had never been such a broadly-based network of public intellectuals, consisting of bureaucrats, NGO activists, artists, journalists and the like.

At the API Workshop in Phuket, I called on Fellows to aim at transforming the API Community into a think-tank and a do-tank for the development of Asia, one that would draw together public intellectuals from across borders, bring in wisdom and experience, and develop new methods to solve problems. Since then, two years have passed. In that time, I have been delighted by the progress that has been made. Workshops have been held in different countries, regional committees have been formed, and preparations have been advancing for an initial regional workshop, with the environment as its theme. I sincerely hope this will lead to concrete action. This is the task of those who make up the API Community.

In conclusion, I would like to recall the words of former President Corazon Aquino at the first API workshop: She said, “My fervent hope is that, through this ever-growing pool of Asian public intellectuals, Asia’s uniqueness and complexity can be preserved, and its many voices magnified and heard around the world, as we join the often confusing and dehumanizing tide of globalization.”

For my part, I hope that the API Community, through the participation and effort of all its members, will promote original research and hands-on activities that will increasingly contribute to the development of Asian society. At the same time, I hope your influence will extend beyond this region, and that you grow into a body that will transmit Asia’s voice to the world. Thank you.
Dean Joey Cruz, Fr. Antonio Samson, Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, API Fellows, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I must begin by congratulating the API Fellows gathered here tonight for the 6th API Workshop. I had been involved with API Fellowships Program in the Philippines from its inception and I do have some idea of the work it takes to win a fellowship and then to deliver on the award.

Defining API

It is on the issue of scope and themes that I would like to offer some thoughts tonight. What is the scope of our concept of “public intellectuals” and what are our expectations from them? I have participated in some extended discussions in Manila on the issue of determining who could be considered “public intellectuals” from whom we could accept research proposals. I would suppose that the programs in the other countries also wrestled with this issue, which is fundamental in determining who can be considered for the award.

The Intellectual and Academe

The term “intellectual” naturally led us to focus on faculty in universities, particularly since the awards were meant to support an activity that required research. Some observers have warned, however, that public intellectuals constitute an endangered species, a vanishing breed—because those capable of playing that role have fled to, or been captured by, academe. Obviously, this is a critique that comes from those disenchanted with what they see in universities.

These critics see professors engaged in teaching as mainly concerned with the process of transferring the notes in their binders to the notes in the binders of their students. Those engaged in research, on the other hand, dedicate themselves to producing studies that few will read, fewer will understand and virtually no one will use or remember. Except, perhaps, those professors who will copy notes from the studies into their binders so that students can then reproduce them in their binders.

These are clearly stereotypes that are not really new. But other concerns are new and relate to the trend towards the corporate management of universities. This has imposed, among other things, a more rigorous job analysis and assessment of faculty performance and a more sustained monitoring process. Oxford Dons have been fighting to protect their control of academic affairs against appointed managers. At Northampton University in the UK recently, the vice-chancellor presided over a review that froze the salaries of 40% of the faculty, because the affected professors had fewer management responsibilities.

In both the UK and the US, there has been a trend towards hiring both teaching and research faculty on fixed contract arrangements, without the possibility of pursuing a tenure track. There have also been proposals to give significant weight in the approvals process to the benefits that can be expected from research projects.

Certainly, faculty have to submit to performance evaluation, but they also have a right to a process that is appropriate, transparent and fair. The demand that research proposals be subjected to a cost-benefit analysis would not be so onerous or objectionable, as long as the benefits are not excessively weighted towards financial returns and a reasonable time-frame to achieve them is provided. Otherwise, research in the social sciences and the humanities would face difficulty getting funding support.

Universities have also become more dependent on support from external stakeholders, including the private business sector. Both administration and faculty become thereby also more vulnerable to pressures on the research directions they pursue and the policy positions they advocate. They suffer from the same vulnerability, where their budget entirely depends on yearly appropriations by the state.

Some quarters would maintain that academic institutions have no business taking policy or political positions. In 2001, I was serving on the board of an association of universities. In one meeting, at the height of the controversy over the alleged involvement of President Joseph Estrada in illegal gambling, I noted the eloquent
silence maintained by academe on the issue. Individual universities, including my own, had spoken out. But the sector as a whole had remained quiet, when all kinds of other associations—of businessmen, lawyers, accountants, retired soldiers, religious bodies, and civil society groups—had voiced their demand, if not for the resignation of the president, at least for a thorough and transparent investigation of the charges.

A ranking official of another university questioned the propriety of joining the fray, pointing out that the association, even in 1986, did not involve itself in the protests against Marcos. What stunned me then was the evident pride taken in that precedent. At a crucial point in the country’s history, when the nation stood balanced on a razor’s edge between the reconsolidation of dictatorship and the reemergence of democracy, seclusion in the ivory tower was proudly proclaimed as the correct course of action. Equally appalling was the suggestion by another person that the school heads should just allow, perhaps even encourage the students to join in the protest actions against Estrada, but should prudently stay on the sidelines themselves.

Last year, at a meeting of university presidents in Bangkok, I had the pleasure of talking to Margaret A. McKenna, president of Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I had not met her before, but I had written her some months earlier to express my appreciation for a piece she had published in the *Boston Globe* (13 January 2006), entitled the “Silencing of College Presidents.”

In that contribution, she pointed out that, in the 19th century, moral leadership was preeminently a role expected of the college president; many of them taught the school’s course on moral philosophy and ethics. In the 20th century, some presidents distinguished themselves for providing this moral leadership in periods of crises. Despite the risk of provoking public controversy, presidents like Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame or Kingman Brewster of Yale University, spoke out on the moral issues in the United States of their day: race, poverty, and the Vietnam War. The challenges, as Brewster explained, were striking a “deliberate balance of judgment” about what say, seeking “how to avoid excessive exploitation of the presidential office, and how to avoid being a moral eunuch on a morally anguished campus.”

McKenna warned that 9/11 and the War against Terror had made the questioning of established government line more dangerous; dissent was likely to be deemed unpatriotic. She believed that, for this reason, college presidents have tended to focus on their administrative jobs and to shy away from larger national issues.

The danger McKenna sees in the U.S. also looms in our region. If academic bureaucratization and the financial vulnerability of many universities make even their presidents reluctant to speak out on public issues, are universities likely to provide a secure platform for public intellectuals? From whom, then, if not from their leaders, can students learn the kind of civic engagement we hope they will practice? It is the example of moral leadership, exercised at the highest levels, that empowers the university community to fulfill its responsibility to seek the Truth and to speak Truth to Power.

**Media and “Punditry”**

The media is the other sector that logically should offer suitable candidates for the Public Intellectuals program. The work of journalists requires intellectual effort and involves a measure of research, mainly along the lines of oral history, but sometimes also demanding archival investigation. But media has become, as universities are becoming, Big Business. Where the media operations form part of a corporate conglomerate, the danger of capture by the special interests of the owners becomes magnified.

The emergence of television journalism has raised new problems. Television puts a premium on presentation, not necessarily intellectual skills. Indeed, sometimes not even presentation skills, but good looks. Even the industry jokes about their “talking heads,” which must be perfectly coifed. With good looks, TV hosts only require literacy to read the cues on camera, often prepared by researchers paid a measly fraction of what the anchor receives.

It is, perhaps, this debasing of media journalism that has turned the term “pundit” into a derogatory description. But the term had been more respectable. The original Indian word “pandit,” from which it is derived, referred to a learned person, a scholar or teacher versed in Sanskrit and Hindu law, religion and philosophy. British judges in India in the 18th and 19th centuries, who knew little of Hindu customs and oral traditions, employed them as court advisers. Until about the mid-1860’s, the legal structure actually carried a post for a law officer designated as the Pandit of the Supreme Court to counsel British judges on points of Hindu law.

Pundit later came to mean an expert in a field who pronounced authoritative views in the media on his or
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acquired their own shows, or journalists, taking the role of news anchors or talk-show hosts, began to qualify as pundits themselves—which contributed to blurring the distinction between the expert and the journalist. By virtue of presence in the media, the journalist gained recognition as an expert and the expert had to adjust to become more accessible to the mass media audience. Jean Bethke Elshtain, a board member of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University, noted the risk: as time goes on, the public intellectual may become more and more public and less and less intellectual.

Perhaps, inevitably, the pundit became associated with people pushing vested interests, a particular ideology or political platform. I think our public intellectuals would do well to shun the pundit label.

But punditry is an important element in defining the purposes of the API Fellowships Program. In the most fundamental definition, public intellectuals must acquire at least two qualifications: a level of disciplinary expertise and the ability to communicate their field to a broader audience beyond the field. They raise their value when they can clarify the meaning of developments in their specific fields and their connections with other fields. They perform an even more useful role when they can provide the public with insights into the implications of the academic work done in their fields on related areas of study.

Some public intellectuals, because of the credibility and the prominence they establish in their own fields, become influential sources of views on other fields. Einstein made his mark in physics. After gaining international prominence for his work in the discipline, he received and accepted invitations to speak on religion, education, ethics, philosophy, and world politics. Unless one is an Einstein, however, there are clearly risks in venturing beyond one’s area of expertise.

Part of the mission of the API Fellowships Program would be to support promising public intellectuals to move up this hierarchy of roles from communicator to prophet. Presumably, the process of moving up means reaching a progressively growing public. Ironically, ICT technology, which should logically facilitate the reach to a bigger audience, also makes it possible to contain the information flow.

Anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that national newspapers have been losing their readers. More people are getting their news from radio and television. And national political news, the mainstay for newspapers of national record, is losing reader interest, except, possibly, during crisis conditions.

The variety of publications available in bookstores and newsstands, on the other hand, has expanded tremendously. These materials cater to specific interests or demographic groups. There are magazines for the teen-agers and the elderly and pregnant women; for those interested in cosmetics or cuisine; gardening or guns; motorcars or movies; travel or technology. There are magazines that cover sports, and even more specialized publications that focus on specific sporting events or even individual teams.

Those who want to pursue their special interests beyond the weekly or monthly publications can surf the web for relevant blogs. Two points, I think, deserve noting. First, only a relatively small sector of society would have the education and the money to access these specialized sources of information. Second, these privileged few have complete control over the information they would like to see.

We look for the public intellectuals to play a role in shaping the culture of society towards desirable standards (though, of course, we can debate what these standards should be). But, especially, in the developing countries, they often stand at some distance from the mass of the population, which is mainly concerned with making a living. At the same time, their reach to the educated, moneyed class is completely contingent on the access it permits to them.

Imagined Communities and the Concept of Asia

The national audience appears to be shrinking. Society is being balkanized, fragmented into a multiplicity of interest groups that can selectively focus on anything they choose, from aviation to Zen. Each group can construct a virtual, self-contained community that can filter out of its radar screen anything extraneous to its concerns. The Boston baseball club that recently won the World Series speaks of a Red Sox Nation, whose geographical reach does indeed appear to span the American continent and beyond; it has a significant following in Japan, because of its star Japanese pitcher. It is a “nation” with a wide reach, but a narrowly limited focus.

The mention of geography leads me to the third element in the Asian Public Intellectuals Program. The Fellows gathered here today clearly do not represent all of Asia.
It is reasonable and necessary, of course, to impose administrative and budgetary limits on the scope of the program. But it may be useful to reflect on our concept and understanding of Asia. Does the geographical tag imply that our public intellectuals should preferably focus on Asian issues or address mainly an Asian audience? And how do we identify these?

Even the issue of which countries comprise Asia is not so easy to determine anymore, if you consider all the clusters that describe themselves as Asian. I am sure we can all identify the ten members of ASEAN. Perhaps, you know that SEAMEO is ASEAN plus One, with the addition of Timor Leste. Perhaps, some of you can also describe the coverage of the club for Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

The term Asia-Pacific is interesting. It can be understood to mean a group larger than Asia, including both the countries on the Asian continent and the island countries of the Pacific Ocean. Grammatically, it can also be correctly interpreted as limiting membership to countries on the Asian land mass that have access to the Pacific. APEC takes the narrower definition; UNESCO the expanded view. But last year, the Australian Ministry of Education and Training convened a conference of Asia-Pacific Education Ministers, and the intended territorial scope appears even bigger than that of UNESCO, extending from Turkey in the west to the Pacific Islands in the east, with Brazil enjoying Observer status.

I will concede your familiarity with these groups. But I believe I can safely bet the house against anyone naming the countries that can participate in the Asian Games and those that can receive financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank. I will even offer a hint: APEC has 21 members; the Asian Games fielded teams from 42 countries; ADB includes 48 Asian member countries.

I think we now all accept that nations and their claimed national territories are political and psychological constructs. In Benedict Anderson’s memorable phrase, nations are “imagined communities.” Their boundaries are determined by historical accident, established by the vision and aggressiveness of leaders, the fortunes of war and the incompetence or brilliance of contending diplomats.

One of the first things we learned, as students of Southeast Asian history, was the World War II provenance of the term—Lord Louis Mountbatten had established the headquarters of his Southeast Asia Command in Kandy in Ceylon or Sri Lanka. Despite once bearing the name and its historical and contemporary religious links with Burma and Thailand, Sri Lanka remains outside any grouping of Southeast Asian countries.

The concept of nations as imagined communities has equal relevance to both Europe and Asia. Some European weather maps reportedly end abruptly at national borders; these would not be very helpful to meteorologists. Somewhat similar is the practice followed by some countries of changing the names of typhoons once they enter national territories. In our time, it seems the essential solidity of topography and terrain has melted and become reduced to fluid lines on maps drawn by military and political strategists to serve national interests and ambitions. Geopolitics has trumped Geography.

Until recently, we have been able to depend on geographical origins as a reliable indicator of identity. But intermarriage, migration and, in general, the mobility that technology has made possible, have made birthplace and ethnicity less decisive cultural markers. We can no longer presume that the ethnic Asians we encounter in the United States, Europe and Australia necessarily speak Asian languages. And even when they do, their primary political allegiance lies with the country where they live. Increasingly we have to think in terms of hyphenated identities: Filipino-American, or Dutch-Indonesian, or Thai-German, and so forth.

Still, the hyphenated population, though it may be increasing, remains small. Indeed, the process of integrating them into the imagined community of their adopted nation is one of the complex problems to which globalization has given prominence. Despite the rise of multinational institutions, the emergence of a global market and the expansion of the world-wide web, which defies national boundaries, the predicted demise of nation-states remains only a distant possibility.

The emergence of the European Union had at one time suggested that regional associations might pave the way for an inclusive and cohesive political institution bigger than the nation-state. But the opposition to the EU constitution in France and the Netherlands has applied the brakes on the movement towards a stronger political union.

The SEAMEO ministers of education and ASEAN itself have been pushing for a program to promote a stronger sense of ASEAN-ness and a more cohesive Southeast Asian socio-cultural community. But none of the member countries see this advocacy as in any way
replacing or even weakening the ties between citizen and country.

**Identity in a Globalized World**

I have ventured to suggest that the terms of the API Fellowships Program—Asian Public Intellectuals—require periodic review because perspectives on intellectuals, the public and Asia are not immutably engraved in stone. The review would help ensure that the program remains relevant over time.

Many papers on the agenda for this workshop reflect upon the issue of globalization, its meaning, consequences and implications, and the related themes of identities and boundaries. A number also deal with how these issues emerge in popular culture.

Let me end with a small example, a kind of case study, of how these issues may interconnect. Some of you may be familiar with “Chess,” not the game, but a musical play based on the game. One of the best known songs starts with the line: “One night in Bangkok makes a hard man humble.” The plot revolves around the rivalry between an American and a Russian chess grandmaster during the period of the Cold War, and their common struggle to balance their love of the game to which they have dedicated their lives and their personal relationships.

At one point, the Russian realizes that he has fallen in love with his American rival’s manager/girl friend, and he entertains thoughts of defecting to the capitalist West. He expresses the dilemma he feels in the song entitled “Anthem”.

No man, no madness
Though their sad power may prevail
Can possess, conquer my country’s heart
They rise to fail.
She is eternal
Long before nations’ lines were drawn
When no flags flew, when no armies stood
My land was born
And you ask me why I love her
Through wars, death and despair
She is the constant
We who don’t care.
And you wonder will I leave her—but how?
I cross over borders, but I’m still there now.
How can I leave her?
Where would I start?
Let man’s petty nations tear themselves apart
My land’s only borders lie
Around my heart.

Here we have an artist’s testimony to a man’s rootedness in the land of his birth, of his people, of his culture in a time of global, ideological confrontation. I hope it serves to add a dimension and a color to the theme of boundaries, culture and identity in an age of globalization that many of you have been exploring in your work.

My best wishes for a stimulating and fruitful meeting. Thank you and good evening.

E.C. de Jesus
25 November 2007
OVERVIEW
Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu, Workshop Director
6th Workshop of the API Fellowships Program

ENCOUNTERS OF ASIAN TRANSFORMATIONS: VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

The papers in this collection carry an important and central agenda: to understand the social transformations in Asia as these are taking place. Like the sociologist Bruno Latour who proposes that one should “study science in action and not ready-made science,” the 2006/2007 API Fellows studied social and cultural transformations in-the-making and by doing so could arrive at an understanding before these become facts, blackboxed and taken for granted.

In the study of Asian metamorphosis, Latour’s idea means investigating and analyzing the social conditions from which transformative actions emerge, the medium and practices of social transformation and the outcomes which both constitute and reproduce the conditions and structures bearing such actions. Such is the nature of the perpetual metamorphosis of Asia.

API Fellows are able to study social and cultural transformations in action by having the privilege of observing, reflecting on and analyzing Asian societies for a prolonged period of time. This period of time, which allows a space for cultivating both knowledge for understanding and knowledge for action, is becoming rare in an age of speed and multiple tasking. The body of knowledge and insights that API Fellows collectively build is refined by the comparative optics of viewing one’s own society in relation to another and vice versa, since they study a society other than their own.1

Each paper sheds light, on a continuum of degrees of focus, on the contexts and processes of social transformations in Asia, and on the origins and consequences of these transformations as they are taking place. These transformations may happen gradually as society and its various parts constantly search for equilibrium. At other times, transformations occur in the form of contestations and tensions that suggest uneven and partial outcomes. Two sets of works by API Fellows can be viewed as offering an insight into the nature and dynamics of the circles of power and the great portion of goodwill residing in society. Another set can be regarded as contributing to the understanding of the dynamics of social transformations, particularly the intermingling of continuity and discontinuity, the blurring or reintegration of boundaries, and the refiguring of identities and futures. Finally, there is a set of works that can be considered as collages of betterment and the specificities of globalization.2

Circles of power and counterbalances

The different types of social honor that society bestows to different groups of people hint that more people of diversified backgrounds can participate in the traditional spheres of power—politics, religion and economy. Akiko Morishita’s examination of the political longevity of the Chief Minister of a Malaysian state shows one example of how political and economic power is bestowed by society and how the political culture perpetuates the grasp of those who lay hold of power and impedes the ascent of others into circles of power.

Ayame Suzuki’s study on the rise and fall of opposition forces in Malaysia illustrates how influential individuals from the professional, educational, cultural and religious sectors can potentially counterbalance the dominant economic and political elite. She highlights a new aspect of counterbalancing, achieved by engendering the perception that legal boundaries have not been pushed and that deliberative channels for interest articulation exist, which resulted in some members of the opposition not remaining opposed to the government.

In his engagement of a sample of Muslim and non-Muslim interpretations of Islam’s place in politics in Malaysia, Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad suggests that definitions of rights and laws by the political elite must take into account the interpretations of those for whom it speaks. He shows how an appreciation of these differences is vital to understanding the fractious debates about the nature of the secular state and the Islamic state.

Persistent problems, promising solutions and beneficence

Persistent problems of poverty and social inequality have generated promising solutions. Josie M. Fernandez
presents some reformulations of philanthropy which have led to the idea of social investments as replacement for charity work. To make the point that philanthropy is bound to particular social, political and economic conditions, she focuses on examples of Islamic institutional philanthropy in Indonesia, which is comprised of various acts of giving freely or obligatorily.

However, proffered solutions should be carefully examined, as Hozue Hatae has done on Japanese private-sector development projects in Malaysia and the Philippines, for their capabilities to help communities and to respond to their unintended consequences. By studying three of these projects, she is able to provide us a glimpse of how “sustainable development” has, in many cases, turned out to be destructive development for local people.”

The gleaning of important lessons from best-intention actions is also a theme that Heru Susetyo shares with Hatae. Susetyo describes the inevitable differences in capabilities across countries and localities in providing for the basic needs of victims of disasters. His account of the disaster management systems of Japan, Indonesia and Thailand is instructive of the twin facts that while most disasters are impossible to prevent, human beings can either magnify or diminish their costs, and that survival and recovery favor those who are best prepared.

Intermingling of continuity and discontinuity

Some societies discard or neglect their traditional culture as others try to protect themselves from the invasion of the modern and the new. Michi Tomioka, Jo Kukathas, Ramon Santos and Glecy Atienza direct attention to various groups’ efforts to find a balance between the old ways and the new. Tomioka shows how traditions are invented—the contraction of time in Javanese court dances is an example—and how the previous form can be restored to its rightful place. The warm reception of her staging of the full version of the dances shows that since “[a]rtistic values can be limited or changed according to social and cultural contexts… [i]t would be effective for cultural communities to revalue and reconsider the results of former art projects in search of their own roots, historical memory and cultural identity.”

Kukathas’s reflections on the theater, particularly the noh, unmask many of the ironies that accompany transformations in the arts. Among these: that many traditional art forms cease to be a voice for those in the fringes “once they occupy the privileged position of a classical or state form,” and that “those who seek to freeze tradition forget that tradition is evolving.” A nationalist stance that seeks to foster a society’s uniqueness and authenticity, she suggests, is more detrimental than beneficial as it leads to the stratification of that society’s arts forms.

One important aspect in the translation of the old into contemporary times and spaces is the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another. Atienza provides a glimpse into how Indonesian and Thai artists themselves have developed a theater documentation system where the preservation and transformation of traditional theater practices undergo a “process of critical interpretation and re-interpretation.” She identifies the creation of a collective theater memory, developed by artists’ engagement of communities in the production and performance of theater, as the core of this system.

Santos presents the traditional and indigenous ways of preserving and transmitting musical arts and the formalized institutional structures for doing so in contemporary Indonesia and Thailand. Since institutional and formal modes of transmission and learning are likely to dominate the present times, Santos, like Atienza, underlines the artists’ ennobling role to “effect a balance between what is lost and what is gained and accordingly exercise their power and imagination… to determine the parameters of change through which and by which they can exercise the license to create and innovate, in the process of sustaining, perpetuating and enhancing tradition.”

Blurred borders and social integrations

The experiences of boundary-crossing hybrid forms present themselves as a fertile ground of study. Hybridization, which refers to the combination of various cultural elements, is closely linked to the forming of an identity. Mokhammad Yahya’s and Djarina Velasco’s respective studies of Southern Filipino Muslims in Metro Manila and the Indonesian side of the Indonesian-Philippine border illustrate a form of hybridization where previous cultural and geographic connections become blurred by combinations of new symbols, signs, practices and localities.

Yahya chronicles a form of hybridization among Filipino Muslim urbanites: their “rhetorically fundamentalist but pragmatic and moderate approach to an Islamic state” bears the imprint of the enclave character of their urban settlement that allowed them
to retain their identity but at the same time respond to features of a predominantly Christian urban life. These social realities are difficult to reduce into conceptual frameworks. Velasco shows this to be the case of the current frameworks used in understanding the issues in borderzones. One framework’s lack of recognition of problems is prologue to the search for solutions. Another’s uncritical problematization of the phenomenon colors all the initiatives aimed at solving the perceived problem. It is time, she points out, for a people-centered perspective on the borderzone.

Alwin Aguirre’s presentation of Indonesian and Japanese science fictionists’ alter-conceptions of social life acknowledges a form of hybridization in the imagination of social life that results from the interface between science and technology and the social world. His discussion of science fiction focuses on the extent to which hybrid imaginations of the future depart from the Western tradition of science fiction and instead advance visions of tomorrow that truly reflect an Asian agenda for alternative life.

**Refiguration of identities and futures in times of transformation**

Images and texts reconstruct the social reality that they represent and in doing so contribute to social processes, including the construction of identity and meaning. Yoshiko Shimada’s interactive art project which she conducted in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia demonstrates how the unmasking of refuged identities in a changing world can proceed as a conscious engagement of the private and public binary. Through the exercise of unveiling public secrets, she provides an example of how art can fulfill a cathartic role while society awaits structural changes that take longer to realize.

Myfel Joseph Paluga offers insights into how human societies construct their identities by selectively reserving a space for animals in their social life. As society changes and as animal-relating practices change with it, Paluga suggests putting everyday phenomena under scientific scrutiny to “calibrate traditional views and practices to the actual lives of...animals.”

Iskandar Sharifuddin Bin Mohd. Said and Kaori Fushiki show that the reconstitution of social identity can be motivated by the project of nation-building or of marking one’s society as distinct and different from others. Iskandar Sharifuddin Bin Mohd. Said details how the state, through films, manufactures the facts of the nation and how films lending themselves in this exercise do not only serve the state or any organized power. A film that inspires discussion long after its screening allows the audience to manufacture facts themselves. Cultural politics and its many forms is also the subject of Fushiki’s examination of a recent surge in the promotion of “Balineseness” through the performing arts. Her work portrays the tensions created by this movement: on the one hand, it instills a pride of tradition and of place; on the other, it breeds stultifying ethnocentrism.

**Specificities of globalization**

Globalization may be viewed as the convergent transformation of particular entities (e.g., continents, nations, villages, companies, organizations, individuals). Supa Yaimuang contributes to an understanding of globalization as a lived and contextual experience by looking at Indonesian and Japanese farmers’ response to changes that are underway in the agricultural sector: the sustainable agricultural movement. Her documentation of sustainable production and consumption methods characterizes the sustainable agricultural system as a recognition of the wisdom of the past.

I Ketut Gunawan’s work generates a deeper appreciation of globalization as an overarching reality for non-state terror groups in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. These groups, he points out, have built networks, including virtual ones, which spill over national territorial boundaries in furtherance of their goals.

Krisnadi Yuliawan Saptadi contributes to an understanding of globalization through its workings in cinema wherein “the nature of film production is really difficult to keep within one country because creativity cannot be kept within one country’s boundaries.” He shows that cinematic representation and experience in Japan and Thailand are dialogues with Hollywood, in which the resistance to Hollywood’s “domination” is a da capo theme and the Asianization of cinema is a robust project. Sing Suwannakij likewise offers his thoughts on a paradox case of the globalization of representation: what one knows about Japanese spirituality goes through a Western sieve and can differ from what the Japanese actually perceive and practice; yet, the ensuing reality is more complex as these representations are consumed by the locals themselves.

Mohd. Naguib Razak joins Suwannakij in attempts “to discover, unravel and understand spirituality in Japan’s material utopia,” an insoluble condition of spirituality and materialism that arises both from Japan’s endogenous
sequences of social change and from its encounters with
the world outside. The questions that Naguib draws
from the absence of spirituality, especially among the
young, locate the question of reality as represented by a
filmmaker within another question, often rarely asked:
how does this reality affect the filmmaker?

**Collages of betterment**

In the following works, investigations of social
life look into the furtherance, enhancement and
rectification of engagements with society’s political and
economic systems and state mechanisms. Varinthra
Kaiyourawong’s study of a non-governmental
organization’s communication campaign to promote
community rights to biodiversity resources shows how
new political and economic conditions have pushed
civil society, which relies on tested strategies based on
communication and community development, to adapt
their actions to the “signs of the times.” Civil society has
become sensitive to indigenous and traditional wisdom
and to new, innovative systems of knowledge. The
refinement of civil society is also Chaiwat Thirapantu’s
concern as he examines the idea of transformative
leadership anchored on self-cultivation in Indonesia,
Japan, Thailand and the Philippines. He argues that
civil society organizations will be more effective if they
are led by transformative leaders who are able to provide
a space for communities to exchange ideas and nurture
social relationships.

Ahmad Hezri Bin Adnan’s work in Indonesia and the
Philippines addresses the hazards and risks created by
scientific and industrial advances and state-sanctioned
activities, and raises questions as to what extent the
state can monitor itself through sustainability indicator
systems vis-à-vis the price of progress. This is because, as
he shows, the usefulness of such systems depends largely
on whether or not they are used to inform policy and
governance.

Iderlina Mateo-Babiano grounds the theme of
betterment on the issue of regenerating urban street
life and rescuing cities from the imminent threat of
becoming part of the geography of nowhere. Her study
of the streetscapes of Bandung, Bangkok and Manila,
highlights the advantages of using a user-centered
approach, one that focuses on the needs of pedestrians,
in street management strategies.

In a study of the institutional location of academics and
intellectuals in Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand
and in discerning his own role as an API Fellow, Sharaad
Kuttan, emphasizes the importance of the intellectual
heritage of Southeast Asia, and the promise of the
intellectual’s reflexive and instrumental role before an
extra-academic audience.

It is in challenging facts, blackboxes, and taken-for-
granted realities that public intellectuals contribute to
the shaping of their own society’s alternative futures.
The comparative optics resulting from a study of a
society other than one’s own ensures that this pursuit
of possibilities for the future is tempered with the twin
pursuits of being in harmony with other societies and in
competition with them. These twin goals would inspire
innovation and transformative action in varying ways.

The papers in this collection provide a glimpse into
the process of researching Asia’s multiple realities.
One can, and perhaps only should, begin with an
initial idea of the phenomenon one is interested in. It
is the encounter with reality that should lead one to a
fuller understanding of it. It is the collective hope of
API Fellows that in sharing this fuller understanding
of reality, they will move those individuals whose
decisions affect the lives of ordinary people to find ways
to guarantee that transformations will not favor only
a few, and move those ordinary people who are the
central actors in the transformation of Asia to celebrate
and, at the same time, feel the seriousness of their great
role in it.
ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

The 6th API Workshop was held in Davao, on Mindanao Island in the Philippines, from 25-29 November 2007. The general flow of the Workshop, comprised mainly of eight parallel sessions of paper presentations, followed a chautauqua, a set of talks or lectures. While the imagery should in no way be fully associated with the great body of factual information relating to chautauquas, it was offered as a heuristic device for grasping the power of the workshop. Just as lectures are the mainstay of the chautauqua, the paper presentations were chautauquas in themselves. Twenty-seven API Fellows punctuated narratives of Asian transformations with numerous philosophical, artistic, and social scientific analyses and insights.

Many readers would have encountered the concept of chautauqua through Robert Pirsig’s “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.” Pirsig’s novel, written in 1974, describes a motorbike journey across the United States by the narrator and his son.

Pirsig, or rather the motor biker, gives lectures in his head. Sometimes, the lecture appears in the form of conversation with the son and/or the couple they befriended. In all instances, the reader is the third person on the motorbike. In the API Workshop, the participants went on a motorbike trip—with many third persons on the motorbike.

Who were these third persons on the motorbike? Indeed, who was the audience of the API chautauqua? Since the API is about Fellows studying a society other than one’s own, the workshop’s immediate audience was: individuals who come from the society being studied by another; and individuals who come from the same society of the Fellow studying a society other than one’s own.

The other person on the motorbike, the other important audience, was composed of the students of the Ateneo de Davao University. In the “API Hour,” selected Fellows visited five classes of the Ateneo de Davao University where they shared insights from their explorations of Asian transformations.

Aside from being characterized by lectures, chautauquas have one other characteristic. They are itinerant. In their original form, chautauquas brought education and culture to remote places. In Pirsig’s book, the motorbikers travel across the United States. In the API chautauqua, the presentations allowed workshop participants to travel to and across Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

The API chautauqua also allowed travel across Mindanao through “Mindanao Talk” with Fr. Albert Alejo, S.J., Executive Director of the Mindanawon Initiatives for Cultural Dialogue of the Ateneo de Davao University. Actual travelling was also done with a visit to local settings, namely the Philippine Eagle Center and Eden Nature Park, where issues related to environmental conservation and indigenous communities manifest themselves.

NOTES

1 This comparative optics is further enriched by that fact that most Fellows in this cohort (19 out of 28, or 68%) pursued multi-sited research.

2 The presentation of papers in this book of proceedings varies slightly from the thematic assignment of papers and sessions in the Workshop. For the original Workshop program, please see Appendix I.

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Introduction

This paper will focus on politics and the timber business in a forest-rich state in Malaysia. Around 66.1 percent (8.22 million hectares) of the total land of the state is categorized as forest area, and as much as 60.0 percent of the forest has been sold as logging concessions (Brown 2001). The state government budget largely depends on the forest revenue, especially since the timber boom of 1979 and the end of the nation-wide recession of the late 1980s. Forest revenue made up 14.6 percent of the government budget revenue in 1965, 21.1 percent in 1970, 17.7 percent in 1980, 21.2 percent in 1985, 50.3 percent in 1989 and 44.4 percent in 1995 (see Graph 1).

The Malaysian federal government has officially given great autonomy to the state government, including the entire control over forest concessions. In this sense, the state’s autonomy level is much higher than that of neighboring Indonesia, where the central government transferred the authority to issue logging concessions of up to 10,000 hectares to local governments as part of the process of decentralization after the fall of Soeharto. Indonesia’s decentralization and the subsequent implementation of the direct election system for local government heads (i.e., governor, mayor, district head) led to collusions and/or severe competition among politicians, bureaucrats and business people at both the national and local levels for the control of local political and economic interests. For example, in Kalimantan (the Indonesian territory of Borneo), national and local elites compete in particular over the control of forest concessions and mineral resources such as coal (Morishita 2006).

POLITICS AND TIMBER IN MALAYSIA

Akiko Morishita

The political conditions in the Malaysian state, which I argue in this paper, are much different from those in Kalimantan. Here, the state Chief Minister has retained his strong political influence for more than 25 years. He has also held the position of State Minister of Resource Planning since 1985, which has given the authority to issue forest concessions. Furthermore, he is the president of the local Muslim-based party of the state coalition government. I begin by outlining how the Chief Minister has concentrated strong political power into his hands, emphasizing his political cleverness in establishing political equilibrium among leading politicians representing other ruling parties and ethnic groups, and in gaining the federal support that strengthens his power in the state government. I then focus on one of the prominent local timber business people to describe how business success largely depends on political patronage in this state. In conclusion, I discuss possible future changes in the political conditions of this state.

Managing the federal-state relationship and inter-party politics

Malaysian political institutions centralize power in the hands of the state government in local administration. In the hierarchical administrative system, local administrators below the state level are all appointed: the Resident at the divisional level, the District Officer at the district level, and the Administrative Officers at the sub-district level. Village heads are also appointed by the government. There is no elected body except the state legislative assembly. Members of the local authority bodies (i.e., city/municipal/district councils) are all nominated by the state government. They comprise of Parliament members, state assemblymen and women, party politicians, government officers, business people and leaders of social organizations who are favored by the government. It is, therefore, crucial for those seeking political power over the state to gain the top positions in the state government which controls all political levels, ranging from the state capital to the division, district, sub-district and village.

In the eyes of the law, the Yang di-Pertua Negeri (Governor) and the Chief Minister are the most...
significant positions in the state government. The governor is the formal head of the state, appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King). He has the right to appoint the Chief Minister and other state ministers from the state legislative assembly, based on the assembly’s composition. However, in the state under study, these positions were actually decided in negotiations among the state’s ruling coalition parties. The federal government easily intervened and played a decisive role in the negotiations since the component parties of the state coalition government were often unable to unite because of ethnic differences, personal rivalries and disputes over political alliances. In this situation, the president of a Muslim-based party in the ruling coalition has assumed the office of Chief Minister since 1970 largely owing to backup from the federal government and he, instead of the nominal governor, has controlled the state government.

This paper focuses on the present Chief Minister (1981 to the present), who was born to a local Muslim family in 1936. His first occupation was in the judiciary after graduating from an Australian university in 1960. Along with his uncle, he became one of the prominent leaders of the Muslim-based party in the state coalition government of the 1960s. In 1963, he was appointed as state Minister of Communication and Works and then Minister of Development and Forestry in 1966. He was, however, dismissed from the post in 1967 because a non-Muslim based party dominant in the government coalition at the time feared his party’s growing influence, backed by the federal government, over the state Cabinet. Afterwards, he was appointed to a federal ministry with the help of his uncle, who held the office of federal Minister of Lands and Mines.

In 1970, his uncle assumed the office of Chief Minister with backup from then Prime Minister Abdul Razak Hussein despite his long absence from state politics due to his federal ministership. In other words, his marginalization in state politics by being placed in the federal government resulted in him gaining a strong connection with the national political leader, who had an unofficial but significant influence over the selection of state Chief Minister. After taking office, his uncle, however, failed to maintain a harmonious relationship with the other parties in the coalition government and the electorate as a result of too great an accumulation of power and wealth in his hands and the neglect of other communities in terms of the allocation of political and economic interests. He was also at enmity with Hussein Onn, the successor to Abdul Razak as Prime Minister, since Hussein regarded him as corrupt and as an ally of his predecessor. The Chief Minister argued with the federal government over a plot to overthrow him and to engineer the state’s secession from Malaysia. Hussein Onn then effectively forced the Chief Minister out from office and replaced him with his nephew, who was Minister of Federal Territory at that time (Brown 2001).

The current Chief Minister succeeded in striking a political balance among the leading politicians representing other government parties and ethnic groups through the allocation of executive positions. While he held the most important and profitable positions in the state Cabinet (i.e., Chief Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Planning and Resource Management—the successor of the Minister of Resource Planning), he distributed other important positions to the other party leaders to firm up political patronage. In the 2006 Cabinet inauguration, for example, the non-Muslim deputy president of the Chief Minister’s party and the president of the Chinese-based party, whose daughter married the Chief Minister’s son, were reappointed as Deputy Chief Ministers; the president of the non-Muslim-based party as Minister of Land Development; the president of another non-Muslim-based party as Minister of Social Development and Urbanization; and a Muslim senior politician as Minister of Housing.

During the term of the current Chief Minister, the state ruling coalition parties steadily won the great majority of seats in both state and general elections through various ways. They include: vote-buying, the allocation of campaign funds only to the government parties’ candidates, the establishment of new constituencies so that the seats of the government parties would increase, the adoption of a ballot-counting system to obtain a detailed breakdown of the voting results of each village, the commitment to infrastructure building in return for supporting government parties in rural areas, the acceptance of an opposition party into the governing coalition after the elections, and so forth. All federal parliamentarians elected from the state government parties in general elections have supported the national coalition government (Barisan Nasional, BN) and the Prime Minister. The federal government, thus, does not interfere with the Chief Minister as long as the state coalition government provides crucial votes to keep the national BN in power (Brown 2001).

The legitimacy of the Chief Minister’s rule has been affirmed by the achievement of economic development. The state GDP progressively grew from 3,488 million ringgit in 1980 to 5,291 million ringgit in 1985, to 6,558 million ringgit in 1990 and to 9,629 million ringgit in 1995. A decline in the poverty rate has accompanied
the rise in GDP. The ratio of households below the official poverty line has been reduced from 64.4 percent in 1970 to 47.7 percent in 1979, 31.3 percent in 1985, 21.0 percent in 1990 and to 17.0 percent in 1995 (see Graph 2). Those statistical outputs, whether they are true or not, have been used as proof of his successful administration.

Two issues, however, could undermine the Chief Minister’s rule. Firstly, his family business and involvement in corruption have been allegedly reported by some independent media groups. It is reported that his family corporation has received numerous government contracts for infrastructure building and accumulated great wealth (Aliran 2004). Another report also says that he has received a multi-million ringgit contract from Japanese timber shipping companies in exchange for his connivance in their tax evasion. Secondly, a land issue has arisen since the government projects of forestry and plantation development began to exploit indigenous peoples’ customary lands. The land issue had in fact already emerged during the colonial period but the ongoing commercial logging and recent huge oil palm plantation developments are accelerating the penetration into indigenous peoples’ living spaces and lives in rural areas. Grievances and protests against these development projects are not taken seriously and are sometimes suppressed violently by the government. These issues have eroded public confidence in the Chief Minister’s administration and the government. This public distrust can cause serious damage to the present political system in the long term.

Collusion between politics and business

While accumulating wealth through his family business, the Chief Minister established patron-client relationships with powerful business people in the state through the allocation of forest concessions and logging contracts. Most concessions were awarded to his family, relatives, friends and political associates, and then were subcontracted to local timber companies close to the Chief Minister’s family and/or his associates (Brown 2001). In these situations, five main powerful business groups have grown nationally and even internationally. All of them are family corporations founded by local Chinese. How did they make a link with the Chief Minister and become successful in business? The following part will focus on one of these companies, which was the biggest among them but has recently been overtaken in size by another company. It will demonstrate how local business people with a logging interest depend on patronage from the Chief Minister and his political associates.

The company’s founder, Tan (a pseudonym), was the eighth richest person in Malaysia and the 746th richest person in the world in 2006 (Forbes 2006). His personal net worth was said to be more than two billion ringgit (USD800 million) in 1995 (Malaysia Business 1995). How has he achieved such a great success and why was his company overtaken by another company recently?

Tan was born to a poor family in a district capital in the state in 1935. He is the second generation of Foochows who migrated to the district in the early 1900s. After graduating from a local high school, he took a correspondence course with a Chinese university and also began his career at his uncle’s timber company. In 1975, he set up his own company along with his brothers. The company started as a timber contractor in his hometown and now operates as far away as New Zealand, central Africa, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Russia. Other than timber exports and timber processing, his business has also expanded to cover finance, media, information technology, mining, aquaculture, oil palm plantation, trading and property development (Malaysia Business 1995).

Tan experienced political hardships during his early business days. In the early 1970s, he was jailed by the Chief Minister at the time on a charge of being a communist (Brown 2001). His hometown, which is also his business hub and where the majority of the population is Chinese, was the base for local communists from the 1960s to the mid-1970s. As communists used the forest as their safe area, logging contractors had to give assistance to the communists in order to be allowed to continue to work in their area of operation. After being released, Tan tried to creep into the Chief Minister’s favor, even making a special trip to Taiwan to serve as his golf umbrella-holder. The Chief Minister, however, continued to abuse his relationship with Tan. The Chief Minister, for example, suspended...
Tan’s federal senatorship, despite it being promised to Tan by the then Secretary General of the Chinese-based party, Gan (a pseudonym), who is a Foochow politician and shares a hometown with Tan, in exchange for a bribe (Brown 2001).

In 1981, the Chief Minister stepped down and his nephew assumed the position. Tan moved quickly to build up new political connections not only at the state level but also at the federal level this time. Top national and local politicians and their family members became board members in Tan’s listed company. They included a brother of the new Chief Minister, a former federal Chief of Defense Force, and a former federal Attorney-General. In 1987, Tan also purchased a 34 percent share in a company, the other shares of which are owned by a senior local politician who is former state Minister of Environment and Tourism and owns huge logging concession tracts in the eastern part of the state (Brown 2001; Colchester 1994; Malaysia Business 1995).

Under the new Chief Minister’s administration, Tan’s political ally, Gan, became the president of the Chinese-based party, and was also appointed as Deputy Chief Minister in 1994. Tan’s younger brother was then appointed as Senator in 1995. In order to make further political connections at the federal level, Tan also established a company in Kuala Lumpur in partnership with a son of the Prime Minister at the time. In 1992, Tan split off 15 percent of the company to another company in which the Prime Minister’s sons were sole shareholders and directors. Other share allocations went to several politicians of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malay-based party of the national coalition government (Brown 2001).

Tan’s company in Kuala Lumpur, however, failed to make profits and his family members resigned from the company board in 1994. After Tan’s withdrawal from the partnership, the Prime Minister’s son brought a lawsuit against him. Tan tried to arrange a meeting with the Prime Minister with the help of Gan, an old medical school classmate of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, however, refused to meet with Tan. It is also said that federal Inland Revenue Service agents were sent to raid the headquarters of Tan’s company (Brown 2001). Tan’s attempt to make a strong connection with the top national politician then broke down.

Tan’s political links have further withered away since Gan stepped down as the president of the Chinese-based party after his defeat in the 1996 election. A new party president was selected who also became Deputy Chief Minister. His daughter married a son of the Chief Minister. The new Deputy Chief Minister also held the office of Minister of Industrial Development and Minister of Modernization of Agriculture. It is likely that this was the time when Tan’s company was overtaken by another local timber company, the owner of which has close links with the Chief Minister and the new Deputy Chief Minister. Furthermore, another local Chinese businessman, Kiong (a pseudonym), began to gain economic strength rapidly in the early 1990s. He went into not only the timber industry but also non-timber businesses such as chemical and construction companies in partnerships with the Chief Minister and a former federal Minister of Finance. Kiong also obtained the trust of Prime Minister through his very quick completion of construction projects, including a five-star hotel on a popular Malaysian resort island. Kiong conflicted with Gan over the gigantic dam project in the state and was behind the latter’s defeat in the 1996 election (Brown 2001).

While being upstaged by other local Chinese business people, Tan became active and influential in the timber industry in other countries, particularly Russia and Papua New Guinea. His company has been operating in the Russian Far East since 1997 when it acquired the rights to harvest 305,000 hectares of state forest. In Papua New Guinea, his company is said to have made close connections with national and local politicians through bribery, including a former Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Internal Security, a provincial Governor and two Parliament members, and as a result succeeded in gaining control of close to 50 percent of country’s log exports. Although the company’s international operations have been accused of deforestation and illegal logging by Greenpeace and other international NGO groups, it is likely that Tan can more easily conduct legal and illegal timber operations in collusion with politicians in those countries than in Malaysia where his political connections have become weak at both the federal and state levels.

Through the story of Tan, it is obvious that local business people, especially in the timber sector, totally depend on political patronage and cannot be independent even with their great financial ability. In addition, top politicians can exercise police power as a political means of weakening their business partners if they become insubordinate or intimidating. Under those conditions, it is likely that local business people in this forest-rich state in Malaysia prefer to expand their business overseas where it is much easier to bribe politicians for business favors than in their own country.
Conclusion

In the forest-rich state in Malaysia, business success largely depends on political patronage under the strong rule of the Chief Minister. The major external and internal factors of the present Chief Minister’s longtime control over the state can be summarized as follows: As external factors, the national BN parties (i.e., UMNO, the Chinese-based party MCA, the Indian-based party MIC) have not come into this state so they have to rely on the state government parties for gaining BN-support seats in Parliament. Hence, the federal government supports and will not interfere with the Chief Minister as long as the state coalition government delivers crucial votes to maintain the national BN in power. Moreover, the Chief Minister is nominated from among the party leaders of the state governing coalition, so the federal government can easily intervene in the process of negotiation among the party leaders in order to put its favorite forward as Chief Minister. All these factors indicate that the state’s politics are ultimately influenced by the federal government.

As internal factors, the Chief Minister has succeeded in striking a political ethnic balance in terms of the allocation of political interests by giving the offices of state ministers to leading politicians representing various ethnic groups while he holds the most important and profitable positions in the Cabinet. Another significant issue regarding control in the state is winning general and state elections. The government parties have succeeded in maintaining a majority of seats in elections through various methods such as vote-buying, the establishment of new constituencies, commitments to infrastructure building in rural areas, and so on. Under these conditions, the Chief Minister concentrated political power in his hands and established the politico-business patronage systems through the reallocation of timber interests so that powerful local business people depended on him for their business success.

Are there any possible changes in political conditions in this state? The Chief Minister is already over 70 years old and has a health problem that will force him to retire in the near future. Since political power is much too concentrated on him and no other local politician is equal to his political skills at reading and manipulating the federal and state political situations, the future competition for the office of Chief Minister may lead to severe and persistent disputes and reorganizations of power among major party leaders. The federal government will then play a crucial role in the process of negotiation among local politicians. Hence, political instability at the federal level will create even greater confusion in competition over political power in this state.

NOTES

1 I cannot mention the name of the state and the Chief Minister for security reasons. For the same reasons, some references which I used are not on the reference list.

2 The reasons for the 1975 and 1985-86 decline in forest revenues need to be examined carefully in further research.

3 Actually, the autonomy in the forestry sector, which the federal government granted to the state government, is not absolute since the federal government keeps many ways to control the state government. For example, federal agencies such as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Agency, tax departments and even the environment department could be used to put pressure on the state government. The state examined in this paper has been able to keep the forestry land autonomy because the Chief Minister has been able to satisfy federal leaders in power by giving them some shares of the forestry interests.

4 The Indonesian central government, however, abolished the right of local governments to issue logging concessions in 2002 because of the over-issuance of concessions by local government heads.

5 The Malay- (and Muslim-) based party of the national coalition government, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), does not have a branch in this state.

6 The divisional administrative system was formed only in this state in Malaysia.

7 Please see Brown (2001) for details about these five timber companies and their political networks.


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POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND OPPOSITION FORCES IN MALAYSIA: THE POLITICAL PROCESS OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT AND THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

Ayame Suzuki

Introduction

Malaysia’s political regime is often referred to as “soft authoritarianism” (Means 1996), “semi-authoritarianism” (Ottaway 2003), or “semi-democracy” (Case 1993), because it restricts political rights or freedoms, but yet it has periodically held competitive elections. Unlike many other non-democratic countries, the so-called “Third Wave” did not trigger a regime transition in Malaysia. On the one hand, previous studies have tried to explain the endurance of Malaysia’s political regime by arguing that the opposition forces—an aggregate of pro-democratic or pro-liberal agents—do not grow because civil society is divided by ethnic cleavages, and the middle class or capitalists are too dependent on the state to have incentives to overthrow the established government (Crouch 1996, 242; Ottaway 2003, 161-89). On the other, works written after the Reformasi (Reform) movement in 1999 assert the incremental tendency of opposition forces by emphasizing the liberal and democratic nature of the middle class (Abdul Rahman 2002) and the development of cooperation among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (Weiss 2006).

However, neither explanation grasps the actual dynamics of the opposition forces and, hence, the dynamics of the regime. Indeed, the size of the opposition forces waxes and wanes rather than remaining static or incremental. This study explains the dynamics of the opposition forces by focusing on people’s perception of their opportunities for interest articulation and their attitude towards political institutions, both of which are determined by the nature of the political institutions. Here, “political institution” specifically denotes legislation that restricts political rights and its implementation, while “deliberative institutions” are alternative channels for interest articulation. The main resources were Hansard (the official record of Parliamentary proceedings), newspapers, and interviews with key persons.

The study consists of three sections. The first section examines the political process and implementation of the Official Secrets (Amendment) Act, 1986 (OSA), which restricts freedom of information and speech. This section shows how the political institution determines people’s perceptions and attitudes and thus, the size of the opposition forces, and vice versa—the latter’s influence on the former. This section depicts the dynamic interaction between the opposition forces and the political institution.

The second section deals with the National Economic Consultative Council (NECC), a deliberative institution for economic policymaking—an alternative channel for interest articulation that complemented the restricted political freedom and hence affected the size of opposition forces.

In conclusion, the study argues that the incentive of actors to challenge the existing political institution and add their strength to the opposition forces depends on their perceived opportunities for interest articulation.

Figure 1: Framework of the study.
These opportunities are regulated by laws that restrict political rights and are complemented by alternative channels. The above findings will be captured in a tentative model of the dynamics of opposition forces and political freedom in Malaysia.

**Official Secrets (Amendment) Act, 1986**

In 1986, the Official Secrets (Amendment) Act was enacted. This section depicts the political process of its legislation, which included not only the government and the governing parties but also the opposition parties and civil society; the rule-abiding nature of its implementation; and the dynamics of the opposition forces.

**Political process of legislation**

The background for the Official Secrets (Amendment) Act was the deepening of the government-private sector relationship that resulted from a privatization policy and the “Malaysia Incorporated” concept that was introduced in 1983. Paralleling this development was an increase in citizens’ awareness of the state of the government’s economic management that resulted from the foreign media coverage of the mismanagement of public companies and corrupt practices of ministers. Cabinet documents related to this area of concern and information related to the tender award of a government project, above all, came under public scrutiny, resulting in the leaking of related documents.

The government became vigilant about the media, arguing that freedom of the press should be restricted for the sake of peace and economic development (New Straits Times [NST], March 10, 1986). In March 1986, the government tabled the OSA amendment bill, which established mandatory jail sentences to discourage the leaking of related documents.

The amendment generated severe opposition from the National Union of Journalists (NUJ); the Bar Council; trade unions, including the Malaysia Trade Unions Congress (MTUC) and the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPACS); NGOs such as Aliran Kesedaran Negara (National Consciousness Movement, Aliran), the Federation of Consumers’ Associations, and the United Chinese School Committees’ Association; and opposition parties such as the Democratic Action Party (DAP). Even actors that were rather close to the government opposed the amendment, such as the Organization of Newspaper Editors (ONE), and the parties of the governing coalition Barisan Nasional (National Front, BN) such as Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People’s Movement, Gerakan) and the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) (NST, March 17, 18, 23, 25, 29, April 2, 3, 1986; Star, March 13, 20, 30, 1986).

The reasons for the opposition were two-fold. First, the mandatory jail sentence was too harsh and deprived the judiciary of its discretion to decide sentences. Second, the amendment did not stipulate a definition of “official secrets” (NST, March 8, 17, 23, 25, 28, 1986). By this time, a definition of the term had been given by the court: “Government must surely have the undoubted right to decide what information it would keep from the public. Such information would be official secrets…” (MLJ 1980, 293). It is understandable that people opposed an amendment that might land them in jail for leaking any document classified at the whim of the government as “official secrets.”

Such widespread opposition, together with its own concern about the coming election, forced the government to review the bill (NST, April 4, 5, 1986). In October 1986, the public saw a new bill with the following provisions: (1) “official secrets” are (i) Cabinet documents; (ii) State Executive Council documents; (iii) documents concerning national security, defense and international relations; (iv) documents concerning federal-state relations; (v) advice, suggestions and recommendations on the governance and function of the government; (vi) documents concerning the national economy, such as currency, budget proposal, and foreign investment; and (vii) documents related to tender awards (Schedule); (2) the Minister may, by order published in the Gazette, change the items in Schedule (§2A); (3) the Minister's decision to certify certain documents as “official secrets” cannot be challenged in courts (§16A); and, (4) mandatory jail sentences for offenders.

Three categories of actors had distinct attitudes about the bill. Actors in the first category required the liberalization of the OSA under the banner of Freedom of Information. For example, the Bar Council and NUJ called for the withdrawal of the bill, because the definition of “official secrets” was too wide, the minister’s power to certify a certain document as “secret” was beyond judicial review, and the mandatory jail sentences deprived the judiciary of its discretion (NST, October 29, November 7, 1986). This line of thought was shared by the trade unions, NGOs, academic societies, and opposition parties such as the Democratic Action Party (DAP) (NST, October 28, November 10, 14, 20, 22, 23, December 12, 1986;
The government explained the rationale for the new bill: (1) the government had reduced the definition of “official secrets,” responding to the people’s opposition; (2) the executive power to classify information as “official secrets” would not be abused; (3) judicial review of the minister’s decision was not necessary because the legislature, which had electoral legitimacy, and the executive responsible for it should supersede the judiciary, which was a non-elected branch; and (4) mandatory jail sentences were the only deterrence against the leaking of official secrets, considering the competition among the mass media (Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Dewan rakyat [PRPDR] 1986, 6078-96).

The liberal camp criticized the above arguments, maintaining that the bill violated the fundamental liberty of the people. For example, the DAP argued that information related to national security should be the only “official secrets,” the executive power given by §2A violated the legislative power of parliament, the principle of separation of power was violated under §16A, and provisions for mandatory jail sentences deprived the judiciary of its discretion (PRPDR 1986, 6092-6137; 6171-81; 6181-99). Other liberal actors, such as the NUJ, MTUC, CUEPACS, the Bar Council, and Aliran, supported the same arguments (NST, November 4, 7, 8, December 8, 10, 1986; Star, December 8, 23, 1986).

However, the third bill was supported and acquiesced to by the BN and business groups. The governing parties supported the bill mainly because it reduced the definition of “official secrets” and presumably because it deleted the documents related to government tender awards, the most controversial item, while some parties expressed their concern that §2A might allow the minister to arbitrarily classify any documents as “official secrets” (PRPDR 1986, 6145-51; 56-61; 81-9; NST, December 4, 1986). Some business groups from various ethnic communities in Kuala Lumpur formed the “Action Group to Uphold Democratic Principles” and expressed their support for the bill, while ACCCIM declined to take stern action other than to adopt a resolution urging the government to withdraw the OSA in the general assembly (NST, December 22, 1986; NSP, December 16, 1986).

As a result of the attitude of BN and business groups, the size of the combined opposition forces diminished, in spite of the liberal camp’s call for a further amendment.

In the second category were the then prime minister (PM), Mahathir Mohamed, and other ministers who advocated the necessity of the bill. Among them, PM Mahathir was adamant about the first group, saying that the government would not hear the voices of the “minority” (NST, November 17, 1986).

In spite of the PM’s stand, another amendment appeared in December. This was solely because of the combined pressure from the actors in the first and third categories. Among the latter were factions of governing parties, such as the MCA, Gerakan, the Malaysian Indian Congress, and the BN Back Benchers Club (BBC), business groups including the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ACCCIM), and the Organization of Newspaper Editors (NST, October 31, November 10, 17, 19, 1986; Star, November 7, 9, 14, 19, 1986). These actors expressed their opposition to specific provisions such as those that concerned mandatory jail sentences, §2A, and Schedule, above all, because they included documents about tender awards as “official secrets.” Actors such as ACCCIM and BBC tried to persuade the government through direct dialogue (Nanyang Siang Pau [NSP], November 26, 1986; NST, November 25, 26, 1986). It should be noted that the ideas of the first category actors were conveyed by the BBC to the PM in the course of their dialogue (NST, November 13, 1986).

The direct and indirect consultation among the actors from the three categories resulted in the following revisions: (1) the number of items in the Schedule was reduced to three, leaving cabinet documents, State Executive Council documents, and documents concerning national security, defense and international relations as “official secrets”; (2) a new provision, §2C, which stipulated the minister’s power to declassify “official secrets,” was inserted; and (3) other provisions, such as §2A, §16A and various provisions about mandatory jail sentences, were left intact.

In the first category, actors such as the MCA, Gerakan, the Malaysian Indian Congress, and the BN Back Benchers Club (BBC), business groups including the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ACCCIM), and the Organization of Newspaper Editors (NST, October 31, November 10, 17, 19, 1986; Star, November 7, 9, 14, 19, 1986). These actors expressed their opposition to specific provisions such as those that concerned mandatory jail sentences, §2A, and Schedule, above all, because they included documents about tender awards as “official secrets.” Actors such as ACCCIM and BBC tried to persuade the government through direct dialogue (Nanyang Siang Pau [NSP], November 26, 1986; NST, November 25, 26, 1986). It should be noted that the ideas of the first category actors were conveyed by the BBC to the PM in the course of their dialogue (NST, November 13, 1986).

The Work of the 2006/2007 API Fellows
Implementation of the OSA and its rule-abiding application

Four points should be noted about the implementation of the Official Secrets Act. First, there was a case in which a member of an opposition party, Parti Keadilan Rakyat (the National Justice Party), was arrested in 2000 for possessing and communicating a report about the Anti-Corruption Agency’s investigation into two ministers, which was said to have been classified “official secrets.” The accused was acquitted in 2004 (NST, January 15, 2000; April 9, 16, 2004). Second, the disclosure of “official secrets” has been practiced in such cases as controversial national development projects (NST, April 22, 23, 1987). Third, the minister’s power under §2A has not been exercised, and Schedule has remained unchanged. Finally, the Act has been applied in some deliberative processes. For example, the Education Act of 1996, regulating educational matters such as the status of vernacular schools, was drafted through deliberation under the protection of the OSA because the matter was considered to be “explosive” (Star, October 9, 1995). The NECC, which will be discussed below, is another example.

As a whole, the implementation of the OSA has not been as authoritarian or abusive as was expected. Rather, the Act was implemented in a “rule-abiding” manner.

Dynamics of the opposition forces

The OSA was enacted as a result of competition and deliberations among several actors. These included: (1) opposition parties and NGOs that demanded liberal legislation; (2) the government which tried to protect “official secrets” for the sake of the smooth functioning of economic projects; and, (3) the governing parties and business groups that tried to secure access to information that had relevance to their interests and prevent abuse of the Act by the government.

The restriction of political freedom imposed by the first and second bills resulted in an increase in the size of opposition forces, as the first and third actors cooperated. The opposition forces grew until the government was forced to relax some provisions. However, momentum was lost when the governing parties and business groups no longer had an incentive to urge liberalization after they perceived their right to know—especially information about tender awards—had been guaranteed.

Unlike the governing parties and business groups, those in the first category—opposition parties and NGOs—are still, today, requiring revisions of the OSA (NST, August 27, October 4, 1992; Star, February 2, September 14, 2001, August 2, 2002, November 9, 2005; FOI n.d.). However, the opposition forces have not gained momentum because of the rule-abiding nature of the implementation of the OSA, in which few people have fallen victim to arbitrary control. The acceptance of the NECC, a deliberative institution, on the part of the governing parties and business groups has also prevented the opposition forces from growing.

Deliberative institutions: Alternative channels for political articulation

In 1989, the National Economic Consultative Council, consisting of the government, political parties, business groups, trade unions, professional bodies, and NGOs, was formed to discuss economic policies to replace the New Economic Policy (NEP). This section argues that the BN parties and business groups found the NECC an effective alternative channel for political articulation.

Background and formation process of the NECC

The NEP, which was formulated in 1971, had two objectives, namely, the eradication of poverty regardless of ethnicity and the restructuring of society or correcting the imbalances between the less advantaged Bumiputras (Malays and other indigenous groups) and non-Bumiputras (Chinese and Indians). The restructuring policy, including the enactment of the Industrial Co-ordination Act (ICA) that regulated the distribution of corporate wealth among ethnic groups and set a numerical target of 30% equity ownership for Bumiputra, was rather controversial.

Seeking deregulation and liberalization, Chinese associations, such as the MCA, Gerakan, and the ACCIM, suggested the formation of the NECC to secure their influence over policy making, in spite of their numerically weak position as an ethnic minority (Star, May 13, 1987, November 27, 1988; NSP, September 12, November 26, 1988). The idea was accepted by the government, for it expected that the NECC might achieve a consensus on the future policy while avoiding the political conflict that might result from free competition. The idea was also welcomed by such actors as trade unions who had scant opportunity for interest representation (Star, February 10, 1991).

Was the NECC an effective alternative channel?

To show that the preferences of the governing parties and business groups were well reflected in the policy,
the policy preferences of the relevant actors, the NECC Report, and the Outline Perspective Plan II (OPP II)—the new long-term economic plan document—will be examined.

The policy preferences of the groups and individuals can be plotted on an X-Y chart, with the “principle of distribution” on the Y-axis and the “principle of the government’s intervention” on the X-axis. The upper end represents distribution based on a “merit-and-needs approach,” which rejected distribution based on ethnicity and quantitative quotas for specific ethnic groups as had been the case under the NEP, but advocated distribution based on economic standards for the purpose of human resource development (HRD) instead. In contrast, the bottom represents an “ethnic-based approach,” which assumed that the economic imbalances among ethnic groups should be the main focus. On the left side of the X-axis is a “liberal and open economic policy” that embraced rapid growth led by the private sector with liberalization and deregulation as the main thrusts of economic policy. On the right side, on the other hand, is a “protective and progressive” policy featuring caution about a liberal economy and expected government intervention for distribution purposes, such as the protection of small and medium industries (SMIs), poor laborers, and consumers from big or foreign interests.

Based upon the above X-Y chart, four categories of groups with distinct policy preferences are to be elaborated below.

(i) Protective-progressive/Merit-and-needs approach: The first quadrant represents the ideas of Chinese associations and a leading economist and NECC member, Professor K.S. Jomo, who pointed out the adverse effects of liberalization and privatization on local and small interests (Kua 1990, 60-1; Jomo 1989, 106-7; Jomo 1994, 69). Second, these organizations asserted that the rights of laborers and a minimum wage should be guaranteed, as this would result in the creation of effective demands (Kua 1990, 57-8, 109; Jomo 1989, 105-6).

(ii) Liberal/Merit-and-needs approach: The MCA, ACCCIM, National Chambers of Commerce and Industry (NCCI), and Gerakan, which took a rather ambiguous position, asserted four points (Kok et al. 1990; Yeoh 1992; Mohd. Ramli 1989; PGRM 1984). They believed, first, that liberalization, deregulations, and privatization should proceed. Second, distribution should be achieved through a trickle-down effect rather than through the introduction of a minimum wage. Third, the effort to correct ethnic imbalances should be based not on a numerical quota, such as the government tender award and control of equity ownership, but on quality enhancements such as the development of Bumiputra entrepreneurs to increase their competitiveness. Finally, a policy for poverty eradication regardless of ethnicity should be pursued.

(iii) Liberal/Ethnic distribution: The second quadrant is represented by PM Mahathir who advocated that deregulation, liberalization and privatization should be pursued (Mahathir 1991). Second, although the purpose of social restructuring needed to continue, the quota system should eventually be abolished, and the quality of ownership, rather than quantity, should be given due emphasis (Star, June 19, October 31, 1990).

(iv) Protective-progressive/Ethnic distribution: Members of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), a BN party representing the interests of Malays, preferred government intervention for the purpose of raising their economic standards. This would be achieved by setting numerical targets for tender awards of privatization projects and equity capital in the corporate sector (NST, October 29, 1988; Star, October 28, 30, 1988, June 22, 1991). Semangat-46 (S46), the former UMNO faction led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, argued that the two objectives of NEP should continue, and the condition of foreign equity participation should be tightened (NST, July 27, 1989, February 5, 1990).

NECC report

The NECC report, which was compiled as the “consensus” of the members, mostly reflected the “liberal/merit-and-needs” idea, while partially incorporating some of the ideas of the other camps.

As for government intervention, the NECC report states that rapid economic growth led by the private sector should be the foundation of the new policy. The report recommends the further relaxation of foreign and domestic capital and privatization (NECC 1991, 391). It states that the government “need not intervene into economy for the purpose of correcting imbalances (e.g., among ethnic groups),” except for the purpose of eliminating discrimination or of training and education (NECC, 316). It also argues that “legislation” (i.e., ICA) will be used to correct ethnic imbalances, although not through the regulation of individual companies but at sector levels (NECC 1991, 324). The report also recommends that labor laws be amended to enhance workers’ right of association, while suggesting that tripartite cooperation among the government,
employer, and employee be a “public policy (dasar awam)” (NECC 1991, 366-7).

To address the distributive objectives, the report recommends that poverty eradication regardless of ethnicity should be emphasized (NECC 1991, 286). Although it acknowledges that a “merit-and-needs approach may not be used for the groups that are left behind because of social and historical factors,” it also states that an “ethnic approach be abolished as soon as the gap between ethnic groups is corrected” (NECC 1991, 303). It also suggests that the distribution effort should be aimed at HRD rather than the direct distribution of wealth (NECC 1991, 293).

As a whole, the NECC report recommends liberalization, privatization and deregulation, with temporary regulation for the purpose of correcting imbalances among ethnic groups. It also recommends a merit-and-needs approach, while admitting the temporary use of an ethnic approach only in terms of human resource development.

Outline Perspective Plan

OPP II was drafted with the consideration of various proposals, including the NECC report (OPP II, 1.02). Providing “growth with equity” as its main target, the document states that the guidelines for foreign and local investment for the promotion of exports will be relaxed and that privatization will proceed to realize export-led economic growth by the private sector (OPP II, 1.59, 1.65, 1.76, 3.41, 4.64). The government, according to the document, will limit its intervention to areas where the “market cannot effectively function” and will implement two policies, namely, poverty eradication regardless of ethnicity and the restructuring of society (OPP II, 3.41). The document does not mention the rights of laborers or minimum wages.

Apparently, the OPP II places more stress on the restructuring of society than on the merit-and-needs approach (poverty eradication). However, in a drastic change from the NEP, it does not set a specific time frame for the restructuring of equity capital so that the policy will be implemented in a flexible manner. It emphasizes quality enhancements such as the development of Bumiputra entrepreneurs, rather than outright wealth distribution based on quantitative targets (OPP II, 4.40).

Unlike the NECC report, the OPP II emphasizes social restructuring as a target of its distribution policy and legitimizes government intervention for this purpose. However, the two documents do share such basic ideas as economic growth by liberalization and deregulation, and emphasize quality enhancement and HRD rather than quantitative targets and the direct distribution of wealth.

Figure 2: An image of policy preferences / NECC Report / OPP II.
Actors’ perceptions of and attitudes towards the NECC

The S46 scoffed that OPP II was a plan for business people, and actors in the first quadrant labeled the NECC undemocratic and the OPP II as paying “lip-service to politically less sensitive concerns” (Star, June 19, 1991; Kua 1990, 3; Jomo 1994, 49-50). On the opposite side, actors that fall into the second quadrant praised the OPP II because it promoted economic growth led by the private sector in a liberal environment and changed the approach to social restructuring (Star, June 18, 19, 20, 1991). These actors believed that many of their views and the NECC recommendations had been incorporated into the OPP II. UMNO also supported the OPP II because it set a target for developing Bumiputra entrepreneurs (Star, June 22, 1991).

The NECC provided the above actors with opportunities to have their interests reflected in the policy. This explains their acceptance of the non-liberal political institution and, hence, the slowing down of opposition forces.

Conclusion: Implication for regime dynamics

The above findings are captured in Figure 2. There is an interaction with a time lag between the two variables, namely political freedom and the size of opposition forces, which draws a clockwise trajectory. As the government decided to restrict the political freedom of the people, the size of the opposition increased (the enactment of the first and second OSA bills—trajectories represented by arrows ① and ②), until the opposition movement successfully forced the government to take a turn towards liberalization, which move was followed by a decrease in the size of the opposition to “O” (the third OSA bill—arrows ③ and ④). The size of the opposition has remained in stasis at “O,” because the level of restriction has not varied in the course of the implementation.

The enactment of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) can be achieved only when the trajectory shifts to the upper right (the ideal trajectory). However, as long as deliberative institutions, such as the NECC, are perceived to be effective channels of interest articulation by many actors (e.g., the BN parties, business communities), such a shift is not likely to occur.

Contrary to expectations, middle and capitalist classes are not as conservative as are alleged, and neither is civil society so divided. In fact, their cooperation, or the synchronization of the movements by respective actors, actually resulted in the amendments to the OSA. However, the above picture also dismisses the assumption of the incremental tendency of the opposition forces. Rather, the size of the opposition forces, which determines the prospect for institutional reform and regime change, is in dynamic interaction with people’s perceptions of and attitudes towards the political institution and the nature of the political institution.

A scenario for liberalization, based on the above model, is as follows. A serious abuse of the OSA gives rise to an opposition movement (arrow ①), while many actors find the deliberative institution ineffective, bringing about a shift in the trajectory to the ideal one, resulting in endurable opposition (arrow ⑤), which eventually
leads to the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act. In other words, pro-liberal movements succeed when more people face authoritative control and an ineffectual deliberative framework.

We may be able to think of another way than a straightforward liberalization, which may follow such a gloomy development. For example, broadening and deepening the deliberation processes and gradual institutional reform through deliberation among various actors may be realistic, as is exemplified by the Bar Council’s successful effort for legal reform through deliberation with the government, which resulted in an amendment to the Legal Profession Act in 2003.

NOTES

1 The original OSA was enacted in 1972.

REFERENCES

Books and articles


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Newspapers and magazines


**Other sources**


THE DISCOURSE OF THE ISLAMIC STATE AND ISLAMIC LAW IN MALAYSIA

Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad

Introduction

This chapter aims to describe the issue of Islamic state and Islamic law in Malaysia. Many believe that the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of Islamic law are the goal of Islamic movements in Southeast Asia. The movement's drive to establish an Islamic caliphate may have been influenced by external and internal factors. Externally, this movement is seen as the impact of Islamic Revivalism (Kebangkitan Islam), which spread from the Middle East to Southeast Asia in the 1970s. Internally, the issue of an Islamic caliphate is a cultural, historical, sociological and political dynamic of Muslim interpretations of Islamic teachings. This study focuses on Malaysia as an example of a Muslim country in Southeast Asia, regarding the debate on Islamic state and Islamic law.

During my field work in Malaysia, I collected various types of data as part of my research project. First, I examined the Malaysian Constitution from its early beginnings with the draft by the Reid Commission in order to understand whether Malaysia was intended to be defined as an ‘Islamic State.’ Second, I approached the issue of identity among Malays. I interviewed Malays in several states in Malaysia (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Kedah, Kuala Trengganu, Kelantan and Perak). I tried to gain an inside perspective from grassroots Malaysian Muslims regarding what it means for them to be Muslim. I received some interesting answers from them, such as that Muslims tended to follow the government's rules. The Constitution has explained the position of Islam in Malaysia. Some of my respondents were concerned that the issue of an Islamic state and Islamic law in Malaysia could lead to a misunderstanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. Non-Muslims preferred to claim that Malaysia is a secular state in the sense that every single religion can play a major role in Malaysia. It is therefore inappropriate to urge Malaysia to be established as an Islamic state. I also did an ethnographic study on one Islamic movement in Malaysia, Jamâ‘ah Tabligh. I went out among them (khurûj) while they preached Islam to Malays in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. In-depth interviews were conducted among members of Jamâ‘ah Tabligh at Sri Petaling, Bandar Baru Bangi and Masjid Jamek market. Besides this, I attended the regional meeting of Jamâ‘ah Tabligh at the Sri Petaling mosque. The goal of this meeting was to understand and evaluate the situation of the organization in two states, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.

I chose different groups and methods of conducting research in this study because I wanted to see how the concepts of an Islamic state and Islamic law were interpreted by Malaysians. By doing this, I could add some important issues that show trends among Malaysians who approach the issues through a substantive and formalistic approach. The legacy of Malaysia as a multiethnic country has led to the problem of Islam as a contested and reconstructed religion in the country. In other words, I assume that there is no single consensus among Malaysians about what an Islamic state and Islamic law in the country are and how they should be established. At the same time, the government also has its own interpretation of the process of Islamization in many aspects among citizens. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the current portrait of one controversial issue as part of the process of Islamic resurgence in Southeast Asia in general.

Understanding the Islamic State and Islamic Law

Many Muslim scholars have explained the nature of an Islamic state. This topic is studied in Islamic political science (siyâsah syar‘iyyah) as part of Islamic jurisprudence or Islamic law (fiqh al-Islâm). In Islamic sources, an Islamic state can be defined in Arabic terms, such as a daulah (state), bani (dynasty), hukûmiyyah (government), sulthân (kingdom), khilafât (state) and imâmah (leadership) (Hilmi 1998; Ahmed 1988). Nevertheless, the meaning of state in Arabic is daulah, which can be classified into three levels: a federal state (al-daulah al-ittihâdiyyah), a legal state (al-daulah al-qanûniyyah) and a welfare state (al-daulah ar-rafâhiyyah) (Badawi 1993, 408).

It is likely that there is no term for Islamic state in Islamic classical sources, even in the most authoritative books (kitâbs) on Islamic political science (Siyâsah Shar‘îyah) written by al-Mawardi (1966) and Abi Ya’la (1992). These books look at how to administer a government
when there are Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The books also discuss what kind of rights people who are administered by a Muslim ruler have under Islamic law. On the other hand, Ali Abd al-Raziq (1998, 32), an ulama from Egypt who was labeled an infidel (kafr) due to his ideas about secularization in Islam, claims in his book al-Islâm wa Ushûl Hukm (1972) that “the Glorious Qur’ān supports the view that the Prophet, peace upon him, had nothing to do with political kingship, Qur’ānic verses are in agreement that his heavenly work did got go beyond the Message, which is free of all meanings of authority.”

However, there is an argument that the state in Islam can be approached by rooting the concept of daulah as enunciated in the al-Qur’ān in how it was first practiced by the Prophet Muhammad through his establishment of a state in his era at Madinah. Jastaniah has identified some characteristics of Muhammad as a Prophet of Islam and a leader of Muslims and non-Muslims in religious and secular affairs. It is also reported that the Prophet Muhammad promulgated the al-Dustûr al-Madînah (Constitution of Madinah), which contains forty-seven articles. There are many lessons on the establishment of a state from this constitution. First, the people of Madinah came from many tribes, ancestries, cultures and religion. Second, this constitution aimed to organize Muslims and non-Muslims in one state under a Muslim ruler (the Prophet Muhammad) through brotherhood. Third, the state safeguarded freedom for all religions in Madinah city. Fourth, all citizens were equal under the Constitution (Sukarja 1995, 191-4).

The issue of the Islamic state was discussed in Islamic discourse during the 20th century when Muslim kingdoms were in decline, not only in the Middle East but also in Southeast Asia. Regarding the reasons for this decline, Hefner (2000, 3) says that “the first has been the diffusion of democratic ideas to disparate peoples and cultures around the world. The second is the turn of the millennium that has seen the forceful reappearance of ethnic and religious issues in public affairs.” He also maintains that “the end of the twentieth century demonstrated convincingly that high modernist reports of the demise of religion and ethnicity were…premature” (Hefner 2000, 3). To respond to this trend, three groups of Islamic political thought arose regarding the issue of the relationship between Islam and the state. The first is the conservative group of people who want to integrate Islam and the state because, according to this paradigm, Islam provides an Islamic social system from the al-Qur’ān and Sunnah (prophets’ tradition). This group is divided into two sections: the traditionalist group that believes that Muslims should follow the classical Islamic political tradition and the second, fundamentalist group that is eager to return to the al-Qur’ān and Sunnah totally, with no room for the ijtihād (Islamic legal reasoning). It seems they believe that the Ijtihād gate (inside bāb al-Ijtihād) is closed for Muslims. In Federspiel’s (2001, ix) words “…fundamentalists …rejected the secular concept of the nation-state and called for the establishment of a state and society structured to implement its concepts of Islamic values.”

The second group is the modernists. Deliar Noer maintains that the modernists recognize only the Qur’ān and Hadîts as the basic sources of their ideas and thought. They propose that “the gate of ijtihād is still open and rejected the idea of taqlid” (Noer 1985, 120; Noer 1973). In Southeast Asia, in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, this group played a major role after World War II in the establishment of state blue prints. Historically, this group came from the Islamic reformist movement during the colonial era. They were named the kaum tua (old generation), who maintained traditional Islam within Muslim society. The proposal of this group is that Muslims may have certain rules or concepts on the establishment of an [Islamic] state, but they are permitted to adapt other systems such Western ideas on political affairs. Kurzman (2002, 4) maintains that “this movement was the self-conscious adoption of ‘modern’ values—that is, values…associated with the modern world, especially rationality, science, constitutionalism and certain forms of human equality.”

The third group is the secularists who argue that Islam and the state should be separated. This group is also called liberal Islam. In Islamic political thought, the separation of religion and politics was promoted by Kemal Ataturk of Turkey, ‘Ali Abd Raziq of Egypt and Soekarno of Indonesia. Suffice it to say that emerging nation-states among Muslim countries were influenced by secularist ideas (Smith 1970, 97-6). In last decade, there are many types of Muslim countries which fall in the above categories. Choudhury (1993, 95-6) has categorized Muslim countries by governance. First, there some Muslim states like Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan which designate themselves as Islamic states. Second, there are the vast majority of Muslim countries which do not claim to be Islamic states; there are references to Islam sometimes in a form such as ‘state religion.’ These countries are governed mainly by Western legal codes but in personal
matters such as marriage, inheritance etc., Islamic law or *sya'r i'ah* is implemented. Third, there are a very few Muslim countries which prefer to have a ‘secular state’ on the pattern of the Western concept of the separation of politics and religion. J.N.D Anderson, in his *Islamic Law in the Modern World*, classifies the legal systems of the Muslim world today: (1) those that still consider the shari'ah as the fundamental law and still practice it to a certain extent in their countries; (2) those that have abandoned the shari'ah and become secular; (3) those have reached some compromise between theses two position (Anderson 1959, 83).

It is interesting to look at various definitions of Islamic law. Joseph Schacht, for example, defines this law as:

> The epitome of Islamic thought, the most typical manifestation of the Islamic way of life, the core and kernel of Islam itself. The very term *fiqh*, ‘knowledge’, shows that early Islam regarded knowledge of the sacred law as the knowledge *par excellence* (Schacht 1964, 1).

The terms *fiqh* and shari'ah have similar meanings. Fiqh is used in the literal sense to mean “understanding” (*al-fahm*). Basically, the meaning of the term *fiqh* is usually similar to words such as *'ilm* (knowledge) and *kalâm* (theology). The term *'ilm* has the same meaning, and in the era of the Prophet there appears to have been no difference between the two terms. According to Nyazee, “as sophistication crept in, the term *'ilm* came to be applied in a narrow sense to mean knowledge that comes through report, that is, traditions: *hadith* and *atbar*. The term *fiqh*...came to be used exclusively for a knowledge of the law” (Nyazee 1994, 21). Thus the terms *'ilm* and *fiqh* were separated when specialization in law and tradition came into existence toward the end of the first century of Hijrah.

Furthermore, the terms *kalâm* and *fiqh* were not separated until the time of al-Ma’mun (d.218 A.H.). *Fiqh* previously had embraced both theological problems and legal issues. That is why Abu Hanifah (d. 150 A.H.) defined *fiqh* as “*ma’rifah al-nafs mà lahâ wa mâ ‘alayhâ* (understanding the self in terms of one’s rights and duties)” (Dahlan 1997, 333). This means that *fiqh* concerns understanding Muslims’ rights and obligations. However, when the Mu’tazilah (an Islamic theology group) began to use the term *kalâm* for their teaching, the term *fiqh* came to be restricted to the corpus of Islamic law. This differentiation has serious implications for the study of Islamic law.

There are many definitions of *fiqh*. Abdul Wahhab Khalaf (1978, 11) defines *fiqh* as: “*al-ilm bi ak-akbâm al-shari’ah al-’amaliyyah al-muktaqib min adillatihà al-tafsiliyyah* (the knowledge of the legal rules pertaining to conduct that have been derived from specific evidence).” Khalaf also highlights another definition of *fiqh* as: “*majmû’ al-akbâm al-shari’ah al-’amaliyyah al-mustafa’dah min adillatihà al-tafsiliyyah* (the compilation of the legal rules pertaining to conduct that have been derived from specific evidence)” (1978, 12). It can also be defined as a “statement concerning the understanding of the speaker of the meaning of his speech” (*‘ibârah ‘an fahmi gharadhî al-mutakallimun min kalamihi*) (Minhaji 2001, 94). It is perhaps safe to say that *fiqh* is the finding of Islamic law from the main sources (Qur’an and Sunnah) through *ijtihad*. The person who looks at the law is called *mujtahid* and this process is termed *ijtihad*. Finally, the finding of this activity is called *fiqh al-Islami* or Islamic law (*al-akbâm al-Islamiyyah*).

The term *shari’ah* means the source of drinking water. For Arabic people, *shari’ah* means religion, *asb-tharîqah al-musta’qimah* (the right way), and *an-nustus al-muqaddas* (sacred texts) from the Qur’an and Sunnah (Dahlan 1997, 335). Schacht says that *shari’ah* is “the sacred law of Islam.” He goes further, saying that, “It is an all-embracing body of religious duties, the totality of Allah’s commands that regulate the life of every Muslim in all aspects; it consists of ordinances regarding worship and ritual, as well as political and (in the narrow sense) legal rules” (Schacht 1964, 1).

In other cases, scholars differentiate between shariah and *fiqh*. First, while *shari’ah* comes from Allah, *fiqh* is the product of human interpretation. Second, there is only one *shari’ah*, while *fiqh* implies diversity. Third, *shari’ah* is very authoritative while *fiqh* is very liberal, since it is a human product. Fourth, *shari’ah* is not subject to change; on the contrary, *fiqh* faces many changes through socio-cultural dynamics. Fifth and finally, *shari’ah* is idealistic while *fiqh* is realistic. To clarify, I mean to say that Islamic law is *fiqh*, not *shari’ah*. In this context, *fiqh* as human interpretation has produced Islamic law or the Islamic legal system. There are at least four types of Islamic legal literature: *kutûb al-ahkâm al-sharî’ah* (books on Islamic jurisprudence), decrees of the Islamic courts, the laws and regulations of Muslim countries and *fatwâ* (legal pronouncements of jurists) (Mudzhar 1998, 80).

**Discourse of Islamic State and Islamic Law in Malaysia**

In this section I will discuss the interpretation of
Muslims and non-Muslims on the issues of an Islamic state and Islamic law in Malaysia. Before I examine this discussion, it is worth pointing out that the need for the establishment of an Islamic state in Malaysia is still debatable, since there is a debate on what the nature of Islamic state is. It is widely known that there is no example of an Islamic state, so it can be said that this debate is likely to urge the implementation of Islamic law in the country. In this context, it can be said that the Southeast Asian states that have a Muslim majority—Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam—also apply Islamic law. Historically, *shari`ah* was implemented in conjunction with local customary law (*adat*) and/or colonial law. In addition, customary law included certain aspects of Buddhist and Hindu traditions, which had arrived several centuries earlier. In the thirteenth century, Islam came to Southeast Asia and Islamized the local traditions. Islamic law developed within the region and was practiced in certain socio-cultural-political situations. It was important in unifying the Islamic kingdoms in Southeast Asia (see Bustamam-Ahmad 2007). In fact, the issue of an Islamic state is likely the issue of the implementation of Islamic law. In addition, it safe to say that the reason for Muslims to have an ‘Islamic state’ can be linked to the fact that their historical accounts show that this law was implemented before the colonial era. However, as we shall see in this section, Muslims in Malaysia do not have a single voice in what they mean by Islamic law.

*I am Muslim and I am Malaysian*

When I conducted my field work in Kuala Lumpur, I interviewed some respondents on what it means to be Malay and Malaysian in Malaysia. These are some responses:

I come from Johor and work in Kuala Lumpur at a Governmental Office. My parents are Javanese. I speak Javanese with them. But I am Malaysian, because I was born in Malaysia. I speak Malay with my kids and English with my colleagues at the office.

A 42-year old Malay-Javanese

What Malay do you mean? Our Prime Minister is not Malay. Mahathir is Indian, even though he never declared himself as Indian. We Indians have problems with the Malays in Malaysia. We made them second class before independence, and now we are second class behind them even if we are Muslim. We have the same God. We have the same prophet. We go the same Mosque. We read the same Holy Book. We vote for the same party in the election.

A 65-year old Indian-Malay

I am Malay, because I was born in Malaysia before 1957. I speak Malay, and I can also speak Tamil, Urdu, English. At the same time, my family is Muslim. So, we are Malay. When I have problems, I cannot go to UMNO, due to the fact that I am Indian. When I visited the Indian Party, they rejected me because I am Malay and asked me to report my problem to UMNO.

A 53-year old Pakistani-Malay

I would like to start this debate with these statements from respondents. During the time I was in the field, I saw that one of problems of Islam in Malaysia is likely to be linked with identity. What I mean is what is Islamic teaching being implemented for in Malaysia? How is the concept of Malayness understood among Malaysians? The problem of identity has been discussed among scholars, not only in regards to socio-ethnic-religious issues, but also in political affairs (Nagata 1985, 305-11). This shows that in the establishment of an Islamic state as proposed by Muslim-Malaysians, the problem of identity could also be a crucial issue, at least among my respondents. During my fieldwork I always heard first, “we are Chinese,” “we are Malay,” “we are Indian,” and then “we are Malaysians.” I was unlikely to hear “we are Muslim” first, then “we are Malaysians,” because most people intended to show their ethnic-identity, since it may lead to discrimination, hegemony, and marginalization (see Muzaffar 2006, 21-36). It is no mistake when Joel S. Kahn (2006, xv) says:

I have been disturbed by the high level of racism, patriarchy and exclusion that continues to exist at all levels of Malaysian society, a consequence of the hegemony of a particular nationalist narrative of Malay indignity.

Thus, in the debate on an Islamic state in Malaysia, non-Muslims and Muslims who oppose an Islamic state refer to the Malaysian constitution. Meanwhile, the Muslims who urge the implementation of an Islamic state in Malaysia go back to the context of Malaysian history where there were Islamic Kingdoms and the implementation of Islamic law for the Malay people. Article 3 (1) of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia states that: “Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.” This article does not imply that the Federation is an Islamic State. Besides this, I would like to quote some statements that say Malaysia did not become an Islamic state after independence.
First, The White Paper on the Constitutional Proposals for the Federation of Malaya: “...there has been included in the proposed Federal Constitution that Islam is the religion of the Federation. This will [gnaw] away the present position of the Federation as a secular state.” Second, the statement of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1958: “I would like to make it clear that this country is not an Islamic State as it is generally understood, we merely provide that Islam shall be the official religion of the State.”

It is clear that Malaysia is not an Islamic state, but Muslims practice Islamic law according to shari‘ah. However, the issue of an Islamic state has created much debate among the elites in Malaysia, especially when the PAS asserted that Malaysia is an Islamic state. It also proposed the implementation of Islamic law through the achievement of political power at the federal level. This party was established by groups of Malay Ulamâ (religious scholars of Islam) on 24 November 1951 as the Persatuan Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) or Pan-Malaya Islamic Party (PMPI) which was later altered to the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) in 1972 (Isa 2001, 3). Zaleha (2006, 45) writes that the “PAS committed itself to parliamentary democracy and participated in the general election gaining support mainly from rural Malays in the northern Malay states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis.”

Kelantan can be as example of how an Islamic state is, where one can say that there is no serious tension between Muslims and non-Muslims (Winzeler 1985). During my trip to this state I saw that on Friday noon, when it is time for Jum‘ah prayer, the shops, cafes and supermarkets were closed until this prayer was finished at the Masjid Muhammadi. Most of women were wearing jilbab (head coverings) in every place, even the female cashiers at supermarkets owned by Chinese businessman. The receptionist said to me that Kelantan is a Bandaraya Islam (Islamic city), not an Islamic state. At this point, I was surprised to an advertisement for DIGI, since the message was written in Arabic script and the models were two women who were wearing Islamic dress, something I could not find in other states in Malaysia. When I was in Kuala Lumpur I tried to find this picture in the city, but I was unable to. What surprised me was that the language was not Arabic but Jawi, and meant ‘wide coverage’ (Liputan Luas), one of DIGI’s marketing slogans. In fact, for many buildings in Kelantan, most of sign boards were written in Jawi script, including Chinese owned shops. The Jawi script has been quite widely introduced among Muslim Malays in Northern Malaysia, Southern Thailand and Aceh in Indonesia, especially for the santri (students) at pondok, pesantren, surau and dayah (van Bruinessen 1999).

When I was in Kedah I bought some kitabs (Islamic books) that were written in Jawi script. Because Kedah does not promote itself as an Islamic state in Malaysia, I did not see any jawi script on the many streets and corners. The Jawi script in these kitabs was published by ulama from Pattani (Thailand) and printed in Penang. Furthermore, the experience of the PAS in controlling Kelantan has been a serious motivation for this party to establish an Islamic state in Malaysia. When I clarified this with one of the PAS’s Research Directors, Zulkifli Ahmad, he said that an Islamic state means justice for every citizen. The PAS had used a wrong strategy in the election, because they promoted an Islamic state and most Malaysians do not understand what an Islamic state is. I would like to quote his statements:

The Islamic state is just a concept. This leads us into a misunderstanding on the concept of Islamic, even among the Islamic movement. It seems to them that when there is the promotion of an Islamic state, it will marginalize non-Muslims. So, it is safe to say that an Islamic state is how to form the government. When we talk about what is Islamic government, you named it Daulah Islam, Negara Islam, Islamic state. …al-ibrah musammâ wa lâisa bi ism (in fact, a thing is valued for its substance, not from the name). The name can be changed, but the substance is the soul. What is in Islam is the soul.

His answer on the nature of Islamic state is almost identical to the definition raised by the Head of the PAS Consultative Council, Dato’ Nik Aziz Nik Mat, on the notion of the Islamic state: “What we (the PAS) want is a country which observes the teachings of GOD and the Prophet. That’s all. Whatever you want to call
it... an Islamic state, Malaysia or Kelantan, do it by all means. The name is not important.”

According to PAS documents that contain a brief explanation of the Islamic state:

“The Islamic state bases its legislation on the law of the Almighty Who is Most Gracious and Most Merciful. ... The Islamic state is an ideal state cherished and longed for by all who love peace and true justice. The true Islamic state is a state which is peaceful and prosperous while receiving the pleasure of Allah the Almighty. When peace is combined with forgiveness from Allah, true peace will result (PAS, 18).

Islam Hadhari (Islamic Civilization)

The PAS’s promotion of the Islamic state in its formal documents has led to a crucial debate in Malaysia in which the PAS is opposed not only by non-Muslims, but also by Muslims who tend to accept Malaysia as a secular state. The PAS consists of individuals who want to establish an Islamic state and implement fully Islamic law in Malaysia. This group comes from political parties or Islamic movements that include Malaysian NGOs. They express their voices through political action through the parliament or elections by urging others to vote for a truly Islamic party that can establish an Islamic state in the country. Looking at this group, we can say that the discourse of the Islamic state and Islamic law in Malaysia is a socio-political issue in the political arena. Soon after the PAS published the preamble of the Islamic state, many elites responded (discussed below) to this in their speeches and media.

The fact that Malaysia is being governed by Malays or Muslims can be a reason that Malaysia is an Islamic state. Besides this, Muslims can practice Islamic teachings in their daily life according to shari’ah. This group is made up of government bureaucrats who confidently view Malaysia as an Islamic state because it is governed by Islamic values. Abdul Hamid Othman, ex-Prime Minister’s Department spokesperson, said that “we recognize [Malaysia] as an Islamic state as it is ruled by Muslims and the Muslims under their rule have obtained peace and tranquility.” Before this, Mustafa Muhamed, head of UMNO Information, maintained, “PAS has not given a detailed explanation of the Islamic state concept as it is afraid of losing the support of the Chinese and Indian communities.”

On 18 June 2002, Mahathir went so far as to say that Malaysia is an Islamic fundamentalist state and can be proud of that fact. The Malaysian government’s policies, he said, abide with the fundamental teachings of Islam. He acknowledged that his views would shock many in the West “because they consider a fundamentalist to be someone who is violent and did all kinds of bad things.” But he said this perception was wrong, and it was not necessarily a bad thing to be a fundamentalist. Mahathir Mohammad had declared Malaysia as an “Islamic State” in early July 2001 in his address at the Convention of the Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition in Kuala Lumpur. He also made a similar statement in his address at the Gerakan Party Annual Delegates Conference in Kuala Lumpur on 29 September 2001. To fulfill this statement, the Malaysian government tried to elucidate a concept that was quite different from the PAS’s demands. The Party has also duly promoted the Islamic state concept in Malaysia since its emergence up until today.

In 2002, a committee of ulama and intellectuals tried to discuss Islam Hadhari. The objective of this discussion was to find a direction to integrate an Islamic state and Malaysian civilization. JAKIM (the Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia) also started to explore the direction of Islam Hadhari. Before this year, JAKIM was only concerned with Muslim civil servants in Malaysia (Salleh 2005, 55). Until 2002, there had been no serious attempt by the Malaysian government to place Islam Hadhari as the main issue in the state and the National Front’s manifesto.

To respond to this issue, the government has promoted the idea of “Islam Hadhari,” which was announced by the Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi, during a speech in 2004. In this year, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced the concept of Islam Hadhari in his speech at the 55th UMNO general assembly (Badawi, 2005). He spoke about Islam Hadhari and the need for a globally competitive Malay community. He stated that “Islam Hadhari is complete and comprehensive, with an emphasis on the development of the economy and civilization, capable of building Malay competitiveness.” He also mentioned that Islam Hadhari was an approach that emphasized development that was consistent with the tenets of Islam and focused on enhancing quality of life. Furthermore, he suggested that Islam Hadhari was an effort to bring the Ummah back to basics, back to the fundamentals, as prescribed in the Qur’an and the Hadith that together form the foundation of Islamic civilization. This definition is similar to the neo-modernism that was promoted by Fazlur Rahman, a leading Islamic scholar from Chicago University, in the 1980s. Thus, Islam Hadhari is a new name for neo-modernism in Islamic thought. This interpretation
tries to open the gate of ijtihād among Muslims in the contemporary era through combining classical Islamic scholarship and Islamic civilization with modern, or Western ideas, and analytical methods (Barton 1995, 7).

I have discussed this issue elsewhere where I argued that Islam Hadhari can be divided into three issues. The first issue is that Islam Hadhari is one mode of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. However, when I traced back the mode of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia, I found that Islam Hadhari is similar to the concept of Islam Peradaban (Islamic Civilization) that was promoted by Nurcholish Madjid or the idea of Islam Rasional (Rational Islam), one of the ideas from Harun Nasution, an Islamic thinker in Indonesia. The second issue with Islam Hadhari is that this mode of thought forms a political agenda in Malaysia, where the Barisan Nasional intends to challenge the mode of Islamic thought promoted by the PAS. It is interesting to note that Islam Hadhari became a political formula in 2003-2004 to fight with opposition parties. The third issue is the fact that Islam Hadhari is an idea to counter the issue of the Islamic state that was promoted by the PAS. However, most of the Islamic institutions are promoting Islam Hadhari as a new way of interpreting Islam. It seems that Islam Hadhari has become a tool to develop Malaysia in the image of true Islam.

Non-Muslims

This group is made up of those who are against the concept of an Islamic state and the need to expand Islamic law. This group is composed of non-Muslims who see that an Islamic state will be a threat to them, especially the implementation of Islamic criminal law (hādīd). They also fear that freedom of religion will be undermined in Malaysia. Non-Muslim community leaders actively oppose the idea that Malaysia is an Islamic state. They worry that this is not an appropriate idea, as Malaysia is a pluralistic and multiethnic state, especially the idea as promoted by the PAS in the media. The DAP (Democratic Action Party), as a member of the Barisan Alternative, published a Media Statement on 28 June 2001 to challenge the intentions of the PAS to promote an Islamic state in Malaysia, stating:

As DAP leaders had stressed at the Barisan Alternative Leadership Dialogue on June 16, 2001, the Barisan Alternative must address and respect legitimate opposition to the establishment of an Islamic State in Malaysia, not because of anti-Islam sentiments but because an Islamic state in multi-racial and multi-religious Malaysia is not compatible with parliamentary democracy, power sharing in a plural society, human rights and individual freedoms, women’s rights and social tolerance (Siang 2001, 85).

Lim Kit Siang (2001, 85) proposes that “…not a single Barisan Alternative leader made mention of the Islamic state issue because the coming-together of the four opposition parties had nothing to with Islamic state but represented an unprecedented opposition effort to break the Barisan Nasional political hegemony to restore justice, freedom, democracy and good governance in Malaysia.” As result, the DAP escaped their commitment with the BA in September 2001 due to the Islamic state issue. It is interesting to note that the DAP is also against the concept of an Islamic state as promoted by Mahathir Mohammad on 29 September 2002 and has launched the slogan, “Say No to 929” (Liow 2005, 922). This party has also criticized the MCA, a Chinese party in BN collaboration with UMNO, because this party promotes an Islamic state. I would argue that the fear of an Islamic state within the DAP leads their ethnic-oriented political movement. To comment on this debate, Farish Noor (2001, 11) writes “…till today non-Muslims react with fear and apprehension whenever they hear the term “Islamic State” mentioned…In practically every contemporary case where the project of an Islamic State has been attempted, it has led to the strengthening of religious and cultural boundaries.”

Islamic Missionaries: Jamā‘ah Tablīgh

In Malaysia, there is an Islamic movement that attempts to promote Islamic communities based on Islamic teachings (al-Qur‘ān and Hadîts). During my field work, I involved myself with this Islamic group, which is called the Jamā‘ah Tablīgh. However, group members do not declare that they want to establish an Islamic state in Malaysia. In addition, Jomo and Shabery (1992), for example, maintain that Jamā‘ah Tablīgh is an informal, unregistered missionary movement. Many argue that Jamā‘ah Tablīgh is not a political organization and does not support the government programs. However, some maintain that this movement plays a major role in the political arena, even if it is unregistered. I visited their mosque at Sri Petaling and attended some of their meetings with them in Bandar Baru Bangi. I also went out with them (Ar. Khurûj) to do the da‘wa, one of their activities of going to the mosque to pray together.

In Malaysia, Jamā‘ah Tablīgh was introduced by Maulana Abdul Malik Madani, who came to Singapore and Selangor in 1952 as a representative of his markâz.
especially when the local people reject their invitation with rudeness. Tablighists believe that if people reject joining their program at the mosque, it is because the Muslims have not achieved hidayah (guidance from Allâh). So, according to the Tablighists, every one who does not perform shalat can be grouped as Muslims without hidayah. Besides doing khurûj, the Tabligh also hold Malam Markaz every Saturday night at Sri Petaling. The most important aim of this ritual is to talk about the power of Allâh by saying, “La Ilâ ha illâ Allâh (there is no God, except Allâh)” in every Muslim circumstance of life. In a Tablighist’s words, “We meet to talk about imân (faith).” These meetings are attended by more than four thousand Tablighists. I came to my belief that this is an Islamic group that tends not to promote an Islamic state and is only concerned with the quality of faith of every single Muslim in Malaysia.

Conclusion

To conclude this paper, I would like to highlight some important points. First, Malaysians have a problem with the issue of identity among themselves in terms of what it means to be Malaysian and Malay or another ethnic background. This problem leads to the problem of perception on what kind of Islam could be implemented in Malaysia as a secular state. Second, it is interesting to emphasize that Malaysia is a secular state. However, in the last two decades the government has promoted Islam as a tool of development. At the same time, the Islamic parties are still eager to have Malaysia become a fully Islamic state by implementing Islamic law for all Muslims in Malaysia. Third, the debate on an Islamic state has led different groups of Malaysians to form their own interpretation of this concept. So far, this investigation has provided a brief portrayal of Muslim and non-Muslim interpretations of what an Islamic state is. Fourth, the Malaysian government also plays a major role in promoting this country as an Islamic state, and the current Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi, is trying to fulfill this concept by suggesting the concept of Islam Hadhari. This paper has showed that Islamic Hadhari is being utilized in many Malaysian governmental and non-governmental sectors. It would be interesting to do further research in this country on how the problem of separation between state and religion in the mirror of pluralism plays out at the grassroots level.

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FROM CHARITY TO SOCIAL INVESTMENTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: 
A STUDY OF PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA

Josie M. Fernandez

Introduction

The word ‘philanthropy,’ derived from the Greek philen (to love) and anthropos (human), means “the expression of love to human beings.” Nadarajah (in Josie M. F. and Abdul Rahim 2002) defines philanthropy from a sociological perspective as an expression of our sympathetic/compassionate sense borne out of our sociability and directed at those in need of help. Robert L. Payton stresses the definition of philanthropy in the sense of organizational or collective action, where philanthropy is not an individual action but a collective action carried out by or through organizations or institutions (in Josie M. F and Abdul Rahim 2002). It is seen as forms of social interventions to help eradicate poverty, provide access to basic needs such as health and education, promote global peace and security and conserve the environment. There is a growing belief that governments alone cannot meet and sustain the needs of their people.

This study shows that philanthropy in Indonesia is profoundly driven by religion, cosmological practices, community sustainability and political changes. The case studies in this paper underscore the fact that the philanthropic activities of a society reflect the cultural, social, economic and political conditions of particular periods. The religious constructions of philanthropy have a powerful resonance that manifest themselves in the patterns of giving.

Islamic philanthropy was introduced in Indonesia with the advent of Islam in the Malay Archipelago in the 15th century. Islam places great importance on caring for others through various forms of giving such as zakat, which is obligatory, and infak, sedekah and wakaf, which are voluntary. Through Islamic philanthropy, Muslims help the poor and the needy meet their religious obligations (Bamualim et al. 2006).

Since the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, mosques and pesantrens (traditional Islamic schools) have practiced Islamic philanthropy. The mosques and pesantrens became centers for education and dakwah (Islamic propagation) (Bamualim et al. 2006). It was, however, not institutionalized until the early 20th century when Muhammadiyah, an Islamic social organization founded in 1912, established a zakat collection center to raise funds and disburse them to the poor. Today, Muhammadiyah runs thousands of schools, dozens of universities and hospitals and hundreds of orphanages through grassroots support. However, due to inadequate resources, Muhammadiyah also accepts government subsidies (Bamualim et al. 2006).

The move to institutionalize Islamic philanthropy was in tandem with developments taking place throughout the Islamic world at that time. It was a response by Muslim communities towards the development of science and technology, secularization and modernization. It was an acknowledgement of the inadequacies of Islamic institutions in responding to the challenges of modernity. The Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) Yogyakarta established Badan Wakaf UII in 1948 to respond to these challenges. The Pondok Modern Gontor pesantren established in 1926 has kept pace with modernity but the growth of institutionalized philanthropy for social change has been slow. Islamic philanthropy has remained largely traditional and therefore charity oriented (i.e., providing services to the poor and the needy) (Bamualim et al. 2006).

Catholic philanthropy began to take root in Indonesia in the 1800s. Elements of charity, social investment and social justice shaped Catholic philanthropy. Schools, hospitals and orphanages were built and managed through donations from Catholics. With democracy and human rights as the fundamentals of social justice, the Catholic Church became an active participant in the struggle for independence from colonial rule in Indonesia (Yayasan Kehati and INRISE 2006).

Likewise, philanthropic giving has long been a part of Hinduism, which came to Indonesia around the 2nd century. The Pania Fund in Indonesia, made up of collections from Hindu temples, is used for the needs of the poor. The Saraswati Foundation underscores the need for education of youth.

Buddhism reached the shores of Indonesia during the rule of Sriwijaya. Dana, the Buddhist form of giving, is practiced through support for the poor. For example,
the Tzu Chi Merit Society provided humanitarian aid for the building of homes in Aceh after the tsunami disaster in 2004.

Findings

In the last two decades, changes have been taking place in the philanthropic terrain in Indonesia:

- A new paradigm to mobilize indigenous resources through organized philanthropy is shaping the field of philanthropy;
- The development of social justice philanthropy is evident;
- The pluriformity of philanthropy needs to be recognized;
- The centrality of religion and culture in the expansion of philanthropy is profound;
- The role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in addressing economic disparities through the establishment of philanthropic foundations is important;
- The issue of the sustainability of Indonesia, through putting into practice the principles of sustainable development, cuts across all philanthropic endeavors;
- There is an absence of any work on the cosmological values linked to philanthropy and cosmology-cum-economy societies in the Indonesian context;
- Absent too are studies on community or horizontal forms of philanthropy; and
- The indicators used for social justice philanthropy are access to basic needs, capacity building, education, health, environmental conservation and achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Trends

The findings indicate two major trends in the field of philanthropy in Indonesia. These are: the institutionalization of giving and the growth of entities that focus on social justice rather than on charity.

Institutionalized philanthropy

Modern philanthropy is highly institutionalized in that resources are mobilized for grant-making, which goes through various stages such as identifying prospective beneficiaries and intermediaries. Wealthy individuals and families have established grant-making foundations to enhance the efficacy of their contributions. These foundations are serviced by many supporting organizations, such as research institutions and centers of excellence.

Philanthropy in Asia has not attained this level of institutionalization. However, the growth of the civil society movement is changing the structure of philanthropy in Asia. The dependency on foreign aid, which will diminish as Indonesia develops, has also triggered the need to develop indigenous philanthropy.

A study in 2000 by the Public Interest Research and Advocacy Center (PIRAC) showed a high level of giving among Indonesians. Almost all of those interviewed (96%) stated they had given donations either in the form of cash, goods or time and energy. Increasingly, organizations are being established for Indonesians to channel their contributions. The study noted “that the financial potential of the Muslim community to raise zakat, infak and sedekah funds total around IDR20 trillion annually. Around 98 percent of all Muslims in Indonesia donate cash, food, or their own time. Even those with an average income equivalent to less than one thousand US dollars per annum give donations. For a country in which Muslims constitute almost 90 percent of a population of over 220 million, the potential of Islamic philanthropy is obviously huge. A large proportion of the population (110 million) still lives on less than USD2 a day and realizing this potential is all the more important” (Bamualim et al. 2006).

Social justice philanthropy

The concept of social justice philanthropy (SJP) was first developed in the United States by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP). It is “the practice of making contributions to non-profit organizations that work for structural change and increase the opportunity of those who are less well off politically, economically and socially” (Saidi 2006). The goal of SJP is the creation of social justice, which theoretically involves:

“addressing basic needs, redistribution of power, transformation of values in favor of diversity (e.g., race, gender), strong community capacity, and public participation in decision making. Traditional philanthropy does not address basic needs nor does it contribute to the transformation of values, including prejudices on race and gender. Traditional philanthropy may redistribute power and improve capacity but it is unclear who makes decisions, to whom power is redistributed and whose capacity is built. From the SJP perspective, social services do not eradicate the root causes of..."
social injustice.” (Saidi 2006)

In Indonesia, the emergence of social justice philanthropy can be traced to religious philanthropy based on Islam and Christianity (i.e., missionary work). Before the Muhammadiyah, it was the Christian missionary movement that built schools, hospitals and orphanages in many Indonesian cities. Muhammadiyah emulated this Christian expression of philanthropy. However, *dakwah* and missionary forms of philanthropic activities at the turn of the 20th century did not respond to the causes of poverty and alienation (Bamualim et al. 2006).

It was the development of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the 1970s that brought a shift from traditional philanthropy to social justice philanthropy. Poverty, marginalization, environmental degradation, violations of labor and human rights, gender discrimination and limited democratization and restrictions on citizens created the space for advocacy. However, advocacy CSOs in Indonesia are generally not recipients of traditional philanthropy.

Institutions such as Eco Pesantren Darut Tauhid, Dompet Dhuafa Republika Foundation, the Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation (Kehati), Yayasan Wisnu, and Transparency International Indonesia are pursuing the goals of social justice philanthropy through their activities. The programs of these philanthropy-related organizations reflect their efforts to find solutions to the deep-rooted problems of Indonesia today, such as poverty, environmental degradation, lack of access to education and health, redistribution of resources, corruption and peoples’ empowerment through participation. The diverse programmatic activities of these institutions are set to transform Indonesian societies in urban and rural areas.

Indeed, social justice philanthropy is a battleground for a range of issues that impacted Indonesian society during the twenty years of the New Order Regime (1968-1998). The struggles for freedom, people’s participation and empowerment stifled by the oppression of the Suharto era began to influence the development of philanthropy in the 1990s. The financial crisis of 1997 precipitated the fall of Suharto in 1998 and resulted in the birth of “an awakening era for CSOs.” A new spirit of philanthropy was triggered by creating “a momentum for a society which has enjoyed a long tradition of philanthropic giving to move from spontaneous giving to one based in understanding the need for more sustainable efforts to help others to help themselves” (Bamualim et al. 2006).

**The Case Studies**

The following case studies, developed through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and review of secondary materials, underscore the two major trends of philanthropy in Indonesia discussed above. The strategies engaged by the organizations to institutionalize giving towards social justice are based on factors of religion, culture, community, borderless giving, growth of corporate social responsibility concerns and civil society advocacy.

**Category 1: The pluriformity of philanthropy**

One of the significant findings of the study is the pluriformity of philanthropy in Indonesia. It is this pluriformity that has constructed an ethos that enables Indonesians to embrace philanthropic orientations based on religions: Islam, Christianity, Hindu, Buddhism and cosmological practices. In 2007, Indonesia celebrated 60 years of independence from Dutch colonial rule “on the heels of national polemic on issues concerning liberalism, pluralism and secularism” (*Jakarta Post*, February, 2007).

Several CSO leaders interviewed for the study expressed that the pluralism Indonesia is proud of is under threat. However, the following case studies mirror the diversity and pluralism of Indonesia. The featured institutions use a mix of strategies to develop their institutional capacity to sustain their philanthropic work. These are deriving resources from religious giving, community contributions, volunteerism, corporate contributions, and transnational giving.

- **Eco Pesantren Darut Tauhid**
  The Eco Pesantren (EP), established in 2006 by Abdullah Gymnastiar (the founder of Darut Tauhid), is a model for the social transformation of villages plagued by persistent problems of poverty, inequalities, environmental destruction, politics and corruption. Located in Cigugur Girang Village, Parongpong, Bandung, EP is “science in action.”

  Dr. Budi Faisal, an architect cum academic cum government officer trained in Indonesia, the US and Australia, is leading the team that is transforming the model into a reality. The principles guiding the transformation of this village are rooted in Islamic and sustainable development values.

  The financial resources for the building of the EP are *wakaf* contributions. *Wakaf* are the earliest forms of Islamic philanthropic endowments. *Wakaf* can come
from both Muslims and non-Muslims. The wakaf contributions are only for the initial building of the EP as it is envisioned to eventually become a self-sustaining model for villages. A donor who contributes IDR75,000 receives a certificate for the purchase of a piece of wakaf land. However, Dr. Budi points out, “All wakaf belongs to God. EP has taken precautions to ensure no one will ever sell the assets of EP.” Strict adherence to the principles of transparency and accountability in regards to wakaf donations are observed. The amount of wakaf donations collected is announced daily on radio.

The EP addresses the devastating consequences of the exploitation of non-renewable resources, the use of agricultural chemicals, unbridled urbanization and the lack of access to education and economic self-reliance. The importance of economic activities is visible. At the EP model farms, 48 farmers are growing vegetables that have a higher market value than conventional produce. The EP markets the produce directly to supermarkets and other outlets. The farmers are guaranteed a minimum income to address fluctuations in prices and the impact of weather patterns. Interestingly, these farmers cited economic benefit as the first reason for their participation in the EP activities.

The EP model is ecologically friendly and upholds sustainable development principles. It is designed to be self-sustaining in food and energy and produce zero waste. Santris (students of pesantren) receive a holistic education in agriculture, Islamic knowledge, science, technology, Islamic values, entrepreneurship and leadership. The integrated education system emphasizes how to love nature and is intended to build the spiritual and social capital of villages. It is hoped that after they graduate from the EP, the students will go to rural areas and work with local villagers to empower a village and make it less dependent on the cities.

• Dompet Dhuafa (DD)

Dompet Dhuafa (DD), founded on 2 July 1993, is a successful model for zakat collection through the adoption of modern management principles and strategies—organizational development, transparency and accountability. DD is one of several like-minded institutions that mobilize and manage Indonesian Muslim community resources, specifically for the zakat, infak and sadaqah (ZIS), which are all forms of charitable giving in Islam (Saidi 2006). DD was initially a sister institution of the Republika. In 2001, DD separated from being managed by Republika and assumed greater organizational independence. The ZIS resources are managed optimally with professionalism, transparency and accountability.

DD’s vision and mission are captured in its logo, which contains a picture of a hook, and its motto, “Whoever is unable to fish needs to be provided with a place to fish from. When the fishing place is available, he needs to know if there are any fish out there. When there are fish out there, the angler needs to be protected from being pushed aside by those with more experience and more fish hooks.”

The main programs of DD are health services, education (including an international school for selected poor male students), economic development, human resource development, charity and natural disasters response. Its major sources of funding are domestic and include earned income service fees (0.5 percent), corporate contributions (0.5 percent) and public donations (99 percent). DD’s marketing and fundraising strategies, such as using the media and celebrities, have been very successful. Rahmat Riyadi, the President of DD, says: “DD’s success is not a reflection of its successful fundraising but its success in gaining public trust.”

• Yayasan Wisnu

The Yayasan Wisnu (YW) was founded in 1990 in Bali by Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists of different ethnic origins (e.g., Chinese, Javanese, Manado, Balinese). YW takes its name from tri hita krana, the Hindu triad of Brahma, the Creator; Wisnu, the Conserver; and Siva, the Renewer. Its vision is to be a “catalyst for change through sustainable development principles for a better quality of life for the Balinese.”

YW’s office in Seminyak Kuta stands on land donated by the family of one of its founders and current director, Made Suaranath. The office was designed by another founder, Popo Danes, an international award-winning architect.

The initial programs of Yayasan Wisnu focused on waste management and recycling. In Bali, the hotels generated much waste that was dumped indiscriminately. YW was successful in developing recycling models and facilities that are now managed by others.

As some of the founders, staff and project participants of Yayasan Wisnu began to express a need for a shift in its focus, a three-day consultation on the future directions of YW was held in 2003 with the founding Board, staff and various stakeholders. The consensus was that the real problem of development is the paradigm of top-down interventions. “When a culture and its practices are still alive, the process is different from urban planning concepts of the West,” says Suaranath. The meeting
decided that YW then takes the path of community empowerment to address the challenges of modernity and globalization that have some serious consequences for Balinese communities. This includes the loss of thousands of hectares of fertile agricultural land to hotel development and the loss of fishing grounds and coral reefs have affected the livelihood of communities.

Thus, YW focuses on sustainable development and consumption in the villages of Nusa Ceningan, Kiadan Pelaga, Duku Sibetan and Tenganan. Balancing life, the relationship between human beings, the environment and social justice are fundamentals that embody the concept of sustainability. Community organizing includes the participatory mapping of natural resources, human resources and cultural practices before a project is initiated. For example, the concept of *subak*, which refers to the equal sharing of water resources, contains a great deal of wisdom. Through the *subak* system, conflicts over resources are avoided in these villages. For basic needs, *mensyukun*—cherish what you have—is encouraged. Community empowerment also involves building the capacity of the community.

The main projects in the villages are ecotourism, the benefits of which go directly to the communities; income generating projects such as coffee growing in Pelaga; the development of micro-hydro projects in Pelaga and Tenganan; the production of wine from *salak* and the strengthening of existing cooperative practices like the *subak*. The villagers manage these projects voluntarily and the funds go directly to them. Networking and barter trade are encouraged among the villages. The village of Pelaga provides coffee for Tenganan, which in turn barter rice and coconuts.

YW is a slim CSO with six staff. Board members are volunteers and work on the community projects without any financial remuneration. Staff such as Atiek, Danny and Gede pointed out it is their love for community and the environment that motivates them to work in YW.

“Yayasan Wisnu belongs to the community. One day, the board will come from the community,” said Board Members Suarnath and Agung Putradhyna.

- *Yayasan Kayon-Bali*

Individually and in small ways in their own locality through volunteerism, sharing of knowledge and expertise. This was pointed out by Agung, Wes and Gede during our discussion in the beautiful hamlet of Marga.

Nine individuals from various backgrounds—architecture, law, engineering, mechanics, literature and accounting—founded Yayasan Kayon (YK) on 24 February 1999. Kayon stands for *piKiran, karYa untuk harmOni lingkungaN* (thought, speech and deeds for environmental harmony). The goals of YK are to promote an understanding of the concept of sustainability and to incorporate it in the daily lives of children and farmers in the village of Marga, to use mathematics, physics and biology to respond to local needs and to promote an understanding of pluralism and intercultural relations.

YK’s programs for children consist of basic computer learning, English, electronics and local culture. The children’s courses are conducted through study groups named *mengapet* and inspired by the Balinese calendar *Tika*. The activities for farmers are run through *Sekhe Manyi* (rice harvesters group). The programs promote alternative energy and appropriate farming technology. Organic farming, biogas development and a revolving microcredit fund for animal husbandry are being initiated.

The home of Agung Putradhyna, one of KY’s founders, is used as the learning center for children. All activities are run by volunteers.

**Category 2: Corporate social responsibility philanthropy**

Philanthropy and social responsibility go beyond charity and welfare. Today, corporations are contributing to numerous causes such as education, achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals, community development, the environment and rehabilitation after major disasters.

- *Eka Tjipta Foundation*

The Eka Tjipta Foundation (ETF) is a family foundation founded on 17 March 2006 by the Eka Tjipta Widjaja family (of the Sinarmas conglomerate). The foundation is managed through an endowment fund from the Widjaja family. Its vision and mission statement is: “Enhance quality of life, welfare and foster self-supporting society by providing a sustainable contribution through various programs that are economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable.”

While ETF’s activities focus on sustainable development, its business unit is committed to good governance, respect for the environment, human rights, fair labor practices, consumer protection and community and societal development. The foundation believes that, for a stable Indonesia, economic disparities must be
addressed and environmental protection must take center stage in the development process. This, states ETF, can be achieved through education and alternative energy empowerment projects. The programs of the foundation reflect these beliefs.

Economics for Life projects have been launched in ten high schools in Mojokerto, East Java. To promote the concept of biofuel, students have participated in the mass planting of *Jatropha* trees. The ETF likewise rebuilt five elementary schools destroyed by a devastating earthquake in Yogyakarta in 2006. It also supported workshops on global warming and climate change in the lead-up to the UN conference on global warming in December 2007 in Bali.

- **The Sampoerna Foundation**
  Putera Sampoerna and his company, PT H. M. Sampoerna, wanted to return something to Indonesia, which had given them so much. Putera Sampoerna found his call in education. Together with other shareholders of PT H. M. Sampoerna, he founded the Sampoerna Foundation, which has partnership arrangements within Indonesia and other ASEAN countries, and whose operations are managed by 150 staff members.

  Support for education was seen as a neutral and non-partisan strategy in the context of philanthropy and politics. The foundation focuses on providing scholarships for students to pursue tertiary education as well as for teachers who want to pursue graduate studies. As less than 50 percent of teachers in Indonesia are qualified, the foundation established a Teacher Training Institute to enhance the quality of teachers. The Foundation has also launched various management programs to produce people of caliber for businesses.

- **Como Shambala Estate at Begawan Giri/Como Foundation**
  The Como Shambala at Begawan Giri is no ordinary hotel or resort. Built on a 23 acre site overlooking the Ayung River in Ubud, Bali, it is a place for nourishing the spirit and achieving holistic health. The guests are celebrities and the well-heeled.

  The resort is owned by Christina Ong, a Singapore tycoon and hotelier. It is not a conventional cement and brick hotel. Nature around it is intact. A natural spring revered for its healing properties, the Source, is located within the resort.

  Como Shambala’s corporate social responsibility begins with the conservation of nature. No trees are cut. Should one fall, it is turned into compost. The roofs of the villas and suites are made from traditional *ylang ylang* roofing. All food served is organic.

  As the area was purchased from villagers, at least one family member in the village where the resort is located, is guaranteed lifetime employment with the resort. It also recognizes that villages are cohesive religious communities. The villagers worship in temples within the area of the hotel. It supports local culture through financial assistance for music and ceremonies. A kindergarten for the village children is run by the staff of the resort. Water harvested from the spring is supplied to homes in seven villages.

  The Como Foundation (CF) prioritizes women and girls. Education, healthcare and skills development for needy women and girls from around the world receive support from CF.

- **Bali Hati Foundation**
  The Bali Hati Foundation (BHF) is another example of transnational philanthropy as donations are also received from overseas. It is a non-profit foundation established in February 1997 to promote the education and social welfare of the people of Bali. “Hati” means heart in Indonesian, and the name suggests that the heart, the beauty of Bali, is its people. Its founders are Frank Olgvary, Christiana Reimandos and Ketut Arnaya. It provides services that build the capacity of needy Balinese children and adults to improve their quality of life. It operates a spa, the profits of which support the schools.

  The projects of the Bali Hati Foundation are varied and are designed to enable young Indonesians to realize their individual and social potential. It creates an environment where love and concern, combined with educational and social initiatives, can achieve not only the spiritual and intellectual growth of individuals but can ultimately bring about fundamental changes in the economic and social life of Balinese villagers. Community service by the students upon the completion of any course of study is viewed as fundamental to achieving this goal. Although the Bali Hati Foundation recognizes the close interrelationship of spiritual, intellectual and material achievement, it is in no way associated with any religious foundation, sect or denomination and has no political affiliation. Its programs are open to all without religious or gender biases.

  Among its major projects are the Bali Hati Elementary School, Bali Hati Community Education Program, and a mobile clinic. The clinic project began in 2003
through donations from the Swiss government and SAFM Radio, Adelaide, Australia. From 2003 to 2006, the clinic provided dental care and treatment, general health examinations and PAP smears at various locations, including orphanages and elementary schools, in nine Bali regencies.

In August 2005, BHF was selected as the best non-profit foundation in Bali by the government. It was also named the “number one” foundation in Indonesia.

Category 3: Grant-making foundations

Grant-making foundations raise funds which are utilized to provide grants to NGOs.

- **Kehati—The Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation**
  Kehati, established in 1994 in Jakarta, has the distinction of being the first grant-making NGO in Indonesia. Its initial funding support came from the United States of America in the form of an endowment grant. Annually, Kehati is able to allocate six percent of the value of the endowment fund for the implementation of its programs. Kehati currently receives funding from both domestic and international sources.

Its mission includes supporting biological diversity conservation and the sustainable utilization of biological resources; empowering communities and other stakeholders in biological diversity conservation; and supporting the development, enactment and adoption of policies to secure the conservation and sustainable utilization of biological resources. Its program areas are education and training, institution building, environmental conservation, community development, research, advocacy, publications and public information, and emergency and disaster relief.

Kehati places a great emphasis on building the capacity of communities to enable them to be economically self-reliant, with local knowledge forming the basis of conservation and economic activities. Indonesia’s biological diversity is its strength. For example, following the financial crisis of 1997, the prices of medicines skyrocketed and many died from lack of access to medicines. A solution was found in Madura, once the cradle of Indonesian herbal medicine. Kehati revived its tradition of producing herbal cures. Pesantrens, health centers and universities have been successfully participating in this project for the last seven years.

Category 4: Community/horizontal philanthropy

Community forms of philanthropic activities are still strong in Bali. In the villages of Kiadan Pelaga and Tenganan, pluralistic collectivism and seka (to be one) principles have sustained a social structure deeply rooted in Balinese cosmology. Most activities are undertaken in groups. The banjar (village) is steeped in the desa adat (village customs) and are regarded as kin-like communities. Adat institutions provide the organizational base for a balance between individual and collective interests and good. Tenth century Balinese inscriptions make references to banjar putus (obligatory ceremonial contributions) and banjar suka-duka (mutual help in joy and sorrow). The sharing of agricultural resources, water and irrigation through subak (cooperative or village customary organizations), equity in development projects, collective cremations, group preparations, and participation in celebrations and ceremonies, environmental conservation and the sale of land and negotiations with the state are all premised on adat structures (Warren 1995). These concepts have been sustained in Kiadan Pelaga and Tenganan where the banjar functions as the conduit for ritual, social, economic and administrative activities.

The egalitarian codes in village structures have been instrumental in the implementation of all projects initiated by Yayasan Wisnu. YW facilitates its community programs through the adat institutions. The labor required for implementing projects is community-based and voluntary. One empowering activity is mapping of the village territory/resources by the community. Says Komang Suarasa, a young man from Tenganan, “It took us a year to map 940 hectares of our village. I know and understand my land now. I am proud of that.”

Both Tenganan and Kiadan Pelaga bear testimony that strong communities and leadership are central to sustaining villages. The adat rules protect biodiversity to keep the balance. “If you lose biodiversity, everything collapses,” say the villagers.

Tenganan is proud that it has sustained and protected one of Indonesia’s oldest villages through the strict enforcement of adat rules. Any villager who cuts trees in the forest suffers the severe punishment of being banished from the village. The forest in Tenganan is abundant with fruits, nuts, herbs, flora and fauna. As a water catchment area, it provides water to many villages. “The strong leadership and strict enforcement of adat have kept away state interference and hoteliers,” states I.M. Sadr, a former dinas head and respected opinion leader of Tenganan.

Meanwhile, Kiadan Pelaga is a showcase for the natural
farming of coffee, which is carried out through *subak*, the village cooperative. The village is also a water catchment area, where the underground water forms a river which flows down to Southern Bali. “We have strict rules on the conservation of bamboo planted from the time of our ancestors,” emphasizes Pak Juta, the village head. Bamboo prevents erosion; hence, indiscriminate harvesting of bamboo is not permitted.

**Category 5: Advocacy philanthropy**

“The notion that philanthropy, to retain its character, must remain non-controversial represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the institution, which not only prevents its historical development, but also destroys its essential values. The most traditional of charitable purposes ordinarily require the acquisition, development and dissemination of information and ideas and they are not rendered the less charitable because such information or ideas are disputable and disputed.” (Albert M. Sachs in Rabinowitz 1990)

The critical role of institutions in the development of policies, advocacy for social justice and equity and systemic change require philanthropic support. The words of Albert M. Sachs affirm this.

- **Transparency International Indonesia**

Transparency International Indonesia (TII) is a civil society organization established in October 2000 as part of global efforts to eliminate corruption and promote transparency and accountability in government, business and civil society. It is governed through voluntary association by a Board of Directors and a Supervisory Board. TII’s projects extend to seventeen regions where it has regional and field offices.

TII’s main strategic programs and projects focus on advocacy, policy changes and public education. Research and capacity building for communities, government officials and businesses on issues related to corruption are some of its priorities. Corruption Perception Surveys in thirty-two cities in Indonesia are an important tool for policy advocacy and public education. Building islands of integrity through Integrity Pacts is another strategic intervention in the battle against corruption. Other areas of work are political party financing, tax reforms, CSR, extractive industries and tax reforms. Publications of research findings and guidebooks strengthen TII’s advocacy and capacity building activities. A major TII project is the monitoring of the rehabilitation of Aceh following the devastation of it in the Asian tsunami.

“One organization alone cannot fight deep-rooted corruption. Coalition building is important,” says Rizal Malik. TII participates actively in several coalitions striving for policy reforms for greater transparency and accountability in government and business to achieve social justice, a central element in achieving sustainable development.

**Category 6: Philanthropy-support organizations**

Research institutions and associations play effective roles in the growth of indigenous philanthropy and the quality of philanthropic efforts. In Indonesia, the Public Interest Research and Advocacy Center and the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture at Universiti Islam Negara have undertaken surveys and studies on patterns of giving in Indonesia and on well known indigenous philanthropy institutions.

The recently established Philanthropy Association of Indonesia likewise undertakes research, advocates for policies to spur growth in the philanthropy field and promotes national, regional and international networking.

The Asia Pacific office for the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) at the United Nations Development Programme in Jakarta is also pivotal in creating awareness on CSR and the need for Indonesia to achieve the goals by 2015.

**Conclusion**

This paper attempts to bring a better understanding of the pluriformity of philanthropy in the modern era in Indonesia, the most populous Islamic nation in the world. The philanthropic institutions examined in the study are transforming charity, rooted in religious, cosmological and community values, into social investments such as the eradication of poverty, education, advocacy, environmental protection and sustainable development. Corporate philanthropy is likewise emerging as an important contributor to development in Indonesia. However, there are many challenges to the institutionalization of philanthropy. These are:

- Transforming and creating more professionally-managed philanthropic institutions to enhance giving and serving;
- Finding solutions to prevent the loss of land to development and the loss of communities that sustain traditional and cultural forms of philanthropy;
- Confronting perceptions on the purpose of
Islamic philanthropy to remove misunderstanding on the role of pesantrens (e.g., that they are not breeding grounds for terrorism as depicted in the Western media);
• Achieving the MDGs for Indonesia by 2015 with support from philanthropic foundations for poverty alleviation programs;
• Mobilizing support for advocacy for social justice from corporate philanthropic foundations is crucial for strengthening civil society;
• Preventing money laundering through philanthropy to reduce corruption;
• Addressing the threats to pluralism, liberalism and secularism through philanthropic support;
• Sourcing support for research on cosmological philanthropic practices in Bali for a better understanding of the pluriuniformity of philanthropy;
• Creating information channels for networking between grant-making foundations and indigenous philanthropy organizations;
• Developing policies (e.g. on taxation) to spur the growth of philanthropic institutions; and
• Harnessing pluralism in philanthropy for strengthening democracy, tolerance, peace and sustainability in Asia.

These challenges raise questions that I hope other scholars will pursue more fully.

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**SOCIAL IMPACT OF JAPANESE PRIVATE-SECTOR PROJECTS ON LOCAL PEOPLE IN THE PHILIPPINES AND MALAYSIA**

Hozue Hatae

**Introduction**

“Sustainable development” has been the mainstream mindset of development projects since 1992 when the World Environmental Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro. The concept is derived from the challenge of how we can dissolve the conflicts between “development” and “the environment” for our lives to be sustainable. In this light, various actors, such as multinational corporations and financiers, have set up “self-imposed control” and social responsibility policies which take into account environmental and social aspects.

Japanese companies have done the same. Currently, more Japanese corporations are engaged in development projects abroad, especially in Asia. They have been focusing on large-scale infrastructure projects, such as dams, irrigation systems and power plants, and extractive industry projects, such as oil, gas and mining. These projects are supposed to attain “sustainable development” with their own “self-imposed control” and social responsibility policies.

However, these controls and policies have still been unable to prevent significant social impacts resulting from these large-scale development projects. The local people who live near the projects still suffer from losing their homes, livelihoods and traditional ways of life. It is difficult to say that “sustainable development” has been successfully achieved.

**Objectives and significance of the study**

The research aims to reflect on the reasons for the above-mentioned situation and make some recommendations for the attainment of genuine “sustainable development” for local people. Japan currently plays a vital role in development projects in Asia as investor, financier and implementor and will certainly seek new opportunities for development projects abroad in the future. Thus, it is important to make recommendations about good practices for Japanese companies to secure social justice and genuine development for local people.

**Methodology**

Intensive interviews with local people affected by three Japanese private-sector projects were conducted in order to identify:

1. What kinds of social impact local people are concerned about;
2. How the meaningful participation of the affected people was secured in the planning, implementation and/or monitoring processes related to the social issues; and
3. Whether the project proponents could successfully prevent or mitigate social impact.

**Findings: Illustrations from three cases**

Three Japanese private-sector projects show how large-scale development projects could possibly turn into destructive ones for local communities and highlight the challenges in achieving “genuine development” for local communities. These cases are presented below.

**Case study 1: Coral Bay Nickel Project in the Philippines**

The Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Company (RTNMC) has been operating an open-pit mine situated in Barangay Rio Tuba in the municipality of Bataraza in the southern part of the province of Palawan since 1975. After thirty years of open pit mining, the RTNMC entered into a partnership with Coral Bay Nickel Corporation (CBNC) to put up a Hydrometallurgical Processing Plant (HPP) in order to recover nickel and cobalt from the low-grade ore that forms a mountain of mine wastes from the original nickel mining activity. The major components of the HPP project include a hydrogen sulfide facility, a limestone quarry and tailings dams. The HPP was constructed within the existing mining area of the RTNMC with an investment of USD150 million and started its operations in 2005. There is currently an expansion plan to construct another HPP, with the second plant next to the existing HPP.

The project owner is the joint venture CBNC, composed of three Japanese companies, Sumitomo Metal Mining...
Co., Ltd. (54% of capital input), Mitsui & Co., Ltd. (18%), and Sojitz Corporation (18%) and the Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation (10%).

Destruction of indigenous people's life and culture

The proposed limestone quarrying operation was expected to cover some 13 hectares and the limestone extraction activity necessitates the removal of the forest cover over the limestone hill. More than thirty families of the Pala’wan indigenous community have long occupied the land forming part of the proposed limestone quarry site and have asserted their ancestral rights over their domain. The Pala’wan are concerned about the possibility that the Gotok River could be blocked by rubble and debris resulting from the quarrying operations and that this source of water, reliable even during times of drought, might be affected. The removal of a significant portion of the forest cover also threatens the agricultural production system (kaingin) of the Pala’wan.

Pollution and ill effects on health

The HPP uses chemicals during its purification processes that include a 98 percent concentration of sulfuric acid, methanol and hydrogen sulfide. There should be immediate treatment options discussed for this sulfur waste, as sulfur oxide emissions are dangerous pollutants that cause acid rain. The inefficiency of tailings dams in preventing toxic leakage is another concern as there is the possibility that the tailings will contaminate the surrounding groundwater.

The HPP project has currently given rise to various health concerns in the host communities, including: (a) an outbreak of skin lesions among residents (mostly children) of the village of Tagdalungon, situated near the HPP’s sulfuric acid unloading site; (b) chronic coughs and headaches among residents of the barangays surrounding the HPP; and (c) the pungent odor emanating from the HPP.

Consultations and local people’s participation in the decision-making process

Local non-governmental organizations (NGO) networks in Palawan showed their concerns about the HPP project before the construction work commenced. Local residents, together with the Pala’wan community from the 11 affected villages surrounding the HPP, also voiced their opposition to the project, especially during the construction period. They submitted a series of petition letters to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), stating their concerns about the HPP project and demanding the cancellation of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) that had been issued by the DENR. The number of signatures on the petitions finally reached a total of 5,346 individuals in early 2003. A series of mass demonstrations by the communities was also carried out.

Local NGOs filed a petition in the 17th Division Court of Appeals in August 2003 since the DENR had issued an ECC without the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of those directly affected by the project, the Pala’wan indigenous people, which is a violation of the Indigenous People’s Rights Act (IPRA, or Republic Act No. 8371). However, a notice of decision from the Court of Appeals dismissing the filed petition was issued after only one month. In October 2003, a local legal assistance NGO submitted a motion for reconsideration at the Supreme Court on behalf of local NGOs stating the violations of the CBNC/RTNMC and the grave abuse of discretion on the part of the Secretary of the DENR when he issued the ECC to the HPP project. This was likewise dismissed.

Although the proponent failed to secure the “Social Acceptability” and “Free and Prior Informed Consent” requirements under the IPRA law and the Philippine Environment Impact Statement (EIS) System, the construction still pushed through and was completed in 2005. In a desperate attempt to comply with the social acceptability requirements under existing laws in the Philippines, the proponent secured the signatures of tribal chieftains representing various indigenous communities in Bataraza. These signatures, together with those of other community groups and local officials, were attached to their EIS report. The manner by which such signatures were secured, however, is highly questionable, considering that only the tribal chieftains signed the petition that was prepared for them by the proponent’s associate, and there were no community meetings called for before such petition was made. Some residents were made to sign attendance sheets that were passed off as endorsement of or consent to the proposed project.

Japanese proponents’ performance

CBNC, together with the RTNMC, has been boasting of responsible mining by launching the PhP95 million “Social Development and Management Project (SDMP) 2004-2009” in order to assist the development of the host community (i.e., the 11 villages affected by the HPP). The components of the SDMP include education (e.g., scholarships), infrastructures and facilities (e.g., building village facilities), livelihood programs (e.g.,
provision of handtractors) and social services (e.g., quarterly medical outreach). These projects have been conducted at the community level. Many affected village-heads (Barangay Captains) admitted that the initiatives that the CBNC, together with the RTNMC, is doing for the host community show a great improvement in comparison to what the RTNMC had done by itself before CBNC came into this area for the HPP project.

The people, however, voiced numerous complaints, such as the following:

“When I went to the quarterly medical outreach, I could only get several tablets of paracetamol. The transportation cost to get to the venue was more expensive than what I could get there.”

“We are now suffering from chronic headaches and coughing. The medicine they provided in the quarterly medical outreach is not for these.”

“Most of the students who obtained scholarships are the children of village or tribal officials.”

“It seems that the handtractor was provided to the community. But I am not sure about it. The tribal chieftain might be using it by himself.”

Since the proponent planned the SDMP without any consultation with or participation by the people in the beneficiary communities, it eventually failed to meet the local people’s demands. Furthermore, the SDMP has been of benefit to some local political leaders, such as village-heads and tribal chieftains, and their close supporters. Meanwhile, there are certainly groups who have not enjoyed the benefits of the SDMP. As a result, the SDMP has led to a split within the community and has increasingly marginalized the people who are not in the mainstream of local politics.

Case study 2: Mindanao Coal-fired Power Plant Project in the Philippines

The 210 Megawatt Mindanao Coal-fired Power Plant is an Independent Power Producer (IPP) project aimed at settling the allegedly imminent power shortage in 2006 in Mindanao. It is owned by Steag State Power Inc. (SPI), a joint venture of a Filipino company and the Steag AG of Germany, which supplied the technology and technical expertise in building the plant. The project cost was USD300 million. The plant was constructed in the municipality of Villanueva, Misamis Oriental, which is 25 kilometers outside Cagayan de Oro City. It is located inside the 3,000-hectare Phividec Industrial Estate-Misamis Oriental (PIE-MO) where there are many people who make their living through agriculture and fishing. The project proceeded as scheduled and the SPI started its commercial operations in 2006.

While the implementor is the SPI led by the Steag AG, the Japanese consortium of Sojitsu and Kawasaki Heavy Industries won the order for boilers and turbines and other equipment.

Health hazards and environmental damage

Local people are concerned about health hazards caused by the air pollution they encounter throughout the length of their life span due to plant emissions such as total suspended particles (TSP), nitrogen oxide (NOx) and sulfur dioxide (SO2). Another concern was the high possibility that the power plant would also contribute to hazardous environmental damage due to high levels of mercury and other heavy metals (e.g., arsenic, chromium, lead) in the effluents. Despite questions being raised by the local people, the topic of toxic heavy metals was never addressed in the public consultations.

Involuntary resettlement

Some 130 households, most of whom were landless farmers in the PIE-MO, were relocated out of the plant site. There is a big question of whether or not the compensation scheme for such resettlement will improve or at least restore their living standards. For example, the compensation standard for demolished structures in the relocation packages of the responsible governmental agency, PHIVIDEC, is 10 percent of the appraisal value of a structure to be demolished. This does not meet international standards, such as the World Bank Operational Policy 4.12, which stipulates that the depreciation of structures and assets should not be taken into account. The people were provided only a disturbance fee amounting to PhP6,000.00. Some of the families were provided a house in the resettlement site that has a mere area of 54 square meters. These resettled people were promised “priority of employment” in the project. Some people, however, were refused due to their age or lack of sufficient education. The people who were not supportive of the current presiding local politician also had difficulty accessing job opportunities. Even though some people were employed, they were fired after a few months and did not receive permanent or regular employment. After the construction phase, a great deal fewer local people have been employed.
Viable alternatives

Local NGO groups stressed that the coal-fired plant is not the most sustainable energy option for the region. They pointed out alternatives that are more economically and ecologically sound, such as renewable energy sources and the rehabilitation of existing hydroelectric power plants. Their proposal, however, was neither discussed in the EIS nor during consultations, and was not incorporated into the project plan.

Consultations and local people’s participation in the decision-making process

The local NGOs and people’s organizations (POs) raised their concerns through various ways, such as petition letters and protest actions. However, the EIS defined the affected people as those who reside in an area within a two-kilometer radius from the stack and a distance of six kilometers along the coastline starting at the mouth of Tagoloan River. Although the local groups pointed out that it is necessary to investigate the effects of the coal-fired plant on the environment, agricultural products, fishery and the people in a wider range than that considered in the EIS, they were defined as outsiders or non-affected people who had no right to participate in the planning process of the project. Local groups were unsuccessful in trying to obtain a copy of the EIS from the relevant Philippine government agencies.

It is obvious that the relocated people were not provided with the opportunity to participate in making the resettlement plans. They were presented with the existing relocation package, called the Memorandum of Agreement between Province of Misamis Oriental and PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority, in 1995. No consultation about their options regarding the form of compensation, for example, land or monetary compensation, took place.

There were also insufficient opportunities for affected local residents and local NGOs to participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the Social Development Plan of the SPI, which was only issued in English, a language that is difficult for most of the local residents to understand.

Japanese proponents’ performance

SPI initiated its Social Development Plan as stated in its website: “Mindful of its social responsibility towards its host communities as well as the areas nearby, the company has developed a comprehensive community development program that is responsive to the needs of the communities’ constituents and aims toward sustainability and self-sufficiency.” Several income-generating livelihood projects have been launched, such as a food catering project, a handcrafted cards project, a chair making project and a demo-farm agricultural project.

None of these livelihood projects, however, has succeeded in providing a main source of income for the people. Many residents who think that a livelihood program is not enough to restore their living standard have not participated in these programs. For example, the relocated people in the resettlement sites qualify to be provided with 200 square meters of land per family in the 1.4-hectare demo-farm, which is only enough to serve as a sideline livelihood. As a result, only four out of 32 qualified families are still engaging in the demo-farm program. Some have chosen instead to return to their original residence where they can find more agricultural land for their livelihoods. A series of medical missions have also been conducted in collaboration with agencies of government units. However, many residents failed to enjoy the medical services since they were busy making their living.

Case Study 3: Broga Incinerator Project in Malaysia

A 1,500-ton mega-incinerator, touted as the world’s largest incinerator and costing RM1.5 billion, was proposed in Broga as part of the government’s plan for an integrated solid waste management system. It was supposed to process 1,200 tons of trash a day from the metropolitan areas of Kuala Lumpur (KL) and Selangor. At the same time, a sanitary landfill was also planned in Broga, adjacent to the proposed incinerator, to bury the fly-ash produced in the burning process of the incinerator. The project implementor, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, prepared a Detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (DEIA) on the incinerator project and the Department of Environment (DOE) approved the DEIA. Despite this green light to go on with the project, the government officially announced that the project had been “ditamatkan” (cancelled) in July 2007.

Japan-based Ebara Corporation won the contract to build the incinerator proposed in Broga through an international bidding process.

Main concerns of local people

Health and environmental hazards by toxic emissions

The incinerator project garnered opposition from some
residents as they were of the view that pollutants in the form of dioxins, heavy metals and ash from the incinerator plant would be hazardous to public safety, health and livelihood. The residents were worried that their daily life could be affected with the setting up of the incinerator and that the emissions of toxic gases and heavy metals from such plants could be the cause of cancer and other diseases in the long term.

Impact on water catchments in the area

The incinerator site sat on a part of a forest reserve serving as a water catchment area, which supplies tributary rivers (Sungai Takali and Sungai Seringgit) that run into the Sungai Semenyih from which the Jenderam Water Intake supplies drinking water to more than 333 residential areas that consist of millions of households in KL and Selangor. The people were concerned that the site could reduce the water catchment potential of the area and affect the safety of the drinking water if the toxic ash containment system fails.

No intensive arguments on existing alternative plans

Other cheaper and safer alternatives are definitely available. However, before properly considering the comparison of an incinerator with the overall waste management plan, the government decided on the incinerator project as the immediate and prioritized solution.

Consultations and local people's participation in the decision-making process

Most people learned about the decision to locate the incinerator project site in Broga from the newspapers on 22 November 2002. Since then, the local people who were concerned about the adverse impact of the project tried various channels to raise the matter and engage with the authorities through dialogue. Upon realizing that no response could be expected from the local elected representatives of the state, the residents sought the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SHAKAM)’s intervention. The Commission arranged for a dialogue between the authorities and residents in Broga on 30 January 2003. However, a second dialogue on 24 April 2003 was cancelled.

Meanwhile, the authorities sometimes called meetings in response to local people’s requests and also voluntarily held several briefings at the local level before the terms of reference (TOR), or the scoping phase, for the DEIA was determined. However, these meetings were not successful because the government did not allow the participants to ask questions, and even asked them to furnish their names and whom they were representing. This was what happened at a briefing on 6 April 2003. Furthermore, the people who opposed the project were sometimes told that all the briefings were closed-door. In fact, during a briefing on 22 March 2003, they were chased out of the venue in Semenyih and were told not to create trouble there.

As a whole, the local people were unable to have their questions answered or obtain much information. In fact, the DEIA report on August 2003 itself stated in the section on Concerns Raised: “About 80 percent (of the local people) want more information.” The information that the authorities provided was mostly on the positive sides of the project, such as its use of clean and sophisticated technology.

The final decision of the government was the cancellation of the project, which was long demanded by the local residents’ group who were opposing the incinerator. However, it is still difficult to say that the people’s participation in decisionmaking process for the incinerator project in Broga was fully secured. Their participation in the decisionmaking process was still limited as the government did not provide the venue to discuss people’s concerns with full information disclosure at the right timing.

Japanese proponents’ performance

The people in Malaysia easily learned through the Internet and other sources that Ebara Corporation has one of the worst operational records for incinerator plants in Japan. The credibility of Ebara was highly questioned by the local people, and the local residents’ group went to the office of Ebara Environmental Engineering Malaysia to meet with Ebara’s top management in December 2004. However, Ebara’s management refused to meet with them and only received their letter outside the building. After that visit, no further response from Ebara Corporation was given.

Ebara boasted that its latest invention, fluidized-bed gasification and ash-melting technology, promotes zero emissions. This reflects the company’s main selling point of sustainable development and environmentally-friendly waste management. The Ebara Corporation also has its own "self-imposed control" policy on environmental aspects, or its “Environmental Policy.” According to the policy, its basic stance to solve environmental issues is by “developing technology and products” that will “contribute toward the conservation of the global environment and the formation of a recycling-based..."
society through business activities.” However, there is no social nor human rights aspect to that policy, let alone the recognition of the basic human right to know. It surely lacks the concepts of transparency and accountability to the local people concerned.

Conclusions/Implications

The local people in these case studies are aware of the prospective social impact of the projects and try to raise their concerns through various channels. Meanwhile, project proponents are usually declared to be responsible for the environmental and social aspects of their own projects. They are making efforts to provide some income-generation projects, medical services and educational assistance for the host communities under the name of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

It seems, however, difficult to say that these projects are attaining “sustainable development” for the local people. On the contrary, it is unquestionable that there are local people whose suffering has increased due to the negative impact of these projects. The CSR efforts in these case studies fail to properly benefit the affected people or effectively mitigate the impact on local people. The CSR projects appear to the affected people to be corporate public relations or green-wash techniques in order to avert public attention from the negative impact of the projects.

The social impact or problems caused by development projects are not unintended consequences, but are predictable, avoidable and mitigatable if the proponents sincerely take into account the voice of local people and the human right of local people to decide the development plan for themselves.

The common problems in the attitude of the implementors are summarized as follows:

(1) Failure to properly assess social and environmental impacts prior to approval
As we could see in Case Studies 1 and 2, proponents failed to adequately assess the project’s social impact prior to project approval, disregarding the information provided by the local people. This failure resulted in impacts far beyond what were originally predicted, destroying the lives of many local people.

(2) Inadequate needs and options assessment
As we could see in Case Studies 2 and 3, proponents failed to undertake an adequate needs and options assessments prior to project approval and tended to be fixed on proceeding with their proposed project option before any consultation with local people.

(3) Failure to release adequate information to local people
As we could see in all of the case studies, proponents failed to release adequate and well-balanced information to the affected communities and the public. In many cases, proponents simply provided information on the positive side or regarding the benefits of the project, but gave no information on the negative side or possible damage to the local society.

(4) Failure to ensure proper consultation with the local affected people
Further, as we could see in Case Studies 1 and 2, project proponents failed to involve the affected communities in decisionmaking. This resulted in the projects proceeding without the proper involvement or participation of affected communities. Vocal people were sometimes labelled outsiders and removed from the list of stakeholders. Even though the concerns that the local people took up were listened to and documented, such as in public consultations and in meeting minutes, those concerns were not incorporated into the decisionmaking process, or the proposed project plans were hardly changed.

Recommendations

Supposedly “sustainable development” has in many cases turned out to be destructive development for local people. All of us, as well as Japanese project proponents, seriously need to seek the attainment of genuine “sustainable development” for local people so that these people can meet their basic needs under the name of development.

All of us should be aware that there are still people who are negatively affected, even though the proponents provide and conduct CSR programs for the community. It is necessary that the public, especially Japanese, keeps monitoring the performance of Japanese proponents abroad.

Japanese proponents should respect the human rights of local people, including those who are likely to be negatively affected, in decisionmaking related to proposed projects. More concretely, the following recommendations to Japanese proponents can be made:

(1) Before deciding to proceed with any project, Japanese proponents should avoid influencing the local decisionmaking process through which local people can thoroughly discuss their needs and their options in
developing their community. Such public consultations or hearing processes should take a long time in order to properly assess a community’s needs, such as its need for mining developments, energy services and waste disposal systems, and fully analyze the different options for meeting those needs. The proponents should not engage in any construction activity during this period.

(2) It is important that Japanese proponents should be sufficiently accountable to local people as well as to the Japanese public. They should provide adequate written information upon the request of the local people, in the manner and language best understandable to the locals, so that they can properly discuss whether or not the proposed project will be the best option to meet their needs. The proponents could also actively have dialogues directly with local residents/NGOs who have brought up concerns and opinions.

(3) Japanese proponents should carefully take into account the political and cultural background in each society where the implementors engage in their projects, by conducting social and cultural impact studies with relevant experts before the approval of any project. Some affected communities, especially indigenous people’s groups, have their own traditional decisionmaking process. Local politics can sometimes be one of the big factors that hinder affected people from benefiting from a project.

(4) The human rights situation around project areas, especially the state of the freedom of expression, must be closely studied when Japanese proponents propose a project. The project should not be pushed through if the local people are significantly hindered from expressing their opposition to the project, or if the meaningful participation of local people is not secured. In the Philippines, a spate of extra-judicial killings/enforced disappearances has occurred, whereby people opposing development projects are labeled as terrorists and some of them have become victims of political killings. In Malaysia, the Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), a preventive detention law under which any person may be detained by the police for up to 60 days without trial for an act that allegedly threatens the security of the country or any part thereof, has been consistently used against people who criticize the government and defend human rights and has suppressed opposition and open debate.

NOTES

1 The case studies were also drawn from a review of the following documents:

2 In fact, in the author’s interview on 13 July 2007 after the official announcement of the cancellation of the megaincinerator, an officer of the newly established Department of National Solid Waste Management shared his view that the government decision had not been because of the local people’s protest but rather because of the financial and economic aspects. The project in Broga is expected to cost another RM200 million per year to operate. Many experts have estimated that the cost of burning every tonne of rubbish could be as high as RM240 compared to only RM25 per ton for the current landfill method.
Policies and Victim Services in Disaster Management: Lessons Learned from Indonesia, Japan and Thailand

Heru Susetyo

“Most disasters cannot be prevented completely, but some disasters can be reduced to the minimum.” (Yamakawa 1990)

“Not all the injustice accompanying the tsunami can be blamed on Mother Nature.” (Bangkok Post Editorial, 23 December 2006)

Introduction

A disaster can be defined as a “serious disruption of the functioning of a society causing widespread human, material, financial and environmental losses which exceed the ability of the society to cope using its own resources,” (PNDCC 1996) or “a sudden or great misfortune or calamity, or a sudden calamitous event producing great material damage, loss and distress” (Dejoras 1997).

Natural disasters roughly fall into three broad groupings: geological events, triggered by the internal workings of our planet, meteorological events, caused by variations in global weather patterns and biological disasters, resulting from the actions of living agents such as diseases or insect pests. They can occur separately or together, and are generally, although not always, unrelated. Natural disasters are also known as “acts of God” because they can strike with little or no warning and without any apparent direct human involvement (Coenraads 2006).

Another form of disaster is a technological disaster or technological accident. The Philippine Disaster Management System (1996) distinguishes natural disasters from technological accidents and emergencies that threaten human life, property and the community as a whole. However, technological accidents are relatively preventable. They can be foreseen and intervened in by using human knowledge and skills. Examples of technological accidents are transportation accidents, industrial accidents, construction accidents, hazardous material accidents, animal and plantation accidents, epidemics and fires.

This paper describes policies and victim services related to disaster management in Indonesia by comparing them with the policies and victim services presently used in Japan and Thailand. The data were collected by conducting field research in Japan (four months) and Thailand (two months and one week) and also library research.

The field research in Japan was carried out in Kobe (Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake Memorial), Osaka University, the Kyoto area (Kyoto University and Disaster Preparedness Museum), the Tokyo area, Mito (Tokiwa International Victimology Institute), and the Niigata area (Niigata prefecture office and Ojiya city, the area most affected by the Niigata earthquake in October 2004). Data were collected through visits to NGO offices and museums, participation in seminars, and interviews with experts. The research in Japan was hosted by the Disaster Prevention Research Institute of Kyoto University, Uji—Kyoto under the supervision of Prof. Norio Maki.

The research in Thailand was carried out in the Bangkok area and in Southern Thailand (Krabi, Phuket and Phang Nga). Data were collected through expert and key informant interviews, site visits and visits to NGOs and relevant government agencies and participation in conferences. Phuket and Phang Nga were among the areas most affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004. The research in Thailand was facilitated by the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok.

Disaster Management Cycle

Most incidents are broken into four phases: mitigation, planning, response and recovery. Preparedness affects each of these phases and has deep roots in the first two: mitigation and planning (Morrisey 2004). Preparedness is any activity taken in advance of an emergency that develops operational capabilities and facilitates an effective response when a disaster event occurs. It involves actions to establish and sustain the determined levels of response necessary to execute a full range of incident management operations. Preparedness is implemented through a continuous and systematic process of planning, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating and taking action to correct and mitigate. Paper planning is an excellent component of preparedness; however, without deliberate practice
Mitigation is any activity taken to eliminate or reduce the degree of long-term risk to human life and property from natural and human-made hazards (Morrisey 2004). It refers to activities, planning or codes development that lessen the severity of an incident. These actions may occur before or during an incident and may be the result of lessons learned from previous or similar events. Mitigation activities are an important element of preparedness. They provide a critical foundation across the incident management spectrum, from prevention to response and recovery.

Response is any action taken immediately before, during or directly after a disaster event to save lives, minimize damage to property and enhance the effectiveness of recovery.

Recovery involves short-term activities undertaken to return vital life-support systems to minimum operating standards and long-term activities undertaken to return conditions back to normal.

Policies and victim services in Indonesia’s disaster management

Indonesia is a disaster-prone country. Vitchek (2007) writes that Indonesia has replaced Bangladesh and India as the most disaster-prone nation on earth. For instance, whenever the word “Indonesia” appears on the list of headlines on the Internet site Yahoo News, chances are that another enormous—and often unnecessary—tragedy has occurred on one of the islands of this sprawling archipelago. Airplanes disappear or slide off runways, ferries sink or simply break apart on the high seas, trains crash or get derailed, landslides take carton-like houses into ravines, earthquakes and tidal waves swallow up coastal cities and villages and forest fires from Sumatra create smoke that chokes huge areas of Southeast Asia.

The scope of disasters is on a scale so vast that they cannot be discounted simply as the nation’s bad luck or as the wrath of the gods or nature. Some of the disasters that have struck Indonesia are human-made, many are preventable, and in all cases, the possibility exists of reducing the human toll. Vitchek (2007) underlines that earthquakes alone do not kill people. Poor construction of houses and buildings are the culprits, together with the lack of preventive measures and preventative education.

The number of victims and other losses that results from disasters in Indonesia, either human-made or natural, is quite tremendous. Since December 2004, Indonesia has lost some 200,000 people in various disasters, excluding automobile accidents, ethnic-religious conflicts and conflict between the state and the people. Indeed, many Indonesians are experiencing lives as dangerous and hazardous as those in war-torn parts of the world. On close scrutiny it becomes obvious that people die due to almost non-existent efforts to prevent the loss of life and due to a lack of basic education.

Ferries are sinking not “because of high winds and waves;” they are sinking because they are overcrowded and badly maintained or, more precisely, because they are allowed to be overcrowded and badly maintained. Everything is for sale, even the safety of passengers. Companies care only about their profits, while government inspectors are mainly interested in bribes.

The Indonesian airline industry has one of the worst safety records in the world. Since 1997, at least 666 people have died in eight major airplane crashes in Indonesia. On average, a deadly train accident occurs every six days in Indonesia, many caused by the lack of gates at its 8,000 level crossings. More than 80 people die per day on Indonesian roads, mostly due to the terrible state of the infrastructure and poor law-enforcement (Vitchek 2007).

The Indonesian Parliament enacted the Disaster Management Act (Undang-Undang Penanggulangan Bencana No. 24/ 2007) on 29 March 2007. Prior to this newly enacted bill, the existing regulations for disaster management were Presidential Decree No. 3, 2001 on the National Coordinating Board on Disaster Management and Refugee Handling (Badan Koordinasi Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana dan Penanganan Pengungsi), Presidential Decree No. 111, 2001 on the amendment of Presidential Decree No. 3, 2001 and the National Coordinating Board Secretary Decree on Common Guidance in Disaster Management and Refugee Handling.
In accordance with the guidance issued by the National Coordinating Board (through the National Coordinating Board Secretary Decree No. 2, 2001), Indonesia’s grand strategies in coping with disaster and refugee problems are as follows: (1) emergency response phase, (2) empowerment phase, (3) reconciliation phase, and (4) relocation phase. The measures to handle refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) are as follows: (1) emergency/search and rescue, (2) data collecting, (3) emergency assistance, and (4) people’s involvement.

According to Puji Pujiono, former director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Kobe, more effective management of disasters would significantly improve human security in Indonesia. To this end, a coherent policy framework with more effective downstream implementation would be a prerequisite. The existing disaster management policy framework is fragmented and scattered, outdated and lacking in coherence. Devastation from a string of major calamities in combination with the dawning of new democracy, local autonomy, and regional/international frameworks compel a paradigmatic shift in the disaster management policy framework.

Furthermore, based on my own observations while joining volunteering activities to assist Aceh tsunami victims from December 2004 to January 2005 and Yogyakarta earthquake victims in June 2006, the victim services program in Indonesia is unorganized, unintegrated and not well-planned. Besides the fact that before 2007 Indonesia did not have the Disaster Management Act, the prevailing disaster management policies before 2007 were not adequate to cope with disaster response activities. Badan Koordinasi Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana dan Penanganan Pengungsi (National Coordinating Board for Disaster Management and Refugee Handling), which coordinates disaster management and has branches in all provinces and regencies in Indonesia, could not integrate and coordinate the disaster countermeasures since the Board was equipped with only limited jurisdiction, had poor facilities, was understaffed, had a low budget and had unclear policies. Therefore, when a disaster occurred, the victim service providers and caregivers, either coming from the common people, NGOs, or government bodies, ran their activities on their own without coordination among one another.

Polices and victim services in Japan’s disaster management

Japan is located in the circum-Pacific mobile zone where seismic and volcanic activities occur constantly. Although the country covers only 0.25 percent of the land area on the planet, the number of earthquakes and the distribution of active volcanoes is quite high. Also, because of its geographical, topographical and meteorological conditions, the country is subject to frequent disasters such as typhoons, torrential rains and heavy snow.

In Japan there is much damage to lives and property due to natural disasters every year. Up until the 1950s, there were numerous large typhoons or large-scale earthquakes which claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people (Suzuki 2006). However, due to the progress of countermeasures such as the promotion of national land conservation projects, improvements in weather forecasting technologies, the completion of disaster information communication systems and the preparation of disaster management systems, the number of deaths and missing due to natural disasters shows a declining tendency.

When a disaster occurs, it is important for local residents to take the initiative in performing urgently required activities such as fighting fires, fighting floods, search and rescue and evacuation in order to help disaster management activities proceed smoothly. For this reason, residents aware of the need for solidarity in community establish local voluntary disaster management organizations. These organizations prepare materials and machinery in the region, and practice disaster management drills, among others. As of April 2001, about 57.9 percent of the households were participating in local voluntary disaster management organizations.

Various groups, including the Japan Red Cross Society, work as volunteers. To encourage these groups, the national government and local governments promote the preparation of a learning environment by disseminating pertinent information through public relations, education and the preparation of an activity base.

Disaster management drills are conducted in order to confirm and verify the capability of the disaster management system of each organization to smoothly carry out the required activities should a disaster occur. In the case of an emergency, national and local governments must immediately collect and analyze information on the state and scale of the damage and exchange this information with relevant persons and organizations. After this, a system for executing a disaster emergency response is established. The contents of the
Disaster emergency responses include providing advice on directions regarding evacuation, fighting fires, rescuing victims, securing emergency transportation, emergency recovery of public facilities and other activities. In municipalities and prefectures where a disaster has actually occurred, disaster emergency responses such as establishing a headquarters for emergency measures are conducted by the municipal and prefectural governments with the full mobilization of their resources. Furthermore, at the time of a large-scale disaster, the governments may establish a Headquarters for Major Disaster Management (headed by the Minister of State for Disaster Management) or Headquarters for Urgent

Table 1: Disaster management in Japan (Suzuki, 2006)

Disaster Management (headed by the Prime Minister) and promote emergency measures.

The director generals of each ministry and agency gather at the Prime Minister’s official residence immediately after a disaster occurs. Utilizing the information collected from pertinent organizations and images of the disaster-stricken area provided by a helicopter from a related ministry or agency such as the Defense Agency or the National Police Agency, the damage is estimated using the Early Evaluation System (EES). With this information, it is possible for the members to better understand the damage, which is then analyzed and immediately reported to the Prime Minister so that a basic policy can be decided promptly. In the case of large-scale disasters that exceed the response capabilities of the local government, wide-scale support for a disaster emergency response from the National Police Agency, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, and/or the Japan Coast Guard is available and, according to requests from the prefectural governor, Self-Defense Forces can be dispatched for emergency response activities. There are also instances in which the government establishes an On-Site Disaster Management Headquarters at the actual site of the disaster by dispatching a governmental investigation team to the stricken area in order to obtain more detailed information so that prompt measures are taken.

According to Koji Suzuki, director of the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) in Kobe, disaster management in Japan before 1959 was relatively poor. The turning point in Japanese disaster management began in 1959 when Japan experienced the Ise-Wan Typhoon around the Nagoya area. This was an epoch-making turning point since the typhoon triggered enormous changes in Japan’s disaster management, from a response-oriented approach to a preventive approach and from an individual approach to a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach. After this incident, the government, along with private agencies, started to invest in disaster reduction.

In 1961, Japan enacted the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act, which introduced some elements as follows: (i) establishment of a Disaster Management Council with national, prefectural and municipal level organization in a multi-sectoral coordination body; (ii) establishment of a Disaster Management Plan at the national, prefectural, and municipal levels; (iii) establishment of an ad-hoc headquarters for emergency response as a multi-sectoral body in case of emergency; and (iv) stipulation that the government must issue an Annual Government Official Report (White Paper) on Disaster Countermeasures, to be submitted to the Diet. The White Paper on Disaster Management is an obligation of the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act (since 1963). It describes countermeasures taken by the Government, is edited annually by the Cabinet office, and has about 6,000 copies sold every year.

As a follow up to such measures, the government

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Disaster Management Act</th>
<th>Disaster Management Plans and Systems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Provision and Saving Act for Natural Disasters</td>
<td>Establishment of the Seismological Society of Japan</td>
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<td>1884</td>
<td></td>
<td>Start of the Department of the Interior Land Surveyor Weather Reports</td>
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<td>1896</td>
<td>River Act</td>
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<td>1897</td>
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<td>1899</td>
<td>Disaster Preparation Funds Special Account Act</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>Flood Prevention Association Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Flood Control Expenditure Funds Special Account Act</td>
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<td>1925</td>
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<td>Establishment of the Earthquake Research Institute, Tokyo Imperial University</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>Disaster Relief Act</td>
<td>Establishment of the Tsunami Warning Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Disaster Relief Act</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Fire Service Act</td>
<td>Establishment of the Ministry of Construction Establishment of the Board of Inquiry for Prevention of Damage from Earthquakes</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>Flood Control Act</td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>Temporary Measures Act for Subsidizing Recovery Projects for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Facilities Damaged due to Disasters</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>Act concerning National Treasury Share of Expenses for Recovery Projects for Public Civil Engineering Facilities Damage due to Disasters</td>
<td>Establishment of the Kyoto University Disaster Prevention Research Institute</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>Meteorological Service Act</td>
<td>Establishment of national fire-fighting headquarters</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Temporary Measures Act for Financing Farmers, Forestrymen and Fishermen Suffering From Natural Disasters</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>Seashore Act</td>
<td>Establishment of the Japan Meteorological Agency</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>Landslide Prevention Act</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>Soil Conservation and Flood Control Urgent Measures Act</td>
<td>Establishment of the Ministry of Home Affairs Fire and Disaster Management Agency</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td>Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act</td>
<td>Designation of Disaster Management Day</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>Act for Special Countermeasures for Heavy Snowfall Areas Act Concerning Special Financial Support to Deal with Designated Disasters of Extreme Severity</td>
<td>Establishment of the Central Disaster Management Council</td>
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<td>1963</td>
<td></td>
<td>Formulation of Basic Disaster Management Plan Establishment of the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention</td>
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<td>1964</td>
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<td>Geodesy Council’s Proposition on Earthquake Prediction</td>
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<td>1966</td>
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<td>1970</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>Act Concerning Special Financial Support for Promoting Group Relocation for Disaster Mitigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Act Concerning Improvements, etc., or Refugees, etc. in Vicinal Areas of Active Volcanoes (revised by the Act on Special Measures for Active Volcanoes in 1978) Act for the Payment of Solatia for Disasters</td>
<td>Proposition for Volcanic Eruption Prediction Plan</td>
</tr>
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Table 2: Japanese progress in disaster management laws and systems

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arranged public awareness activities by introducing Disaster Management Day every 1 September, in commemoration of the day of Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 (as a result of a Cabinet agreement in 1960), Disaster Management Week, every 30 August to 5 September (as a result of a Cabinet agreement in 1982), disaster management drills, disaster management seminars, disaster management fairs and so on.

The Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill was introduced in 1971. The main objective of this drill is to confirm and verify the disaster management systems and training. All government bodies, as well as private companies, disaster management organizations and residents, take part in this drill. The Prime Minister also attends this drill. The number of participants in the drill in 2005 was around 1.9 million people.

Public awareness activities include a Disaster Management Poster Contest. Children and young adults may join this contest. In 2005, 8,435 applications were sent from all over Japan. The prize-winning posters are used for awareness-raising activities.

However, Prof. Tomohide Atsumi from Osaka University has noted that the real turning point for Japanese disaster management at the present time was the Kobe earthquake on 17 January 1995. This massive earthquake, which killed 6,433 people, collapsed 123,000 houses and buildings and displaced 316,000 people, triggered a tremendous disaster response as well as ignited a great deal of volunteerism. About 1.2 million people volunteered themselves to assist the victims of the Kobe earthquake and helped the recovery of the city. The Niigata earthquake in October 2004 was the second turning point for volunteer activities in Japan. People from all over Japan came to Ojiya City in Niigata Prefecture to help the victims. They took leave from their jobs and studies or came to the area regularly for several months.

Prof. Toshio Sugiman from Kyoto University supported this rough observation by stating that since 1995, volunteering activities have become more popular in Japan, and the government positively responded to this trend by enacting a Volunteering and Disasters Act immediately after 1995, which established a volunteers’ center in affected areas.

The Japanese Red Cross is among the most prominent non-profit organizations (NPO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) that seriously pay attention to and tirelessly carry out emergency response programs for the victims of disasters, especially earthquake victims. This agency has also equipped itself with supporting facilities, emergency tools, hospitals and even blood centers. Therefore, it will always be ready to cope with unexpected future disasters at any time.

Besides the Japanese Red Cross, other NPOs and local people have also played an important role in assisting earthquake victims, particularly in the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake in 1995 and the Niigata earthquake in 2004. Rescue Stock Yard, a Nagoya-based NPO, and the Tokyo-based Shanti Volunteers Association are among the notable Japanese NPOs dealing with disaster victims and disaster preparedness. However some volunteers simply jumped into disaster-affected areas by themselves, without engaging with any agencies.

In line with disaster management countermeasures is disaster mitigation education. Disaster mitigation education is unequivocally classified as one significant part of disaster preparedness. For the case of earthquake mitigation education in Japan, public education for earthquake preparedness is provided in Japan in various forms, starting with the school curricula, exercises in evacuation and fire prevention, mutual help, collective cooperation, experiencing shaking in earthquake simulators and booklets and documentary film dissemination.

There are many disaster mitigation training centers designated to the public nationwide (shimin bousai senta) as well as fire museums (belonging to firefighter agencies) which also provide self-help training in coping with disasters. However, the most important disaster studies center remains the Great Hanshin Awaji Memorial, a museum and training center established in 2002 commemorating the Kobe earthquake of 17 January 1995.

Policies and victim services in Thailand’s disaster management

Natural hazards or natural disasters that frequently occur in Thailand are droughts, earthquakes, epidemics, floods, landslides, waves/surges, wild fires and windstorms (WCDR Report 2006). The massive earthquake that triggered a tsunami on 26 December 2004 was among the most severe disasters in Thailand for centuries. The catastrophic incident devastated 407 villages in six southwestern provinces, namely Phuket, Trang, Phang Nga, Krabi, Ranong and Satun. The tsunami took almost 8,000 lives and caused total financial losses of USD2 billion.

Right after the tsunami waves ebbed, relief activities were immediately and continuously activated. It is
widely accepted that Thailand government agencies led effective relief efforts and responded immediately on the day the tsunami struck. As a consequence, Thailand achieved rapid success in its relief operation within a few months. The key factors in the effectiveness of the relief response can be delineated as follows: (i) synergy of Thai people from all walks of life in providing all kinds of assistance to their suffering fellow residents; (ii) close and integrated collaboration and cooperation among civilians, the military, the police, NGOs, charitable foundations and civil defence volunteers, among others; and (iii) an influx of endless support and humanitarian assistance from the international community through various organizations (DDPM 2005; WCDR Report 2006).

The Royal Thai Government, the private sector and NGOs have continuously launched activities to enhance livelihoods and rebuild the environments of the affected people and areas following the initial phase of rescue and humanitarian relief. The Thai Red Cross was considered the most important non-governmental agency that provided emergency assistance to the victims shortly after the tsunami took place.8

Other measures taken by the government and NGOs included providing a compensation scheme for the affected communities and conducting Disaster Victims Identification (DVI). These measures were quite important since many of the victims could not easily be identified (for instance, undocumented Burmese migrant workers).9 Another important measure was the building of temporary housing for internally displaced persons in Phang Nga and Phuket, the two most affected areas of the 2004 tsunami, which was managed by the government as well as NGOs.10

The victim services provided in Phang Nga and Phuket provinces also embraced legal assistance. The tsunami took land and houses as well as lives and, in some cases, made land ownership unclear. The borders between one piece of land and another were blurred, and this led to disputes among villagers as well as disputes between villagers and new investors11. Fortunately, a couple of human rights NGOs (e.g., Thai Lawyers Association, TACDB) worked to help local people resolve their land problems. The NGOs facilitated local people to organize and defend themselves before a Thai district court.12

Besides emergency response programs, many agencies in Thailand have also introduced and conducted disaster preparedness activities so as to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience in the tsunami-hit communities. The international community, NGOs and the United Nations mechanisms also continue to endlessly support Thailand in these humanitarian assistance activities. Disaster preparedness activities include the following: (1) introduction of community-based disaster risk management; (2) establishment of a National Disaster Warning Center (including an early warning system and a tsunami early warning tower); and (3) raising of public awareness through disaster prevention education and a Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Academy (DPMA), organized by the Thailand Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) (DDPM 2006) 13.

The Civil Defence Act of 1997 classifies disasters into three categories: (1) human-made and natural disasters; (2) disasters resulting from air raids during wartime; and (3) disasters resulting from sabotage or terrorist attacks. The disaster management system in Thailand is mainly based on the Civil Defence Act of 1979 and the Civil Defence Plan of 2002. The National Civil Defence Committee (NCDC) is the main policy making body. On 2 October 2002, the Thai government enacted the Bureaucrat Reform Act of 2002, whereby the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) came into existence under the umbrella of the Ministry of Interior. This department was also designated to shoulder the responsibility for the country’s disaster management and thus replaced the former Civil Defence Division as the National Civil Defence Committee Secretariat (WCDR Report 2006).

Among the tasks of the DDPM are the following: (1) formulate policies and guidelines and set up criteria for disaster management; (2) study, analyze, research and develop prevention, warning and disaster mitigation systems; (3) develop an information technology system for disaster prevention, warning and mitigation; (4) mobilize people’s participation in establishing disaster prevention and mitigation; (5) create people’s awareness and preparedness in disaster prevention and mitigation; (6) arrange trainings and exercises in disaster prevention and mitigation, the rehabilitation of devastated areas and providing assistance to victims as stated by law; (7) promote, support and carry out disaster prevention and mitigation activities, provide assistance to victims and rehabilitate devastated areas; (8) direct and coordinate the operation of assisting victims and rehabilitating the areas devastated by large-scale or high magnitude disasters; (9) coordinate assistance with both internal and international organizations in disaster prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation; and (10) perform any other functions stated in law as the Department’s...
tasks or as assigned by the Ministry of Interior or the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{14}

The DDPM also has regional centers (i.e., Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Regional Centers) located in twelve cities and Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Provincial Offices in 75 provinces nationwide.

Other important bodies in Thailand’s disaster management are the National Civil Defense Committee (NCDC) and the National Safety Council of Thailand (NSCT). The NCDC coordinates all activities relevant to civil defence and disaster management and performs all functions relevant to disaster management at the national level, while the NSCT is responsible for managing human-made disasters such as traffic accidents, chemical accidents, occupational accidents, accidents in homes and public venues, fires and subway tunnel construction accidents, as well as considering measures to prevent fires in high-rise buildings and accidents during subway tunnel construction and providing safety education.

According to a WCDR report (2006), Thailand is now prioritizing some measures in its disaster risk management, as follows: (1) public awareness and education; (2) early warning system; (3) international disaster management; (4) effective damage assessment; (5) community-centered approach; (6) preventive approaches; (7) prevention; (8) public participation; (9) unity management; (10) efficient management; (11) human resource development; and (12) livelihood rehabilitation.

The Civil Defense Secretariat is responsible for identifying disaster prevention measure and policies and monitoring the National Civil Defense Plan. This Plan serves as the master plan for all agencies concerned, and provides guidelines for the formulation of the operational plans of agencies responsible for disaster management.

Furthermore, Thailand also has some projects on disaster reduction, namely: (1) One Tambon (sub-district) One Search and Rescue Team (OTOS); (2) disaster management training for managers, practitioners, local government officers and others through the DDPM’s Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Academies (DPMA), which are situated in six different campuses, namely Chiang Mai, Phitsanulok, Khon Khaen, Phuket, Prachinburi and Songkhla; and (3) education for disaster-preparedness in primary schools.

**Summary and conclusion**

Policies in disaster management are part of disaster preparedness, while victim services are part of disaster response. Both of them are among the most important and inseparable parts in the disaster management cycle.

Indonesia does have disaster management policies. Moreover, it has just enacted a new Disaster Management Act in March 2007. However, the policies, as well as measures taken so far, are far from perfect. Indonesia still needs integrative policies and measures to cope with its various disaster-related problems. The newly enacted bill is really a blessing, but is not enough.

Policy alone is not enough. It might be best treated as a basis for disaster management, yet, it must also be subsequently supported by measures taken by government, civil society, private companies and other stakeholders who work together to mitigate the disaster and strengthen disaster preparedness in a more cooperative and integrative way.

According to Vitchek (2007), Indonesia is poor, but it certainly has the capacity to protect some of its most vulnerable citizens. The main problem is a lack of political will and a system whose priorities lie elsewhere. The failure to deal with the problems of natural and human-made disasters is rooted in the combination of the dominance of the calculus of profit and the system’s corruption.

The natural disaster victim services programs in the three countries vary due to their own preparedness and policies. Generally, no agency in the above countries is really well prepared for disasters since the nature of disasters is that they are unpreventable and unpredictable. However, Japan is slightly better off since the country has equipped its disaster management system with adequate policies and preparedness. Also, its people and government have been quick to learn from previous disasters so that they can provide the services adequately.

Thailand’s disaster victim services program is as poorly funded as Indonesia’s. Moreover, the country is not a disaster-prone country compared to Japan and Indonesia. However, Thailand has also already equipped its disaster management system with relatively adequate policies and established many disaster preparedness centers and victim service groups all over Thailand.

Japan and Thailand have radically learned from their
natural disasters by introducing adequate disaster countermeasures, including disaster policies, disaster responses and disaster preparedness. That similar radical learning has taken place in Indonesia in the aftermath of massive disasters—such as the earthquake and tsunami in December 2004—is still open to question.

In the absence of an integrative package of disaster policies and disaster victim services, the Indonesian people are really in danger. The government does respond to disasters by providing relief and enacting policies. However, those measures seem to be a form of “bureaucratic survival” and not a real product of radical and systematic learning. The coping capacity of the people remains low.

What should the Indonesian disaster management policy be? Indonesia, surely has its own unique geographical and sociopolitical characteristics that make it different from the other two countries. However, disaster management elsewhere, either as a theory or practice, has its own standard and similarities. Therefore, it is not too late to learn from other countries’ experiences and follow international standards without ignoring local values and capacities. A more integrative, comprehensive and community-based disaster management is among the things that should be achieved in Indonesian disaster management.

Furthermore, the next thing to do is to shift the mindset and paradigm in dealing with disaster management. Puji Pujiono (2007) mentioned that at least four components of the paradigm shift should be incorporated, namely: “From emergency response to disaster risk reduction; from centralistic to local autonomy, from relief to basic rights, and from government centric to participatory.”

NOTES

1 Interview with Puji Pujiono, Kobe, 22 November 2006.
2 Interview with Koji Suzuki at ADRC, Kobe, 22 August 2006.
3 Interview with Prof. Tomohide Atsumi at Osaka University, 9 November 2006.
4 Interview with Prof. Toshio Sugiman at Kyoto University, 22 October 2006.
5 Data from interviews and observations at the Japanese Red Cross in Kobe (Hyogo Chapter) on 22 September 2006 and Japanese Red Cross Headquarters in Tokyo, 8 October 2006.
6 Data from an interview with Prof. Toshio Sugiman of Kyoto University and Prof. Tomohide Atsumi of Osaka University and a site visit to the Shanti Volunteer Association in Tokyo and temporary shelter for Niigata victims in Ojiya City, Niigata. Significant information was also provided by Kiyoko Itagaki and Ozaki-san, a nurse and victim assistant from Gunma prefecture, respectively, and by some students at Niigata University, Niigata City.
7 Based on participatory observations carried out in Kyoto Shimin Bousai Senta, 3 September 2006, and the Tokyo Firefighter Museum in Ikebukuro and Shinjuku, 7-8 September 2006.
8 Data provided by the Thai Red Cross in Bangkok on 17 January 2007.
9 Data given by the Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma, a human rights NGO working for democracy in Burma in January 2007. In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, they took part in identifying the victims, particularly undocumented Burmese migrant workers who worked along the seaside in Ranong, Phang Nga, Phuket and Krabi provinces.
10 Data provided by the CODI (Community Organizations Development Institution), a semi-autonomous Thai government agency; data also obtained by a site visit to Ban Nai Rai village, Ban Nam Ken village and Phuket beach.
11 The problem of land ownership in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami could be observed in Ban Nai Rai village in Phang Nga province. Investors found this place suitable for building a beach resort.
12 Based on interviews and observations in Ban Nai Rai Village, 23-24 January 2008.
13 The tsunami early warning towers were installed along the southwestern coast of Thailand, particularly in Phang Nga and Phuket, based on direct observation done by the researcher and information provided by an officer at the Phuket Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in Phuket, 24 January 2007.
14 Data provided by a high-ranking officer of the Thailand Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in Bangkok, January 2007.
REFERENCES


INTERMINGLING OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

REVALUING JAVANESE COURT DANCES (SRIMPI AND BEDHAYA) WITHIN THE CURRENT SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Michi Tomioka

Introduction

Srimpi¹ (see Photo 1) and Bedhaya² (see Photo 2), ritual dances of the Karaton Surakarta Hadiningrat (the Surakarta Court), were first permitted to be performed for the public as part of a national project called Pusat Kesenian Jawa Tengah (PKJT, Art Center of Central Java) in the 1970s. Both of these court dances have experienced many changes or innovations since then.³

The project was started in 1970 under the first five-year plan of the new president, Suharto, in order to revive traditional arts and culture, and lasted for three periods (1970-1983). There were many activities in the PKJT project, not only for the court arts, but also for folklore arts and contemporary arts. The project was led by Gendhon Humardani (1923-1983),⁴ who was also the head of the Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia (ASKI, the Indonesian Academy of Arts) Surakarta. Combined, these two organizations are often called PKJT-ASKI. ASKI Surakarta was later upgraded as the Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI, the Indonesian College of Arts) Surakarta in 1988 and then the Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI Surakarta, the Indonesian Institute of Arts) in 2006.⁵

Surakarta Court dance was in decline due to a lack of dancers when the PKJT project began (Pamardi 2002). Although the court dances were still regarded as the source of Javanese traditional dance, Humardani did not preserve them as they had been. Instead, he thought it more important to innovate with the former arts in accordance with the changing times and encouraged participants to produce pemadatan (contracted) versions of court dances after reviving them (Tomioka 2005a).

He did not merely shorten the duration of the performances but also transformed many other elements of the dance and the music, applying the concept of performing arts from the modernized West to Javanese court dances (Tomioka 2005a). He included only pemadatan versions in the ASKI curriculum, so that the full versions of revived dance compositions were not taught in the course of study.

Vital changes established in the PKJT project are: (1) pemadatan (contraction of time), shortening the duration of the performance to one fourth of the original length (fifteen minutes); (2) faster tempo and more dynamic changes to the tempo than was traditionally the custom; and (3) synchronized movement as in corps de ballet (group dancing in ballet).

According to interviews with many dancers of PKJT/ASKI from those days, these contractions and transformations were successful in attracting public notice in the 1970s in Central Java, and they were very proud of that fact (Tomioka 2005b, 39). However, Sal Murgiyanto criticized the PKJT performance in Jakarta in 1979, saying that the ten-minute srimpi pemadatan was terlampau tergesa (too rushed), and that they needed a good chief who could deal with traditional materials (Murgiyanto 1993). The transformations of the traditional customs made by the PKJT project were
less appreciated in the metropolitan context, where many different cultural identities coexist.

About 40 years have passed since the beginning of the PKJT, and about 25 years since the death of Humardani, but it seems that no remarkable changes or innovations have occurred in Surakarta regarding Javanese traditional dance. This is, in my opinion, mostly because practitioners have missed the starting point/origin of Javanese traditional dance, which would confirm their cultural identity in this modern era of globalization. My guess is also supported by the fact that Sardono W. Kusumo and Sal Murgiyanto have advocated seeking their own “cultural roots” as the guiding principle of the Graduate School of the STSI Surakarta (Tomioka 2005b) that was established in 2000.

Many elements transformed by the PKJT project that are essential to Javanese court dance have the potential to acquire new meaning in contemporary social and cultural contexts.

**Circle of time and contraction of time**

Here I have to add an explanation on the traditional customs of the court dances before the 1970s. In their full versions, *srimpi* and *bedhaya* performances last from forty to sixty minutes for the dance proper, with five to seven minutes for each entrance and exit. About an hour-long performance of a certain dance or musical composition was quite normal in the former days; for example, Sardono W. Kusumo performed a fifty-five minute court dance in the 1950s (Kusumo 2002, 103).

Javanese traditional dance has a circular structure, and the dance is launched and ended by a *mangenjali* (prayer with palms joined together) movement with the dancers sitting on the floor. Dance movements, formations and music structures are related to one another. One musical structure is repeated a certain number of times and then followed by another musical structure. As the music goes on, various kinds of movements are repeated and developed in symmetrical formations, through which harmony or balance and a meditative atmosphere are gradually generated. The dance makes time feel luxurious as performers as well as members of the audience become enraptured by it.

Moreover, in Javanese courts where *alus* (elegant) behavior is highly appreciated, fast tempos and dynamic or drastic changes in the tempo are regarded as *kasar* (rough), and an artificial/unnatural movement is not appreciated. According to Bambang Busur, the phrase *kembang tiba* (flowers falling down to the earth) refers to the movements in Javanese dance. The term means dancers have their own timing of movement like the flowers of a tree that fall down to the earth one by one, whereas the synchronized movements of dancers are compared to the flowers falling down all at once (Tomioka 2005a). In this way, Javanese court dance has a circle of time in which the changes progress gradually for a certain length of time until the dance returns to the beginning.

To contract the full version into one fourth or one half is, in other words, to reduce the number of repetitions or circles, and economizes on the amount of time traditionally used. Humardani also transformed the quality of time. Dance criticism by Humardani on ballet (Humardani 1961) shows how he was moved by the Western performing arts, in which time flows straight to the climax. A linear flow of time is generated by fast and dynamic changes of tempo, synchronized movements of *corps de ballet* and formations appropriated for proscenium theaters (Tomioka 2005a). All these elements make visible changes. If movements are synchronized among the dancers, changing from one movement to another is more visible than the movements of *kembang tiba*. If the formations are always symmetrical and balanced among all the dancers, there seem to be no visible changes at a glance.

Humardani introduced the concept of a linear flow of time to Javanese court dance. All things considered, he intended to make Javanese court dance fully attractive to an audience that liked the stage or show performances of Western countries (Tomioka 2005b), and that contraction of time was the doorway to realizing this intention.

Here in my project, I wanted to revalue the essential elements of Javanese court dance by representing court dance performances in their full version, from which Indonesian artists will be able to revive their historical memory, restore the wholeness of their experience, and revalue their own cultural identity.

**Methodology**

In this project, I made a music recording (CD) and a documentary video (VCD/DVD) of live performances of “*Srimpi Gondokusumo*” and “*Bedhaya Pangkur*” with the performances having the following elements: (1) they show the full version of the dances; (2) they are performed in the classical tempo; and (3) they maintain each dancer’s *wiletan* (individual style). These media
will be of practical use not only for dancers to learn and analyze choreographies but also for researchers of related areas of study to know what Javanese court dances are really like.

I chose “Srimpi Gondokusumo” and “Bedhaya Pangkur” out of ten Srimpi and two Bedhaya because I found that both have experienced more drastic changes than the other pieces in the PKJT project and, in addition, we were unable to find any other source on these materials except Mrs. Sri Sutjiati Djoko Soehardjo.

The late Mrs. Sri Sutjiati Djoko Soehardjo (1933-2006), who was an instructor at the Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia (SMKI, the Indonesian High School of Arts) Surakarta from 1956 until her retirement in 1994, was our primary source for this project. She participated in reviving the Srimpi and Bedhaya dances in the PKJT project. It is to be deeply regretted that she passed away on 8 November 2006, a few weeks before the first performance of this project.

Participants

For dances, I selected those who had participated in the PKJT project in the 1970s and the early 1980s (and therefore were the transition generation), had learned under the primary source, were still active as professionals and had differing careers or backgrounds.

Different from the case of dancers, I appointed gamelan groups in which professionals, senior amateurs or semi-amateurs and young musicians aiming to be professionals were mixed together. I preferred to give opportunities to those who had never experienced Srimpi and Bedhaya dances for as much as an hour in their full version. Their musical performance was accordingly not as complete as that of a professional group, but good enough to express the rasa (feeling, sense) of court dances.

Occasions

I performed Srimpi Gondokusumo at the pendopo (traditional hall for Javanese ceremonies and dances) of the Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Indoensia (SMKN8 or SMKI) Surakarta in November 2006 (see Appendix) as part of a regular event called “Pentas Nemlikuran,” which has been held there on every 26th night since March 2003. This event was already famous among fans of Javanese traditional dance, so that we expected a large audience without any publicity effort.

The “Bedhaya Pangkur” was performed at the arena theater of the Taman Budaya Jawa Tengah (TBJT, the Art Center of the province of Central Java) (see Appendix). This time, we produced an independent dance event with stage directions. It is usually difficult to attract ordinary people to the TBJT, but we met the press and tried to appeal to the larger public in Surakarta and its outskirts.

As for the “Srimpi Gondokusumo” performance in Jakarta (see Appendix), we held a discussion between the dancers and the audience just after the dance performance. We gave out information about the event mainly to university students who majored in performing arts at IKJ, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ, a teachers’ college), as well as members of Javanese dance groups in Jakarta.

Performance outside the court

As I mentioned above, I did not involve court performers nor did I perform the project at the court. This is because Srimpi and Bedhaya dances have already become part of Indonesia’s social heritage since they were opened to the public in the national project. The Surakarta Court has also inherited Srimpi and Bedhaya under the court system, which really owed much to the PKJT project. I followed the advice of ISI Surakarta and asked for permission for the performances, although some said there was no need to do this because the court dances have been formally opened to the public. This is very true, but I did it to show our respect for the court, and asked the court to make offerings and prayers before each performance.

Findings

Responses to my initiative varied from one group to the other. It reflects the changing and diversification of cultural contexts since the PKJT era.

Response from dancers and musicians

Dancers and musicians had concerns about coming up with a full version of the dances. However, some dancers felt a little uncomfortable at the same time because I asked them not to follow the PKJT customs. I understood that this was certainly difficult for those who had experienced the strict training of the PKJT project regarding details.

In contrast, music instructors were more cooperative and involved students from an educational point of view. I was very pleased to hear from Suraji, the music director of the Srimpi Gondokusumo performance, that they would like to inspect the results of past researches.
(e.g., Martopangrawit’s 1976 work). They reconsidered their habit of gamelan playing since the PKJT period and this project showed another approach to court dances and another way to socialize art activities, according to Danis Sugiyanto, the music director of the Bedhaya Pangkur performance.

Production members from the performance venues in Surakarta and Jakarta actively supported my project. There was, however, a member of the “Pentas Nemlikuran” committee who did not agree with my proposal, saying that an hour performance was too long and that there was no need for my performance because they had shown the Srimpi Gondokusumo in pemadatan version before. This reflects the common PKJT point of view and they were challenged by my idea.

Response from the mass media

In order to publicize the Bedhaya Pangkur performance, I met the press with the help of MATaYA arts and heritage (an organization that promotes social activities of the arts), so that it was reported in many newspapers (see Appendix 3). The MATaYA staff and journalists highly appreciated that we intended to produce the court dance performance for the public outside the court.

In August 2007, I appeared on “Kick Andy,” a Metro TV show on a nationwide network (see Appendix 3) and talked about my project to revive court dances. I emphasized the necessity to pay more attention to Javanese court dances in their full version as part of the Indonesian heritage because these choreographies were no less excellent than other dances in the world.

The episode was titled “Kami Juga Cinta Indonesia” (We Also Love Indonesia) under the theme of nationalism in Indonesia.12 Andy (the host of the talk show) said the episode provoked a remarkable response from viewers via telephone or e-mail and the audience rating was high. One of the directors of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism sent a cell phone text message to me regarding the show that said, “Mempunyai dampak positif terhadap peningkatan apresiasi penonton terhadap tarian kuno yg jarang dipentaskan di masyarakat” (It had a positive impact in raising appreciation for old dances that are seldom performed for the public.) I received many other responses along the theme that Indonesians were ashamed of not knowing much about their own history or culture.

Response from audiences of performances

Most of the ISI Surakarta instructors who had participated in the PKJT project still believe that performing Srimpi and Bedhaya dances in their full version are too long, boring and monotonous for audiences. However, even those who had no preliminary knowledge about Javanese dance could appreciate the performances, as the following comments show.

An acupuncturist who watched Srimpi Gondokusumo in Surakarta (see Appendix) said, “I could enjoy the dance by rocking myself to the music and movements of dancers. I did not feel bored at all for an hour. From my point of view as an acupuncturist, the movements in the Javanese court dance make the audience as well as the dancers relaxed and meditative, and are, thus, good for health.”

Many audience members reported that they did not mind that the dancers of the Bedhaya Pangkur were already stout and middle-aged, once they started dancing.

The Bedhaya performance was attended by as many as 300 people to full capacity, in spite of heavy rain. According to an article appearing in the Suara Merdeka on 30 June 2007 (see Appendix), some attendees could not enter the theater so they watched the performance on monitors outside. I was surprised to find that many in the audience were not acquainted with me, the other participants or MATaYA staff. They seemed to have gotten news of the performance through newspapers, mailing lists or by word of mouth.

A Japanese attendee who watched the Srimpi Gondokusumo in Jakarta (see Appendix) said, “I did not feel bored at all. I felt as if I had been transported to the colonial age and had met court dancers at that time.”

A person who watched another Surakarta dance performance that lasted forty minutes in Jakarta a few days before our Srimpi performance said, “When I saw the former, I felt forty minutes was too long and got very tired, even though the dancers were young and beautiful. It was because they lacked rehearsals and concentration. But this time, I felt an hour passed by very quickly and was enchanted by the elegant movements.”

Discussion

Many people took an interest in my concept of performing the court dances “outside” the court. My approach to the court dances was different from that
of the PKJT project; I focused people’s eyes on the full versions of the court dances. Ordinary people could be enchanted by these full versions if performers were skilled and well rehearsed, and the performance was presented in full seriousness. The audience did not only see the physical, superficial beauty of the dancers but perceived their inner beauty, elegant movements and meditative atmosphere, which moreover called Javanese culture and history to mind throughout the whole expression.

There were also a number of effects on the performers: (1) the dancers and musicians became more absorbed in their performance of the full version as time went by, which created a meditative atmosphere; (2) the classical tempo of the music was comfortable for the performers (as well as the audience) because it was a natural tempo for breathing; (3) each mature dancer was free to express her own wiletan, unlike in the PKJT style, which strictly demanded that dancers move in a synchronized way. Through this freedom of expression, the performers could feel satisfaction in completing an hour-long performance as if it were a ritual ceremony.

In this way, both the performers and the audience experienced another dimension of time and space and derived a kind of satisfaction that could not be attained through performing or watching performances of the contracted as well as the transformed versions of court dances.

Court dances in their full versions, therefore, still contain much potential under current circumstances. Nevertheless, there are few dancers or organizations that are aware of them in Surakarta. Some dancers feel it is difficult to leave behind the customs that were implanted during the PKJT era.

Generally speaking, the performing arts in Indonesia have developed under the art policies of the government in relation to tourism or to the creation of a national culture. They have, therefore, been developed for urgent, practical use. PKJT was also started under the art policy of the government in the 1970s, and Humardani’s innovations were suitable under that policy. It is true that the pemadatan of the Srimpi or Bedhaya dances expanded the range of traditional dances. However, it is also true that the idea, fixed since the PKJT period, that the Srimpi or Bedhaya dances in their full versions are too long and boring has prevented the public from appreciating higher arts or admiring their own culture and history.

Artistic values can be limited or changed according to social and cultural contexts, such as customs, preconceptions, government art policies or influences from foreign countries and so on. It would be effective for cultural communities to revalue and spontaneously reconsider the results of former art projects in search of their own roots, historical memory and cultural identity.

NOTES
1 A kind of Javanese court dance performed by four females.
2 A kind of Javanese court dance performed by nine females.
3 See Rustopo 1990, Chapter IV, on the PKJT-ASKI and the role of Gendhon Humardani.
4 He was a younger brother of Sudjono Humardani, a private assistant to President Suharto.
6 Humardani himself used the term corps de ballet to mean group dancing in Javanese dance (Humardani 1970).
7 R. Supanggah, the head of the Graduate School of the ISI Surakarta, criticized Humardani’s pupils on their passiveness and lack of initiative (Supanggah 2003).
8 Martopangrawit could gather ten Srimpi and ten Bedhaya music compositions (Martopangrawit 1976), but most of the Bedhaya choreographies were out of use at that time, according to Sri Sutjiati Djoko Soehardjo.
9 The PKJT project was ended with the foundation of the TBJT in 1983. The TBJT supports arts innovation and creation so that it is sometimes regarded as standing apart from ordinary people.
10 Here we do not take the Bedhaya Ketawang into consideration, which is still the monopoly of the Surakarta Court for its coronation anniversary. Martopangrawit (1976) does not include this in his publications.
11 Ketan Biru and Nasi Uduk.
12 The Republic of Indonesia commemorates its independence day every 17th of August.

REFERENCES
APPENDIX: Products and outputs of this project

1 Srimpi performances

1-1 “Srimpi Gondokusumo” / music CD

**Date:** 20 November 2006
**Place:** The pendopo (Javanese traditional hall) of “Garasi Seni Benowo”, Benowo

**Music Director:** Michi Tomioka
**Instructors:** Suraji, Sukamso, Hadi Boediono, Supardi, Rusdiyantoro (ISI Surakarta)

**Musicians (Instrument: Name):**
- Hadi Boediono*/ Gender Barung / Sukamso*/

**Costume Director:** Hartoyo (ISI Surakarta and the Surakarta instructors (names highlighted with an asterisk on the list above), nine elder amateurs / semi-amateurs and ten ISI Surakarta students or alumni/alumnae were involved in the project. All the instructors and senior members reside around Benowo. Garasi Seni Benowo, located in the house of R. Supanggah, the head of the Graduate School of ISI Surakarta in Benowo, has become a center of gamelan activities in Surakarta. These two groups hold regular rehearsals twice a week which are often attended by students for advanced studies.

**Dancers (Position: Name):**

**Costume Director:** Hartoyo (ISI Surakarta and the Surakarta Court)
**Costume:** Dodot Alit
**Hair Style:** Bangun Tulak
**Music Director:** Suraji (ISI Surakarta)
**Musicians:** “Maju Mawas” and “Mijil Laras” from the Garasi Seni Benowo, Benowo

**Lighting/Sound:** The production team of “Pentas Nemlikuran”
**Video Works:** Esha, Chris (Studio 19, ISI Surakarta)
**Photographer:** Heru Santoso (Studio 19, ISI Surakarta)
Offerings: 26 November 2006 Ketan Biru and Nasi Udak from the Surakarta Court

Description: This performance was held as part of “Pentas Nemilukuran.” We performed first, while the second performance was a “Bedhaya Babar Layar”, a Bedhaya dance of the Yogyakarta Court which was revived by ISI Yogyakarta under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Hermien.

1-3 “Srimpi Gondokusumo” / video DVD

Date: 26 August 2007
Place: The Teater Luwes, Institut Kesenian Jakarta (IKJ)
Document Type: Live Performance and discussion
Rehearsal Period: 8-21 August 2007
Producer, Artistic Director, Dance Director:
   Michi Tomioka
Dancers:
   batak: Michi Tomioka / gulu: Sri Setyoasih, dada: Saryuni Padminingsih, buncit: Hadawiyah Endah Utami (ISI Surakarta)

Costume Director: Hartoyo (ISI Surakarta & the Surakarta Court)
Costume Assistant: Budiarti (ISI Surakarta)
Costume: Dodot Kerembihan

Hair Style: Bangun Tulak

Music: 1-1 “Srimpi Gondokusumo” / music CD (78 minutes)

Lighting/Sound: Production team of the Teater Luwes (Representative: Trisapto, Fakultas Seni Pertunjukan, Faculty of Performing Arts, IKJ)

Video Works: Hari Sinthu (Fakultas Film dan Televisi, IKJ)
Photographer: Priadi Soefjanto (Fakultas Film dan Televisi, IKJ)

Cosponsor: Fakultas Seni Pertunjukan, IKJ
Donors: Mrs. Pia Alisjahbana, Mr. Bondan Winarno

Special Thanks:
Nungki Kusumastuti (Fakultas Seni Pertunjukan, IKJ)
MATAX arts & heritage

Performance date: 21 August 2007 Ketan Biru and Nasi Udak from the Surakarta Court

Description: This was an independent performance which was followed by a discussion between the dancers and audience with Nungki Kusumastuti as moderator.

2 Bedhaya performances

2-1 Bedhaya Pangkur / music CD (1:05:58)
Recording: 25 June 2007
At Studio 19, ISI Surakarta
Producer: Michi Tomioka
Music Director: Danis Sugiyanto (ISI Surakarta)
Instructors: Danis Sugiyanto, Supardi, Darsono (ISI Surakarta)

Musicians:
   “Marsudi Renaning Manab”, Kemlayan, Surakarta

Kepak Player: Bambang Tri Atmadja (ISI Yogyakarta)
Engineer: Iwan Onone (Studio 19, ISI Surakarta)

Description: Twenty-six musicians consisting of seven ISI Surakarta instructors/musical staff (names highlighted with an asterisk on the list above), 11 amateurs/semi-amateurs and eight ISI Surakarta students or alumni/alumnae who reside around the area were involved in the project. This group was founded in 1938 in Kemplayan where many court musicians lived, and has come into action again since 2000 under Danis Sugiyanto at the studio of Sardono W Kusumo. Now this group holds regular rehearsals twice a week at Cakra Homestay, Kemlayan which are often attended by students, including foreigners.

2-2 Bedhaya Pangkur / video DVD

Date: 28 June 2007, 19:30 door open, 20:00 start
Place: The Teater Arena, Taman Budaya Jawa Tengah (TBJT), Surakarta
Document Type: Live performance
Rehearsal Period: 13 April - 25 June 2007
Producer, Artistic Director, Dance Director:
   Michi Tomioka

Dancers (Position: Name)

Costume Director: Hartoyo (ISI Surakarta and the Surakarta Court)
Costume Assistant: Dwi Maryani, Dewi Kristiyanti (ISI Surakarta)
Costume: Dodot Agung

Hair Style: Bangun Tulak

Music: 2-2 Bedhaya Pangkur / music CD (1:05:58)

Lighting/Sound: Production team of the Teater Luwes (Representative: Trisapto, Fakultas Seni Pertunjukan, Faculty of Performing Arts, IKJ)

Video Works: Hari Sinthu (Fakultas Film dan Televisi, IKJ)
Photographer: Priadi Soefjanto (Fakultas Film dan Televisi, IKJ)

Cosponsor: Fakultas Seni Pertunjukan, IKJ
Donors: Mrs. Pia Alisjahbana, Mr. Bondan Winarno

Special Thanks:
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Performance date: 21 August 2007 Ketan Biru and Nasi Udak from the Surakarta Court

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2-1 Bedhaya Pangkur / music CD (1:05:58)
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At Studio 19, ISI Surakarta
Producer: Michi Tomioka
Music Director: Danis Sugiyanto (ISI Surakarta)
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**Performance dates:** 11 May 2007 Ketan Biru from the Surakarta Court / for the opening of rehearsals
28 June 2007 Ketan Biru and Nasi Uduk from the Surakarta Court

**Description:** This performance was held as an independent production. After the doors opened, we offered a gendhing bonang (instrumental music) performance, “Babar Layar,” for 15-20 minutes, while waiting for attendants.

**3 Publicity in the mass media**

26 June 2007
- KOMPAS “Pergelaran Tari Bedhaya Pangkur”
- SOLOPOS “Tari Bedhaya Pangkur akan disuguhkan dengan kosep asli”
- The Daily Jakarta Shim bun (Japanese) “penari asal dari Jepang Michi Tomioka mengali tari Keraton klasik, petals di Solo tgl.28”
- RIA FM (radio) “Selamat Pagi Surakarta” 07:00-07:10

27 June 2007
- SUARA MERDEKA “Bahasa Kagok Penari Jawa Itu”

28 June 2007
- KORAN TEMPO “Tari Keraton Solo Dikonservasi”

29 June 2007
- Wawasan “—Pertunjukan ‘tari Bedhaya Pangku’ di TBS semalam—Merekonstruksi kembali karya PB IV dan PB VIII”

30 June 2007
- MEDIA INDONESIA “Tari ‘Bedhaya Pangkur’” (only photo)
- KOMPAS “Tari Bedhaya Pangkur” (only photo)
- SUARA MERDEKA “Sukses, Pentas Bedhaya Pangkur”

5 July 2007
- SOLOPOS Kridha (Javanese) “Bedhaya Pangkur Kahabar ing TBS”

12 July 2007
- SOLOPOS Kridha (Javanese) “Michi Tomioka aisi Jepang wasis mbeka”

16 August 2007
- Metro TV, “Kick Andy” (talk show, nationwide network)
  - Episode: “Kami Juga Cinta Indonesia” (We Also Love Indonesia)
  - Broadcast: Thursday, 16 August 2007, 22:05-23:05
  - Re broadcast: Sunday, 19 August 2007, 15:05-16:05

24 August 2007
- The Daily Jakarta Shim bun (Japanese), “Srimpi Performance of the Surakarta Court Style”

29 August 2007

31 August 2007
- The Daily Jakarta Shim bun (Japanese), “The first performance at IKJ of the reconstruction of traditional dance by a Javanese dancer, Michi Tomioka”

**4 Publications**

TRANSFORMING THINKING, TRANSGRESSING BORDERS

Jo Kukathas

Introduction

A year spent in Indonesia and Japan exploring traditional and contemporary theater allowed me to witness the ways in which artists and intellectuals transgress and transform their traditions. A study of these theaters made it obvious that these transgressions are nothing new and that globalization, far from homogenizing the arts, can make them dynamic.

However, the artist is often pitted against a national historical narrative that seeks to fix, not transgress, borders. It is in the lively skirmish between art and authority that the artist has to find a dynamic balance. Authority and artists come in many forms; sometimes they are one and the same, and it is here that the skirmish intensifies as artists contest the not-so-natural evolution of art and society.

In examining the artist as a transforming/transgressing agent, I have chosen to focus on Japan and in particular the tradition of noh. But first a quote from an old globalist:

The pursuit of reason and rejection of traditionalism are so brilliantly patent as to be above the need of argument. If traditionalism were proper, the prophets would merely have followed their elders and not come with new messages.

Akbar the Great, India

From traditional to contemporary: A survey

Start with tradition but don’t end there.

Goenawan Mohamed, Indonesian poet

Noh and Ulysses S Grant

One of the first non-Japanese ever to see a noh play was Ulysses S Grant. It was 1879 and he was on a global good will journey. His flustered hosts in Tokyo, uncertain how to entertain him, asked the great noh actor Hosho Kuro to perform. To his hosts’ surprise, Grant did not fall asleep. Instead, it is recorded that after the performance he turned to them and said: “You must preserve this.”

Grant was not to know that at the time the fate of noh was hanging in the balance. Noh had been intimately associated with the shogunate since the 14th century when the samurai lord Yoshimitsu took a shine to the beautiful young actor Zeami Motokiyo—later called the father of noh, famous as its greatest theorist and playwright. Under this military court patronage and removed from its folk roots, noh took on the remote esoteric features one associates with it today.

However, in 1868, ten years before Grant’s visit, the shogunate was overthrown, and with the Meiji restoration and its mania for all things modern, the traditional arts had fallen into disfavor. Noh was branded pre-modern and most of the old noh families disbanded. However, Grant urged that the art form be preserved “and the recommendations of so distinguished a visitor were not lightly to be dismissed in those days of uncritical respect for all things foreign” (Keene 1957).

Simultaneously, a delegation sent to study European art had witnessed opera and concluded that, as noh rather resembled opera, it might be worth saving after all. Noh was preserved and its status as a “classical” art after the European model was affirmed. Noh was adopted by the Meiji government as a national representation of Japan and “Japanese-ness.”

Ironically, it was the global gaze of Ulysses S Grant and others that was an essential factor to noh’s survival. Noh was “preserved” and monitored. Only five schools were allowed to open, and the strict iemoto or headmaster system meant that noh was carefully controlled both from within and without.

Noh and contemporary Japanese artists and audiences

So did noh survive to have any meaning to ordinary Japanese? Or has consumerist makudonarudo culture left them dulled to more metaphysical desires? I believe contemporary artists and audiences continue to explore and respond to noh, not as an act of resistance to “globalization” but out of a desire to explore an alternative discourse to the present day’s dominant view of human existence. Japanese audiences, while nervous of noh, respond deeply to its cultural signifiers.”
Watching *nō* theater makes us appreciate that not everything is as it seems. It is a meditation on the invisible and unseen. In fast-moving, consumerist Japan, such meditations are regarded as providing an important balance, a time-out from the world rushing past outside the theater. In *nō*, the actor is often masked, heavily dressed, his/her movements minimal. Often the actor is completely still: what Zeami calls *sennu hima*—a void/rapture of time and space in which the actor stands doing nothing but shows his/her way of being, completely inhibited. The audience must work to see past the surface to the hidden worlds of loss, suffering and longings of the heart.

What then are we observing? It is that one thing that we always desire to see but cannot see: the movement of the human soul. *Nō* can provoke in its viewers powerful emotions of empathy beyond what we see on stage.

This power that *nō* has is something contemporary Japanese artists are still profoundly aware of and it invigorates the works of contemporary artists as diverse as anime director Miyazaki to theater director Okamoto Akira.

*Spirited Away*

Surprisingly for a blockbuster, Miyazaki’s *Spirited Away* offers a bleak vision of Japan. The vulnerability of the Japanese identity is clear. The bubble has burst, leaving abandoned theme parks and mindless consumers. Pollution from materialism has created filthy rivers and people are pigs or foul smelling. The gods are offended. The bathhouse of the gods is the bulwark against ugly materialism but even this faces a battle from polluting forces within and without. Its only hope lies in its young heroine, Chihiro.

Miyazaki warns that “in this borderless age… a man without history or a people that forgot its past will have no choice but to disappear in a shimmer of light” (Napier 2006). Chihiro is in danger of that.

Her quest, therefore, is for cultural recovery/rehabilitation. She must rediscover and reincorporate elements of purity, endurance, self-sacrifice—values historically regarded as traditionally Japanese—in order to rescue her parents, now sadly turned into pigs.

The young girl or *shōjo* has another, deeper, cultural resonance in Japan. Only she can turn her parents back from pigs to humans. Only she can restore the lost boy, Haku, back to his true identity as a river god. Most significant is her encounter with the mysterious Stink God. In bathing him she discovers a thorn in his side. She pulls the thorn, which turns out to be a bicycle handlebar, which is in turn connected to other junk. She pulls, the pieces untangle and the Stink God is revealed to be a River Spirit finally free of the pollution of modern life. He wears the most sacred and ancient *nō* mask—the old man or *okina*.

The use of the *nō* mask in this popular film makes it clear that even ordinary Japanese who have never seen a *nō* performance see *nō* as embodying something sacred and deeply spiritual: something worth rescuing, recollecting, re-encountering. Under the stink is something sacred. That the river is sacred is quickly understood as part of everyday Shinto doctrine which sees the potential for sacredness in all things.

Shojo, Miko, Shinto and the origins of Japanese theater

The image of the girl as shaman is crucial in Japanese cultural tradition. In the Shinto religion, shrine maidens, *miko*, had an important function as mediators with the gods, restoring balance and harmony. Significantly, the story of the origins of Japanese theater comes from a story of one such *miko*. Zeami, in narrating the sacred origins of *nō*, recalls a mythical event.

The sun deity Amaterasu, attacked by her brother, the storm god Susano’o, goes into hiding and the world is plunged into darkness. The entreaties of the gods cannot move her. The clever young goddess, Ama no Uzume, overturns a tub near her cave’s entrance and dances joyfully on it, eventually exposing her breasts and lifting her skirts in a bawdy display. The gods convulse with laughter and, hearing this, the curious Amaterasu is lured out. Thus, through performance, light returns to the world. Balance is restored.

Zeami’s story conveys the magic powers of dance and theater: exorcism and trance as well as obscenity and laughter must converge in order to avert evil and bring renewal to the world.

The idea of balance or *ki* is still central in Japan and an acceptance of the invisible in Japan is apparent everywhere. Thus, while many Japanese may deny any religiosity, their sense of the spiritual nature of things is widely accepted, as is obvious by the small shrines that dot the landscape, the plethora of hedgehogs, raccoon dogs and foxes and the porcelain cats that wave their paws at you from every sushi restaurant. In *Spirited Away*, the Stink God’s true form is revealed because of the concern of the inhabitants of the bathhouse—or the concern of ordinary folk.
Performance as release and harmony

On the level of myth, this episode’s structure of misidentification followed by the revelation of his true nature is typical of many archetypal myths concerning a disguised god.

However, it is also the dramaturgy of noh theater. In noh theater, especially mugen or dream noh, the poor boatman or the mad woman in the first half of the play reveals him/herself in the second half as a true, more powerful transformed self. The dead can speak, not because they are not dead but because they are merely hidden or transformed. The performer or shaman allows them to reveal their true selves.

In this sense, noh theater is a purification rite and its performance is an exercise in recognition and correct identification that allows release and harmony, recognition and joy. The goddess is lured out of her cave. Once you can see past the form, the invisible reveals its true nature. Within everyone is something sacred. “Even the head of a sardine can be god.”4 This is a deeply subversive and democratic concept.

Moreover, in noh theater it is the dead, those without authority—those without historical or social dominance, who have lost the war—who are given the right to tell their story and recall their version of events. Noh privileges not the victor but the voiceless and the invisible. All noh plays put the deceased and voiceless firmly in the centre of the narrative.

However, the irony of many traditional art forms is that once they occupy the privileged position of a classical or state form, they no longer clearly play this role. The privileging of form over philosophy creates a rigid, unchanging art form that is used by the state to give validity to their position as guardians of these forms and of society. It no longer speaks for the voiceless and invisible in contemporary society. Business and tourism benefit, too, from this fixed form and tradition is seen as something to be protected from outside threats—globalization, modernity and even contemporary art—which may attempt to change the form and content of such traditions and make them less “Japanese” and therefore less feminized, available and consumable.

The louche origins of kabuki

In this paper I would like to offer the suggestion that threats to traditional culture in Japan, Indonesia and elsewhere do not come from globalization and modernity except insofar as that modernization has changed humanity itself and insofar as globalization has changed the dominant discourse.

Rather, I would like to examine the threats from those well-meaning folk who seek to preserve. Those who seek to freeze and control culture in order to validate some other, often nationalist, agenda often lay the blame at globalization’s door. They regard culture and the arts as a “moral resource” and want to lift it to lofty heights, forgetting the low, often mischievous, origins of theater as well as its complex, syncretic history.

Those who want to preserve tradition as something to be consumed like a national dish forget the sacred and spiritual origins of dance and theater. Those who seek to freeze tradition forget that tradition is evolving. For its evolution to continue, it must die and be reborn. The role of the state has often been to preserve “the vanishing” in order to make claims of cultural authenticity, hegemony and superiority while the contemporary artist seeks to critique and to destroy in order to create a new disorder. This tension is an ongoing historical one of resistance and refusal and out of this new theaters are made.

A brief look at the origins and history of kabuki illustrates this. According to tradition, kabuki was founded in 1603 by another Shinto priestess—Okuni. It acquired the defamatory name kabuki, meaning “to incline” or “bend,” as these women transgressed social boundaries. From its “prostitute kabuki” origins, kabuki actors were social outcasts, “beggars of the riverbed.” Although fiercely suppressed by the shogunate, kabuki was the artistic means by which commoners could express their suppressed emotions under such restrictive social conditions. In this way, kabuki was contemporary theater.

Kabuki borrowed shamelessly from bunraku noh, kyogen, popular ballads, fiction and legends. When women were forbidden to perform, kabuki perfected the art of the male impersonator or onnagata. Whatever challenges were thrown up, the lively, open art form called kabuki adapted to and adopted them to ensure its survival. The arrival of Western boats and Western art introduced perspective to kabuki sets as well as changes in make-up and props. Stories, too, changed with new characters ranging from foreign sailors to Jesuit priests. People flocked to the kabuki theater to catch up on the latest trends and fashions as well as the latest gossip and stories affecting the community.

Today in the classical preserved world of kabuki, the word kabuki is written with the Chinese characters...
and is often explained as meaning *ka* for “song,” *bu* for “dance” and *ki* for “skill.” Its original meaning of “bent,” with its attendant connotations of wild, outlandish and eccentric, is all but forgotten.

**Globalization as bogeyman**

As for the bogeyman known as globalization, Sen has made various spirited defenses of globalization insisting that while “globalization has been instrumental in shaping the world... by a persistent movement of goods, people, techniques and ideas it has shaped the history of the world” (Sen 2005).

One has only to look at masks and *gigaku* dance in Japan to be able to trace its origins to China. The Buddhist philosophies underpinning *noh* came to Japan from India via China and Korea. The *wayang kulit* of Java owes its heritage to the stories of the epic Mahabharata of India and the philosophy of the nine *Wali* or Sufi saints, as well as local stories and animistic beliefs. The nature of art and culture in both Indonesia and Japan has been essentially syncretic despite various attempts throughout history to “close the doors” or control foreign influences.

It is a misdiagnosis to claim that the globalization of ideas and practices has to be resisted because it entails some dreaded Westernization. The peril of this claim is that it incites parochial tendencies, ignores history and can lead dangerously to ethnic pride and a false sense of an immutable identity.

Given the global interactions throughout history it can also cause non-Western societies to shoot themselves in the foot—even in their precious cultural foot (Sen 2005).

However, the wholesale rejection of global influences from either East or West is neither possible nor necessary. For culture to be vibrant and alive, it has to meet the challenges of modernization. Protected and nurtured in a hermetically sealed environment, it loses its purpose and will die.

**Identity as choice**

The artist’s understanding of culture, I would argue, is ultimately syncretic, universalist, humanist, pluralist and evolving. The contemporary artist seeks to preserve by changing and in so doing preserves not form but metaphysics, with all its subversions intact.

The nationalist stance, in contrast, is conservative, frequently concerned with notions of unified identity and the authentic. It is concerned with preserving court and classical traditions, seeing those traditions as more representative of state culture.

This creates notions of a cultural hierarchy in which certain art forms are regarded as more worthy. The folk arts, more robust in accreting modernity, are regarded as vulgar and low art, not representative of national cultural values and, therefore, national identity. These are notions I would hotly contest.

Those who advocate the need to “salvage” traditions, who often use the discourse of the “vanishing,” do not see their desire to “recover” or “discover” their identity as a choice. They do not see tradition as something changeable and alive. Rather “increasingly such nostalgic yearnings often lead to a sense of *noblesse oblige* on the part of the speaker, who feels the obligation to revive or renew the imagined glory of the past” (Pattita 2002).

This view that a person’s identity is something s/he detects rather than one s/he determines lies at the heart of the ongoing historical struggle. Some claim that identity is a matter of discovery, others that identity is a matter of choice. The globalist may well be more inclined to believe in identity as choice, feeling that she has a choice about her beliefs, associations and attitudes and that she must take responsibility for what is chosen. The nationalist hopes that by burrowing deeper within his own cultural context he will discover his more “authentic self.” This is a deeply troublesome concept.

**Metapatterns**

It is clear from examining Miyazawa’s popular film that there are metapatterns that exist which make traditional cultures still resonant. Theater director Tadashi Suzuki believes that, while only a limited number of people watch *noh* theater, it continues to have some reality in Japan because the past is closer to the modern Japanese to whom, as a people, the vast disruptions brought about by secularization have come relatively recently [sic in the Meiji era]. He feels that Japan is closer to the model of a communal society than a highly individualistic one. Therefore, Japanese audiences have some ability to sense the beauty and significance that *noh* possesses that point to the transcendent. The fact that otherworldly and supernatural stories are readily believed suggests that certain implicit ties exist to these older ways of thinking. *Noh* is a historical form but the underlying pattern of thinking behind it and the belief system that governs it still exist.
The Meiji Restoration

The Meiji Restoration opened Japan to the outside world after centuries of isolation. Faced with these exciting new challenges, people responded differently. Eager to discover their new global identity, the Japanese even began chopping down their once beloved cherry trees to make Western-style furniture.

The government’s massive push towards bunmei kaika (civilization and enlightenment) extended deeply into the cultural realm. The cultural, economic, and political changes altered the traditional theaters and challenged the Japanese conception of theater.

Bereft of shogun patronage, noh found new patronage in a government eager to have a classical art form after the Western tradition. Attempts were made to reform kabuki but this new kabuki was not a success and kabuki itself began to crystallize into its modern form. Like noh, it reinvented itself into a classical tradition in order to survive.

A new theater emerged to take its place. Shingeki (New Theater) decided to completely rupture from traditional forms and base its theater solely on Western models of acting and playwriting, privileging drama or spoken text over the traditional theater of movement, dance and song. In 1923, the Tsukiji Shogekijo (Tsukiji Little Theater) sought a complete break with tradition and was hugely influential in the evolution of modern Japanese drama as we know it today.

Shingeki’s emphasis on theatrical realism and naturalism, as well as its leftist politics, represented a rupture with and a rejection of not only the theatrical past but the entire cultural heritage of Japan. Significantly, the rejection was not of the form that traditional theater took—the stylized spectacle of kabuki or the quiet movement of noh—but what was considered its essence.

Traditional theater was no longer seen as something that could change society or contribute to its greater good. Metaphysics and mysticism were on their way out. Rationality, empirical observation and causality were on their way in.

The modern emphasis was on rationality, not transcendence or spirituality. Traditional Asian theaters, grounded as they are in Buddhist, Hindu, animist or Sufi beliefs, take as their root the belief in nothingness. Western theater, however, based as it is on an Aristotelian dialectic, puts humans in the center. Embracing Western forms of theater and education meant seeing the world in a very different way. Knowledge was regarded as the province of the mind and faith or beliefs were held to be innately unprove-able and so inferior.

The empiricism so beloved of the mainstream of Western thinkers was what changed theater. This dominant view of human existence was the most powerful globalizing influence of the 19th century.

The pattern of modern humans is to resolutely turn away from precisely those experiences that hold an opportunity to open up the soul and to move beyond rationality; “the kind of transcendental pilgrimage route offered by the ritual of the noh world by this way of thinking would find deep obstacles to acceptance” (Rimer 1997).

Modernization

Newly modern Japan rapidly became a newly militarized Japan and in the pre-war period moved politically to the right. Tradition was hijacked for a nationalist agenda of promoting a golden age of Japanese culture. After the war, noh and kabuki were in disgrace and accused of serving a feudal agenda. However, they were soon restored to their positions as National Treasures due in large part to the sympathetic insistence of American curator/bureaucrats in Japan. In becoming National Treasures, they were once again set apart from the evolving historical narrative.

However, contemporary artists continued to contest the Japan under American Occupation. The riots in 1967 following the ratification of the American involvement in Japanese politics (AMPO) were a demonstration against the increasing Americanization of Japanese politics and culture.

Angura—A return of the gods

A new theater movement, termed underground or angura, sought to re-establish contact with a lost “Japanese-ness” and pre-modern culture. It advocated a return of tradition and “a return of the gods” to theater. These theater artists attempted to blend traditional and modern theater with largely leftist politics. Only vaguely knowledgeable about traditional theater, they nevertheless felt an impulse to return the sacred to the theater (Tsuno 1970).

David Goodman argues that this “return of the gods” was an attempt to make a bridge to Japan’s cultural past and a need to reconnect with the “bedrock of Japanese culture” (Goodman 1997). The angura movement
sought to rethink and transgress the borders of modern Japan, not by embracing the preserved forms of noh and kabuki found in the national theaters but their sacred and shamanic origins.

Hijikata Tatsumi, the founder of the post war Japanese dance form, butoh, rejected his ballet training and returned to the mud and earth of his village in northern Japan to discover the Japanese body that came from that same earth stripped of the artifice of centuries of court tradition. His dance of darkness had a profound impact on the young creators of the angura movement. At the same time, his partnership with contemporary dancer Kazuo Ohno created work that drew on both darkness and light. Both had experienced first hand the horrors of the Pacific war. Hijikata danced “with my dead sister in one half of my body.” Ohno had the memory of his younger sister dying of hunger in his arms.

They returned the dead to their rightful place on the Japanese stage and this communion with the dead and this giving voice and movement to those who had suffered horribly was a powerful return to the metaphysics of noh theater.

At the same time, Ohno’s Christian beliefs were apparent, as were his globalist interests. His seminal work Remembering La Argentine, a tribute to the Argentinian singer/dancer, was hugely influential, expressing empathy to a person of a culture and tradition across the globe. Nationalism was rejected. In playing that role, Kazuo Ohno was transformed into La Argentine and the universalist, humanist nature of art was revealed.

When Nietzsche called for the establishment of a metaphysical theater capable of healing the existential problems of his time, he provoked a revolution in Western theater, prompting people like Yeats, Artaud, Brecht, Genet and Ionesco to make a new theater. They responded by borrowing from ballet and opera, scrutinizing accounts of myths and rituals in traditional societies, and ransacking the theater traditions of Asia (Karampetos 1995).

In the 1960s, contemporary Japanese theater was grappling with the same existential problems and the angura movement’s return to investigate the pre-modern was a natural response to a global malaise. However, because of the rupture between traditional theater and shingeki, many of those in the angura movement had little knowledge of traditional theater. Some in traditional theater attempted to cross the divide.

The 1960s saw pioneering work between traditional and contemporary artists. There were casualties—Kanze Hideo was expelled from noh for his involvement in leftist angura theater—but a movement had begun. The global reach of Western scholarship did much to promote the understanding of the role of traditional theater. Stern criticism of modern theater arose. This impulse came not only from Japan—it was a global theater phenomenon. No longer was the drama or spoken word seen as the central element in theater, with the actor merely an embodiment of the playwright’s voice. This was concurrent to theater movements in Europe where the Living Theater movement was seeking a new form by questioning the nature and purpose of art as entertainment for consumers. Theater traditions were being questioned on a global level. During this process of questioning, the essential structure of traditional theater such as noh and kabuki, especially the performance style and concept of the body, became the center of attention. Western theater makers flocked to Japan to watch traditional performing arts. Shingeki had broken with tradition, insisting, “Don’t dance, move. Don’t sing, tell. (Odoru na ugoke. Utau na, katare.)” Now this was questioned. Theater was recognized again as the body dancing in space and the voice singing. Samuel Beckett wrote that his plays were written to be “sung.” Zeami’s treatises to actors, his 14th century Fushi Kaden, had advocated the same thing. Beckett was a hit in Japan. The global movement of people and ideas was apparent and enriching.

Contemporary Theater

In Sumbawa Donggo owns a horse
In Jakarta Donggo buys a bicycle
Ajip Rosidi, Indonesian Poet

Contemporary theater makers in Japan today continue to seek a balance between their modernity and their tradition. Setagaya Public Theater was founded by angura stalwarts, Black Tent’s Makoto Sato and Matsui Kentaro, to be a theater that would seek to restore the balance in Japanese theater by reconnecting to the bedrock of Japanese tradition. One Setagaya program, the Contemporary Noh Series, invites established playwrights to interpret anew noh theater. This series attempts to go beyond the form of noh to its dramaturgy and metaphysics.

Elsewhere, playwright Sakate Yoji, who did his thesis on Zeami, owns to not being as interested in Zeami’s theories of performance as his stories. However, his plays all contain ghostly elements. Sakate’s most famous play,
Epitaph for a Whale, has been commented on for its noh-like elements and Sakate’s bare minimalist staging has more in common with the noh stage than with the western proscenium.

Others drew not on the stories but the metaphysics. Director Ota Shogo turned more deeply to the form and spirit of noh in his “silent plays,” Water Station, Earth Station, and Wind Station. A stalwart of the angura movement, Ota created pieces of non-verbal theater that startled audiences everywhere. In Water Station, a single pipe in the middle of the stage provides a focal point for transients who move slowly across the stage. The slow movements of the actors allow us to see the tiny movements of their soul as they stop to refresh themselves, playing out their huge dilemmas of grief, hopelessness, joy and despair in small series of movements or kata. Using ordinary actors, Ota used the form of noh to explore human desires and stories but told the complex stories not through words but through the use of space and time.

In the early 1980s, playwright-director Hirata Oriza, reacting against both the Western shingeki playwrights as well as the noisiness of the kabuki-inspired angura “tradition,” made a new kind of theater which critics dubbed Quiet Theater. Hirata prefers the term colloquial theater as his characters, again played by non-traditional actors, speak a natural, everyday, colloquial Japanese. He acknowledges the direct influence of noh in his work. By making his action and conversation minimalist, he hoped audiences would go beyond what is being said on stage to what is hidden.

Through dramatic construction, theater gives form to the minute oscillations within the individual who does not notice or does not want to notice what is happening around him. Traditionally as a medium, theater has served the function of providing the illusion of seeing reality. However, today, from the far end of the universe to the inner workings of the human body, there is nothing that we cannot observe anymore as long as it has tangible shape. Yes there is still one thing that we cannot but desire to see. That is the movement of the human soul (Poulton 2006).

Returning to Point Zero: Okamoto Akira

Finally, the work of Okamoto Akira and his company Ren’niku Kobo has been profound. Central to his work has been his concern with the place of noh in contemporary theater. His Contemporary Noh Series is a return to the metaphysics of traditional theater. His long relationship with such artists as the late noh masters Kanze Hisao and Kanze Hideo and the butoh dancer Kazuo Ohno and his own belief in the importance of seeking new forms of theatrical expression has led him to cross a multiplicity of borders.

Pushing the borders of experimental, avant garde and essential theater, he crossed the borders separating contemporary theater, noh, butoh and dance. Central to the work is that they “never assume the theatrical framework or structure as given or established.” Rather, they begin at “Point Zero” by “radically questioning” their work and “treat the whole production process as problematic from a bottoms up perspective” (Okamoto 2007).

While acknowledging that theater has an amusement and entertainment aspect, Okamoto feels that “the lack of questioning of the principle of entertainment as a goal inevitably leads to theater experienced as a rigidified habit.” More significantly, he says, it alienates theater from both its past and its future and removes it from its external environment, thus turning theater into little more than a present experience. “Theater centered upon the entertainment principle ends in circular self repetition and eventually declines” (Okamoto 2007).

Acknowledging this problem led Ren’niku Kobo to realize that while they had to remain focused on noh, they had to constantly demand of themselves how to relate and combine their work with pre-modern theater and traditional culture. It also led them to collaborate with both traditional and contemporary artists from a variety of disciplines, including sound, light and multimedia, adhering firmly to the belief that theater is essentially a pluralistic art form and one that “develops between audience and actors” (Grotowski 1997). Okamoto’s company sees tradition, not as a dead form, but one that continues to evolve in the bodies of actors, theater makers and audience members.

His deep relationship with various traditional performers has allowed experimentation of a very profound order. In his contemporary noh play Mu (Void), he worked with two masters of their art—butoh dancer Ohno and noh master Kanze Hideo. He used texts from three sources, the noh play of the secret old woman Nob Obasute, Beckett’s drama Rockaby and contemporary poet Naka Taro.

The Nob Obasute deals with the topic of taking old people to the mountain and throwing them away. For Japan’s rapidly aging population, this is a story rich in cruel metaphor. In the first half, following the dramaturgy of the noh performance, we see a broken
down old woman, cruelly cast out into a void. However, in the second half she is transformed. We see past the broken exterior to the story within and magically we see the young woman within the old frame.

In the performance, we see the apparition of the spirit of the old woman. She is dead but, as with all noh characters, she is not dead but merely transformed. Time is not linear but circular. Death does not come as the end. Instead, she is assimilated with the moonshine, showing a transparent, innocent, dancing figure as a result.

What we see is what Zeami calls senu hima—a void/rapture of time and space in which the actor stands doing nothing but shows his way of being, completely uninhibited. In the body of Ohno, in the gutturall earthy chanting of Kanze, in the otherworldly sound of the Japanese flute and in the emptiness of the noh-like stage, time and space are transcended: time slows, space expands and the stage contains the universal.

By contrast, in Beckett’s Rockaby, aging is the prelude to death. Death will come as an abrupt and empty conclusion. Confined to her rocking chair manipulated by an unseen hand an old woman, played by a contemporary Japanese actress, babbles. Okamoto (2007) describes aging in modern times as “complete loneliness and is the meaninglessness and empty conclusion of modern times revealing the depths of vanity.” Both are part of the tradition of modern Japan.

**Traditional theater: Restoring the dead**

Like their traditional theater forebears, contemporary Japanese plays often feature ghosts or the dead. In some way the Angura movement precipitated not so much a return of the gods but a return of the dead to primacy on the stage. Sam Shepard, the American playwright whose works are peppered with ghosts, finds his work more easily accepted by Japanese audiences than contemporary American ones who are discomfited by the dead cohabiting so readily on stage with the living. Traditional theater in Asia and indeed elsewhere is often about conjuring the dead and it is this negotiation with the dead that is the heart of the shamanic tradition. I believe it is this tradition where the border between the traditional and contemporary artist will be transgressed and transformed many times over in a multitude of ways allowing release, recognition and joy. Contemporary theatre too prides itself on providing a voice for those made voiceless by contemporary society and politics.

**Conclusion**

In exploring truths as they are revealed to us from an older belief system, perhaps we can travel some way from the depths of our current vanity which holds fast to its belief in the self-evident. Traditional theater has much to offer, not in the way of form but in a way of seeing, perceiving and understanding; it seeks to see the invisible as much as the visible: it is a way of seeing that is at once humanist and universalist, not nationalist and essentialist. It has a relationship with the past that goes beyond the historical. It must, therefore, be left to evolve and meet the challenges of modernity. In the words of Indonesian poet and theater maker Goenawan Mohamed, “Start with tradition but don’t end there.” Or, like Chihiro, we may be apt to disappear in a shimmer of light or, worse still, find ourselves inhabiting an abandoned theme park filled with the detritus of cultural scenarios (Napier 2007).

**NOTES**

1 MacDonald’s.

2 It is said that modern Japanese audiences are somewhat embarrassed by the strangeness of noh or kyogen in the modern world. But they sense in these theaters a link, however tenuous, connecting them with a part of their cultural heritage, and in the end they feel rather lonely without them. Sabaka Junko makes this analogy: a contemporary audience is like the husband in the kyogen play The Sickle (Kamabara) who cannot get along with his wife but, having failed to kill himself and the relationship, he returns home distressed and upset but relieved at having the comforts of a familiar home and marriage.

3 See 10th century Genji Monogatari.

4 Japanese proverb.

5 Globalization is, moreover, not simply a western export. Thus, a whole-hearted embrace of Arab culture in Indonesia, for example, with its claims that this constitutes a more authentic (more Muslim) identity can similarly lead to a false sense of identity with onion-shaped mosques replacing more diverse structures and the ubiquitous jilbab replacing a larger variety of head coverings. It is a movement towards what Goenawan Mohamed (2001) terms “Al Identity.”

6 The problem, of course, lies with issues of what constitutes authenticity and the “real.” Traditional culture is often feminized. The feminized country is valued for
her beauty and purity, which must be preserved and defended. Traditional symbols of Japan are flattered by foreign authors: “The most artistic people in the world;” “Nothing is ugly in the humblest Japanese home;” “No other nation even understands so well how to make a cup, a tray, even a kettle, a thing of beauty.” This flattering view from the outside is then adopted to sell Japan both to locals and foreigners. The relationship to tradition then becomes one of consumption and there is a great danger in structurally positioning art as a consumable object against the consuming power of the West—whether that consuming power is tourists, heritage organizations such as UNESCO or well meaning curators intent on preserving art forms. A defense of preserving Japan’s traditional past often depends on locating Japan in the past as innocent, young, feminine and consumable. The quandary is that defenders of culture become through their objectification of that culture complicit with its subordination, leading to what Rey Chow has called “the ugliest double bind in the history of imperialism” (Quoted in Pham 1999).

7 Kabuki, too, is evolving today. Youthful Kabuki superstar Shido Nakamura’s latest kabuki offered audiences a flashier, faster version including a grand finale in which a police car burst onstage through a back door. “When kabuki is taken abroad, it’s always taken as something traditional and grand,” says Shido “I’d like to show people it’s a living thing.” Says 27-year-old Misaho Sato, “I never thought I’d be caught dead at a kabuki play. But I’m definitely coming back” (Newsweek 2007).

REFERENCES


INTERMINGLING OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

TRANSMISSION, PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION: A CRITICAL STUDY OF ASIAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC CULTURES IN POST-COLONIAL AND POST-MODERN TIMES IN THAILAND AND INDONESIA

Ramón Pagayon Santos

Introduction and General Framework

In the post-colonial era, traditional musical expressions as a primary source of cultural identity for peoples and communities in Asia face new challenges as they continue to evolve under changing social and institutional conditions. This new era in Asian musical life is characterized by infrastructure building by nation-states for self-determination, globalization and high technology.

The present study formulates a broad perspective on the transmission and teaching of Asian musical traditions and repertoires as they reflect changing pedagogical concepts, strategies and techniques that have been brought about by Western colonization. The adoption and transformative application of these strategies and techniques by local educators and modern culture bearers, premised on sustaining the continuity of traditional musical practices as a source of cultural identity and a sense of selfhood, may be viewed as both a direct reaction and a creative response to the challenges and dynamics of change, whether social, political, economic, or religious. The thrust to build modern societies was characterized by redefining and reconfiguring social practices in community life towards achieving political stability, economic prosperity and the legitimacy of one’s membership in the “civilized” international community. It is in the issue of the transmission of traditional cultures that one can fully appreciate the tension and even confusion that changes in social values and institutions have created in reconciling the cultural significance of traditional life and expressive practices with the legacy of the colonial era.

Institutionalization of pedagogy and modern education: Formal structures, standards and literacy

The establishment of formal educational institutions in Southeast Asia, deriving mainly from the overall literacy agenda of the colonial regimes, later provided the principal instrument for the development of professionally productive citizenries in modernizing nation-states (Department of Education 1994). As a prescriptive instrument, each set of curricular offerings embodies each institution’s vision, not only of the kind of graduates that it expects to produce, but also of the latter’s role in a changing society, as well as the role of the institution itself in contributing to the cultural and economic development of its region and the entire nation (see Fry 2002). Partly on this account, cultural practices have been re-taxonomized into, for example, “classical” forms as practiced in Royal Courts and temples and “secularized” forms for public consumption vis-à-vis folk rituals involving elements that include spirit possession and trance. Consequently, traditional repertoires also have to be fitted into the curricular structures whose parameters are partly defined by time allotments between practical, theoretical and extra-artistic course requirements, replacing the almost unbounded and flexible schema of traditional pedagogy that “authorizes” the traditional master to teach only what his disciples are capable of learning. Under these conditions, modern education has produced two types of artists: 1) academic artists and formally trained experts, many of whom have extended their academic experience abroad and gained substantive material benefits; and 2) village-bred artists who developed their expertise through direct participation in village traditions and who identify themselves as “natural” artists.

The tension between pedagogy and learning in the past and at the present time is even more dramatically felt in the dynamics of learning between oral and written methodologies (i.e., the use of notation). Today, the growing reliance of students on writing in all aspects of modern education has greatly affected aural memory, bringing about a diminishing sense of extemporality and aptitude for variation that are part of the “unwritten” canons and creative mechanism in traditional performance practice. Moreover, modern education has imposed a greater burden on master artists who have to adjust to the literate process of music education, including the learning of the solfa system. They are subjected to institutional systems of accreditation of teaching competence, academic certificates and revalidation of their orally-acquired knowledge according to the tenets of modern higher education as pre-requisites to teaching in institutions of higher learning. For this reason, the master artists...
have had to suffer through the academic drudgery (oftentimes under the advisorship of their own former pupils or disciples with master’s and doctorate degrees in ethnomusicology or music education), a case of experts relearning what they already know and are very good at.5

Ethnomusicology serves as another form of modernizing the entire domain of traditional arts education. In Indonesia, ethnomusicology has become a tradition in itself, having been implanted by pioneers of the discipline such as Jaap Kunst and Mantle Hood, who adopted Indonesia as a prime study area and source of early exotic specimens of non-Western music comparative inquiry.

The eventual “importation” of masters and artists, especially from Java and Bali, to teach and earn graduate degrees in Western institutions of learning developed a new breed of experts. Except for a few committed scholars6 who produce a substantive number of academic writings and publications, local ethnomusicology differs from Western practice in that it is primarily concerned with acquiring the tools for the study of different musical cultures and the acquisition of knowledge and skills in Western music theory, notation, transcription and research methodology.

Ethnomusicology graduates abound in Indonesia today but because of the lack of practical employment, graduates end up with other occupations (e.g., playing and arranging popular Western music for entertainment and the music industry, conducting choral groups, playing the organ in church). A more substantive reason for performing artists, whether in the field of dance or karawitan (musical performing arts) to take up ethnomusicology is the goal of earning advanced degrees abroad since ethnomusicology is the only viable area by which orally-trained artists in native music can study at Western institutions of higher learning.

Innovation, creative exploration and composition

Innovation in a wider sense is an imperative response to social changes. Such latter-day changes are easily traceable to the advent and influence of Western culture on the local way of life, secularization of expressive forms, notion of public entertainment and concerts, sense of individualism, modern technology and its application in the arts, and the commercialization of the arts in the context of popular culture. The idea of the public audience has shifted the power from the artist influencing the taste and cultural orientation of his community to the modern audience who now “commands” “market trends and tastes” that artists should cater to, even at the expense of altering the stylistic and aesthetic essentialities of his/her musical practice.

Such dynamics are no more clearly underscored than by the innovations and, sometimes revolutionary, inventions of individual artists. The blind khaen (reed mouth organ) player Sompat Simpla, 47, from Wang Hai village in Borabu, Northeastern Thailand, revolutionized the playing of the khaen, while molam (vocal repartee from Northeast Thailand) artist Ratree Sriwilai (pronounced Seewilai), 54, has become a popular icon for her “invention” of the molam xing, a fast and popular version of the classic molam khlon, performed complete with a troupe of mini-skirted dancing girls. Among the Karo Batak, the name of Jasa Tarigan is very well known for having introduced the electronic keyboard into “traditional” Batak music.

Although functioning mainly for modern public entertainment, electronic technology and other modern devices have been adopted to facilitate learning. The use of recording devices in the classroom has effectively addressed the limited time allotment for each class period as well as the time a master has to teach each individual student. Some teachers have devised audio-visual kits with prescribed lessons, such as the queen of molam xing, Ratree Sriwilai, who devised her own “distance learning” strategies by producing learning kits containing VCDs and written instructional materials.7 Ramkhamhaeng University is an open university that uses television and satellite technology to teach around 600,000 students all over Thailand. Recently, the University acquired the services of master musician Somsak Ketukanchan to design a program of distance education for the musical arts, which could substantially replace the notion and practice of individual discipleship and apprenticeship in favor of highly impersonal, wholesale mass education.

Composition

In today’s arts education, emphasis has been placed on creativity as part of the over-all strategy of modernizing artistic productions. In Southeast Asia, creation in the traditional practice covers various notions such as the: a) composition of new songs (either melody alone or melody and text) and or texts; b) re-creation of songs through the variation and improvisation of songs and/or texts; c) incorporation of Western tunes into traditional forms (e.g., “Jingle Bells” played on gamelan (Indonesian gong-chime ensemble) instruments); and d) integration of all musically-related elements and aspects—Western and non-Western theory, notation,
performance technique, electronic technology and innovation—in the manufacture of instruments, among others.

Kreasi baru

The concept of composition as an individual creative act is considered to have been sown in Indonesia in the 1950s, with special reference to the contributions of Pak Jokro, who composed many gendhing (compositions) with lyrics on contemporary issues, and institutionalized the formal teaching of traditional repertoires in the villages (modernesasi desa).

Today, the repertoire called kreasi baru (new creations) has become a standard nomenclature in the Indonesian art world. According to Sumaryono, his new repertoire may even be subdivided into three sub-categories, especially applicable to the modern dance tradition (tari):
1) revitalization or restoration of old forms generally referred to as kreasi baru (in music, new compositions in the old forms could also be considered under this category); 2) seni moderen, referring to the production of pieces applying the creative freedom developed in the West (e.g., pieces by Martha Graham, 20th century principles in Western music); and 3) kontemporer, meaning new experiments and avant-gardism based on traditional arts. The latter refers to the “avant-garde” works produced by karawitan artists who modernize the traditional performance practice by reconfiguring the gamelan ensemble, integrating instruments from other cultures, including the West, and adopting and fusing elements from such major traditional styles as those from Bali, Yogyakarta, or Sunda, as well as Western music. This movement has also evolved a new compositional process, a semi-oral, collective procedure, in which performers of an ensemble, whether purely musical or with other artistic media, develop the final form of a piece through continuous “rehearsals.” The dichotomy between composers trained in the West, writing scores and pieces of music that adopt ideas and elements from traditional repertoires, and the “karawitan composers” who adopt the oral process as their point of trajectory, has fomented ideological tension, in spite of the fact that both “camps” are in reality partly the result of the larger influence of Western theory and practice.

Preserving indigenous pedagogy in modern education

Cognizant of the dialectic, if not dialogic, difference between traditional pedagogy and modern education, institutions and their faculties have been exploring areas by which a compromise could be achieved between the two learning ideologies. Some of the principal strategies are:

- The employment of master artists in classrooms. Whether they do actual teaching or simply lend their iconic presence, master artists visibly affect the attitudes and behavior of students.
- Reviving orality through literate strategies. Although repertoires are introduced in written notation, students are required to commit them to memory.
- Team teaching as a replication of communal learning. The concepts of communal learning and team teaching have been adopted as a class strategy, ideally consisting of five teachers to a class of 10 to 15 students, allowing semi-individualized monitoring, although not all schools are able to bear the cost implication.
- Sourcing the villages. In schools that do not provide for hiring master artists in the regular program, individual professors include field work in their course requirements, sometimes leading to a state of discipleship with the masters on the students’ own time. To preserve the aesthetic link between modern institutions and traditional village communities, the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) Solo requires each graduating student to present his/her terminal project, the graduation examination-recital, in his/her home village where the jury consists of both faculty from the home institution and masters from the student’s own village.

Threats, new initiatives and institutional safeguards

Commodification of culture; performance as profession

As commonly perceived, the impact of outside influences (e.g., entertainment, economy, religion, technology) is viewed as the principal threat that undermines the essentialities and the aesthetic, theoretical, and pedagogical integrity of the expressive traditions of a particular country or society. With the pressures of globalization, Thailand and Indonesia, branded as “developing” together with other Southeast Asian nation-states, have consciously measured their development as members of the international community in economic terms. The commercialization of traditional music and the arts has become a part of the modernizing landscape all over Southeast Asia. Hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, and other public venues in Indonesia, including temples and palaces, are now providing venues for traditional performing arts as a commodity to foreign visitors just like the symphony
orchestra concerts and ballet, which metropolitan areas like Bangkok and Jakarta have also been promoting as emblems of modern urban life. The infusion of the element of entertainment into traditional events such as weddings, anniversaries and even funerals has created opportunities for artists. Many students and graduates of arts academies and vocational high schools have organized performing groups like the sanggar so that they could join the ranks of other wage earners in the modernizing social environment. As traditional artists become part of the professional community, the art forms themselves have undergone drastic changes in their aesthetic and intrinsic functional value. Long rituals in Bali have been shortened by their conversion into public performances where they have been fitted into tourism packages, including even cremation ceremonies. In the sanghyang ritual of the kecak in Bali, the very time of the spirit possession can practically be predicted in terms of minutes.

Music as business and industry

The proliferation of music business programs in leading universities in Thailand is the result of new government directives specifying that each program in higher education must justify itself by ensuring that the graduates will earn a living from these specializations. For this reason, music business as a study program or course content in tertiary schools has become part of the overall arts curriculum. The incipience of research on developing and mass producing traditional instruments can now be observed, as in the efforts of Piyapan Santawisook, Assistant to the President of Mahasarakham University, who has a private laboratory-factory just outside the university. The thrust to produce highly professional individuals who can contribute to the material progress of the nation could reach some radical limits. Mass production of phin (three-string tear-shaped lute from the Northeast) and wot (circular panpipe) can be found in a factory in Kentong village in Khon Kaen province, being run by two young entrepreneurs, owner-artist-managers Decha, 21, a recording artist, and his older sister Pennapa Chasanguan, 24, who is taking an MBA course to hone her business sense. In Thaksin University in Southern Thailand, a proposal has been submitted to transform the Music Department into a “College of Professional Music” under the concept that all programs must lead towards professional careers in music (Dansakoon 2006).

At the Mahidol University College of Music, Dr. Sukree Charoensook has added studies in music technology and music business to the curriculum. Because of its natural affinity with income generation and commercial entertainment, popular music in all its forms, including the study of molam xing, is a principal feature of the music business curricula. Mahidol University also has the most financially successful ventures in the field of music education. It operates extension schools of music called “Music Campuses for the General Public” situated in three different shopping centers, each branch catering to the different middle-income brackets that patronize these malls.

Vocational schools

Parallel to the proliferation of programs and courses in music business in Thailand is the restructuring of the arts high schools in Indonesia into vocational training centers under the new political dispensation and educational reform. From their status as arts academies, arts high schools have been reformed and renamed Sekolah Menengga Kejuruan Indonesia (SMKI), with a total of eight such centers all over the country. Quoting from the information sheet of SMKI in Bantul, Yogyakarta, the State Performing Arts “teaches students to have abilities and skills in performing arts required by entertainment and art industry.” One of the social roles of the vocational schools is to find or identify potential employment for their graduates and to forge linkages with commercial establishments. The highly pro-active SMKI in Yogyakarta lists its linkages with Hotel Jayakarta and Hotel Mutiara and dance sanggars (community-based performing groups) such as PLT Bagong Kussdihardja, Didik Nini Thowok Entertainment, as well as the Radio Republik Indonesia, Radio Swasta di DIY, and Televisi Republik Indonesia.

The arts have also always been considered an integral program for schools for the disabled, especially the blind. In Chiang Mai, the Northern School for the Blind of Her Royal Highness the Queen’s Patronage has an active music program. However, the music program is more of an elective rather than a regular part of the general curriculum. In North Sumatra, the Vocational School Center for the Blind (Yapentra) in Tanjung Morawa recently started music instruction on Batak music. Most of the instruction in music is centered on areas that can be useful for earning a living in the entertainment industry: drums, guitar, violin, trumpet and piano. These are offered together with other skills such as carpentry and massage, which are compulsory for all visually impaired students.

The advent of new communication media and the commodification of artistic productions as modern...
entertainment is particularly identified with the youth or what is essentially the future citizenry of the national polity. Threats from outside and inside of Indonesia’s current system of governance have spawned new reactive strategies from the artistic and cultural communities. They have devised alternative methodologies in education and organized national and international events, all directed towards challenging and matching the temperament of today’s youth, as well as promoting solidarity among artists and instilling a national consciousness for culture and the arts. Targeting the apathy of youth towards traditional cultural practices, Endo Suanda, one of the major artist-educators today, established LPSN (Lembaga Pendidikan Seni Nusantara) with the vision of not only revitalizing a knowledge and appreciation of their cultural heritage among high school students, but also a feeling of pride. LPSN produces teaching materials (e.g., books, monographs, and audiovisual kits), conducts workshops and regularly visits the schools to monitor the progress of both schools and teachers who have adopted this new strategy. To date, the project, which began in 2002, has established twelve regional centers on all major islands in Indonesia, accredited some 1,000 teachers and reached some 100,000 students (Lembaga Pendidikan Seni Nusantara 2006, Gombloh 2007).

**Institutional safeguards**

In spite of the changes in the value and relevance of traditional expressive cultures in modern life, institutional mechanisms either remain in place or are being established in order to preserve traditional practices as living emblems of a society’s cultural heritage. These mechanisms, both humanly evolved and nature-induced, may be viewed as functioning as safeguards in the conservation of the essential integrity of the traditional expressive cultures.

**The Khru culture**

Abiding respect for one’s teacher and master is embodied in the *wai khru*, an annual ceremony honoring the master as well as an occasion for formally initiating young people to a life of discipleship, almost like taking a vow to aspire for mastery of one’s musical skills. The *wai khru* ceremony in Thailand is indicative not only of the respect and reverence for the teacher in any productive endeavor, but also respect for what has been learned.

**The Royal Courts**

The royal courts, whether politically active or not, serve as a *de facto* conserver of the cultural traditions, being themselves part of such traditions. Performers who are privileged to be members of the palace ensembles are well versed in traditional practices, especially the rites and ceremonies. In Thailand, the royal family’s support of culture and the arts is particularly notable in that King Bhumipol is a practicing musician-composer and Princess Sirindhorn is a fine *khaen* performer. In Indonesia, the royal court ceremonies are closely integrated with religious rites. In modern times, the courts also provide the venues and facilities for public performances. What is perhaps a more significant role of the courts lies in their symbolic presence, continuously serving as a living mechanism in keeping alive the spiritual and social significance of the artistic traditions performed under their auspices. Many of the masters who are members of the court artistic groups also teach in academic institutions and their choice disciples get the opportunity to apprentice with them, eventually becoming court musicians themselves (see Hari 2007).

**The family and pedagogic dynasties**

The family tradition remains a strong factor in the social fabric of Southeast Asian peoples. As an institution, it also serves as a mechanism in the transmission of traditional values, knowledge, and cultural identity. In the course of the research, many artists traced their lifework to their parents and earlier ancestry. Samang Jiangkan, 55, a *molam* master, first learned the art from his uncle because his father could not send him to school among nine children. Surasak Pimsen from Khon Kaen, who plays several instruments such as the *khli* (recorder) and *phien*, grew up in a family of musicians and was reared by his father, Buen Pimsen, a *molam* teacher. In Gyanar, the most famous *gamelan* factory, Sidha Karya, traces its existence through some 500 years of family history of *gamelan* manufacturing. The present generation of lecturers in arts schools and institutes are mostly children of master village artists. The *pedalangan* tradition itself in Central Java is traced back to the Mataram Kingdom that later became the Kingdom of Karto Suro, and its proliferation to other parts of Indonesia is believed to have branched out from one extended family tree.

Thus, the concept of family does not only refer to immediate kinship among members of a household but to extended family units, clans and artistic dynasties. The pedagogic dynasty in Thai classical music is an interesting, if not intriguing illustration: the present generation of teachers, whether in academic or informal educational settings, traces their artistic lineage to pedagogic dynasties. In general, there
are about four or five schools (i.e., groups, stables, dynasties) distinguished from one another not only in terms of style (e.g., variational techniques), repertoire and aesthetics, among others, but also by ideological differences. Such differences are fueled by a strong sense of competition and the pursuit of social, if not artistic, prominence, and are closely identified with legendary masters and founding patriarchs. The phenomenon of the pedagogic dynasty could also be extended to the institutional dynasty in Indonesia, where the two oldest arts institutions, ISI Solo and ISI Yogyakarta have spawned most of the teaching forces in the traditional performing arts in the entire nation, whether in arts high schools (sekolah menangga) or in arts colleges, institutes, and universities.

Empowerment of traditional resources through awards and competitions

The system of rewards, ranging from the national artist award to special awards and citations from the Royal Family are sources of prestige as well as social and artistic capital, including employment in institutions of higher learning and the procurement of disciples. Competitions as validating strategies in the community likewise serve various purposes: as a rite of passage that can transform winning participants from being ordinary musicians to bearers of cultural emblems, or as a short-cut to earning prestige certificates without having to go through a formal educational curriculum. In competitions, participants are usually identified with the masters who groomed and trained them or to the school in which the students are enrolled.

Institutional mechanisms

National governments have established cultural centers to house cultural agencies and promote cultural activities. The Taman Budaya in Solo, a sprawling landscape of finely and artistically built structures, houses several offices, including an audio-visual library. It has all possible venues—pendopos (performance pavilions), arena-like open theaters, an indoor theater, an art gallery, rehearsal halls equipped with gamelan, and other musical and extra-musical facilities. Various interest groups, especially those conducting workshops for children, use these facilities for free. Another institutional mechanism is the presence of foreign funding agencies such as the Asia Society in Bangkok and the Ford Foundation in Indonesia, and the programs and projects that they fund in cooperation with local individuals or institutions. The latter has given substantial assistance to educational projects including the LPSN of Endo Suanda, UPI research, the production of teaching materials and the Revitalization Program of Universitas Sumatera Utara, headed by Rhitaony Hutajulu (Hutajulu 2006).

The seasonal cycle

The continuing power of the seasonal cycle of living where both religion and nature dictate the boundaries of human existence and societal participation provide another factor in the perpetuation of traditional musical practices. The major religions of Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism are permanent sources of commemorative activities such as the Mawlid and the Buddhist Lent, which require musical performances and other forms of artistic expression.

The artists, the community and the schools

Consciousness for identity and, on the part of the artists, the pride and passion for what they are doing and their spiritual rewards even without the material motivation constitute an intangible force in ensuring the perpetuity of traditional cultural expressions. The likes of Sudjit Duryapranit, Unlan Hongtong and Damrong Chaipat in Thailand open and offer their houses as virtual schools for village youth. In Indonesia, newly emerged artist icons with high academic and social standing (e.g., Rahayu Supangga, I Wayan Dibia, Pak Jokro) provide venues for artists to perform and sustain the traditional arts. They have actually joined the ranks of art patrons, who range from members of the Royal Household to wealthy families. Such individual commitments are a result of the sense of community that remains strong in both Indonesia and Thailand, reflected in great part in the communal nature of their performing arts media, especially the musical arts. There are regular community programs such as the Pendidikan Kahaisatraan Kluwart (PKK) or Education Family Welfare Organization program activities for women towards the acquisition of useful skills. The cooperation between artists and community extends to the local system. A number of these schools share a deep concern for the preservation of traditional arts, such as Mekar Arum High School in Cinunuk Cileunyi in Bandung regency, which offers arts education in its three-year high school program and takes pride in garnering major prizes in regional and national competitions for young artists.

Postlude/Prelude

The transmission of traditional expressive cultures is a broad arena in which modern infrastructures of learning have generally been superimposed on traditional methodologies of pedagogy, whether exercised as a

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conscious strategy of sustaining tradition or practiced as part of a larger socio-cultural template in the course of human life in Southeast Asia. Looking at the larger issue of transmission, one may argue a theory of difference between interventional acculturation and evolutionary enculturation with reference to the cultural history of Southeast Asian peoples in the last 500 years. In this regard, the present study offers a much more open-ended view not only of the highly complex transformative nature of cultural transmission, but also the multi-dimensionality of the entire phenomenon in which individuals and institutions interact with extra-territorial influences. From one perspective, such aspects as belief systems and modes of worship, gender, family organization, the community and political governance have emerged in the course of the present inquiry as both agents of change and institutional safeguards in sustaining and preserving the essentialities of the expressive traditions.

From another standpoint, the economic agencies of the times have brought about a dramatic shift in the valuation as well as the utilization of the artistic product vis-à-vis the new institutions of learning that have now been tasked with developing a new resource, capable of converting an intangible patrimony to materially profitable productions. In this regard, human resources, artists and culture bearers, as well as modern institutions of learning, become the focal point as the ultimate repository of power and the main instrument by which canons of transmission and learning may be ideated, formulated, transformed and practiced.

Institutional and formal modes of transmission and learning are predictably going to be the way of the future. Change, however, exacts sacrifices and even loss, as well as gains and profits on the part of the larger domain of tradition. It shall, therefore, depend on the artists themselves to effect a balance between what is lost and what is gained and accordingly exercise their power and imagination in using the institutional machineries to determine the parameters of change through which and by which they can exercise the license to create and innovate, in the process of sustaining, perpetuating and enhancing tradition.

NOTES

1 Data were gathered from study visits to the main regions of Thailand (North, Northeast, Central and South) and the major provinces of Indonesia (Jakarta, West Java (Bandung), North Sumatra, Central Java (Solo and Yogyakarta) and Bali); meetings were held with more than a hundred principal consultants and visits were made to more than 50 institutions and communities during the four and a half months of field study.

2 In the formalization of teaching and learning traditional arts and culture, three types of institutions of higher learning providing professional arts education have evolved: 1) the arts institute; 2) the teacher training institution and/or university; and 3) the academic university.

3 Many of these folk rituals have also become spectator events, performed at fairs and other tourist and commercial venues.

4 Notation came into the learning process in the musical cultures of both Indonesia and Thailand in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, initially introduced and induced by Western missionaries and pioneering scholars whose interest ranged from purely historical documentation to scholarly study and the cultural preservation of local musical repertoires (see Miller 1992, Seelig 1932, Sontong 1973, Lenasawat 1992, Diya 2006).

5 Some institutions have found faster solutions to this problem by awarding honorary degrees, such as an honorary baccalaureate degree, as in the case of pi-nora (double-reed instrument used in nora) master Kuan Yok by the Rajabhat University in Songkhla. The Rajabhat University in Chiang Mai has also awarded Damrong Chaipet, 74, a master drum artist and drum maker from Ban To village, an honorary master’s degree, as was Unlan Hongton, a master artist in sung (4-string rounded box lute from Northern Thailand), pi (free-reed bamboo pipe) and so (vocal repartee from Northern Thailand) from the village of Chiang Dao.

6 Many of these scholars have studied abroad such as I Mde Bandem, Endo Suanda, Sumaryono, Waridi, Santosa Sowerlan, Bambang Sunarto, among others. See Sunarto 2007 as an illustration of scientific writing.


8 There is no exact equivalent in the Western music system. The ghending is in the form of a basic melodic formula or a song that serves as the nuclear material for performances by a gamelan ensemble.

9 Interview with Sumaryono conducted on 3 May 2007 in Yogyakarta.

10 In spite of major efforts such as festivals of modern art (including the hosting of the 1999 Asian Composers League Festival in Solo and Yogyakarta) to reconcile
the activities of the leading personalities from the two camps, practitioners of these two highly distinct creative streams have yet to find a common ground in promoting Indonesian contemporary music.

11 Masters such as Pluang Chairatsami at the Kalasin Dramatic Arts College or Chalerm Maungpraesri of the Dramatic Arts College (Bunditpatanasilpa Institute) in Bangkok who are employed by formal institutions are required to do nothing much but correct and comment while the direct teaching is done by instructors.

12 Such teaching methodologies make the academic operation of these schools a very expensive enterprise. At SMKI Solo, there are 180 students and 74 teachers, which gives a high teacher-student ratio of 2.43 students per teacher.

13 The sanggars are groups that have been organized under the broad motivation of preserving traditional culture, especially of the community that they represent or are based in. What is significant in the sanggar movement is the required presence of master artists who teach and guide the members and act as artistic advisers or even leaders. The sanggars, although not organized for commercial purposes, could be invited or commissioned to perform for special events such as fairs and other special public performances.

14 The cremation ceremony is not only done when someone dies: bodies are first buried and only cremated on the appropriate dates determined by local elders. Thus, hotels and tourism offices are able to advertise cremation events in advance; the cremations consist of a procession towards the beach and setting the body on a watercraft that is set on fire and pushed out to the sea.

15 In the proposed curriculum, traditional folk music has been excluded in the study areas for the reason that performers of folk traditions earn their living from other activities such as farming, fishing, craft and other "non-musical" occupations.

16 The courses run for 12 meetings, ranging between 25 to 55 minutes per meeting depending on the number of persons in a class. A certificate of completion is given after a student successfully passes an examination in each course. The ages of the students in this extension program range from primary school age to 70. Because there are no fixed music programs in the primary schools, the school provides the instructions that many middle-class families now consider part of the total cultivation of their children as modern-day citizens.

17 The first school was established some ten years ago in the Seri Department Store in the east side of Bangkok, followed by the second, established eight years ago in the Central Department Store.

18 Historically, the SMKIs were originally founded as "konserwatori," and later changed to Sekolah Menangga Karawitan Indonesia in 1976. In 1997, the change of the letter “K” from Karawitan (musical arts) to Kejuruan (skills) represented a big ideological shift in its educational purpose and social significance.

19 This transformation dismayed many leaders in the arts world, who themselves graduated from these institutions when their mission was still based on the development of future artists. Such names as Rahayu Supangga, Al Suwardi and H. Soetarno are a few of the long list of illustrious artists now representing and nurturing the cultural and artistic life of the nation.

20 The school has a regular pop band to play at appreciation programs for school patrons and sponsors. The Directress, Mrs. Pikul Leosiripong, who assumed the Directorship in 2001, introduced the training in "massage" as well as music because, before, the blind had only two ways of earning a living—one was to sell lottery tickets and the other was to beg as musicians. She was the first to introduce Thai instruments and recruited the present teacher through her husband, Dr. Prasit Leosiripong, a retired professor of musicology at Rajabhat University.

21 The culture of the khru (master-teacher) and its principal manifestation in the wai khru is practiced in the different fields of endeavor in which skills are transmitted from the master to his/her pupil or disciple. Thus, traditional "crafts" such as massage, carpentry, healing and instrument making are areas where the transmissional process through pedagogy is considered of high social, if not sacred, value.

22 While the materiality of respect for teachers is manifested in the Thai wai khru, respect for the wisdom transmitted by teachers and elders is likewise strongly felt among contemporary Indonesian artists in an informal and less overt manner.

23 According to Sri Raharjo who belongs to this family, the entire pedalangan tribe is connected to the family of Rahayu Supangga.

24 As told by Surasak Chamnongsam and Manop Wisuttipat.

25 These schools include: 1) School of Banglam Pu, now headed by master Somchai Duryapranit and Sudjid, which traces
its pedagogical lineage to Praya Sano (b. 1866); 2) Ban Mai School now headed by Samran Kerdphon (b. 1926) and which traces its lineage to Chang Wangrua (1881); 3) School of Luang Pradit (b. 1881), being now nurtured by a foundation established by his niece, Malinee Sagarik; 4) School of Praya Prasan, also a famous master, who studied with Choi, the blind father of Praya Sano; and 5) School of Mo Plumpricha, formerly very influential, which recruited the finest players to staff its group and school and vies with Banglam Pu for prestige.

26 National artists enjoy a lifetime salary from the government.

27 Although they do not join these competitions (even though they are open to any age or social sector), master artists stake their reputation as masters when they field their wards as competitors. A teacher’s credentials are not only enhanced by the number of students but also by the number of trophies and awards students have won.

28 The first Taman Budaya to be established and later replicated in Bandung, Jakarta and Bali.

29 Since most of these artists are also active in both performance and creative work, one could view this new phenomenon as an effort to maintain a reservoir of traditional knowledge that provides the fundamental ingredients for artistic experimentation.

REFERENCES


THEATER CHRONICLES: LESSONS IN THEATER DOCUMENTATION FROM TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY THEATER PRACTICES IN THAILAND AND INDONESIA

Gley C. Atienza

Introduction

This four-month study focused on two areas—Bangkok in Thailand and Solo City or Surakarta in Central Java, Indonesia. Data gathering was primarily done through observation, watching performances and rehearsals, as well as interviews and informal conversations with artists from different groups. Libraries and museums were also visited as sources of initial readings about the local theater forms. In Thailand, interviews were conducted with a total of 64 traditional/contemporary artists-directors, writers, musicians and puppeteers; three theater critics/researchers; and five museum/archives specialists and art curriculum specialists. Furthermore, 10 rehearsals, five classes on traditional theater and 10 performances were attended and 12 performance areas, four libraries and four museums were visited. In Solo City, interviews were conducted with a total of 35 artists; 15 performances and performance rehearsals and three theater criticism sessions were attended; and three libraries, two temples and six performance venues were visited.

“Creating” theater in Thailand and Indonesia

Theater’s “live” quality has worked towards its conservation and transformation. Primarily, theater has been kept alive through continuous performances. It has also been preserved through icons, popular images and physical monuments. Institutions such as museums and libraries have served as repositories of theater artifacts. Private collections of individuals and homes with theatrical motifs have also helped in creating living monuments to theater practices.

The practice of passing on the art of theater from one generation to another has kept the tradition alive while innovations have enriched the role of theater in contemporary life. Theater is “created” through various levels of engagements, with the artist at the core of the creative experience and the audience, social institutions and society in general as participants and partners in the creative process. Artists have evolved various ways and practices of documenting and preserving their theater practices. Each approach has its own strengths and is closely related to the nature of artistic practice and knowledge dissemination that the artists employ.

Institutionalizing theater

In Thailand, the conservation and preservation of theater practices have been done through state-institutionalized programs to keep traditional theater performances of the most revered and popular theater form, the Ramayana, a part of people’s daily life. Theater practice is marked and supported by the decisive role of the state in institutionalizing traditional theater forms such as the Ramayana to symbolize the state. Ramayana characters can be seen in almost every corner of the country—from official logos to street designs and key chains. Schools instill in young artist-students the importance of continuing the tradition of the Ramayana, while master artist-teachers have dignified the form by giving much credence to learning the tradition before exploring innovations to the form.

The Ramayana, one of the world’s most loved epic stories, has been one of the main sources of traditional theater performances in Thailand and Indonesia. Its openness to re-interpretation in regional texts and oral tradition has found its way into the Ramakien and reflects the various concerns of people at different places and in different times. The Ramayana’s tradition of many different tellings has paved the way for the creation of various versions.

The Ramakien, the Thai version of the classic Ramayana story from India, has been the source for theatrical performances presented for the royal audience, as well as for the audiences who frequent the National Theater and the famous Sala Chaleurmkrung in downtown Bangkok. Ramakien places much importance on the role of the white monkey army leader Hanuman, who helped save Sita from the evil Ravana. The Thai version supports Paula Richman’s observation that the Ramayana has been adapted by Asian cultures to suit their cultural needs. The dance theater piece “Hanuman” has been playing for years in the local theaters and various versions of this play have been done by government-supported institutions such as the Bangkok College of Dramatic Arts. Performers, who include actor-dancers and musicians, have been trained...
from their teenage years to their college years to perform particular roles in the play. At the Bangkok College of Dramatic Arts, for example, a bachelor’s degree course is offered for students who want to specialize in the role of Hanuman. The actor-dancers learn the classical movements of the character, including the nuances and attitudes of the dance form, the verses that go with the movement, and the music and songs that accompany it. Pictures and notations of traditional dance forms, developed as the basic language of the Ramayana dance, has helped in preserving the Ramayana. According to master teacher-artist and master Hanuman dancer Ajahn Prusit Rungkaew, the actor-dancers learn the movements of the character Hanuman, first as part of the monkey army until they progress and learn the more complex and demanding role of Hanuman.

Students also have a handbook on the rudiments of the different dance forms performed by the characters, complete with pictures and illustrations of the form and body position of each dance step, instruments and corresponding props and costumes that go with the role. Through textbooks written by master teachers from the Bangkok College of Dramatic Arts, the state-supported institution for learning dramatic arts, the basic dance alphabet has been notated through pictures and illustrations. Master teachers like Ajahn Akom Sayakom, who have been recognized by no less than His Majesty the King, and Ajahn Prusit Rungkaew are featured in the handbook together with other master teachers in the college. Textbooks on other traditional theater forms such as the manora dance theater are used to guide the students through their training. According to master manora dancer-teacher Ajahn Thummanit Nikomrat of the Prince of Songkhla University of Southern Thailand, the publication of these books was funded by the Queen through the Prince of Songkhla University.

Training programs for students have been geared towards creating master artists who will eventually teach their craft to younger generations. Students who enroll in the program start out as regular students who have been drawn into the program by their desire to be good artists. Eventually, they imbibe the orientation of learning the craft and become culture bearers of their artistic heritage. Master teachers treat their students like members of their families, taking care of their artistic development as well as their personal lives. Student artists learn their art from the traditions set by their master which the masters also learned from the master artists of previous generations. Students are taught to write down their experiences as well as learn their movements and verses by heart. The more advanced students are sent to do performances at meetings of government officials. Master teachers and performers of the National Theater are mostly graduates of the Bangkok College of Dramatic Arts. Other senior artists become performance managers, handlers of props and technical equipment or costume mistresses like Ajahn Aurapin Isarangkura of the National Theater. Other state universities teach theater and other related arts.

Srinakharinwirot University has a theater program and music department which handles theater performances and music programs, with many of the master teachers coming from the Bangkok College of Dramatic Arts. Master teachers of Srinakharinwirot University also conduct mentoring for their artist-students. Many of them learn their craft from master teachers as in the case of Ajahn Surasak Paidam, who trained under a national artist for music for free while rendering services for him on his farm. Other training institutions, like the school handled by Ajahn Vic Chimplee in the southern part of Bangkok, train youngsters from as young as age three to age twelve to perform the children’s version of the Ramayana. Other theater forms such as likay (improvised poetic joust based on the Ramayana) and lakhon chantree (poetic narrative in honor of the gods, an innovation of the Ramayana story) have been supported through the patronage of the King and the community. Puppet plays such as nang yai and nang talung (traditional shadow puppet theater forms) have been promoted through the state’s tourism program. Some researchers, like Ajahn Anan Narkkong of Mahidol University and a musician from Petchaburi province, observe that theater forms such as the nang yai and nang talung are sometimes shown during the daytime, a practice that runs counter to the traditional use of shadows created during nighttime as a venue for people to convene and enjoy a puppet show. The duration of the performance has also been shortened to accommodate the schedule of tourist packages that include the shadow puppets as one of their tourist destinations along with a visit to the floating market and other local handicrafts. This practice has altered the concept of the shadow puppets and has greatly affected the aesthetic quality of the play.

As a fitting support to the Ramakien, the performance area of the National Theater has been designed to accommodate scenes from it. A portion of the stage area’s left side has a ramp-like elevation from the downstream area to the upstage area to accommodate the chariot scene of the Ramakien, according to the Director of the National Theater, Mr. Yongyut Waiprip. The backstage area has provisions to accommodate sets for the performance. Although the traditional platform is used for the performances, the number of performers, costumes and props demands a large performance area;
Aside from schools, families have also been institutional bases in sustaining the life of theater. Many artists come from families of artists and have been brought up in the art environment. Ajahn Rewadee Sayakom, who is a master in the performance of the male roles in the squad drill scenes of Hanuman and author of a handbook on the art of Thai dance, is the daughter of Ajahn Akom Sayakom. Ajahn Akom Sayakom has been recognized by the King through the "wai khru" ceremonies. The ceremony is performed for a master artist who has exhibited excellence in the practice of his/her craft. Many other artist teachers from the Srinakarinwirot University belong to families of artists, as well. Families of artists can also be found in other traditional theater forms such as likay, as well as the nora or manora dance found in the southern part of Thailand and lakbon chantree, performed by traditional artists in Petchaburi province in Central Thailand. In the case of likay performing troupes, families are evolved as troupes develop filial relationships with their co-actors.

In addition to the help from schools and families in providing venues for training and learning for artists, other institutions have helped create markers of theater in Thai society. Massive statues of the main characters of the Ramayana stories lord over the Wat Phra Kaew temple, also known as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Wat Phra Kaew also houses massive Ramayana murals, which have been carefully preserved using traditional paints and materials according to Madame Sukanya Kamthakrae, head of the mural restoration project. Conservation and restoration teams, composed of conservation scientists headed by Dr. Chiraporn Suranyanark, conduct restoration projects for theater artifacts such as puppets books and publications. Librarians at Thammasat University have expended much effort in raising funds to rehabilitate books that have been damaged through time using the technology of book paper reconstruction using "sa" (mulberry) paper. The National Theater uses the age-old technology of sun and air to preserve costumes. Boxes have been designed to house special masks used for performances. It is, however, important to mention that although the displays in the puppet museum section at the National Museum were plentiful, they were poorly annotated.

Contemporary theater groups and artists have initiated the development of new forms to veer away from the traditional Ramayana in an effort to explore new approaches to dramaturgy. While state-supported institutions have preserved and conserved their traditional theater practice through the help of the government, contemporary theater groups have created avenues for performances such as festivals, small cafe performances in the Bang Lampoo area and public parks to make their mark in the theater scene. Contemporary artists such as Nut Nualpang, Nikorn Saetang and Kamron Guntilaka have taken pains to document their work through video. The Bangkok Theatre Season, the most recent of which was held in November 2006, was a showcase of new works by young artists ranging from works of well-known contemporary artists to experiments of budding artists and performance exhibitions of traditional theater such as the manora dance. A number of contemporary artists have taken the initiative in writing re-interpretations of traditional forms. Pichert Klunchung’s writings chronicle the sources of dance and movement motifs from traditional dance forms, tracing their roots to the natural images of flora and fauna in Thailand and the deep reverence of the people for their King, whom they believe to be the reincarnation of the god Rama. He notes, though, that he may find it hard to have his book published since it runs against traditional concepts of dance and theater form. Other contemporary artists like Kage and Sineenadh Keitprapai, both from the Crescent Moon Theater company, have kept journals and illustrations of their preparations for productions. Kage, a butoh artist and director, chronicles his preparations and thought processes through his personal collection of illustrations and sketches while brainstorming about his production. Sineenadh Keitprapai, on the other hand, keeps a collection of journals and drawing booklets containing her verses, sketches and notes of her preparations for roles that she has performed. Her notes make her aware of her development as an actor and help her identify areas for improvement.

Individual artists have also taken pains to keep documents and archival materials about their work. National Artist for Likay, Boonlert Najpanich, has a collection of musical instruments and scripts that he wrote in his personal museum in his house. He said that it has always been his practice to keep notes of his experiences by keeping a file of his works so that he is able to share them with younger people who want to learn the art of likay. While providing jobs for artists, he also keeps the interest in likay alive by training young students. Musician Ajarn Manop Wissuttipat of Srinakarinwirot University has written a book about Thai music notation and hopes to translate his work into English. Other members of the faculties of schools and universities are also driven to write about their work as artist-teachers through journal articles and research reports, which they are required to submit regularly.
Contemporary artists, who have very little or no support from the government, have taken the initiative to record their own experiences, though raw and unorganized, in an effort to keep track of their work. Video recordings have been made to record their works and their rehearsal process; diaries have been continuously filled with personal illustrations of an artist’s travails. On most occasions, contemporary theater groups give out brochures and handouts or create websites about their plays. Much of this work has been supported through the personal funds of the actors. Indeed, younger artists like Pradit Prasartthong of the Makhamporn Theater Group; Kamron Gunitilaka, Thepsiri Monsukpa, Kage and Sineenadh Keitprapai of the Crescent Moon Theater Company; and Nikorn Saetang of 8 x 8 Playhouse have asserted the creation of new forms of theater to create venues of negotiation among the different sectors of society. While traditional theater dwells on the classical stories of royalty, contemporary theater tackles issues such as identity, unresolved historical crimes such as the Thammasat student massacres in the mid-1970s, gender issues, education and poverty. Through experimental plays, books and documentary films, traditional theater has been re-evaluated and challenging issues have been tackled in an effort to negotiate the relevance of tradition to contemporary life.

The National Library houses theater reviews that have been published in various journals and magazines since the 1970s. International research institutions such as the Special Program for Archeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA) and the Siam Society Library have maintained journals and magazines featuring traditional theater experiences. Scholars have been assigned to do research on contemporary groups’ efforts to enliven the theater scene. Scripts and write-ups about artists still have to be systematized and collected. The Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Center is an example of an institution that houses a rich collection of materials about the traditional shadow puppet theater and publishes books and journals about traditional theater forms; however, a number of materials about theater, especially those that are oral and improvised in nature, still need to be documented.

Recently, a group of critics has initiated a research project on the state of the arts in Thailand entitled, “Criticism as an Intellectual Force in Contemporary Society.” Under the leadership of well-respected literary scholar and critic Chetana Nagavajara several areas of art, including theater, were studied using various theater reviews and focus group discussions to abstract the status of theater in Thailand. The discussions observed that classical theater in Thailand is basically created by the Royal Court; thus, the trend of contemporary artists since the 1970s is the direction of “art for the oppressed.” In addition to this, theater critics have initiated discussions to elicit a feedback mechanism for artists. Kamron Gunitilaka has shared experiences in inviting theater critics to watch plays and discuss their comments after the show. The same is true for the performances of Pichert Klunchung and Nikorn Saetang for B-floor Theater. Theater reviews have been frequently published in newspapers; theater students have made theater practices the topic of their researches and inquiries, signifying a clear interest in the theater. Critics from major dailies have also sought discussions with contemporary artists hoping to create a venue for exchange and criticism among artists and the viewing public. Theater artists who are also members of academia, like Prof. Pornrat Damhrung of Chulalongkorn University and Parichat Jungwiwitanaporn of Thammasat University and Srinakharinwirot University, have engaged students and scholars in monitoring the development of theater through scholarly activities. Much work, however, remains to be done in developing a clear theater criticism process and practice. Theater criticism has not yet been institutionalized as a practice since, as one critic says, Thai society is not very open to the idea of criticism. The idea of making theater practice an area of discourse is a far cry from the usual treatment of theater as an institutional practice in reverence of the King and the gods. Much work remains to be done in creating a clear-cut interest by putting together materials for the development of theater resources in Thailand. While a number of foreign scholars have taken an interest in writing about Thai traditional theater experiences, traditional and contemporary artists have yet to develop a consciousness in writing their own narratives and keeping track of their artistic legacies.

Evolving theater as a community force

Like theater in Thailand, the practice of theater in Indonesia has been sustained through continuous performances by various artists and individuals. In Solo City or Surakarta City, performances are teeming with artists who are very open about sharing their experiences with their community. *Wayang* performances are part of the people’s daily life, whether as formal performances or as venues for engagement with the community.

The institutionalization of the *wayang kulit* as a UNESCO-designated Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity stems from the fact that *wayang kulit* is part of the people’s collective memory. Although many younger *dalang* (*wayang kulit* master puppeteers) complain about the younger...
generation’s disinterest in wayang kulit performances, wayang kulit remains one of the most important features of theater in Indonesia.

Institutional support through government-funded agencies like libraries and museums helps in storing published materials and archival materials about theater. The National Library, for example, houses copies of books in Bahasa Indonesia, English and other languages featuring various forms of theater. Close to a dozen journals on theater publish research by scholars. The Institute Kasenian Jakarta houses copies of scripts from the 1970s to the present, as well as copies of video recordings of performances done in their theater. The Museum Nacional and the Wayang Museum in old Jakarta has a collection of various wayang on display. The documentation and annotation of the wayang collection has been limited to titles and dates. Libraries, particularly the Institute Seni Indonesia (ISI) Central library, have a rich collection of materials about traditional theater practices with several copies of books, journals and scripts about the wayang kulit, with periods covering the ancient manuscripts. These have been translated into various languages and forms of scripts to make them intelligible to the uninitiated. Hundreds of photographs are also available in the library archives and the cultural center office. Listings are updated and well sourced. Librarians are trained in the field of library science but most of them have not been initiated into the practice of theater, aside from their being members of the art community of Surakarta. Libraries have no special methods for materials conservation except for computerized monitoring of borrowing and lending procedures. There are no programs for information dissemination or the participation of artists in the enrichment and development of theater resource centers. Scripts of various theater forms such as the wayang kulit have been reproduced by photocopying for the use of interested students and researchers.

The museum at the Surakarta Kraton is poorly lit and poorly documented; artifacts on display lack sufficient upgrading, preservation and conservation methods. No special programs for the care and proper documentation of the artifacts on site are being implemented. A special collection of old Javanese manuscripts can be found in the museum although strict procedures are observed in order to access the material. Streets have also been marked with statues of important characters from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics.

Schools play an important role in preserving the traditional theater form. The Institute Kasenian Jakarta offers courses in traditional dance and theater forms as well as courses for music and the visual arts. In ISI-Surakarta, courses are offered specializing in the wayang, dance and music. A theater department has yet to be developed, although there are three departments for the performing arts which have earned for Solo the tag of being the “Center for the Performing Arts.” At the Pedalangan (wayang department), master puppeteers train their students in the art and history of puppetry, as well as the music, verses and puppet-making skills that go with it. Students are trained to create improvised stories based on well-known folk tales derived from the Mahabharata and spend most of the time integrating these with pressing issues. Characters are stereotypical and represent virtues and qualities, which the audience loves. The skill of the dalang can be seen in his masterful weaving of popular characters and situations with current issues in a mix of wit and humorous situations. These narrations last for several hours, some extending until the wee hours of the morning. Thus, the dalang must know how to keep his audience’s attention through his comical situations, exciting voice changes and his masterful flipping and manipulation of the puppets.

Dalangs have a special way of keeping track of their theater practice. Bapak Purbo Asmoro, in his late 40s, houses his wayang in a compound complete with a wayang stage. In his personal collection are undocumented pictures, handwritten manuscripts of wayang kulit stories that he wrote when he was still a student and wooden chests containing centuries-old wayang of different characters in excellent condition. His hand daggers, which are the markers of a dalang, are on display in his personal glass museum. His house can be easily identified as that of a dalang, with walls, doors and glass windows decorated with glass etchings of scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Another artist, musician Bapak Suranto, who comes from a generation of dalangs intimates that his family’s wayang tradition is kept intact through intermarriage within the family. Thus, families preserve their theater practices by passing on the legacy of their craft to their children or nearest kin. Photographs are mostly kept in family albums. Most of the pictures are not annotated, are of poor quality and were taken by non-professional photographers, most of the time their wives or children, using instant cameras. Photograph copies were simply kept in recycled plastic bags with few of them being labeled or captioned. Annotations are done orally while the pictures are being viewed by an interested party.

Another dalang, Bapak Suyanto, performs the wayang here and abroad. He has been well supported by foreign funding agencies in pursuing his studies and writing about his work through papers which he shares with
his colleagues. He has also taught his children the art of manipulating puppets as he hopes to develop the tradition in his family. Master wayang maker Bapak Bambang trains students in the art of making puppets, not only by teaching them the rudiments of making the puppet but also the process of conceptualizing and creating distinct qualities for familiar puppet characters. He has written his dissertation on the conceptualization process of puppets for the wayang, integrating his exposure to Muslim culture and his Catholic religion in his motifs. In Butuh village, south of Surakarta, a village known for crafting wayang puppets for their livelihood, the skill is shared by members of the community and transferred from one generation to the next as a source of livelihood for the family. Business seems good as evidenced by the quality of houses that families have been able to put up through their wayang business.

Traditional wayang artists who perform the wayang kulit also need to study traditional dance movements as these are also the source of the movements made by the puppets in the wayang kulit. The same movement can be seen in the dance numbers performed in the wayang orang (literally “human puppets”); thus, traditional and contemporary performers share the same skills in mounting a production. A number of contemporary artists make video documentations of their performances and works, others keep records of their scripts, and others write books and undertake higher education studies in order to write theoretical papers and studies of their work. Eko Subriyanto, one of the more popular contemporary artists, has trained in traditional dance under Bapak Pramadi of the ISI Surakarta and Mbak Ely Lutan of Jakarta. His performances center on evolving new themes and metaphors which comment on contemporary issues. Invitations to festivals, exhibitions and work abroad have provided the impetus for contemporary artists like him to film their works so that they maybe screened by international festival committees for possible inclusion in arts festivals. Mugiyono Kasido, a leading dance theater artist, takes videos to document his work during rehearsals so that he can monitor the extent of the work that has been achieved in his rehearsals and performances; likewise, the videos also serve as samplers for festivals and other art events which can open opportunities for sharing and income generation for the artists, who rely on their artistic work for artistic and personal sustenance. Slamet Gundono, one of the more popular dramatists, draws from traditional metaphors and transforms them into contemporary theater pieces which he puts into video form. Dalang Enthus Susmono draws from traditional wayang and infuses contemporary characters into his puppets. He makes it a point to write about his works and takes video recordings of his performances.

Most of the teachers of the ISI started their artistic career at an early age. They realize how important it is to have a formal education so that they can better understand their craft. Most artists become teachers and create teaching modules and materials for their students and protégées. They are also required to write about their work and provide the library with copies of their papers. Their being teachers at the ISI is a clear synthesis of their experience as artists. A number of books have been written to raise the practice of the wayang into theory. Samples of these include Pakeliran Seni: Wayang Purwa (2007) by Dr. Slamet Suparno, which deals with the philosophy and dynamics of the wayang, and the Buku Petunjuk Praktikum Pakeliran Gaya Surakarta, a handbook on the principles of the wayang kulit prepared by the faculty of the Pedalangan of ISI-Surakarta. Video recordings of performances of faculty members of the Pedalangan are also made available for researchers. At the ISI-Surakarta, wayang kulit performances are collected and kept by a team of videographers. The video library of the Wisma Seni (Cultural Center) also houses a collection of video recordings in Betamax and/or VCD format on performances held at the Wisma Seni campus. Most of these recordings are in Javanese or Bahasa and well-annotated by the staff.

Theater criticism and sharing of comments about artists’ work facilitates the artists’ need for feedback and validation. Venues for this exchange range from simple and friendly exchanges of ideas over tea to formal discussions in scheduled meetings attended by interested artists. The more formal criticism sessions are recorded by the local videographers. Performance reviews are also published in the local language although there are limited publications for this in Surakarta. A number of books by foreign researchers have also been written about the wayang. Central Javanese culture has been a favorite topic for a number of Western cultural researchers and anthropologists. Local researchers have also taken an interest in writing about their own culture and relating this to their craft as artists. Well-known artists such as Sardono and Lutan regularly conduct research among local communities to enhance their creative work and engage the communities in artistic activities.

Pendopo or large performance halls are available on the ISI-Surakarta grounds and provide a good performance venue for artists who would like to share their experiments with the public. Rehearsals and performances can be viewed for free and have thus become venues for exchange and interactions among

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artists and the viewing public. Other venues are available in the main town center, such as the Wayang Museum, which features ketoprak performances, comical skits similar to the vaudeville, and wayang wong/wayang orang for free. Shows which have been sponsored by politicians even provide packed meals to their audience. Although government support can be found in the setting up of institutions and cultural centers for the formal study and documentation of the theater forms such as the wayang kulit, the communities’ unwavering interest in the production and performance of live dances, musical ensembles and dance dramas marks the city’s collective action to preserve and develop their traditional theater form. Aside from traditional performances, innovations by wayang artists who have been trained in the traditional mode are plenty. These artists are very open to sharing their experiments with other artists in the community as a way of enriching and validating their artistic craft.

Towards a repository of people’s theater memory

Theater documentation has been shaped by the role of theater and theater artists. Thai society has been keen about using theater to maintain the royal hierarchy; critical views about Thai society from contemporary artists have resulted in the development of alternative theater forms as a reaction to the state-defined traditional forms. In Central Java, colonial history has taught lessons on the value of a well-maintained culture. With the decline of monarchic rule, the artists have realized the potent role of culture in preserving a people’s identity. The transformation of courtly dances and performances into people’s art has realized the role of culture in shaping a people’s identity.

The lack of a systematic theater documentation and theater resource center among theater artists with a rich theater practice seemed unlikely at first. However, after looking at the theater practices of artists in Thailand and Indonesia, it was quite understandable not to find one. Theater practice is indeed a live endeavor and most theater artists create to address pressing issues of the time with very little concern about the need to save the experience for posterity. The idea of leaving a mark among the audience is achieved when an excellent performance is appreciated by the audience. The idea of preserving is done through the continuous creation of excellent community theater experiences which remain in the hearts of the people. Theater documentation is the creation of a repository of people’s theater memory where the continuity of traditional theater practices and the discontinuity of tradition through innovations in contemporary theater forms are compiled through the process of critical interpretation and re-interpretation.

The theater artists’ propensity for adaptation and innovation of theater forms to suit the particular needs of the time and intent has defined an aesthetic quality of Asian theater. Improvisation as a key quality for artistic creation has created a demand for artists to identify the anatomy of their artistic creation as part of the requisites of theater documentation.

The artists’ continuous efforts towards artistic excellence

Theater artists’ untiring efforts to achieve the best artistic endeavors motivate them to monitor their work, conduct research, rehearse, identify areas for improvement and raise their practice to a theoretical level. The artists lay claim to an intangible process through the act of critical interpretation by sifting through their experiences and passing on the lessons of their craft to the next generation. Through personal diaries, rehearsal videos and informal sharing sessions with co-artists and experience papers, the pursuit for artistic excellence has been put to the fore as an important requisite in marking an important artistic contribution. The artists’ continuous clamor for audiences to validate their work highlights their conscious recognition of the audience’s role in creating a people’s theater memory. The audience’s validation of an excellent artistic experience offered by the artist illustrates the audience’s critical participation in creating markers of artistic excellence.

Institutionalizing community engagement in creating markers of artistic excellence

Community engagement in creating markers of excellence may vary from simple attendance of performances and direct feedback expressed by clapping and comments after each performance to formal sessions of criticism and evaluation and publication of reviews and academic papers by the artists’ themselves or by scholars and critics who have been trained to document live creative processes of artists. Schools may be considered one of the best repositories of a people’s theater memory. Training is one of the artists’ best means of marking artistic experiences as theater artists are able to note down their experiences, not only through books and articles but most especially through the success of succeeding generations who take on their role as artists and bearers of the cultural heritage that they have tried to enrich. Aside from schools, other social institutions have been mobilized in creating repositories of theater memory. Museums, libraries, and urban planners can be engaged in collecting artifacts and innovating ways of preserving artifacts using local materials and technology.
Government and non-government agencies have used various ways of recognizing efforts for continuous artistic excellence through awards, exhibitions and promotional programs.

The books and works of Western scholars have marked the face of traditional forms so that the world may understand their theater forms. However, the rich repository of materials written in the native language remains a challenge to any scholar interested in learning about a people’s culture and identity. The use of the native language as a foremost quality of theater preservation should be recognized. This distinct mark of the native language in artistic experiences embodies the soul of a cultural experience as it serves to protect a people’s experience while it distinguishes the work from all other works of art.

At the core of theater documentation is the theater artist who engages his community in various layers of involvement in creating a people’s collective theater memory. There is a need for the theater artist to identify the potentials of various forms of documentation, in the same way as we try to understand how each part of our body works. A people’s theater memory identifies the participation of various segments of society in processing a social concern through validation, reiteration or presentation of alternatives for change. By engaging the community in creating a people’s repository of theater memory, theater is further redefined from being a venue for entertainment to being an opportunity for learning and experimentation for social change. The theater artist should go beyond the challenges of continuous creation of excellent artistic works and write their own artistic legacies.
EXPLORING ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS AMONG FILIPINO MUSLIM URBANITES IN THE QUIAPO AREA: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION AND URBAN LIFE

Mokhammad Yahya

Introduction

Centuries of struggle against foreign colonizers—Spain, Japan and the USA—account for the articulation of a strong desire for the union of religion and politics in the discourses of Filipino Muslims (Moros) throughout history. Living as a sovereign and independent people under a sultanate system of government without any foreign powers to subordinate them have made Moros proud of their freedom.

Unjust economic and political policies and treatment of marginalized Muslims in Mindanao have driven them to seek self-determination and an independent Bangsamoro state. In the liberation movements that have evolved, Filipino Muslims have inevitably used religion (Islam) as their motivation or even the underlying ideology of their struggle. This fact explains why at the level of rhetoric, political Islam or the union of religion and politics in an Islamic state figures significantly in the consciousness of Muslims, even those now living in the urbanized environment of Quiapo. It would seem from this study that the discourse and categories of the Muslim liberation movements in Mindanao have filtered into the consciousness and rhetoric of ordinary Filipino Muslims.

The literature in the sociology of religion defines fundamentalism as a type of religiosity that is an amalgam of religion and politics (see, for example, Kurzman 2000 and Armstrong 2000). The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Abu Sayyaf, and other Muslim movements in the Philippines all advocate the fusion of religion and politics in varying degrees. Since the idea of secularization remains alien among the Filipino Muslims in this study, their religiosity at a discursive or rhetorical level essentially shares the fundamentalist premises of Muslims in other parts of the world. Their vision of an ideal future society is of Islam and the state as one, a theocracy where God’s laws govern and where the 3-D formula, Din-Daulah-Dunya (Religion-The State-The World), prevails.

The economic problems in Mindanao have pushed some Moros to migrate to Metro Manila for a “better life.” The move away from the Muslim heartland in Mindanao is expected to result in a change of behavior among the rural migrants. Contact with strangers is seen as a potential source of cultural shock, as unfamiliar environments disturb homogeneous ideals. The migrants learn not only to tolerate the attitude and customs of other people, but also to accept insecurity and instability as a normal state of the world. These characteristics could potentially work together to increase the incidence of what Wirth (1938) called “the pathological condition,” including personal disorganization, mental breakdown, suicide, delinquency, crime, corruption, and disorder. The same contact could also eventually result in secularization or liberalization, as contact with people from different religious persuasions demands greater religious tolerance.

Another factor that could mediate the way Filipino Muslims in Metro Manila would think and act vis-à-vis Islam is the loosening of kinship ties. Communal solidarity is replaced by a more rational type of solidarity, the kind that Durkheim (1964) called “organic solidarity.” The close-knit community in rural surroundings is changed in an urban setting, tending to individualize experiences. It is important to note, however, that these changes may be counteracted by processes that enhance primordial identities.

The case of the Philippines and urban Muslims in Quiapo is a good example of how tensions between individuation and secularization, on the one hand, and solidarity around religion and increasing religious fundamentalism, on the other, are played out. This study aims to describe the forms of Islamic fundamentalism among selected urban-based Filipino Muslims and the factors that have shaped them in the context of the historical and social evolution of the Muslim community. It probes the level of Islamic fundamentalism among Muslim Filipinos in the Quiapo area and obtains a wide range of information through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and secondary data collection. Key informants included Muslim clerics (imam and ustadzs), Muslim scholars, MILF/MNLF members, Muslim youth organization representatives, members of Jama’ah Tabligh, Syabab, Syiah and Wahabism (which are described later in the text), barangay captains,
government employees, factory workers, politicians, professionals, traders, and representatives of non-government organizations (NGOs). Two sets of key informants were interviewed for the study: twenty key informants from Marawi City to provide information on migration and on fundamentalist ideas being carried by movements or translated into everyday life, and eighty key informants living in Muslim communities within the Quiapo area. Contextual information was also drawn from Christians based on their position and knowledge of issues concerning Muslims in Quiapo. Secondary data included materials from various offices in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA), and several libraries in Mindanao and Metro Manila.

Exploring the plight and worldview of Muslim urbanites could help enhance the capability of the government, Filipino Christians and those of other faiths to deal with Muslim minorities in Metro Manila and in Mindanao in the spirit of greater pluralism.

Quiapo’s Muslim communities: A demographic sketch

Of the four Muslim settlements in Metro Manila (i.e., Quiapo, Taguig, Tandang Sora, and Baclaran), Quiapo is by far the largest, most centrally located and most commercial. In particular, the study was confined to two barangays (villages) namely, Barangay 383 and Barangay 384, which surround the Golden Mosque and the Islamic Center, because they reflect the strong influence of both the mosque and the market on the community. Technically, the Islamic Center or Barangay 648 is not in Quiapo but in San Miguel. It is, however, adjacent geographically to Quiapo, and many Muslims from the Islamic Center conduct their businesses in Quiapo, spending long hours there and intermingling with residents. Thus, for purposes of this research, the Quiapo area encompasses San Miguel. The intermingling of a vibrant market or secular life with an equally powerful religious life around a major mosque made the Quiapo situation a good site for research.

Barangays 383 and 384, which host Muslim communities, are also the site of the “Barter Trade” area, a trading center for pirated VCDs and DVDs. Known as the “Rajah Sulaiman Market” before the 1980s, the Barter Trade area is located in the busy Quinta public market under the Quezon Bridge. Barangay 384 with its Golden Mosque has a female barangay captain. It has a total population of 15,000 with 3,000 households (NSO 1990) although the barangay captain claims there is a much larger population than that shown in the census figures. The majority of the Muslims, who make up a third of the population of this barangay, engage in business activities ranging from running halal food restaurants to selling pearls, jewelry, carpets, and pirated VCDs and DVDs. The jama’ah (congregation) of the Golden Mosque is mainly from this barangay. In contrast, Barangay 383, with a smaller population of 5,000 people and 2,000 households, is only ten percent Muslim, partly explaining why the barangay captain is a non-Muslim. Despite their small number, however, Muslims from this barangay as well as from Barangay 384 dominate the trade in VCDs and DVDs in the “Barter Trade.” The daughter of the Barter Trade’s manager claimed that about 110 of the 115 VCD/DVD stalls were owned by Muslims.

In the Islamic Center, which is located in Barangay 648, San Miguel, the total population is 32,000 with 3,000 households in 1990. According to the barangay captain, Muslims constitute a majority here with only two percent of the population Christian. Eighty percent of the population is Maranaos and 18 percent is Tausug, Maguindanao, and Yakan. The majority of the population is working in the trading sector. The Islamic character in this Muslim community is more apparent than elsewhere in Metro Manila.

In general, there are two clusters of Muslim groups among the key informants: one formed around the aspirations and struggles of political movements and another around emerging schools of thought. The first cluster consists of groups influenced by or formerly associated with either the MNLF or the MILF.2 The second cluster consists of adherents to Shiah, Tabligh, Syahab, Wahabism, and Balik Islam (Christian converts), and ordinary Moros. The differences among these clusters can be understood in the context of three types of Filipino Muslim struggle: armed struggle, collaboration with the Philippine government, and apolitical movements. The first and second types are operating politically while the third type is primarily a struggle in the cultural realm on an individual level. The gradual development of these three types of movements seems to suggest that the greater concern is how to improve the material lives of Muslims rather than the theological mission of establishing an Islamic state.

Forms of Islamic fundamentalism among urban Muslims in Quiapo

Interviews and informal group discussions reveal a common aspiration: that Islam and the state should be fused and Shariah3 be implemented to ensure a more prosperous Muslim society in the Philippines. All key
informants agree that Islam offers solutions to all the problems of Filipino Muslims. They are quite passionate about their advocacy for an Islamic state. The language and aspirations of leading Islamic fundamentalist movements in the world have filtered into the consciousness of the ordinary Muslims interviewed. At the discursive or rhetorical level, the Muslims interviewed manifest the fundamental characteristics of Islamic fundamentalism as mentioned by Salvatore (1998): the view that Islam will solve individual and social problems (Islam huwa al-hall), making it necessary to fuse religion (Islam) and the state.

In practice, however, key informants differ in their views of how to achieve the goal of an Islamic state. In a sense, the fundamentalist rhetoric on an Islamic state is associated with different approaches depending on the ideological tendency or school of thought of the respondent. The worldwide interest in fundamentalism is due to its political implications in terms of the struggle for control over the state. However, for the Muslim political movements in Mindanao, the call to arms in the context of the historical struggle of the Moros is put as a “jihad’s call” to defend communities threatened by various actions of the Philippine government. It is a call for the preservation of the religious and cultural values of Filipino Muslims, as well. The three observed forms of Islamic fundamentalism are summarized below.

**Armed struggle**

This form of Islamic fundamentalism wants to establish an Islamic state based on the belief that Muslims in the Philippines will only prosper through the establishment of an Islamic state. To be independent from the Philippine government is considered a religious duty. Based on their history of being free as Bangsamoro and their experience of unjust treatment by the Philippine government, they consider armed struggle to be just. This kind of fundamentalism can be seen from the early stage of the MNLF-MILF movement.

Although there are some admirers and former members of the MILF or the MNLF among the key informants, none admitted to advocating armed struggle, that is, to a political, economic and military approach toward the achievement of an Islamic state in response to the strong reaction of the Philippine government against demands for an independent Bangsamoro state. This kind of fundamentalism was gradually given up due to the realization that this idea may be utopic.

**Involvement with the Philippine government**

Key informants see the formation of an Islamic state either as a possibility under an autonomous Muslim region within the Republic of the Philippines or a future possibility when, with an increase in the number of Muslims in the country, the Islamic way of life becomes ingrained in other parts of the Philippines.

About ten percent of the key informants were once members of the MNLF or are supporters. Following the MNLF position, they consider the establishment of an independent Bangsamoro Islamic state too idealistic, if not utopian. Under prevailing circumstances, critical collaboration with the Republic of the Philippines is seen as the most realistic option, given the historical struggles of Filipino Muslims. The creation of ARMM (Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao) is the focus of the movement.

Although the MNLF and its sympathizers among the Quiapo key informants have chosen to participate in the governance of the ARMM, their idea of Islamic politics remains unchanged. The view that Islam cannot be separated from the state is still the political principle they believe in. The creation of the ARMM is viewed as a means to be autonomous, allowing the Muslims in the region to live in accordance with their way of life, culture and, at the highest possible level, with the Shariah, the Islamic law. The difference in views between the Mindanao Muslims, on the one side, and the Philippine Government, on the other, on the legal framework that would govern the ARMM has been a source of political conflict in recent years. Nevertheless, key informants in Quiapo think that the implementation of the Shariah can be applied rationally and gradually within the framework of ARMM, considering that a significant number of Christians also live in the Bangsamoro homeland.

**Cultural struggle**

The influence on Muslims in Quiapo of an emerging apolitical movement that emphasizes a cultural and peaceful struggle toward an Islamic state is an important finding of this study because it qualifies their fundamentalist tendencies. If Islamic fundamentalism is defined as the intensification of Islamic religiosity on individual and societal levels, this third movement is an individual and inward-oriented religious intensification. Because of its focus on the individual, the movement is apparently apolitical and its implicit approach to politics appears moderate.
Set against the armed conflict and unstable political situation in the South, the poverty of Muslims and the lack of job opportunities for them, this inward religious intensification seems to attract adherents because it is a form of escape from the difficult life in the South. In the city, the increasing number of adherents to this movement may be explained by alienation and the loss of a sense of brotherhood or communality as the constant bombardment by the materialist media has pushed Muslims to seek a more spiritual, peaceful and secure life.

The group that seems to have the biggest number of adherents within this emerging movement is the Jama’ah Tabligh (Community of Mission). Although this group still believes that there should be no separation between religion and the state, its idea of an Islamic state is no longer understood within the framework of a nation-state and the political struggle to establish it, but through religious intensification (Islamic awakening) and preaching (Tabligh). The more intense a person is in his religiosity and the more Filipinos are converted to Islam through the missionary zeal of Muslim ‘evangelists,’ the closer the Philippines will come to the creation of an Islamic society. If the MILF and the MNLF are operating politically, the form of Islamic fundamentalism represented by the Tabligh is primarily a struggle in the cultural realm.

Filipino Muslims’ movement: A sociological perspective

The political struggle of Filipino Muslims represented by the MILF and the MNLF and the cultural struggle of the Tabligh can be discussed from different sociological perspectives. Although the MILF and the MNLF are Islam-inspired, they share some of the assumptions of social structuralist theories which consider the social structure, particularly the economic structure, as the most significant determinant of technical, social, and cultural change. The parallelisms between the MNLF/ MILF experience and social structuralism are not surprising. MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari’s outlook as the founder of the MNLF (from which the MILF split) was influenced by the nationalist struggle and activism in the University of the Philippines in the 1960s.

In contrast, the emerging movement represented by the Jama’ah Tabligh more closely resembles Emile Durkheim’s interpretation of the change process. In Durkheim’s theory (Durkheim1893/1964), the sequence of transformation is from change in the cultural structure to change in the social structure and eventually to the technical structure. By cultural structure, Durkheim means forms of collective sentiments or social values. These sentiments are the fundamental basis of social integration and cohesion, transcending and changing the material relationships found in society.

The religious content of the Tabligh Islamic renewal movement constitutes the collective sentiments that the members of the new movement hope will eventually change the political and economic structure of Philippine society into an Islamic society. In particular, the collective sentiment based on the Islamic faith (iman) can be seen in the internal structure of the ummah (Muslim community). The imam and the larger context of the “jama’ah” or “ummah” derive from the value system of tawhid.

Religious intensification to strengthen the iman based on the tawhid has been continuously made by the Jama’ah Tabligh. The jama’ah or ummah is a community that creates, internally or externally, an institutional system with its own authority: the ustaz or imam leadership within the Islamic school (ma’had) and its students. This community structure evolved out of the normative value system, which became the reference for establishing its social institutions. On this normative level, the ummah is an ideal entity or an imagined reality constituted by Islamic values. Out of the imagined ideal grew the concept of ummah wahidah (oneness of the Islamic community/society) based on the Islamic value system. Once the value-based internal structure of the ummah is established through the conversion of more Filipinos to Islam, followers of Jama’ah Tabligh believe that the technical structure (the Islamic society/Islamic state) will be formed easily and peacefully.

In contrast, the Shiab community did not raise the issue of the Islamic state since this school of thought is associated internationally with the intention to establish “God’s government” on earth through an Islamic state, following the example of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. This could be due to their position as a minority group within the marginalized Muslim community in the larger Philippine context. Key informants claim that it is too idealistic to think of an Islamic state in the Philippines.

Similarly, members of the other group, Syabab, assert that a greater focus on educating Filipino Muslims and propagating Islamic teachings among non-Muslims is more significant than an outright political struggle for territorial control. In Quiapo, the members of this group have devoted themselves to education by establishing the New Horizon Islamic School in Pasig...
City and operating a madrasah (a place where learning/teaching is done) in the Golden Mosque. Informal discussions with this group reveal their preference for cultural struggle over armed struggle. As a consequence, they do not see as necessary the separation of Filipino Muslims from the Philippine Republic.

Of all the schools of thought represented in Quiapo, the puritan group is closest to the ideal type of Islamic fundamentalism as portrayed in the literature. Islamic Puritanism was introduced to the Philippines by the Filipino alumni of universities in the Middle East, particularly those in Saudi Arabia. It is apparent that Wahabism, the official Islamic school of thought in Saudi Arabia, has influenced this group. The Islamic Puritans in Quiapo seem to be successful in making fundamentalist ritualism (e.g., prohibition of maulid nabi’ celebration) replace traditional Islam. In the first place, they hold good positions in the religious sphere (i.e., as ustadz, imam). Secondly, traditionalist Islam is generally weak in the Philippines as seen from a comparison of the case of Quiapo and the Philippines with the Indonesian case. In the Philippines, traditionalist Islamic institutions appear to lack power and influence and there seems to be a dearth of Muslim scholars in the country.

Although there are educated Filipino Muslim professionals, this group does not seem to be particularly knowledgeable about Islam. Some key informants who are professionals say they are unable to spend much time studying their religion although they do pray a great deal. Although selected Quiapo Muslims showed their fundamentalist tendencies at the rhetorical level, in practice they have tended to be more pragmatic, as reflected in their moderate position on an Islamic state. The social and political realities in the Philippines seem to have a greater influence on the formation of political Islam among Quiapo Muslims than theology.

Abstinence of Islamic liberalism

While Gellner (1992) is right in saying that the clash between High Islam (legal-esoteric type) and Low Islam (mystical-esoteric type) generally creates religious fundamentalism, it has also produced a moderate or even liberal Islam. Indonesia provides an example of the birth of moderate and liberal Islam. The multi-centric authority structure in the Philippines, which tends to weaken centralized religious and administrative leadership, allows for various and, therefore, potentially liberal interpretations of a fundamentalist Islamic future and the strategies towards it. However, the absence of a centralized religious organization with a high level of Islamic scholarship in the country has prevented the development of a countermovement that would have tempered conservatism among Filipino Muslims. Both traditionalist Muslims and puritan fundamentalist Muslims tend to be theologically conservative. The more liberal elements of Islamic theology that are found in Indonesia and Malaysia do not seem to be significant in Quiapo and in the Philippines.

As mentioned previously, there is no group that serves to balance Islamic thought in Quiapo or in the Philippines towards a more liberal ideological position. The traditionalist Muslims, who like their Malay neighbors are Sufi-oriented and tend to be politically moderate, are weak both in power and knowledge, so that they cannot resist the fundamentalist influences that make the theology of Islam in the Philippines puritan, conservative, and literalist. Key informants assert that educated Muslim professionals tend to have a weak foundation in Islamic theology and do not have enough knowledge to balance the conservative type of Islam.

This situation is very different from Indonesia where the conservative and puritan type of Islam is counterbalanced by the Nahdatul Ulama’ (NU), a strong traditionalist and pluralist political and religious force.

Ethic over esoteric

Ideologically, the emphasis on Shari’ah in the religious life of Muslim Filipinos shows the ethical character of Islam in Quiapo and the Philippines. As an ethical religion, Islam is the guardian of law and order in society, in contrast to a salvation religion which emphasizes individual salvation. Key informants, and probably Filipino Muslims in general, put more emphasis on the norms or ethics of religion, while in many Malay-inhabited regions, the esoteric aspects are emphasized. It is observed, for instance, that the mystical element is predominant in Java so that a reformist movement such as the Muhammadiyah is influenced by Sufi teachings. The lack of esoteric, contemplative, and mystical dimensions in the Philippine Muslim community may be due to the long history of wars, most significantly the wars against Spanish colonial expansion. Because of this, Islam has taken a more utilitarian character and has become a normative guide for groups that are directly or indirectly at war with external forces.

The predominantly normative elements of Islam in the absence of opportunities to develop individual-oriented salvation strategies could explain why there is a lack of integration between fundamentalist goals, on the one hand, and the more pragmatic and moderate
political ideology and more tolerant and pluralist attitude, on the other. The inconsistency between the aims of different movements to achieve an independent Islamic state and their acceptance of the continuing sovereignty of the Philippine Republic shows that the real aims of Filipino Islamic movements are intended to improve the material life of Muslims rather than to advance the theological mission of establishing an independent Islamic state. It is only recently with the rise of schools of thought influenced by the Shi'ah in Iran, \textit{Ikhwanul Muslimim} (Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt, \textit{Hizbut Tahrir} (Liberation Party) and so forth that theology is beginning to motivate actions for the future. Interestingly, the theologically inspired schools, some of which have revolutionary roots, seem to assume the position of political moderation when transplanted to Philippine soil.

Factors of Islamic fundamentalism among Muslim urbanites in the Quiapo area

What factors shaped the rhetorical fundamentalism but pragmatic and moderate perspective on an Islamic state of key informants? First, the rhetoric was formed by centuries of Bangsamoro struggle against colonialism and by the continuing political and economic imbalances in Mindanao, in general, and in Muslim Mindanao, in particular. The discourse on a more desirable future where religion and the state are one in implementing the “Divine Law” seems to be in the consciousness of ordinary Filipino Muslims.

The discourse on the goal of establishing an Islamic state is also a way of maintaining the ethno-cultural identity of Quiapo Muslims against the onslaught of the Christian majority ideology and the modernizing/secularizing tendencies of urban life. Gowing (1979) makes this point when he said that the Islamic ideal \textit{ummah} and the concepts of \textit{dar al-Islam} (the abode of Islam in which Islam is the official religion) and \textit{dar al-harb} (the land of the enemy) are ways of maintaining the psychological identity of Muslim Filipinos.

Second, the orientation of key informants toward the imagined community of Muslim Mindanao is another factor that reinforces the fundamentalist ideal of an Islamic state. It seems that living in Metro Manila has hardly influenced their aspiration for the future. Thus, although there is a separation between religious values and economic activities among the traders interviewed in Quiapo, the idea of secularization has no room in their normative statements about Islam. When traders were asked about the apparent dominance of their market activities and the observable neglect of religious values, they admit that they do not perform rituals as often as they should. They emphasize, however, that they do not miss the weekly Mosque service. They also say that their engagement in business does not mean that they are neglecting their Islamic hopes and duties but that they merely adapting to the demands of survival in the city.

Third, the Mindanao-orientation of key informants is maintained because the Quiapo Muslim community lives as an enclave in Metro Manila. Most of the key informants do not engage in more intimate contact with other cultures outside the Muslim ethnic groups. Except for the traders, many of them need not interact with non-Muslims. Thus, their sense of community and religiosity is well preserved with lifestyles that revolve around the mosque. These mosques serve as excellent places to rest, meet, and entertain kinfolk. They have become community centers. Although key informants claim that there are marked differences between the rural-religious culture of the South and the more urban-secular culture operating in Quiapo, the mosque has been a critical factor for \textit{ummah} integration. Indeed, many transitory people traveling from and to the South stay in the \textit{barangay} in order to be close to the mosque and to their own relatives. It is a safety net for Muslims who have lost their old world in the South.

Fourth, apart from limited interaction with people outside the Muslim enclave in Quiapo, the community-centeredness of Muslims is another reason why city life has not diminished the value they give to a future Islamic state. Every community is an autonomous body, with its own central administrative and religious leadership, which coexists with other groups within the community that provide for the various needs of residents. Except for traders, a member of the community need not spend significant time outside Quiapo to satisfy social and religious needs.

This coexistence of various groups accounts for a relatively multi-centric organization. This explains why, despite the shared fundamentalist aspiration regarding a future Islamic state, key informants differ in how they perceive this state and the strategies to attain it. This multi-centric tendency, which seems to be the very nature of the Muslim community in the Philippines, makes the Filipino \textit{ummah} different from that found in neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia. The absence of a nation-wide sense of \textit{ummah} is due not only to ethnic differences and the minority position of Islam in the Philippines but also to historical experiences. Even in areas in Mindanao where Muslims constitute a majority, the history of the Sultanate shows a tendency towards a wider distribution of power. Among the Maranaos, for

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example, there are many power holders credited with the titles of sultan and datu (Gowing 1979).

Probable effects of urban and city life on Islamic fundamentalism in Quiapo

The effects of urban life can be summarized as follows: it is observable from conversations with traders that living as a Muslim in the thriving Quiapo market has led to an interpretation of Islam that combines their acceptance of the spirit of capitalism, individual piety, and external manifestations. Some of the traders have constructed their lives in such a way that personal piety and religiosity expressed by the attendance in the mosque are considered vital to the success of their businesses.

It is, however, also observable that the market has muddied the religiosity of some of the Muslims interviewed. Seven out of ten key informants rarely go to the Mosque during weekdays although most of them, if not all, are present on weekends. Their informal conversations with the researcher also centered on market activities with very little reference to God. Their lives seem more secularized; that is, their business activities were obviously separate from their religiosity. Economic interests seem to speak more loudly than religious laws and morals. However, even if market life and the pragmatic attitude that accompanies it seems to undermine the religiosity of some of the key informants, the fundamentalist rhetoric (e.g., theocracy, anti-democracy, literalism) seems to maintain a strong hold among them.

Toennies (1963) and Simmel (1951) emphasize the individualist character of urbanites. Louis Wirth (n.d.) further added that urbanites are impersonal and do not have deep emotional ties because of the process of social isolation. These ideas are observable in Quiapo but the individuating effects of city life seem to be insignificant. Gans (1970) and Fisher (1984) seem to be correct in the view that the process of social isolation is not experienced by ethnic villagers like the Muslim community in Quiapo because they are able to live in self-contained ethnic communities with deep communal and emotional ties. The mosques have become social centers and serve as a mechanism for ummah integration. Furthermore, the creation of a comprehensive structure like the Jama’ah and its growing influence continues the historically rooted tradition of a religious-civil society (dar al-Islam). The Jama’ah is a defense against the secular and materialist lifestyle of Metro Manila that could pull apart the very fabric of the religious and social institutions of the migrant population. The Jama’ah provides the members with communal and religious solidarity. The Jama’ah, as well as other Islamic schools of thought, reinforce the role of religion as an integrative force uniting the Quiapo community. For individuals, religion provides a reinforcement against the anomic quality of urban life. Culturally, it provides a link between rural-traditional-agrarian values and urban-modern-industrial worldviews. Socially, it gives back a sense of belonging to an otherwise diasporic community.

Implications

This study was limited to the Quiapo area. It will, therefore, be useful to explore other Muslim areas such as Taguig, Tandang Sora, or Baclaran where the market is not as central as in Quiapo. Such studies can shed more light on the worldview of urban-based Filipino Muslims in their everyday surroundings.

As a final word, this study has shown that even though Islamic fundamentalism has appeared on the rhetorical level, in practice selected Muslims in the Quiapo area are politically moderate. Muslims are just as peace-loving, moderate, and tolerant of pluralism as most Filipinos. My interviews show that most, if not all, of my key informants accept the sovereignty of the Philippine Republic despite their hope for an independent Bangsamoro Republic in a distant future. Although they express their hopes for an Islamic state, some of them pragmatically speak of the impossibility of achieving it in the Philippines and are slowly leaving the idea behind. Given this, it is imperative for the Philippine government and society to treat Muslims fairly and with respect.

NOTES

1 The term “Moro” is identified with Muslims in the Philippines. It is more than just a signifier of religion or ethnicity. The term represents the fight against colonization by forces outside the Philippines and from within the country. In contrast, the term “Filipino” was a label applied to Spaniards born in the Philippines indicating their allegiance or subservience to Spain. For this reason, Saleh Jubair (1997) made a fine distinction between the two terms when he wrote that while “Filipino” was the child of colonialism, “Moro” was the offspring of anti-colonialism.

2 The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is a political organization in the southern part of the Philippines, organized in the early 1970s by Nur Misuari with the
intention of creating an independent “Moro Nation.” This led to the Islamic insurgency in the Philippines. Seeking an end to the hostilities, the Philippine government decided to hold peace talks in 1976. Unfortunately, both sides were unable to settle on an agreement so hostilities continued for the next two decades. As the hostilities continued, the group began to suffer from internal factionalism. Disagreements between moderates and conservatives arose after the reluctance of the MNLF to hold a violent insurgency. The more conservative Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was formed in 1981 when Salamat Hashem and his followers broke off from the MNLF. The basic difference between MNLF and MILF is that MNLF is more open, nationalist oriented while MILF is less open, Islamist oriented and still strongly believe in the struggle of an independent Bangsa Moro. For further study on these groups see Gowing (1979), Gutierrez (1999) and Jubair (1997).

Sharia (Islamic Law) is the body of Islamic religious law. The term means “way or path to the water source.” The source of Islamic law is al-Quran and Hadits (Muhammadan tradition). Sharia deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene, and social issues.

Mawlid Nabi is an Arabic term for the “Birth of the Prophet. It is a term used to refer to the observance of the birthday of the Islamic prophet Muhammad which occurs in Rabi’ al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar.

Shi’a is the second largest denomination of Islam, after Sunni Islam. Shi’a Muslims, though a minority in the Muslim world, constitute the majority of the populations in Iran, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, and Iraq, as well as a plurality in Lebanon. The Shi’a adheres to the Qur’an and teachings of the final Prophet of Islam, Muhammed, and in contrast to Sunni Muslims, believe that the prophet’s family, the Ahl al-Bayt (the People of the House), including his descendants known as Imams, have special spiritual and political rule over the community.

REFERENCES


FLUID BOUNDARIES: TOWARD A PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH 
TO BORDER ISSUES IN NORTH SULAWESI

Djorina Velasco

Introduction

The border area where the national territories of Indonesia and the Philippines blend into one another is a border that cannot be seen. Like any maritime border, it is a border continually washed away by unbound streams of water and shifting ocean floors. It is a border not realized by physical markers—not a fence or wall, nor a river or a mountain range—but by the acts of border agents who patrol the waters that connect, rather than transect, insular Southeast Asia and its people. Indeed, the exact border coordinates have not been officially defined nor bilaterally agreed upon. It is, in every sense of the word, a fluid border.

This fluidity is an inescapable reality that conditions social processes that come to the fore in borderzones, especially the construction of identities. Drawing on field experiences on the Indonesian side of the Indonesian-Philippine border in North Sulawesi, this paper explores the issues and problems of identity formation in the borderzone. This is its first aim. A second aim is to develop a more people-centered perspective of “real life” issues in borderzones that addresses some of the inadequacies of predominant approaches.

My discussion is divided into four parts. The first section reviews common perspectives on borders and picks up some theoretical threads to frame the discussion. The second section explores the history and geography of my research area, while the third section problematizes the social construction of identities in the borderzone. A concluding section presents proposals towards a more people-centered approach in understanding and addressing border issues.

Problems and possibilities

Borders are a subject matter in a range of arenas. It is a topic that occupies politicians and bureaucrats, economists and entrepreneurs, scholars and activists, law enforcers and lawless elements alike. As divergent as these voices may be, a discernible pattern is that discussions on borders are invariably couched in terms of problems and possibilities.

To law enforcement agents, borders present headaches. As marketplaces for contraband, escape routes for criminals and rebels, and passageways for the illegal traffic of people, animals and goods—borders are a real test of states’ sovereignty. Borders cut through neighboring jurisdictions, creating sliced spaces where the power of one state ends and the power of another begins. Who/what may be illegal on one side of the border finds a safe haven on the other side. Borders reveal the limits of a regime, but also protect it from undesirable outside forces. For this reason, they are sites of inclusion and exclusion, of sanction and surveillance. It is this kind of thinking that underlies what is commonly known as the “security approach” to border issues, which essentially consists of zealously guarding a nation’s territorial integrity and economic resources.

By contrast, internationalists of various stripes approach borders from a different set of assumptions. To advocates of (inter)regional integration, borders are fast losing their significance. What is stressed is the imagery of the “global village” made possible through rapid advances in travel and communication technology, as well as the advancement of a globalizing information-based economy based on de-territorialized exchanges. Nations and regions are seen to be moving towards a “borderless world” of exciting new possibilities and creative solutions to transnational challenges.

From a more bottom-up orientation, yet another set of problems and possibilities arise.

Here borders are problematic where they seek to encase human activity and aspirations. Rarely do we find states’ borders neatly hemmed. In most parts of the world, international borders are arbitrary, if not artificial, partitions. They are vestiges of colonial domination and “old-style” geopolitics that divide people of common descent and homeland. In this sense, borders represent repressive control mechanisms of the center reigning in centrifugal movements at the margins.

The other side of the coin is that precisely because borders are arbitrary, they are not sacrosanct. Thus, where there are borders, there is also resistance—
against this background, it is possible to identify at least two broad streams in the scholarship of borders.

one stream places emphasis on the crossing of borders, the activities and processes that take place in borderzones. in these cultural studies, border-crossing becomes an occasion for performance. people who move around borderlands take on various roles reflecting their changing hybrid identities. they switch between languages, identity cards and social status in transversing political boundaries. borders here become a metaphor for experimentation and the exploration of difference, for transcending prescribed categories of belonging.

the other stream in the scholarship on borders deals with the notions of territoriality and space. it examines the consequences—both stated and unintended—of living in a world divided by borders: the politics of drawing and securing borders or, as the case may be, the possibility of the (selective) opening of borders. here we see how borders are concrete manifestations of state power. national borders are more than just lines on a map or demarcations in the physical world; they are “political constructs, imagined projections of territorial power” (baud and van schendel 1997, 211). territoriality is “a spatial strategy” which uses territory and borders to control, classify and communicate—to express and implement relationships of power, whether benign or malign, peaceful or violent” (anderson 2002, 27).

in today’s world, borders have become an accepted, taken-for-granted reality. we hardly question their existence. however, anderson (2002, 27) asks us to take a step back and reflect on the flip side of territoriality: while giving greater tangibility to power relationships, it de-personalizes and reifies them, obscuring the sources and relations of power. it sharpens conflict and generates further conflict as its assertion encourages rival territorialities in a ‘space-filling process’.

seen in this light, border-crossing is less an occasion for celebration than cause for concern. harrowing refugee accounts from across the globe attest to this. cunningham (2004, 345), thus, reminds us that “for much of the world’s mobile population, the experience of transnational interconnection entails rivers and oceans to be crossed (often in unsafe and overcrowded vessels), electrified fences guarded by border controls, stretches of isolated desert, or the interrogation cell in the basement of a port of entry. as such, borders can be regarded as enactments of power on our globe, diagnostic of how the apparatus of rule unfolds in a global landscape.” the image of globalization as an unstoppable, free flowing phenomenon is, thus, difficult to sustain. therefore, even as nations are said to be moving closer together in this age of increasing global interconnections, borders are far from being anachronistic markers of possession. borders remain highly functional barriers for keeping undesirable elements at bay.

i revisit the underlying assumptions of the security as well as cultural approaches to borders toward the end of this essay. this study, thus, begins by tracing the historical context of the indonesian-philippine border area, mindful of the possibilities of creative resistance, problems in policing partitions and attendant issues of power outlined above. the next section delves into the history and present-day situation of nusa utara, the northern islands where the indonesian sea shades off into philippine waters.

nusa utara: islands in between

the island regencies of sangihe and talaulad constitute the northernmost tip of the vast indonesian archipelago. these territories are composed of about 132 islands, out of which only 39 are populated. combined, the regencies encompass an area of about 47,320 square kilometers, 95 percent of which is sea. the hilly topography of the islands does not lend itself to large-scale cultivation. on the main islands, there are neither industries nor plantations, only smallholder cultivation of copra, root crops, vegetables, cloves and other agricultural products. fisheries are another important livelihood. a smaller percentage of the population makes a living from trading goods to fill the needs of the local population of less than 300,000 souls.
Indeed, the defining feature of Sangihe and Talaud is their location: isolated and left behind. This description, *terisolasi dan tertinggal* in Indonesian, is a buzzword among both local public servants and the general populace. Yet, this was not always the case. The islands were once an important “relay ground” for world trade during the “Age of Commerce” (Hayase 2007, 81). Indeed, the history of Sangihe and Talaud in early modern times is intertwined with that of the sultanates of Ternate, Maguindanao and Sulu, as well as Chinese traders and European explorers, missionaries and colonizers.

Local society was made up of scattered autonomous chiefdoms (*kedatuan*) and petty kingdoms (*kerajaan*) without any overarching power structure. Chinese traders first became active in the region in the 15th century. The first Europeans to reach the shores of Sangihe in 1521 belonged to the Spanish expedition originally commanded by Ferdinand Magellan. Having lost their captain in the Battle of Mactan, the fleet set sail to the Spice Islands, making a pit stop at Sangihe. The Portuguese soon got into the picture as well, developing a trade route from Ternate to Borneo via Sulu and the Sangihe islands by 1526. Due to its location, Sangihe gained in strategic importance, being a “natural guidepost” (Ulaen 2003, 37) for seafarers engaged in the profitable spice trade.

Catholic missionary work in the area also commenced, as the Spanish established their base in Manila and built relations with a handful of Sangirese *rajas*. On the other hand, a number of *rajas* chose to align themselves with Ternate. The kingdom of Kandahe on the main island of Sangihe, by contrast, was Islamized by Sulu and maintained close relations with the Buayan sultanate of Mindanao. The kingdom even established outposts on the islands of Balut and Sarangani (Hayase 2007, 87).

However, co-existence among the various kingdoms of different creeds was far from peaceful, as alliances shifted and tensions often flared.

For centuries, many Sangirese lived on the south coast of Mindanao and the Davao Gulf region or shuttled between islands. There were no clear boundaries between Sangihe and Mindanao (Ulaen 2003, 48; Hayase 2007, 93). However, as Maguindanao consolidated its power under the leadership of Sultan Kudarat in the first half of the 17th century, the Sangirese were forced to subordinate themselves to his rule. With the decline of Maguindanao in the 19th century, Sulu gained political and economic preeminence not just as a trading post for forest and marine products for Chinese markets, but also as a center for the slave trade. Pirates from Sulu regularly raided parts of Sangihe and Talaud to capture slaves (Ulaen 2003, 37; Hayase 2007, 93).

Meanwhile, with the ascendency of the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or VOC) in the region and the subsequent withdrawal of the Spanish and Portuguese, Sangihe and Talaud were increasingly drawn into the Dutch ambit. By 1677, the *Noordereilanden* were included in the VOC map, as the Dutch entered into agreements with the *rajas* and *datus* of Sangihe. Catholicism was banned, and a number of faithful migrated to Manila (Hayase 2007, 89). By 1825, Sangihe and Talaud were placed under the provincial administration of Manado, rendering traditional leadership obsolete. The colonial period, thus, sealed the fate of Sangihe and Talaud, making it a unitary administrative entity at the fringes of the Dutch domain. This presented a significant break from its past, where the islands had represented a complex constellation of kingdoms with linkages across the busy traffic zone of the Sulawesi-Sulu Sea. This effectively transformed Sangihe and Talaud from a trade zone.
to a borderzone (Ulaen 2003, 49). Needless to say, local people were not consulted or made part of this process and only had a poor appreciation of these transformations.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the flow of people to and from Mindanao never ceased through the centuries, especially among those engaged in barter trade. With the changing direction of the winds, it is said that each monsoon season encouraged people to travel between islands to find new trading opportunities and even future spouses. There are numerous legends and royal genealogies that attest to these exogamous practices (Hayase, Non and Ulaen 1999; Tiu 2005). It is due to this history of migration and intermarriage, trade links and religious ties, that anthropologist and historian Alex Ulaen likens the islands of the Sulawesi-Sulu Sea to an entity such as the Mediterranean, a contiguous area of land and sea with common socio-cultural traits.

Cullamar (1998, 19) interviewed Sangirrese settlers on the Philippine islands of Balut and Sarangani who recall that those who arrived before 1935 thought the virgin islands were theirs by virtue of occupation. Indeed, there were no signs to warn them that they had entered into “foreign” territory, as immigration laws were only introduced when the Philippines and Indonesia became independent republics. Crossing the border without proper papers only became a crime in the second half of the twentieth century.

As the Philippine frontier around General Santos was opened, there was a great demand for labor in the agricultural and fisheries sectors. Migrant workers from Nusa Utara, fleeing the political and economic instability on the Indonesian side in the 1950s due to rebellions and unrest, filled this need. While some settled in Mindanao permanently and raised their families there (Tiu, undated), others chose to commute back and forth.

Since neither the Indonesian nor Philippine government was able to regulate this “illegal” flow, the Border Crossing Agreement of 1956 was instituted in the context of the repatriation and/or legalization of overstaying visitors. Successive guidelines, joint directives, agreements and amendments have since expanded and constricted opportunities for habitual border-crossers through the years. These regulations allow residents of the Indonesian-Philippine border area, as defined, to obtain border crossing cards (in lieu of passports) that allow them to travel to the other side of the border for up to 59 days for the purposes of family visits, religious worship and pleasure. Fishing crew members are given 29 days. Individuals are allowed to bring with them USD250 worth of goods for cross-border trade, families are granted USD1,000.

The reality, however, is that these amounts are often exceeded. In such cases, traders must negotiate over additional levies with border-crossing officers at designated border crossing stations on both sides of the border. Sometimes, people prefer to bypass these stations altogether and pass through the border “illegally.” This not only makes their journeys more cost-efficient, but also shortens travel time, since the Indonesian border crossing stations on the islands of Marore, Miangas and Tarakan are quite remote and inaccessible. Fishermen who “illegally” sell their catch across the border are referred to as “strikers.” Another problem is that the border trade is only allowed among residents of the officially defined immediate border area, consisting of the sparsely populated outer islands. Goods bound for markets on the main island are therefore brought in clandestinely.

By all indications, the Sangihe and Talaud island cluster as a whole is not a prosperous region. Poverty is exacerbated by the lack of adequate transportation and communication infrastructure and poor social services. Crops are prone to pests; many coral reefs and mangrove forests are damaged. The area is also vulnerable to natural disasters. Any cross-border trade taking place—both legal and illegal—is not animated by profit, but survival. Whether traded “legally” or “illegally,” there is no difference in the assortment of goods. For the most part, goods brought in from the Philippines, such as rubber slippers, kitchenware and nylon sleeping mats as well as alcoholic beverages and Coca-Cola, fill the everyday needs of people. Fishing equipment and materials for the upkeep of outrigger motorboats (bangka in Filipino) are also almost exclusively sourced from the Philippines. Fish, copra and Indonesian laundry detergent are the top “export” products to the Philippine market.

Admittedly, there have been cases of Filipinos getting caught for smuggling firearms and fake dollar bills and engaging in illegal mining across the border. The connivance of Indonesian law enforcement officials in smuggling activities remains much harder to prove. Nevertheless, accomplices in these crimes are outsiders, not people of the borderzone. The same is true for suspected terrorist movements. Nusa Utara is far from being a terrorist hotbed—as my informants from all walks of life emphasized.

In this regard, it is important to understand the relative
location of Sangihe and Talaud within the Indonesian archipelago. These northern island kabupaten are the most peripheral within the province of North Sulawesi, not just in terms of distance, but also in terms of development and infrastructure. Provincial politics is dominated by the Minahasa ethnic group and people in the capital of Manado often look down on orang pulau (“island people”) from the north—the irony being that Minahasans themselves also feel marginalized within their country. Nusa Utara is therefore twice removed from the nerve center of the Indonesian nation. The situation is even worse for the remote northernmost islands in the immediate border area. A concrete manifestation of this marginalization is that the large fish processing plants (among these are subsidiaries of Philippine companies) are located in North Sulawesi’s premier port city of Bitung. The jobs and revenues created, therefore, do not benefit the people in the borderzone where the fish are caught.

This marginalization extends to government structures, processes and mindsets as well. For example, to encourage economic development, the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East-Asia-Growth-Area (BIMP-EAGA) was signed into existence in 1994 and is experiencing renewed enthusiasm after some growing pains. Informants from local government units in Sangihe, however, are not too impressed by this initiative since they are not included in the structure that formulates BIMP-EAGA’s programs and strategies. Their interests are supposed to be represented by the provincial and national-level officials who sit in the meetings. The Sangihe regency, therefore, prefers to forge local-to-local linkages with Philippine counterparts from Sarangani province and General Santos City. The local government and local branches of national agencies based in Tahuna also have substantive suggestions on amending legal frameworks for cross-border trade, yet there are no venues for them to be heard by decision-makers in Jakarta.

In this section we have seen how the present-day isolation of Sangihe and Talaud is a product of recent history and state policies. We have also seen that the traditional inter-coastal movement of people has been carried over to present times. As legal scholar Immanuel Makahanap explained to me: “Laws cannot stop the natural flow of people who have developed bonds with other islands over hundreds of years.” It is in the next section that we look into the formation of identities among local populations.

**Identities in context**

That identities are fluid constructs, contingent on the intersection of various variables is, of course, a truism, especially in borderzones, where lines of ethnicity and political loyalties are far from self-evident. Throughout this research, what struck me was not so much identities in themselves—the way people feel, think and talk about themselves—but the specific contexts in which given identities are generated, strengthened and weakened. This can be illustrated by the story of Miangas.

With a total population of 982 people, life on Miangas is simple. There are no telephones, no cellular sites, no television antennae, no stores nor eateries. Fishing and copra are the main sources of livelihood. From Miangas, Cape San Agustin in Davao Oriental can be reached in three hours by pump boat. By contrast, it takes three days to reach the main island of Sulawesi aboard a passenger ferry that ploughs the route every fortnight. Most of the adults, frequent border crossers, speak Visaya and/or Tagalog and tune into Philippine radio every day. Many are agricultural migrant workers in Southern Mindanao. Locals interchangeably refer to their home as Isla de las Palmas—its Spanish name dating back to colonial times. Like many other outer islands in the sprawling Indonesian archipelago, Miangas rarely makes waves. An unprecedented expression of dissent in May 2005, however, put Miangas on the map.

The trigger was the death of Miangas Village Secretary Jhonly Awala, who succumbed to injuries he received at the hands of the Chief of Police of Miangas. The latter reportedly lost his temper when he encountered the drunk Awala on a Monday afternoon and beat...
him. With no adequate medical treatment available on
the island, Awala died in the arms of his relatives and
neighbors the same night. Agitated villagers kept vigil
all night outside the residence of the sub-district head,
threatening to set a fire if their calls for justice were
not heard. The next day, the Talaud bupati (regent)
arrived to prevent the situation from escalating. About
two hundred people, dressed in black, mobilized to
express their outrage at the senseless death and their
acute neglect by the Indonesian state. They lowered the
Indonesian flag at the Miangas pier and greeted the local
government delegation by waving a Philippine flag.

In shock, Indonesian authorities wasted no time in
wooning back the island population. Sacks of rice,
assorted medicines and sports equipment were doled
out almost immediately. Two years after the incident,
the once sleepy island is awash with government
projects: the pier is upgraded, a warehouse constructed,
and there is even talk of developing an airstrip to bring
Miangas closer to the world. A piped water supply was
completed in early 2006 and the first street light put up
later that year. A residence for a village doctor has been
built, although there is still no word when s/he will set
up practice. A terminal building and marketplace add
to the picture—yet without the steady flow of people
and goods, these remain unused (Velasco 2007). The
central government may have instituted a full-fledged
program to develop Indonesia’s outer islands in the
meantime, but without adequate consultation with the
local people, assistance does not always correspond to
the needs on the ground.

Nonetheless, the Philippine flag has long been returned
to its rightful place at the Philippine Border Crossing
Station on the island and locals are proud to point out
the progress when receiving newcomers. Mr. Yoppy
Luppa, the harbor master of Miangas, explains that “the
people of Miangas feel close to the Philippines. But we
are also scared of the war in Mindanao. We do not want
to go there.”

In the case of Miangas, the remote location has bred
pragmatists rather than rebels. Poverty and the lack of
opportunities force them to be practical and resourceful.
They are not interested in talking about whether they
feel more “Indonesian” or “Filipino.” What matters
more to them is that their grievances are being heard
and taken seriously. In Miangas, as elsewhere in Nusa
Utara, people prefer local identities to national ones,
such as orang Miangas, orang Talaud or orang Sangir.
They are just too far removed from the centers of the
nation to participate meaningfully in provincial, let
alone national, life.

Similarly, being able to speak two to three languages,
including Visaya and/or Tagalog, is not a “big deal” to
them, because it has “always” been that way in their
seafaring-trading culture. Having relatives both in
Davao and Bitung is “normal” on the island, where the
intercoastal movement of people is a way of life. No one
raises an eyebrow at “undocumented” Filipinos married
to locals on the islands. It would certainly seem strange
to them if an academic came to them to “celebrate”
their “hybridity.”

The same is true for thirty-something Adrian (not his
real name) and others like him whom I befriended
in Manado. Born to a Filipino father and a Sangirese
mother in Davao, he keeps his “mixed” identity
a secret. Since his birth certificate states that he is
“Filipino,” he has no Indonesian identity card nor a
valid visa and passport. Yet he has lived, studied and
worked “illegally” in Manado for more than 20 years
and knows no other “home.” Ironically, Adrian is a
card-bearing member of the nationalist Indonesian
Democratic Party and has run for local office in the
past! As a stateless nationalist, as it were, he defies many
norms. Yet, the constant fear of being discovered is no
joke at all. Adrian’s circumvention of Indonesian laws
is not an act of mischief. For him, it is the only way
he can continue the life he has built for himself in his
“motherland.”

Conclusion

In the main body of this essay, I portrayed the
history and current issues in the Indonesia-Philippine
borderzone. At this point, I would like to make my
critique of predominant border frameworks more
explicit by relating it to questions of statehood.
In conclusion, I point to a more people-centered
perspective in understanding and addressing the needs
of local populations in the borderzone at hand.

As seen above, my interaction with people in the
borderzone has led me to question the centrality of
identity and cultural flows in much of social sciences
today. A major problem with the cultural approach to
border issues is that it obfuscates the need to remedy
conditions that place local populations at a disadvantage.
Rather than hailing border-crossers as subversive,
itinerant subjects, I have, therefore, sought to refocus
attention on the structural conditions of poverty and
marginality that necessitate the circumventing of official
rules in the Indonesian-Philippine borderzone.

What the cultural approach lacks in problem-
orientation, the security approach more than makes
up for. This orientation trains its sight on identifying and sanctioning the wayward, those who violate the boundaries and sanctity of the nation-state. However, the security approach is also one-sided, in that it turns a blind eye to people’s traditional life-worlds. The security framework simply leaves historical linkages and the fluid nature of the border unproblematised. Instead, the state’s security apparatus focuses on what I classify as ‘second order’ problems in the borderzone: undocumented migration, illegal fishing, and smuggling. The shortcoming of this approach is that even though it may target the “big fish” involved in transnational crime, oftentimes it victimizes the poor and marginalized who are unable to defend themselves.

A common example here is the profitable fishing operations that are orchestrated from General Santos and Sarangani in Mindanao, which employ fishermen (no women) of Sangirese origin or mixed Sangirese-Philippine parentage who reside in Mindanao. They bring with them local knowledge of the fishing grounds and are able to “blend in” once the fishing vessel transverses to the Indonesian side in search of swarms of prized tuna and other fish. A common modus operandi is to have two captains and two flags (one Indonesian, one Filipino) that are conveniently interchanged, depending on which side of the border they are on at a given time. This way, the operators are able to avoid getting caught for poaching in foreign waters and fishing without a permit. However, if their cover fails and a vessel is caught by Indonesian navy patrols, the crew is left to its own devices. Sometimes, such cases are “settled” on the spot by paying bribes. Other times, the crew is apprehended and languishes in a detention center for many months before repatriation procedures are completed. Ship owners and operators often shrug off personal responsibility and have disinterested Indonesian agents represent the crew members. Circumstances are aggravated when fishermen are unable to prove their identities and citizenship is difficult to ascertain. The Philippine consulate in Manado is the only agency that helps these detainees.

I have thought long and hard about a question posed by one of my advisers in Manado, Rignolda Djamaluddin: “Are people tricking the state or is the state tricking the people?” The poignancy lies in the fact that transgressors in the borderzone at hand are not “big time” gangsters, just ordinary people following their traditional lifestyle of fishing and inter-island trade. They do not “trick” the state out of malice or for big profits. Some of us may secretly applaud the skillful mice in this cat-and-mouse game. However, we should not forget that it is the cat that sets the rules of the game.

Here it must be stressed that borders in themselves are not “irrelevant” to people. For centuries, people in Sulawesi and Mindanao-Sulu have, in fact, taken advantage of differentials across localities in order to trade commodities, exchange marine technology and enrich their lives. Problems arise when ordinary people eking out a living become victims of a border regime insensitive to their needs and intentions.

Perhaps the biggest trick the state is playing on the people is its attempt to project itself as an omnipotent, infallible entity—the irony being, of course, that the state’s sovereignty is compromised by its own state personnel, either through active connivance in or tolerance of “unlawful” practices. What people experience is not the rule of law, but the rule of inconsistency. This is also one reason people feel ambiguous about the ‘maintenance’ of the border, which, to begin with, is an imposed reality in their lives and a barrier to their aspirations.

From the people’s perspective, then, we may ask ourselves: Given that the Indonesian-Philippine border is not about to dissolve into thin air anytime soon, can
borders actually become a resource for community development? How can the borderzone rise from its ascribed “backwater” status to become a venue for exchange and sharing?

There is no dearth of imagination on this subject. The people of North Sulawesi have many suggestions. I was often approached by parents who want to send their children to learn English in the Philippines or people inquiring about hospitals across the border. Another idea articulated is that of setting up information and training centers along the border for citizens of both countries, where people can receive social services and input on fishing and livelihood opportunities. What is therefore needed is not necessarily more central government-intervention, but an enabling environment that empowers people to act on their own initiatives and seek opportunities across the Sulawesi-Sulu Sea without fear of sanction.

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Introduction

Science fiction (scifi) is undoubtedly a Western product. After all, as many science fiction scholars contend, it is a by-product of modernization in the West. The history of science fiction in the West, much like the definition of the genre, is, as it seems, a matter of polemics. However, it is a widely accepted notion that science fiction as we know it today had its boom in the 20th century. Having said this, it is of absolute necessity to give some clarity as to the definition of science fiction on which observations and claims in this paper are founded. Though not one absolute meaning of science fiction is readily at hand, the research used a very general (somewhat open and broad) definition of science fiction: a narrative where science and technology and their imagined permutations is a sine qua non, an absolute essential and not just a fashionable adornment or a tangential element.

Science fiction beyond the West, then, can be considered as an imported cultural product if we accept the perception that it is a Western original. However, even if it is an indubitable fact that, outside the West, a staple form of science fiction is that which is local translations of Western works, especially during the incipient stages of its non-Western readership, in due time, science fiction, a supposedly alien creature (as alien as its most popular characters perhaps), has been thoroughly digested by populations who were enchanted by it and accepted it as their own. This appropriation is now by far an insistence for its originality in the culture where it is thriving or where it is extant, while at the same time proclaiming a dialogic existence with its progenitors. This has resulted in an ancestry which is not limited to the ‘originally imported’ science fiction works of the West, but extends all the way to the fantastical narratives of the culture’s own traditional literature.

Wu Dingbo and Patrick Murphy argue in their study of science fiction in China that fiction originates from myths and legends, and science fiction, as a prose genre, is no exception (1989, 8). They further uphold the idea that ancient myths stand as the ancestors of science fiction, which will allow us to see the modern genre of writing as rooted in the literary heritage of a culture that celebrates narratives of imagination. Although in China, Western science fiction gained an advantageous position due to a more pragmatic and programmatic purpose, an emphasis on a history of fantastic literature can shed light on a continuous fascination with anything imaginary, such as science fiction (Dingbo and Murphy 1989, 9). This will point us to the observation that although of Western origin, the wide acceptance of science fiction as a cultural product in many non-Western countries is augmented by a native cultural landscape teeming with images and narratives as spectacular and fantastical as interplanetary voyages and alien abductions, albeit worded in a different modality.

Indeed, Isaac Asimov, one of the elders of the science fiction world, clearly spelled out the similarity in purpose and difference in framework of science fiction writing and other literatures of the fantastic that are of ancient origin. Asimov (1981, 80) contends that science fiction and ancient myths and legends fulfill our satisfaction for longing and wonder. However, myths and legends are drawn from a Universe ruled by gods and demons while science fiction is set against a backdrop of a Universe that is controlled by unswerving and impersonal laws of nature.

Judging from this seemingly simple proposition, the difference that places science fiction on firm ground as the literary form that surely reflects the ethos of the modern times can easily be detected. However, the apparent dichotomizing definition of the genre leads us to a more highly discursive debate as to what constitutes legitimate truth and knowledge in this era (by the gods or demons or by impersonal and strict natural laws). Further expanding our inquiry to the direction of the political, we are prompted to ask what form of power exists and who wields it so that certain forms of knowledge are privileged over others and some truths are deified while others are simply and easily desecrated.

It is quite fortunate that science fiction as the main subject of interest in this study possesses an element that can be considered as one of the most powerful disciplines and institutions of knowledge formation of modern times—science. Science is what clearly separates us from
the past and what apparently is setting us up for the future. *Scientia*, the Latin root of ‘science’ which means ‘knowledge’, seems to give us a sudden understanding of what is truly meant by the word. However, any attempt at definition is resolved only through an inherent conflict, and this continuous puzzlement will only make us arrive at a more complex interweaving of ideas—one that is existent but is not usually noticed or is deliberately avoided. We almost always view science as just a particular mode of inquiry that produces knowledge and prides itself in empirical evidence and positivism. This leads to a claim of championing a value-free and objective stance in the pursuit of knowledge. However one insists on the dimension of science as an arena of power relations, an aspect of science that is incontrovertible but highly inconspicuous, it is still seen as the bearer of truth and as the truth so that being ‘scientific’ is tantamount to being ‘trustworthy.’ In view of this conceptual association, it is of consequence that the preeminence of science as the defining mode of knowledge formation of our time leads up to the eradication of other approaches to understanding the world, approaches that at face value might seem to be contradictory to the tenets of Western paradigms of the project of science even if these approaches still hold true or are continuously significant to the communities that choose to keep them.

It is along this line of analysis that we read the following texts of Japanese and Indonesian science fiction (in translation). The analysis examines the discourse of science in the aforementioned texts and attempts to make explicit the political field within which science as a discipline thrives and science as an institution persists, a facet that is commonly ignored whenever we accept it as a monolithic signifier of truth and progress. This project also aims to discuss the images of the future embedded in the texts and the intersecting issues continually faced by the periphery as the world rolls along this track to progress.

**Brief background of Japanese and Indonesian science fiction**

According to Robert Matthew (1989), science fiction in Japan had its origins in the Meiji era (1868-1912), a period of modernization following Western models of development. With the rapid development and change being experienced by society and the people, the literature during this period consequently reflected this transformation. With the influence coming from the West, not only were paradigms of development imbied by Japanese society, but also its literary form. This fascination with the West led to the appreciation by Japanese readers of adventure stories by Jules Verne, for example, whose works were immediately translated into *Nihongo* soon after their initial publication.

Takayuki Tatsumi (in Seed 2005, 328) further divides science fiction in Japan into categories according to the generation foremost writers of the genre belong to. He offers us the following periodization:

1. “The First Generation Writers,” the formative figures of the 1960s, who were deeply influenced by the Anglo-American science fiction (SF) of the 1950s;
2. “The Second Generation Writers” of the 1970s, who positively assimilated the New Wave of the late 1960s and the early 1970s;
3. “The Third Generation Writers,” from the 1980s, who are mostly contemporaries of the Anglo-American post-New Wave/pre-Cyberpunk writers;
4. “The Fourth Generation Writers” (late 1980s-1990s) who take for granted the postmodern modes of Cyberpunk, cyborg feminism and “Yaoi poetics” [the Japanese equivalent of the taste for K/S (Kirk/Spock) fiction and Slash Fiction]; and
5. A fifth generation of writers whose range cannot be wholly portrayed just yet but are sometimes nicknamed “JSF” writers who made their debut at the turn of the century.

Indonesian science fiction, on the other hand, stands on a different plane compared to its Japanese counterpart. Although it is much too early to provide any definitive statement regarding science fiction in Indonesia just by looking at the texts gathered, it is worth taking note that based on available materials in various locations such as bookstores, libraries, comic shops and video stores, there is a smaller number of Indonesian science fiction in various media relative to the amount of materials gathered in Japan. Perhaps it is not being overly hasty to claim that, by sheer volume, Indonesian science fiction lacks in popularity.

It is also interesting to consider that some of the materials such as *Supernova* (2001) and *Cokelat Postmortem* (2005), which are generally described as science fiction in popular listings like websites or blog site discussions, may be considered as similar to the kind of incipient science fiction writing seen in Japan. This statement is due to the fact that some materials may have been classified as science fiction because they contain ‘science fictionish’ elements, perhaps in the form of scientific terminologies, scientific principles or scientific facts, but do not necessarily create the critical topology of...
a narrative. In other words, some ‘science’ is present but the manner in which it is utilized is not really and actually a requirement for the story to live or die.

Opposing oppositions, dissecting dichotomies: The discourse of science and technology in Asian science fictions

For this particular discussion, I opt to focus on three Japanese science fiction texts and three Indonesian science fiction texts. The Japanese materials include Kobo Abe’s Inter Ice Age 4 (1970), Hagio Moto and her manga (Japanese comic books and cartoons) They Were Eleven (1976), and Masamune Shirow’s Ghost in the Shell (1991). For the Indonesian texts, we will focus on a television situation comedy entitled Lorong Waktu (Time Tunnel) produced by Demi Gisela Citron Sinema in 2003, Ronny Fredilla’s Transpondex (2006), and the first volume of an Indonesian manga called Inside: My Best Friends (2006) by Altis Studio.

The general conceptual framework centers on the blurring of boundaries that once were definitive assertions of fragmented and even antagonistic relationships between disciplines and particular worldviews. Through discourse analysis, we attempt to examine the representation of science and technology (ST) in these texts and make palpable the political in our constructed relationship with science and technology, especially highlighting the skepticism toward pervasive discursive binary oppositions that view science as truth and others as myth.

Science and spirituality/religion

It seems odd that a text supposedly espousing science to form its trope self-permeates elements that could be considered counter or contradictory to its master framework. Science and spirituality, so it seems, are two opposing poles: one utterly into the rational and empirical while the other slipping into the unknown and mystical. However, one cannot be more real than the other.

This is Ghost in the Shell’s (GitS henceforth) proposition as it delivers an exhilarating, action-packed, hi-tech story about a world where physical and national boundaries are dissolved through cyberspace, and cyborg assassins and AIs abound. GitS is about the encounters of one Major Motoko Kusanagi who stands as the leader of a group of top government security agents who are called upon by Aramaki, the Chief Security Police of Section 9, to resolve cases involving ghost hacking, assassinations and other gruesome and heinous crimes committed for—as it turns out in the end of every stake-out—political, economic and no less personal gains.

There is frequent mention of the subject ‘ghost’ that is sometimes referred to by the words ‘spirit’, ‘life force’, ‘being’ and ‘life.’ It is worth noting that the main driving force of the plot is the underlying question of the definition of ‘being’ as a living entity different from machines, such as robots, which are highly mechanical, or the androids who, though highly intelligent, are nevertheless inevitably lacking the element of spirit or ghost.

Perhaps the chapter that finally reveals the character of the Puppeteer is the single most significant part that is of particular interest to our purpose, not to mention that it is also the climax of the whole novel after many deadly encounters of the team with minor, establishing events. The Puppeteer is a strange ‘form’ or ‘formlessness,’ perhaps stranger than the ‘ghost’ construct because it is beyond discussion of the ghost as spirit. It is actually a discourse on the very essence of ‘life’ and affords us some critique of the powerful social structures that dictate who or what has the right to life or the reality of life.

Let us for a moment indulge the Puppeteer in a recital of its take on life, being, self and spirituality, each time calling on the discourse of science combined with religiosity and Western and Eastern philosophies. The Puppeteer’s profound litany:

...Gravity and a strong mutual interaction, etc., continually divide components creating protons and nuclei creating atoms... Cells and organisms in individual life forms... Multiple species in ecosystems... The universe we know is only one out of $2^n$. It’s made up of a combination of $2^m$ kinds! The values of $n$ and $m$ appear to continue infinitely but we don’t know for certain...

Following are lines that appear to be an ecumenical assemblage of various Western and Eastern spirituality—an amalgamation of philosophies for the purpose of more holistically explaining the Puppeteer’s (text’s) conviction and analysis of life itself. It is worth recalling that this near conclusion of the Puppeteer’s treatise started with his mustering of scientific reasoning:

The secrets of the Kabbala, the Norse myths, the Chinese myths, the tree of wisdom in Eden, the tree of life, the world tree... These are all worthy of being called amenomi-bashira, or “the pillar of heaven”... It’s the system in the universe that
channelers—in every era, culture, and every race of people—have traditionally accessed…

This disbelief in the absolute separation of science and spirituality is also manifest in the Indonesian sci-fi television program Lorong Waktu, albeit in a manner that specifically banishes the long-standing divide between science and religion.

The plot centers on the character of Haji Husin who takes care of a masjid (mosque) and a couple of personalities with an obscure past. It also features an endearing child character, Zidane, and his adventures in time travel with the others. Originally shown during the Ramadhan of 2003, the narrative, aside from being governed by the science fictional essential (i.e., time machine), is inspired by the teachings of Islam such that each adventure that the characters take on must have a moral consistent with the doctrines of the faith. Aimed at capturing the Indonesian family as its main audience, the wholesome series was intentionally created to be a rich lode of life lessons derived from Islamic teachings.

Dedi Mizwar, who conceptualized and produced the program, emphasizes this conceptual scheme in the story. In an interview, he conveyed that the main inspiration for creating the program was to make people realize that science and religion (i.e., Islam) are not fundamentally opposed to each other. Science and religion, he further asserts, are in fact complements.

**Science and myth**

Indonesian sci-fi’s insistence, as with the case of Lorong Waktu, on the necessary interconnection of science and religion is easily comprehensible if we take as a reliable basis for such an assertion the country’s essential bond with Islam as one major facet of its identity formation. This can also be said regarding Japanese sci-fi’s facility for fusing science with spirituality. However, aside from the fact that traditional Shinto philosophy, for example, creates an easy path for such sensibility, it is indispensable to recognize that Japan’s history of science and technology has a constructedness that is somewhat different from the West, although the West was its most influential source of modern science and technology. Sakuma Shozan, said to be the leader of Japan’s modernization, advocated in the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) the slogan, “Japanese morals and Western arts,” which paved the way for a dual cultural structure: the acceptance of Western science and technology (especially in the Meiji restoration) while recognizing the value of reinforcing its own home-grown philosophy, morals and culture (Chamarik and Goonatilake 1994, 316).

This melding of local and foreign consciousness can also be the one probable reason why Japanese sci-fi yet again defies with ease one clearly established dichotomy that attempts to delineate the difference between credible and incredible claims to truth. We can read such discourse in the manga, *They Were Eleven*, which tells the story of ten examinees from different territories (countries and planets) aboard an abandoned ship, free-floating in space, who, for their final exam, are tasked to survive a 53-day period and return back to Earth safely. As it were, the assignment is serious enough for the ten youngsters who are supposedly among the best in the batch. However, the greater difficulty resides in another complicating, yet simple, mathematical problem: there is one too many on-board.

Setting aside this mystery for now, we venture to focus on one of the ten characters by the name of Nuum, from the planet Inudo, and his proclamation of a belief system that his civilization holds dearly. This exposition is prompted by an astronomical event that concerns an unexpected encounter with a planet’s sun that proves to be of fatal consequence. Nuum, upon learning of this occurrence announces, “According to my country’s astrology...the overlapping celestial bodies are a foreshadowing of the worst possible circumstances. We will probably meet our ruin before the 53 days are up” (Hagio 1996, 111). The mere mention of the term ‘astrology’ instantly elicits negative reactions from his co-examinees, who view Nuum’s convictions as superstitious fabulations. Doubts are raised as to the truth of the statements from a creature that seems to have an obscure and mystical take on clearly scientific astronomical phenomenon. Then again, we hear Nuum further illumine us of his country’s claim to truth, which, needless to say, is scientific truth, “The positions of the planets and stars determine the seasons, and the seasons in turn determine the cycle of life... life and death. This is fate. Astrology is a science that has been developed on my planet through the study of nature” (Hagio 1996, 112-113).

We have to be mindful of the multi-cultural (and interplanetary) backdrop that drives the story. The characters are from different countries of various planets with different worldviews. This is redolent of Sandra Harding’s (2006, 31-49) contention for the openness that science should have in creating different systems of knowledge due to the fact that cultures and changes in them shape sciences. Furthermore, the argumentation that ensued from Nuum’s declaration of his planet’s scientific beliefs can be read as a problematization of the
demarcation of truth and myth in science. Often, with the blessing of scientific consciousness, we are likely to believe that as a modern people we ought to leave behind things of the past that include beliefs that are unfounded in any competent evidence—myths. This almost-always-ready antipathy is what is actually being conflicted in the Indonesian novel *Transpondex*—a tale about a teenage girl’s adventure into the future to look for and save her father who was actually the inventor of the time travel device dubbed the ‘transpondex.’

The elaboration of the divide between science and myth as truth and fantasy (respectively) lies in the depiction of the future in the story as a historical possibility. This future, as made clearer by the events, is undoubtedly rooted in the past. There is no argument in that except for an interesting detail in the plot of novel—the future Indonesia is inhabited by characters from the epic *Mahabharata* (e.g., *Pendawa*), which is considered (just) a mythological tradition. The unequivocal dismantling of the barrier that separates truth and myth is further compounded by the introduction of actual historical personalities into this future scenario. The main antagonist in the story, who is revealed only toward the end, is easily recognizable as Hitler, who even has at his disposal a ‘swastika inspired’ superhuman fighting technique.

A central understanding that we may achieve from reading the text in this light is that myth is not alien to science. The arena of knowledge and truth-creation is not immune to containing age-old beliefs that need discarding in favor of new ones. As once held scientific principles become refuted and new ones based on more present scientific advances arrive, the scientific community is driven to change its worldview. Ziauddin Sardar (2000, 28-29), in discussing how scientific principles can be outmoded as advanced by Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), asserts that even the scientific method as an idealized process upon which much of science’s claim to objectivity and universalism is based is just a mirage-myth.

Science as politics

Laura Nader (1996), an anthropologist, claims that much about science is taken for granted, such as its bounded and autonomous nature, its homogeneity, its Westernism and its messianic spirit, and often we do not see it as connoting an institutional setting. This is also the tenor of Kuhn’s (1962, 5-6) evaluation of science from the perspective of a professional historian wherein he looks at science not as the objective and disinterested discipline it purports to be but as a dogmatic set of practices that is also self-promoting and self-fulfilling.6

Kobo Abe’s *Inter Ice Age 4* depicts exactly how science does not exist in a vacuum but in a wider context of concrete human and institutional relationships. It is about a scientist, Dr. Katsumi, whose view of science seems to be ‘science for science’s sake.’ He is one who perfectly embodies the distancing of the self from the object of study, a conviction that will lead to his tragic fate as the story unfolds. Dr. Katsumi heads a research lab that monitors and perfects a forecasting machine named ‘Moscow I,’ which was consequently upgraded to ‘Moscow II’. During this time, when the polar ice caps have begun to melt, a secret and illegal group of scientists with the backing of private corporations and certain government institutions have begun work (without Dr. Katsumi’s knowledge) on a scheme to preserve terrestrial life through the biological mutation of animals and even human beings (acquired through aborted human fetuses). The ultimate goal of the project is to create an underwater nation that will survive the destruction of Japan.

Two things in the story immediately lead us to the understanding that science can never be value-free. First, science as an institution is defined and delimited by hierarchy and bureaucracy as effectively represented by the conspiracy against Dr. Katsumi. This involves the complicity of the lab, research institutions, private corporations and the government. Second, the use of science and technology as a tool for various forces to reinforce their goals is portrayed by the squabble initiated by the USA when Dr. Katsumi’s forecasting machine, having been fed with basic information, predicts the triumph of communism. The American government’s gush of vitriol stems from its position as a political rival—at least prior to 1991—of the Soviet Union, as the other superpower. In the story, we witness claims by the USA redolent of Cold War rhetoric: “the [present] course of the Soviet Union is to attempt to threaten the liberty of men and jeopardize international friendship by betraying their own claims for peaceful coexistence.”

Johan Galtung and Robert Jungk (1970), in a critique of the then emerging field of study known as ‘futurism,’ warned against the impending hegemony over the visualization of the future that serves only the interests of power groups by employing the expertise of governmental departments, military establishments and large corporations. This political dimension of science and technology often overlooked by the average individual (as the consumer of science and technology) is cleverly insinuated in *Inside: My Best Friends* (Vol. 107).
1) by Altis Studio. The manga-inspired text revolves around the story of three friends who become involved in the development and use of newly developed hi-tech future weapons in the form of battle suits.

Political overtones with specific reference to a developing country’s dependence on foreign science and technology can be observed in the text. Looking closely at the panel introducing the second chapter, we can see in the background the name of the institution that develops these powerful weapons. Realizing what the name supposedly pertains to, CEDAR (UN Center for Research and Defense Facility), readers are not only given information as to what Indonesian body or establishment may possibly have the capacity in the future to utilize such a level of scientific and technological advancement, but are also made privy to the present-day (or, probable future) scenario of a developing nation’s continued dependence on foreign (Western) science and technology transfer.

**Future imperfect, past forward: Imagining the future in Asian science fictions**

We have seen that Asian scifi is not non-existent, though the literary form is largely seen as a Western cultural product. We have noted how necessary it is that we examine the constructions of the future in Asian scifis and engage in this dialogue with the particularities of the community’s diverse experiences (e.g., as colonial subjects engaging with past colonizers, as developing nations co-existing with industrialized neighbors, as modern states that still cherish traditional sensibilities) as our backdrop or foreground. At this point, aside from the critical look bestowed upon ST, it is also significant to examine the constructions of the future in Asian scifis to see if they challenge or fortify visions of tomorrow that thrive in the status quo of today.

This is especially important in the context of the Third World—largely seen as too backward and unindustrialized to cultivate in itself a culture of scientific and futuristic imaginings. However, it is also this very characteristic of technological delay and scientific disenfranchisement that warrants ample attention to existing articulations of power relations revolving around the interplay of science and technology, development, politics, the military and economy, and society and culture.

By this time, it is unwise to deny the overbearing significance of science and technology in the macro- and micro-spheres of human life. As we have seen in the aforementioned scifi texts from Japan and Indonesia, the future seems to be constructed under the overhanging aegis of science and technology (i.e., space explorations, cyborgs and AIs, hi-tech battle suits, time machines, genetic manipulation). From this viewpoint, we can almost taste the future as techno-scientific and definitely picture it as ‘techno-idyllic.’ However, it is also dangerous to overindulge in the unexamined acceptance of everything that science and modern technology offer us as if to say that they are all that we need in forging a path to tomorrow.

This warning is best given voice by the same scifi texts that, along with the techno-idyllic landscape, envision the future as also replete with oppressive anti-human and sub-human value systems. In the anthology entitled *Administrator* (1974) by Mayumura Taku for example, individuals are transformed into mere machines, much like robots, by training them to be emotionless and expressionless—a prerequisite to being unbiased in the treatment of colonists (called ‘Terrans’ who wish to live on colonized planets) and the natives of the planets.

Aside from a highly significant commentary on colonization, imperialism and the ethnocentrism of human beings, the ‘Administrator System,’ the main metaphor and central image in the narrative, serves as a critique and foreboding about bureaucracy and the reduction of the individual into a mere ‘function’ of a system where robots (machines) are increasingly depended upon in various aspects of daily processes in the forefront of public transactions.

This seemingly dystopic depiction of the future due to the uncritical effluence of technology is especially common in the Japanese texts included in the study. This does not necessarily mean that the Indonesian texts do not engage in such issues or themes as we can see in its commentary on the pitfalls of advanced technology in, for example, the novel *Lost in Teleporter* by Trina Barmawi, which tells the story of a man who loses his nose in a ‘teleportation machine’ in the desire to get to Bandung (a city in Indonesia) the fastest possible way. This is also not to say that a portrayal of a symbiotic relationship with technology is not to be found in the said Japanese texts. It is better to say, in fact, that the Japanese scifi reveals a contradiction when visualizing...
a future eventually tied to science and technology. The highly observed ability of the Japanese to absorb technology and feel a sense of intimacy with it is actually manifest in many scifi materials. For example, in the manga Chobits by Clamp, personal computers in the future have really lived up to the term ‘personal’ since they have become humanoid companions, dubbed ‘persocom,’ that each person can possibly have and choose to have over ‘real’ people. Standing in sheer opposition to Chobits’ benevolent and often servile persocom is a dark and pessimistic imagining of a future beset with man-made humanoid cyborgs and AIs gone berserk, such as the anime Parasite Dolls by Kazuto Nakazawa, in which androids develop unforeseen glitches akin to irrational, even psychotic behavior that proves to be a threat to their human companions.

It is fair enough to say, judging from the materials included in the study, that Indonesian scifi is not similar to the Japanese texts in its level of depicting a highly techno-idyllic future. However, in the scifs of Indonesia, the representation of the future as history is allowed more prominence.

It is interesting to note that many of the Indonesian texts are preoccupied with the theme of time travel.10 Lorong Waktu featured a time machine, Pertualangan Erasmus portrays the tale of a child, Erasmus, and his journey to the future to meet a dictator and his namesake only to find out that the despot is actually his alter-self, and Transpondex brings us yet again to the future of Indonesia that serves as the juncture for the mythical characters of the Mahabharata and actual historical figures. The interest in time travel perhaps goes beyond a penchant for recycling scifi clichés but implicates the very cliché in a particular utility that encourages a more conscious political and ideological engagement or confrontation with personal and shared histories that are constantly reviewed, revisited and revised. Through the aforementioned texts, we bear witness to the ineluctable bond between history as past (even as we concern ourselves) with history as future—be it an articulation of faith and its wider role as a catalyst of social, political and cultural change and bringer of hope, or the intersection of the personal and social in self-actualization and the realization of a destiny, or the assertion of indigenous cosmological narratives in a largely restrictive dominant purview of certain legitimizing institutions of knowledge.

This re-articulation of marginalized views of the future as not solely techno-idyllic but also historically conscious could be the conceptual foundation that shores up another representation of the future that is youth. In both the Japanese and Indonesian texts, the younger generation is usually represented as the rightful owner of the future. From Zidane in Lorong Waktu and the teenage techno-geniuses of Inside to the highly evolved battle suit pilot Amuro Ray in Mobile Suit Gundam and the kids who choose to stay in the ruins of a once-exalted modern city of Aphrodite, they prompt us to revise our understanding of the future as circumscribed by materiality and instead see it as a new breed of consciousness that will inherit the earth. Transcending the innate emptiness of a tabula rasa, to represent the future as youth is to invoke at once a fresh and open but at the same time an informed and evolved consciousness that is prepared to go beyond the limits and traps of outmoded ways of understanding the world and generating knowledge (see for example, how in the series Mobile Suit Gundam by Yoshiyuki Tomino, a story about space colonies and mobile battle suits, the quotidian routine of space exploration triggers an evolution of consciousness and sensibility unbound by a tiresome terrestrial domain).

Perhaps, one of the greatest problematics that the problematization of Asian scifi brings is the extent to which it reinforces or challenges the images and imaginations of science, technology and the future that have been constructed by the (dominant) West. We have always been fascinated by the spectacle that science and technology may bring to tomorrow. Now is the time to question the imagination created by the domination of certain ideological formations. Japanese and Indonesian science fiction as discussed above certainly proclaim the vital role of acknowledging that an active relation with science and technology is not the sole entitlement of the West. From a post-colonial take on science and technology, it is beckoning the developing and non-Western world to challenge a prefigured subjectivity of scientific and technological subjugation, and to dismantle the confinements of (our own) imaginings.

**NOTES**

1 For a listing of the titles of the texts included in the study, please refer to the Appendix.

2 Takayuki Tatsumi’s full discussion on the science fictionality of Asia can be found in the article entitled “Japanese and Asian Science Fiction” in Seed (Ed.) (2005).

3 This statement should not be construed as accurate by any scientific measure. It stems from general observations I made while gathering materials in the country. Though by no means can it be accepted as a statistical truth, the observation is actually supported by local scholars,
The discussion of *Lorong Waktu* as the principal text in the paper is based on an interview with the creator of the program, Dedi Mizwar, who is also a well-known and respected film actor and producer in Indonesia. Since the television program was aired in 2003, I did not have the chance to view it myself and thus sought the next best thing—to gather insights from the maker of the program himself.

It is important to remember at this point that the Puppeteer’s entire thesis is presented as a long and continuous declamation that vividly reflects the transition from a very scientific paradigm to a more philosophical and spiritual invocation. This clearly demonstrates the dissolution of the barrier separating science and spirituality. It is best to see the *manga* itself to gain the insight of the Puppeteer’s profound words in its entirety.

In Kuhn’s discussion, the dogmatic set of practices that is also self-fulfilling as a defining characteristic is especially true for what he terms ‘normal science.’

Moreover, the USA government demands that the current futurology project be abandoned as it proves to exert an obtrusive brutality on the consciousness of those who hear of the machine’s predictions. To complete the entire passage: “We consider the Moscow II to be a violence against the mind; we advise its early abandonment and revocation. In the event our statement should go unheeded, we are prepared to petition the United Nations” (Abe 2004, 14).

I am indebted to Georgi Shakhnazarov for this concept. In his discussion of the field of futurology as fiasco, Shakhnazarov (1982, 15-18) espouses this term to mean that most futuristic scenarios attempt to firm science and technology as omnipotent and the sole determinants of social development. Furthermore, he contends that futurology as a field is slanted in favor of the scientific-technical revolution that paves the way to technical solutions of all social concerns.

Compared to American and European workers, for example, who have often opposed the introduction of new technology, such as robots, that they see as possibly threatening them with unemployment, in Japan’s automobile factories, by stark contrast, each robot is called by a pet name (Chamarik and Goonatilake 1994, 313).

There are two possible explanations for this. First, time travel is a staple in general science fiction texts. We cannot fault any writer of science fiction who chooses to rehash the particular trope. Second, this one we owe to Mas Cahyo Pamungkas of the Indonesia Institute of Sciences (LIPI). In a discussion on Asian science fictions where I first presented this reading of Indonesian science fiction texts, he proposed that the preoccupation of these narratives with time travel could be traced to a particular story where Muhammad the prophet travelled from the earth to the heavens and back in just one day.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX: List of science fiction materials included in the study

Japanese

Novels

Anthologies

Manga

Anime

Film (non-anime)

Indonesian

Novels

Manga/Comic book
Sequen: *Rujukan Seni Cergam* Vol. 1 No. 1-4

TV series
BONES IN TANSU—FAMILY SECRETS

Yoshiko Shimada

Introduction

My art project, “Bones in Tansu—Family Secrets,” originally started in Tokyo in 2004. It travelled to Korea in 2005, and with the API fellowship, I was able to conduct it in Metro Manila, Chiang Mai and Yogyakarta. The project was comprised of an installation, a workshop and a discussion in each country. The installation consisted of a tansu (chest of drawers) and a writing booth. Each drawer contained a secret and a piece of artwork. The audience was encouraged to peek into the drawers and to write their own secrets and put these secrets into a box. I checked the box every day and made new artworks based on the secrets. The installation period lasted from two to four weeks. After this period, I conducted a talk and discussion with the audience. I also conducted workshops to share and further understand these secrets.

The objective of this project was to provide a safe arena for the silenced to express their experiences and share these with others in public without risking their privacy. Creating this space was the ultimate purpose of this project. This was not, however, a tool for sociological research. For research purposes, this installation was not wide-ranging enough and not verifiable. Thus, the audience was not the subject of a research project, but was an essential participant and collaborator in this art project. Through their secrets, I could make some assessment of their society, an assessment that was shared and discussed with the audience through the workshops.

The significance of this project, therefore, did not lie in providing answers to the problems. Rather, it lay in empowering the audience and in encouraging its members to relate to and empathize with each other. This installation served to erase the border between the public and private spheres and to make the audience aware that their private and familial problems are not just personal, but also political.

The project was realized in Metro Manila at the University of the Philippines in Diliman (UP Diliman) from 1 August to 15 September 2006, at the Chiang Mai University (CMU) Art Museum in February 2007 and at the Cemeti Art House in Yogyakarta in July 2007.

Findings

There are some particular issues which interest each local audience. In the beginning of each new location, I presented the secrets from the previous region. In the Philippines, I put secrets from Japan and Korea into the drawers. The audience reacted strongly to some of the secrets. However, I do not intend to essentialize these problems to a particular region since they existed in the previous region. Still, I want to know the reasons behind this strong reaction to particular issues in each site. There are some secrets that appear only in a certain site. For example, political affiliation appears as secrets only in Manila. On the one hand, this could indicate that there are more political problems in the Philippines. On the other, it could indicate that there is greater disillusionment or apathy toward anything political in other countries. Moreover, it may be the case that there is more oppression or self-censorship against political expressions in other countries. There is no one reading of these particularities and I am not trying to find one conclusion. My purpose is to present each region’s particularities and provide some insights so they can be shared and empathized with by people outside the region. The following pages present some of these issues and findings.

Metro Manila

The venue for the installation was the Faculty Center of UP Diliman where there is a great deal of faculty and student traffic. I collected altogether over 250 secrets. Most were written by students and 90 percent were in English. From previous installations in Tokyo and Seoul, I realized that the audience reacted to certain secrets already provided in the drawers. For example, in the case of Metro Manila, many reacted very strongly to a secret from Korea about incestuous sexual abuse against children. As a result, an overwhelming number, about 40 percent of all secrets, were about child abuse. I discussed this with students in three lectures and asked them to write papers about it. Some wrote that the reason behind this is alcohol or substance abuse by
parents, housing inadequacy (i.e., a whole family forced to sleep in one room), and insufficient education for both parents and children. Others said that there are an increasing number of families with absent parents, as parents working abroad leave their children in the care of relatives or older children. Without parental protection, the children left behind are exposed to abusers within their household. Many think that the main reason for this domestic abuse is overwhelming poverty caused by local and global inequality and the government’s inability to support its own citizens.

I also think that one of the reasons why there was such an overwhelming reaction to this particular issue is that there is more awareness of domestic violence and child abuse and wider media coverage in the Philippines. In other words, people are aware that this abuse has a name. In 1994, in Japan, there was no record of domestic child abuse at all. When my artist friend tried to get information from the Japanese Ministry of Health, the officials said that domestic violence and child abuse did not exist in Japan as there was no record, and that the term “domestic violence” was a “foreign” concept. In contrast, awareness of this problem among young people is very high in the Philippines. However, because of the family structure and perhaps religion, it is still difficult to speak out about such experiences. This project provided victims with an opportunity to relieve themselves of their burden.

I was very fortunate to have befriended Alma Quinto, a well-known Filipina artist who participated in the Yokohama Triennale in Japan in 2005. When she was in Yokohama, I collaborated with her in organizing workshops on domestic child abuse and trauma. She had been working with sexually abused girls at an organization called Create Responsive Infants By Sharing (C.R.I.B.S.) in Manila for over ten years. C.R.I.B.S. is a non-profit institution that houses abandoned infants and abused girls between the age of six and seventeen. With Alma’s help, I conducted a workshop with children at C.R.I.B.S. This was to further understand the issue of abuse by interacting with the victims themselves and also to try to provide some help towards their recovery process through art making.

The C.R.I.B.S. workshop’s main purpose was to empower the girls; therefore, the whole process was decided collectively. I came up with the idea of making a pinata and smashing it up. A pinata is a children’s toy of Spanish-Mexican origin. It is a colorful papier-mâché doll filled with candies. At parties, children smash it up with sticks. I have noticed that some institutions for abused children try very hard to exclude any indication of violence from the children’s environment. To my mind, this “protective” method seems to rigidly solidify their identity as that of victims. While some protection may be necessary, I think outbursts of violence and the experience of power in a controlled environment will enhance the children’s self-esteem. Moreover, I also simply wanted to have fun with the girls.

I suggested making a “Monster” pinata and that the girls make drawings of a monster, which could be something from their past experiences or their inner selves or pure fantasy. Then we showed each other these drawings and made up a unified image of a monster. With help from UP students, we made the basic structure of a pinata with papier-mâché, which the girls then painted. I put secrets of child abuse cut into small pieces like confetti and candies inside the monster. On the day of the smashing, the girls dressed up in their best (they wanted to dress as super women) and sang a song from the Philippine version of the TV series Wonder Woman. The girls then smashed up the monster and tore it open. Afterwards, we discussed how they felt about it. Many said it was a great deal of fun and also felt that it was empowering.

Another aspect very particular to the Philippines are secrets about political affiliation. There are many students who kept their membership in or sympathy for the Communist Party of the Philippines a secret from their families. Unlike in Japan, the Communist Party is banned in the country and crackdowns on students on the UP campus are prevalent. While I was there, one female student with a video camera was abducted by a special police force unit and later released. An uncle of my friend was gunned down during his political campaign. Thus, the threat is very visible and real. However, even in this difficult situation, there are also brave and encouraging secrets. Several participants said their secret is that they want to become doctors, teachers, or volunteer workers to help deprived people, rather than carry on the family businesses and make money. This social awareness and eagerness to do something to improve their society is not found once in Japan among the more than 1,000 secrets I gathered there, and was also rarely found in other countries. This may be because of the location (i.e., UP Diliman is a state university) but, compared to other countries’ political apathy, the young students’ compassion and interest in the socially marginalized in the Philippines seem to be very strong.

Chiang Mai

Here, the venue of the installation was the Chiang Mai
University Art Museum. Chiang Mai University has an extensive campus and a very strong fine arts department that is reflected in the CMU Art Museum, which is very large for a university and is as large as many municipal museums in Japan. The installation was held in a relatively small room on the first floor. While traffic was not as frequent as it is in Manila, the museum is visited by the general public and many tourists so the audience for the installation was more diverse. Before the show, some people from Thailand told me that Thais are very shy and would not reveal their secrets to strangers, the same thing I was told before the first installation in Tokyo. However, I collected over 1,000 secrets in one museum show in Tokyo alone. Although the number of secrets collected here was lower than in Manila, the percentage of participants from the audience who wrote these secrets was about the same. I received 80 secrets altogether, after which I had a series of discussions with students from Chiang Mai University and local artists. Of all the secrets collected, the common thread was about the closeness of family relationships and its burden. Parent-child relationships seem co-dependent on economic, social and emotional factors. Some students suggested that this reflects a regional characteristic of the northern rural Thais, where traditional family values are stronger as compared to the big city of Bangkok.

After some discussions with art students, CMU students expressed an interest in creating artwork from other people’s secrets. One student said: “Before, I thought artists were to express themselves. But now I realize that artists can empathize with other people’s pain in the artwork.” Much of the art education here seems to be centered on the rather romantic, 19th century Western idea of art as the product of some genius artist who expresses his inner emotions, or pure aesthetics, removed from society. For most art students, the participation of the audience in creating artwork was unthinkable. I was very much moved by the CMU art students’ empathy and willingness to internalize and create art from other people’s pain and sadness. Six students completed small drawings and collages, after which I interviewed them on video about what they were thinking in the process of art making. Finally, I exhibited their work together with mine in new drawers in Indonesia.

One of those interviewed was an art student who said that the secret that affected him most was one in which a man was mistakenly arrested and imprisoned by the police. Later this person became a lawyer in order to help those who are wrongly accused. That student made an abstract black drawing.

“I did this drawing and kept working on it again and again. It was like a catharsis of letting go of the effect of the secret I read. I kept on drawing until I felt fine, getting rid of the fear I felt from the secret.”

“Normally when I make an art work, it comes from my inner feelings or my own experiences. This time it was different. I was affected by the suffering of another. It was a new experience for me.”

From his words, it is apparent that art and art making is a tool for both empathy towards and recovery from trauma, which is not necessarily the artist’s own.

Yogyakarta

On my next stop, I performed the project at the Cemeti Art House in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Unlike all previous cases, the Cemeti has no affiliation with an academic institution. It started as an artist-run gallery of contemporary Indonesian art, founded about 25 years ago by Mella Jaarsma and Nindityo Adipurnomo, two internationally well-known artists. The house is one of the most respected art institutions in Yogyakarta, where contemporary art and artists seem to be thriving. The Cemeti certainly has been the center of much artistic and political energy in Yogyakarta. It provides a gallery and office space as well as residential quarters for artists, and is now hosting a residency program with Artoteek Den Haag in the Netherlands. The residency program, LANDING SOON, is a three-year exchange program which provides two spaces for artists from The Hague and one space for an artist from Indonesia for period of time.

Most people who came to the installation, apart from the general public, were artists. Over time, I collected about 80 secrets, after which I conducted one round of talks with artists that was attended by over 40 people. This was followed by a very vigorous discussion. Interestingly, almost all of the secrets collected at the Cemeti have one common theme, namely sex. Sexual relationships and sexuality in general seem to be the participant’s main secrets from their families. Many said that this was due to religious beliefs as, unlike the other countries where I had previously conducted this project, Indonesia is overwhelmingly an Islamic nation. Young people’s sexual activity seems to be strongly controlled by society. This does not mean that the young are sexually inactive, but rather that their activities and feelings need to be hidden from authority inside and outside the family.

One female participant suggested that many writers
might have been women. Although many in the audience were indeed female, there were very few female artists or art students. While I spent some time at a local art academy and went to art performance events, I met only a few female art students. One internationally known female Indonesian artist, who is self-taught, said that there is still unspoken discrimination against women in Indonesian art institutions. There seem to be fewer opportunities and little encouragement for women to express themselves in an artistic form. Therefore, when they come across an opportunity to speak out in public without fear of sanctions, they pour out their most personal secrets.

Another issue that came up in the discussion is the absence of current socio-political topics in these secrets. One discussant said that perhaps this is due to the young generation’s apathy to anything political. In the 1990s, when there was political turmoil and the student movement in Indonesia was very strong, artistic expressions were also predominantly concerned with social and political issues. After several changes in governments, the younger generation now seems to be more concerned with their personal relationships. One older artist at the discussion said that now most of the middle-class youth in urban areas are turning a blind eye to the suffering of people in deprived regions.

Indeed, when I spoke with young art students, they preferred talking about famous Japanese pop artists and comics rather than about victims of the recent earthquake, floods, poverty and corruption. This is, however, not a particularly Indonesian phenomenon. The commercialization of art and globally marketed popular culture are spreading all over the world, which is precisely the reason why I started this project in Japan in the first place. For over ten years now, I have been creating art works that directly deal with issues of conflict and history. However, in recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to communicate with youth, who seem to have very little interest in or knowledge about Japan’s recent history. They seem more concerned about their daily lives and relationships with their small circle of friends and family. I want them to realize that their personal issues and grievances can be related to social structures and political issues, including history. Acknowledging and sharing the pains of the personal can be a strong political action.

The absence of real political issues and the prevalence of personal, sexual issues in the secrets collected, therefore, do not mean that there is little political awareness in Indonesia. Providing this little space to breathe and release the personal can lead to the acknowledgement of these voices that have not previously been heard, and the finding of relevance for their experiences. Perhaps this kind of “sexual politics” can lead to change in the real political structure.

After completing the project in three countries (in addition to Japan and Korea), my findings share the following similarities:

1. There is much violence and oppression hidden behind the façade of seemingly harmonious “Asian family values.” In each country, the majority of family secrets pertain to domestic violence, sexual abuse and other suffering caused by a strict family structure.

2. The ones suffering and silenced are mostly women and young people. Although the secrets were written anonymously, I deduced the writers’ gender and age group from the writing style and language. The social structure they live in forces them to remain quiet; thus, their problems become internalized.

3. The above problems arise from a lack of education, gender inequality, poverty, religious dogmatism, and changing value systems. The last one seems to be particularly prevalent in the Asian region, where modernization, globalization and capitalization have been occurring at a very rapid pace, and leaving huge gaps between male and female, young and old, rich and poor, and urban and rural people. Social inequality seems to be getting worse, and the oppressed and weak are becoming increasingly sidelined and ignored.

Conclusions and Implications

The original purpose of this project was to create a safe space in which the public and the personal could meet anonymously. In such a space, personal problems are recognized and empathized with by the public and their causes politicized. However, now that I possess over 2,000 secrets, I believe I have some kind of responsibility to develop the project further to seek out the possible role art can play in the actual recovery process. While on the one hand, there is a definite need to change the social structures that cause these problems, on the other, there is an immediate need to help those who suffer from them. Some of the secrets I collected are indeed desperate cries for help. Changing social structures is a long-term goal, but empowering the victims, through art, is a more urgent need.

The workshop I conducted with girls at C.R.I.B.S.
in Manila is one example of how art can intervene to support the process of recovery. There, I was fortunate to be able to collaborate with Alma Quinto, a Filipina artist, as well as with caregivers and administrators who have been working with sexually abused girls for years and built trusting relationships with them. It is essential to establish trust between artists, therapists and sufferers in order for this kind of art project to succeed. Beginning with the planning process, it should be collaborative; otherwise, it will just be another exploitation of the sufferers as objects in the name of art. Also, it should differ from so-called “art therapy” where, in most cases, artists instruct the victims to create some artwork from their experiences. While it is not without merit, I think it often leaves the sufferers remaining in their victimhood. It is not enough to merely recount their past experiences, it should give them a new meaning and significance and provide a way to recognize and recover from them. It is also important to design such a project as an “open” rather than a “closed” one. Of course the privacy and safety of the victims should be the priority, but public participation and interaction is a vital part in order to elevate personal problems to social ones. From my past experiences, “closed” art projects may help solidify a certain group identity and provide safety, but they often deteriorate into self-pity and internal power struggles. Controlled “open” projects enable real empowerment to all participants through collaboration and interaction.

In the future, I would like to develop a new art project based on the findings of this project and hope to bring it to the same regions I visited this time. I would also like to report my findings back home in Japan, where family-related social problems have become more visible of late, but where public awareness and the politicization of these causes are still underdeveloped.

End words: “The personal is the political”

This is a famous feminist thesis, which I believe is still relevant. This whole project is an embodiment of this thesis. There are many oppressed people who remain voiceless and are made to blame themselves and to resign themselves to their “destiny.” Sharing, empathizing and collectively seeking justice and recovery is not just a need of feminists, but a universal need. I hope my art project can contribute to this effort in the future.
CULTURAL ATTITUDES TO ANIMALS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONS AS A DIMENSION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY FORMATION AND DYNAMICS

Myfel Joseph Paluga

Banga man ug tadyaw kon singkion sila./Dayag nga madaut ang banga, dili ba? ...[When an earthen jar and a large stoneware vessel are struck together,/The earthen jar will certainly break, won’t it?...][—Emiliano Batinicila, “Lawa-Lawa” [Spider Web] (1938)

Introduction

Imaginative markers between humans and animals are seen in the everyday moves of a language. This point was driven home to me, one day, in the flow of a casual conversation in the gria (priestly house) of the ratu (traditional chief) in Sangeh village (Bali), where my wife and I stayed. Recalling that the watchdog barked almost regularly at two or three o’clock early each morning, usually waking me up, I asked the question of whether ‘Browny garap’ (‘the dog Browny works’) was a good sentence. I was then beginning to pick up bits of working Balinese phrases. A quick ‘no’ was the response, coupled by some laughter. Browny makan (eats), the ratu inserted a point, joining the conversation while ironing his clothes. Eating, not working, is Browny’s main activity and garap (work) is only for humans. I again got a ‘no’ when I mentioned that dogs also ‘work’ by actively guarding the gria every night. However, after a brief silence, someone said, ‘Sapi garap, yeah, okay,’ (the cow works) resulting in some merriment to the household to what appeared like an insight.

Some basic life-acts, reflected in a language, certainly serve as distinctions in the divide between humans and animals. In the everyday lives of people, there are mundane practices that show ‘us humans’ busily putting up markers of distinctions, and therefore identifications, from ‘them animals.’ The ‘animal’ seems to constantly re-insert itself via the backdoor every time one opens the front door to announce ‘the human’ and its proper limits. How this taken-for-granted dialectic between humans and animals is played in Southeast Asian contexts, both in ordinary talk or in broad historical patterns, is the interest of this paper.

Sites

The descriptions and reflections in this paper were made possible by a series of fieldwork that we undertook in the Philippines¹ (mountain settlements of Mt. Apo, Mindanao) and outside, in Java (Depok), Bali (Denpasar and Sangeh), and parts of southern (Surat Thani and Nakhon Sri Thammarat), central (Bangkok and Lopburi), and northern (Chiang Dao) Thailand.²

Objectives

The paper presents ethnographic and ethological descriptions on selected aspects of human-animal relations in Southeast Asia, specifically in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. A sampling of these animal-relating practices and attitudes, happening in varying ecological and cultural contexts, shows the extent of diversity Southeast Asians have woven as a result of their long-term interactions with nonhuman animals. The modes of interaction are both complex and patterned. While we cannot give a single unifying label to the phenomena, we cannot also discount the broad themes that emerge in these dynamic practices. This paper wants to highlight both the dynamics and patterns in human-animal relations and pinpoint, as emerging from such relations, aspects that are explicitly linked to notions of identities.

Significance

A basic premise of this paper, one that it wants to endorse as a way of seeing, is to look at the ethnographic and ethological descriptive bits as constitutive elements in the formation of how we construe ourselves—as well-marked and bounded “human” entities—as we live in a wider, more-than-human world. Whether real or imagined, animals figure well in the making of our daily lives and self-understandings in this interwoven world of life-forms. More than being actively political, every identity-making act is part of daily existence. It is, in philosophical terms, flatly ontological, a basic and everyday question on the ‘who’ and the ‘what’: one that is always already-there and, without much fanfare, constantly re-asserted and re-figured in our daily transactions in, and with, the world. While not being able to give full flesh to a demanding claim, this paper might be significant in opening up and exploring on this note—animals and identities—in a Southeast Asian context.³
Methodology

We did a combination of library research, field ethnography, animal behavior observations (ethology), surveys and interviews. Photography, video documentation, recorded interviews and group discussions were also utilized. We were helped by Balinese and Thai interpreters in most of our interviews and also by competent individuals, mostly academe-based, in the development of our survey instruments, in the actual conducting of the survey, and in the analysis of results. While the main source for the study’s findings are taken from fieldwork in the sites mentioned above, comparative library information from other areas of Asia are cited when relevant.

Findings

The complex and ambivalent ways in which Southeast Asians relate to animals can readily be observed in the case of monkeys. Monkeys are variously feared, venerated, hated, displayed, disciplined, respected, made as resources for moralizing, given a sacred space, plus a host of more ambivalent emotions. Some ethnographic bits from Bali highlight these aspects. *Feared:* while walking with a Balinese mother and her son beside a troop of feeding monkeys in Sangeh Monkey Forest, both of them kept mentioning *takut* (fear) as their feeling for the monkey, with the mother even commenting on how I had the nerve to follow them almost every day; the local *pawang bojog* (monkey tamer) is always first described as one who, while not having ‘fear’ of the monkeys, is the one ‘feared’ by the monkeys. *Venerated* or shown venerating: images of monkeys and their leader Hanuman can be found in many temple sculptures and paintings; some monkey-figures are also depicted as making their own veneration gestures, as in a praying position; their constant association with the sacred forests also made them “sacred monkeys” to some folk and tourist imaginations. *Hated:* both direct observation during our fieldwork and reports by other observers found cases in which monkeys roving far outside of the sacred forest grounds are shot at or stoned by angry farmers for disturbing their fields. *Displayed:* in various artworks as pop figures; as traveling monkey-performers in *topeng monyet* (monkey performances) shows that one could encounter sometimes in the streets of Denpasar and varied places of Java, as *obyek pariwisata* (tourist objects) in many “monkey forests” of Bali and sacred temples of Thailand, as “working monkeys” in the coconut fields of Sumatra and south Thailand, as agricultural “pests” dwelling in the margins of mountainous settlements of Mindanao, or as conservation targets in the mangrove areas of Surat Thani.

Through all these, however, there are broad and enduring patterns observable, from Bali to Mindanao to southern and central Thailand. One broad pattern seen in these diverse contexts is the propensity of monkeys to actively assert themselves, and by their trainability and adaptability, to find niches, or to be forced into them, in the expanding spaces of humans. This is displayed in their insertion into various aspects of the everyday life of the people: as performers in pedestrian *topeng monyet* in the streets of Denpasar and varied places of Java, as *obyek pariwisata* (tourist objects) in many “monkey forests” of Bali and sacred temples of Thailand, as “working monkeys” in the coconut fields of Sumatra and south Thailand, as agricultural “pests” dwelling in the margins of mountainous settlements of Mindanao, or as conservation targets in the mangrove areas of Surat Thani.
Patterns and structures in human-animal relations

I would like to underline at least six general and enduring patterns that could be observed in human-animal relations in Southeast Asia, which might even apply beyond this region: (1) the role of domestication (after a long prehistory of hunting-gathering life), the resulting rise of agricultural village patches hedging on forests, and the emergence of enduring dichotomies that have shaping effects on the lives of humans and animals: wild/tame, forest/village, ‘beastly animals’/‘humane humans’ (a kind of post-neolithic pattern in human-animal relations); (2) the adaptability of monkeys in exploiting the changing and increasingly constrained landscapes of the region (this could also be true of many other animals, the crows of Japan being a celebrated example); (3) the divergent effects on animals brought about by the expanding eco-tourism industry and globalizing forces, as dramatized by the case of Bangkok street dogs and the obyek pariwisata monkeys of Bali; (4) over-conservation, the making of animal pests, and other unwanted by-products of some cultural practices and/or human-dominated ecosystems; (5) the diverging kinds of animals given central importance in different cognitive domains; and (6) (as an exploratory point) the interaction of several factors (e.g., tourist-villages compared to non-touristic ones; city versus village) in shaping perceptions of animals. The main data to be given here will touch on the results of the conducted survey.

(1) Enduring dichotomies from the neolithic period and post-domestication practices
Thais have the sat pa/sat liang dichotomy to register the wild/tame binary, and this has variations in almost all groups in Southeast Asia. This binary cannot be seen among most surviving hunter-gatherer peoples of today, suggesting its emergence when humans entered the Neolithic Period and took seriously the growing path of domestication. Two consequences have since resulted from that point onward: (a) non-domesticated animals began to be construed as ‘beastly’ and ‘aggressive,’ partly as a result of simply their being not-tamed, and partly as a result of ecological logic: some ‘wild animals’ (like monkeys) are attracted to forage near the margins of settled villages where crops and fruit-bearing trees are in great concentration; thus began the ‘natural conflict’ between farmers and ‘pest animals’; (b) as knowledge of selective breeding increased, as a central tool in domestication, there also resulted the growing propensity of humans to selectively transform animals beyond the needs of sustenance. A result of this trend can now be seen in the shaping of ‘sport animals’ like the region-wide sabung (cockfighting), the southern Thai wua chon (bull-fighting), and the Thai ‘fighting fish.’ The extent of reshaping that Southeast Asians have done to these organisms, mental and physical, cannot be over-emphasized. An interesting scientific study, for example, shows the hyper-aggressive behavior of Thai-breed fighting fishes compared to their ancestral species.

(2) Adaptability of monkeys and other animals in improvising ways of living in human-dominated ecosystems
Udayana University-based primatologists have documented diverse forest patches, mostly with temples and thus considered sacred, which have been exploited by monkeys (fascicularis macaques) as their territories. In Sangeh, the 10-12 hectares of dipterocarp forest, a
sacred ground, also became home to about six or seven troops of monkeys, which we were able to document. In the relatively more natural settings of Mt. Apo, a ten-hectare area is only fit for one troop, which is strongly territorial and prevents other troops from entering its vicinities. The Sangeh macaques managed to accommodate each other, the six eager troops, in taking advantage of the rationed food from the people (financed by tourism earnings) by evolving a kind of fluid territoriality. In such an emergent design, the hierarchy of troops cycles (the stronger troop first, then the second, and so on) in sequence, from the first to the last hour of the day, in taking their share of the food placed in the feeding area. At the biogeographic level, an interesting long-term collaborative study of both Balinese and non-Balinese primatologists suggests that for hundreds of years, Balinese macaques have been exploiting the “mosaic of riparian forest” carved out by Balinese farmers over the last few millennia. These patches are now counted at almost fifty in the most recent inventory. Macaques inhabiting these areas, mostly associated also with temples and shrines, exist in “fairly high density.” Religious protection from these areas, the recent emphasis on tourism, and the increased provisioning of tourism monkeys have even accelerated their growth.

A close study of how monkeys in differing contexts (in Lopburi, in Mt. Apo, in Surat Thani’s mangrove areas) show diverse strategies of living would itself form another paper. A quite dramatic case might be given as a paradigmatic example. Carrion crows in Sendai, Japan harvest walnuts each autumn and place them in front of cars stopping at traffic signals. When the cars move, the nuts are crushed, and the birds fly down to eat the nutritious nutmeats. The city crows’ food niche has expanded, perhaps due to less availability of naturally-eaten nuts, to those that are unbreakable by their beaks. The solution lies itself in the context of urbanity.

(3) Globalizing forces, eco-tourism, and the disciplining of animals by modularizing their spaces

It is quite eye-opening to see the strong contrasts when one reads the many European travelers’ accounts of Southeast Asia even up to the early 20th century. They always noticed the many animals—dogs, chickens, pigs, and transport animals—allowed to freely roam the public spaces, in both villages and cities. As modernity and its modular and sanitizing ethos strengthened its grip on public administrators, animal spaces became subjected to strict regulation and regimentation. A dramatic case can be seen when hundreds, perhaps thousands, of street dogs in Bangkok were rounded up and transferred to the city’s margins to clean the city of eye-sores during the APEC meeting of 2003. The same “cleaning” of street dogs also happens in Bali when...
national dignitaries from Jakarta take a tour of the place. Some Balinese were also considering Islamic sensibilities against dogs. In New Israel, Mt. Apo, and even in Bali, some villagers seem to have given themselves warrant to stone or shoot monkeys who have 'strayed' out of their allowed spaces.

(4) Over-conservation and other unwanted by-products of some traditional practices or emerging patterns in human-dominated ecosystems

This is seen in the following cases: (a) the superabundance, even approaching the level of being field pests, of wild pigs in an area of non-pork-eating Malaysia;\(^\text{15}\) (b) the fast-growing population and quite obese monkeys of tourist-swarmed temples in Sangeh (Bali) and Lopburi (Thailand); (c) aggression and assaults on tourists by monkeys, who might have developed "bad habits" in touristic settings;\(^\text{16}\) and (d) the occurrence of the world’s first reported case of monkey-to-human "simian foamy virus" (SFV) transmission in Bali (although such viral transmission is asymptomatic).\(^\text{17}\)

(5) Different kinds of animals given central importance in different cognitive domains and practices

An example can be seen when we compare animal images in folk stories and illustrations of animals found in magico-mystical practices. In Bali, snakes or dragons predominate in magical illustrations while monkeys predominate in folk narratives.\(^\text{18}\) Two points might be derived from these facts: (a) that valuations given to animals could be domain-specific (i.e., a given animal is highly valued in one domain, like in oral narratives, but not so much in another domain, like in visualizing practices); (b) both story-telling and magico-mystical valuations of animals might not necessarily translate to ecology-oriented conservationist valuation as this might be another cognitive domain. These cognitive patterns,\(^\text{19}\) in tandem with changing social conditions, might be the reason why snakes or other culturally-potent animal images are assigned symbolic powers but their counterparts in real life could just as well be over-exploited as other ordinary animals.\(^\text{20}\)

(6) Interaction of several factors in shaping perceptions of animals

The relevant highlights of the survey include the following:\(^\text{21}\) (a) a distinctively high rating on the sacred (duwe) status of monkeys in Sangeh as compared to its neighboring villages (or to the city of Kuta).\(^\text{22}\) This suggests the important role of specific social and economic settings within Bali in shaping perceptions of animals (Sangeh is traditionally famous for its "monkey forest" and has economically benefited from its monkey-forest ecotourism setting); (b) respect (for

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**'Monkeys are sacred,' 'They can be protectors of humans'**

**VARIATIONS OF VIEWS BY SELECTED BALI COMMUNITIES/AREAS**

Paired bars for each community/area (thick bar = mean) show respectively, the range of views on macaques (looked up: sacred (duwe) and protectors). Rating scale: [1] No opinion; [2] Low; [3] Moderate; [4] High; [5] Very High; Very Agree. Horizontal line shows the distinctly high ratings on the duwe status of monkeys by Desa Sangeh (means > 3.5) compared to others (means < 3.5). It also shows separation of duweview from the idea of monkeys as protectors of humans.

Link lines for each paired bars show similar pattern across all areas (left-to-right downward slant).
monkeys or other animals) was not necessarily linked to perceptions of similarity (with humans). Sangeh folks gave high ratings for monkeys as being ‘sacred’ but gave low ratings for the ideas that ‘they are kin,’ ‘protectors of humans,’ and that their ‘lives are similar to humans;’ (c) a mixed attitude exists among local people (ranging from hesitancy to some degree of agreement) with regard to the ‘destructive’ practices of monkeys. Being held as sacred does not make the monkeys socially ‘innocent’ in local people’s eyes; and (d) animals were not given equal cultural and religious high-marks. Monkeys, for example, are given higher ratings for religious importance than dogs or birds.

**Human-animal relations and the weaving of identities**

As mentioned earlier, the “animal” figures as the demarcation boundary for identifying the “human.” This seems to be a basic denominator in the formation of ‘human’ identity, with the ‘animal’ as the contrastive other. There are, however, other aspects that link animals with identity-making practices in Southeast Asia as shown in at least three cases below: (1) the role of monkeys in shaping the identity of places; (2) the important and traditional role of the ‘animal-tamer’ in many areas of Southeast Asia; and, (3) sociocultural factors affecting the linguistic and cognitive structure of the human/animal divide.

(1) Animals and the identity of places

Some places in Southeast Asia are associated with animals. Quite prominent are areas within Hindu-Buddhist spheres where some places are associated with the animal characters of the Ramayana or other folk narratives. For example: (a) Lopburi, in its founding mythology, is the land given to the loyal fighting monkeys of the Ramayana, thus ‘embedding the story in its landscape’; (b) Surat Thani’s iconic image in most state-funded tourist flyers, maps and leaflets, promoting it as the place where coconut-picking *lin kang* monkeys (*nemestrina* macaques) are found; (c) Sangeh’s changing image and function as reflected in its popular name-in-use, from temple-centered *Bukit Sari* to tourist-object, monkey-centered “Monkey Forest.” These symbolic animal associations are sometimes given actualization by protecting real animals found in the areas (*fascicularis* monkeys of Lopburi and Sangeh; *nemestrina* monkeys of Surat Thani; snakes, bats, and birds in different areas of Bali). In due time, tourism has further strengthened these animal links as the centerpieces of local attractions. No one would think of Sangeh of Bali, for example, without mentioning its sacred forest and its monkeys.

(2) The ‘animal tamer’ person has a traditional and still-continuing role in many Southeast Asian societies

An enduring and important village figure in Southeast Asia is the “animal tamer or trainer.” Whether as birdsinging trainer, monkey tamer, or as a specialist of other animals, the social role of the “animal tamer” is still being asserted in these times of advancing modernity in so-called “traditional societies.” The *pawang bojog* of Sangeh is illustrative of this case. His recognized expertise in ‘taming’ and ‘disciplining’ monkeys who are ‘fierce’ or ‘naughty’ has been taken advantage of by primatologists doing research there and by veterinarians periodically checking the monkeys of Sangeh. The *pawang* is the one called for by the veterinarian to get a sick or dead monkey from the protective troop. He has also guided researchers in identifying troop location and has shared information on various aspects of monkey behavior. Scientists working on elephant conservation in northern Thailand, on the other hand, have been greatly dependent on mahouts and their indigenous knowledge of animal behavior and techniques in taming elephants.

(3) Sociocultural factors affecting the linguistic and cognitive structure of the human/animal divide

Exploratory sociocultural patterns include the following: (a) Balinese, compared to Indonesian and Filipino (or English), strongly encodes the human-animal divide in its use of language; lexical dissimilarity when talking about humans and talking about animals might indicate a higher tendency in Balinese culture to emphasize the...
dissimilarities between humans and animals; (b) villagers (mostly farmers), compared to university graduate students, make a stronger divide between humans and animals in language use, suggesting the importance of socio-economic factors in shaping cultural/linguistic patterns; (c) gender and caste factors are also important in influencing such patterns—for example, categories that are given importance in the human/animal divide differ between sexes and castes.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

There are interesting continuities in the ways Southeast Asians relate traditionally to animals that are still observable in the present. Selected animals, like monkeys and elephants, have been assigned special places in the social and cognitive domains of various areas of the region. These animal presences are even exaggerated and symbolically dramatized with the advent of state sponsorship and global tourism. While perhaps showcasing environmentalist views, buffered by some eco-friendly aspects of Hindu-Buddhism, there are also not-so-animal-friendly by-products in present animal-relating practices, as they interact with the wider forces of a changing world. In diverse issues relating to human-animal relations, a proper appreciation of the scientific ethos might be needed to calibrate traditional views and practices to the actual lives of present animals. The following points might be considered: (1) an intervention to alleviate the quality of life of culturally-protected animals (e.g., temple monkeys) should be informed by balancing religious sentiments with scientific assessments. In the case of monkeys, for example, the culling or transferring of excess troops to forests might be considered for areas where monkey troops are overpopulated; (2) many of the relevant proposals of animal rights groups should be openly considered, as some of them are quite humane and practical, like the neutering of street dogs abandoned by humans; (3) animal rights activists, however, should also factor into their discourses the important role of the cultural and socio-economic forces shaping human-animal relations. For example, there is really the need to go beyond a simplified construal of the “rights” of the nonhuman animals by first understanding the complex forces shaping human-animal relations in the varied contexts of Southeast Asia.

I will end, however, on a more philosophical note. The paper has highlighted some complex patterns in human-animal relations in Southeast Asia. Shown are narrative-bits about ‘our’ lives and identities that go beyond the humans-among-ourselves stories, recognizing the ordinary but important roles of animals in many facets of social life. One need not be in Sangeh or Lopburi, places that dramatically showcase the social role of animals, to see that the everyday lives of humans, and their varying constructions of self, are interwoven with the lives of nonhuman animals. Visioning an alternative world needs the knowledge brought by a closer study of the complex relations humans have with animals, as active, sometimes irritating, always necessary, agents of nature.

**NOTES**

1 See Paluga (2006) for a brief overview of the general themes in human-animal relations in Makilala, Mt. Apo.

2 My wife and I have been conducting intermittent fieldwork and visits in Mt. Apo, mostly to study macaques, since the late 1990s; we extended these field studies late last year up to the middle of this year in Indonesia and Thailand. The fieldwork in Indonesia and Thailand was conducted from 16 November 2006 to 20 May 2007, a total of about six months—104 days in Indonesia and 81 days in Thailand. In Bali, we stayed in the village of Sangeh for one-and-a-half months (25 December 2006 to 9 February 2007) to do ethological observations on Balinese macaques at the Sangeh Monkey Forest and to do village surveys and interviews on human attitudes to monkeys and other animals. We also conducted field and ocular visits in areas with animals held to be sacred (e.g., birds, snakes, monkeys, bats) that also have developed into tourist attractions: at Uluwatu, Tanah Lot, Alas Kedaton, Petulu, Ubud Monkey Forest and Goa Lawah. In Thailand, we stayed for some weeks (1 March to 20 May 2007) to do ethological observations on Balinese macaques at the Sangeh Monkey Forest and to do village surveys and interviews on human attitudes to monkeys and other animals. We also conducted field and ocular visits in areas with animals held to be sacred (e.g., birds, snakes, monkeys, bats) that also have developed into tourist attractions: at Uluwatu, Tanah Lot, Alas Kedaton, Petulu, Ubud Monkey Forest and Goa Lawah. In Thailand, we stayed for some weeks (1 March to 20 May 2007) to do field observations and conduct interviews mostly in tambon (administrative unit) Klong Noi, Ban Tong Tuang, Surat Thani province, and at some tambon within and near Tasala City, Nakhon Sri Thammarat province.
While listing interesting and varied bits of human-animal relations in different areas of Southeast Asia, the paper wants to constantly pose or insinuate this point: what if these practices are not merely casual effects but, more importantly, are part of the many intrinsic causes in how we spontaneously identify ourselves? What if, instead of animals being simply utilities and spectacles, we are more dependent on them, materially and imaginatively, than we would credit, in our everyday construction of ‘us’ as a stable ‘we’?

The linguistic aspects of the paper benefited much from consulting with a senior linguist in Udayana University (Dr. I.G.M. Sutjaja). Direct and indirect help from a colleague in the Computer Science and Mathematics Department (the late Dr. N. Navarrete) of UP-Mindanao supplemented my knowledge in the shaping and analysis of some quantitative approaches. We gained background, central, and supplemental information for the study in the many libraries of Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok) and Walailak University (Tasala City) and in the personal libraries of kind individuals. We also acquired relevant materials from various bookstores of the two countries.

See also the ethnographic observations of Wheatley (1999) on the treatment of Balinese monkeys by different people.

Bird-David (1990) gives a capsule idea of the ways “gatherer-hunters” relate to the forest and its “giving environment,” one dominated by concepts like “forest as parents,” “nature as ancestors,” and the human beings in the village as “siblings.” (See also, along this line, the study of Seitz (2007) on the attitudes to animals among Bornean hunter-gatherers, and also the full-length ethnography of Brightman on hunter-prey relations among the Crees.) Also, the earliest and widely-distributed category for “world,” “territory,” or a demarcated space in archipelagic Southeast Asian and Oceanic contexts, the concept of banua/vanua, could encompass both the cultivated and non-cultivated/forested areas and also both humans and nonhumans (i.e., plants and animals). Berkes, Kislalioglu, Folke and Gadgil (1998) consider banua/vanua as referring to a wider notion of “land” as both the physical and the “living environment” or the “ecosystem.” In the Austronesian context, the historical reconstruction of Salazar (2006) places the category banua as a concept that predates the emergence of “chiefdom” societies. While the Austronesians, with their banua and related concepts, are already neolithic, the fact that these concepts were in place during the earliest period of settlement formation might suggest their close link to a pre-neolithic, “giving environment” worldview. This is quite a contrast with the succeeding neolithic stance of increasingly emphasizing the demarcation between the realms of the cultivated (e.g., village and its domesticates) and the non-cultivated (e.g., forest and its animals). Settled villagers who practice cultivation and, at the same time, still rely to some extent on gathering and hunting, lie midway between classic hunter-gatherers and full-time farmers. This midway mode is most probably the condition of the earliest Austronesians living in their banua-world. Conceptions of the world that are dominant in the hunting-gathering mode of living, like the banua view, would still survive in the neolithic and post-neolithic modes if only in a more toned down version.

The importance given by neolithic, Southeast Asian peoples to their domesticates might be seen in the study of Blust (2002) on the faunal terms in Austronesian languages. He makes the interesting observation (p. 91) that while there is no generic term for ‘animal’ in both the Proto-Austronesian and Proto-Malayo-Polynesian languages, the Proto-Western-Malayo-Polynesian (e.g., Indonesian and the Philippine languages) has a generic term for ‘domesticated animal’ (ayam). One could, for example, see the domesticated/forest distinction in the Malay (h)ayam, ‘domestic fowl’ with the ayam hutan or ayam alas (forest fowl), or the Bisaya ihalal/binubi (wild/domesticated) distinction which is also true in many Philippine languages.

Higham (1996) presents what I think is the earliest archaeological depiction, in an East Asian, Bronze Age context (southern China, south of Lake Dian), of animals represented as “fierce” and “predatory.” A decoration on a piece of forearm armor (p. 169) depicts various animals biting, fighting or chasing each other. Another artifact (p. 168) is in the form of a sacrificial table in the shape of a domesticated cow attacked, on its hindquarters, by a leaping tiger. Wood remains from the principal site (Lijiashan cemetery) have been carbon-dated to 830-400 BC. The villages that created these artifacts are at the chiefdom level of political complexity. Historically, chiefdoms are also sociopolitical forms that marked the beginning, or at least predominance, of systematic inter-village attacks and warfare. Chiefly warriors, in various contexts, have appropriated animal figures (as tigers or birds of prey, for example) in construing themselves during warfare.

See the diverse people-wildlife conflicts in case studies edited by Knight (2000). See also Paluga (2006) for the case of human-monkey conflict in the Philippine setting. Terweil (1989) also gives an apt observation in the Thai context, in his definitive study of travelers’ accounts of 19th century Thailand. His point is worth quoting at length here:
Our travelers saw pioneer farming settlers who feared being trampled by herds of wild elephants, who could be attacked by crocodiles and who had to battle with large flocks of wild birds in order to grow their crops. Such battles continued throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, and gradually they were all “won.” The rhinoceros, the crocodile, the tiger, monkeys, birds and elephants all had to give way (pp. 256-257).

10 Thais have been breeding Bettas (domesticated fighting fish) for “cockfight-like contests” for hundreds of years. Verbeek, Iwamoto and Murakami (2007) provide a careful study of the aggressiveness of these fishes. They cite (p. 75) the claim of Thai breeders that Betta splendens species are selectively bred for fighting by discarding losers and allowing winners to breed, resulting in “significantly more aggressive” strains of fighting fishes than either the wild-type or the domesticated veiltail variety. The authors’ careful testing of such folk observation give the following relevant result (p. 80), among others: “We were able to confirm our prediction that domesticated B. splendens males of the short-finned plakat variety are significantly more aggressive than wild-type B. splendens.”

11 See Western (2001) for a broader presentation of the concept of “human dominated ecosystems” and a description of the ecological patterns of such ecosystems.

12 The hypothesis for a temporally ‘fluid territory’ of the Sangeh macaques could be formally stated as follows: There is a daily temporal/hourly cycling of troops in the occupation of the central space and the choice time/s of the area; the front area is better, where the tourists usually stay longer and where the feeding areas are located. There is an interesting relation between time (sequential pattern of events; for example, number of tourists per given time in a constant area, plus the rhythm of tourist flows in a day), space and group hierarchy. Both time and space are determinants or important conditions for the formation of group hierarchy, but time (t1>t2>t3,...) has a more ordering role, in a finer scale, in group hierarchy than space. Spatial hierarchy seems to be simple, just s1>s2, where i=-1: monkey groups occupying s1 is ordered based on variable t, where each group [g1,g2,g3,...] gets the following time slots at s1 [g1=t1,g2=t2,g3=t3,...] and are thus arranged, g1>g2>g3,...

13 See Fuentes, et al. (unpublished) for the report on the land-use pattern of Bali and its exploitation by macaques.

14 Marzluff and Angell (2005, 73) cite the “locale-specific use of automobile traffic to open nuts by carrion crows (Corvus corone)” and frame the discussion of this behavior in a wider context of long-enduring human-raven/crow ecological interactions.

15 Ickes (2001, 688) presents a “supranormal pig density” in the Pasoh Forest Reserve (Negeri Sembilan, Peninsular Malaysia) due to “the combination of an absence of feline predators and an abundant food supply from the surrounding agricultural plantations.” While the author only mentions (a) the extinction of natural predators (tigers and leopards) and (b) the abundant year-round food supply of African oil palm fruits from plantations bordering the reserve as the causes of this ecological condition, the non-pork-eating context of Islamized Malaysia might also be added as a dimension.

16 See the study of Wheatley and Putra (1994, 323) showing monkey aggression as “positively reinforced by food rewards” by both the local folks and non-Balinese tourists. A classic case is when monkeys steal objects from visitors and tourists (I experienced this myself when my eyeglasses were grabbed by a monkey at Ulu Watu) and some people offer the target monkeys some food hoping to divert them from the stolen objects. In the long-run, monkeys are ‘taught’ to associate tourist objects with easy access to food. In the study of Wheatley and Putra (1994, 324), “the vigor of monkey aggression corresponds with the quality and quantity of tourist food.”

17 See Jones-Engel et al. (forthcoming) for the full Balinese report of macaque to human transmission of the SFV, the first such report in a global context.

18 Based on frequency counts of animal images in Hooykaas (1980) and animal characters in folk narratives in Eiseman (2002) and Sutjaja (2005).

19 See the study of Wessing (2006) for an interesting folklore study of animal symbols and their structure in Southeast Asia.

20 Here is an assessment (Whitten, Soeriaatmadja and Afiff 1996), perhaps too strong, of this divergence of symbolic and material treatments of animals. I will quote it at length:

It has been argued that the inclusion of animals as essential elements of dance, literature, and ceremonies demonstrates that people and nature are all part of the same whole, and that animals are often more appreciated by the gods than are people. This is attractive and in line with the alluring doctrines of New Age philosophy and religion, but normal animals are scarcely to be seen in any of the important positions in Javanese or Balinese arts. Ganesha (the goblin-like, elephant-headed god), Barong (the ‘well-meaning’ but fearsome-looking lion), Garuda...
(the humanoid, golden sun-bird, mount of Vishnu, enemy of Naga the serpent), Hanuman (the humanoid Monkey King who conquers Rawana for Rama), Raksasa (the devilish monster with long fangs), Naga (the dragon serpent), and hosts of other weird beasts are depicted and revered but this has not resulted in any noticeable respect for earthly animals or their habitats (pp. 680-681, emphasis added).

Given that there are places like monkey forests which became havens for macaques (who are also construed, sometimes, as representatives of Hanuman), this assessment appears too harsh. However, the point seems correct in its present, general pattern.

21 Based on survey results from Bali.

22 This qualifies the view given by Wheatley (1999) that gives the impression that monkeys are held to be sacred in Bali in general.

23 Brockington (1998) has done an impressive study of “wildlife” figuring in the Mahabharata and Ramayana Sanskrit texts. In his assessment (p. 417), “the frequency of mention of wildlife of all kinds suggests that attitudes to the natural world were on the whole positive.” Brockington also notes (p. 418) that the kinds of animals mentioned in the Hindu sacred texts are “considerable.” Wild animals mentioned include lions, bears, monkeys, jackals, boar, wolves, hyenas, porcupines, rhinoceroses, mongooses, hares, rats or mice, leopards, various birds, snakes and other reptiles and fish and other water creatures. It looks like a textual zoo and demands comparison with the monotheistic texts of the Bible and the Koran. In the monotheistic tradition, the “ark of Noah,” with its description as full of so many animals to be saved from the great flood from God, has captured the imagination of different millenarian religious groups in the Philippines.

24 Terweil (1989, 225) encourages the systematic studying of this phenomenon of traditional stories, like the Ramayana, which have become ‘embedded in the landscape.’ In the imagination of local people, these stories are not “mere metaphor, but perceived as actuality.” He mentions another story which is quite similar to the planet-wide battle of Ramayana, this time involving another animal, the buffalo. Outside Bangkok is a village named Sisa Krabu’e (cf. Filipino, karabao/kalabaw), or “Buffalo Head,” because “it was here that the head of the buffalo Thorapha had landed after Thoraphi had hurled it away” (p. 255).

25 See Skeat’s (1984) magisterial work on the Southeast Asian practices of “magic” for a wide view of the connection between magic, magicians, animal tamers, and animals.


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Sight/Site And Nation

The location for cinema is sight. Everything else comes afterwards and at the same time, in the same space. In the cinema, time plays out its scenarios from the fields of war to narrow alleyways in small towns, from rural to urban, tradition to modernity, without the audience having to leave their seats. If we never had to travel, it is because film has taken us there, where we have been and where we are going, in and through time, a duration that Victor Burgin has described as “imbricated” or overlapping time. What takes us there, while we are here, in the comfort zone of the darkened cinema hall, close to a half awakened/dream state is narrative, structure and organization. It organizes and structures us, the subject, via our perception of the object/screen.

It is also in this sense that cinema is sight and site specific. The implication here is the spatial continuum from screen/site of visuals to mental/sight of visuality—from screening space to mental space. It is here that ideologies play out their images, and it is also in this sense that space is never neutral and that most things are already mediated, if not life itself.

The screen presents us with a space unlike but similar to other places that we have encountered in reality, recognized and imagined as image yet never been to, but perhaps close to a place we can call home, country or nation. It is through the mimesis of realism, that we encounter image as reality and reality as image, as a cycle of reproduction and representation. Put in another way, as a member of the audience, I am the origin and the destination in the cycle of representation of the image and its narration.

Seen in this light, another dimension can be added in the way that we can view narrative, especially in the context of its operations as ideological constructs and their operations within the concept of spatial relationships. No longer can we think of ideology as a concept out there, separated from the subject as an “instrument of domination wielded by one section of a society and imposed upon another” (Burgin 1997) but shifted to a broader and deeper dimension where “ideology was now conceived of in terms of a space of representations that the subjects inhabit, a limitless space that the desiring subject negotiates by predominantly unconscious transactions” (Burgin 1997). J.L. Beller, in discussing the cinematic technology and Vertov’s work, says that the Russian filmmaker “takes the image as a technology for ‘the organization of the audience with organized material’ effectively grasping cinema as a social machine for engineering the socius” (Beller 2002, 71) and thereby rendering “objects and images as social relations” where “viewers do not encounter the techno-imaginary only on the screen, its logic is already inside them” describing “the enfolding of the image into the social fabric” (Beller 2002, 71).

In this sense the site for cinema is sight and the sight for cinema is site, the bodied self, the subject. The human body is the interface between the object and its image. Everything in this paper that can be imagined and visualized begins from this space, from the relationship of screen and self, self and screen.

In looking and reading cinema in the context of the narrating of nation, it seems to me hazardous not to engage in the ideas and theories governing space and spatial relationships, in the ordering and organizing of principles behind those two terms. The nation often referred to as the nation space points to its amorphousness, its ether-like quality, that is less about its objectness that can be grasped and apprehended than about its qualities as ideas, myths and symbols that are articulated through spatial categories and territories, via cultural texts—print media, novels, art, films etc.—across textual and spatial boundaries. It is in this way that we can begin to traverse, engage in, map out and begin to understand some of the ways and elements that reveal their constructions and imaginings.

Space invites categorization, territorialization, demarcations and borders—mapping in various forms and guises—in defining the nation. Those forms can manifest themselves through social and cultural practices that draw lines of inclusion and exclusion, thereby turning space into place. They originate from the body and the body’s engagement through the lived environment, via language and the senses—the nose, ears and eyes. In the cinema the eyes have priority:
The current metaphor of landscape as the inscape of national identity emphasizes the quality of light, the question of social visibility, the power of the eye to naturalize the rhetoric of national affiliation and its forms of collective expression (Bhabha 1994).

Film—DissemiNation

While the West and China and Japan in the East have had their history in the birth, construction and establishment of the idea of nationhood, proclaiming the death of nationalism once they had gained their brand of modernism, the rest of the world is still coming to terms with these ideas in the aftermath of colonialism, whose inherited problems are still coursing through the body politic, whether in border claims and disputes, or intra-ethnic rivalries over territories carved out and established from the landing of the first European. The idea of the nation as Foucault has termed it is a “discursive formation” and therefore perpetually a work in progress. It has no fixity, and territories and borders are constructs of historical contingency that defy more than they define, including ethnicity, race and religion. What characterizes a nation is becoming more important as groups, communities and ethnicities in Indonesia, from Maluku to Aceh, became more vocal after Suharto’s downfall and the advent of Reformasi and ushered in a new era of relative democratic freedom of expression. Not least of these freedoms is the rise in two areas of Indonesia’s social, political and cultural life: the voicing out of ethnic identity, challenging the unity of nationhood, and the use and spread of media forms, in particular films and video, concomitant with the awareness of those new found freedoms of expression in promoting issues and contestations of histories that were otherwise marginalized.

This paper attempts to look at films and their constituent elements and constructions in narrating the nation. The birth of nations, always filled with trauma, violence and wars, has invariably been part of almost every nation’s history, as it defines itself around the idea of coherence. As one of the earliest writers on the question of nationalism puts it, “Unity is always effected by means of brutality” (Renan 1990).

What is a nation and what is nationalism and what are its field, perimeters and definitions, can fill pages beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it for me to say that Benedict Anderson has already given us a brilliant account on nationalism and its constituent ideas in his book, Imagined Communities. His view that the space and time of the modern nation is embodied in the narrative culture of the novel and print media could extend to include the narratives of most media, including films.

Towards this end, this paper looks at two Indonesian films of the war genre, Darah dan Doa (The Long March) (1950) and Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI (The Treason of the September 30 Movement and the Indonesian Communist Party) (1984), which have been identified as representative of this genre. Many of the films share similar themes, and many elements act as recurring motifs expressing abiding concerns and expressions, signifying main tenets in their visual and narrative constructions.

Beginning / Ending—Birth / Death

The scene on the screen opens on a vast landscape somewhere in Java. Two ranking officers are looking through a pair of binoculars. Adam, the more martial character complete with a songkok-like military headgear, passes the viewing equipment to the more casual of our two heroes, Sudarto or Darto, as they survey the scene below from their vantage point higher up. Although the camera frames them in a ¾ angle, the subsequent views of several shots of the landscape from wide to close, showing soldiers in formation and scrambling across the terrain, as if from Darto’s point of view/pov shot, is in fact framed for and privileges the audience. The audience, to borrow Althusser’s terminology, is “hailed” or “interpellated” to enter the viewing process whose sightline is at odds with Darto’s, but clearly signalling and consigning them their space and function, emplacing them as witness in the narration of a historic struggle across the heartland. Darto does not and cannot see what they can, as we see a slight worry cast over his face and by crossing their sightlines, they are in fact signaled that Darto’s eyesight fails him, as a revolutionary and a soldier, as the film makes clear further into the story.

Adam sees with his own eyes and he speaks more than Darto who is merely looking via the “viewing aid” of the binoculars. Of the two, Darto is slightly a step lower in the frame, but as officers they are both at higher ground, while their men are scrambling through the rough terrain down below, and the audience privileged in relation to their spatial relationship.

Here all spaces have been signaled and demarcated, and people have been consigned, in their places (class) and in their spaces, image-cinema screen (object), image-mental screen (subject), in the words of Michelle Sipe in her essay, space as means of social control, framing it as masculine practice, for “controlled visibility and
What Darto is also looking at is himself, at the ending of the film, hence the slight shadow of worry across his face. He has already seen his own death, at the hands of the audience. In film language and revolution, 24 frames per second, cinematic time is not a mystery. It is compressed and imbricated and, for the colonial subject Darto, split at the borders of cinematic space and country, between past and present, death is the only outcome and mode of being. The nation cannot accept those that are in between. If Adam is the sacrifice that defines nation, Darto is the sacrifice because he defies nation.

The romantic individualist Darto sees his own demise at the film’s ending. From the heights of national consciousness in the Javanese highlands to the depths of the urban interior, he returns to his small quarters. He sits down to open his journal, when a shadowy figure from a dark corner of the room, brandishing a gun, calls out, asking Darto if he remembers him, giving himself a name. Darto replies that he does not remember. Darto looks at his journal and we see a montage sequence of excerpts of key moments from the film superimposed over the journal’s pages. Accompanying these images is Sukarno’s speech.

The camera frames the scene for the audience’s point of view. The assassin is at the extreme edge of frame in shadow so that there is an uninterrupted view of the scene. The framing closes onto Darto while he addresses the audience. We hear a gunshot as he grabs his chest. This direct relationship to the audience mirrors the urban interior, he returns to his small quarters. He sits down to open his journal, when a shadowy figure from a dark corner of the room, brandishing a gun, calls out, asking Darto if he remembers him, giving himself a name. Darto replies that he does not remember. Darto looks at his journal and we see a montage sequence of excerpts of key moments from the film superimposed over the journal’s pages. Accompanying these images is Sukarno’s speech.

Here death is tantamount to suicide, and in the extended spatial continuum between the audience and Darto, it is a collective purging. Even as he falls, his back is to the masses, the people in the audience; his execution and death are an example to and lesson for the body politic. If his self sacrifice is of a higher order, it is only to differentiate from the death and sacrifices of Adam and Widya and countless others in the nationalist struggle, in that, where theirs is at the mimetic level of realist representation, Darto’s is at the level of our/his engagement with the text itself. Not only is he split between borders of territories, of the interior landscape of the self, but also of cinematic space and screen space, between the representation of reality and representation itself. He is the image that is sacrificed in the writing and re-imaginings of the nation, with the blank journal as an open invitation to the audience to re-write, re-imagine. Thus the film inscribes the audience into the narrative, and asks the audience to re-inscribe the text of national imaginings, film amongst other media as part of the accumulations of sacred text, in the national longing for form.
and in which the text for national and ideological forms are written, then what exactly is that text and how are they articulated and how do they engage with subjects in culture and society?

For answers to these questions we turn our attention to my readings of the two films mentioned that signify, inter-text and articulate the nation. *Darah dan Doa* was made in 1950 by Usmar Ismail, who is considered to be the father of Indonesian films. The other is *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* made by Ariffin C. Noer in 1982.

*Darah dan Doa* is a black and white film recounting the Indonesian struggle against the Dutch colonizers in their war of independence. It tells the story of two heroes, both officers leading their unit, volunteers and homeless civilians in a long march, through the treacherous and embattled countryside of their homeland, Java. It basically narrates the birth of a nation, and is a prime example of the genre of “war films” that underpins the construction of nation and identity, and in this respect it is a good representation of the collective historical “memory” of the nation. The second is a feature film re-enacting, in a quasi-documentary mode, the events surrounding the night of 1 October 1965, when seven of Indonesia’s army chiefs were kidnapped and murdered at Lubang Buaya.

My research and readings places this film as pivotal in the film’s (re)construction of history and its enlistment of documentary codes and conventions in signifying its status and authority on historical truth, and its blurring of the borders between fiction and documentary as symptomatic of trauma and terror. These films construct nation and history as a narrative exercise in myth making.

The themes of birth and death and executions, in *Darah dan Doa* of a father at the hands of his son, while in *G30S* between internal political rivalries, the forces representing the father of Indonesian Independence Sukarno and the sons of the nation. Love is shown in relationships between men and women, filial and familial relationships. These aspects of contestations find their expressions in different spaces and various forms, where rivalries manifest themselves as the “enemy within” of post-revolutionary struggle as much as those that betray the military projection of itself as the family, the patriarch and guardian of nationalist ideals from the fields of the Javanese countryside to the interior spaces of the domestic.

These events and markings, the gravesites for the warriors in *Darah* and the burial hole for the murdered generals in *G30S*, mark the land in the rituals of commemoration of sacred places and in the remembering of sacred dates.

Concomitant with these themes, in much of these war films, is the theme of writing, from notes and journals to letters of officialdom. This binary opposition characterizes these films, delineating oppositions and demarcations of power between the public and the personal.

*Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* is a film produced under orders from Gen. Suharto himself. In many ways, the construction of nationalist ideology in *Darah dan Doa* finds its logic and trajectory in the events of 1965, on the night of 30 September, and the subsequent trauma of political cleansing that spread throughout Indonesia in its aftermath. There are no less than five differing accounts of the events, of which Suharto’s is the officially endorsed and accepted version for the national polity. The film claims to re-enact history and is thereby a “truthful” account of that night, complete with newspaper clippings, authoritative voice-overs and documentary footages of national mourning at the end as evidence of its veracity.

The film proper begins in the ailing Sukarno’s bedroom at his palace in Bogor. The first person to be introduced is D.N. Aidit, leader of the Indonesian Communist Party and his assistant, as they await doctors from the People’s Republic who arrive to administer acupuncture on the sick president. The first real dialogue to be heard is in Mandarin. The structuring of shots and the ordering of scenes in a discontinuous manner disorganizes spatial continuity around the absence of the president’s sick body, which is shown in a series of extreme close-ups accentuating the emptiness in the palace as a symbol of the space of the nation while suggesting an absence of power in the president’s body as the body politic, already threatening to be filled by D.N. Aidit and the Chinese doctors. In fact, the close ups of needles puncturing the president’s body already suggests the introduction of something physically and culturally alien associated with Aidit and the doctors from the People’s Republic, all of whom are communists.

In this cavernous empty palace filled with paintings and statues of women, where the president is seen alone at his huge desk surrounded by books from Mao to Lenin, the heart of the nation is being drained by corrupting influences while a herd of deer, robust and majestic, are running in the palace grounds outside, suggesting that
real power lies elsewhere.

If the setting suggests a power vacuum, everything from here onwards in the film, with its concentration on Aidit and his plotters, stains their actions as originating by association from the palace.

The final scene shows Nasution’s injured youngest daughter lying alone in her cot-like hospital bed, the youngest victim, recalling Sukarno lying alone in his bed from the opening scene, except here she comes after images of the people in national mourning. The nation’s hopes and dreams lies in the balance between life and death, in the fragile body of a little girl, but if, as the scene in front of her father’s painting suggests, she is not a pejuang or warrior, it is precisely because her time will come at the end of the film where death will be the bintang (star) that confirms her status as a pejuang.

The nation space

Space constructed in binary oppositions allows for a unity under realist representation and seamless linear temporality as logical conclusions and closure, articulating spatial continuities towards a horizon of the ideal, of mythic homeland and future struggles as eternal. The presence of bodies within these spaces that signify a fullness and plenitude points to an absence of “other,” bodies, lives, and alternatives in social, political and cultural existences in other spaces consigned to the edges of the map, from the abandoned hut in the countryside to the cardboard shelters in urban areas. Where directors choose to depict and present landscape in their films, they do so by signaling the “condition of possibility” for the “masculine production of landscape and its practices of feminine enclosure” (Sipe 2004, 92).

The narrating of the nation and its ideology maps out its struggles in public spaces, where duty, honor and sacrifice take precedent, denying the private and the personal, which turns space into place. Individual struggles are firmly located within the larger context of the nation, the revolution and public life as epic spectacle, where actions and dialogues play out their tropes for national consciousness.

Land needs markers to turn space into place, albeit still within the larger agenda of nationalist public sites. It is for this reason, too, that Connie’s father’s grave cannot be contained within a Javanese landscape but is given a europeanised backdrop, lest the lines of patriarchal origination are confused for Javanese ones so that other deaths can find and sow their seeds of meaning and metaphor as historical markers of blood and sacrifice for nationalist soil. It is no accident that the first image of the start of the soldiers’ march across Java begins at Borobodur in a long ontological line, from the execution of the treacherous father by the dutiful son, to the gravesites of Adam and Widya of their union in death, to the grave of Lubang Buaya and the aftermath of its reaping in the mass missing graveyards of thousands across the Indonesian landscape.

As has been discussed in this paper, this binary in the divisions of rural and urban landscapes, between interiors and exteriors, sets the scenario for future struggles, from nationalism to militarism, that find their conclusion in the exercise of power and control of the nation’s domain in the struggle for the interior domestic spaces in G30S.

Where paintings in Darah are utilized to reference and demarcate land and territory as significations for divisions in ideological struggle as spatial constructs, in G30S paintings specifically signal the limits of spatial encounters as conditions in the organization of gender, hierarchy and power.

Two particular scenes and sequences articulate the way in which gender contains and defines space, in the way that landscape politics or, for our purposes, space and its management can show “how masculine forms of landscape... have produced the corollary of feminine enclosure, whether symbolic, social, physical or architectural” and in the way they frame “their access to space, that either expand or exceed the confines of the domestic sphere,” and help actively shape “a range of cultural, national and institutional spaces and, perhaps most consequentially, the more spatially diverse and fluid spheres of intellectual” (Sipe 2004, 92) and cultural thought and in what ways they produce meaning and contribute to national ideological agenda.

In the opening sequences of G30S, where Sukarno lies bedridden attended by Aidit and the Communist Chinese doctors, in ten to eleven shot sequences, the leaving and entering of each frame shows paintings of clothed and half clad Javanese women in various “feminine” poses on the walls, as well as naked feminine busts and statues in shots where Sukarno is reading at his desk.

As mentioned earlier, the palace symbolizes the heart of the nation, the body politic is ailing, and power is being drained while Aidit and the communists are introducing foreign elements into Sukarno’s body via acupuncture, so that draining is a consequence
of women (his legendary sexual energy). That the women are objectified, framed in static timeless poses as paintings on the walls, defines the limits of spatial enclosure normally attributed to feminine and domestic spaces, reminding and highlighting to the audience the absence of any physical presence of the nurturing and caring woman and thereby the productivity of the family, which is consistently contrasted by the generals who were kidnapped later on in the film while in the bosom of feminized domestic and (re)productive spaces (the bedroom), effectively linking “the containment of women to the gendering of space” (Sipe 2004, 94).

Sukarno’s palace is signified as an absence, as the disembodied presence of women and the symbolic power of the nation, signaling it as the measure of all other spaces.

If the nation space in Darah is the exterior spaces, and the interiors are duplicitous, in G30S the exterior symbolizes anarchy as it is overrun by youths and the forces of the Indonesian women’s organization cadres known as Gerwani, while the interiors from the presidential palace to the secret backrooms and offices of the communist plotters, the homes of generals and their officers become the site of struggle for the nation space. Ninety percent of the film is played out within interiors.

In G30S the nation is in the home and the countryside is filled with instability and perversions. “Here the household is a conduit, where concepts of landscape enter the domestic space, reshaping it as well as the exterior world that the home is ostensibly defined against” (Sipe 2004, 95). If it is in this sense that if the military is associated with land and territories, then its infiltration into feminine spaces needs to be re-oriented and re-anchored for martial purposes and that was signaled early before the kidnapping sequences. Before the long seamless edited sequences of the kidnappings of the seven generals begin, as one of its main scenes, the film introduces the audience to the daughter of the leading general, Nasution, where space is signaled and articulated unmistakably within the terms of power and gender.

The sacred space of the military can never directly mirror hers or any woman’s, as the painting diminishes her role and woman’s as a mere reflection in the mirror, and as a space about to be infiltrated and taken over by military struggle as a space for the nation. What this play or reconfiguration in spatial relationships pronounces/announces is that while the painting takes on dominant position, the traditional domestic space of the feminine as embodied by mother, daughter and maid exists as merely a reflection, and diminished as one where woman’s role is confined to herself as a reflection and representation of masculine authority. This demarcation and articulation of spatial categories is necessary to clear the path, to revise female space in order to assert and augment male and military power as they perform their active engagement within the domestic spaces in the battles to come. The little girl’s fantasy needs to be corrected, reoriented in front of the mirror.

What the painting also articulates is the all-dominant and pervasive presence of the father and the military, even when he is not home, as that around which the center of family as the sacred institution revolves. This is underlined as the daughter and her sister run outside at their father’s return to greet him, where the camera positions our view from the curtained window of the living room, so as to announce his male authority as pervasive/belonging to the exterior though his voice reverberates from the interior space of the living room, where the home “functions as the site of infiltration of external, patriarchal conceptions of space, resources, time, work and leisure producing the privacy and individuality crucial to middle class identity, feminine and masculine” (Sipe 2004, 95). However, in G30S, the home as nation space for ideological struggle needs to transform domestic space as the embodiment of masculinity.

The image of women connects these spaces. I would go so far as to posit that the acknowledgement of the military’s version of the events, as a recognition of its own phallic nature, is tied to its need around Lubang Buaya to falsely report Gerwani’s (the Indonesian women’s movement’s) perverted display of its power by dismembering and severing some of the generals’ bodies and sexual organs, which were disseminated in the public arena. This threat to the male body/politic from the “uses” of women as sexual signifiers in Sukarno’s palace as draining his sexual power and male power needs to be re-oriented to women as signifiers of the productivity of the family at the heart of the nation in General Nasution’s home within masculine space. It is only then that at the end scene, the little girl’s life can go so far as to posit that the acknowledgement of the military’s version of the events, as a recognition of its own phallic nature, is tied to its need around Lubang Buaya to falsely report Gerwani’s (the Indonesian women’s movement’s) perverted display of its power by dismembering and severing some of the generals’ bodies and sexual organs, which were disseminated in the public arena. This threat to the male body/politic from the “uses” of women as sexual signifiers in Sukarno’s palace as draining his sexual power and male power needs to be re-oriented to women as signifiers of the productivity of the family at the heart of the nation in General Nasution’s home within masculine space. It is only then that at the end scene, the little girl’s life can take on the burden and weight of the whole nation as it hangs in a hospital cot between life and death, so that although death is her star that mirror’s her fathers, as a pejuang, as fantasy in front of the vanity mirror, the real star to match and add to her father General Nasution’s chest is the death of spaces for women, lest like Gerwani, they may embody their independent spaces around the w/hole of history at Lubang Buaya. To put these
connections into their signifying context, landscape in this sense, as space, and to signify its context:

“landscapes become a process of reflexivity, of identity and inter-subjectivity. Their ‘character’ is constructed by the subject herself from numerous ‘things,’ and her own encounter, physically, with bits of landscape. These become engaged as fragments of a wider everyday visual culture, ‘there,’ though her embodied and reflexively-embodied encounter may be most significant. Material features so encountered are rendered meaningful through our personal engagement with them. What emerges is a geography of spatialization: a process. Understood in this way, landscape, space and place are never ontologically given but developed through practices, discursively grasped in an embodied way. The subject in landscape is spacing, practicing, producing, doing things in and with space.” (Crouch and Malm 2004, 255)

That space is that of our embodying of locations, physical as well as mental, and this space is discursively practiced in the cinema, although engaged as representations, as image, visuality is central in the mental process via the ocular, as site for the human subjects’ engagement with space and its representation. It is here space and its representation is thereby “performed in a process of flows, where combinations of memory, action and meaning” such as ideological constructs “are complex and performed together” (Crouch and Malm 2004, 254).

What both scenes articulate are the power relations at work in the gendering of space as social and political constructs. Sukarno’s palace is the highest signifier of power bereft and denied of women, and the martial infiltration re-claims and re-defines the domestic and feminized space as its very heart, the reproductive space of the nation for ideological struggle.

Other spaces

If Darah is the birth of the nation, where the present reconfigures the past to an eternal future repetition, what its constituents point to is the construction of its (history’s) own logic; its positive projections of nationalist ideals in its own image, and its negative between the cuts, the spaces beyond the frame, and the images that it denies and represses in the organization of narrating the nation, as a violence that would re-surface around the w/hole of “Lubang Buaya” (in the events re-constructed) in G30S. What G30S shows are the strains that held the contradictions in the narrating of nation to its breaking point and its resultant violence.

The elements and organizing principles drawn out in Darah had to be harnessed and shifted in perspective and narrative structure. They were re-aligned in several ways: the inversion of space as the site for political and military struggle from the public spaces of the countryside to the interior of domestic spaces, partly because the kidnappings happened in the generals’ homes, attesting to historical veracity, but more importantly it indicates the effects of and need for authoritarian infiltration and control of all spaces that requires containment via the policing of the limits and demarcations of those spaces, between the private, domestic and public, between gender, class and hierarchy, ethnicities, groups and communities, that make up the nation.

Romancing the nation

This is of course taken to its logical conclusion and realized in “G30S” where battles were fought in the interiors of the domestic realm. Darto is no ordinary hero. As anti-hero he fails to possess his object of desire, “whether she becomes synonymous with the land, as she often does, or with the ‘naturally’ submissive and loving races and classes that the hero will elevate through his affection, woman is what he must possess in order to achieve harmony and legitimacy” (Sommer 1990, 85). The land shelters the soldiers and military from the enemy, and Widya is the nurse and woman who rescues the old injured woman in the field.

In Indonesian films, nation building and romance go hand in hand; love is productivity.

Writing the nation

In several Indonesian films, scriptural metaphors consistently play a part in writing the nation, in authorizing its narrative around the visible and invisible spaces of love, emotion, duty orders and administration, and demarcating borders between the personal and the public.

In the films Pedjuang, Enam Djam di Djogja, Lewat Djam Malam, Embrun and others, writing in official letters, orders and reports is highly visible, whereas notes of love and of a personal nature are hidden, silenced or cryptic. Private wishes and desires must be sublimated to national sacrifice and duty, for the nation.

The printed word is linked to power and personal writings threaten the authority of institutionalized space and its organizing procedures in demarcating the
private and the public. What this reveals is the potential for the personal and the subjective to be a source for disruption.

The image of writing seems to prescribe oppositions in the act and uses of writing as power relations in narrating the nation. Writing is prescribed and sanction towards administrative and authoritative uses that legitimize power and its implementations. These themes are consistent in the films viewed and mentioned above; the existing binary between writing as private individual and public acts, endorsing and realizing as fact the Indonesian paper trails of bureaucratic machinery. Personal writing interjects and interrupts the flow of national intent: the machinery of information and administration. The personal has to be sacrificed, if not subsumed, for the good of the nation.

Writing the personal isolates oneself from the public expression of nation as narration. What this infers in Darab is the division not only as writing, but that the act of writing comes under the scrutiny and the guiding principles prescribed by national ideology. What at another level is exposed from a different angle, as Benjamin emphasizes in the new rise in print capitalism, it is confrontational and problematic as this new machinery and form of writing distinguishes itself from storytelling, bringing about a crises in storytelling (the personal experience) where “this new form of communication is information” (Brennan 1990, 55).

The scenario points to the inclusive aspect of national ideology’s need to keep track of language, media and communication, because as Brennan reveals in a 1980 UNESCO report, “It has become increasingly clear that the effects of intellectual and cultural dependence are as serious as those of political subjection or economic dependence. There can be no genuine, effective independence without the communication resources needed to safeguard it…a nation whose mass media are under foreign domination cannot claim to be a nation” (Brennan 1990, 60).

If we replace the word writers with filmmakers, Doris Sommer makes the point that “the writers were encouraged both by the need to fill in a history that would increase the legitimacy of the emerging nation and the opportunity to direct that history to a future ideal” (Sommer 1990, 76). This history was under marching orders, in Indonesia’s case meaning its military and martial concepts of the national polity. It is therefore instructive that the scene of writing is also the scene of interrogation, confession, assassination and death, leading to Darto’s funeral and the soldiers marching in victory.

Thus writing is a “consciously produced and necessarily violent filler for a world full of gaps,” (Sommer 1990, 79) where although the film seems to invite the audience to write, it also denies in death and closure, and if writing invites a future, that future is already prescribed, not only in filmic closure (Darto’s death and funeral) but by nationalist martial ideals.

These acts in writing propose to guide and control communication as a homogenizing force, in the need for reconciliation, of difference of language, et cetera, which was merely a consolidation of forces in the transitory period (a fragile time) towards founding and building a nation.

Contradiction surfaces and becomes prophetic, showing the structures at work and the authorities’ fears. In proposing that writing should be contained to the private spheres, this very act of writing and reading emerges later under the Orde Baru as the very space for disruptive acts, whether hidden sub-textually in the novel, as a form of narrating the dissenting and alternative voices of the nation, to their fragmented pamphleteering calls of resistance across campuses.

New places and independent spaces

What the contemporary generation of filmmakers is doing is re-claiming and re-covering the spaces which defined their lives and practices historically, and their lived moments and experiences within the community.

We cannot talk of nation without consideration of social spaces and their relationship to representation and lived realities, without considering spatial politics and their constituencies and productivities.

If representation has any meaning for nation and identity, and if it has any part in forming ideological constructs, it is that they are constant shifting processes in the contestation of spaces that can only be derived by realist representations as mythological forms, whose current status is being actively and progressively challenged by the young, whose subject matter reveals a response to repressed and hidden histories, whose recovery can only originate within their own subjectivities, as private and personal that would counter reigning discourses and representations as public histories and national myths.

These fragmented and isolated perspectives within the proliferation of narratives in the current media-scape attests to previous authoritarian demarcation and
fragmenting of individuals and community, ironically re-emerging as individual voices cut off for three decades from any continuity from groups, community and the idea of nation. They show up the stitchings of the fragile and porous entities of the nation state. In many ways the post-65 containment, and at times brutal repression of communities, sowed the seeds for the military’s and Suharto’s own downfall, precisely in the ways that it feared (but could not foresee) in its own narrativizing of its identities, territories and borders, hidden by its own obsession with the whole of history at Lubang Buaya, of the communist specters and the PKI, and all forms of potential dissent, driving “other” voices and alternatives and resistances underground. This created the conditions of their own nightmares as in Darab dan Doa and G30S for the enemy within, the nationalist text.

Yayan and Rudi’s form of video-making aims at a counter-hegemonic struggle at the level of practice, which goes beyond the frame of representations.

What needs to be studied and understood is the entire process, right up to the screening and reception of the final product, as in what forms of dissemination their works take on and in what kinds of context. This, in other words, is to continue and translate the constructs in this paper, looking at in what ways they engage in their film/video-making process spatially across communities, territories, language and cultural borders.

Their form of video-making engages and defines their practice as instilling political and social awareness with the issues which are localized, and in their workshops this form of engagement circumscribes and prescribes filmmaking as political, and in so doing by raising the awareness in the process of addressing their issues via technology transforms the communities self-representation. This form of empowerment that reaches out to the dispossessed, the marginalized and the forgotten, re-invigorates their practice and opens up the practice of video making at many levels, redefining and establishing new modes and forms of address. They translate and transform the term inter-disciplinary of cultural theory into, to cite Irit Rogoff “not as surrounding a chosen object with numerous modes of scientific enquiry, but rather as a constitution of a new object of knowledge” (Rogoff 2002) and practice.

The current expansion and development in the Indonesian independent video/filmmaking scene has its own hierarchy of which the kinds of practice that Rudi and Yayan are engaged in put them at the periphery of the scene.

Their practices contrast but also translate and find meeting points between theory and practice, between textuality and actuality, on the ground practice in narrating the nation. Looking at Rudi’s and Yayan’s works reveals an aesthetic and practice removed from the totalizing force of the nation’s cultural expressions.

They also reveal in their subject matter in the post-Suharto contemporary scene a practice which aligns itself to the issues and ethics of representation in the matrix of intra-national, inter and across communities and identities, those from the urban ghettos to the peripheries and borders, where they “evoke the ambivalent margin of the nation space. To reveal such, a margin is in the first instance, to contest claims to cultural supremacy” (Bhabha 1990, 4). That they work at the most general level, if not under or “in-between” boundaries of race, religion, cultures and communities and those elements that constitutes the narratives of nation, describing this process of hybridity as incorporating “new” people, or re-representing others “in relation to the body politic,” generating other sites of meaning that fall outside the cultural authority’s orbit, “and inevitably in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation” (Bhabha 1990, 4).

It is in this respect that Rudi’s and Yayan’s work can be seen to engage and highlight in their textual engagement and material practices the spaces in which the nation is written and re-presented, where to invoke Bhabha’s insightful thoughts when he says “The ‘other’ is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between ourselves’” (Bhabha 1990, 4) highlighting authority and power’s need to contain the narrativizing of the nation into less of a fracturing and splintering entity but more towards a singular homogenizing force. It provides in some ways, important modes of operation, in answering Bhabha’s question, “What kind of cultural space is the nation with its transgressive boundaries and ‘interruptive’ interiority?”

This reading and analysis of culturally mediated texts and their productivities needs to be seen in this light and in the light of ground practice.

Conclusions

Films and our relationship to films require engagement and our understanding of their narrative constructions and organizing principles via our practices in space, the human subject as the location for the destination.
and origination, as a site for meaning/and the making of meaning; the way they frame their image as representations and their human subjects within their purview in forming, shaping the ideologically constructed human subject as members of groups, ethnicities, communities that make up the nation. It is in grasping/analyzing the articulations of the relationship between film and the social fabric that we can begin to unlock and understand our place in the processes of social and political transformations, and in so doing actively participate and contribute, to re-imagine and re-make the texts and practices of the nation, that tends toward dominant modes of expression that limit and contain the human subject in it’s homogenizing ideological grip.

Alternative cultural expressions and practices can aid in re-defining and re-drawing cultural lines and borders and their demarcations, to expand their territories as inclusive of differences and diversities towards an open, equitable and just society and its representations.

They provide for opportunities of a discursive and processual engagement across textual, filmic representations as much as real physical ones, to create less exclusionary spaces and more cultural dialogues across borders. Culture and film thereby becomes a means of projecting and transforming social and political conditions—in their representations as text as well as practice.

In other words, as an example in Yayan Wiludiharjo’s practice, the film only really begins where it ends, where the subject does not stop at the screen either as textual engagement or practice, but is taken further extending as a continuum, from cinematic space to public spaces across village halls, campuses and community networks, via discussions, talks, reconciliation and action. It is in this sense that I mean when I speak about film as crossing and transgressing textual and cultural borders, spaces and practices, to re-imagine and realize spatial politics as a necessary engagement in cultural politics.

Textual engagement, filmmaking and screening become processes within and without spatial territories and borders, across lived spaces and embodied places as cultural practice.

REFERENCES


RECONSIDERATION OF LOCAL IDENTITY THROUGH PERFORMING ARTS IN THE ERA OF OTONOMI DAERAH

Kaori Fushiki

Introduction

This study looks at the case of Bali in the use of performing arts as a means of representing local identity. “Bali” represents an ethnic, religious and cultural minority within the domestic situation of a nation-state, the Republic of Indonesia. It has historically needed to insist on its own local identity within this nation-state and, in later years, this tendency has been strengthened. After 2000, the enactment of local autonomy (Otonomi Daerah) brought with it the tendency to adhere to the public opinion of Balinese society and was accompanied by radical cultural activities.

It was against this background that this research was done. Data were gathered through participation in and support of cultural activities, data analysis and interviews. I carried out secondary data analysis to gain clarity about Bali’s educational system and cultural politics. I interviewed some people to clarify the discourse of “Ajeg Bali.” The focus of the study on cultural practice was mainly the artists of performing arts. I thus observed and assisted in some performing arts competitions. My field research was mainly done in the Kotamadya Denpasar area. This area is a center of Balinese society where most of the Balinese local mass media is based. Many institutes producing religious leaders, intellectuals and artists are concentrated in this area. It seems that the formation of public opinion is easily seen here. In this city, what kind of ideas do individuals who engage in performing arts for a living have? Moreover, since the emergence of public opinion supportive of the performing arts depends on how they are brought to the public and by whom, how does this change the performing arts themselves and the customs of the people?

Local identity of Bali: “Ajeg Bali”

With the arrival of mass tourism in the 1970s, Balinese society achieved a great deal of development. However, the turning point came in the latter half of the 1990s. The scenery and the aspects of the “traditions” that formed the image of “Bali,” which were the resources that created tourism, were lost due to lifestyle changes especially associated with urbanization and modernization. The Balinese image was further assaulted by the decrease in the number of tourists in 1995, the Asian economic crisis in 1997, the change of government in 1998 and the political confusion that followed. These events resulted in a high inflation rate, bankruptcy of hotels and restaurants, a sharp decrease in the number of group tour visitors, a decrease in people’s actual income and increased hardship for the Balinese. This caused a sense of impending crisis in conventional Bali society, which was dependent on tourism. This sense of crises produced the tendency among the people, through the mass media, to reconsider their ideas of “self.” In particular, when the authority of the Bali state government was greatly expanded in 2000, a tendency to insist on local identity through cultural activities spread out into the district societies.

What is “the quality of Bali/Balineseness” (Picard 2005, 112)? The word which I encountered in 2000 to show Balineseness was kebalian. However, in later years, the keyword changed to Ajeg Bali. It is said that the concept of Ajeg Bali was coined in May 2002 by Satria Naradha, the president of a Balinese newspaper, the Bali Post (Darma Putra 2004, 316). This concept spread throughout Balinese society instantly when the Bali Post Company launched Bali TV and held a big campaign about it. The concept called Ajeg Bali is captured as follows:

Ever since the October 2002 Bali bombings and the subsequent trials of Islamic radicals, many Balinese have turned from talking about ‘Bali Lestari’ or ‘Preserved Bali’ to calling for ‘Ajeg Bali.’ ‘Ajeg’ is a Balinese word meaning hard or stable or fixed. … ‘Ajeg’ implies a certain tough new cultural conservation (Degung Santikarma 2003, 14).

… Ajeg Bali bukanlah sebuah konsep yang stangan, melainkan sebuah upaya peningkatan terus-menerus yang dilakukan secara sadar oleh masyarakat Bali untuk menjaga identitas, ruang serta proses budayanya agar tidak jatuh di bawah penaklukan hegemoni budaya global (Anonymous 2004, 46).

[…constant innovation being practiced consciously by the Balinese makes an effort at following their identity because it is not conquered by the global
cultural hegemony (translated by Fushiki).]

“Suatu gerakan ideologis untuk menjaga kehidupan sosial budaya Bali agar tetap eksis sekaligus kokoh menghadapi tantangan internal dan eksternal” (Putra Darma 2005, 316).

[An ideological activity that is going to protect the social and cultural life of Bali for its eternal and solid existence when faced with internal and external challenges (translated by Fushiki).]

ajeg: a new protectionist ethos in the discourses on Balinese cultural identity (Noszlopy 2005, 179).

This discourse has been readjusted and reframed for the 21st century by academics, local government and the mass media, specifically the Bali Post, as the discourse of Ajeg Bali. Ajeg Bali, a Bali that is “upstanding,” “stable” and culturally autonomous, follows in the wake of the correct practice of adat (Noszlopy 2005, 180-181).

What is real the meaning of Ajeg Bali? Before a true meaning of Ajeg Bali could be arrived at, the opinion of leaders has extended the keyword in the mass media. The word was received by the people and practiced without being doubted. The concept of Ajeg Bali has now become “something one has to do as ‘Balinese.’” It is only in the last few years that Ajeg Bali has become a popular ethos with the local people. Many cultural activities are done as representations of the Ajeg Bali movement. It is also related to the religious ethos or aesthetics, especially with Agama Hindu (Hinduism).

How do artists respond to Ajeg Bali? A few years ago, they did not recognize the concept of Ajeg Bali. Nowadays, artists who are highly educated want to talk about Ajeg Bali themselves and want to put it into practice. This is an interesting phenomenon. Life with the local identity/ethos of “Ajeg Bali” was introduced not only by intellectuals but also by artists, especially traditional gamelan players. When they play gamelans in some rituals that society wants to perform, they suggest the most “suitable” gamelan for the ritual. The ability to make suggestions comes from the knowledge brought about by their higher educational attainment. They sometimes change the social behavior in a local site like a desa (village). In these places, very local behavior sometimes replaces the standard, mainstream style.

In addition to the situation detailed above, problems with Ajeg Bali complicate local politics. Many cultural events concerned with Ajeg Bali are organized by local governments. In my research, I followed some performing arts lomba (competitions). Sometimes the competition became a transactional stage for political powers where who received the honor from the lomba was more important than artistic representation. The principal political interest within a desa is the one who participates in the dance, music and other things, and no one notices what is important in the piece or its aesthetics. In this situation, there are certain criteria for entering the competition, but these no longer consider ethos or aesthetics.

The contribution of ISI to Balinese performing arts

Institut Seni Indonesia-Denpasar or ISI-Denpasar (Indonesian Arts Institute in Denpasar) is one of the national universities of the arts and music. Most of the people who take an academic role or form the political nucleus of the current Balinese performing arts scene graduated from this university. This university was established as a vocational school of Balinese traditional arts and has now become an institute of Indonesian arts. In the era of the academy, this university had its graduates perform surveys of the local performing arts, and these reports became a basic, important record about contemporary Balinese arts in those days. After becoming STSI-Denpasar (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia-Denpasar), the university functioned as an institution that mainly produced artists creating performing arts. Many graduation works were produced and a public examination was held every year. Now the Institute is sending out highly educated artists who give guidance to younger generations of artists.

Graduates’ creations and social evaluations of reactions to the Institute

I analyzed the trend in graduation performances and tried to investigate how this trend was tied to social changes. The reason for this analysis was that I expected the university to have played a role in the Ajeg Bali movement. From 1988 to the mid-1990s, many students who majored in karawitan (traditional music) at STSI-Denpasar chose theater sendratari (seni drama tari, dance drama) for their graduation performances. Then, starting in the mid-1990s, many students did their graduation performances as dance pieces. Then from 2000 onward, many students did their graduation pieces not in the karawitan style but in the konser (modern concert) style. This implies that not only has the karawitan style been abandoned but that the pieces do not “use” traditional gamelan instruments. I was very surprised by this result, because the Institute is a center for the study of traditional music, but many of its students no longer use the karawitan style. This situation
is far removed from social reality. Furthermore, I sometimes heard “there is no social concern within ISI-Denpasar because they cannot do anything” as a social voice. Some cassettes recorded by STSI-Denpasar or ISI-Denpasar that are already on the market are said to feature the wrong way of playing gamelans, especially in the traditional pieces. Many old, non-formally educated gamelan players complain about this. However, these recordings are still broadcast in the Balinese mass media and have become popular works. Also, some students in ISI-Denpasar cannot judge the lomba of traditional gamelan well. Because of their poor judgment, many people complain of the lack of fairness and problems arise within the committee.

**Female gamelan activities**

Village-based women’s gamelan groups are usually called Gong PKK. There are a number of methods by which the members of the group are selected or the groups are formed. It is not only women but also men who are concerned with the establishment of a group. There are three ways of forming a group. The first type can be called a “selected members” group. Members of the group are selected by men in the community and are expected to bring honor to the group or to become an example to their children. One who wants to join the group but does not have the ability cannot be selected for the group. The second type can be called a “mixed members” group. Members of the group are sometimes selected to bring honor to the group or selected because of the status of the husband or the wife in society. However, if anyone wants to join the group, the request is not rejected. The third type can be called a “true lovers” group. Members are not selected from any specific type of people; anyone who wants to join is welcomed to the group.

**A showcase of Ajeg Bali**

The gamelan activities of the women are not a traditional phenomenon. However, the wearing of pakaian adat (traditional clothes) is almost a duty. This shows that the gamelan is clearly customary. In the ngaya (offering of the gamelan play to the gods) at the pura (temple), the women wear their traditional Balinese clothes and say a prayer to the gods before a performance. They receive holy water from a priest and then play the gamelan. The donning of traditional clothes, the offering of prayer, the receipt of the holy water and the performance of the gamelan are the indexes of their practice of Ajeg Bali. Therefore, the dedication performance in the temple becomes a big event in their village. The image of women who are good wives and mothers, who protect their tradition well and practice Ajeg Bali, is a source of pride not only for women but also for men. Moreover, the lomba of the gamelan has similar importance to the ngaya. Winning a high prize in lomba brings great honor to the village. Therefore, lomba are held for gamelan playing in various classes such as those for women, children and youth. In the case of women’s gamelan, it was after the 1980s that lomba were first held. After the Ajeg Bali movement began, the lomba became more popular. Currently, not only women but also men eagerly promote the gamelan activities of women.

**Identity of women**

Traditionally, women are not expected to perform artistic activities in society, except for girls’ dances. Married women are only expected to have the role of the keeper of the family properties and to make offerings to their gods and ancestors. They are expected to follow their husbands. However, women’s relatively low social status has been a hot topic recently, with some women wanting to improve their status. In the study sites, there are two attitudes towards women. At one site, women are making efforts to raise their status, while at the other site, women want to maintain traditional female roles and images. These two attitudes separate women into two groups. One is the group that joins, supports or approves of the female gamelan activities. When they hold a ngaya, they get the chance to participate as gamelan players wearing their special costumes. The other group criticizes female gamelan activities. They insist that the gamelan activities are men’s work and not suitable for women.

**Children’s gamelan activities**

In many cases, the establishment of children’s gamelan is deeply connected to the parents’ request. Children’s gamelan activities have an educational purpose. However, a more interesting phenomenon is the viewing of the practice of the gamelan as social education. In some areas where public morals have been corrupted, parents want to keep their children away from social problems like prostitution and the drug trade, among others, with the lessons of Ajeg Bali. Of course, there are cases of children’s gamelan groups that are established because of the children’s aspiration. However, because of the problems of expense, instruments and facilities, it is difficult to start the lessons in a banjar (a regional association). When the group is approved by a banjar, they can practice the gamelan at the bale banjar (banjar assembly hall). If they are not approved, the group cannot use the bale banjar. In this case, children’s gamelan activities are done within the context of a
private gamelan group called sanggar.

Education, ngaya, TV programs and competition

Because of the parents’ educational aims, children’s gamelan activities have certain peculiarities. The parents require their children to pray to the gods at the temple before they start their lessons. They are required to give a “Hindu” greeting to the instructor and to wear the pakaian adat during the lessons. The parents believe that this is one way to learn Ajeg Bali. They want their children to learn “Balinese” culture in the “Balinese” way in a “Balinese” setting as “Balinese.” The proclamation of this result, the children’s attainment of “Balineseness,” is usually performed as a ngaya. A ngaya is the most suitable chance to show the result of their daily activities to the village. To show it outside of their village, the parents would arrange to have the children’s performance filmed for a TV program, with children’s “Balinese” activities on TV becoming popular, especially performance filmed for a TV program, with children’s village, the parents would arrange to have the children’s daily activities to the village. To show it outside of their village, the parents would arrange to have the children’s performance filmed for a TV program, with children’s “Balinese” activities on TV becoming popular, especially in Bali-TV. However, a lomba will attract the most people. Schools send participants as representatives of a local school and community. Schoolteachers pick out the brilliant students in their school to form groups that will participate in the competition. A prize brings great honor to the school, the local community, and the children. For this reason, parents and schools need the best instructors to give children the best learning environment. However, the participation of schools in gamelan activities causes friction with the local gamelan group. The main problem is the selection of a representative. The selection is done by teachers who often do not know the details of gamelan playing techniques and the characteristics of the group. This creates a feeling of unfairness and causes stiff relations. Putting children with different levels of technical skills together also creates some problems. The parents of the selected children pay for the expenses for lessons and special clothes for the competition since there is no support from the school. However, the school, which collects the prize money, does not reimburse the parents for the expenses. This causes dissatisfaction among parents.

Beleganjur competitions and youth gamelan activities

Beleganjur is a type of Balinese gamelan usually used for religious ceremonies to exorcise evil spirits. Usually, it is played by the youth. It is a form of creative gamelan and new creations of the beleganjur are very popular. When a lomba for beleganjur is planned, the local community becomes excited about the competition. It can also be said that the competition of gamelan beleganjur is a political event. Many of the members of the groups are chosen by and supported by the Desa Dinas (village administrators). The beleganjur competition is, therefore, a battle of the villages. The beleganjur competition that I studied was held in September 2006 as a part of Lomba Karana Teruna Teruni (Competition of Youth Groups in the Village Society). It was also done as a part of a commemorative event of a hundred years after the Puputan Badung (the historical mass suicide in Badung Kingdom, Bali). The Desa Dinas that I studied made an effort to participate in the competition to bring honor to the village or to not be disgraced by other villages by the lack of preparation. It was of utmost importance for the Desa to participate in the competition.

Process for the competition, criteria and the performance

The meeting to organize participation in a lomba is usually done six months before the competition. However, the village I studied was late in making preparations and had the meeting only one month before. At the meeting, the village mayor and the government officials selected a composer to create a new piece for the competition. Then, the selection of the gamelan players took two weeks. Practices, therefore, started only two weeks before the competition. Because of the lack of time, the piece was made simple and short, just long enough for the competition’s criteria. However, there was fear that their participation might cause the composer and players shame so they initially wanted to drop out of the competition. However, because the delegate of the youth association wanted to bring himself honor and have his participation fee returned, he approved the participation of the group without the agreement of the others. After the decision to participate, the group practiced every day. Because Balinese gamelans do not use the notation traditionally, it was difficult for the selected members to memorize the composition. The piece was completed only one day before the competition.

Every competition has clear criteria. This beleganjur competition had its clear criteria outlined in its official documents. Many elements of Ajeg Bali are included in the criteria and the published theme was itself related to Ajeg Bali. The competition’s theme was classic stories and the composition’s topic had to be chosen from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Sutasoma or Tantri. The work’s composition was to express a theme of greatness, bravery, humor, loyalty and virtue within a length of six to eight minutes along the chosen story line in the style of Sendratari. The instrumentation was to be traditional and typical, and the number of each musical instrument was pre-determined. Combinations of various musical
instruments used in recent creations were not acceptable. The players and supporting members were required to wear clothes used for courtesy or ritual. They also could not use tools that did not have an element of tradition. The “traditional” spear, the ornaments of a traditional motif based on a wayang puppet (shadow puppet), a barong (sacred animal) and a rangda (widow) were recommended. The competition piece was made in accordance with the criteria and was checked several times for adherence to the criteria. A few days before the competition, the village officials invited the judges and supervisors to a rehearsal to receive their guidance. At the competition, this guidance was reflected in the piece.

The group that I studied held a rehearsal five days before the competition. The rehearsal was done in the pura and the members came in simple traditional clothes. The judge and supervisors also came on stage wearing traditional clothes and received a polite reception from the village officials. On the competition day, all members gathered at the temple wearing “Balinese” costumes and prayed to the gods for success. After the performance, they went back to the temple and ate a meal with pork together. Components of Ajeg Bali in this activity include pura, traditional clothes, prayer at pura and eating pork.

Prosperity and popularity of non-traditional performing arts

As traditional Balinese gamelans prosper, non-Balinese performing arts are also gaining popularity in Balinese society. An example is PSR (Pekan Seni Remaja, Youth Arts Week) which is sponsored by Denpasar City. PSR, once comprised of various competitions, including athletics, between junior high and high school students, has now become a synthesis competition of cultural activities. Furthermore, an art festival for kindergarten and primary schoolchildren came to be held at the same time. These competitions are generally divided into two branches: traditional and non-traditional. Various gamelans, “classical” dancing, chanting of Balinese poetry, Balinese literature and Balinese painting are classified in the traditional section. The non-traditional section includes modern drama, paduan suara (chorus), Pop Bali, and so on. A new creation in the traditional style is thought as traditional because the “invention of tradition” is an ordinary feature in this society. In 2007, all competitions were done under the theme of Ajeg Bali. The non-traditional section uses the Indonesian language and not only Balinese, and many people of other ethnic origins participate in these competitions.

Paduan Suara

Paduan suara is a mixed chorus. According to Putu Setia (1986), students’ choirs were popular in Balinese society in the 1980s, and their popularity continues to this day, especially among high school students. It seems that the difference between the situation in the 1980s and now is that in the 1980s, choir performances were broadcast by the Balinese mass media while nowadays, they are not. The songs that are used in competition are Lagu Cinta Tanah Air (patriotic) Indonesian songs and songs that were popular in Bali in the 1960s. Other songs are choir pieces arranged by composers who learned Western music such as Ismail Marzuki and Iskandar, and pop music arrangements by Ngrah Arjana or A. A. Made Cakra which form a set piece. Students are obliged to sing one of these and to choose two other pieces from a set selected by the committee. The conductor was chosen from among the students of the school, but the piano (an electric keyboard) accompaniment was arranged by the committee. The singers wear their school uniforms and sing with gestures. The choral competitions are very exciting. Sometimes battles among supporters take place in the halls.

These competitions are a suggestive phenomenon. On the one hand, the Ajeg Bali movement is radical, but on the other hand, other cultural performances are accepted by the local society, as well. In my view, this situation shows the centripetal forces for modernization. Non-traditional performing arts reflect the image of modernity such as western style music, Indonesian language and school uniforms. For this reason, competitions in non-traditional performing arts continue to be more popular than traditional ones.

Pop Bali: Ajeg Bali-ized non-traditional performing arts

Pop Bali, a form of popular music sung in Balinese language and fused with musical elements such as the Balinese gamelan, recently became widely popular. Before the last decade, Pop Bali was thought to be old-fashioned music. Many young people did not want to listen to and sing Pop Bali because of its old-fashioned style. However, this changed in 2000 when Pop Bali was identified as one of the components of Ajeg Bali. The musical style was enriched. There arose styles of Mandarin, Banyuwangian, alternative, rap, rock and others. Many singers became popular and many young people became supporters of the singers or the band. For a few years after 2000, the pop competition in the PSR was done by performing Indonesian pop songs and international pop songs in English. However, nowadays, the pop competition is done by performing “Balinese”
pop songs and the participants wear traditional clothes to be Ajeg Bali. Because of their popularity, there are many private pop competitions now. The competitions have become popular shows. Sometimes the pop competitions banish the “traditional” ones. In one of the cases I observed, the traditional kendang (drum) competition was forced out of the competition hall because the pop competition took so long. The pop competition had more than a hundred participants but the traditional kendang competition only had twelve participants. There were few spectators for the kendang competition because the stage was set in a school classroom. In contrast, the stage for the Pop Bali competition was built in a courtyard with rich decorations. This reflects the status of the Balinese local identity. Traditional competitions are thought of as adhering to Balinese origins, and hence are important ones, but actually the Balinese want to be modern and suited to their times. Traditional competitions, therefore, are not as popular as the pop competitions.

Conclusion: Performing arts and the reconsideration of local identity

As I have shown above, the performing arts in local “Balinese” society are deeply concerned with people’s expectations. Many activities are related to people’s relationships in society, including the expectation of social honor and economic profit, among others. The aesthetic criteria of the performing arts are not considered by ordinary people. However, they are very proud to do Ajeg Bali through the “Balinese” performing arts. The figures of the new “Bali” include not only “traditional” Balinese performing arts but also new “Balinese” performances like Pop Bali. This situation shows that the “Balinese” performing arts and their activities have become part of the social identity of “Bali.” Intellectuals made the discourse of Ajeg Bali in the local mass media, while government officials spread and expanded it and set up Ajeg Bali events. And the people do it. This seems to be one of the ways of doing Ajeg Bali.

However, who really wants Ajeg Bali? In Kotamadya Denpasar, it was the people who worked in the local government system, including the mayor, who gained honor and profit from the system. Many concerned people, like intellectuals, government officials and artists, met with the mayor to lobby for support to “cultural” activities such as the performing arts by appealing to a crisis of local identity and proposing the practice of Ajeg Bali. It may be said that Ajeg Bali becomes a kind of mantra in Balinese society, as Ari Dwipayana (2005: 14) points out. It may also be said that today’s Ajeg Bali situation is sometimes “too much” for the Balinese and others in the Balinese local society. There is the fear that it will become too ethnocentric, with too much Ajeg Bali causing awkward relations with neighbors who are not “Balinese.”

To reconsider the problem of local identity, I want to show two points of view. First, there is the viewpoint of the national political situation. From this point, we can sometimes see the radical Ajeg Bali movement, which seems to be linking with the Parisada (Hindu council) which gives people guidance for daily life and which was already disunited through the religious act and a difference of opinion for “Balineseness.” This has resulted in changes to customs, rituals and the performing arts. Furthermore, we can see public opinion and public acts as political tools, such as the use of performing arts from the Beleganjur in the Ritual of the One Hundred Years of “Puputan Badung.” This means that the performing arts have been politicized in this context. Moreover, others in Balinese society already feel a change in the social atmosphere. Actually, through the activities of daily customs/performing arts, social rejection of the non-“Balinese” elements in the community has already occurred.

In short, there is a need to reconsider the concept of local identity. This process will cause social unease and unstable social conditions because of its political character. It is necessary to pay attention to the easy, hasty movements that use the local identity.

Why has the sympathy to expressions of the local identity such as Ajeg Bali become a political topic? It is because the performing arts, which are performed as representations of the local identity, can become tools of agitation by power holders and people who want to profit from the situation. I think there is a problem in the relationship between academic intellectuals, those in the mass media, artists and local politicians, especially at the village level. To clarify the problem and the system, we have to investigate the views and activities of local politicians. However, I had no time or opportunity to study this phenomenon. It still remains as the next issue to be studied.
NOTES

1 Gamelan are Indonesian/Malaysian traditional musical ensembles. Many of them are bronze gong-chime orchestras, although some use bamboo, wood, steel, among others, instead of bronze.

2 This TV channel was established by a local newspaper company, the Bali Post, in 2002.

3 The theme of 2006 is as follows: Through the examination of our culture, we will improve the creativity of the young generation while realizing a unity that is aimed at peace and Ajeg Bali (Melalui Nilai-Nilai Budaya Kita Tingkatkan Kreativitas Generasi Buda Dalam Mewujudkan Kesatuan Menuju Kedamaian dan Ajeg Bali).

4 Sometimes the act of eating pork becomes the marker of "non-Muslim=Balinese." So through this act, some people discriminate against others in being Balinese.

5 Pop Bali is performed by the Balinese to show their "Balineseness" in plural languages. It was in the 1970s that Pop Bali was commercialized and appeared in the market as so-called popular music by the recording media.

REFERENCES


TRANSFORMATIONS IN AGRARIAN LIVELIHOOD AND THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT UNDER GLOBALIZATION

Supa Yaimuang

Introduction

The dynamic transformation of agriculture in many countries around the globe has been actively occurring under globalization. Globalization has created powerful economic, political, social and cultural ties across borders (Singh 2007). After the Second World War, the development of economic ties became the major theme in global integration as international trade and investment were enhanced and production technology greatly improved in line with the growth of transnational corporations (TNCs). Information technology has significantly speeded up this integration, especially in the flow of money and investment, labor, production, information and culture.

Within the context of globalization, the global economy has been accelerated by the ideology of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, which developed from capitalism, is defined as trade liberalization in terms of goods, services and capital, allowing them to flow across borders without state control, leading to rapid economic growth (Janyapes 2000). In this context, TNCs have gained greater power in economic negotiations that have included deregulation, privatization, trade stabilization and liberalization. Meanwhile, international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have played important roles in gearing up this economic transformation.

Consequently, agricultural transformation has inevitably moved forward under several bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. These trade agreements have been made between developed countries, in which agriculture is highly subsidized, and developing countries, which are poor. The concept of trade liberalization considers that free trade will bring about competent trade competition and efficient production. It has been implemented by many international organizations as a method of poverty reduction. As a result, farmers’ ways of life have been transformed and small-scale farmers have inevitably had to adjust to the context of globalization. As an alternative to these changes, sustainable agriculture is proposed by the agricultural community. It was conceived as a response to the impact of the Green Revolution.

The objective of my study was to understand changes in the agricultural sector and the creation of farmers’ alternatives in the development of sustainable agriculture in Japan and Indonesia. In Japan, this study focused on farmers’ livelihoods and farmers’ groups in the prefectures of Mie, Saitama, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Hokkaido and Yamagata. These farmers are involved in the development of sustainable agriculture including the issue of farmer-consumer linkages, as well as related policy issues. In Indonesia, the study was conducted in rice-based communities in Wonogiri District, Central Java and Ngawi District, Eastern Java. The study focused on the impact of trade liberalization and the formation of the communities’ alternatives based on local culture and biodiversity. The study was conducted at two levels. At the policy level, data were gathered through a literature review and interviews with local state officials. On the issue of sustainable agriculture and communities’ alternatives, the study was focused at the community level. Data were gathered through interviews with family members and members of community groups, NGO staff and university academics. Participation in various activities such as meetings, seminars and on-farm visits also generated data.

Agricultural change: Political, economic and social context

Agricultural change in the two countries has been caused by changes in their political, economic and social systems. These include the change to adopt a system of capitalism, which in Japan took place after the Second World War. In Indonesia, after independence in 1945, the country declared itself a democracy and launched a land reform program. Japan moved towards industrialization while Indonesia was still in the stage of nation building, adopting capitalism in 1967. After a land reform program, the farmers in both countries become small farmers. In Japan, the average land holding per family is one hectare except in Hokkaido.1 Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the average land holding is only 0.35 hectare. On the island of Java, where the land is fertile and suitable for farming and hence, the population relatively dense, the average land holding is only 0.25 hectare. In Japan, the farm population is decreasing. In 2005, 1.96 million families were farmers.
out of a total population of 127.8 million people. In Indonesia, the majority are farmers. In 2003, there were 25.4 million farm families, making up 56 percent of the total population.

The most important agricultural change in the two countries was the Green Revolution. The Green Revolution transformed the pattern of agriculture from traditional farming (which used human and animal labor and was very nature-dependent) to modern agriculture. This form of modern agriculture required the use of chemicals and new technologies, including improved seeds and animal breeds. High Yielding Varieties which required the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides were developed. Farmers had to depend on these external inputs produced by agribusiness companies. Before the Green Revolution era, Indonesia had more than 8,000 native rice varieties (Brookfield and Byron 1967). By 1988, 74 percent of these native rice varieties had been lost (WRI 1998). Native rice varieties were replaced by high yielding varieties promoted by the government with support programs such as input subsidies. In 1984, Indonesia achieved food self-sufficiency but the country faced environmental problems as a result of agricultural chemical use. Soil and water were contaminated; pest problems spread as pests grew resistant to chemicals. The volume of production stabilized and then began to decrease due to environmental changes. Japan also faced environmental and chemical contamination problems. Western influence had entered Japan since the Meiji reign; at that time, Japan adopted modern technology and external inputs in its agriculture. Experimental research on agriculture was introduced, although it required many years to be applied in the Japanese context. After the Second World War, there was an increase in chemical use in order to meet the country’s needs for food self-sufficiency. Japan began to experience environmental problems in 1965, which is the same period during which Indonesia adopted Green Revolution technology in its agricultural sector.

Changes in agriculture under globalization

Agriculture in both countries is confronting problems from trade liberalization. Both multilateral and bilateral agreements are moving Japan and Indonesia towards liberalized economies. The Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) affected the Indonesian agricultural sector. In addition, under regional agreements that have been made, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), domestic support from the government to the agricultural sector has been abolished. The role of the government in the rice trade has been reduced. The government has had to change its policies and allow the private sector to expand its role in trading; this has been done together with the reduction of export and import tariffs. For example, import tariffs on agricultural items were reduced to five percent in 1999. The process of tariff reduction began in the early 1990s and, even as Indonesia was confronted with economic problems in 1998-99, the country still had to follow its international agreements. As the country faced economic problems, it had to borrow money from the IMF and the World Bank. The loan came along with conditions that forced Indonesia to adopt free trade policies. Japan also faced strong pressure to open its country up to free trade agreements and reduce its import tariffs. In 1990, Japan had to reduce its tariffs on oranges and beef and, in 1993, on rice. It has had to abolish domestic support for agriculture. As a result, it has adapted its laws to follow the terms of international agreements. In 1999, Japan declared the Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas to replace the Basic Agriculture Law of 1961. The new law addressed production efficiency, increased competitiveness and food security. The details of how this change has impacted the agricultural sector are outlined below:

1. Food self-sufficiency and trade competition

There is no exemption for a developed country like Japan nor for a developing country like Indonesia. After signing free trade agreements, both faced problems due to decreased food self-sufficiency. In Japan, food self-sufficiency decreased and the role of the agricultural sector declined after the Second World War. Japan has to depend on imported food. This is because the country became an industrialized country. Free trade should benefit net-food importing countries like Japan but the ratio of the nation’s food self-sufficiency has declined: Japan’s food self-sufficiency was 48 percent in 1990, but declined to 43 percent in 1995 and 40 percent in 2000. At present, Japan imports food such as bananas, mangoes, chicken, shrimp, beef and vegetables. More than 60 percent of its imports come from the USA, Australia, China and Thailand. The domestic price of agricultural products has likewise decreased. Since the beginning of trade liberalization, with the importation of oranges and vegetables from China, domestic vegetable producers have suffered since they cannot compete with cheaper Chinese vegetables.

Indonesia faced economic problems in 1997-1998, and with them, problems of food insecurity and poverty. In 1999, the number of poor increased to 23 percent. Indonesia imported 5.8 million metric tons
of rice in 1998, 4.2 million metric tons in 1999 and two million metric tons in 2003 (Sidik 2004). Rice has become a food security issue for Indonesia. In 2004, the government prohibited the importation of rice during the harvesting season and charged an import tax IDR430/kg. At present, Indonesia imports many kinds of food such as soybean, sugar, fruit, meat, milk and cotton. When these products are imported, the domestic price goes down and farmers suffer. At the same time, the government is unable to launch a domestic support program because of Agreement on Agriculture under the WTO. Although Indonesia is an agricultural country, it is dependent on imports. Thus, it will face the problem of food insecurity over the long term.

The study of rice-based communities, such as the case of Pucangan community and the community network in Ngawi District and Setreorejo community in Wonogiri District, found that farmers’ cost of production has increased. However, the price of domestic rice has remained low as it has to compete with the low price of imported rice. Indonesia imports rice from America, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan and Myanmar, and because of the free trade agreement within the ASEAN and the WTO, this rice import is tax-free. This brings down the price of rice from these countries, and Indonesian farmers end up selling their rice at a very low price. At the same time, the prices of other goods such as cooking oil, clothing, gasoline and education-related expenses have gone up; therefore, farmers do not earn enough income and become indebted. Many have to work at other jobs, as laborers or furniture makers, for example, or migrate to work in town. Women farmers have also been affected by the economic problems and their role has changed. Like the men, they also have to migrate to the towns or to other countries. Most of the women who leave the country work as housekeepers in the Middle East or Malaysia, or as workers in the service sector or in factories in Jakarta and other large Indonesian cities. In some villages, almost the only people left living there are old men and children. During the economic crisis, landless people also faced difficulties in finding jobs. Although the government has a program to help the poor by selling rice at a cheap price, there is not enough of this rice to meet the demand. In some cases, children have had to leave school since their parents could not afford to pay their school fees. Some landless farmers rent land and have to share their produce with the landowner or pay the rent in cash. This further increases the cost of production for these farmers. Land ownership is a problem for farmers in Indonesia, and the government had a policy for land reform since the 1960s but access to land is still a big problem. Many farmers have reflected that the government should launch a policy to protect small farmers. The national and international policies for trade liberalization were made without the people’s participation in the decision making processes.

2. Changes to agri-food production and the trading system
Changes in farming patterns since the Green Revolution and changes in government policies in response to free trade have resulted in changes in the national production structure. In Japan, the government prioritizes farms with areas larger than four hectares; meanwhile, most small farmers own only one hectare, except in Hokkaido. The government still supports small farmers living on mountains where small parcels of land cannot be easily combined to support agribusiness. However, the trend for Japanese agriculture is to become large scale and for agribusiness to play a more important role. Small farmers in Japan are now mobilized and have adapted their production patterns by combining land parcels or setting up production groups or companies. In the future, this pattern will multiply. Farmers may change their relationship to a joint venture and draw salaries as in the case of a business firm. Some farmers may survive, especially those living in areas where parcels of land cannot be combined and those who establish self-help systems within the family or group by practicing sustainable agriculture. The principal farmer group that may survive is the group that receives support in the form of direct payments on five major crops, namely soybeans, wheat, barley, beets and Irish potatoes. In 2006, other items being supported by the government have been added, such as vegetables, fruit and animal products.

In Indonesia, the government launched a policy to increase rice production for the nation’s food security. Normally, farmers rely on external inputs such as chemical fertilizers, pesticides, improved animal breeds and plant seeds, and technology. After the implementation of free trade, trading in agricultural inputs has become easier and the traders’ business is booming. While trading small farmers’ rice is a problem, the business firms, especially large scale ones, play a greater role. An agribusiness company, a joint venture between Thai and Indonesian entities, produces maize seed. There is another company, a joint venture between Indonesian and Dutch entities, that produces vegetable seed and fruit seedlings. Meanwhile, the promotion of palm oil is under the control of Indonesian and Malaysian companies. For poultry, although farmers raise native chickens, 75 percent of poultry is produced by a Thai company. As the structure of food production changed, the trade system also changed. Some goods are under the supervision of the Indonesian government, such
as wheat, rice and soybeans, but the government has allowed the private sector to trade these commodities and changed the law to support private sector trading. The country also faces a cooking oil shortage as the price of cooking oil went up due to the production of palm oil for export to meet the demand for biofuel. The private sector does not pay attention to the domestic demand since exporting palm oil is more profitable. This situation has led to a domestic food problem. After the introduction of free trade in 2001, Indonesian food imports were valued at USD2.9 billion; in 2002 this increased to USD3.3 billion, 30 percent of which was processed food and beverages. The volume of imports from the USA was 25 percent or USD809 million out of the total value. The food business will probably expand further since Indonesian consumers mainly consume non-local food.

3. Intellectual property rights
Under the WTO agreement, intellectual property rights have been applied to agricultural products. In Indonesia and Japan, laws have been amended and new laws have been passed that pay more attention to breeders’ rights than farmers’ rights. The concept of intellectual property rights is based on capitalism, which considers everything to be a commodity. This law was developed from the system of copyrights for industrial products. The industrial sector is, however, different from the agricultural sector, which is considered in many places to be characterized by a culture of helping one another and sharing of seeds and knowledge. In agricultural societies, seed is not a commodity but can be exchanged and shared among farmers. In this way, seed genetic diversity has increased. Although society changed and farmers began to buy seeds from the market, nobody had dominant control over the seeds. However, the system of intellectual property rights has changed the structure of agriculture and converted common property into individual property.

In Japan, the government passed the 2002 Intellectual Property Basic Law and launched a policy to use intellectual property rights to create efficient competitiveness for agriculture and the food industry. The government promotes the innovation of new technology, including new varieties of plants that are to be used in production and the food industry. It has developed regional brands and strictly controls violations of the patenting system for imported products that are produced without permission from the breeder. The regional brand and patent system will result in a high cost of inputs. It can also be used as trade barrier.

In Indonesia, the country passed laws and amended some laws on this issue, particularly the Plant Variety Protection Law. The Plant Variety Protection Law was passed in 2000 and has created complications for the agricultural sector, as well as increasing conflicts. For example, an agribusiness company involved in maize seed production sued farmers in East Java for selling maize seed and using breeding technology belonging to the company. The farmers were arrested and sent to court and a guilty verdict was handed down. This case reflects the trend where a more dominant control over genetic resources will prevent farmers from having access to seed. The monopoly control over seed will increase the price of seed and this will no doubt add to farmers’ expenses. In addition, the development of technology has so far been directed towards the development and promotion of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). GMO technology will decrease farmers’ self-reliance. Moreover, the law does not recognize farmers’ rights over native seeds and animal breeds. The new laws not only reflect the changes in agricultural technology, they also change the culture from self-reliance based on small farmers’ system of exchange and sharing to a system of trading (i.e., buying and selling).

Sustainable agriculture: Paradigm of self-reliance and farmers’ freedom

The paradigm of sustainable agriculture is the paradigm of self-reliance and farmers’ freedom. Sustainable agriculture emerged from farmers’ adaptations in response to corporate control over mainstream agriculture. Sustainable agriculture includes the concept of environmental protection, since the environment is part of farmers’ capital. The use of external, non-local inputs increases the cost of production and makes farmers dependent on them. Sustainable agriculture is not only a set of techniques for non-chemical agriculture but also includes the concept of farmers’ self-reliance and struggle for survival.

Sustainable agriculture has many forms in accordance with each ecosystem in which it is found. In Japan, farmers practice natural farming; this system was derived from the traditional way of farming but integrated with new innovations. The pattern of organic farming developed later. In Indonesia, sustainable agriculture refers to a system of traditional natural farming or Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which has developed into organic farming. These systems were developed based on farmers’ experiences in the two countries. This study found that sustainable agriculture is dynamic and plays many important roles, detailed as follows:
1. Conservation of agrarian culture and food self-reliance
Small farmers who practice sustainable agriculture in Japan acknowledged that the idea of conserving local food culture comes from family farm production which aims at food self-sufficiency for the farm family. Sustainable agriculture is practiced for the purpose of food self-sufficiency in good quality, pesticide-free food, while at the same time conserving the environment, soil and water. Thus, sustainable agriculture provides food security, with the surplus for sale as income for the family. Families practicing sustainable agriculture may process food from the materials found on the farm. For example, Mr. Furuno processes some fresh products, such as duck or vegetables, into local food. Mr. Shimpei makes sembe (local bread) from rice, while Mr. Kitahara, a Hokkaido producer of organic onions, produces an onion-based salad dressing. Based on family consumption, sustainable agriculture production has to be diverse and plant and animal production must be integrated. What is produced will depend on the size of families and the family’s demands for food and income.

Indonesian farmers also practice sustainable agriculture in rice-based communities. The traditional culture of the farming community, where farmers produce mainly for household consumption, still exists. Although farmers grow rice two or three times in a year, they also grow many other kinds of crops. They normally divide their land into a plot to grow cassava, chilies and peanuts, and in some plots, they grow fruit trees. They also raise animals in their backyards. This pattern was adapted from the traditional farming practices of farmers in Ngawi District, East Java. The farmers of Wonogiri District, Central Java, practice a system of growing multi-purpose trees mixed with peanuts, soybean, maize and cassava. The system is designed based on the local eco-system and the limitation of water shortages in rice farming. In some villages, the farmers grow many local varieties of beans. They also have good cultivation plans. Because of the limited size of their land holdings, they grow many kinds of plants both at the same time and at different times. In this way, farmers have food for consumption all year round. This agricultural pattern is designed to respond to their own family’s needs. They are able to produce enough food for consumption and to provide some income from the farm. This can be considered the rural economy of small farmers. This system is the basis of food security for the family and the community. This study found that the community produces a surplus of food and that farmers also have a system of storing rice for the next season, and have other food crops for consumption, such as corn and potatoes. This is the cultural practice in all communities. These communities have enough food and they are part of an economic system that uses both cash and rice. They divide their produce into three parts, one for the family’s consumption, one part for building social capital and the third part for sale. The main problem that these Indonesian farmers faced is income insecurity.

2. Establishment of a local food system
Farmers practicing sustainable agriculture set up activities that link themselves with consumers or develop local markets. These systems take many forms. Farmers and consumers in Japan have created an interesting and innovative local food system. It is called the teikei? system which takes the form of a direct relationship between farmers and consumers. This system allows farmers to produce food and send it directly to consumers. The consumers learn and understand the production patterns, and support the producers. Communication is important. The producers provide information about their produce for each week and share stories about the limited number of products. Sometimes, there are suggestions on food processing. Some groups organize activities for consumers. For example, in Mie prefecture, farmers groups organize miso-making for urban housewife groups. In some areas, they have a system of product exchange, such as trading vegetables for soybean starch that one of the farmers interviewed, Mr. Kaneko, uses to make compost. Farmers also develop delivery services on their own or through a service company. On special occasions, farmers may send small gifts to the consumers with whom they have a relationship. Mr. Shimpei, for example, sends a small bag of sticky rice.

Cooperatives are another way of managing production and establishing a relationship with consumers. The farmers sell their organic products to a distribution center, such as the network of the Ainou Kai Distribution Center. There are many cooperatives in the network, and these are found in Osaka, Nagoya and at Ainou Kai. At Nagoya Center, the farmers set up the cooperative because, at the initial stage, farmers faced marketing problems since their organic products looked bad compared to products grown with agro-chemicals. Consumers did not want to buy organic products. The farmers, through their cooperative activities, provided consumers with information on organic production and create a better understanding of the system. Other cooperative systems have been organized by consumers, while some cooperatives mobilize themselves as small cooperatives to sell organic products and environmental protection goods, such as the case of Green Co-op in Fukuoka prefecture. Other
cooperatives are established to support sustainable agriculture systems and environmental protection, such as the Seikatsu Club, which was established in 1968 and has 26 branches nationwide. The Sanchuko Club has two shops in Fukuoka. There is also a group called Hyakusho Yakai (1977) that wants to conserve the environment in cooperation with producers in promoting organic farming. This consumer cooperative acts as a link between producers and consumers. They have a home delivery service and also deliver products to the representative of the consumers’ group. They have also organized educational and welfare activities for mothers and children, as well as the elderly. In the late 1990s, they also developed a certification body that is still being used.

In Indonesia, the system is different. Production management is done by the community through the local market. Consumers consume local food made from products from the farm. For example, the farmers of Boto community make tempeh from soybean wrapped with teak leaves collected from the farm. This process allows farmers to make use of all the materials found on the farm and, in turn, provides cash for the family. Some also process Koro beans, which are a native bean, or sell fresh Koro at the local market. In addition, farmers try to develop the local market through group mobilization. The members of Yayasan Duta Awam process maize into animal feed and sell it to the animal-raising group. Some have also developed a local market for native rice and processed herbs and sell directly to consumers. For the past few years, local NGOs have organized themselves as a network called Alliance Organic Indonesia and established the Biocert, a certification body to certify organic products. The target of the sustainable agriculture movement in Indonesia is to establish a market system that farmers can easily access and within which they can receive a fair price for their products.

Sustainable agriculture under globalization

Mainstream globalization, with its concepts of free trade and consumerism, has had an impact on the development of sustainable agriculture. Farmers have to confront the changes in the whole society. In Japan, consumers are aware of chemical-free products and this made a way for organic farming to exist as an alternative. It is a good example because there has been a great shift from conventional to organic farms. However, the change is based more on fashion rather than on a real need; therefore, sometimes the movement created confusion among consumers. As a result, organic certification was needed. However, certification does not support organic farmers but rather serves to allow the consumer to distinguish between organic and conventional products while the farmers have to bear the burden of paying the certification fee. In Indonesia, the system of certification has just started but there is a need for the movement to learn from other countries.

There are a great deal of organic and natural products in the market. With consumers’ awareness, consumer cooperatives and distribution centers may face changes as they have to deal with the issue of product standardization, which will replace the consumer-producer linkage system. They have to adapt and try to set up a certification system for their consumers. Furthermore, there have been changes in consumer behavior due to the impact of globalization such as a preference for home delivery, especially in the big cities such as Tokyo. The cooperatives may need to improve their member systems or they may have to work with consumers. There is a question of whether the cooperatives need to work with consumers alone or if they may have to work and establish relationships with producers as well, as in the concept of sanchoku or the teikei system. Another question is concerned with the expansion of the cooperatives from small-scale to large-scale, and how can they can conserve their identity in selling local food if, as a large-scale cooperative, they have to sell non-local products as well.

The changes in government policies, especially on domestic support and the role of the Japanese Agricultural Cooperative Association (JA), may affect medium-scale cooperatives. At present, there is a need to use JA to buy products from farmers in large volumes. Green cooperatives buy from JA in lower volumes. However, if cooperatives have to change their systems, green cooperatives may require more capital to buy products directly; thus, there is a need to manage the relationship and management system among these cooperatives.

In Indonesia, sustainable agriculture has developed from traditional farming; some of the products are sold at both local and regular markets. The regular market is not a place where farmers can easily go and sell their products. The development of consumer and producer linkages is still at the early stage. They are now trying to develop a local market based on local conditions. The complications of globalization and free trade affect Indonesian farmers who have to deal with more issues starting from the basic rights over their natural resources, genetic resources, and market access, as well as the issue of farmers’ participation at the policy level. The issue of food sovereignty becomes crucial as called
The link with partners in society

The need to seek alternatives in organic farming and the link with consumers has led to the development of new relationships and social activities. There are links between organic growers groups and consumers such as the Rainbow Plan Project, which mutually manages garbage, or the Hiroshima Group, whose members together protect the environment. There are other relationships established by people such as the network of the Asian Farmer Exchange Center, consisting of farmers and city dwellers working together, or a women’s group called We 21 at Kanagawa, where they have opened a recycling shop and donate part of the money to support development work in Asia and Africa. A group called Kurume in Fukuoka prefecture was formed, with members working as volunteers and sending support to African countries. In fact, these groups have coordinated with local governments and people’s organizations in many countries.

In Indonesia, cooperation between farmers’ group, NGOs and academics has existed for a decade, and has developed into a social movement to address people’s problems. The development of a local plan under the joint cooperation of NGOs, GOs and farmers or research and experimentation on bio-fertilizer or organic farming techniques are the starting points for civil society to address the agricultural sector’s problems. However, sustainable agriculture has not received support from the government. Social relationships are forming under the framework of building a peaceful and just society. This is one social movement among many which fights against the globalization current.

Conclusions: Agricultural methods in the global context—different conceptions and ideologies

The free trade system has brought about significant changes for small-scale farmers in both countries. As a result, the food sovereignty of the two nations has not only been decreased but has also become less secure, particularly under the current global energy crisis. Agricultural areas have been turned into energy resources regardless of the consequences of global warming. It is most likely that the agricultural sectors of these two countries will increasingly become large-scale or industrial. Small-scale farmers have been pushed aside physically, economically and culturally. Food production is no longer limited by borders. Economic marketing in the context of globalization has created a borderless system across the globe, regardless of the type of food, monetary system, trade, society or culture.

Within such transformations, an alternative has developed and grown up against globalization, which focuses on materialism, while abandoning spiritual values and concern for the environment. Alternative schemes have been initiated such as natural farming in Japan and traditional agriculture in Indonesia that have become modern-day organic farming. These systems oppose globalization and create social alternatives. In reference to global and national changes, Fukuoka-san (1987), the Japanese farmer, clearly stated his opinion about agricultural and social methods in his book, The One Straw Revolution: “An ultimate goal of agriculture is not growing crops but building up human fertility.” As we are unable to separate any parts of our lives, if we modify our agricultural methods, then we alter our food and social character, as well as our values. Sustainable or organic farming has linked humans to the environment, not to mention the connections that have grown among local communities. The eagerness of Japanese and Indonesian consumers to consume organic food grown using sustainable methods reflects how they have turned their ways of life back to nature. The teikai system is an effort to build up a direct connection between producers and consumers, that is, an attempt to create a new social relationship between farmers and consumers through organic products. Similarly, the Rainbow Scheme initiated in Nagai, Yamagata prefecture builds up a relationship between urban people and farmers within a common society. These alternatives have improved common knowledge among organic farmers in terms of harnessing lunar and seasonal cycles. Traditional knowledge has been refurbished through a common process. This has revealed an effort to systematically develop agricultural alternatives by focusing not only on production but thoroughly combining production with its surroundings. For instance, Indonesian farmers have kept up their agricultural traditions such as the ritual to worship Mother Rice. Thus, while some rituals have already been modified, others still exist in some form.

The application

Like Indonesia, Thailand is an agricultural country. Small farmers in Thailand face the same problems as the
small farmers in Japan and Indonesia. Thai farmers have also adapted to globalization and formed a sustainable agriculture movement. The lessons learned by the two countries included in this study in terms of national policies and experiences of small farmers in preserving their livelihood can be adapted to strengthen the sustainable agriculture movement in Thailand. These are:

1. Market access for small farmers. The main lessons learned from Japan concern the establishment of a direct relationship between producers and consumers and the cooperative system as the mechanism to create a better understanding with consumers. The main lesson learned from Indonesia regarding establishing a network between producers and consumers is the concept that the producer is also a consumer. For example, there is a relationship between the corn growing group and dairy farmers. Consumers are not only middle-class city dwellers but also farmers who produce different products; this can be a market space for small farmers. This concept includes the community culture of food security and the strong culture of local food and local markets (including retailers). These systems can be adapted to create a diversity of markets that can easily be accessed by farmers and consumers. Thai farmers can learn from these systems and develop their own market spaces that will strengthen the self-reliance and freedom of Thai farmers.

2. Policy monitoring on changes in the agricultural sector and food system in Thailand. This is significant for national self-reliance on food. This study found that self-reliance on food in both countries decreased because of economic integration under the concept of neoliberalism. The integration of markets and production processes, including intellectual property rights, supports transnational company more than small farmers. The case of palm oil for biofuel in Indonesia has created a shortage of cooking oil and led to a food crisis because it has created a conflict within the agricultural sector about its role in producing food and its role in producing biofuels. Decision-making about this role rests with the business firms. The case of the corn farmers in Indonesia who were arrested under the intellectual property rights system reflects the neglect of farmers’ rights. Policy monitoring should be implemented at both the national and international levels.

3. The establishment of relationships and the exchange of information, knowledge, and farmer’s local wisdom through groups or civil society are important. These groups will stimulate the movement of the agricultural sector towards self-reliance and freedom. They will also improve social values. This kind of relationship has been established in some places such as the link between Japanese farmers and Thai farmers facilitated by the Rainbow Plan Project. There is a sharing of lessons learned on the issue of local markets. This relationship should be expanded and developed towards the goal of fostering social justice and a peaceful society.

NOTES

1 Hokkaido is considered to be very different from other parts of Japan. In the land reform program after the Second World War, a farmer could have a maximum of 12 hectares.

2 The Uruguay Round, the third phase of the GATT from 1986-1994, extended the agreement fully to new areas such as intellectual property, services, capital and agriculture. Out of this round the WTO was born.

3 The *teikei* system is a Japanese direct distribution system for agricultural products. It focuses on the direct mutual relationship between farmers and consumers.

4 *Sanchoku* is a cooperative which provides the agricultural product directly to the consumers. It is characterized by direct transaction or direct buying routes from producers to consumers. *Sanchoku* is seen as a way of guaranteeing the safety of products for members and also the information exchange between producers and cooperative members.

REFERENCES


Introduction

This work centers on non-state groups’ actions in the form of terrorism and/or insurgency utilizing terror tactics in Southeast Asia. These actions potentially undermine a transformative Asia that shows promise in moving forward into its political maturity and socio-economic advancement and threaten the very basics of human security in the region. To deal with such threats or problems, one should better understand the nature of such groups’ actions. In doing so, this research sheds light on their actions in three religiously distinct countries, namely Indonesia (predominantly Muslim), the Philippines (predominantly Catholic) and Thailand (predominantly Buddhist).

The main objectives of this work are, first, to better understand the origins and driving forces of these actions and the networks built by the perpetrators, and second, to identify the historical, structural and ideological roots of the problems. The significance of this work is, first, it can be used as an entry point to deal with the issues highlighted, second, it can promote the increased use of non-conventional approaches (non-military approaches) in solving the problems, and third, it can promote religious tolerance in building a more peaceful society.

This study applies a qualitative analysis to data obtained through in-depth interviews, personal communications, focus group discussions and library research. While the analysis of the Philippine and Thai cases is mainly based on the data collected during fieldwork in Manila and Mindanao (Zamboanga, Basilan, Davao, Cotabato) and Bangkok and the Thai southernmost provinces (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Songkla, Satun), respectively, the analysis of the Indonesian case is based on my academic observations of the case, library research and content analysis of related documents. The findings are presented as a comparative study.

Conceptual framework

Non-state groups’ actions are defined as actions by non-state actors. Categories of non-state groups’ actions vary widely, from peaceful demonstrations and street confrontations against the state security apparatus to insurgencies and terrorism. This work focuses on terrorism and insurgency utilizing terror tactics. While insurgency can be easily understood as a non-state group’s action, terrorism in fact can be grouped into two main categories, namely state terrorism and non-state terrorism. State terrorism is beyond the discussion of this study.

There are over one hundred definitions of terrorism proposed by experts and governments (Schmidt and Jongman in Malik 2001), and attempts to find a single universal definition have “been long and painful and [are] now living a separate life of [their] own.” They have come “to resemble the quest for the Holy Grail” (Malik 2001, vii). This particularly becomes problematic when it is related to independence struggles, guerilla movements or insurgencies, as described in the conundrum, “one state’s ‘terrorist’ is another state’s ‘freedom fighter,’” (UNODC nd) “one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter,” (Primoratz 2004, xi) or “what one’s enemies do is terrorism, what one does oneself is not” (Kronenwetter 2004, 14).

One important clue to define terrorism, as Primoratz (2004, xii) suggested, is that one should “seek a definition that does not define terrorism in terms of the agent, nor in terms of the agent’s ultimate goal” but “should focus on what is done and what the immediate point of doing it is, and put to one side the identity of the agent and their ultimate and allegedly justifying aim.” In this line, Ricolfi (2005, 80) distinguishes between terror attacks “which have civilian targets” and guerrilla attacks “which have military targets.” Therefore, it is wrong to say that all insurgents’ violent acts regardless of the type of the violence are not terror attacks (e.g., the terrorising of innocent civilians by insurgents). In the same line, not all violent acts carried out by terrorist organizations can be categorized as terrorism (e.g., certain violent robberies committed by certain terrorist organizations).

The discourse on violent actions was dominated by grievance theories until the late 1990s. This is because grievance “is not only much more functional externally, it is also more satisfying personally” (Collier 2000,
As has been widely recognized, the success of certain movements (e.g., collective actions, rebellions) relies heavily on the support of individuals as well as communities. By “disseminating” grievances, the movement can recruit supporters more cheaply. Hence, “even where the rationale at the top of the organization is essentially greed, the actual discourse may be entirely dominated by grievance” (Collier 2000, 92). In relation to terrorism and insurgency utilising terror tactics, Stern observed some types of exposed grievances such as alienation, humiliation, demographic shifts, historical wrongs and claims over territory (Stern 2003).

However, grievance theory collides with Olson’s theory on the phenomenon of free-riders in a situation of collective action (Olson 1971). Since justice is a public good (Collier 2000), the movement will face the problem of free-riding. Collier is evocative of the fact that “even though everyone is agreed that rebellion is desirable, it is even more attractive if the costs are borne only by others and the success of rebellion will not be dependent upon the participation of any one individual” (Collier 1999). Thus, grievance-based factors are insufficient to drive rebellions or collective violence in most cases. This is the case due to “the non-excludability of the consumption of justice” (Collier 1999).

In view of these problems, Collier looked at the important role of economic motives. In order to underline the contrast to the grievance theory, he called this theory “greed theory.” He suggested that it is greed or the economic motive of certain parties that drives a conflict. The greed theory is also regarded as capable of embracing the above problems. As Collier found by means of empirical cases, the true cause of violent conflicts is “not the loud discourse of grievance, but the silent force of greed.” In his study of worldwide rebellion cases, he found that “greed considerably outperforms grievance” (Collier and Hoeffler 2001). In summarizing her case studies of terrorism and insurgency using terror tactics, Stern (2003, xix) maintained that what surprised her most in her research was the “discovery that the slogans sometimes mask not only fear and humiliation, but also greed—greed for political power, land or money.”

Such approaches are useful when analyzing terrorism and insurgency using terror tactics. However, there are some curiosities left concerning the use of such approaches in explaining such terror attacks as suicide bombings in Indonesia. Hence, this research also attempts to go beyond these two contending perspectives.

Terror attacks and their origins in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand

Indonesia, with a total population of 208.8 million in 2005, is a Muslim-majority country where Muslims make up 87.2 percent of the total population, Christians, 6.2 percent; Catholics, 3.3 percent; Hindus, 2.2 percent; and Buddhists, 1.1 percent (BPS 2005). The Philippines is a Catholic-majority country with a total population of 76.5 million in 2000, where 84.2 percent of its people are affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, 5.4 percent with Protestant denominations, 4.6 percent with Islam, 2.6 percent with the Philippine Independence Church, 2.3 percent with Iglesia ni Kristo and 2.2 percent with others (including animism) (Abinales and Amoroso 2005). Thailand’s population is predominantly Buddhist, numbering to 95 percent of the total population of 60.9 million in 2000. Muslims make up 4.5 percent of the total population and the rest are Christians, Hindus and Sikhs (Abuza 2003).

These three countries have experienced numerous terror attacks or terror related actions in the recent past. Some of the attacks in Indonesia were the attacks on 16 churches across Indonesia on Christmas Eve, 2000, resulting in 16 people dead and over 100 injured; the so-called Bali bombing I on October 12, 2002, resulting in 202 people dead and 317 injured; the Marriott Hotel attack on August 5, 2002, killing 14 people and injuring 132 persons; the Australian Embassy attack on September 9, 2004, killing 11 people and injuring tens of others; and the so-called Bali bombing II on October 1, 2005, killing 23 people and injuring 148 others.

In the Philippines, some of the attacks were a grenade attack in Zamboanga that killed two female American missionaries; bomb attacks in 1993 targeting a missionary ship, the MV Doules, in Zamboanga; Zamboanga airport, and Catholic churches, injuring several people; the kidnapping of three Spanish nuns and a priest in 1994; the kidnapping of 52 teachers and students in Tumahubong, Basilan, in which two teachers were beheaded; the Sipadan kidnapping of 19 foreigners and two Filipinos; the kidnapping of ten Western journalists (mostly Germans); the kidnapping of three French journalists in 2000; the kidnapping of three Americans and 17 Filipinos at Dos Palmas Resort (Palawan) on May 27, 2001; the SuperFerry 14 bombing in 2004 that killed 118 people and injured hundreds of others; and the Makati, Davao and General Santos bombings in February 2005 that killed 13 people and injured 140 others.

Some of the attacks in Thailand were the attack on three
Buddhist monks and novices on January 24, 2004, in which two were killed; bomb attacks on August 22, 2004 in Yala, injuring 13 people and damaging more than 30 vehicles; the assassination of 95 village headmen and assistant headmen (Buddhists and Muslims) by militants from January to June 2005; bomb attacks at a hotel, a restaurant and convenience stores on July 14, 2005, injuring 17 Buddhists and Muslims; the attacks on schools and teachers in 2004-2007, in which 71 teachers (including Muslims) were killed, more than 100 teachers were injured, and 170 schools were burned down; the attack on a commuter van on March 14, 2007, where eight Buddhist passengers were shot to death at close range, execution-style; the killing of two Muslim men by militants in a drive-by shooting on April 14, 2007; the assassination of a 29-year old Muslim (a local government official) in Naratiwar on June 22, 2007; and the killing of a Muslim vendor in his pick-up truck by militants on August 13, 2007.

There is no doubt that such non-state groups’ actions were terrorism, terror attacks, or terror related actions as they systematically and/or repeatedly killed or intimidated civilians and spread fear among the communities.

From a historical perspective, such attacks are not isolated or independent events. They have their own historical traits. The groups’ actions in Indonesia stemmed from the passions of its members to establish an Islamic state of Indonesia, which was first promoted by Kartosuwiryo in 1936. (Kartosuwiryo later established Darul Islam (DI) in 1947, Tentara Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Army, TII) in 1948, and Negara Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic State, NII) in 1949.) The recent attacks were contributed to by the rise of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which vowed to establish such a perceived ideal state. In fact, JI was established due to a rift in the DI/NII leadership between Abdullah Sungkar, the founder of JI, and Ajengan Masduki. In its development, it had a shared ideology with Al Qaeda and turned its target to American interests. In the Philippine case, terrorism is rooted in the historical disputes concerning the forced incorporation of the Moro Sultanates into the Philippine state. The rise of the Abu Sayaf Group (ASG), which was founded by Abdurajak Janjalani (a former member of MNLF, or the Moro National Liberation Front), has highly contributed to these attacks. In its development, the ASG had a link with Al Qaeda operatives and became notorious for its kidnapping-for-ransom activities, particularly against Westerners. As for the Thai case, the issue is similar to that of the Philippines, namely the forced incorporation of the former Sultanate of Pattani into the Thai state. In the recent terror attacks, the central figure is Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Koordinasi (National Revolution Front-Coordinate, BRN-C), particularly its mobile combat unit known as Ronda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK, or small patrol unit). BRN-C has a loose, cell-based network with a broader new generation of village-based separatist militants who called themselves Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani (Pattani Freedom Fighters), whom local people refer to by the generic term “pejuangs” (freedom fighters). While RKK also belongs to the pejuangs, not all pejuangs are the members of BRN-C. It is also important to note that not all pejuangs attack civilians.

In short, the Philippine and Thai cases have a shared historical origin centering on the issue of regaining their “occupied” land. This is totally different from that of Indonesia, which originated from a strong passion to establish a perceived ideal state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>The Philippines</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, where many Muslims have been killed</td>
<td>Grievance on the suppression of Bangsamoro identity (e.g., transmigration program, Filipinization)</td>
<td>Grievance on the suppression of ethnic Malay identity (e.g., language/education policies, Thainization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel’s occupation of Palestine, where many Muslims have been killed and are living in misery</td>
<td>State-treatment of Muslims (e.g., Jabidah) and injustice</td>
<td>Injustice towards and state-treatment of Muslims (e.g., Krue Se, Tak Bai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance on secular state of Indonesia</td>
<td>Grievance on secular state of the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao</td>
<td>Grievance on secular state of Thailand, particularly in the southernmost provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived suppression of Islamic movements to establish an Islamic state and/or sharia law</td>
<td>Natural resource exploitation in Mindanao (ancestral domains)</td>
<td>Natural resource exploitation in the southernmost provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievances on perceived Christianization and against Christians in the communal-religious conflicts</td>
<td>Perceived discrimination and marginalization in economic development</td>
<td>Perceived discrimination and marginalization in economic development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Rough ranking of main grievances in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.
The driving forces

The driving forces of such terror attacks or terror-related actions in the researched countries could be highlighted from two contending perspectives: grievances vs. greed. These contending perspectives, however, insufficiently explain such phenomena. Therefore, the paper goes beyond these two contending perspectives by highlighting perpetrators’ ideology of violence.

The grievance issue

The findings reveal that terrorism, terror attacks, or terror related actions in these three countries (Indonesia, the Philippines and ‘Thailand) were driven by grievances. Table 1 compares the groups’ main grievances.

The grievances listed below and the attacks as noted have a religious dimension in each of these countries. Although in the Indonesian case the current top grievance is anti-American sentiment, there is still a strong religious dimension. Such grievances along with the origins of the problems (the historical origin) become the root causes of terrorism and terror attacks, consisting of both historical and structural roots. The existence of these root causes implies the existence of gaps between the state and the community and between two different communities.

It seems that addressing some of these grievances is beyond the authority or capability of the respective governments (e.g., the issues of the US and Israel’s policies and actions in the Indonesian case). Some of them are certainly opposed by the existing governments (e.g., the conversion of the secular state to an Islamic state in Indonesia, the establishment of independent Islamic states in the Philippines and Thailand). The rest could be discussed. As experienced in the past, the groups may provide concessions if the governments are also willing to give some. Thus, there is a space to deal with the existing gaps, at least to improve the situation. Civil society could play an imperative role in bridging the gaps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>The Philippines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money funnelled by Al Qaeda to JI</td>
<td>Money funnelled by Al Qaeda to the ASG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Qaeda to Hambali (I) = USD30,000</td>
<td>Jamal Khalifa to ASG = PhP160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Qaeda to Hambali (II) = USD100,000</td>
<td>Jamal Khalifa to ASG = PhP6,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Qaeda to JI (1995) = IDR250 million</td>
<td>Al Qaeda to ASG = Est. USD3,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Qaeda to JI (1997) = IDR400 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Qaeda to JI (2000) = IDR700 million</td>
<td>In-country fundraising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar al-Faruq to JI = USD200,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Jabarah to JI = USD70,000</td>
<td>Sipadan kidnapping = at least USD10,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambali was captured with USD70,000</td>
<td>Ten journalists kidnapping = USD25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-country fundraising</td>
<td>Three journalists kidnapping = Est. USD5,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery shop robbery in Serang (Banten) = IDR6 million and 4.5 kg of gold</td>
<td>Gracia Burnham’s release + PhP5 million (for Kimberly Jao Uy’s release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lippo bank robbery in Medan = IDR113 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government’s fund robbery in Poso = IDR490 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery shop robbery in Pasar Tua (Palu) = n/a</td>
<td>Exortion, blackmail = n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery shop robbery in Monginsidi (Palu) = n/a</td>
<td>Taxing businesspeople, farmers, teachers, among others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
<td>Expenditures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bali bombing I = Est. IDR80 million</td>
<td>New teenage recruits in Basilan = PhP5,000/person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW Marriott bombing = Est. IDR80 million</td>
<td>New recruits in Jolo/Sulu = PhP50,000/person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian embassy bombing = Est. IDR80 million</td>
<td>Others = n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others = n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) n/a = data not available

(2) The currency at that time was about Rp 10,000 and PhP42 to the US dollar in Indonesia and the Philippines respectively.

Table 2: Terror financing in Indonesia and the Philippines.
The greed/economic issue

A terrorism expert, Gunaratna, maintains that “money is the terrorist’s lifeblood” (Time Asia 2003). This is not an exaggeration in the JI and ASG cases of Indonesia and the Philippines, respectively, as Table 2 shows.

Some of JI’s funds mentioned in the table below may be overlapping while others are untraceable. However, it is clear that huge amounts of money were funneled by Al Qaeda to JI. With such flows of money, Time Asia (2003) argues that Al Qaeda was subcontracting its “projects” to JI. To raise more funds, JI also carried out in-country fundraising activities through robberies, as seen in Table 2. In total, regional intelligence officials estimated that “at one point in 2002 Hambali had as much as USD500,000” (Time Asia 2003). The “business” size of JI was, however, outnumbered by that of the ASG. While JI ran a hundred thousand dollar “business,” the ASG ran a multi-million dollar “business,” drawing from foreign sources (e.g., Al Qaeda), kidnappings, drug trafficking, extortion, blackmail and taxing peasants, fishermen, coconut growers, businessmen and teachers (Ressa 2003; Bale 2003).

A Filipino journalist maintained that “the Abu Sayyaf began making money from everyone—starting with journalists. I saw the learning curve and the greed of the Abu Sayyaf grow” (Ressa 2003, 113). One defector from the ASG, Ahmad Sampang (a pseudonym), maintained that during its formative years, the ASG received a great deal of support from foreign sources. “Even our uniforms came from abroad. We were even issued bulletproof vests,” said Sampang. He admitted that in the past the ASG members kidnapped people because they did not have enough money to buy arms, bullets and food. Realising that the group’s orientation later changed, Sampang left the ASG. He said, “I left because the group lost its original reason for being. The activities were...for personal gratification. We abducted people...for money” (in Torres Jr. 2001, 41). He left the ASG in December 1998; thus, he recognized this change in orientation before a series of high profile kidnappings in 2000-2001. An American woman, Gracia Burnham, who was kidnapped on May 27, 2001 and spent more than a year in the ASG’s hands, observed that “the bottom line was money” in the ASG kidnappings (in Ressa 2003, 111; see also Burnham 2003).

In the Thai case, there are only intelligence reports mentioning that “the southern Thailand insurgents are being funded by the Saudi Arabia-based Islamic fundamentalist Wahhabi movement.” (World Politics Watch 2007) Another report says an association of Thai students in Indonesia (PMPIT) “takes care of the finances of the insurgency” through its fundraising activities overseas (Bangkok Post 2007). However, there is no hard evidence on the exact amount of money used to finance the terror attacks. What is clear, by assessing their use of cars and motorcycles as bomb carriers, their constant supply of explosives, weapons, and bullets, and the commando-style training courses they have received in the jungle and plantations, is that they certainly need funds. In one case, a professional bomb maker confessed that he had been charging the militants THB2,000-5,000 per bomb from 2004 until his capture in July 2007 (The Strait Times 2007). The availability of funds can also be inferred from the statement of Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) leaders (in Malaysia and Sweden) who offered a bounty of THB90,000 (USD2,250) to those who killed any governors or prominent officials of Pattani, Yala and Naratiwat (Gunaratna, Acharya and Chua 2005, 83). In addition, BRN-C has five units, and one of them is the economic and financial affairs unit whose main task is to collect and manage funds.

In short, money plays an important role for the ASG and JI in carrying out their operations. It is not exaggerating to say that money is the lifeblood for their activities. The difference is that while the ASG wrapped their silent force of greed within the discourse of grievance, JI seemed to use the money for its operations and for the costs of its members’ personal living. In the Thai case, it is certain that they need funds to finance their operations. Whether the funds are also used for living costs are unclear.

Disrupting the financial networks of terror financing is the responsibility of the state. If the perpetrators of the violence are full-time “workers” in resorting to violence, it is also the state’s responsibility to bring jobs, and it is the responsibility of civil society to carry out economic empowerment to ensure that local people do not need to rely on terror “projects” to cover their living costs.

Beyond greed and grievance: The ideology of violence

When the field coordinator of the Bali Bombing I, Imam Samudra, mentioned that JI employed suicide bombers, no one believed his statement as it had never happened before. As time passed, it was clear from the forensic evidence that the bombings were carried out by two suicide bombers. This announcement shocked many government officials, analysts, observers, experts and religious leaders. Later, suicide bombings in Indonesia turned into something usual, as seen in the following table.
It is interesting to understand what is driving these actions. This can be traced from Imam Samudra’s statement after he received a death sentence. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the case of Imam Samudra:

Sentenced to death for his role in the nightclub attack in October 2002 by the Al-Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah terror network that killed 202 people, he said he does not fear facing a firing squad. ‘It’s the key to paradise, everything will be very, very nice,’ he told Sydney radio station 2UE from his prison cell in remarks broadcast yesterday. He believed paradise held the promise of 72 virgins for single men, but only 23 if a man had been married on earth, as he has. ‘We kill to get peace,’ said Samudra, adding that his message to the United States and Australia—which lost 88 citizens in the Bali bombing—was ‘I win.’ (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2004)

The research identified a number of other forces that drive JI, ASG and RKK (and some other new generation insurgents) to carry out terror attacks or terror-related actions in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, respectively, which are summarised in Table 4.

The ideology of violence is an important driving force. It has been used to justify the terror attacks or violent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JI (Indonesia)</th>
<th>ASG (The Philippines)</th>
<th>RKK and others (Thailand)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology of violence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ideology of violence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ideology of violence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takfīr (excommunication, enemizing perceived infidels): - America and its allies - Non-believers (particularly Christians) - The existing (secular) government - Believers (certain Muslims who are believed to undermine the religion and its perceived ideal practices)</td>
<td>Takfīr (excommunication, enemizing perceived infidels): - The existing (secular) government - Non-believers (particularly Catholics) - America and its allies - Believers (some Muslims who betray, oppose or do not support the struggle)</td>
<td>Takfīr (excommunication, enemizing perceived infidels): - The existing (secular) government - Non-believers (particularly Buddhists) - Believers (Muslims who collaborate or work for the government [munafik/hypocrite] and betray, oppose or not cooperate in the struggle [murtad/apostate])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incentive Expectation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Incentive Expectation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Incentive Expectation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dying as a martyr</td>
<td>Dying as a martyr</td>
<td>Dying as a <em>syahid</em> (martyr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to paradise</td>
<td>Dying as a holy warrior</td>
<td>Dying as a <em>Wira Shuhada</em> (army of martyrdom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dear my brother and wife, God willing, when you see this recording I’ll already be in heaven.”</td>
<td>“Ride on a white horse to heaven when […] die”</td>
<td>“When martyrs are killed, they are not dead but alive next to God.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting married or become a bridegroom (in heaven)</td>
<td>Going to heaven</td>
<td>“They [the munafik] will not be welcomed in heaven.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martyring 72 virgins for a single man (23 for a married man)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marrying 72 virgins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: The ideology of violence in the researched countries.*
acts of these organizations. In this ideology, there are two interconnected notions used by such groups (i.e., JI, ASG, RKK), namely violent jihadism and takfir (emphasizing perceived infidels, thereby rendering them legitimate targets). If these groups only used one of these notions (i.e., the former), it would not lead to terror attacks, as jihad fi sabillillah (jihad in the path of God) is allowed only in a declared war against the combatants. If the latter (takfir) is incorporated into the former, the target becomes mostly civilians. Moreover, in the views of the militants, the incentives they believe they will receive in the after-life for their actions are instrumental in providing their motivation.

It is interesting to note that Muslims can also become the targets of terrorism. This work, however, finds a different treatment of them by the groups under study. In the Indonesian case, the groups target Muslims who are believed to be undermining the religion. JI operatives, for instance, targeted Ullil Abshar Abdalla (an activist of the Liberal Islam Network, JIL) and even Megawati Soekarnoputri (before she was President) for assassination, but these plans failed to be realized for various reasons. Imam Samudra tried to avoid Muslim casualties; but if they got killed in the blast it was considered to be their destinies, like collateral damage. He even apologized to the families of Muslim casualties in the 2002 Bali bombing (Samudra 2004). However, the ensuing bombings by JI continued to kill many Muslims.

The ASG under Abdurajak Janjalani was known for protecting and helping Muslims. After his death and when Abu Sabaya threatened Christians and urged Muslims to remove all crosses in Basilan, a former ASG member, Ahmad Sampang, said, “It is not right anymore… If only Abdurajak was still alive, he would not allow it. Innocent Muslims will be affected” (in Torres Jr 2001, 39). The ASG under Khadaffy Janjalani also protected Muslims by, for instance, releasing Muslims who were kidnapped by mistake (e.g., in the kidnapping of 52 teachers and students in Tumuhubong, Basilan, in March 2000). However, they would try to kill the defectors (perceived traitors) of the ASG; Sampang confessed that at one time Abu Sabaya’s group went to his house and tried to kill him, but that “I was able to escape” (in Torres Jr 2001, 42). The ASG also hated the Muslim Congressman Abdulgani “Gerry” Salapudin, a former MNLF Commander. Sampang said, in the past, “He did not help us. We asked him once to give us at least a few sacks of rice. But he failed us. We cannot kill him because he has a lot of armed men” (in Torres Jr 2001, 39-42).

The Thai case is, however, totally different. While JI and the ASG mostly try to avoid Muslim casualties (if they occur, they are considered collateral damage), the new generation of insurgents in Thailand has intentionally targeted many Muslims who work for the government, oppose their deeds and ideology or do not cooperate with them. This has contributed to the fact that between January 2004 and August 2006, more Muslims than Buddhists were killed in the recent violence and terror attacks in Thailand. One of the ideological explanations for this phenomenon can be found in a captured document entitled Berjihad di Pattani (Waging Jihad in Pattani).

The majority of Muslims in Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, are, however, moderate. They, including religious leaders, do not agree with the deeds and the ideology used by JI, the ASG and RKK to justify their terror attacks or violent acts.

The networks: Actual and virtual networks

The networks can be distinguished into actual networks and virtual networks. An actual network can be divided into an internal network and an external network. The actual networks of such groups in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand are summarised in Table 5.

Another type of network—the virtual network—has played a considerable role in the JI case. Discouragements to commit terror attacks have been carried out by many Indonesian religious leaders. Abu Bakar Baa’syir even released a “fatwa”: “Don’t do bombing in Indonesia.” However, according to one security analyst, Noor Huda Ismail, “his ‘fatwa’ discouraging violence in Indonesia has not been well received by fringe young and impassioned jihadi recruits. Young jihadists have instead turned to the Internet to download fatwas from mainly Middle Eastern jihadists, including fatwas from the late Jordanian-born Zarqawi and a jailed Saudi Arabian cleric, Al Maqdisi” (Ismail 2007).

The International Crisis Group (ICG) has noted that since the 2002 Bali bombing, the terror groups in Indonesia have reached the third generation and at present are not necessarily under JI’s structural commands. Abdullah Sonata, for instance, denied his membership with JI. He instead declared himself and his cohort as “mujahid freelance” (freelance mujahidin), meaning their movement is leaderless or under a leaderless organization. One former member of JI from Central Java confirmed that Sonata was not a member of JI. It is also interesting to note that “about 18 ‘mujahid freelance’ have been under detention” (Tempo 2005).
How did a leaderless movement build its network? Besides through personal contacts and friendships, the role of the virtual network is of importance. In fact, two of the Sonata group’s members are Internet savvy, and were tasked—besides to communicate with Dulmatin in the Philippines via email—to communicate with the world via websites. By tracing the JI case, there is also no doubt that Imam Samudra was Internet-minded. He spent a great deal of his time surfing jihadi websites and chatted with persons who have the same views as him. After the Bali bombing, he extensively communicated with other JI members via email and monitored the post-Bali bombing case via websites. He was captured with his laptop and the investigators found material for his future website claiming responsibility for the Bali attacks, expressing his violent ideology, stating 13 reasons for the attack and warning America and its allies concerning future attacks (see Adisaputra 2006; Samudra 2004). Two JI-linked lecturers from Semarang (Central Java), Agung Prabowo and Agung Setiadi, also made a website (www.anshar.net) for Noordin M. Topp, which was used to post their ideology of violence and news of Noordin’s activities as well as to communicate with other jihadists. In jail, Iman Samudra was also able to communicate with other jihadists, as well as with Agung Prabowo and Agung Setiadi, and posted his views on www.anshar.net via a laptop smuggled to him. This shows that members of this group have built and used virtual networks to communicate with the world for their cause.

The ineffectiveness of the discouragements by religious leaders and their choice to trust the Internet shows how effective the Internet is in sustaining the movement. The improved technology of the Internet to hide certain messages and its easy access means it will continue to be used to build and maintain the JI network as well as to nurture its ideology. Because of this, “this may be part of the explanation for how in the last seven years JI has shown resilience as a clandestine organization and demonstrated an ability to adapt to internal rifts and crackdowns by the authorities” (Ismail 2007). The easy use and access of Internet material, as one jihadist maintained, means that “the sprawling and anarchic nature of the web makes it easy to operate: Just put up a site, run it until it is closed down, and then put it up again somewhere else” (Ismail 2007). Thus, even if the organizations of JI and other terror groups could...
be tracked down by security and intelligence officials, leaderless jihadists could still find their own way to further their goals through the virtual network.

With this kind of network, the terror groups can easily build communities that resemble what Ben Anderson called “imagined communities.” However, the “imagined communities” here are not related to a sense of ethnicity, but a sense of religiosity where the ideology of violence is used to cement the concerns of these communities. This kind of network is more difficult to deal with compared to an actual network as its drive is located in the minds of individuals. This is a challenge to civil societies advocating peace or to those who work for a more peaceful world.

**Conclusion**

While Asia has promisingly transformed itself toward political maturity and/or economic advancement, it faces imminent threats that could undermine its current and future advancements, either locally or regionally. One of the threats is non-state groups’ actions in the form of terrorism or terror attacks. Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand are countries in Southeast Asia that have suffered from such actions.

Such non-state groups’ actions have their own origins. In the Philippine and Thai cases, they have originated from a dispute about claimed areas (those of the Sultanate of Sulu/Maguindanao and the Sultanate of Pattani, respectively). Insurgencies attempting to regain the perceived lost areas and create an independent state have led to the emergence of groups that use terror tactics to further their goals. In the Indonesian case, terrorism has originated from a strong passion to establish a perceived ideal state. The recent lethal attacks, however, are strongly related to US policies and actions in world politics.

The grievance approach is insufficient to explain the phenomenon of these non-state groups’ actions. The greed explanation also has some limitations in explaining the phenomenon. Alternatively, the ideology of violence has considerably contributed to these actions in the researched countries.

While the group’s actual network is vulnerable to the state security apparatus, the virtual network is more resilient since the core force in this network lies in the minds of individuals, cemented with a shared ideology of violence. The use of this type of network has been observed in the Indonesian case. In the future, the network could contribute to the establishment of a wider, leaderless movement with its own “imagined communities.” It is not exaggerating, therefore, to say that the members of such “imagined communities” could carry out independent terror attacks without the command of, or being tied to, certain actual organizations.

Due to the complexity of the issues, multi-dimensional efforts should be carried out to overcome the problems. The use of non-conventional approaches (i.e., non-military approaches) should be given emphasis, particularly through investments in education, economic empowerment and the promotion of religious tolerance.

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GLOBALIZATION, INFLUENCE AND RESISTANCE: CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE IN JAPAN AND THAILAND

Krisnadi Yuliawan Saptadi

Introduction

Ben Okri, a Nigerian writer, once said that if anyone wants to conquer a nation, first they have to invade their stories. Sometimes, when we talk about globalization, many people believe that Hollywood, with all its blockbusters, has already done exactly what Okri said. As Wim Wenders, a famous German film director, once said to his fellow Germans, “The Americans have colonized our subconscious.”

The feelings represented in Okri’s and Wenders’ statements are the reason why Hollywood is often criticized for overwhelming global audiences with “American culture.” In the eyes of the world, Hollywood is America. It represents not only the glamour of American movie stars, but also their “soft power”—what many see as the cultural imperialism—of the world’s lone superpower.

It is a fact that although Hollywood produces only a small fraction of the world’s feature films, it garners about 75 percent of theatrical motion picture revenues and even more of the video rentals and purchases. Moreover, despite some twists and turns in individual years, the long-term trend has clearly favored Hollywood’s increasing domination. Hollywood’s proportion of the world market is double what it was in 1990, while the European film industry is one-ninth of the size it was in 1945. Further, in Western Europe in 1985, 41 percent of the film tickets purchased were for Hollywood films; by 1995, however, the figure was 75 percent.

Starting in 2000, Hollywood films generally had greater box office sales outside the United States than at home. Eighteen such films took in over USD100 million internationally, a total not matched by any film produced outside the United States. While there was an interloper in 2001 (the Japan animated film Spirited Away took in over USD200 million), it was the exception that proved the rule, as the top 10 films at the box office in 2001 were all Hollywood products. The global situation in years after was no different.

Historically, Asian markets have not been very significant for Hollywood. They have not generated as much revenue for the studios as have European and Latin American markets. However, this began to change in the 1980s and especially the 1990s. Nowadays, Hollywood movies take about 96 percent of box office receipts in Taiwan, about 78 percent in Thailand and about 65 percent in Japan.

A number of factors have contributed to the growth of Asian film markets and to Hollywood’s increasing domination of them. Trade liberalization has allowed many more Hollywood movies to come into Asian theaters, and economic growth has given more people the means to see them. The building of modern multiplexes has dramatically increased the number of venues for film exhibition, while the privatization of television and the development of new distribution technologies such as video, cable and satellite have created whole new markets for film beyond the theatres.

While the distribution-exhibition sectors of Asian film industries have welcomed this market expansion, the production sectors have not always been so enthusiastic, insofar as multiplexes and the new home-based entertainment outlets tend to fill up with Hollywood films. Hollywood’s economic, institutional and political power gives it a competitive advantage that few industries in the world can match: only Hollywood can afford to spend USD200 million on a single film; only Hollywood has the global distribution network and publication powers that can get its movies into theaters worldwide; and only Hollywood has the US government behind it, pushing to open foreign markets even further.

As markets around the world expanded and as Hollywood claimed a bigger and bigger portion, the logical thing happened: Hollywood studios began to earn more of their money outside of the US than they did inside. From the 1950s through the 1970s, Hollywood earned about 30 percent of its money overseas. That percentage began to climb in the 1980s and today the average studio production earns well over 50 percent of its revenue abroad. That number is expected to grow over time, with some industry figures predicting the foreign share of box office earnings could rise to 80 percent within the next 20 years. This means that Hollywood is
becoming an export industry, making movies primarily for people who live outside the United States.

Asia is Hollywood’s fastest growing regional market. Some analysts predict that within 20 years Asia could be responsible for as much as 60 percent of Hollywood’s box-office revenue. No wonder that the American film industry now sees the growing markets of Asia as its next great frontier. In the pursuit of the two billion-plus viewers of Asia, Hollywood is expanding its embrace to include actors from Hong Kong, scripts from South Korea or Japan and also production facilities in China or Thailand. Perhaps nothing indicates globalization as much as the growing ties between the Asian and American film industries.

However, is it only Hollywoodization that is happening in Asia? How about an Asianization of films? We can, of course, ask questions about influences among film cultures in Asia. Nowadays, as people travel between countries pretty much like they traveled between cities in the old days, Asian people and Asian films also travel. As neighboring countries, ties between Asian countries are supposed to be stronger than ties between Asian countries and Hollywood. However, in the field of cinema, is this the case?

With this Asian Public Intellectual Fellowship, I proposed a project to see how globalization works in the field of cinema. I wanted to see globalization through cinematic representations and cinematic experience in Japan and Thailand.

**Japan**

During my stay in Japan in October 2006, the 19th Tokyo International Film Festival was being held. This is one of the major, if not the most important, film festivals in Japan. This festival has a famous competition section where many international films compete to be the best. However, already for three consecutive years, the programmer of this festival also holds a special section that is called “Japanese Eyes,” in which s/he selects and screens the best Japanese films produced each year.

What was really interesting for me was when, at the end of the festival, out of 13 films that were selected by Yoshi Yatabe, the Japanese Eyes Programming Director, *The Cats of Mirikitani* was picked as the best film in this category. This was not only interesting because *The Cats of Mirikitani* was the only documentary film shown in the Japanese Eyes section that year, but also because of the production nature of this film.

*The Cats of Mirikitani* can hardly be described as a Japanese film in a traditional sense of production. The director of this documentary is Linda Hattendorf, an Ohio-born New York film editor who has been working in the New York documentary community for more than a decade. This film is a directorial debut for her. Lucid Dreaming Inc., the company which produced this film, is also not a Japanese company, but American.

The subject of this film, Jimmy Mirikitani, can be dubbed as Japanese because his parents were Japanese. However, Mirikitani is not a Japanese citizen. He was not even born in Japan, but in Sacramento, America. Mirikitani is a Japanese-American. All of the events in this documentary were shot and took place in America. The city of New York is the ultimate landscape of this documentary.

Jimmy Mirikitani was a street painter who was all of a sudden noticed by Linda Hattendorf when she walked in the freezing cold streets of Manhattan on the first day of 2001. When Hattendorf saw him, Mirikitani was sleeping under many layers of clothing in front of a grocery store. An intimate, yet strange relationship began between Hattendorf and this 80-year old homeless man when she agreed to “buy” one of his drawings in exchange for taking a photograph of him, which was the payment he requested.

Starting with that first encounter, Hattendorf documented their relationship with her video camera. The result, *The Cats of Mirikitani*, is no doubt a treasure of personal filmmaking. Slowly, in a very subtle way, *The Cats* brings in the fact that Jimmy Mirikitani is a very unique and special person. As quickly revealed by an examination of his art, Mirikitani was held in a Japanese internment camp during the Second World War, as a part of the anti-Japanese campaign after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The strong message and relevance of Jimmy Mirikitani’s experiences is thrown into shocking relief when, about nine months after Hattendorf began recording, the events of 9/11 took place. That evening, Hattendorf found Mirikitani alone in the toxic cloud that had taken over lower Manhattan. Feeling worried, Hattendorf asked him to come home with her. Surprisingly, Mirikitani, who up to that point had refused virtually all assistance being offered to him, agreed.

This film, which started with the awkward relationship between Hattendorf and Mirikitani, develops a great, unspoken affection at this point. With Hattendorf’s help, Mirikitani, who was very bitter about his life and
his experiences in the internment camp, slowly made peace with his past life.

Maybe everyone will agree that watching *The Cats of Mirikitani* is a privilege. The hidden message of this film is very strong: connecting every prejudice that is affecting the world after 9/11 with an experience of a victim of such prejudice during the Second World War. I witnessed the loudest applause at the end of *The Cats of Mirikitani* screening, far louder than for any other film included in the Japanese Eyes Category at the 19th Tokyo International Film Festival that I watched.

In term of quality, I know no one will question the judgment of the jury when they picked *The Cats of Mirikitani* as the best Japanese film at the Tokyo International Film Festival 2006. However, for me, one interesting question still comes up: is *The Cats of Mirikitani* really a Japanese film? Does the fact that *The Cats of Mirikitani* falls in a Japanese film category tell us about something more than just a simple film categorization?

Yes, Masa Yoshikawa, the producer of this film is Japanese. He had previously worked on many productions for the Tokyo Broadcasting System and NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation). Keiko Deguchi, the editor of *The Cats of Mirikitani*, is also Japanese. However, both of them are now based in New York. Yoshikawa has written and produced many feature films and American television programs, while Deguchi has edited many big American feature films, including Steven Shainberg’s recent narrative feature *Fur*.

So, why can *The Cats of Mirikitani* easily be categorized as a Japanese film? Is it because the hidden narrative in this film tells the deep feelings of the victimized Japanese under American domination? Or is it because, nowadays, the nature of film production is really difficult to keep within one national boundary? For a long time, questions about national cinema were not easy to define or answer. Film theorists agreed that national cinema is a term used to describe the films associated with a specific country. However, its meaning is still being debated by film scholars and critics.

For the industry, it is easier. National cinema is determined by the place that provides the capital irrespective of where the films are made or the nationalities of the directors. For the industry, a film is sometimes just a number on a balance sheet. However, cases like *The Cats of Mirikitani* call this definition into question, as well.

Choi also acknowledged that this “aura” is something you can feel when it is there but is hard to fully explain. Maybe this is the case in *The Cats of Mirikitani*. However, being international is not something new for Japanese cinema. Some say that, in Japanese history, cinema was always international before it was national. The first films to be exhibited in Japan were produced abroad while the first Japanese productions depended on foreign-made equipment and advisors. Even the spread of cinema as a key element in early Japanese mass culture during the Taisho and Showa period can be said to be a result not of Japanese traditions but of vernacular modifications of industrial and textual practices developed by Hollywood studios in the 1910s.

Starting with that introductory phase, a big culture of cinema-going slowly arose in Japan and the Japanese film industry grew stronger and larger. As an industry, we can say that the Japanese film industry was copying Hollywood’s success. Its studio system and star system was similar to Hollywood’s. At one point, in the 1950s, the Japanese film industry reached its peak and produced about 650 films a year; at that time, this was even more than what was produced in the United States.

While the influence of Hollywood’s modes of production deeply penetrated the Japanese movie industry, Japanese cinema provided a different image internationally. Since the 1950s, great directors like Kenji Misoguchi, Yasuhiro Ozu and Akira Kurosawa burst onto the international stage and became darlings of world cinema. Some of them, like Misoguchi, were sometimes slow to be recognized, and only known long after their productive years, but all of them definitely changed the way people saw Japanese cinema.

Masterpieces by Misoguchi, Ozu and Kurosawa suddenly provided fascinating alternatives to crude Hollywood spectacles with their insipid narratives. Thanks to them, suddenly Japan became Western cinema’s “privileged other.” *Rashomon*, *Sansho Dayu* and *Tokyo Story* were
celebrated because these Japanese films purveyed serious humanist themes in a style derived from a deep artistic heritage.

After the Ozu, Misoguchi and Kurosawa era, Japan introduced Shohei Imamura, Nagisa Oshima and their generation to the world. This new generation expressed themselves with greater freedom by tackling subjects that were more social and violent. Despite the differences, Imamura and Oshima still impressed world viewers with their vivid and pure forms, which were mysterious and challenging but always identifiably “Japanese.” All of these famous Japanese directors became living proof of an old formula that to be truly international, a cinema must first be truly national.

Despite the international success of these famous directors, success was never theirs at the local box office. These directors, whose films had what international experts called strong “local” flavor, never became number one in the local box office records. Hollywood movies took over. Even though the Japanese film industry always considered itself one of the strongest in the world (with an average production of three hundred films every year, it comes number three after India and the United States), it could not deter the Hollywood invasion.

The 1970s was the start of the decline in the Japanese movie industry. Falling attendance rates combined with an economic downturn dealt a sharp blow to the Japanese industry. The major distributors—Toho, Toei and Shochiku—made money only by filling their cinemas with foreign films or animation. Slowly, Japan became Hollywood’s single most profitable export market.

During these hard times, only Japanese animation, more popularly known as Anime, could still challenge Hollywood domination. Since the 1980s, names from the Anime World, such as Hayao Miyazaki, Mamoru Oshii and Satoshi Kon, have been shaping the Japanese film industry. We can always say that Anime is one form of resistance to Hollywood domination, because Anime has distinct Japanese expressions, portrays Japanese problems and is executed in a very Japanese style.

Aside from the Anime world, in those times it was very difficult for new film directors to break into a major studio network because, to put it simply, the studios brushed aside the newcomers. Fortunately, starting in the 1990s, several young Japanese filmmakers employed their creative energy to try to put up a resistance to Hollywood domination. These young filmmakers have given new life to Japan’s battered film industry.

At that time, these filmmakers were all between 20 and 40 years old, and produced their films with extremely limited resources. In Japan, one of the world’s most expensive countries to live in, this sometimes meant that these directors also worked in television, advertising or cartoons, and held down several jobs to make ends meet.

Interestingly, all of these new Japanese filmmakers tended to focus on social and psychological themes, like delinquency and senseless crime, which mirrored the confusion and malaise of a generation that had rejected the old ambitions of getting rich, blind loyalty to one’s employer and social harmony. Without access tomajor distribution networks, they made films in a ghetto of art cinemas where competition was fierce: this new genre could never earn much money.

Financing the productions was also a nightmare for them. With budgets ranging from USD100,000 to a million dollars, most often they had to go into debt to get the film started. One of these directors is Shinya Tsukamoto. Making fantasy films in the tradition of the Frenchman Georges Melies, Tsukamoto was director, cameraman, set designer, actor and producer all rolled into one. It is said that it took Tsukamoto eight months to make Bullet Ballet, his seventh film, whose street scenes were largely shot clandestinely.

Another name is Kiyoshi Kurosawa, who started his career by making film noir on 16 mm or video, even though since the beginning, he infused his works with a surprisingly philosophical dimension. Two ofKurosawa’s major works, Eyes of the Spider and Serpent Path (1998), were shot one after the other, each in two weeks, with the same crew and the same actors. The same plot of revenge, however, is handled very differently in the two cases.

Takeshi Miike is another director in this generation. His work, despite seeming too violent, is highly regarded and has many cult-followers internationally. Another name is Akihihiko Shiota, who made a couple of erotic films before his remarkable Moonlight Whispers in 1999, which follows three children growing up in a city suburb and cost less than USD200,000 to make. This young filmmaker, whose later more popular works were categorized as “Japan New Wave of the 1990s,” really loved experimenting.

This new generation of directors made their films without any thought for the big studio networks.
Look at Hirokazu Kore-Eda, who directed Wonderful Life. For Wonderful Life, Kore-Eda, who was trained in documentary production, sent his assistants out on a five-month mission to capture on video “the best memories” of about five hundred elderly people. He looked at the rushes, did the casting and then contacted those he had chosen to appear in the film.

Or look at Aoyama Shinji. His feature Eureka, deals with a recurrent theme in 1990s Japanese cinema—that of a new life, a transition to an alternative state of existence following a traumatic experience. It shows three people, a man and two children, who have escaped from a bloody hostage-taking episode and struggle throughout the film to find their way out of a maze of misfortune. Last but not least, I have to mention Takeshi Kitano, who played an essential role as “big brother” to this new generation of filmmakers.

All of these new generation directors from the 1990s were celebrated internationally with many award and prizes, but did they change Hollywood domination locally? No. Look at Takeshi Kitano, for example. His company, Office Kitano, produced a steady stream of independent films, but this company made most of its money by selling movies to television. The Japanese box office was still not too generous with this talented filmmaker.

My travel to several cities in Japan during my fellowship revealed how strong the Hollywood presence is in local cinema. As I met with people, I noticed that their knowledge about Hollywood films, actors or directors was much better than their knowledge about all of “the new wave of the 1990s” directors. I had similar experiences, not only in the big cities, but even in medium-sized cities like Yamagata.

For me, this is interesting, because a Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) report said that the Japanese film industry entered a steady recovery phase in 2004. JETRO is convinced that constant increases in movie attendance and box office revenue indicate that full recovery is underway. In 2004, box-office revenues were split 62.5 percent for foreign films and 37.5 percent for Japanese films. After so many years of Hollywood domination, even this small share is considered a sign of Japanese films’ promising future.

Another optimistic figure came up in the Japan Times newspaper. Japan Times journalist Yoshio Kakeo reported that, in the first quarter of 2007, Japanese films outperformed Hollywood because, for the first time in 21 years, Japanese films held more than 50 percent of the market share. Therefore, if the JETRO and Japan Times numbers are true, how can we explain the “unpopularity” of Japanese directors?

We have to look closely at those optimistic numbers. Yes, it is true that Japanese films have started gaining a bigger attendance lately. However, as I mentioned earlier, the Japanese films that are receiving a large attendance are different than the ones that receive many awards from international film festivals. The Japanese films that are attracting many viewers mainly do not came from all of those challenging directors I mentioned earlier.

Anime, as always, is the most popular film genre in Japan. Then came a genre that has lately been called J-horror. Hits like Hideo Tanaka’s Ringu and another Japanese horror movie Ju-on are the record holders at the local box office. Other popular genres are action and teen flicks. Interestingly, except maybe for the Anime, all of those hits have one thing in common: they somehow mimic Hollywood in terms of narrative structure.

Most commercially successful Japanese films are not concerned with the exploration of national themes and styles. Like Hollywood films, their basic formal concern is merely story telling or narrative. Stories are routinely designed along a precise temporal dimension and spatial lines: look at successful films such as Bayside Shakedown 2 or Always—Sanchome no Yuhi (Always—Sunset on the Third Street).

Even though these films can beat Hollywood blockbusters in term of box office revenues, we can say that both films fall strongly into Hollywood conventions. It is not that those films were bad. Aside from its success in commercial distribution, Always, for example, was awarded with 12 prizes at the annual Japanese film awards. However, watching this film will take you to places where Hollywood films have gone before.

Always has very good computer graphic special effects, almost perfect. However, in the words of Japanese film critic Kenichi Okubo when we talked about this film, “the depiction of emotions by the characters in Always was hardly Japanese.” If watched carefully, we will find that Always is very disciplined in following Hollywood narrative conventions, like the simple balance-destruction-resolve structure that makes audiences passive.

As a result, despite the recent “revival” in the local box office, Japanese films still suffer defeat from Hollywood. Look at the case of the J-horror blockbuster Ringu. The success of this Hideo Nakata’s film made Hollywood offer him a contract for a Hollywood remake. Many
critics agree that *The Ring*, Hollywood’s remake of *Ringu*, was not as good as the original. However, in Japan, this remake film brought in more revenues than the original!

Unfortunately, even though the directors from the “Japan new wave of the 1990s” are still working and have made many films, their films are hardly as influential as before. It seems that they are only continuing on with what they have already achieved. In one interview, Aaron Gerouw, a Japanese film expert from Yale University, agreed that there is nothing as good as “generation 1990s” in recent Japanese films. According to Gerouw, Japanese films desperately need new blood.

Fortunately, independent films are always strong in Japan, and became even stronger when digital moviemaking became more popular. This is a place where another resistance to Hollywood domination could emerge. This independent mode of production, which is free from big studio, marketing-driven product, has also made international collaboration easier. *The Cats of Mirikitani* is one such case.

With a small crew, and collaboration between an American-woman director and several of her Japanese friends, *The Cats of Mirikitani* breaks many conventions. It is still considered a Japanese film, even though it tells a non-Japanese story in a non-Japanese land. While *The Cats* is “only” a documentary, it can also easily compete with big budget production films and win a prestigious award.

*The Cats of Mirikitani* also provides evidence that, nowadays, the nature of film production is really difficult to keep within one country because creativity cannot be kept within one country’s boundaries. In Japan, there is a big trend in international collaboration, especially within the far eastern countries. Look at how Takeshi Kitano’s production company helps nurture some of the best talent from China. Kitano’s company is a major force behind many of Jia Zangke’s award winning films.

Korea is also starting to influence Japanese films more and more. There is a “booming” interest about Korean movies in Japan, inspired by the smash-hit TV drama *Fuyu no Sonata (Winter Sonata)*. Some Korean blockbusters have also been remade into Japanese versions. Another interesting fact is the rise of Korean film distribution in Japan. By 2004, Korean movies become the second biggest foreign movies in Japan, replacing French movies.

Maybe in the future, these trends in Asian collaboration will broaden the old boundaries into new boundaries. As noted by Kurosawa Kiyoshi, one of the directors from the “Japan new wave of the 1990s,” when being interviewed: “After 1998, I was traveling to many film festivals around the world. I made films that were usually dubbed J-films (Japanese films), but all in those festivals, my films fell into the Asian-film category. Even Iranian films are mentioned in one breath with my films.”

**Thailand**

As in Japan, Hollywood also dominates the Thai film industry. In 2000, Hollywood movies took in about 78 percent of the box office receipts in Thailand. This is of course, inviting “resistance.” When interviewed, Wisit Sasanatieng, director of *Tears of the Black Tiger*, the first Thai film to be officially selected for the Cannes Film Festival in 2001, said in a very resistant voice, “Globalization tries to make the world the same as America.”

In this kind of world, Wisit admits he is always searching for a Thai influence when he makes films. “We must use our traditional culture as a weapon to fight back. Don’t let Hollywood steal our culture,” he said. That is why Wisit’s films always seem to pay homage to old Thai films, especially some of those directed by Rastana Pestonji, a Persian who was once dubbed the “Father of Thai films.”

In *Tears of the Black Tiger*, for example, he cast Sonbati Medhanee as one of his main actors to play a tough, Charles Bronson-style leader of mountain bandits. Sonbati was one of Pestonji’s actor, and also a star whose name is recorded in the Guinness Book of Records because he starred in six hundred feature films. When choosing Sonbati, Wisit Sasanatieng also wanted to be proud of what many call as the golden age of Thai cinema.

Long before Hollywood domination, the period of the 1960s and the early 1970s can be considered the golden age of Thai films. At that period, the Thai film industry could produce almost two hundred films a year. Not only did the film studios enjoy booming revenues from their action flicks, melodramas, horror or teen movies, this period also saw a group of intellectuals enter the film industry and make so-called “socially critical cinema.”

These young and energetic intellectuals, who came from universities, political movements or journalism, used filmmaking as a medium to present their sociopolitical
views. Their social concerns were triggered by two important political events: the student uprising on 14 October 1973 and the attack on demonstrating students on 6 October 1976. These intellectual-director films are still considered classics and are some of the most important films in Thai history.


Censorship prevented Thai directors from attempting any controversial or political films. When Surasri Phatum made Country Teacher (1978), depicting social injustice in 1970s, he was forced to escape a clampdown by the authorities by temporarily hiding away in the forests of northern Thai. In the 1980s, when Euthana Mukdasanit attempted to depict the political terrorism of 1932, his project was never given permission by the authorities.

Starting in 1985, Thai cinema experienced another type of film: a flood of teen flicks. The teen flick genre was so popular that even Prince Chatreechalam Yukol, a director from the social commentary era, eventually made two teen films. As a result, when later facing the flood of Hollywood blockbusters, Thai film could hardly survive. With low quality movies, Thai films could only attract audiences in remote rural areas of Thailand.

When, in 1993, the Thai government was forced by the American government to reduce its tariffs on imported films, the number of American films being shown in Thailand increased. This Hollywood invasion grew even more potent when Thailand’s Entertainment Theatres Network and the Hong Kong/Australian-based Golden Village established EGV, Thailand’s first multiplex theater.

In this context of Hollywood’s strong domination, Wisit Sasanatieng and his generation emerged as challengers. The turning point for this new generation of Thai films was when Pen-Ek Ratanaruang launched his directorial debut Fun Bar Karaoke in 1997. This movie was followed by Nonzee Nimibutr’s feature debut Dang Bailey and the Young Gangster. Later, Pen-Ek became famous because his films won many awards abroad, and Nonzee because his movies broke many Thai box office records.

After his directorial debut, Pen-Ek Ratanaruang made Sixtynine (1999), Monrak Transistor (2002), Last Life in the Universe (2003), Invisible Waves (2006), and Ploy (2007). Monrak Transistor opened as the Thai debut in Cannes’ Directors Fortnight, Last Life in the Universe in Venice, and Invisible Waves in Berlin’s competition. All of his works gave him a reputation as one of the few Thai auteurs with anti-narrative structures and experimental cinematography.

Different from Pen-Ek, Nonzee Nimibutr’s success lies in box-office revenues. After Dang Bailey and Young Gangsters (1997), he made Nang Nak (1999) a horror movie that was adapted from the well-known legend of a female ghost who refuses to accept her death and insists on spending life with her husband. Both of them broke all previous Thai box office records. After that, Nonzee made two films, Jan Dara (2001) and Baytong (2003), which were more personal, not visual heavyweights and without big box office revenues.

Another name in this generation is Yongyoot Thongkongtoon. His directorial debut Iron Ladies (2000) expanded the borders of Thai cinema from festival circuits to international commercial markets. Unfortunately, this generation of directors, can only challenge Hollywood in a small way. Yes, Nonzee Nimibutr and Yongyoot Thongkongtoon can have their share of box-office revenues. Their films can even beat Hollywood blockbusters. However, unlike Wisit or Pen-Ek, their narratives are not that different from the enemy: Hollywood. When watching a short uncut version of Nonzee’s newest film, Queen of Lakansuka, I feel like I was watching another Pirates of the Caribbean movie.

As a whole, the birth of this 1997 generation has been unable to change the face of the Thai film industry. The majority of annual releases are still occupied with popular genres like action, slapstick and horror. The most recent popular movies like Ong Bak: The Muay Thai Warrior or even Prince Chatreechalam’s King Naresuan all borrow Hollywood narratives with Thai flavor only as an addition.

In an interview, when asked to describe the current status of the Thai film industry, Pen-Ek said, “The problem is Thai films over the past 10 years have been crap. It was better before. Now, Thai cinema lacks originality.” For Pen-Ek, most Thai films are marketing-driven and market-oriented. “There are so few directors here. Most directors do not even have a voice because all of their works are defined by marketing officers,” Pen-Ek said.

Asian Transformations in Action
The Work of the 2006/2007 API Fellows
However, another “resistance” is taking place within the Thai film community. The Thai Film Foundation, for example, has held an annual Thai Short Film and Video Festival since 1997. Many talented directors are born through this festival. However, if we talk about Thai alternative filmmakers, no other name is worth mentioning than Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

Almost unknown, Apichatpong became an overnight legend when in 2004 he brought his film, *Tropical Malady*, to the official competition in Cannes and won a Special Jury Prize. In 2006, his *Syndromes and a Century* was also the first Thai film to compete in Venice. A graduate of filmmaking studies from the Art Institute of Chicago, Apichatpong brings his own approach to film, and is sometimes dubbed the most genuine filmmaker in the world. His well-known trademarks are fragments of images and sound, an anti-narrative structure and experimentation with exotic elements.

Apichatpong is not alone in this independent alternative cinema. There are other important indie figures including Aditya Assarat, Uruphong Raksasad, Pimpaka Tohveera and Mingmongkol Sonakul. Like Apichatpong, Uruphong Raksasad is also a very gifted filmmaker. His nine-shorts-collection compiled into one feature, *The Stories from the North*, is a challenge to almost every feature film convention.

Realistically, except for Apichatpong, who can always request foreign funds, these indie-alternative filmmakers still suffer from a lack of financial support and cinematic limitations. Therefore, despite their stubborn resistance, it is really hard to say if, except for Apichatpong and few other names, Thai independent filmmakers will bring an alternative approach to developing Thai film culture.

**Conclusion**

My travels in Japan and Thailand showed me the depth of Hollywood’s influence over both countries’ film industries. However, during that time, I also felt that Hollywood’s “domination” has made traditional cultures or the cultures of other nations start to question their identity. This has led to resistance, in many ways and forms. In cinema, some of this “resistance” can be easily traced, but some are difficult to see.

Yet, globalization is not only about Hollywood. Thailand and Japan are also affected by the tide of cinema globalization. In the case of Japan, Asian influences prevail strongly. Korean films have become fashionable, while collaborations between East Asian countries are also developing. In Thailand, interestingly, the independent-alternative filmmakers are also using globalization as a way to make their voices heard.
INTRODUCTION: Chasing reality, shift of focus

From my research experience, I learned what is almost a life truth: that there is always a chasm between reality and one’s understanding of reality. My primary interest was Buddhism and, before the actual research, I naïvely thought, gathered from books I read, that Japan was primarily a Buddhist country, and that perhaps I could study it in comparison with Thailand. This is what I wrote in the proposal to the API:

While still in monkhood in the Theravada tradition, I was intrigued and greatly inspired by the teachings and characteristics of Mahayana and Zen Buddhism, as well as their forerunner, Taoism. In particular, I am fascinated by the emphasis on quietism, simplicity, minimalist way of living, and more importantly, their down-to-earth, natural, and ordinary approach to truth in everyday life, as opposed to text-based hierarchical, rigid, yet highly arbitrarily interpreted, complex phases to attain the great Enlightenment in the Theravada tradition. The fascinating aesthetical virtue of wabi-sabi, for example, runs counter to the celebration of permanent and grandiose construction of symbolic materials.

Although I also wrote that Zen and Taoism “…themselves have been conceptualized, institutionalized, and broken into often-contending sects and schools, and later, in the context of Globalization, re-packaged and commodified,” indicating that somehow I was already cautious of the danger of the over-idealized image of another culture, this was just a bookish level of caution. After arriving in Japan, I found in myself countless ‘misunderstandings’ or misconceptions about Japanese society and its spirituality, which shall be outlined below. Doubtless, to correct these is certainly the purpose of research, which should bring about more understanding, trying to get as close as possible to reality. I then set myself, in the first few months, the task of covering the existing literature on Japanese spirituality as much as possible. At the same time, I also tried to get to know people, talk to them and make friends, bearing in mind that natural interviews can take place at any time.

As a result, I learned more about Japan and Japanese religions. For instance, I learned that the present state of Japanese spirituality is typically segregated and compartmentalized into different beliefs, and various sects and schools within even one belief system, comprising a plethora of religiosity, with greatly diverse features of teaching, ritual and practice, although certain similar patterns also exist. Take Buddhism, for instance: there are the sects of Shingon, Tendai, Zen (which is sub-divided mainly into Rinzai and Soto), Pure-land (or Jodo, with a (dis-)affiliation of Jodo-shinshu) and Nichiren (split off into Nichiren-shosho and its modern next of kin, Soka Gakkai, etc.), among others. All these are further liquefied in their details, and yet have solidified into new religious organizations. To give one example, one of the people I met was the head of a new Buddhist organization based around Tendai teachings, yet it does not belong to the Tendai sect. The actual practice of Buddhism is tied with local temples, which are usually run like a family business, and ie (the household system) further breaks down the specificity and diversity of the religion. A friend of mine kindly pointed out that Buddhism and Shintoism could hardly be separated before the official segregation in the Meiji period. This is not to mention some of the shinshukyo or New Religions which often draw and fuse inspiration, worldviews, concepts, ideas, rituals and practices from various major religions. The notorious Aum Shinrikyo, for instance, encompasses the teaching of three major Buddhist schools, Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana, but also includes some elements of Hinduism (note the word aum), and Christianity (the belief in the apocalypse, also the group has changed its name to Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet), and the practice of Chinese gymnastics and yoga. To confuse things even more, I learned that not a few religious followers belong to more than one sect at any time, or change from one to another after some ‘trial period’ to see if the faith can offer solutions to their problems (Reader 1991). Meanwhile, among the non-believers, or so they claimed to me, which seem to be the majority of the people I encountered, the celebration of many traditions around yearly events, such as the Buddhist-related bon festival, Christmas or visiting Shinto shrines during the New Year, seems to be a perfectly normal practice, without any
contradictory feelings about observing many faiths. All these are to briefly illustrate how, when one takes a closer look, Japanese spirituality can vary and diversify greatly, defying any simple classification, whether in terms of organizations, locality, teachings or practices. Down to the individual level, one still has to discern the differences from one person to another even within the same faith, and even within one person at different times.

Considering this, the gap between the reality and what I had in mind earlier seemed to widen even further. Even after I was already in the research site, it took me a long time to make heads or tails of what was going on in the complex Japanese spiritual landscape. I already thought at that time that to compare it with Buddhism in Thailand was beyond any possibility. When I started to be able to grasp a vague understanding of it, I still encountered something ‘deviating’ from the picture I had, but it remained hazy. It seemed to me that I could only ever chase reality because the more I tried to grasp it, the more it eluded me; the chasm mentioned above could never be filled.

However, this does not mean that we should not try to study anything, but that we also need to bear in mind the limitedness of our perceptions. This opened up the question of how I should proceed with my research. To find similarities between the religious practices of the two countries risked the over-glossing and oversimplification of a complicated reality. To descend into the minute details of the diversity would be an endless task. Even specialists who can speak the language and have been in the country for a long time still struggle with it. The task would have overburdened my capacity and limited time frame. Apparently, a shift of focus was necessary.

Certainly, I could easily discard my earlier ‘misunderstandings’ and try to elaborate what is ‘true’ of spirituality in Japan, collecting and quoting at length what specialists have said about it, and present it here. However, I came to notice the significance of this misperception. Firstly, I asked, why is there such a stark difference between reality and its representation? In my case, why did I think that Japan was primarily a Zen country while in reality there are people who have no relation whatsoever with Zen, or have absolutely no idea about it? Certainly, there are many factors involved; my ignorance must share part of the blame, but beyond that there was the issue of how, in other countries, Japan and its spirituality are represented, mainly through print media, but also through other kinds of pop culture, especially visual mediums, including films, manga and animation (think about Studio Gibli’s animation movies). In Thailand, for instance, most of the books on Japanese religion are translated from English, with embedded Western perspectives and preoccupations, but are usually treated as natural. The famous works on Zen by Thomas Merton, for instance, are based principally on the comparison between Zen and Christianity, but are translated into Thai without this caution. Even such a pioneer in translating, sparking off discussion, and popularizing Zen Buddhism in Thailand from the 1970s onwards as the late Buddhadasa Bikkhu seemed not to be overly concerned on this point. The Western view of the East, in a rather romanticized, Orientalism-like fashion, is definitely in the working, and the discourse on Zen which has been massively popularized since the 1960s in the West is not an exception. However, I shall also show below that this politics of representation is by no means a case of the last century, but was occurring already much earlier, with a particular emphasis on the visual, scientific bias.

Secondly, it is a representation that competes with reality to replace reality. Representation is not necessarily a ‘wrong’ or ‘mis’-conception but ‘representations have a strong built-in tendency to self-naturalization, to offering themselves as if what they represented was the definitive truth of the matter… representations define worlds, subjectivities, identities, and so on’ (Pendergrast 2000). This means that nothing can be classified easily as false or true, if the person believes that it is true. In anthropology, researchers often encounter situations where the time-line in the memory of the informer is ‘distorted.’ Nationalistic discourse is usually a ‘distorted’ version in the eyes of revisionist academics, but a majority of the population in a country still believes that it is the natural, absolute truth about their history. Therefore, we must also, instead of merely attacking representation as illusion, consider and analyze how the process of representing works. In my case study, the representation of Zen in Western countries is also re-introduced and adopted by the local Japanese, who look at themselves as such, calling to mind the process that Harumi Befu calls auto-Orientalism (Befu 2001). However, this looking at oneself through the eyes of others’ (Dubois 1989) in a recent context differs from any previous eras on the point that it usually occurs in the form of consumption, especially among those who are susceptible to the flows of images, ideas, perspectives and information in the globalized, consumerist society.

Having laid out my groundings for an argument, I will present my findings by dividing them into two main interrelated themes—the representation and the consumption of Japanese spirituality.
Representation

When one is not satisfied with the situation one is in, it is easy for that person to idealize another situation, another society or culture, as being beautiful, more beautiful than the one s/he is in. Buddhism in general, and Zen in particular, was often idealized as offering a worldview that goes beyond the limitedness of the logical/rational Western mind and/or the predicaments of Western society and values. David Loy, for instance, writes that Buddhism emphasizes “…the centrality of humans in a godless cosmos and neither looks to any external being or power for their respective solutions to the problem of existence” (Loy 1998). While this is certainly inconsistent with the actuality of everyday practice of Thailand, Japan and most other societies where the Buddha is widely regarded as similar to a god who will come to save believers in times of trouble, this kind of ideational image and representation exerted a significant influence on the generations who were disoriented and dissatisfied with the Western way of life and society and looked elsewhere for inspiration, especially the new romantic ‘hippie’ movement of the 1960s in the US and Europe whose impression of Buddhism largely stemmed from writings by, among others, Alan Watts, D.T. Suzuki and Philip Kapleau, and produced such work as Jack Kerouac’s The Dharma Bum. Much of the representation of Japanese spirituality, particularly Zen, in Thailand today can also trace its derivation, without much change in debate or argument, from this period of romanticization, as it was largely mediated through translations of the literature written by and through Western perspectives, rather than arriving directly into the country.

However, studying this in Japan itself offers quite a different outlook. Instead of being a thing of the East—a distinctive worldview and entity quite foreign and apart from the West—Buddhism was brought closer to its Western counterpart, Christianity, and became greatly rationalized when it came into contact with the scientific ethos at the onset of modernity. Centuries before the 1960s, representations of Buddhism in the eye of Westerners also took place, but rather in a negative way, as something native and backward, as opposed to science-based Western modernity. In Japan, before the clear shift of paradigm to wholeheartedly adopt the modern worldview and pursue modern national goals during the Meiji era, there was a watershed period of clashes of ideals and ideas in the Edo era. Being Chinese and adopting Confucian values was an archetype for the Japanese for a long time, and it was still very much so in the Edo era. Despite its exclusion and a ban on travel, a close tie, imaginative if not physical, still remained between the Japanese and Chinese; for instance, as late as 1802, Hishiya Heishichi, a Nagoya textile merchant, in his travel journal, Tsukishikikou (A Kyuushuu Travel Journal), wrote, “The scenery in Nagasaki Harbor was like a Chinese landscape painting, and I felt as if my boat was in the midst of it all.” Actually, Hishiya Heishichi’s attraction to Chinese Nagasaki was the driving force behind his visit. Although there were also attempts to define unique ‘Japanese-ness’ by such early Nativist (kokugaku) writers as Motoori Norinaga (18th Century)—the forerunner of 19th and 20th-century Japanese nationalism and Nihonjinron (theories about unique Japanese-ness)—the Other at that time from which the Self of Japanese tried to differ was predominantly Chinese.

The wind turned towards the West, significantly the US, with the arrival of the Black Ships of Commodore Matthew Perry, who forced the opening of Japan with the Convention of Kanagawa in 1854. Although change was arguably already under way long before that year, as contact with Westerners, their technologies and their entrenched scientific mindset could still be found despite the official isolation—exemplified by Tachibana Nankei (1753-1805), a medical doctor and traveler, who exclaimed when he encountered the Dutch microscope that “the precision of a microscope… exceeds even the Buddhas’ eyes” (Screech 1996)—it was after the Meiji Restoration that frenzied catch-up with Western modernity in every aspect and fabric of society took place full-scale. In the spiritual realm, this led to the rise in prominence of people like Inoue Enryo (1858-1919) who advocated the exorcism of superstition from Buddhism (resulting in him being given the nickname ‘Dr. Monster’). By doing so, as Josephson (2006) argues, he helped bring Buddhism closer to being a ‘religion’—a term that had a different meaning in Japanese before—with Christianity as a model or prototype. In other words, Buddhism was previously not a ‘religion,’ in the modern sense of the word, but when it became one:

More than a mere word game, this change of status would profoundly transform Buddhism. It would lead to sect restructuring, radical reconceptualization of doctrine, and even a new term to refer to the tradition – a shift from the pre-modern norm “Buddhist Law” (bukkyo 仏教) to the contemporary “Buddhist teachings” (bukkyo 仏教) (Josephson 2006).

A similar trend can also be witnessed around the same time in Siam/Thailand if we look at, for example, the writings of Kum Bunnag who argued in 1867:
...what we call the deity coming to be born on earth that we see floating in the air must actually be some kind of animal which can fly up high, just like the snake or fish swimming in the sea. As for the rays of light... is actually a meteorite, which wherever it falls will burst a glowing light around (Tippakarawongse Mahakosadibbhadee 1867).

As a result, Buddhism has become formalized and rationalized, with a scientific worldview permeating the fabric and order of things of the Buddhist cosmos. A good example would be the belief in the existence of the Buddha Amida’s Pure Land, thought to be located in the ‘West,’ a purely symbolic belief referring to the sunset of this life. However, with the new geographical knowledge that came with the Western-style globe, many simple believers were confused. Today, many Thais also believe that nībbana is a place or a space to reach for or to go to, often associated with the image of the universe as scientifically constructed. Spirituality was made modern in its essence so that it could easily be referred to or incorporated into other modern discourses emerging around the same time, such as the building up of the modern nation-state, as can be witnessed in the cases of Japanese State Shintoism, Bushido, Hachiman Daibutsu and the Thai nationalist ideology of Nation-Religion-Monarchy. This transformation usually took place in the center of a nation where contact with the West was immense, but the process was usually inconsistent in more distant areas, such as Okinawa or Chiang Mai, whose spirituality and spiritual worldviews varied, although imposition of the central culture also occurred, often with violence.

Consumption

As Clifford Geertz (1973) observes, the more you learn about another culture, the less foreign, and the more normal it becomes. The more we study about Japanese spirituality and its development, the less exotic or romantic it becomes. It is like everything else that moves with time and operates within an ever-changing socio-historical context. However, during the research period, I also came to realize that it did not matter how much I knew that that kind of image was only a version of a representation of a reality, which was not even necessarily a reality itself, although there were still many people who were ready or would like to believe in that image. To say that they were wrong and I was right was simply to hold a certain academic arrogance and, more importantly, to be ignorant of another important phenomenon that was emerging.

Therefore, the investigation into the history of Japanese spirituality stopped at that point, and, towards the end of the research period, I set out the task to visit as many of the temples that offered zazen meditation sessions to lay people as possible. Heeding Foucault’s warning that “discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs” (Foucault 1972), I thought that these temples would be the place where this reluctant state of constructing oneself through the image represented by others would actually take place. Perhaps this half-baked representation-cum-reality would be best summarized by a simple comment from a person I befriended with in one of these sessions: “I come to try Zen meditation because I want to know why Westerners are so interested in it.” On another occasion, I found a similar incongruity when I came across a book of collected English-language haiku poems translated into Japanese by a Japanese collector who mentioned:

I was born, grew up, and have always lived in Japan, but I’ve never read a haiku until I read Tenement Landscape by Paul David Mena. For me, reading English language haiku is a pleasurable meditation. Why? I found Paul’s haiku to be surely haiku. It reveals the deep haiku mind, but at the same time, it presents a very contemporary and openminded view. So I was greatly moved by it. (Daikoku in Mena 2001)

This search for one’s self, one’s own identity, may recall the characteristics and development of theories of the uniqueness of the Japanese (Nihonjinron), as well as its Nativist and nationalist precursors. Yet, the current phenomenon departs from the previous ones in that it is not directly linked with the idea of being a Japanese subject of the government or the nation (although the prospect that this can be resorted to in the future cannot be ruled out as a rise of right-wing sentiment is being seen), but involves mediation through the mass media and the consumption of its images in a personalized, individualistic way. For example, at the end of each zazen session in one temple, all the newcomers were asked to introduce themselves and to tell how they came to know about the place. The majority of the people—who, to my surprise, were young people from around the age of university student to early thirties—said that they learned about it from the Internet (see Figure 1). Only one person, a middle-aged woman, reported that she saw it in a newspaper column. Other sources included TV programs, which made one of the temples I visited very popular, magazines, some of which you could pick up for free at train stations, and direct advertisements made by the temples themselves (see Figure 2). In the urban context, the sense of sharing...
A spiritual community is no longer fixed by physical proximity, but is mediated through the impersonal mass media so that one can come to these temples without knowing anyone beforehand, and when finished with the business, one can leave them without knowing anyone, too.

At first, I was a little surprised to learn that, in Japan, it is almost politically correct for most of the people I met to claim that they are non-religious, although they might actually practice otherwise. This might stem from many reasons; one might be the recent activities harmful to the public of some religious organizations or cults. Another might be that some people are well aware of the implanted historical and political meaning of religion and its usage during imperialism and war, and deplore anything that has religious overtones. For example, when the writer Yukio Mishima built his house, he decorated it a style that he claimed to be ‘anti-Zen,’ reflecting his post-war nihilistic attitude. In Thailand, it is the opposite: to say that one has no religion is usually taken as strange or radical.

However, even among those who participated in obviously religious activities, the way they approached spirituality was more diversified and personalized than in previous eras. It involved more postmodern-style mix-and-match, trial-and-error, and, in many cases, the de-stressing of a sensation-gatherer (Bauman 1997), perhaps an escape from what Hegel called ‘the unhappy consciousness of modernity’ (Prendergast 2000) into Walter Benjamin’s ‘the unconscious of the dreaming collective’ (Buck-Morss 1989). Many seek spirituality in order to elude problems in their personal life, family, workplace or relationship; a friend of mine told me that she started to believe in reincarnation after suffering severe trauma due to a break-up. However, she also tried many things that have a spiritual element, especially New Age health-related, healing treatments from zazen, yoga, spa massage, body-and-mind therapy and personal aura-reading, many of which combined scientific methods and devices. Again, these trends seem to be generated and popularized first in the West, employing ancient Eastern beliefs and methods, before they spread to the Eastern countries itself, most notably through the demand of the tourists to consume ‘things East,’ making some Easterners proud of themselves along the way. However, as a consequence, these ‘things East,’ including spirituality, have become a sign or a symbol to be consumed without necessarily having a relationship with its traditional or original meaning; it has become what Baudrillard calls ‘pure simulacrum.’ Two examples will suffice to illustrate this point: one is the traditional symbol of Zen’s sunnata or Voidness used as a substitute for a Roman alphabet “O” on the cover of
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Figure 4: Image of the Buddha’s head on a music booklet.

A booklet produced by a Soto Zen sect; another is the head part of a Buddha image on the cover of the book, *Japanese Club Groove Disc Guide* (see Figures 3 and 4).

Conclusion and Implications

Before the research began, my basic thought was that there might be some lessons that could be learned from the Japanese experience for Thailand, but many Japanese monks I met told me that things were the other way around. Some even felt that Japanese Buddhism had come to a *cul-de-sac* of materialism and, in fact, Thailand was still in a far better situation. Some Japanese temples drew inspiration from Socially-Engaged Buddhists in Thailand and tried to apply it to their communities. There are, in fact, a number of individuals who are working on this, trying to rescue spirituality from material corruption.

I do agree with and respect such efforts. However, it must be said that Socially-Engaged Buddhists are really a minority in Thailand while the majority seems to be moved by waves of modernization, Westernization, consumerism and globalization. Certainly, criticism on increasingly materialistic religion has to be made but, in my opinion, there seems to be an unbridgeable gap between the two camps. My point is that to simply condemn consumerism and materialism is not enough, but we must also understand its inner logic, how it works in everyday life, as well as how it seeps into and transforms spirituality. We must take into account how religions are part and parcel with society and history, and when people’s way of living changes, religions are also affected, both in form and content. If one wants to subvert consumerism or other such illnesses, more understanding about them is necessary first.

What I argued in this paper, therefore, runs against the recently generally accepted dualist discourse that puts the Global in distinctive opposition with the Local, in which the latter is often seen as inferior, threatened and in need of being saved. While I am not naively repudiating that such dualism does not exist or contending that the Local should not be saved, to simple-mindedly perceive and define ‘the Local’ should be cautioned against: the problem does not lie with any locality but with our perception of it. In the dualist perspective, the Local is static, slow, sluggish and representing a good, former time—which often easily becomes an object of glorification in nationalistic rhetoric or of romanticization in many versions of localism—set in opposition to the flux of the speedy and ever-changing Global. My study, while employing the terms East/West and Global/Local, attempted to move beyond simple conceptual antagonisms by illustrating throughout the text that these binary identities are, in fact, in relationship with each other and are closer to each other than is usually thought, exemplified here by the fact that Japanese spirituality was brought into its present form by a comparison with its ‘Western’ counterpart, and it is still constantly being constructed through this representation, which provides an avenue for consumption. It shows how it is drawn into and becomes a part of visual culture, fashionable trends and an Orientalism-like relationship. Clarke (1997) shows that the reversal (i.e., the influence of the ‘East’ on the ‘West’) is also pervasive. At the same time, having argued against fixed positions, I have postulated another important point in this essay, to prevent ourselves from assuming the other extreme end of the spectrum, which is to nihilistically claim that everything is just discourses and nothing exists and ‘anything goes’: the binary oppositions will not disappear just because we say so. There is a constant construction, re-construction, affirmation, implementation and consumption of them in society which should not be ignored, although they should not be accepted at face value either. This position of not fully accepting or ignoring in criticism is important in charting concepts that are dangerous but necessary.

If, out of these, I am going to give perhaps any clear and practical recommendations, I would say that I do not have any for spiritual organizations, but may have one that is directed more at lay persons, who are in the midst of consumerism, globalization and so on, and looking at religions and spirituality as outsiders. The recommendation would be to go back to where I started this essay, that we can never grasp reality but only chase it, including the reality of religions. This does not mean that we should not try to understand anything at all, but one conclusion we might come to only pushes us away from approaching the same reality from other
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perspectives. In other words, we have to be careful of the limitedness of our perception, of what we consume and believe. Only with this awareness of the limitation of the self can we allow Diversity—not only of physical appearance, such as ethnicity as generally understood, but also diversity of the meanings of things—to truly exist and operate.

NOTES

1 I do not want to drop names here, but in order to confirm that this is not just a personal imagining, but that some academics have already taken it very seriously, I would like to refer to Jacques Derrida, who coined the term *différance* to explain the process in which words, what we write, read, speak, always defer meaning—although my experience here may be a simpler version of *différance*. In Derrida’s deconstruction, in which *différance* operates, to find a meaning of a concept/sign involves a process of pointing beyond itself, of always referring to something else, something different. The concept/sign is, therefore, never fully present, and its meaning is always deferred. Likewise, when I was in the field of research, I would have liked to capture the reality of it. But all I found were many versions of it, told by many people as they perceived it. These multiple explanations of reality are endless, and the reality (if there is one behind those explanations), thus, is always deferred. When I held to one version of an explanation of reality, I pushed away other possible versions. Realizing this, therefore, I was in a constant state of “chasing reality.”

2 For the same reason as Note 1, I would like to refer here to what Foucault calls the empirico-transcendental doublet—where one is in the reluctant state of being both the subject and object of gazing (Foucault 1994).

3 It should be noted that this representation and mixing across cultures also took place long before the modern period and has continued to take place since then.

4 It should be mentioned here that a kind of ‘internal Orientalism’ also exists, such as how the Japanese view, say, Okinawa or Thailand, and how Bangkokians view other parts of Thailand, but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

REFERENCES


SPIRITUAL HUNGER AND THE CONSUMPTION OF SPIRITUALITY IN JAPAN (OR: WHILST I SEARCHED FOR MY SOUL IN A SOULLESS METROPOLIS…)

Mohd Naguib Razak

Note: This current version has been abridged and simplified by the author from the original final paper in order to meet the publication requirements of the Foundation.

Shinjuku, Tokyo
Sunday, April 27, 2008

I stand here before a 10th floor hotel window, looking down at the sea of grey concrete structures before me.

Of bland low-rise apartments and mundane office blocks.

Away from the soaring skyscrapers.

Away from the suggestive lights of Kabukicho.

I am here, back in Tokyo again.

By myself, of my own volition and my own means.

At the very heart of this soulless metropolis.

Just six months earlier, I was in the midst of packing up and leaving Tokyo. I had depleted my entire grant from the fellowship and all my personal savings. And I was nowhere near understanding the subject matter I had chosen.

I was totally numb and empty within myself. My project in tatters.

In the beginning…

It began as a journey to discover, unravel and understand “Spirituality in Japan’s Material Utopia” as my theme and subject matter for a feature-length documentary film with an international audience in mind. Nevertheless, it soon became obvious that the funds and resources available at my disposal during this fellowship simply would not allow me to produce such a film.

Therefore, even before arriving in Japan, I had already recalibrated my plans to use this fellowship period only to discover, unravel and understand my theme thoroughly and convincingly in order to then, later on, produce a documentary film that was exceptional, insightful, fair and far-reaching on this subject-matter, upon a ‘second coming.’

For better or for worse, I chose to be based in Tokyo because of the vast number of contacts, resources and the network of people I already had here. There was also always something about Tokyo that kept me coming back to it again and again—like a journey to the cutting edge of civilization, like standing on the precipice of mega-modern madness, or enduring that final, most remote mile of understanding about the nature of our humanity in this multi-faceted, multi-layered, multi-nuanced day and age. Tokyo is a place for all that.

“Spirituality in Japan’s Material Utopia:” A Thematic Dilemma

This was the title I had arrived in Japan with. It was no doubt a vast and daunting theme, but one that I felt convinced enough to be inherently important, globally relevant and significantly far-reaching.

But I had not yet really factored in the extreme complexity of the situation in Japan surrounding this theme in reality, beyond my own superficial estimations and presumptive formulations.

And so I quickly began to realize what an even more daunting, dizzyingly complicated terrain this was for an untrained non-scholar like me to navigate. Especially with the myriad of material to trawl through, from all sorts of sources, be they libraries, scholars, newspapers, television, journals, and local culture as well as popular culture. Plus a sizable amount of cultural, academic and media stereotyping to side step or at least be wary of.

To take it all in, one would have to really consider the politics of modernization during the late 19th Century Meiji Restoration; the repositioning of Shintoism to State Shintoism and the curbing of local and folk religions or belief systems; the rise of militarism that led
to Japan’s involvement in World War II; the disastrous end to Japan’s military campaign in World War II; the reversed policies of the American Occupation in countering rising Communist influence in Japan; the social efficacy of Buddhism in addressing the need for rites and rituals in certain stages of life; the emergence of the New Religions, and then the New New Religions (yes, that’s right); culminating with the Sarin gas attack in Tokyo’s subway system by the religious cult group, Aum Shinrikyo; the negative image of religious cults following that incident; and the long list of text, context and subtext just go on and on and on (to put it all very simply).

I realized quickly that I didn’t want my work to be overwhelmed by so much historical baggage and an inconsequential amount of anecdotal detail. I did not want to spend so much time setting up, explaining or clarifying the circumstances preceding or surrounding this theme that I would be left with very little space to judiciously and naturally develop and present my own conclusions and perspectives.

Nor was I interested in a study that had to be limited by a specific geographical or situational parameter, nor reliant upon some compact or useful angle, cliché or stereotype, nor an approach that would fragment this subject-matter, even though I realized that it may render some to see this study as unsubstantive, ambiguous and non-scientific.

More than just for academic research or study, I wanted to tailor it according to the immediate and genuine concerns of current society in Japan and the rest of the world, without creating another piece of ‘pseudo’ social commentary geared merely for consumption and distraction, or else for conspicuous social affirmation.

These were just some of the considerations besetting my mind during those early stages, whilst I descended further into the shadowy valley of my first full experience of autumn and winter in Japan. I was still in a state of non-arrival, languishing out in the wilderness of misapprehension, misconception and misadventure over all that is spiritual and material within today’s Japan and Tokyo.

This Soulless Metropolis

Ultimately here in Tokyo, we live in a metropolis over-populated with people and material possessions, material conduits and material distractions, but depopulated of souls. Or rather the souls of people everywhere are simply nowhere to be seen nor felt.

Try scanning around on a subway train or whilst walking a busy thoroughfare. The soul is just something you never really see in public here in Tokyo, much, much more than in other major cities. It is perhaps a commonplace reality, given the discrepancy between the *tatemae*, or public face, and the *honne*, or inner feelings, in the daily life of the Japanese.

This is not to say that everyone in Tokyo is in fact without a soul.

But simply, their souls are nowhere to be seen. Perhaps tucked away carefully from common view, perhaps tucked away so well that even they have forgotten where to find them.

I, for one, certainly forgot where I left or tucked away my soul at some point during my fellowship, and have been spending something like a year trying to coax it back into the centre of my existence.

Every now and then, whilst living in a decent residential area, I could see how some foreigners would, for the briefest moments, get excited upon seeing me—a fellow *gaijin*, or foreigner, in their non-touristic area—only to see them quickly switching back their expression to something emotionless and blank as everyone else around them.

Even foreigners here—besides tourists and other short-term visitors—are apprehensive about being out of step and inappropriately behaved here in Tokyo. Myself included.

As a result, everyone lives within himself or herself—alone—emotionally and psychologically. Amongst people they may be, but they are always alone.

The father is typically alone in his own role-playing obligations and career insecurities. The mother is typically alone in her never-ceasing obligations and responsibilities, if not to her children, then to her neighbors and her social circle. The children may be fortunate enough to have a sibling to share their childhood with—but ultimately each and every one of them must carve out his/her own niche in the world eventually. They are taught very early in life not to be a burden on others nor to depend on others, and they, too, rapidly become alone.
Beyond a certain age, one is obliged to start ‘being an adult’ and fulfill one’s designated role, one’s promise or potential in society, and from that time, one becomes emotionally ‘an island’ at the honne or inner level, having to conceal personal thoughts and feelings for the sake of maintaining social obligations and meeting the demands of group cohesion.

Physically and inter-personally though, at the tatemae or exterior level, one is never allowed the luxury of being ‘an island,’ unless one has already been banished as a social misfit. Every action, gesture, utterance or movement bears consideration for others before oneself.

Even on a train amongst strangers, entering a lift with people you have never ever seen before, in a crowded café or narrow aisles in a convenient store, everyone is always mindful of people around them, and being consciously and visibly mindful to the others, albeit without a single bit of genuine emotion given or taken in the exchange of gestures.

‘Why smile when a grin will do?’

In fact, to smile to strangers may be overdoing the ‘tatemae’ somewhat, and may leave the other person uncomfortable or even suspicious about our intentions. Better just to offer a restrained grin, that’s it. Nice and simple, nothing too expressive, nothing too committal, nothing out of the ordinary.

Living in Tokyo, especially whenever I am out and about in the ‘big, bad’ metropolis, I feel like my soul is redundant. Never is it engaged, never will it be required in order to navigate through my daily existence in this ‘material utopia.’ I only need to be armed with a retinue of small gestures, such as nods, raising of the hands, small bows, stiffening the body when someone takes a seat next to me or enters a cramped lift next to me, et cetera.

In fact, having my soul fully engaged on a daily basis would often leave me mentally exhausted, overwhelmed, confused or depressed, so much so that it made more sense to shut off my sense of feeling and cease engaging my soul when it was not in any way necessary or required.

After awhile, the soul, feeling so neglected and divested of interest, will gravitate towards items of material pleasure, seeking out something nice to eat, some visual stimuli to consume or distract, a cool product to own, a new piece of cosmetic tool, a clothing statement, a stylish place to be seen, a TV program to collectively have half-hearted laughter with, an accessory that ‘fits’ one’s image of oneself; oh, the possibilities go on and on and on.

And so I became more and more of an isolated creature in deep hunger for some compassion and some sense of warmth amongst people, finding satiation only in the temporary release of material pleasure and comforts.

**Much Ado about Nothing**

Till today, I have not been able to make my Japanese friends truly understand what I had been going through in Japan. They all kept echoing the same declaration of incredulity, “But you have a Japanese wife with you!”

I realize now that, in their eyes, I was more than privileged in my own situation. A spouse was in fact the only person one could appropriately share one’s burden with, in principle. Not your friends, not even your best friends on most occasions, nor colleagues, nor one’s relatives, nor even one’s parents at times (depending on how welcoming they are, in fact).

For myself, as a Malay, a sense of compassion amongst a larger group or network of social allies is essential to our good state of mind, confidence and well-being.

When my father passed away last year, I was touched to see even long-forgotten friends and former work colleagues show willingness to come out of their way to attend my father’s funeral, even though they had never met him. It was simply a genuine, and strong, expression of regard, support and compassion for their fellow brethren, even from amongst non-Malay and non-Muslim friends and colleagues.

Even some total strangers who had known my father came and approached me, opening up to me, expressing their deep and genuine sympathy for me, sometimes even struggling to hold back the tears in front of me. These are but a handful of examples of how we often step up to the plate and offer some gesture of compassion and love to soothe those we see in need, even when not called for and even when with strangers.

I was saddened by the fact that hardly any of my Japanese friends knew what to say to me (assuming that they even wanted to say anything to me) with regards to the loss of my father. Perhaps I cannot really judge them; perhaps it is not something that they even knew how to respond to appropriately. Perhaps it is not something they would even bring up with a friend, in the manner that I did to them.
At the end of the day, the saddened honne (true feelings privately held) always remain locked away from public eye, and the appropriate tatemae (public face) is all that matters within the sphere of social interaction. No amount of compulsion for ninjo, or a sense of emotion or compassion, could ever override the incontestable demands of the giri code of conduct—the obligation to the group and community.

Even though I may seem fortunate to at least have a Japanese wife to help me deal with all these problems, in fact, it was harder to deal with for that very reason. Because I have a Japanese wife, I was expected by everyone else to already know and understand comprehensively my way around the giri and the tatemae.

To her credit, my wife had indeed been trying to help me understand these rules and values of Japanese life. But what if I did not wish to, or did not agree to some of it, or if it was so much and too much against my own moral persuasion, my own moral code, my own sensibilities?

It is in fact really impossible for me to incorporate these rules and values without abdicating my own principles and convictions without diminishing my own cultural and moral identity. What is the point then in me being who I am, to come here and investigate this society?

My envy for my wife’s natural ability to adjust to these requirements made me feel alienated from her. It all seemed so easy for her. Time and again, I found myself feeling isolated and misunderstood, and feeling less than human within this society.

Would North Be True?

I lost my father on April 4th, 2007 just seven weeks after receiving news that he had been diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer. I still cannot write this without tears falling down around me. It never gets easier. You just learn to sidestep those things you know will trigger it. But to avoid the tears is to avoid ever thinking about it, to avoid feeling something real about what it meant, or how it was, or where I am now. And the feeling is so raw.

Lately, I have been remembering a song that the singer-songwriter, Sting, wrote in coming to terms with the death of his own father. I find myself hanging on to the words to this song because I cannot myself seem to find my very own words. They just seem to melt away every time.

The Deep Blue Sea of Meaninglessness

Much of everything else after that remains a blur from where I stand now. I cannot see back into that part of history without the rain of the year that has passed welling up upon my eyes again.

All I know is that I did try to give myself some time off and remained in Kuala Lumpur for a few more weeks than originally planned. But I soon found myself struggling to contain my remorse. And so I decided to plunge myself into work and obligations there for a couple of weeks. Upon returning to Tokyo, I carried on very much in similar vein.

Suddenly, one day, just one plain and not-so-dramatic day, I found that I could not construct any sense of meaning for whatever thing I had set out to do. Nothing had meaning anymore. No desire, no meaning. I could not carry on.

I kept trying. I kept trying to deny within myself that which I was feeling, or rather that state of unfeeling in itself. I tried to force myself to keep going, to keep on pushing. I felt that this was simply too indulgent a thing for me to do, too much of an escapist’s solution to my troubles for my liking.

But nothing mattered anymore. And all my work ground to a halt.

Ramadhan had arrived just in the nick of time. I turned to my religion for refuge and shelter. Started reading the Qur’an again. Chapter by chapter. Day after day. Night after night. It helped me stabilize myself emotionally and spiritually, but I could only find peace and calm within my home, or at best within the local area that I lived in.

I could not bring myself to go out and meet people, whether working colleagues, old friends or people I had to get in touch with for my work.

It was a strange, strange feeling for me. I have had anti-social tendencies before, and have always had a disinclination towards socializing in groups larger than two. But this time it was very different.

I felt a deep irreplaceable, irretrievable hollowness within me. I could not even begin to reason myself into meeting people, even when I had initiated them myself, or even when I knew I was socially obligated to meet them.
Spiritual Hunger in Japan

Even as late as mid-October 2007, well beyond the last official day of my Fellowship (and whatever funds came along with it), I was still bent towards making a final stab at completing my work before time ran out, living on funds I had set aside for our return to Malaysia.

I found myself heading to Osaka again, to the city that had shaped an early part of my father’s career when he served as the Director of the Malaysian Pavilion at the World Expo ’70 there in Osaka. He had been in his 30s then, just as I was during my two long spells in Japan.

I had hoped and earnestly prayed that something of an encounter there would trigger me back to my senses and awareness, and have me finding my way back into my work.

But as I stood before that famous Tower of the Sun, that famous tower I had seen so often during my childhood from photographs of my father’s time there in Osaka, during which time I was left behind in Malaysia because I was still barely a year old then—I found nothing. I felt nothing.

Just the sad blue sea of meaninglessness.

For all the great resounding success I have had so many times before in snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, for all the times I have been so successful and even excelled in working under the severe pressure of an imminent deadline or some against-sheer-odds situation, I had absolutely no answer and no response this time. I was numb. Absolutely numb.

I came back to Tokyo and to my wife, and told her, “It’s over. I’m finished. I’ve got nothing left that I can do here.”

“Let’s go home.”

I needed my home, I said to myself inside my heart. Home meant more than just a building, a place, a space, this time.

Hence the abrupt response to the folks at the Foundation, and hence my absence from the API Workshop later that November.

But then, even as I was busy packing up my things and preparing to head back to Malaysia, and as I began to feel a slight sense of relief and life flowing back into me in anticipation of heading back, I also began to feel a tinge of sadness to be leaving Tokyo finally.

I could not quite grasp what this sadness meant at that time, but looking back now, I think I know.

Once I had made the decision to leave Japan, I was not one with the people there anymore. I was not another sardine in their tin can anymore, I was not another soul struggling to swim in this metropolitan (miso) soup.

Now, only now, could I finally feel detached from the state of being that pervaded every person’s life in Tokyo.

Then, and only then, I finally felt again what I used to feel at the end of my previous long-stay in Tokyo: sadness… sadness for the people. Sadness… without any pity. Without any judgment. Without any feelings of iniquity.

But empathy. And brotherly affection. And also guilt—for taking the easy way out myself.

Finally, finally, I had reached my point of arrival, for which I had long sought, just as I was about to abort, abandon ship and escape from Tokyo.

I felt like Charlie Sheen’s character in Platoon as he waited for his helicopter to take him home from his blighted tour of duty in Vietnam. He was finished with Vietnam but he still felt a strong sense of compassion for his fellow unknowing soldiers just arriving by the same helicopter that was about to take him home. Compassion that was beyond words. Compassion that seeps through one’s eyes.

Suddenly it all came together before me.

I was taken back in time to my conversations and interviews in 2002 from my earlier film on Tokyo, Glass Enclosure: Tokyo Invisible. I had sensed emptiness, then, within the young people I had spoken to. They hungered for another country to return to. Perhaps not physically, but rather spiritually.

A place they could escape to, that was in fact always home. A spiritual hunger they had no name or conception of, even.

When did home become just a place or a space one merely laid a physical claim to? These young people were yearning and aching for a home. A real home. Physical or spiritual. Social or emotional.
Now that I was in fact going home, I had finally become aware of the state of the young in Japan.

A spiritual hunger that drives them either to escape or salve their emptiness. And so they consume and consume, for satiation, sublimation or salvation, but still they are hungry.

And I am not talking about religion here. But something even more primordial than that.

Return to Tokyo, April 2008

And so it was finally revealed to me that my return from this one-year Fellowship period was in fact just the end of the beginning, the hard-fought journey towards understanding and revelation that I had sought from the beginning.

I know now the angle or approach my documentary film will take. I will still be taking aim at Spirituality in Japan but, to be more specific, I will focus on spirituality or the absence of spirituality in contemporary Japanese society, especially amongst the young; the current "spiritual boom" in Japan; the role of ‘spiritual counselors’ such as Hiroyuki Ehara and Kazuko Hosoki and the consumption of spiritual experience; the meaning of death, life and afterlife; and the growing numbers of suicide and parricide amongst the young; the incidence of bullying, acute social withdrawal, depression and wrist-cutting as well as other social anomalies and psycho-social disorders in Japan.

My return to Tokyo this time in fact allowed me to re-contextualize my feelings, concerns, responses and meditation on the metropolis, as well as to intellectually and emotionally engage with selected experts and activists involved at the heart of my subject-matter in an honest, open-ended, exploratory, two-way dialogue and essentially test how accurate or even how naïve my views and pre-conclusions might have been, and to gauge how ready I was to contemplate and address these issues in an effective, well-reasoned and well-empathized manner.

I began by interviewing Professor Nobutaka Inoue, Head of the Institute for Japanese Culture & Classics and a Professor of Shinto Studies at Kokugakuin University, who was also Host Professor for my entire Fellowship period.

Professor Inoue set the tone for the many revelations that were to come by stating emphatically, amongst other things, that there was a clear detachment or separation between the people responsible for the religious environment in Japan and the people, especially the younger generation, who actually need some form of spiritual dimension, guidance and bearings within their current everyday lives; that the religious environment urgently needed significantly large effort in redefining its roles within the context of the needs of the younger generation today; and furthermore, there was instead a lack of genuine drive and initiative to understand the situation of the young today amongst the people at the decision-making level.

This was followed by an interview with Ms. Fumie Kamitoh, a Psychotherapist/Mental Health Counselor and Director of the Child Protection Project with the Tokyo English Life Line (TELL) Community Counseling Service, as well as a Mental Health Counselor with a University in Tokyo.

Ms. Kamitoh delivered a hammer-blow of reality when she confirmed that the desire for suicide, certainly amongst those she has counseled, represented a total annihilation of the self, rather than a ‘resetting,’ ‘re-booting’ or ‘re-starting’ of the ‘program’ suggested by some analysts citing the special influence of reincarnation beliefs and a ‘multiple-life’ video-game mentality.

Furthermore, it often had little social dimension, such as a sign of protest or escapism or statement, as it may be in other countries or previous generations in Japan; rather, today’s suicides, or the desire for suicide amongst younger people in Japan, are largely borne by a deep sense of nihilism or, at least to me, that sea of meaninglessness that I had described earlier.

Next, I interviewed Mr. Yasuyuki Shimizu, Founder and Director of Life Link, a non profit organization (NPO) focusing on suicide prevention and suicide recovery therapy.

Mr. Shimizu, on the other hand, warned that one must be careful in reading too much into media reports on youth suicide, since the highest percentage for suicide in Japan is still amongst middle-aged men, and the reports of youth suicide tend to be sensationalistic and repetitive. Nevertheless, he affirmed that there was indeed a disturbing trend, even though represented by small numbers, pointing towards a far more disturbed state of the heart and mind amongst the younger generation, beyond what the general public is well aware of.

He lauded the opportunity ‘spiritual’ TV programs, such as Ehara-san’s Aura no Izumi (the Fountain of Aura),
offered in initiating dialogue or contemplation amongst the younger generation, and hence becoming a possible catalyst for their spiritual or psychological maturation, but he also lamented the fickle and fleeting sense of opportunism within the popular media in Japan, very quick in embracing such 'spiritual icons' when it serves their own interests well, and readily cutting them down to pieces when it becomes 'obligatory' upon them to do so later.

This was followed by an interview with Professor Naoki Kashio, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Letters at Keio University, specializing in “Spirituality in Contemporary Japan” and one of the initiators of the website Spiritual Navigator.

My discussion with Professor Kashio yielded a very interesting point for consideration when he underlined that as Japanese society continued to evolve through the Bubble Economy-period, and the post-Bubble period, the \textit{giri} (obligation to the group or community) aspect of society remained very much intact, whilst the \textit{ninjo} (a sense of emotion or compassion) aspect largely diminished and disappeared, belying the fact that \textit{giri} and \textit{ninjo} were dual aspects that went hand-in-hand traditionally, so much so that they were often referred to in tandem as \textit{giri-ninjo}.

To which I labored the point, if \textit{giri} is so inevitable as something fundamental to the ‘Japanese way,’ what about \textit{ninjo} then—was it not also so inevitable as something fundamental to the ‘Japanese way’?

Next, I interviewed Mr. Nouki Futagami, Founder and Director of New Start, an NPO focusing on the recovery of \textit{hikikomori} (acute social withdrawal) and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training); and I also had a chance to attend one of New Start’s \textit{nabe} parties (like a steamboat or fondue party), where I met and mingled with many who were recovering from \textit{hikikomori}.

Talking to Mr. Futagami opened up a door to a completely different, and ultimately sad and tragic, reality—that of the \textit{hikikomori}. It is easy to dismiss them as weak-minded social escapists or the being part of the privileged curse of affluence, but the implications, I realize now, are much more devastating and outright disturbing to our sense of humanity.

Mr. Futagami described how these young people have fallen into a state of ‘total absence of desire, hope or volition,’ lost in a state of mental stasis, and how this disconnection can last for years, even beyond a decade or so. And with more than a million people said to be in this state, is it not already a crisis of society? While he was very emphatic about the positive results of the many initiatives and programs in New Start, as well as underlining the government’s own extensive ‘outreach’ programs in trying to return this million or so into the local workforce, I was shocked to hear him admit that these were all in fact programs for the ‘recovery or rehabilitation’ of the \textit{hikikomori}, but there was hardly any concerted nor significant effort to ‘prevent’ other young people from sliding into this state of \textit{hikikomori}, even now.

I asked Futagami-san, “What happened here? Was it a case of someone leaving ‘a gate’ wide open, or was it more like that there were ‘gates’ after ‘gates’ left open up to this point, and finally the last one was also breached?” He didn’t actually answer my question. He understood my point.

I followed this up with an interview with Professor John Clammer from the United Nations University, who specializes in material culture and consumption in Japan.

Professor Clammer affirmed the views similarly expressed by Professor Kashio, that while there is supposedly a “spiritual boom” right now in Japan, much of this boom, as reflected in TV programs such as “\textit{Aura no Izumi}” and the nation-wide touring Spiritual Convention or SupiCon (with up to 60 conventions held across Japan throughout each year), is catering to middle-aged housewives searching for some meaning in their lives after completing their chores of raising their own children. But this “spiritual boom” is certainly not speaking to, let alone reaching out to, the young people so desperately in need of a spiritual dimension within their lives or some sort of spiritual guidance or orientation.

Finally, I rounded off all my interviews with a session with Ms. Ritsuko Yamaguchi, Founder of Mood Disorder Association Japan, an NPO focusing on the recovery of people suffering from mood disorder and depression.

This last session with Ms. Yamaguchi was probably the most heart wrenching and the most compelling of them all. Here I learned how there were in fact many filmmakers, especially documentary filmmakers, attending her mood disorder recovery programs. Some of them may be there to investigate depression and mood disorder, but many were seeking some sort of ‘therapy’ for themselves.
I reasoned with her that perhaps this was surprising, because, from where I stood, at least prior to my time in Japan, documentary filmmakers have always been privileged in being able to pursue a career that is richly rewarding to their own sense of well-being and also made them better exposed to the hidden truths, realities and challenges of life, and thus should be much better equipped in coming to terms with it, but Ms. Yamaguchi clarified that, conversely, that made them even more vulnerable, more susceptible and in danger of over-exposure to the problems of society and the conflicts of their subjects’ inner psyche.

She reported how a respectable documentary film director from one of the biggest nationwide TV stations in Japan had recently conducted a very comprehensive study of depression in Japan, through her organization and some of her participants, and to her surprise she discovered later that the TV station had decided against screening the director’s finished documentary film.

He later took his own life, she told me.

“Was it an act of protest or grievance of any sort? Or was it out of a sense of hopelessness?” I asked her.

It was hopelessness, she told me.

This was like, indeed, yet another hammer-blow to my heart, since I, myself, had lost a Japanese documentary filmmaking friend and colleague to depression-driven suicide in September last year; he was a very prominent and proactive documentary filmmaker as well as someone with whom I shared mutual appreciation in one another’s work.

I realized that sometimes people living on the frontline of these social tragedies and insanities are the ones who are at greater risk. So I wondered then how she could herself cope with so much trauma with such regularity and such proximity, considering that she had just told me about a patient of hers who, after some three years of therapy under her watch and advice, had just committed suicide three days prior to my interview with her.

It was then that she revealed to me that she was a 9/11 survivor in that a freak accident had forced her to cancel her confirmed ticket on the tragic and infamous United 93 flight that perished on September 11, 2001. She said it took the trauma of that experience and the feeling of guilt in causing another human being to die in her place to ultimately give her the determination and commitment to establish MDA Japan and to play a role in society to help other people facing trauma and other psychological disorders.

She said that we must all be prepared to give back to society if we wished ourselves to be saved and protected, be it from natural disaster, acts of terrorism or personal psychological trauma.

Although I could never compare my experience with that of hers, nevertheless I could take some wisdom from her: that everything one goes through in life has its own hidden meaning and purpose, and mine was becoming more and more tangible with every interview and every stone unturned.

“Is spirituality or the lack of it, then, the problem? Is it ‘the’ problem?” I asked them all at the end.

As I mentioned before, this was just the end of the beginning of my journey into this theme. The middle is the making of the film, and the end will be the relationships and connections the film will make with the people who will make up its audience.

At every stage, there will be many bridges to be built, the bridges between myself and the people within my film during the making, and the bridges between the film and the audience in the end.

In Conclusion…Sort of…

I am suddenly drawn back to the memory of attending the nabe-party at New Start after my interview with Futagami-san. I was myself rather intimidated by the thought of meeting so many hikikomori, unsure of how to deal or interact with them, and insecure about my own awkwardness in group situations such as these. Little did I expect to see them boldly and ebulliently approaching me, sometimes even ‘cornering me’ just to have some—often disjointed—conversation with me, at times in English, at times in Japanese, their thoughts and logic not at all so polished but their genuineness and sheer enthusiasm so touching and inspiring.

I left the party rather late, filled with warmth and real feelings, something that I felt once again severely deprived of upon my return to Tokyo this time.

‘I had a potful of human contact and emotion tonight,’ I remember thinking to myself, ‘And I think and hope I gave back as much to some of them as I took.’

Was I in need of it more, or were they?

Interesting question.
A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN PROCESSES ON THE ISSUE OF COMMUNITY RIGHTS TO BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Varinthra Kaiyourawong Boonchai

Introduction

Globalization takes place in the form of the domination of economic and cultural centers as well as in the protests against the domination of marginalized cultures. It makes people’s attempts to transcend sociocultural differences more difficult. Although local communities and farmers make up the biggest subgroup of the population, the state marginalizes local people and excludes them from managing biodiversity and local resources because local people have no power to mobilize. They have limited channels of communication and, therefore, cannot push policies forward.

Local people's movements are asking for more rights to manage local resources in order to conserve their ecological systems and strengthen their economic and social self-reliance. The experiences of non-government organizations (NGOs) in the Philippines in communicating and establishing a dialogue among communities to gain public acceptance of communities’ rights and local wisdom paint a successful picture of how grassroots people’s movements can create communication patterns that are able to transcend sociocultural and political differences. Their campaigns on local rice varieties have successfully changed farmers' behavior from growing the high yielding rice varieties promoted by state agencies, which are expensive since they require chemicals (e.g., fertilizer, pesticides) to achieve their high yield potential, to developing new varieties from farmers' own initiatives. It is, therefore, interesting to study how the NGOs in the Philippines communicate with farmers to create and develop their own rice varieties.

The objectives of my research are: 1) to study the communication strategies and patterns used by NGOs to promote farmers’ rights to biodiversity resources; 2) to study which social conditions and contexts are able to transcend sociocultural and economic differences; 3) to find out what conditions have contributed to the success or failure of such communication campaigns; and 4) to find out the ways to apply these patterns of communication campaigning to people’s movements in Thailand. I chose the Southeast Asia Regional Initiative for Community Empowerment (SEARICE) to be my host organization because it is an NGO working on the issue of farmers’ rights to biodiversity resources in the Philippines. It also has a vast experience in campaigning on this issue not only at the local and national levels but also at the international level. SEARICE works towards a just democratic civil society that upholds people’s creative and sustainable utilization of natural resources. It implements the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation and Biodiversity Use and Conservation in Asia Program (CBDC-BUCAP).

My case study focused on the Biodiversity Development and Conservation (CBDC) program, a ten-year old global program on plant genetic resources. CBDC evolved around formal-informal system partnerships, developing methodologies and undertaking researches while organizing farmers into groups to secure their seed supply system, improve their economic gains and build social and political spaces (SEARICE 2007). I conducted a review of the literature written by SEARICE as well as other documents related to the issue. I also organized key informant and group interviews of the organizations’ campaign staff and representatives of the campaign target groups, and observed communication campaign processes in the local areas. The study took twelve months.

The Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation (CBDC) Program—Bohol Project: A case study

SEARICE chose the towns of Bilar, Batuan, Carmen and Dagohoy in the province of Bohol as the Philippine sites of the Southeast Asian location for the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation (CBDC) program because of the very low genetic diversity in these towns when the project started in 1996.

In 2001, SEARICE released a technical report regarding rice farming from the CBDC Bohol project. The socioeconomic survey, which included the barangays of Campagao and Cansumbol in Bilar and Malitbog in Dagohoy, showed that the rice situation is as follows: farmers have limited resources of land and capital. This lack of resources, particularly capital, affects the net farm income of farmers.
The report also recognized that farming is not only the simple conservation and utilization of resources. It requires the correct allocation of resources and the help of external forces in the environment. Farmers make necessary observations about their immediate natural resources, such as soil, labor and environmental conditions, and then determine their actions. When the country experiences a rice crisis, it inevitably resorts to importation. A rice shortage is both a political and an economic issue because it is a question of the government’s incapacity to provide the support services and infrastructure needed by rice farmers to produce sufficient rice. Socioeconomic constraints, such as credit and input availability, are generally considered the factors that slow down the acceptance of sustainable agriculture. The need to maintain contact and communication with farmer-partners is essential to monitoring farmers’ conversion from inorganic to organic farming (Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Program—Bohol Project 2001).

Addressing the abovementioned factors, the general objectives of the Bohol Project were to enhance on-farm conservation, to develop plant genetic resources (PGR) through participatory varietal selection (PVS)/participatory plant breeding (PPB), to strengthen local seed supply systems, to mainstream support for farmer-led conservation, to develop PGR among farming communities, universities and formal research institutions, to enhance gender equity in PGR conservation and development and to promote policy regulations to support farmer-led conservation and development of PGR (SEARICE 1995).

The feedback of farmer-partners on the CBDC Bohol Project

In 2005, the CBDC Philippines (Bohol) Project year-end report featured the project’s work on lowland rice research in plant genetic resources and conservation, development and use (PRG-CDU) in seven communities in Campagao, Cansumbol, Riverside and Zamora (Bilar), Poblacion Vieja (Batuan), Katipunan (Carmen) and Malitbog (Dagohoy). There were seven active people’s organizations, made up of 116 members, from the partner communities of the project. Of the 116 members, 66 percent were active participants. Farmers were classified as active members if they were practitioners of sustainable agriculture (SA)-organic farming, conducted on-farm research and trials on participatory plant breeding (PPB) or participatory varietal selection (PVS), actively attended and participated in the meetings and activities of the organization and were also active in the mainstreaming activities of the project, especially in the implementation of the season-long training at the PGR-farmers’ field school in the province (SEARICE 2005).

Various farmer-partners in Bohol, both men and women who have participated in the CBDC training program on traditional and organic farming techniques, provided feedback about seed conservation and development. Some of their comments are shown below:

“At the start, I did not believe that rice breeding could be done but I also like to try inventing. My breeding objectives are to solve the problem of sourcing seeds and to develop a new variety suited to my field. I was happy when I heard that the harvest of farmers with whom I shared my seeds increased using my developed variety. Other groups which wanted to learn about breeding have also invited me to share my knowledge. Other than that, I did not depend anymore on seeds developed in laboratories.” (Gerardo Calamba from Cansumbol, Bilar, SEARICE 2002).

“One of the things that gave me the inspiration to create a new variety is the dream to develop a new variety from my own initiative and which I can leave as a legacy to my family. It developed my self-confidence to do things like this even though I am already old. Doing plant breeding and selection helped me a lot, especially in the economic aspect. I did not have to buy seeds anymore. I was also able to sell my produce. It enabled me to help other farmers since it gave me the opportunity to share my knowledge in breeding…” (Ruperta D. Mangaya-ay from Zamora, Bilar, SEARICE 2005).

These comments indicate that SEARICE uses the concept of alternative development in implementing its project. The attributes of this alternative paradigm are: that it is need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and based on structural transformations (i.e., self-management by the community). Alternative development involves the improvement of the knowledge, attitudes and skills of disadvantaged people to utilize, sustain and improve the productivity of available resources (Kaewthep 2000). It uses a human approach and recognizes that the people know their own needs best. Therefore, the technician (in this case, SEARICE’s field staff) who believes in this approach first spends his/her time learning the needs and priorities of the people before introducing technologies for improvement. The initial act of the technician under this approach is to learn rather than to teach. The ultimate objective of the technician is to develop the knowledge, attitude and skills of the people.
In practice, the human approach is applied to the concept of the farmers’ field school (FFS), one of the initiatives that SEARICE has implemented. An FFS uses a learn-by-doing approach with farmer groups. It teaches them to apply what they have learned through the program to develop new activities to gain greater control over local conditions.

The communication patterns of the CBDC Bohol Project

In this section, I analyze the communication patterns of the CBDC Bohol project in order to understand how SEARICE encourages farmers to accept the CBDC program and to change their behavior from growing the rice varieties promoted by state agencies to their own rice varieties and how it convinces the general public to accept and support farmers’ rights. The results and analysis are organized into: target groups; the message; and communication methods.

Target groups

There are four levels of communication in this project: the community, national, regional and international levels. At the community level, SEARICE’s field staff identified farmers in the seven communities as the project’s main target group. The strategy is to strengthen community management of community agricultural resources and to increase farm productivity.

At the national, regional and international levels, there are many target groups: farmers in other communities, other NGOs/academics, political leaders and partners in service delivery. The communication strategy is to increase awareness and technical and policy advocacy capacity at the mainstream level for plant genetic resources conservation, development and use, and agricultural policy-related issues. The approaches implemented at these levels are networking, lobbying, advocacy and collaboration.

Messages

Messages deal with both technical issues and policy issues. The technical messages sent to farmer-partners at the community level and other farmers consist of three important components. The first is the conservation and continuous utilization of, for example, community seed banks and home gardens. The second deals with development, such as selecting and actual breeding according to farmer’s own breeding objectives. The last one includes sustainable agricultural practices such as organic agriculture and integrated farming systems. These messages are vital to the main target group because they can actually apply the knowledge they gain.

“I first learned about breeding when SEARICE entered our barangay in 1996. In that training, they taught us how to breed rice, and when I went back to our barangay, I immediately tried rice breeding. Rice breeding helped a lot in my farming since I was able to have my own variety adapted to my field conditions. It is not hard for me now to find seeds to be planted in my field. I was also able to share my knowledge and methods in breeding with other farmers. They recognized the seeds that I developed as those developed by a farmer-breeder.” (Cisenio Salces from Campagao, Bilar, SEARICE 2002).

To deal with policy issues, SEARICE set up a policy and information unit. The unit is involved in lobbying, advocacy and networking on issues related to biotechnology, intellectual property rights (IPR), biodiversity and plant genetic resources at the national, regional and international levels (SEARICE 2007). The policy issues are focused on the protection and promotion of farmers’ rights and other issues that affect farmer-partners. The main point of spreading these policy issues is to claim farmers’ relationship with the land and their right to conserve, develop and freely share plant genetic resources, to market agricultural products, to access technology and knowledge and to have the right to participate in decision making (SEARICE 1996).

At the Regional Conference on Sustainable Community-based Initiatives as Expressions of Farmers’ Rights held on 18 October 2006 in Tagbilaran City, SEARICE launched the Rice Festival Declaration Supporting Farmers’ Rights for Food Security. Following is an excerpt from the Declaration which highlights policy concerns:

“… Concerned about the absence of legislation or policies in many countries in support of farmers’ rights to seeds and sustainable community-based initiatives as a means to enhance food security and contribute to poverty alleviation, and conscious of the need to provide a supportive policy environment to promote food security and poverty alleviation…(Rice Festival Declaration Supporting Farmers’ Rights for Food Security, 18 October 2006).

Another example of how effective messages can inspire target groups to take action comes from the community
registry in CBDC Bohol. When farmer-partners from the Campagao Farmers’ Production and Research Association (CFPRA) in Bilar received information on the Plant Variety Protection Act of 2002, they decided to establish a community registry as the community’s way of asserting its control over and access to seed and other genetic resources (Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Program 2006).

SEARICE has produced three publication formats for its messages. The first is handouts containing technical messages for farmers such as, “Enhancing Farmers’ Role in Crop Development: Framework Information for Participatory Plant Breeding in Farmer Field Schools.” The second is books and newsletters about policy issues, such as the SEARICE Review. The last is books and booklets summing up field work experiences from the CBDC Program such as A Profile of Farmer Breeders in Bohol, and, Pathways to Participatory Farmer Plant Breeding: Stories and Reflections of the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Program.

Communication methods

The CBCD Bohol project prioritizes interpersonal communication as a method of communication at the community level. This interpersonal communication consists of many channels: personal media,¹ specific media² such as seminars, trainings and exchange visits, as well as printed media and electronic media produced by SEARICE. One finding of the study is that the most effective communication method at the community level is when field staff play their own role as personal media.

The SEARICE information flow model features the interaction of “sender” (field staff) and “receiver” (farmers) through interpersonal communication. In this model, the field staff members have two working processes. The first process is reflection and the second one is action. To communicate with farmer-partners, SEARICE staff then use a three-way communication process. This model illustrates:

1) Feeding, which refers to the source gathering information about the problems, knowledge, attitudes, skills and practices of intended receivers. In practice, feeding is done through baseline surveys, focus group discussions, training needs analyses and pretesting of materials.
2) Feed forward which refers to the source planning, packaging and delivering the messages to the receiver(s) through group and interpersonal communication.
3) Feedback which refers to source gathering information about the receiver’s reactions to the information or the channels. In practice, feedback is gathered through monitoring and evaluation (Mercado 1991).

Data from six focus group discussions³ show that every farmer accepted SEARICE as the/a community organizer. SEARICE gives a presentation that informs farmers of PPB/PVS techniques that can minimize farmer’s production expenses, teaches them to conserve and develop seeds, encourages basic organic farming rather than conventional farming and empowers them to lobby the Department of Agriculture to support farmers’ organizations.

Moreover, all the farmers acknowledged that SEARICE’s role is different from that of government agents because the government promotes conventional farming while SEARICE promotes organic farming and sustainable agriculture. The Department of Agriculture gives synthetic chemicals to farmers without actually inspecting the fields while SEARICE uses ecological materials and continues to monitor its services. Government agents provide loans but rarely services from farm technicians.

Thus, an important point is that farmer-partners need close monitoring in the implementation of new technology and other services. They want the technicians or staff to be hardworking, smiling, friendly, supportive and approachable. The field staff should, therefore, continue monitoring and know how to train the farmers well. They should also never give up, even if the farmer-partners are having difficulty with the new activities.

Apart from personal media, SEARICE emphasizes specific media such as trainings, meetings, policy discussions, seminars, exchange visits and close monitoring to communicate with farmer-partners. The communication methods create public spaces for farmers to share their ideas and thus, claim their rights and protect the public interests of their communities.

The significant attributes in the communication patterns of SEARICE—especially at the community level—are smallness of scale, interchange of sender-receiver roles, horizontality of communication and deinstitutionalization.

At the national, regional and international levels, SEARICE uses networking and collaboration with other farmers, NGOs and academics. Many activities at these levels take the form of technical assistance and policy discussions with different organizations. There has also been the formation of a provincial farmers’ seed network.
The communication methods at the higher levels focus on group communication and publications, such as meetings, launching events, seminars, demonstrations of methods and printed media. The main purposes of group communication are to create awareness, increase knowledge and convince target groups to adopt their practices.

For political leaders, policy advocacy and campaigns are the most effective strategies. SEARICE’s staff regularly attends committee hearings and lobby political leaders on the issue of farmers’ rights at the provincial level. They also had an initial discussion on farmers’ rights with one of the Congressmen in the province and lobby for church support of farmers’ rights.

Furthermore, SEARICE participates in and supports CBDC’s regional and global policy and mainstreaming activities. For instance, it participates in the meetings of the regional partners and attends conferences and policy workshops for farmers at the regional level, contributes news to CBDC’s website and its global video documentary, writes papers and reports to advocate CBDC’s policies for global mainstreaming, and also participates in CBDC policy events and regional trainings.

Communication methods at the regional level include mixed specific media and electronic media such as websites, video documentaries and publications. The important point of communication at the regional and international levels is to create “a community of sentiment.” It means that SEARICE tries to create a group that imagines and feels things together by participating in regional partners’ meetings and the production of electronic media. These communication methods are not limited to the national level; they are transnational. Using these channels, SEARICE and its partners create communities in and of themselves from different landscapes that have a common ideoscape of farmers’ rights to biodiversity resources and move from shared imagination to collective action. This media also has become massively globalized; that is, it is active across large and irregular transnational terrains (Appadurai 1996). The table below summarizes the communication patterns being employed by SEARICE.

The process of constructing the meaning of farmers’ rights to biodiversity resources

Social movements are not just shaped by culture; they also shape and reshape it. Therefore, the process of meaning construction is one cultural strategy of social movements for changing power relations and legitimizing their identities. Symbols, values, meanings, icons, and beliefs are adapted and molded to suit the movement’s aim and frequently are injected into the broader culture via institutionalization and routinization (Johnston and Klandermans 1995, 9).

SEARICE has been constructing the meaning of farmers’ rights to biodiversity resources through three processes: public discourses, persuasive communication and consciousness-raising during episodes of collective action.

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<td>• Technical messages • Policy issues</td>
<td>• Orientation program • Seminar, joint events • Study tour, workshop • Printed/electronic media</td>
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Table 1: Communication patterns of SEARICE.
Public discourses

SEARICE collaborates and shares information on farmers’ rights issues with NGOs, academics and other civic groups at the local, national, regional and international levels. It also campaigns on the discourse of farmers’ rights to biodiversity resources with the public through public forums, platforms for the discussion of relevant issues, and websites. There are many signs and slogans referring to the farmers’ rights discourse such as, “Make organic food as your medicine.” Although this slogan does not directly refer to farmers’ rights and biodiversity, “organic food” refers to farmers and biodiversity, while “your medicine” reflects the value of plant varieties which farmers give to consumers. Therefore, the farmers’ rights discourse is legitimized by farmer practice and consumer acceptance. This is one example of various slogans through which SEARICE tries to communicate the meaning of farmers’ rights to biodiversity resources with the general public.

However, both SEARICE’s collaborations and its campaigns are limited to people associated with its program partners and do not include the general public. SEARICE rarely releases its issues to the mass media or forms links with other networks around different issues. Thus, it does not widen public discourse on farmers’ rights as it lacks a diversity of networks to support its campaigns.

Persuasive communication

Persuasive communication refers to specific communication with target groups in order to change their actions through slogans, exhibitions, and farmer field schools. One of the slogans that SEARICE communicates with farmers is, “The seed of rice is the seed of life.” This slogan aims to redefine “rice” as “life.” It means that farmers’ right to their life cannot be separated from farmers’ right to their rice.

SEARICE has succeeded in convincing its target group farmers to develop their own rice varieties. The persuasive communication of SEARICE is a crucial process, not only for local practice, but also for policy participation. However, it cannot continue to develop this process and to make the farmer network push forward its own policy at the national level by creating signs, slogans and other symbolic actions to present the specific meaning of farmers’ rights to each crucial group.

Conditions for communication success

Initiatives require an enabling environment to register success. The success of the CBDC Bohol Project can be traced to a conscious identification of project components, selection of farmer-partners, enhancement of their status, establishment of an administrative structure and the development of support networks.

Appropriate components of the CBDC Bohol Project

The identification of target audiences is necessary for the selection of appropriate communication methods and message and is vital for successful communication. SEARICE clarifies its target groups at the community and mainstream levels. Then it plans to use the appropriate channels with each target audience. Every activity is also based on participation and the exchange of ideas.

…the activities which we have implemented in the project are a campaign. At the local level, our style of campaign is to work with farmers through farmer field schools (FFS), among others, so that farmer partners can observe actual examples, adapt knowledge and know how to implement techniques on their farm. We also conducted FFS, seminars and conference workshops with municipal agricultural officers. At the regional level, we organized consultations and workshops to build networks. Since ten years ago, we already worked and campaigned together with some groups of farmers, NGOs and local government
Our farmer partners have shifted from growing traditional varieties to developing their own seeds… I think we have gained some victories…” (Interview, Alywin Darlen Arnejo, coordinator of CBDC Bohol Project, 13 December 2006).

The objectives and work plan of this project are tools that can solve the problems of farmer-partners. The main impediments that keep farmers from accepting the technologies that SEARICE advocates are a lack of access to superior genetic material, a narrowed genetic base for the major crops in the community (few varieties available, specific demand for traits that the seed market cannot supply), a reduced number of crop species available to the community, limited individual skills to manage genetic resources, and a lack of collaborative efforts to manage plant genetic resources.

Most of the technical/scientific activities, especially PPB/PVS, organic farming and farmer field schools, are concrete activities that farmers can put to use on their own farms. Moreover, SEARICE is a non-governamental organization that has worked and campaigned continuously on the issue of plant genetic resources and seed for ten years. SEARICE’s goals are to work with every sector, including farmers, academics, civil society, businesses and government. For that reason, every sector is always welcome to any events, seminars, or campaigns that it organizes.

Efficient organization administration

SEARICE has an efficient administration. The organizational structure has four parts: administration and finance, information and communication, policy advocacy and technical work. This structure is the key to SEARICE’s success because each part has its own work plan and clear mechanisms. For this reason, the staff in each part can deeply develop their specific skills. For example, the technical staff can concentrate on their work in the field without worrying about fundraising and sending reports to the funding agency because the executive director and policy staff are responsible for those tasks. Thus, the field staff can continue to work with and closely monitor farmer-partners, while the policy staff can disseminate useful information to their target group and closely monitor policy developments.

Attitudes of farmer-partners

Whether the project fails or succeeds depends on the attitudes of the farmers. The six focus group discussions show that farmers accepted this project because they taught them techniques they did not know before. Furthermore, the new methods developed and strengthened farmers’ own abilities to breed new varieties and minimize their expenses. Because the farmers themselves see the usefulness of this project, they have changed from growing the rice varieties that the state agencies promote to planting traditional varieties that they have developed themselves.

“Participatory plant breeding is useful because with it, we do not need to buy high-cost varieties of seed, and at the same time, we preserve the traditional seed. The Farmer Field School imparts knowledge about sustainable agriculture.” (Participant of a focus group discussion with farmer-partners in Cansumbol, Bilar, 6 December 2006).

Status of farmer-partners in society

In general, farmers are poor. When they decide to plant a specific variety, they must buy the seeds at the market. Often, these seeds cost more than they can afford. Since SEARICE introduced organic farming to them, farmers have been able to spend less than they did with the conventional farming that the Department of Agriculture promotes. Accordingly, they have shifted to organic farming.

Vast networks

SEARICE has networks that push for the recognition of farmers’ rights to biodiversity at many levels, such as a network of NGOs that work at the grassroots level, and an international people’s network that campaigns against free trade, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and patents. Since 2001, the project has been very productive in terms of mainstreaming and policy advocacy through linkages with other NGOs and POs. Collaborative activities undertaken with other civil society organizations have also been conducted. In 2001, SEARICE provided orientation and training on sustainable agriculture development to the members of the Wahig Sierra Bullones Irrigator’s Association in Sierra Bullones, Bohol. Moreover, the Montevideo Farmers’ Association in Carmen, Bohol, through the Peoples Fair Trade and Action Center; the Omjon Farmers’ Association in Valencia, Bohol, through the Soil and Water Conservation Foundation; and the Calangahan Farmers’ Association and Kabasaken Farmers’ Association in Sagbayan, Bohol, through Feed the Children, Inc., requested trainings on sustainable agriculture development, particularly participatory rice variety development.
Constraining conditions of the CBDC Bohol Project

Though SEARICE has a great deal of networks with which to collaborate, it still lacks a strong campaign strategy for constructing a public discourse. “Farmers’ rights” is the key public discourse that SEARICE needs to establish in the social cognition. However, it cannot do this alone; the many networks with which it collaborates now are not broad enough to raise the awareness of people to accept the idea of farmers’ rights. In order to successfully create this public discourse, SEARICE should collaborate with other movements and initiate social spaces for people from different classes, ethnicities, cultures and other identities to learn about the value of biodiversity resources, local knowledge and farmers’ rights.

SEARICE still does not have a clear strategy and mechanism for creating policy processes and policy contents. For this reason, it cannot create a strong public discourse that strengthens policy-making on farmers’ rights and farmer participation at the national level. In order to do that, it should facilitate a “think tank” group for developing alternative policies and monitoring current policies by collaborating with social science academics and science academics, public intellectuals and activists who are interested in farmers’ rights.

A number of activities in the work plan were also not conducted due to lack of time, shortage of staff and events such as the national elections (SEARICE 2004). A lack of interactive learning in community planning between policy and community level staff prevents SEARICE from working with farmers for advocacy work. Furthermore, a shortage of staff prevents it from mainstreaming and networking, from having a detailed monitoring plan, and from projecting collaborations and other project events. However, effective communication at the local level cannot be denied; it is a good example of the strides that communication campaigns in the Philippines have made.

Conclusion and recommendations

A number of lessons can be learned from the work of SEARICE. A communication strategy or plan should be devised at four levels: community, national, regional and international. Human and participatory approaches are practiced at the community level while networking and collaborative approaches are considered at the national, regional and international levels.

Participation is key for successful communication and project success. The identification of target audiences is necessary for the selection of appropriate communication methods and messages. Interpersonal communication, using personal media and specific media, is likewise fundamental in communicating with the main audience at the community level. At the same time, group communication, using specific media such as seminars, meetings, publications and electronic media, is to be used at the national, regional and international levels.

Moreover, the main message sent to the target groups should be focused on plant genetic resources and farmers’ rights. It consists of technical and policy messages that provide useful knowledge to target groups for adaptation and actual practice at the community level. Thus, campaigns on the concept of farmers’ rights should be done to build a public discourse; to persuade strategic partners to practice the farmers’ rights concept, such as local practice and policy initiatives; and in the process of consciousness-raising, to create a learning process and spaces for practicing farmers’ rights at the grassroots level.

However, success at the community level does not necessarily carry over to the mainstreaming level because of staff constraints and the lack of a full-fledged monitoring plan.

The findings indicate that SEARICE should, therefore, link community-managed initiatives with academic institutions, other non-governmental organizations, people’s organizations, the mass media and government agencies at the municipal level in order to widen the concept of farmers’ rights. It should also create a public space for farmer’s voices by setting up a working group to be directly responsible for lobbying, coordinating and closely monitoring the plans that it makes with its program partners at the community level. The working group should be composed of both field staff and policy staff, who can share their ideas and sum up their experiences from both the field and policy arenas through mutual work and interactive learning.

SEARICE should also channel information about policy issues that affect farmer-partners through local radio stations since radio is the medium of communication most easily accessible to farmers. Likewise, sending printed materials such as press releases and newsletters directly to local mass media and other change agents will not only disseminate information but also inform listeners about important points that it wants to communicate. Finally, SEARICE should integrate both...
mass media and personal channels if it wants to speed up the diffusion process at any level.

NOTES

1 Personal media means a person who is a sender in the interpersonal and intergroup media systems. Personal media may be composed of leaders in a community and persons from outside the community, such as specialists from government agencies or NGOs.

2 Specific media means media produced for specific content and receivers. Specific media include the printed media, electronic media and activity media.

3 Six focus group discussions were conducted: Malitbog on 22 November 2006, Riverside on 27 November 2006, Zamora on 29 November 2006, Campagao on 4 December 2006, Batuan on 5 December 2006, and Cansumbol on 6 December 2006.

4 Farmers’ rights are rights arising from the past, present and future contributions of farmers in conserving, improving and making available plant genetic resources, particularly those in the centers of origin/diversity (International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, Resolution 5/89, November 1989). Farmers’ rights consist of: rights and relationship to land; rights to conserve, develop and freely share plant genetic resources; rights to market agricultural products; rights to technology and knowledge; rights to participate in decision-making; and other related rights (SEARICE Review, December, 1996).

5 Of the different types of media (e.g., television, radio, newspapers), the radio is the most accessible to respondents.

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The challenges of the 21st century: Democracy in crisis and the roles of civil society movements

In the 1930s and 1940s, many European and American scholars turned their attention to the crisis of democracy that followed the economic depression and the rise of totalitarianism (Strang 2006). Since the fall of the Berlin Wall at the end of 1989, people in Eastern Europe, in Latin America, in Asia and Africa have been throwing off dictatorships and tyrannies. However, democracy, the political system that they are yearning for, cannot fulfill their hopes for a better life. Even in Western Europe and the United States, people have turned their backs on their governments. Voter turnouts sink, public debates get nastier, and democracy seems stymied in the face of mounting multiple challenges. The problems that the world faced before the Second World War were not as complex as those we face now.

We live and work in an era of turbulence and challenges. The winds of change sweeping the world—digitalization, globalization, migration, demographic shifts and terrorism, as well as the degradation of social and natural capital—are giving rise to arenas of clashing forces. These clashing forces play out as tension between multiple polarities: speed and sustainability, market and society, progress and conservation, global and local ways of organizing, and top-down and bottom-up leadership (Scharmer 2001). In the last decade, there have been many articles and books and media reports warning us about the world’s crises. Otto Scharmer has summarized these very poignantly:

“The crisis of our time is not just a crisis of a single leader, organization, country or conflict. The crisis of our time reveals the dying of an old social structure, and way of thinking, and old way of institutionalizing and enacting collective social forms” (Scharmer 2007).

In the last decade, civil society has become a new “power” in the virtual and real world. The growth of social forums and the anti-war movement represents what social movement theorists call “political opportunity structures,” a new framework within which individuals can participate in local and global debates. In particular, the social forums have become the institutionalization of the newest social movements from so-called anti-capitalist movements to environmental, social and migration concerns. Moreover, in many parts of the world, civil society joins with the state and the business sector as the key institutions that are trying to shape globalization and sustainable development.

However, civil society also has its weaknesses, particularly in Southeast Asia. There are diverse groups with widely varying agendas that occupy the space that can be defined as civil society. There is no single viewpoint but rather multiple views, sometimes contradictory. After the tsunami, there were some voices talking about the accountability and transparency of civil society organizations. The double challenge, then, is not to promote civil society per se but rather to strengthen the parts of it that can enhance the quality of public policy outcomes and help advance progressive values. In pursuing these aims, there is a first crucial step to create a positive change in the complex system of civil society networks and then weave these changes into the fabric of the modern world. This is the most crucial task in building a community of committed and distributed leaders in civil society movements. My research methodology is a kind of action research that combines three dimensions of observer, namely, the first person, second person and third person.

As the first person, I reflected on my tacit (intrinsic) knowledge from personal experiences in training around five hundred change agents and local leaders in the last seven years. Moreover, I have used my body to experience the ki energy flows and the field of energy through practicing aikido and Japanese calligraphy. Ki (energy in Japanese; qi in Chinese) is a thousands-year-old Eastern concept that Yasuo Yuasa has tried to investigate in a scientific way. Yuasa (1993) has defined the concept of ki-energy as “an energy unique to the living human body that becomes manifest, while being transformed, at psychological, physiological and physical levels of self-cultivation.” Self-cultivation in Japanese is called shugyou and refers to training the body. However, it also implies training, as human beings, the spirit or mind by training the body. This is the self-cultivation method, or mind-body training method. In other words,
shugyou carries the meaning of perfecting the human spirit or enhancing one’s personality (Yuasa 1993). Ki energy is an energy unique to aikido and Japanese calligraphy. Practitioners of aikido, a Japanese martial arts, regard their ultimate secret to be the unification of mind, ki (energy) and body skill (power).

The first person research is aimed at understanding the intangible factors of leadership performance. As a second person observer, I interviewed and had discussions with some civic leaders and academics in three countries to collect information and insights on how they have dealt with leadership development issues. Finally, as a third person observer, I studied documents on transformative leadership in management science, new science and Eastern traditional wisdom.

Systemic change: Be the change you want to see in the world

We must change the way we change

In his book, Hope is Not a Method, General Sullivan, Chief of Staff of the US Army, emphasized that to meet the enormous challenges encountered in transforming the post-Cold War army, we must not only change but we must also change the way we change (Sullivan 1997). For me, it is an important message (notion) for the leaders in civil society organizations all over the world to rethink their future work and lives because civil society organizations, particularly in Southeast Asia, are facing tremendous pressures from dramatic developments at both the local and global levels. I have seen symptoms of stress and burn out or “inward resignation” in many leaders and social workers who have worked longer than 10 years. In Thailand, leading social, political and environmental activists are coming into their 50s and one is hardly able to find young promising leaders in civil society organizations. When I was in Manila in February 2007 and had several conversations with many Philippine civic leaders, I found similar concerns. Sixto Donato Macasaet, executive director of the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE), told me about CODE’s “nurturing program” to give encouragement to “the successor generations”—future leaders from the community of non-government organizations/peoples’ organizations. He is conscious that the capacity building process still faces a long journey of supporting transformative leadership development. Meanwhile, in Indonesia the civic leaders have not seen the consequences of this dilemma. In comparison to the civil society organizations in Thailand and the Philippines, they are young. They are getting involved in a huge pile of dynamic problems that they are trying to solve. They lamented about heavy workloads, loss of their work-life balance and struggles with their day-to-day work but did not know how to cope with the middle- and long-term challenges facing Indonesian society. My conversations with Sutoro Eko, director of the Institute for Research and Empowerment (IRE), and Poppy Winanti from Gadjah Mada University, who is an advisor of IRE, revealed the fundamental problems of civil society organizations within Southeast Asian countries. They have no time for the individual and collective reflection that is the core process of learning capability. They just learn to “react” to the problems they face but do not learn to “tune in” to the emerging future. From my personal experiences working in this field for more than 30 years, I am afraid that the core groups of Indonesian civil society will repeat the same mistakes that we have made in Thailand over the last two decades. In my opinion, the future of civil society is in our hands when we commit to organizational turnaround and energize ourselves, the leaders and the activists. The basic rationale for civil society organizations is that in a situation of complex and rapid change, only those that are flexible, innovative and productive will excel. For this to happen, it is argued, organizations need to “discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels” (Senge 2006).

Transformational change begins with personal transformation

Most civil society organizations all over the world are established for noble purposes—to make their own societies and the world a better place to live. It is a tremendous achievement that needs transformational change, which is a process that intertwines the personal, the team, the organization and the society at large. It is a process of change that shifts the leaders inside themselves as well as outside. Hence, transformative leadership takes on important new meanings in leading the changes. In essence, the transformative leaders are those building the new community or organization and its capabilities. They are the ones “walking ahead,” regardless of their management position or hierarchical authority. Such leadership is inevitably collective (Kofman 2007). Transformative leadership can have many faces or many names, such as servant leadership, authentic leadership or resonant leadership (Greenleaf 2002). The idea of transformational leadership was first developed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and later extended by others. He showed the contrast between this type of leadership and traditional leadership that wielded power in organizational hierarchies and worked in a top-down manner. For Burns, transformative leadership occurs when one or more persons engage
with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Leaders and followers may be inseparable in function, but they are not the same. The leader takes the initiative in making the leader-led connection; it is the leader who creates the links that allow communication and exchanges to take place (Burns 1979). Peter Senge’s definition of leadership can evoke a powerful image of the transformative leadership that we want to cultivate. Senge’s notion of leadership is the capacity of a human community—people living and working together—to bring forth new realities. Leadership breathes life into the enterprise, without which nothing truly emerges. Put another way, leadership is about tapping the energy to create—especially to create something that matters deeply (Senge 2002).

Therefore, the cultivation of transformative leadership starts with our mind shift by changing our worldview and paradigms. We must change the dominant worldview of the modern culture—the world as a machine. The Newtonian/Cartesian view sees the world as comprised of separate things, particles, and of the relationship between them. Cause is separate from effect. Subject is separate from object, fact from value. Relationships among things are linear, they begin and they end (Wheatley 2006). The leaders must commit to a journey toward lifelong learning, meaning and exploring. Joseph Jaworski, founder of Generon Consulting and author of the book, Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership, has eloquently emphasized the power of mind shift:

“In this process of continuous learning, growth, and development, we undergo three fundamental shifts of mind that set the stage for our becoming more capable of participating in our unfolding future. The first is a shift in the way we think about the world. Instead of seeing the universe as mechanistic, fixed, and determined, we begin to see it as open, dynamic, and alive. The second shift occurs when we come to understand that everything else and that relationship is the organizing principle of the universe. The third shift occurs in our understanding of commitment. It’s not, as I once thought, doing what ever it takes to make things happen. It is rather, a willingness to listen, yield, and respond to the inner voice that guides us toward our destiny.

When we follow our purpose and experience these fundamental shifts of mind, a sense of flow develops and we find ourselves in a coherent field of others who share our sense of purpose. We begin to see that with very small movements, at just the right time and place, all sorts of consequent actions are brought into being. We start to notice that the people who come to us are the very ones we need in relationship to our commitment and the door seems to open for us in ways that we could hardly imagine” (Jaworski 1998).

Some models of leadership building

Charles Handy, a renowned business guru, was asked about his experience in working with outstanding leaders from various organizations. What did he see as the key attributes that make them successful? He answered, “The effective leaders that I have met are a strange combination of passionate human beings who can communicate that passion to others and who at the same time forcefully take risks.” This answer means that leaders are born, not made. Handy argued that those are skills which cannot be learned from others and cannot be taught, but are often the matter of finding oneself in the right place (Handy 1997). I also share some part of his thoughts that extraordinary, great leaders such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela are born, but ordinary, good leaders can be taught. However, in this paradoxical and complex world, one extraordinary, great leader would not succeed if s/he was the only heroic one to solve the world’s wicked problems. S/he also needs a community of transformative leaders that support and work with him/her. I must emphasize again that leadership cultivation involves both individuals and collectives.

Despite crises and challenges in our societies, we cannot simply wait for “born” leaders to appear. I believe that effective leadership can be taught. There are many examples of leadership cultivation that we can study and apply to our contexts in Southeast Asia.

Across more than two decades, Ronald Heifetz and his colleagues at Harvard University have pioneered a distinct, bold approach to learning and teaching leadership, created and practiced in a manner that is responsive to the hunger for a new story about what leadership means and the ways of learning it. Other theorists and practitioners have explored a new understanding of leadership that more adequately honors an interdependent, systemic awareness and the need for significant shifts in perspective and practice (Parks 2005). The Center for Public Leadership has offered degree programs and executive programs. Its executive programs are designed from one week to several weeks long.
Senge and his colleagues have also facilitated the Foundation for Leadership workshop for more than 20 years. The three-day program is based on the leadership development process described in *The Fifth Discipline* by Senge. The purpose of this course is to explore sources of leadership (Scharmer 2001).

A final example of leadership building is the leadership project of the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management, which started in 1980. This Institute was established by Konosuke Matsushita, the founder of Panasonic, who spent seven billion yen from his private fortune to promote leadership for the 21st century. I will describe some details of the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management (MIGM) because it is an interesting example of a servant leadership building program or transformative leadership cultivation, particularly in Asia. Here are some parts of Matsushita’s statement:

“In a world where complex and difficult problems threaten human society in unprecedented ways, a fundamental reevaluation of human nature has become necessary. A rethinking, properly connected, would provide a deeper understanding of the relationship of all individuals to themselves, to community, to their nation, to the world, and to the environment around them. Only then can humanity realize, for the first time ever, its full potential, with civilization advancing to a new and higher stage. But as I thought about these great challenges and great opportunities, I realized that this search for a new philosophy of peace and prosperity requires leaders of great vision and ability who would be capable of implementing these new ideals. Since so many of the world’s and Japan’s problems can be attributed to the lack of a clear, future-oriented perspective and of a long term national and global policy, it seemed to me urgently necessary to begin fostering talented and promising young people capable of assuming the responsibility for these great tasks. Surely, neither the world at large and Japan in particular have done enough in this regard previously… For these reasons, I decide to establish the Matsushita School of Government and Management in order to give talented young persons the opportunity to realize better futures for themselves, for Japan and for the world…” (Matsushita 2007).

In selecting associates for its three-year training course, the Institute seeks applicants who demonstrate fortitude in character, initiative and vision. Particularly, it seeks those associates who demonstrate that they have a sunao mind, a Japanese concept referring to a mindset that is capable of accepting life in a constructive way and is able to see things as they are without prejudice or preconceived ideas. The three-year curriculum of MIGM is very intensive in cooperative research, global literacy skills and Japanese traditional culture (Matsushita 2007). Finally, the associates should commit to five vows:

1) To realize heartfelt ambition;
2) To have a spirit of independence and self-reliance;
3) To learn from all things;
4) To be on the cutting edge of a creative innovation;
5) To have a deep-felt spirit of gratitude and cooperation (Matsushita 2007).

In my interviews with alumni, I asked whether all alumni still keep the five vows in their work. The answer was that not all of them do; especially those who have become politicians cannot maintain the vows. This does not surprise me at all, because leadership is not a one-time act in which you pass an exam and become a graduate. Training courses are useful to learn new methods and new skills, which should translate into everyday life; even an executive leader cannot solve “wicked problems” alone. Leaders still need to work as part of a good team and learn together to create lasting change. Transformative leadership is a life-long learning process done individually and collectively.

*Learning organizations or communities of practice as places for leadership cultivation*

In an interview by Melvin McLeod (2001), Senge described a learning organization as a community of practice. The concept of a community of practice refers to the process of social learning that occurs when people who have a common interest in some subject or problem collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations. The term was first used in 1991 by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, who used it in relation to situated learning as part of an attempt “to rethink learning” at the Institute for Research and Learning. In 1998, Wenger extended the concept and applied it to other contexts, including organizational settings. More recently, Communities of Practice have become associated with knowledge management as people have begun to see them as ways of building social capital, nurturing new knowledge, stimulating innovation or sharing existing tacit knowledge within an organization. In *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Senge defined a learning organization as human beings cooperating in dynamic systems that are in a state of continuous...
adaptation and improvement. According to him:

“Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we were never able to do. Through learning we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life. There is within each of us a deep hunger for this type of learning” (Senge, 2006).

For Senge, a learning organization or community of practice is a place where people are committed to practicing collective cultivation or collective being. He uses the term “cultivation” in this context to mean deep development, becoming a human being. Furthermore, for Senge there is no genuine cultivation without discipline (McLeod 2001). He emphasized the matter of the mastery of five basic disciplines to achieve the results participants want to see. They are: 1) system thinking; 2) personal mastery; 3) mental models; 4) building a shared vision; and 5) team learning (Senge, 2006).

System thinking is the conceptual cornerstone of the learning organization approach. It is the discipline that integrates the others, fusing them into a coherent body of the theory and practice. System thinking is based upon a growing body of theory about the behavior of feedback and complexity—the innate tendencies of a system that lead to growth and stability over time. System theory’s ability to comprehend and address the whole and to examine the interrelationship between the parts provides, for Senge, both the incentive and the means to integrate the disciplines (Smith 2001).

Personal mastery is the discipline that emphasizes that organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning, but without it no organizational learning occurs. It goes beyond competence and skills, although it involves them. It goes beyond spiritual opening, although it involves spiritual growth. Personal mastery is the discipline of aspiration and involves formulating a coherent picture of the results people most desire to gain as individuals (their personal vision), of focusing our energies, of developing patience and seeing their current reality objectively. Learning to cultivate the tension between vision and reality can expand people’s capacity to make better choices and to achieve more of the results that they have chosen (Smith 2001).

The discipline of mental models starts with turning the mirror inward: learning to unearth our internal pictures

of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny. It also includes the ability to carry on contemplative conversations that balance inquiry and advocacy, where people expose their own thinking effectively and make that thinking open to the influence of others. If organizations are to develop a capacity to work with mental models, then it will be necessary for people to learn new skills and develop new orientations, and for there to be institutional changes that foster such change (Smith 2007).

Building a shared vision is a collective discipline that establishes a focus on mutual purpose. Moreover, it is an important task of leadership to inspire and nourish a sense of commitment in organization by developing pictures of the future they seek to create. Such a vision has the power to be uplifting and to encourage experimentation and innovation (Smith 2007).

Team learning is a discipline of group interaction. Through techniques like dialogue and skilful discussion, teams transform their collective thinking, learning to mobilize their energies and abilities that are greater than the sum of the individual member’s talents. When dialogue is joined with system thinking, Senge (2006) argues, there is the possibility of creating language more suited for dealing with complexity.

All these disciplines are concerned with a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future.

Furthermore, each discipline provides a vital dimension. Each is necessary to the others if organizations are learning to connect people’s energies. In 2006, I used these five disciplines to create common core values for two business companies in Bangkok. We saw some shifts in people’s thinking and interacting that led to team learning. I really do believe that these practices in the work place can lead to the building of a “community of commitment” because, without commitment, the changes required will never take place.

Implications: Self-cultivation and skilful facilitation for the co-creation of the field of energy

An effective leader will have the capacity to use his or her “Self” as the vehicle—the blank canvas—for sensing, tuning into and bringing into presence that which s/he wants to emerge. William O’Brien, the former CEO of the Hannover Insurance Company, summarized his experiences in leading change as follows, “The success
of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener.” In other words, the success of a tangible move in a particular situation depends on the Self of the intervener. Although the various Eastern and Western traditions of inner cultivation and development differ in their beliefs and assumptions, they all focus on practice as key for enhancing personal cultivation and spiritual growth (Scharmer 2007).

In my action research, I began practicing aikido in dojo (an aikido school) and also practiced Japanese calligraphy to understand by direct experience how to create energy and connect my energy with other persons. Leadership is the capacity to take effective action with others in full awareness of one’s impact on those others, whether individuals, communities, organizations and even society. As I emphasized at the beginning of this paper, social and organizational transformation begins with personal transformation—changing the perceptions, intentions and commitments of those who can influence the future. In the last two decades, there have been many examples of leaders being engaged in experiences that broaden worldviews, enhance readiness to act with others and tap inner sources of inspiration and motivation. Tom Atlee, founder of the non-profit Co-Intelligence Institute, has articulated his personal journey in connecting the field of energies in his writing, “Democracy and the Evolution of Societal Intelligence.” He wrote, “I have experienced a few rare groups where everyone’s a peer, where leadership is shared, where a special kind of energy among them allows them to explore and solve problems together, successfully. I have watched people with very different ideas, backgrounds, aptitudes and knowledge using that diversity creatively. They come up with brilliant solutions and proposals—better than any of them could come up with alone. The group seems more intelligent than its individual members…I call these dynamics ‘collective intelligence’—which manifests as ‘group intelligence’ in groups and ‘societal intelligence’ in whole societies” (Atlee 2007).

To facilitate such collaborative action, leaders must learn to embody social technology skills. Nowadays, there are many methodologies that could be learned and practiced, such as appreciative inquiry, open space technology, future search, dynamic facilitation, the World Café and the U-Process. There are many reports about using these new social technologies for systemic change. Here is an example:

“The work in Zambia exemplifies that the U-process offers both a methodology to address challenges, as well as a way to learn how to make a shift in how we pay attention. The Zambia team used the U-process to design the workshops, as well as to affect the overall process” (Kaeufer and Flick 2007).

I have used those social methodologies such as community planning and city participatory planning to ignite and connect people’s energy since 1997. In July 2004, I organized and facilitated the first people’s political meeting, “Big Bang Bangkok,” with 1,000 participants. We invited Bangkok residents to share their concerns, find common goals and present their views to the candidates of the gubernatorial election. The meeting was a success. The people’s forum was broadcast live on cable TV and was televised on the evening news and reported in the newspapers the next morning. On 8-9 October 2005, I used the World Café and appreciative inquiry methods for the facilitation of a “People’s Assembly” with 3,000 participants from around 60 provinces of Thailand. My intention was to showcase a strategic dialogue between people’s politics and partisan politics. This could open a chance for Thai society to start taking a journey on a road less traveled to a “new democracy,” as Tom Atlee put it in The Tao of Democracy (Thirapantu 2007). Unfortunately, we could not pursue the follow-up actions as we had planned because one month later a political turmoil started in Thailand that eventually triggered the 19 September 2006 coup. All political and civil society work has stopped for almost two years, but I think that the “People’s Assembly” still has some impact on the Democrat Party’s strategies. In the Bangkok Post newspaper’s top stories on Monday, 23 July 2007, there was an article reporting that the Democrat Party had kick-started the electoral race with its first general meeting on Friday, 20 July, and held its first fund-raiser a day later. Television spots featured a confident Abhisit Vejjajiva, the party leader, proclaiming that the party’s new agenda, “People First,” had been aired (Prateepchaikul 2007).

I believe that civil society organizations will have more impact on the destiny of their own societies when they “transcend” themselves to become real human beings and if the transformative leaders utilize the social technologies mentioned above to convene conversations that result in vitalizing a community that knows what it wants, a community with a vision and capacity for revitalizing even governmental systems. This can result either from communities taking the initiative to act on their own behalf or an ongoing representative constituency that knows what it wants and which cannot be ignored.
Some years ago, civil society organizations in Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand started to pay attention to cultivating transformative leadership as a key factor to foster and strengthen their movements. The learning processes in these four countries could be faster if their civil society leaders had opportunities to share their working experiences and reflections together regularly.

Rosa Zubizarreta has manifested this belief in energetic words:

“We need positive leadership of all kinds, beginning with the ‘creative leadership’ that inspired us to offer the seed of a compelling vision to the large whole. These visions can serve as ‘organizing principles’ that draw others in to work collectively on a common project for the benefit of all. Once a group has converged around a particular vision, ‘facilitative leadership’ is needed to ensure that every voice is heard in a way that is not a cacophony of voices. We need to offer simple structures that encourage the growth and engagement of all participants, so that each person’s creativity can serve to benefit the whole. In this manner, we create the conditions where a vision can live, grow, and be shared” (Zubizarreta 2007).

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INFORMING GOVERNANCE? SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING IN INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

Adnan A. Hezri

Background: governance and sustainable development

The 21st century has been dubbed the century of the environment because human economic activities have caused unprecedented changes to global ecosystems (Lubchenco 1998). Concomitant with the global environmental changes throughout the 20th century are changes in society’s response to emerging ecological threats (McNeill 2000; Simmons 1996). Two broad waves of the institutionalization of environmental policies can be identified (Janicke and Weidner 1997). The first occurred in the late 1960s to early 1970s. The second wave came in the aftermath of the Brundtland Report in 1987 and the Rio Conference in 1992, bringing in its wake the worldwide spread of new or revised institutional arrangements for effective environmental protection, with its new focus on the concept of sustainable development or sustainability (Kraft and Vig 1994).

The two waves of institutionalization are different in terms of policy content and corresponding policy instruments. The policy content of the first wave can be seen as a reaction to early forms of environmental threats. Even though predominantly driven by domestic policies, the first wave diffused internationally following the United Nations Conference on Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972. The second wave, in contrast, was a direct response to global ecological challenges, such as biodiversity loss and climate change. Dovers (1997; c.f. Lafferty 2004) argues that these are sustainability problems, ’different in degree and in kind’ from the discrete environmental threats that were characteristic of the first wave. Arguably, sustainability is a higher-order social goal equivalent to democracy and justice. The number of policy instruments that governments have applied has been more pervasive in the second wave mainly to address the integrative logic of sustainable development, which is to combine environmental, social and economic factors and goals.

The shift to multiple instruments is also characteristic of government reorganizing itself by engaging with other parties, suggesting the shift from government to governance in tackling long-term goals for sustainability. Environmental governance is synonymous with interventions aimed at changes in environment-related incentives, knowledge, institutions, decision making and behaviors. More specifically, governance refers to the set of regulatory processes, mechanisms and organizations through which political actors influence environmental actions and outcomes. It includes the actions of the state and, in addition, encompasses actors such as civil society, businesses and NGOs. Governance is, therefore, not the same as government (Rhodes 1996).

Indicators are important for decisionmaking and governance. With the purported aim of measuring and reporting on progress towards sustainable development, variants of sustainability indicator systems have been developed by governments and civil societies spanning multiple scales of governance (Parris and Kates 2003; Hezri and Dovers 2006). In theory, by integrating information from the environmental, social and economic domains and then feeding knowledge and direction back to a correspondingly wide range of policy sectors, sustainability indicator systems may facilitate cross-agency and portfolio policy connectivity. Additionally, information such as sustainability indicators, if appropriately designed and used, may mediate the connection between the state and civil society. In this regard, sustainability indicators assume the role of a tool for social justice.

Before the emergence of contemporary ideas of sustainability, development indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and the Human Development Index (HDI) were used for measuring progress, directing policy and allocating resources. Indicators are also intended to enhance transparency, accountability and democracy (Solesbury 2002). If made available in the public domain through enhanced socialization (that is, by involving users in the development and use of indicator systems), they may allow civil society to provide political feedback that encourages decisionmakers to connect decisions to the contents of the indicators. There is an expectation that by opening up more communication channels through the development and use of indicators, we will establish a public sphere, an agora in which to discuss and work
together for the resolution of the very difficult issues that face us as societies. Implicitly, indicator systems ought to function as a policy instrument connecting scientific knowledge to a system of users.

Uncertainty regarding the role of information in policy-making is not a theme unique to the sustainability debate. The notion of adapting knowledge to the needs of society, or the general relationship between knowledge and decision-making, dates back at least as far as the time of the Ancient Greeks (Rich 1979). The informational contents of most knowledge systems, indicators included, are consistently subjected to multiple interpretations in any modern society. This ranges from absolute instrumental rational assumption to the more volatile, power-based relational concepts such as secrecy, concealment and manipulation. The underlying question is how do we optimize public policy decisions by basing them on accurate and adequate information?

Despite the popularity of sustainability indicator systems, the understanding of how they are connected to policy processes is still limited. Although there exists a substantial body of literature on sustainability indicators, most of it is mainly technical with less treatment on the issues dealing with processes around indicator development (Hezri 2004). As sustainability has been gradually integrated into public policy across the world, there is a need for research that sees beyond the production of sustainability indicators to their communication and reception in policy processes. Of central concern is the question of what outputs and impacts indicator-based assessments have had, or could have, on policy processes and associated social debates. Such a process-based perspective requires an analysis of the social and institutional basis of sustainability indicator systems (Hezri and Dovers 2006; Rosenstrom and Kyllonen 2007).

Research objectives and design

Against this background, the paper provides a preliminary exploration of this subject through two case studies drawn from primary and secondary data research using semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The two case studies are on the national sustainability indicator systems in Indonesia and the Philippines. The overall goal is to understand the dynamics of the interaction of sustainability indicators with policy systems and processes. The objectives of this research are four-pronged:

- To understand the salient features of policy processes for sustainable development in Indonesia and the Philippines;
- To review the attributes of the major national sustainability indicator systems and how they are shaped and utilized by the policy systems;
- To investigate the extent and impact of sustainability indicator systems on policy processes through policy learning; and
- To compare the two case studies by contrasting similarities and differences.

The study proceeded in three stages: the field study, the two singular case study syntheses and a multiple case synthesis at the final stage of the research. The field study for both Indonesia and the Philippines took four months each. The first two months involved documentary research and the identification of the key policy community in the area of sustainable development. The final two months were used to interview key officials, practitioners and civil society representatives involved in developing and using sustainability indicators.

Policy processes for sustainable development in Indonesia and the Philippines

Before the East Asian economic crisis in 1998, Indonesia had achieved remarkably rapid growth, poverty reduction and other forms of social development for several decades. This high growth, accompanied by unprecedented industrialization, high population growth, structural transformation of the production and consumption base and rapid urbanization, was not conducive to the attainment of the country’s environmental sustainability. Sustainable development became a recognized public policy framework that took into account socio-political, economic and environmental aspects to support the development of solutions to these pressing problems. A strategic articulation of the challenges toward sustainable development for the country is found in an ‘advisory’ document entitled *The Agenda 21 Indonesia* (State Ministry for Environment 1997). Prior to its release in March 1997, the preparation of the eighteen-chapter report took two years, with the involvement of 22 national consultants who formed working groups comprised of 1,000 government officials and members of NGOs, academe, the private sector and the general public. The document contains recommendations for sustainable development up to the year 2020 for each sector of development. This was followed by the release of Sectoral Agenda 21 documents in 2000, covering the mining, energy, housing, tourism and forestry sectors. These processes marked a shift from the hitherto formal-legalistc approach that gave sole responsibility to the
state in environmental policymaking (Santoso 1999; Setiawan and Hadi 2007).

Although Agenda 21 Indonesia started as a promising approach to envisioning a sustainable future, its institutional and policy supports were not fully developed. The 1998 economic crisis caused both civil society and the government to react to the more urgent demand for national political reforms following the sociopolitical upheavals. As a result, the Agenda 21 Indonesia document failed to be followed up with credible commitments for institutional change. The following observation was made in an evaluation of the implementation of sustainable development in Indonesia:

“Despite some achievements, the implementation of Agenda 21 was less than satisfactory and much remains to be done. The implementation of Agenda 21 in Indonesia is confronted with several problems, ranging from inadequate public and government awareness to lack of funding and inadequate political will.” (Ministry of Environment 2003, 2)

Many of the goals and programs in Agenda 21 Indonesia found their way into a business-as-usual mode, largely assimilated into existing planning mechanisms and processes. The implication of this is that the distinction between separate environmental issues and sustainability problems (which should be seen as integrative) could not be established. A further consequence of this is a lack of facilitation of bird’s-eye-view monitoring and the coordination of progress toward sustainability. The above notwithstanding, other indirect policy reforms are not contradictory to the principles of institutional change for sustainability. Apart from the twin processes of democratization and decentralization, a recent policy change to institutionalize Corporate Social Responsibility principles is a step in the right direction in the spirit of sustainable development.

In contrast to Indonesia, policy processes on sustainable development in the Philippines can be traced back to as early as the 1980s. The first concentrated move towards sustainable development in the Philippines began in 1987 with the drafting of the Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development (PSSD). A semi-governmental body, the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), was created to chart environmental and sustainable development initiatives in the country. The PCSD adopts the principles of consensus-building in their structure by institutionalising the participation of members of civil society as the counterparts of government representatives.

A major product of this process is the formulation of Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21), a blueprint for sustainable development which was launched in 1996. President Ramos, in the foreword to the Philippine Agenda 21 (PCSD 1996), considered sustainable development as “a matter of survival.” The PA21 strategy provides, for the critical issues of sustainability for the next thirty years, implementation strategies as well as time bound qualitative and process-related targets in relation to the institutions involved. It adopts two-pronged strategies to map out the action agenda, creating the enabling conditions to (a) assist the various stakeholders to build their capacities towards sustainable development; and (b) direct efforts at conserving, managing, protecting and rehabilitating ecosystems.

In contrast to Indonesia, whereby the strategy processes had institutional grounding in the environment department with limited influences across government, the Philippines has taken a more strategic approach, as seen in the chairmanship of the PCSD. This council is chaired by the vice-chairman of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), which is also the designated lead government agency for PCSD. The facts that PCSD Secretariat is located within the NEDA premises and that national planning in the Philippines has a high component of multi-sectoral integration have facilitated the work of the PCSD to introduce the sustainable development framework in national planning. The PA21 case has provided a conceptual framework for integrating sustainability concerns in the country’s medium- and long-term development plans. Through Memorandum Order Number 33, NEDA was directed to integrate the PA21 into the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 1993-1998 (MTPDP), which is the master plan for development in the Philippines. The above notwithstanding, it was argued in the report, From Rio to Manila: Ten Years After An Assessment of Agenda 21 Implementation in the Philippines, that although the extent and quality of implementation of the PA21 commitments appear to be generally high, the impact of implementation has been low.

Indicator systems in Indonesia and the Philippines

This research is premised on the distinctiveness of sustainability as opposed to discrete environmental issues (see Dovers 1997; Lafferty 2004). A similar logic underpins the view that the development of sustainability indicator systems involves a reorientation of the macro-information system from discrete environmental issues to sustainability. This would require the extension and integration of environmental and social assessment,
monitoring and planning that should be particularly stressed in connection with sustainability assessment and reporting. Moreover, the evolutionary reference necessitates societal willingness to change the policy content from environment to sustainability, integrating multiple perspectives by absorbing the logic of integration. As a distinct policy area but one comprising multiple sectors, values and perspectives, sustainability demands a greater stock of information compared to traditional policy areas.

However, it was quickly realized from the outset that the sustainability indicator systems that are used in practice in the Philippines and Indonesia are mostly propositional. Examples include sector-based indicator systems such as Housing and Environment Health Indicators (Philippines) and Forestry Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (Indonesia), to name just two instances. Although these indicator systems contribute toward the understanding of sustainability, or more precisely inform sustainability, they are not fully-fledged sustainability indicator systems. Within this context, the research reported here examines ‘symptomatic’ indicator systems for sustainability, that is, emerging fragmented and non-holistic indicator systems that measure some aspects of sustainability. Ceteris paribus, these indicator systems should in the long run contribute to the development of sustainability indicator systems that resonate with policy and societal decision-making.

An indicator assessment that tries to measure the holistic notion of sustainability is the green accounting system. It allows analysis of the inherent trade-offs and interlinkages among the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Both Indonesia and the Philippines have experimented with variants of green accounting since the early 1990s. In the Philippines, a pioneering work called the Natural Resource Accounting Project (ENRAP) began in 1991 with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Philippine Agenda 21 process developed the concept further in 1994 by implementing a program called Integrated Environmental Management for Sustainable Development (IEMSD) to support efforts in the integration of the environment in decision-making. A parallel aim was to strengthen people’s participation and constituency-building for environmental policy advocacy. Funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), IEMSD has six sub-programs focusing on formulating sustainability indicators through components such as Environment and Natural Resources Accounting (ENRA), Sustainable Development Models (SDM) and the Environment and Natural Resource (ENR) Database (Cabrido 1997).

Similarly, there are empirical exercises that try to develop a green accounting system specifically for Indonesia, or at least include Indonesia in their cross-country studies. The Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and the Ministry of Environment undertook similar steps by conducting case studies in constructing a natural resources account and estimating the Indonesian Eco-Domestic Product and Green GDP. The resources covered were timber, oil, gas, and coal, and the net-price method to calculate the depletion of resources was used. As in the Philippines, the construction of a green accounting system for Indonesia was pioneered by researchers from international organizations such as the World Bank and the World Resources Institute. Funding provision from these external organizations has the downside of difficulty in ensuring a capacity for repeated measurement and monitoring beyond the project timeline. Benefits to policy-making can only happen when a green accounting system is maintained, tested and adjusted over time, allowing institutions to change and adapt accordingly.

Although highly desirable, an integrated environment and development linkages measurement tool such as green accounting requires high investment for its comprehensive data requirement. Indicators need to be underpinned by data. Data availability and their quality vary greatly between policy sectors and countries. As far as the evidence goes from the two case studies, adequate basic data to support the development of sustainability indicators is still a distant possibility. Moreover, data collection methodologies are frequently inconsistent. The Philippines’ participation in testing a core set of indicators under the auspices of the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD) highlighted this data gap situation. During this indicator testing process, the need for institutional support to build agencies’ capabilities in data collection, compilation and analysis, along with training for the development of skills in the use of indicators, was pointed out.

The collection of environment statistics is important to assess the current environmental problems of a country and to make informed decisions about environmental policies. The data gap problems faced by Indonesia and the Philippines include inaccessible existing and unavailable information. While both nations have long had statistical offices that monitor various aspects of the economy and society, most environmental statistics are locked up in sectoral monitoring and reporting systems. The challenge is to develop sophisticated governmental
capabilities to collate and integrate information from the disparate sources. The integration of socio-economic information with environmental parameters began to be addressed with the development of environmental statistics by the Central Statistics Bureau (BPS) in Indonesia and the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) and National Statistics Office (NSO) in the Philippines. BPS began publishing Environmental Statistics Indonesia annually in 1982 while the NSCB issues the Philippines Compendium of Environment Statistics (PCES) once every two years. The PCES was a joint effort of the NSCB and other agencies represented in the six inter-agency technical working groups that were established to institutionalize environment statistics in the Philippines. The formulation of the Philippine Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (PFDES) was undertaken to solve the inadequacy in the collection and compilation of environment statistics. Although the approach undertaken to develop these environmental statistics was rather conventional in nature, it nevertheless takes advantage of existing infrastructure and requires minimal new investment. Compared to the green accounting system described above, environmental statistics are often less integrative in the sense that they do not integrate nature-society parameters.

Important as environmental statistics may be for decision-making, their utility is limited to the provision of facts and figures. Absent in these environmental statistics publications are analyses of the interaction between human activities and environmental conditions. State-of-the-Environment Reporting (SoER) is the way many governments typically report on trends in biophysical environmental parameters in relation to socioeconomic indicators. This narrative reporting tool is used worldwide to describe human activities that exert pressures on the environment, changing the quality and quantity (the state) of natural resources. Human management responses to the changes include any form of organized behaviour that seeks to reduce, prevent or ameliorate undesirable changes. Indonesia’s first State of the Environment Report was released in 2003 by the Ministry of Environment (KLH) in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The aim of producing this document was to provide a yearly overview of environmental conditions and sustainable development in Indonesia.

Apart from government initiatives, international organizations and civil society are also actively involved in developing other forms of SoE reports. The World Bank’s Environment Monitor series is a periodic reporting system that presents thematic reports which vary among different years. Examples of past reports include Philippine Environment Monitor 2000: General Environment Trends and Indonesia Environment Monitor 2003: Pollution Reduction. The World Bank has also engaged in a more extensive SoE-type analysis of the prospect of sustainability in Indonesia with the publication of Indonesia Environment and Development Report 1994. In addition there are also snapshot and non-periodic SoE reports such as the Country Environment Analysis for the Philippines 2005 prepared by the Asian Development Bank. Apart from these official environmental reports, NGOs in both countries have also developed numerous unofficial SoE statistics and sector profile indicators (for example, on biodiversity, energy and human settlements), which may not necessarily tally with official figures.

Both in Indonesia and the Philippines, the most policy-relevant indicator system with bearing on sustainability is the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Indicators. Governments globally have to abide by the Millennium Declaration, which is a commitment amongst a large number of developing and developed countries to achieve certain social development objectives. The Declaration’s operational targets and goals are made explicit in the MDG. Indonesia and Philippines, along with countries participating in the MDG effort, have declared a 25-year achievement plan, which will end in 2015. The United Nations Secretariat and its specialized agencies and programs, as well as representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have defined eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Among the eight goals, Goal 7 is to ensure environmental sustainability, which includes three targets and eight indicators.

Indonesia’s and the Philippines’ institutional responses to the development and monitoring of the MDG are impressive. Key development planning agencies, such as the Philippines’ National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) and Indonesia’s National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), are undertaking the development of national MDG with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). National statistical agencies such as BPS and NSCB are responsible for providing quality statistical information in the form of measurable, quantitative indicators in order to monitor Indonesia’s and the Philippines’ MDG targets achievement. MDG indicators have become an important reference in development implementation in Indonesia, from the planning phase as stated in the Medium-Term National
Development Plan (RPJMN) to its implementation.

Participation in the MDG, which require reporting against stated targets, could reveal many areas of information irregularities. For instance, there is some uncertainty about the amount of forest cover in the Philippines. Data from the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) indicate that 34 percent of forestland contains some form of forest cover but that forest cover has been declining over the past ten years. In contrast, the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) data indicate that 49 percent of the total land area of the Philippines contains some sort of forest cover and that this percentage has been increasing in the past several years. This is a case whereby indicator development forces improvement in the quality and precision of existing data. Moreover, advocacy for the MDG also comes from Houses of Congress and other sectors of society. For instance, the Philippine Sustainability Watch, a network of NGOs, provides feedback and comments on the implementation performance of the MDG targets in the Philippines. This is a case whereby an indicator system begins to have a significant impact on policy processes. The following section discusses this further.

Uses and impact of sustainability indicator systems on policy processes

Despite popular acceptance of sustainability as a policy goal, the provision of data and statistics on environmental conditions is still lagging behind. Within this milieu, most of indicator systems discussed above (except the MDG system) are still in their early stages of development. In other words, case studies in Indonesia and the Philippines characterize situations whereby institutional reporting for sustainability is still embryonic.

As pioneering policy experiments, indicator initiatives in these countries involve only minimal dissemination to and socialization among potential users. This notwithstanding, a credible commitment, albeit only through experimentation, to couple indicator development to a solid policy process is still absent in both countries. Although the Philippines has institutionalized one of the most innovative processes for sustainable development globally, the construction of indicators has not been coupled effectively to its Agenda 21 process. Efforts thus far still do not fulfill the integrative logic for sustainable development. Without a sustained effort to develop the capacity for empirical-based environmental policies, the sustainability discourse will remain issue-based and responses will continue to be formulated mainly along environmental logic, fragmented and piecemeal. The onus is on both government and civil society to engage continuously in developing indicators that tell a story understandable to society at large. Examples elsewhere include the promotion of the Genuine Progress Indicator by independent organizations such as Redefining Progress in the USA and the Australia Institute in Australia.

As for existing indicator systems in Indonesia and the Philippines, there is a need to leverage the information developed within the science and policy domains to the public domain as well. Findings from this research indicate that without the substantial pre-testing and revision of indicators, efforts to communicate with stakeholders and the public could be frustrated. For example, the inadequate socialization of users to Indonesia’s State of the Environment report through workshops and forums caused potential users, such as environmental NGOs, to be suspicious of the chosen indicators as ‘only telling half-truth.’ Some informants interviewed stated their preference for indicators provided by international organizations for their ‘neutral’ and ‘non-partisan’ values. Strategies are, therefore, needed for better socialization and dissemination of indicators and sustainability indicator systems. This, however, has to take into account the specificities of indicator programs. For highly technical systems such as green accounting, indicators are developed by agency scientists and external consultants with specialized expertise, who determine which data collected by the department are sufficiently useful and reliable to develop into standardized indicators. Therefore, the socialization of these indicator systems is still inevitably limited to the circle of participating scientists and government officials.

For indicator systems that are confined within government policy and science domains, the level of awareness of these systems among potential users, be they from civil society or industry stakeholders, is still low. The development of such governmental sustainability indicators reflects a lengthy process of agency scientists and managers engaging in ‘knowledge selection’ that yields concise, understandable presentations of environmental data. Therefore, the corresponding impact of indicator systems on policy processes in both countries, if viewed from the framework of policy learning (see Hezri 2004), constitutes mainly instrumental and government learning. This means that only selected government officials and participating civil society members will gain lessons about the efficacy of specific indicators or the suitability of institutional arrangements related to indicator programmes. One
implication is that these indicators will be inaccessible and incomprehensible to the general public. In this context, it is unlikely that indicator development would enable social and political learning, whereby social values and a normative understanding of sustainability are enhanced and empowered to move social actions.

Within this context, the usefulness of a sustainability indicator system as a tool of governance follows the traditional function of information in governance, that is, information is used to define and ‘control’ the emerging policy area of sustainability. With the guiding logic of technical appraisal, indicators will be more useful for providing baseline information to guide government decisions, and less as a tool for communicating with various stakeholders. In the Philippine case study, it seems plausible for NGOs to provide alternative environmental statistics, albeit modest in sophistication and quality. This raises the question of what is stopping more members of civil society from replicating such an initiative.

As with most developing countries in the world, Indonesia and the Philippines are still encumbered by the inadequacy of ecological data to develop national level indicators. Indicator systems demand a strengthened capacity in innovation systems and scientific infrastructure. At a basic level, this entails an improvement in data acquisition and assimilation, especially the operating technology of data pooling, calibration and archiving. In theory, a strong science base enables indicator development to reach the processing and application stages, transforming data translation and mediation into indicators amenable for use. In policy systems such as Indonesia and the Philippines, where the base of science is weak or at an earlier stage of development, the utility of indicators is limited to pointing to areas where more information is needed, compromising the potential to steer actual policy change. As a result, the translation and mediation of sustainability indicators into a negotiation space whereby official information is debated and contested by civil society are therefore negated. Due to the high investment needed in developing this capacity, national governments in cooperation with donor agencies are likely to dominate efforts to develop indicators in the near future. More severely, the existing trend could persist whereby governments dominate information and civil society thrives on issues. International benchmarks will continue to play a mediating role, with the MDG as an example.

Conclusions and Implications

Disconnect and disjuncture are the hallmarks of modern governments. This is especially true for a relatively young policy area such as sustainability. When the conceptual logic is still ambiguous, measurement will suffer accordingly. In theory, liberal societies such as Indonesia and the Philippines ought to be more receptive to developing and using indicator systems compared to a conservative society such as Malaysia (see Hezri 2005). The success of embedding sustainability indicator systems into the decision-making fabric is contingent upon the nature of interactions between state and society. The more liberal the nature of interaction is, the more possible it becomes for a sustainability indicator system to be a useful tool for governance; that is, if indicators are made available in the public domain, they will allow civil society to provide political feedback to decisions made by governments. Moreover, the twin processes of democratization and decentralization in both countries offer further promises for the widespread use of sustainability indicator systems. These alone are, however, insufficient to effect significant changes in Indonesia and the Philippines as far as sustainability policies are concerned. Indeed, a policy-resonant indicator system is a function of robust science and credible policy processes requiring a strong scientific underpinning and a solid institutional basis. The following three strategies are imperative to promoting sustainability indicators as a tool for governance:

1. The scientific infrastructure and innovation system of both Indonesia and the Philippines should be continuously developed. The existing technological capacity in both countries to monitor the environment using tools such as remote sensing, geographical information system (GIS) and modelling is still underdeveloped. The uptake of these technologies could be enhanced not just by higher research and development (R&D) allocation, but also by coupling them to long-term ecological monitoring initiatives which will provide appropriate data for indicator development. This strategy could pacify polemics arising from a data-poor debate such as the present claim of Indonesia being the world’s third largest net emitter of carbon dioxide;

2. An unambiguous coercive government structure, be it formal or informal, is desirable to enable information and indicators to move across scales as needed. Indonesia could emulate the Philippines in establishing a coordinating agency/committee which is not separated from the mainstream decision-making process. To institutionalize indicator assessment, both
governments could underpin sustainability reporting by providing a statutory basis, and connect indicator development to the budgetary allocation system and core public administration bureaus. These steps could be the basis for incorporating sustainability indicators as an agenda in institutional politics; and

3. A liberal interaction between the state and society is the precondition for a more functional penetration of indicators in public policy and governance. The policy community in Indonesia and the Philippines should actively release indicators into the public domain and to other branches of government including the legislature and judiciary. This is the essence of indicator socialization. Information technology and the internet should be utilized as key dissemination media. This has to be complemented by the conventional mass media distribution of indicators. Furthermore, policy advocacy in both countries ought to be harmonized with the use of indicators, so that policy debate becomes more quantitative.

These strategies are only a guide, and hence should not be treated as more than that. Their application in Indonesia and the Philippines should be advanced carefully, based on a case-by-case examination. That notwithstanding, adherence to these principles would significantly enhance the connectivity of indicators and policy, and hence its utility as a tool to inform governance.

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REDEFINING THE ASIAN SPACE: A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF EVOLVING STREET CULTURE AND PEDESTRIAN SPACE DEVELOPMENT IN BANDUNG, BANGKOK AND MANILA

Iderlina Mateo-Babiano

Introduction

Asian streets convey a sensorial experience distinct from the Western model. Traditional knowledge resulting from the environment and sociocultural histories is imprinted on how people use the streets and how these streets are formed. The veneration of nature spirits, as seen by the presence of street shrines along the sidewalks, is an Asian phenomenon reflective of animistic roots. Diverse activities such as street vending and hawking add to the thriving character of the sidewalk, imitating the diversity of the Asian forest and further enhancing the pedestrian experience. However, from a transport viewpoint, the presence of these activities serves as a barrier to smooth pedestrian flow and contributes to the deterioration of the street environment. Moreover, street use has also become a political issue wherein vendor presence has become a symbol of a city’s poor economy and, because of its unregulated characteristic, encourages irregular migrants. Streets are also being blamed for hosting other negative activities such as being a haven for drugs and becoming a living space for the homeless.

This study works within the premise that the traditional knowledge systems that evolved throughout a city’s history, starting from its forest beginnings to the strong influence of acculturation, may provide a better understanding of pedestrian street culture, and in particular, how the amalgamation of cultures tangibly shaped street configuration and contemporary street use, especially in Asian colonial cities. This may provide inputs to address pedestrian issues and the improvement of contemporary streets.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are: (1) to examine the spatio-historical development of urban street space and pedestrian culture within three case cities: Bandung (Indonesia), Bangkok (Thailand) and Manila (Philippines); (2) to compare the influence of historical trends, with Bangkok having limited external influence and Bandung and Manila representing colonial cities, and examine how these historical trends affected space morphology, street sociology and pedestrian psychology; and (3) to identify factors that influence local street culture to further understand street morphogenesis, the interplay of movement and non-movement behavior and street space utilization.

Methodology

The study analyzed three case cities: Bandung, Bangkok and Manila. Bandung is a colonial city in a mountainous, temperate zone; Manila is also a colonial city but on a plain with a tropical, humid climate. Like Manila, Bangkok also developed on a plain with a tropical, humid climate but, unlike Bandung and Manila, experienced only limited colonial influence.

The study starts with the sociocultural perspective of spatial use as a way of understanding Asian pedestrians and street use. It is descriptive, interpretative and empirical, utilizing culture to define the parameters that sustain people’s use of the street environment. Data gathering was conducted through a review of historical precedents on street space use, an intensive review of primary and secondary resources, direct observation and street user questionnaire surveys. The aim was to prove that present space utilization is still a consequence of and reflects the underlying pedestrian culture of the past. An extensive examination of streets focusing mainly on emergent pedestrian spaces, referring to both movement and non-movement, was conducted.

Initially, three types of data collection activities were implemented in Bandung to examine street user behavior: a pedestrian diary, an ocular inspection survey and interviews. However, the low response rate of 15 percent led to a major change in the research process. Instead, a street user need survey was developed utilizing the analytic hierarchy process (AHP), which was introduced by Saaty (1980). AHP is a decision-making tool and evaluation procedure that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative factors. It has the advantage of reflecting the way people think and make decisions by simplifying complex decision to a series of one-to-one comparisons. The survey’s goal was to elicit user response on what a positive pedestrian environment is.

English and Thai versions of the survey instrument were
developed, which underwent pilot testing. Aware that this type of study poses the danger of oversimplification and unwarranted generalizations, the author reiterates here that these are inferential concepts and need to undergo more extensive empirical study.

**Findings**

The findings illustrate the results of the comparative analysis of Asian city streets to validate the influence of the forest environment within their street spaces. Even with diverse historical trends and the influence of acculturation, a deep and underlying parallelism on how people utilize space gives rise to a distinctly Asian culture of space. The forest-based concept clarifies sociological similarities arising from the similarity in ecological context that produced related sociocultural adaptations.

**Factors influencing Bandung, Bangkok and Manila**

Geography and climate have a deep impact on people’s way-of-life and behavior. This section discusses various environmental as well as sociocultural factors that influenced the development of the three cities. The Asian region’s tropical forest environment serves as an appropriate starting point in discussing the various influences ranging from the physical and social context to socio-cultural adaptations and settlement formation.

**Environmental factors: Climate, geography and ecosystem**

In general, Southeast Asia is described as having diverse climatic influences with a naturally dense forest cover, high biodiversity and riverine coastal movements. Bandung is the fourth largest city of Indonesia and the capital of West Java. The southern portion is relatively flat compared to its hilly northern counterpart (Siregar 1990). Thus, typical developments are located in the lower valley. Bangkok lies adjacent to the Chao Phraya River, which is considered the central artery of the whole territory. The average altitude of Bangkok is significantly low, and thus prone to flooding. Similarly, Manila lies on the flat plains of Luzon and developed on the shores of the Pasig River. In the three cities, the river is considered a critical component in settlement development because it facilitates transportation, communication and trade with other areas (Blakemore 1996). Moreover, socioeconomic and cultural development are linked with rivers and streams. The Cikapundung River runs north to south through Bandung, dividing the area into two geographic features with only a single bridge to connect both sides. The Chao Phraya River is known for its role as an initial point of development. In pre-colonial Manila, the Pasig River and the Canal de la Reina served as a communication route and a distribution network for the produce brought to the city from the provinces (De Viana 2001).

**Sociocultural adaptations: Thought development and acculturation**

In the three case cities, the development of polytheistic religious thought was highly influenced by the forest environment and indicates the closeness of religion to the way of life of its inhabitants. Pre-colonial Indonesia and the Philippines practiced animism with a strong emphasis on ancestor worship, while for the Thais, homage and respect was the key feature of their social relations as it is customary to pay their respects towards the land spirit (chao thi) of their homes (Askew n.d.). Polytheistic belief was present wherein an ordinary person perceived the natural world to be animated by a vast array of deities who inhabited the trees, rivers and caves (Andaya and Ishii 2000). However, acculturation in the region led to the introduction of Islam by Arabic traders in the 13th century. In the Philippines, aside from Islam, Catholicism was also introduced through Spanish colonization. Ongoing trade with India and China further shaped Southeast Asia’s sociocultural lifestyle. The amalgamation of cultures contributes to the evolution of distinct ways in which people utilized their streets. This is further reflected in the contemporary period in the ubiquitous presence of Chinese enclaves: Chinese Camp in Indonesia, Chinatown in Bangkok and Chinese Sangleys in Binondo, Manila.

**Morphological development in the case cities**

The section discusses the morphological development of the three case cities as a function of their forest-based roots as well as the acculturation process that followed.

**Settlement formation**

The oldest reference to Bandung was in 1488 when it was the capital of the Kingdom of Pajajaran. The majority of Bandung’s population has Sundanese roots, and the polytheistic beliefs of animism still dominate their present life cycle in congruence with their strong Islamic beliefs. Elements present in the Sundanese urban residential quarter (kampung) include a water source, open space (lapangan) serving as social venue for its inhabitants, and a rectangular house plan reflecting the democratic characteristic of the village inhabitants (Salura 2006). The pre-Dutch sunda village consisted of about 40 families, usually related to each other. When
the maximum number was achieved, another settlement was developed in another area. This practice created sporadic clusters distributed all over the Priangan region. There was a distinguishable absence of material culture while a very high oral culture was distinctly present (Affandy 2006). The lapangan served as the inhabitants’ venue for socialization while the open square or alun-alun became the starting point for major roads and helped establish the town’s grid dimension. Kampungs have existed since the pre-colonial period. Thus, the contemporary urban kampungs are reinterpretations of the traditional village pattern (Geertz 1965) of pre-Dutch Indonesians. Similarly, the Philippine barangay reflects the traditional village morphology of pre-colonial Philippine settlements.

Bangkok was originally built in 1782 to succeed Ayuthaya as the national capital. Most commoners lived on floating houses (phte) or houses on stilts in rivers or its tributary canals (Askew 1996) to adapt to the physical environment. Typical districts or neighborhoods (yarn) were often designated with a specific function or community. However, Thailand lacks the colonial legacy common to its Southeast Asian neighbors, making it stand out from the rest.

Bangkok and Manila are port towns. Both developed adjacent to bodies of water. Prehistoric Manila was a thriving river settlement which took on a strasendorf (linear) form (Reed 1978), with the chieftain’s house at the center serving as residential palace and venue for other religio-socio-political activities of the village. Rivers, canals and other waterways served as distribution network, public space, market and social space (Iwate n.d.).

Historic districts in Asian cities may be described as conducive to walking as well as other non-motorized transport modes because of their intensive land use mix and compact quality. The typical density is pegged at 100 to 250 people per hectare (Barter and Raad 2000) but could go as high as 600 persons per hectare in the case of Indonesia (Diwisusanto 2006). Low to medium-rise structures dictate the typical urban form, wherein within these enclaves it would be possible to experience the inhabitants’ local culture. An examination of a Sundanese kampung in Bandung would show the lack of a restrictive social hierarchy among the inhabitants. Community members are considered part of one family. People flexibly adapt to the various changes happening around them.

Colonial Bandung and Manila

In 1919, the North Development Plan was developed and implemented in Bandung with the aim of creating a wholly European district in a tropical country. It was even called the prototype of an Indische colonial city. Greenery was an important characteristic in the new development (Soewarno n.d.). In Manila, segregation was enforced during the colonial period with Spanish inhabitants living inside the walls (Intramuros) while the natives lived in the surrounding suburbs. This was also true in other colonial cities such as Bandung. Two concepts that physically influenced town building in the Philippines were bajo de las campana wherein the indios (natives) were allowed to settle within hearing distance of the church bells, thus defining settlement size, while the cuadricula, which was lifted from the Laws of the Indies, defined the urban form of the community core as consisting of an open plaza with the principal streets laid out on a grid pattern based from the four sides and corners of the plaza.

Development of access ways

In historic districts, access ways are narrow pathways where only foot traffic can be accommodated. Among the three cities, Manila’s street network is the most formal, with an original rectilinear network reflecting a strong Castilian influence. In contrast, Bandung’s road layout, while originally formal, had to be adjusted to conform to the site’s mountainous topography while Bangkok’s first major road, the New Road, extended south parallel to the river and was built on an old elephant track.

Bandung’s pre-colonial roads were not defined clearly and almost all access paths were referred to as jalan. This term is still being used at present and may refer to pathways, roads or streets (Siregar 1990). Access ways into kampungs were referred to as gang and differ from the jalan because of their width and the type of transport mode that can be accommodated. Gangs can only accommodate pedestrians and motorcycles. Within the kampung, alleys fronting the houses are not only considered as access paths but also act as integrators that bring together the inhabitants within the surrounding area. The kampung became an extension of living space, a children’s play area, a meeting place and a utility space. Bangkok had virtually no roads during its first one hundred years of existence and depended on the network of waterways, creeks and klongs (canals), which served as both a distribution and communication network (Fisher 1971). The motive behind road building was to accommodate the building of shophouses, which
proved advantageous in increasing trading activities. At present, Bangkok’s *sois* are defined as areas where people live. They recreate a village (Pichard-Bertaux 1999) and still serve as a communication venue wherein a very rich street life culture can be observed. Within Manila’s *barangays*, alleys serve as living spaces, common spaces for socialization and spillover spaces where they serve various functions such as a place to relax and sit and enjoy recreational activities.

The typical inner city dwellings are still present in the three cities. Figure 1 shows three typical access paths within these settlements.

**Street culture in Bandung, Bangkok and Manila**

The historic parts of the cities of Bandung, Bangkok and Manila reflect strong traditional knowledge systems, especially in the morphological development of their street space. These systems may provide alternative insights that would reconnect urban design proposals with the cultural context so as to be able to spatially express localism. The section reiterates that understanding the socio-cultural history and indigenous knowledge of a group is a prerequisite to improving pedestrian transport policy and provision given that a different culture requires a different treatment of space to be able to match it with users’ needs and desires.

**History of walking**

The walking culture in Asia has a long history and an overview of transport development will prove its presence. The walking period in Asian cities may be defined as the period prior to motorization. The pre-colonial era and the early colonial period in both Indonesia and the Philippines were characterized by a predominantly walking society while the pre-modernization period of Bangkok was a combination of water-based transport and walking, which influenced the urban pattern of the area. There was a limited number of roads, which were usually narrow and unpaved. Town centers had compact urban structures with very dense, intensively mixed land use. The structures were low-rise (two to three levels), dictating a pedestrian scale urban form. Building materials were made up of impermanent products such as wood, bamboo and palm leaves, illustrating the impermanence of Asian traditional structures. Residences in special quarters were close to each other, located either along the town center or waterways. Travel distances were short. In the 1970s, walking was still a major mode of transport for most of Asia (Barter and Raad 2000). The percent of non-motorized trips in select cities during the last two decades of the 20th century shows that walking still constituted a large percentage of the overall trips in Asia (e.g., 40 percent in Jakarta, 20 percent in Manila) (Barter 2000). However, this percentage is slowly decreasing because of efforts to increase motor vehicle traffic, a lack of pedestrian facilities and a worsening environment.

**Purpose of walking**

Walking is considered the most basic mode of transportation given that all travels usually start and end with a walking segment. However, similar to other modes, walking is a derived demand given that the decision to walk is highly motivated by achieving a purpose such as to get to a destination or to realize a goal.

Walking may also be considered as a spiritual exercise. In some countries, such as Edo-period Japan, traveling was only allowed if it was for the purpose of spiritual exercise, such as going on a pilgrimage to visit holy places, shrines and temples, oftentimes located in outlying areas. In contemporary Manila, a tradition that has been passed on is the religious procession, which is conducted through walking. The slow pace of walking relative to other modes (i.e., inside a vehicle) provides time to meditate, absorb and commune with one’s surrounding environment. This increases the intimacy and involvement of the individual in relation to his/her environs and allows a person to become attuned to his/her humanity.

**Street space consumption**

Street users may be considered consumers of space as they undergo certain activities. Some of the main motivations to use streets include: (1) utilitarian—to
work, to study; (2) economic—the need to pursue economic activities such as selling, buying, bartering and trading; (3) leisure—activities that contribute to ease and relaxation; (4) socio-cultural—enjoying the cultural assets along streets, whether intangible or tangible, such as street performances; (5) social—the need to be with others such as meeting in a restaurant and chatting with a friend; and (6) personal needs—for example, to provide an outlet for one’s personal expression.

Street user behavior is complex and composed of two aspects, namely: movement and non-movement. Walking is considered movement behavior; some examples of non-movement are waiting and resting. The concept of non-movement within Asian streets grew out of the realization that in order to provide sustainable spaces, it is necessary to consider the multitude of behaviors exhibited by pedestrians as well as other street users.

The presence of a diverse group of street users contributes to street liveliness. Asian pedestrians do not differentiate between public and private space, using the communal space as an extension of their living area, a venue for commerce and exchange and a place to socialize. Also, there is a direct correlation between walking and non-movement spaces. An area that attracts high pedestrian volume usually has a greater tendency for non-movement activities. As such, the opportunity to increase sidewalk sustainability requires the reconsideration of non-movement activities in the design of such space.

**Non-movement concept**

The concept of non-movement, forwarded by Mateo-Babiano and Ieda (2005), has emerged theoretically based on the premise that streets serve not only as distribution but also as communication networks. The latter refers to streets serving as a venue for the socialization and interaction of inhabitants. It is further argued that non-movement space played a significant role in the evolution of Asian space. Thus, it is within this premise that the perceived non-movement behavior of Asian pedestrians is examined.

To further examine this concept, the study collected pedestrian diaries on September 2006 in Bandung; out of the 200 forms given out only 33 respondents or 16.5 percent of the sample returned the forms. Thus, preliminary results do not allow generalizations. The respondents were requested to record their daily walking activities starting from the time they left their residence.

The average number of daily walk trips an individual underwent in a day was six. Also, the results showed that those taking more than six trips in a day spent a longer time outside per walking trip. Since the study was taken during the Ramadhan period, the distribution of daily walking activity patterns of pedestrians, both movement and non-movement activities, did not reflect the regular pattern of pedestrian behavior. It is common during this period to start the day as early as three o’clock in the morning.

The study of non-movement behavior provides us with the knowledge that Asian space is temporally-dictated. As such, it requires flexibility so as to accommodate various activities that are conducted at different times of the day. For example, a tofu (tahu) vendor who sells his product in the mornings and stations himself in front of the community commercial center may occupy the same space which in the late afternoon serves as neighborhood playground for the children and could be the venue for musical performances in the evenings. The temporal segregation of activities and the vertical quality of Asian space should be one of the main considerations in sidewalk design. As an example, pocket-sized activity spaces should be placed strategically along the sidewalk path. The space should be versatile enough to accommodate a multitude of activities. The seemingly disorganized spatial quality of Asian space is one of its unique characteristics that is not encountered in most parts of Europe or the United States. Based on previous studies, the apparent disarray actually contains a measurable hidden order (Rodin and Rodina 2000). Diversity comes from the influence of the forest environment wherein the cacophony of sounds, sights, smells, tastes and touches can be experienced simultaneously within the Asian street space. The perception is further demonstrated by the presence of food vendors. The variety of food sold in Indonesian street shops (warungs) and the Philippine traditional restaurant (turo-turo) brings forth a combination of visual, olfactory and gustatory sensations which compel passersby to taste their flavors. In most Southeast Asian cities, vending has become an institution in itself, albeit informally. The present approach calling for their total removal from the streets has never been effective and, therefore, can never be a favorable end solution. Furthermore, the pedestrian survey shows the important role street vendors play not only in economic terms but also at the cultural level. A compromise between vending and regulating should be arrived at so as to define the locations most appropriate for such activities as well as improving the aesthetic quality of their presence. Regulation may take the form of permit issuance to allow certain complementary
activities to be conducted within a given radius of an activity generator.

Worth mentioning are the various street elements that have sociocultural roots. As an example, outdoor benches (golodog) can only be found within Sundanese settlements. This refers to a 50-cm bench connected to the dwelling unit facing the alleyways where people can sit and talk to each other. This defines the main alleyway as opposed to the back alley. However, in urban kampungs where the majority of inhabitants are Sundanese, the golodog is still present but has been transformed into a terrace which uses a different material from the original wooden bench (i.e., ceramics) (Rahaju 2006). Although this type of element is not present within Javanese kampungs, there is, however, always a specific place provided for the social venue of its inhabitants such as the alun-alun, which serves as the local landmark and centralizing element for the Javanese kampung (Siregar 1990).

Animistic reflections on the streets

There are also various street practices that have animistic roots. Animism is the pre-colonial belief of most of the colonial cities in Southeast Asia. Animism was borne out of the forest (Suzuki 1978). In Bangkok, it is often common to see street trees that have colored rope-like fabric going around the trunks. The older the tree, the more of these fabrics going around it. Also, the presence of street shrines and spirit houses on or near the sidewalk is said to reflect the reverence of the present owners towards the spirits who lived on the land. Some commercial establishments bring out food in the morning to offer to the gods so that they will have higher profits for the day. Also, some pedestrians bring out food and offer it to the increasing dog population within metropolitan Bangkok. Thus, indigenous knowledge, both positive and negative, should be determined, considered and evaluated if the aim is to create a sustainable street space for its users. Figure 2 shows images of spirit houses.

The street market and the informal street culture

Given that the typical Asian is a social individual who does not go out alone and prefers to do activities together with other people, the Asian street space is transformed into a destination itself, replete with eating places, shopping venues and meeting areas. Within the case cities, the presence of market places reflects the strong Indic-Chinese influence that has evolved into a distinctive pasar (bazaar) culture. In Bandung, flea markets and bazaars draw a large crowd, such as the regular Friday bazaar along Ganesha Street in Bandung that has the mosque worshippers as its captive market. McGee (1967) writes that the highly compact and densely populated commercial-residential precinct of Sampeng, which hosted the largest concentration of Chinese-born people in Bangkok, reflected the indigenous Thai city and at the same time served as the great bazaar and provided a hierarchy of commodity and food markets.

However, a major component in street space sustainability is social equity. This refers to the accessibility of the streets to all users such as pedestrians, the informal street economy and other street users. Often, and in various transport studies, informal street users are considered obstructions to pedestrian flow. However, their rampant presence in almost all streets surveyed in Southeast Asia and how the corresponding government deals with them deserves mentioning. As a matter of policy, and in the name of cleanliness and beauty, street vendors are being cleared off of the sidewalks. However, this is often met with low compliance. Again, the concept of street takes on the Western view that it is solely for movement. However, Asian streets do not only distribute people but serve as a market place and trading venue as well. This also has sociohistorical roots.

The informal sector is comprised of those who undertake activities that do not pay taxes, do not submit regular government reports, and at times, routinely violate certain rules or law (Habito 2005). They are a significant presence in most commercial areas. In more traditional districts in the Philippines, they occupy the “five-foot-way” contributing to a unique sidewalk culture. The streets become makeshift marketplaces where the informal economy thrives. Vendors and hawkers display their wares wherein buyers may use the art of bartering to purchase goods and services. Informal activities

Figure 2: Spirit houses in Bangkok complete with flowers, incense, leis and food in the foreground.
continue to proliferate because of the ease of entry and reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership, small scale of operation, lack of regulation and location within a competitive market (Bangasser 2000).

Informal economy agglomerations are generally found near activity generators such as school entrances, in front of shops and stores, churches, shopping malls, access towards train stations and at intersections. This provides them the assurance of a steady flow of customers. The type of economic activity is dependent on the activity generator, usually complementing that enterprise. Snack food vendors are found outside universities and schools, fruit stand vendors are found outside malls, and flower vendors are found outside churches and other places of worship. Most common goods sold by these sidewalk peddlers and hawkers are consumables such as food products. Within the central business districts, the most common stalls are shops providing lunch, snacks and drinks. Sometimes, tables and chairs complete the ensemble creating a distinct street architecture, however inferior the materials used or shabby they may seem to onlookers. The inventive minds of these storeowners allow them to set up and take down these stalls within a few minutes. In the Philippines, the original vendor cart has evolved from the common wheeled wooden pushcart (kariton) to the converted bicycle. This shift occurred because of the mobility and flexibility of using bicycles. In Bandung, one may be presented with a multitude of stalls from the fixed warungs along the sidewalks to the semi-ambulant and ambulant kakilima. Dago Street in Bandung has already banned sidewalk vending. However, daily observations conducted by the researcher show a different reality. The vendors are still present at a lower density; however, they do not vend on the sidewalks but are conveniently accommodated at the front corner of the adjacent commercial shops, sometimes with their wares abutting the sidewalks. This is also true in Bangkok, where Monday is a ‘No Vending Day’ along Silom Road. Vendor resourcefulness only transfers the stalls from the main Silom Road to the intersecting soi where vending is not banned. These are socioeconomic and cultural realities that transport professionals have failed to consider but must be taken into consideration, especially in the design of sidewalk space within Asia.

The need to satisfy pedestrians

The consideration of pedestrian needs is a significant prerequisite in the design of sustainable street spaces. The basic premise of the need-concept adopted from the area of consumer behavior is that pedestrians behave in a similar fashion to consumers as they utilize space in a way comparable to consuming a product. Needs and values are the micro-level driving factors of human behavior (Vallacher et al. 1994), which are realized through opportunities. The latter refers to products or services that have the capacity to satisfy one’s needs (Jager 2000). In this case, opportunity refers to sidewalk attributes such as the ability to provide seamless travel, comfort and convenience, to name a few. These are parameters or attributes that would encourage user loyalty or sustain people’s use of the street environment. However, these factors do not influence choice but support or inhibit pedestrian decisions (Mumford 1937). The pedestrian need-hierarchy resulted from an extensive literature review on effective pedestrian environments and was inspired by the human needs theory postulated by Maslow (1954) and Max-Neef (1992). The concept of pedestrian level of service (PLOS) (Fruin 1971) is defined as the elements that attract potential users to the system (Vuchic 1981). At the base of these needs is the desire for movement (mobility). Aside from this, pedestrians have other physiological or psychological needs such as protection, ease, enjoyment, equity and identity. This illustrates the six criteria and the attributes which would fulfill each criterion. The pedestrian need-hierarchy considers both movement and non-movement as contributory towards increasing pedestrian satisfaction.

To define the six criteria: mobility refers to a walking environment that allows barrier-free movement from the point of origin to the destination at a comfortable walking speed with no or limited impedance and ensures ease in orienting oneself within the street network. Protection refers to the state of being free from danger or injury while walking by limiting pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, providing provisions to ensure that accidents will not happen. Ease refers to the quality that makes one feel emotionally and mentally secure, comfortable and stress-free while walking. Enjoyment or leisure refers to the quality of the walking environment which allows access to transport-disadvantaged persons (TDPs), allows equal opportunities for other activities besides walking (e.g., sitting, chatting, eating), and does not limit sidewalk use to pedestrians but allows access to other street users such as vendors and leisure walkers. This environment also creates venues for socialization and interaction. Equity refers to opportunities for self-expression, with the sidewalk serving as a venue for socialization and interaction, providing ways of enjoyment and leisure and adding vibrancy to the place. Identity refers to elements that acknowledge sociocultural needs by creating venues for cultural activities, producing a sense of place and encouraging a feeling of belonging amongst its users.
The author established a preliminary hierarchical order wherein the base need would be movement based on the premise that streets are used as distribution networks. The criteria can be divided into two, personal and social. Personal refers to individual needs while social means population-level needs. Personal needs are near the base while social needs are found on the upper levels. The theoretical basis for this is that in order to increase satisfaction, personal needs should be provided for before population-level satisfaction can be accommodated.

The study then conducted a pedestrian survey in Bangkok, Thailand and Manila, the Philippines to evaluate the order and relevance of the concept of the pedestrian need-hierarchy and the significance of each criterion. A total of 150 and 90 samples were collected in Bangkok and Manila, respectively. A number of alternatives were defined that would potentially fulfill the six criteria. It was assumed that individuals tend to fulfill their personal needs before focusing on their social or group needs, and that pedestrians usually walk to be able to fulfill the need for mobility. Thus, mobility was placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. This reflects that each criterion may be fulfilled by a number of criteria while at the same time each alternative may fulfill a single or more than one criterion.

In general, the results show that the most frequent mode taken by the majority of the respondents was walking. This may be due to the fact that any kind of trip starts and ends with a walk trip. The respondents were informed they should consider walking as a mode if they covered a significant walking distance. In previous surveys, walking was often undercounted. The most common mode choice was followed by tricycle, public bus and private vehicle (e.g., car). Also, respondents were asked about their walk trip attributes referring to the number of times they go out of their building to take a walk. The majority of respondents went outside the building one to three times a day. The purpose most often cited was ‘to eat lunch,’ followed by ‘doing some errands.’ Furthermore, those who went out were asked if they stopped temporarily along the way before arriving at their destination. Almost half of the sample answered that they stopped while the other half did not. The reason most cited for stopping was ‘to buy from a sidewalk vendor.’ This reflects the high demand for the informal sector. With respect to the perception of pedestrians on the hierarchical structure of the need-hierarchy, the survey illustrated that mobility is not the most influential element in the decision to utilize streets. Instead, protection came out to be the main consideration reiterating the importance given towards physical safety.

The criterion ‘equity’ surprisingly garnered a relatively high score, specifically on giving importance to the presence of other street users such as sidewalk vendors, while ‘enjoyment’ was the least important.

Conclusions and implications

Sustainable street space should address the mobility, protection, equity, ease and identity needs of pedestrians and other street users. In Bangkok and Manila, the most important considerations are protection, ease and equity. The alternatives that could provide such needs were the following: adequate lighting, the installation of monitoring devices and police stands at intersections were determined to provide the highest satisfaction for the need for protection and ease, while for equity, the provision of street vendor areas and encouraging street performances and street art displays came out as the most effective alternatives. However, this was based on people’s perceptions and preferences. Such preferences are not absolute and may be substituted for more effective ways of providing a specific pedestrian need. The concept of mobility management was then introduced as a strategy for attaining sustainability in transport. In the sub-field of pedestrian transport, one strategy is to encourage a user-centered approach to space design and management so as to improve mobility. A user-centered approach refers to basing management strategies on the needs and desires of users and how these may be physically manifested. Thus, this paper focused on pedestrians by considering their needs, discussing the spatial environment as dictated by the relationship of movement and non-movement within the pedestrian space and the street culture created by the social interaction of the street users. This shared knowledge and meaning is produced when individuals interact in a common space (i.e., pedestrians, vendors in an urban space). At a higher level, this interaction produces a common culture that is transmitted, learned and shared, thus evolving into a distinct heritage and social tradition. The sociocultural history of the streets produces a potential window to discover the pedestrian street culture of the past wherein the latter may provide us with design recommendations on contemporary street improvement so as to encourage more users to utilize a given space. Thus, discussion also focused on the development of walking within the Asian context as well as an overview on the vending culture that is rampant within Asian streets but is oftentimes ignored. In the Asian space, various policies should focus towards encouraging the revival of street culture as well as the humanizing of streets within the Asian context. These may be gleaned from the previous sections such as the gолодог in the Sundanese kampung, creating social
spaces, and recognizing the importance of the *pasar* culture, to name a few.

One of the most important key points in this study is the idea of a forest-based culture as a jump off point in the design of sidewalks. The present morphology of Asian settlements, especially within urban enclaves, allows for pedestrian-oriented developments. To give a few examples, pocket-sized intimate spaces should be strategically provided along the sidewalk. Their presence signifies flexibility, encourages social contacts and maximizes interactions. The strategic placement of benches and the appropriation of vendor space on specific points along the sidewalk encourage social interaction. Segregation is also necessary in order to maximize space utilization. However, the segregation of activities should use psychological rather than physical compartmentalization to make it culturally appropriate for Asian pedestrians. To minimize anxiousness, an appropriate combination of activities, specifically at intersections, should be considered so as to allow a pertinent mix. Natural elements which may serve as points of orientation and as sacred spaces as well as provide cover become necessary given forest-based, animistic roots. Implementing a green sidewalk becomes a viable option. The important role played by vendors along sidewalks has been explicit and is further reinforced in this paper. Proper guidance and regulations should be in place at the national and local levels, allowing and allotting these vendors space whether within the bounds of public or private space.

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ACADEMIC LIFEWORLDS, THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND DEEP
DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES

Sharaad Kuttan

Introduction

The following essay is an expression of a journey, which is why the personal figures as prominently as the political. I begin with a personal narrative but end with a section entitled “Six points of comparison,” which is a modest attempt to summarize my tentative findings. I conclude with a brief call for institutional support for the documentation of Asia’s intellectual heritage which, I believe, The Nippon Foundation through the API Fellowships Program is well placed to encourage.

As a preface, let me note that the generosity of spirit embodied in the API fellowship was crucial as it gave me the space to think through the assumptions I had made when I first conceptualized my research proposal. As the program is not primarily geared to the production of outputs and “deliverables,” Fellows like me are able to invest time and energy in ways not often available in our adult working lives. My years as a graduate student, activist and researcher, while enriching, have also in many ways delimited the ways in which I approach questions of society, culture and social change.

I conclude with a brief call for institutional support for the documentation of Asia’s intellectual heritage which, I believe, The Nippon Foundation through the API Fellowships Program is well placed to encourage.

An institutional critique is, in fact, the very object of inquiry identified in my proposal title. The way I structured the terms of the proposal, typical of social science inquiry, was to work on the hypothesis that a connection exists between ideas (social sciences), institutions (academics/universities) and social processes (substantive democracy/public culture). This was nothing short of ambitious and perhaps impracticable considering the timeframe for preparation that I actually had. Truth be told, the unstated model lurking in the back of my mind was that of a doctoral candidate embarking on fieldwork. However, without the rigorous preparation to which such candidates in the social sciences are subjected to, was this model viable? Those familiar with academic practices will understand that the questions that a doctoral candidate takes to the field are wrought through a process of deep and systematic reading, coupled with a dialogical process initiated in a structured institutional setting, peopled by senior faculty and contemporaries. In some serious sense, I found myself parachuted into my field with a vague idea of what I wanted to achieve, much like a journalist who is rushed to a conflict-ridden city he is familiar with perhaps only as a mark on a map. Was this fatal to my project or was it in fact productive in bringing about a different form and methodology of inquiry?

To interject: it must be said that I suffer from a form of denial, a suppression of frameworks of knowledge that are not institutionally validated. I have gathered in my short but moderately adventurous life a range of experiences and, dare I say, feelings about the world in general and my society in particular that nevertheless informed the line of inquiry that I proposed. That I felt compelled to inflect the style of my proposal in a social scientific manner was both a product of habit, institutional anxiety (that is, a desire for affirmation from the institutions I was going to interact with) and, most importantly, a lack of an alternative vocabulary. When I embarked on this trip last year—a year of living in intellectual discomfort, I must add—the vocabulary that I thought most important for my project was a social scientific one, consisting of concepts, theories and paradigms underscored by a sociological imaginary. This was the ideational stuff of my two university degrees, the second of which, a Masters, was from a department of sociology and anthropology. I had an unquestioned belief in the need for conceptual clarity and theoretical rigor, and an almost naive faith in Reason in public life.

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Has my year of living in intellectual discomfort weaned me of this dependence? The simple answer is, no. Do I feel that a commitment to these values and modes of being is still necessary? The simple answer is, yes. Then, what more? I ask myself.

I caught sight of something other than what I was looking for, almost at the periphery of my visual field. It is nothing of significance except perhaps to me, nothing new or novel. It is no mountain-top epiphany, and might strike others as rather prosaic and ordinary. Maybe it is something remembered that I had once forgotten. It requires no drum roll and if I were to blurt it out now, it would probably flounder about, looking as desperate and as tragic as sea-creatures on the deck of a fishing trawler. This is an image that one often glimpses on the Discovery Channel. Perhaps if I render the image poetically I just might be able to produce an arresting image. This image could be productive of a re-thinking, making it a counterpoint to this essay. Imagine a trawler, not of fish and edible crustaceans, but of ideas; a trawler tossed about on the high seas after a successful catch; the once lively catch, now sorted and graded, lies chilled in its hull.

Perhaps this image does not work; it is too easy, and a touch whimsical. Besides, the deck of a trawler is no place to set out an idea, especially not one so embedded in my personal history. So I shall begin with a brief pre-history, keeping it as best I can from being an indulgent story about my life.

Singapore and Malaysia, a pre-history

When I was a young boy, I would rummage through old photographs kept in the living room cabinet of my maternal grandmother’s home in the border town of Johor Bahru. (The town is so close to Singapore that you could almost hear the efficient and pragmatic gears of government machinery hum, but JB, as we call it, is decidedly Malaysian, the chaotic other to the unnerving neatness across the Straits of Johor.) The monochrome snaps—not sepia tinge—were like fragments of family memories, kept rather unceremoniously in a box rather than laid out in chronological or thematic order in an album. The one that struck me most and over which my child’s gaze lingered was that of my uncle, whom I both feared and adored for some unfathomable reason. He lay, almost reclining, in an “easy chair,” as they were called, surrounded by books. An unremarkable image, perhaps, except for the extraordinary fact that it was taken in a prison cell in Singapore during the turbulent nationalist period of the late 1950s. From that, his second term in prison, my uncle produced what is considered a seminal analysis of colonial Malaya’s economy. Since I had neither read the book nor did I understand economics, the awe with which it held me was clearly not that of intellectual understanding. If I had to name it now, I would identify it as a certain effect produced by the image itself. A muddle of feelings and notions: it was the sense of authority in the figure of my uncle, the authority of books (to which my mother was devoted and to which I later came to make a fetish of as well), and the bewildering terror of prison and forced confinement. As I grew up and encountered a ‘mature’ political vocabulary, I borrowed much of it to shore up that image, propping it up with the then already faded romance of the socialist-nationalist struggle. I would be, from then forth, susceptible to misreading images regarding people, ideas and authority. (When I first came to the Philippines, I thought how profound it was for a nation to choose as its national hero a writer of novels. I found myself corrected on this later in my stay.)

Fast-forward: I came of age in the Singapore of the 1980s. While the political hegemony of the People’s Action Party had been almost unassailable for more than a decade, the Parliament witnessed the entry of a lone opposition figure at the beginning of that decade. Democratization, irrepresible as it seems to be, was on the intellectual agenda and stayed on it until the mass arrests of what we would now term civil society activists in May 1987. What was this talk, this discourse, of democracy? What was it informed by, when, in fact, the only competing ideology to the governing regime had been all but eliminated? By the end of the 1970s, Singapore’s political Left had been erased—as Malaysia’s had been, with its specter last encountered in the haunting echoes of China’s Cultural Revolution. This was felt most poignantly in the mid-1970s in the world theater and the arts. Socialist Realism, as theory and practice, had had its curtain call, forcibly or otherwise in the Peninsula. Moreover, not only was there nothing to replace it, but memories of it and traditions associated with it were assiduously erased.

I told many Filipinos that I encountered in my seven months there about how the Philippines emerged in my consciousness as a place, as a society. For my generation in the mid-1980s in university in Singapore, at least, the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship was probably the most significant for the region, as the fall of the New Order regime of Indonesia was for the late 1990s. Despite our lack of ideological moorings, the saga of the Marcos dictatorship had all the elements of high drama and kept us glued to the radio and newspapers until the final twist. Unfortunately, the journalistic offerings...
we consumed, so often caught up in the present and without space—in minutes or in column inches—rarely had the ability to communicate the deeper processes afoot. When the Marcoses were flown out of the coop, I was left with little understanding about the structure of Filipino society or its politics and culture beyond leading actors and the anonymous cast of thousands.

It was also in the 1980s that the Filipino struggle for democracy came rippling onto Singaporean shores via theater, almost a century after Jose Rizal disembarked and visited the Botanic Gardens before continuing on to Europe. The “training” given to Singaporean theater practitioners laid the foundations for several forms of theater practice, one strain of which I would later join. One particular production centered on the story of a Filipino domestic worker and was particularly compelling for its description of issues of class, gender and transmigration. This, and several other political productions, became the subject of a sociological thesis I worked on in 1988. I had wanted to understand the power of theater but ended up describing, and thus perhaps re-inscribing, the power of the state.

In the midst of the trauma that many Singaporeans felt following the mass arrests of 1987, I spent several years working with working-class children in an educational project run by non-evangelical Christians, believing that no possibilities existed for challenging the status quo in Singapore. Then, I saw no connection between welfare work with the children and the discourse of democratization that I was, in principle at least, committed to. Welfare work to me was socially necessary, perhaps even personally rewarding, but it lacked the heroism that the struggle for Democracy seemed to demand. Working with delinquent children was a challenge but only in the realm of the emotional and, at a stretch, spiritual. These were not dimensions, or modes, of being that I associated with the concept of democratization. This work—serious and demanding as it was—was decidedly “private,” not “public” in the way I understood the concept.

I then abandoned what seemed to be the never-ending trials that children encounter in their daily lives (and the community of volunteers I worked with) to become an advocate of “intellectual discourse” through a journal called Commentary. We sought and courted a public that we believed was out there in the “mass society” created by the People’s Action Party. We labored to extend an opening provided for in the public sphere by the new dispensation of the incoming Prime Minister.

We began without fully recognizing that the culture of writing for a “discerning public” and, equally, the culture of reading were limited, having been diminished by a successful, if authoritarian, government. Cultivating the voice of our writers and a strategic tone for the university-based journal was central to our politics. Without telling the entire story—one not without its own public drama—suffice it to say that I learned to think of the political landscape as a complex territory. I became grudgingly aware of the role of society, and of social conservatism in particular, in the authoritarian practices of the states that I was most familiar with.

Briefly, under our editorial leadership, the journal—which had a decade before been embroiled in controversy—took on questions of “civil society” and “politics.” These themes served as the titles for our second and third collections of essays and discussions. If there was a perception that the journal was challenging the establishment, the government’s hand was in all probability stayed by a very disciplined and academic tone. However, neither our judiciously elliptical language nor a strategic balancing of views could save our fourth issue. (We even ran a letter that both criticized the journal’s liberal outlook while welcoming us as an intellectual interlocutor to the prevailing conservative establishment.)

The issue centered on a controversy in the arts with the attendant proscription of forum theater and performance art. The former was a dialogical theater practice conceptualized by Marxist dramatist Augusto Boal as a radical critique of agitation-propaganda theater (in which I acted) and the later an energetic practice in which the body, in all its presence and immediacy, becomes the stage; both appeared to the state as un-censorable forms and this, ultimately, made them subversive. This was coupled with the fact that the government had already announced its desires to develop the arts as a new industry. It was a convergence of competing desires in which the state was determined to come out on top.

While committed to this form of engagement, I also harbored contempt for “elliptical speech” as cowardly, as evidence of the intellectual’s fear of “speaking truth to power.” With the controversy at its height, I sought a principled gesture and the editorial board chose to resign. (Singaporean writer Catherine Lim later eulogized the debacle as one of many signs that the new and avowedly “friendlier” regime was in fact unwilling to give up the substance of Lee Kuan Yew’s style of governance.) I now think very differently about that choice and of elliptical speech.
It would seem to me now that there is a need for a variety of forms of speech including the seemingly abstract and those not immediately amenable for application to the problems of the day. In many real ways, academics, concerned citizens and artists were trying to create a variety of publics, each with its own register, vocabulary and frames of reference.

I returned to Malaysia and went to work in a newspaper, then involved myself in human rights activism and academic work. Again, the challenges were fundamentally the same; though the space available for open politics was much wider, it was not immediately clear if there was any depth to the public discourse surrounding or informing this politics. One could reasonably ask of both the authoritarian administration and its detractors whether they contributed to a deepening of public culture. (They in turn might ask how “depth” is defined and, indeed, quantified.)

I would like to make one brief reference to the question of the media in Malaysia to underscore my concerns. The Asian Financial Crisis of the late 1990s reverberated throughout Malaysia’s then fast-paced economy as well as in politics. Images of the anti-regime street demonstrations—known by its borrowed slogan of reform, “Reformasi”—carried in the traditional media were then accompanied by the development of the so-called alternative media. Journalists and observers alike looked to the Internet as a new, perhaps even revolutionary, tool. These early assessments were to prove too exaggerated. In many respects, the new media was new only in respect to the forms of dissemination of “information” defined broadly. What remained the same, however, was the quality of that information. If there was potential for new relationships to be formed between the producers of information and its recipients, for new structures of knowledge production to be created, something other than the Net had to come into play.

One commentator astutely identified the problem when he complained about the character of Malaysian political discourse. He said that opportunities to educate the public (the “electorate,” more specifically) at public rallies were being squandered because politicians replicated what we in Malaysia call “coffee shop talk.” This coffee shop talk—its fascination with rumor, ‘insider’ knowledge, conspiracy theories and the like—was being disseminated in new ways and at new speeds but it was “coffee shop talk” all the same. My friends and I thought that the best way to address this problem was to develop different strategies and ‘values’ in our website, titled “Saksi” which in the Malay language means “witness.” We were not without our failings but the general register of our site was in marked contrast to the partisan and polemical character of much that passed for “alternative” media then.

I think one of the challenges that arose in those times of heady political confrontation was to persuade ourselves, and others, that there is value in complexity, that one can fashion a politics out of complex political and ethical positions. This belief in the value of an analysis that is adequate to the object in question—whether it is a politician, a political party or a socially disadvantaged group—is not a widely nor deeply held one in my country, I am afraid.

Our website grew into a larger project with the development of a media NGO called the Center for Independent Journalism. Together with an Indonesian media group, Radio68H, we developed a joint project to circumvent the very tight regulations governing broadcasting. Without getting into a rather nasty narrative about the many conflicts that erupted among “progressives” that I had the misfortune of being caught in, suffice it to say that the project floundered on a fundamental difference in the perception of the role of the media in times of crisis. One leading academic went so far as to claim that even honest public criticism of the political was not to be encouraged, as this provided resources for the ruling party against the nascent democratic movement. His position was popular and in some respects intuitive. Its hazardous consequences would arise only later and could conceivably be dealt with in the future. This is a debate that is never ending, perhaps.

I edged back into academic work after the collapse of the Center’s radio project on a long-term group research project on the Malaysian electoral system. It proved that academics could respond to important issues but in a manner consistent with the specificities of their labor. (Our book—I contributed a chapter on civil society involvement—has made a lasting contribution to the debate on electoral reform in Malaysia.)

For argument’s sake, let me make a sweeping generalization. Politics and the media share a similar pace and tone which contrasts markedly with art and academia. Think of it as a spectrum with a variety of practices in each of these fields lying on various points of this line (or multiple lines—speed, tone, depth) and with neither end of the spectrum defined in normative terms, meaning I do not ascribe values to being fast, for example. Does Malaysia have a full range of practices that gives expression to these terms? This is a question
I took with me on my journey and which informed the construction of my proposal, but one that was decidedly in the present.

A year before I had been toying with another project that was more historically orientated. It arose from the general dissatisfaction with the quality of my own questions and frameworks. Browsing the shelves of an older relative, I came quite by accident upon a book. Since I had browsed those same shelves for decades, it was clearly something in my own desire to see that made the book visible. What drew me to it was its title, embossed in faded gold lettering, *The Cultural Problems of Malaysia in the Context of Southeast Asia*. Out of the permafrost of a Malaysian suburb, I pulled out a fossil from the mid-1960s. The collection of essays from a similarly titled conference was the product of the intellectual impulses of a visiting academic from Indonesia, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (a man whose life would be worth a workshop or two). At that moment, I only recognized him as the author of a book I had picked up at a second-hand bookshop. My inquiries into the man, his milieu and the organizations he was associated with led me into the 1950s and 1960s, a period which I had not, until then, considered as crucial to my self-understanding. The question of how the two decades following the end of the Second World War shaped our consciousness remained on the back burner while I considered how best to shape my project. Needless to say, the year away provided me with a way of seeing these two questions as intimately connected. In some respects, the historical project has come to seem to me to be much more urgent to attend to as materials and, more crucially, people recede from the present.

**Quezon City, caught in a cyclone**

One of the many of things one is likely to overlook when conceptualizing a research proposal (in the humanities, at least) is the weather. I had checked up on semester schedules and the like but I had no idea about the annual season of cyclonic winds that come off the Pacific Ocean and crash into the beautiful islands of the Philippines. (I was blessed to survive the worst cyclone Manila had suffered in over a decade.) In fact, I was not particularly aware of the Pacific and its rim (home to China and the USA) as a cultural and historical matrix. One of the most arresting images I came across while in the Philippines was one produced by a French historian. It was quoted by a Filipino anthropologist in an essay about the “Asian” character of Filipino culture(s). The historian noted that the Philippines was the farthest point that Christianity had reached on its westward journey and the farthest point that Islam had reached on its eastward journey. Not only did it alert me to the need to read a great deal more about the journey of cultures—languages, ideas, cuisine—that traversed the archipelago but it more importantly shifted the very frame in which I saw the country. While I had been to the Philippines on two previous occasions, I carried a mental map that was very much like the map I had on my wall of Southeast Asia: Indonesia and Burma framing the left margin and the Philippines framing the right margin. There is little of the Pacific Ocean and what this essay spelled out for me was everything that Filipinos share on that side of the globe, from flora and fauna to the Manila Galleon and US imperialism.

My previous encounter with the Philippines—as a journalist and as an NGO activist—was marked by a certain speed and lack of depth. I penned an article—entitled “Pinoy’s Complaint”—which recorded the thoughts of many Filipinos I interviewed, from political prisoners to activists. I had learned much but I was puzzled by the thwarted expectation that this was another Asian country and therefore essentially the same as Malaysia. When it was not the same, I simply did not have the frame to identify what this difference was.

This inability to understand fully what I was encountering dogged much of my time there. The more I read, the more I felt I did not understand enough or adequately, and the more inhibited I became about asking questions. I felt that my questions were too basic, something a primer on the Philippines would adequately address. Still I met with people and watched movies.

One movie in particular struck me as incomprehensible, beautiful but “incomprehensible.” It was Lav Diaz’ *Heremias*. Nine and a half hours of landscape, emotions half articulated, buried deep and a protagonist, who lends his name to the movie, whose responses to a crisis completely baffled me. Prior to watching the movie I had the opportunity to ask the director what he was trying to do with his movies and he said, “To show my culture.” It was a question I had to ask but whose answer I did not have the resources to understand except in the most facile way. I then watched the movie and later I read Rey Ileto’s history, *Pasyon and Revolution*, a history that was difficult for me to read but rewarded me later with a sense of a longer and deeper history of Filipino culture. It revealed to me some things about the protagonist I could previously not comprehend, like the meaning of his posture and his political imaginary. The foreword to Ileto’s history notes that a dissatisfaction with positivist social science coupled with a reading of philosophy helped him re-conceptualize this history.
I met Professor Ileto at a political science conference in Zamboanga City but I was only able to secure the promise of an interview in Singapore. I wanted to understand the process of re-thinking that he underwent while reading philosophy. I was not able to ask Dias if he had read Ileto’s history (and I am certain he has) but the connection between the two works seemed to me to be that both work from a common understanding of their culture (in this case, perhaps low-land Christian Filipino culture). One self-conscious attempt to quote Ileto’s work in film—“Indio Nacional”—succeeded only in establishing the filmmaker’s relationship to the iconic text rather than some common cultural pool.

While I read the newspapers, particularly columns by social scientists, I was impressed by the consistency of engagement but left a little cold by the form. I learned many facts about the country and its culture but I was less clear about how all this, presented to a local audience, could affect any kind of cultural shift. This was also true of my experiences in Thailand.

**Palawan, voyage to the periphery**

The typhoon that hit Manila coincided with a trip to a university in Palawan and my encounter with academics at a state university. The ferry trip in the first month of my stay forced me to re-think the strategy and purpose of my research. I conducted long interviews with two very senior academics (retired from the University of the Philippines (UP) and the Ateneo de Manila University) and with younger faculty. I had come with a sense of some disquiet about my ability to use a social science discourse as the pivot of my research. I had read the work of Cynthia Bautista and realized that it would take a profound familiarity with the many decades of Filipino social sciences—sociology, economics, psychology, etc.—to actually pull this off. In recognizing my own limitations in this regard, I thought that a focus on the term “deep democracy” and the notion of public culture that underscored it would be more realistic.

What I did benefit from in the Philippines was the publication of various histories of universities, with those dealing specifically with the experience of the Marcos dictatorship being of particular interest. It took me back to the 1970s, and at Ateneo’s library I was able to begin a process of unearthing more histories. I found the journal *Minerva*, which detailed the disciplining of my own alma mater, the National University of Singapore (then University of Singapore), and its radical twin, Nanyang University. It helped me to begin to piece together the experiences of the region refracted through the struggles in and around the university and the very idea of the university and the intellectual. It also led me back to the regional journal *Solidarity*—which I only knew as it was fading—and an interview with its then editor F. Sionil Jose about the existence of intellectual networks across the region. Intellectuals like Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand were also part of this network and, as I dug deeper, it seemed to me that a forgotten history which underscores, perhaps silently, the contemporary situation, awaits unearthing.

**Six points of comparison**

In many ways, Malaysia is the yardstick by which I measured the Thai and Filipino experiences of both democracy in its relation to the specific institution of the university and the social actor broadly referred to as the intellectual. Here are some broad points of comparison that I noticed while conducting research.

First, intellectuals are recognized as an important voice in the public sphere in both Thailand and in the Philippines in ways that do not exist in Malaysia. This recognition comes from many segments of society and is notable in the way the media often designate the contributions of intellectuals. This is especially marked in Thailand.

Second, a visible and vocal segment of academics see themselves as public intellectuals and participate vigorously in the shaping of the public sphere. I found that this self-identification as architects in the drafting of future models of society—asking questions addressed to the means as well as the ends of society—very compelling.

Third, many academics in Malaysia have participated in politics by becoming members of either the ruling or opposition political parties. A strategy of participating in the political life of the nation as intellectuals is not often opted for. This is related to my first two observations. While in the Philippines, I was told, in half jest, that presidents of the UP often think they can run the country better than the politicians do. (The alleged involvement of the former UP President, Francisco Nemenzo, in the failed Oakwood Mutiny, the role of his “Blueprint” and his association with a leftist political group, is a telling instance of direct involvement.) However, in Malaysia, while a few notable academics have become leading lights in opposition politics, there is nothing akin to the progressive or radical tradition of the UP. Pockets of progressive, pro-democratic academics have emerged, such as the “Aliran” group in the Science University of Malaysia (USM, Penang), but these remain isolated instances.
Fourth, the successful developmental policies of the Malaysian government might be credited with absorbing and institutionalizing some progressive forces. Unfortunately, the pro-indigenous race politics, which in part led to the democratization of the universities, have led to some perverse consequences. One is the increasing bureaucratization of state universities and the rise of an academic class owing much to their political masters. Their reason for being is to legitimize the current order. The nationalist sentiments that animated the policy of deepening inclusivity have turned into a rear-guard action of defending racial quotas and the promotion of staff and students on criteria other than merit. Neither the Philippines nor Thailand seem to share a similar history.

Fifth, universities in the Philippines and Thailand served in some measure and to varying degrees as sites of resistance to dictatorship and repression. While all three countries had politically volatile decades, by the 1970s the Malaysian government had been able to stabilize the situation. There have been several histories on the role of universities in relation to the Marcos dictatorship, such as *Down from the Hill* about the Ateneo, which serve as compelling tributes to the spirit of autonomy and commitment to democracy, though not without their low moments.

Sixth, state universities in Malaysia seem to lack a deep pedagogical philosophy and I found reading about the history of the Ateneo quite instructive on the need for tertiary institutions to have such philosophical foundations. A diversity of pedagogies is also healthy. While I could not discern this dimension in the Thai situation, it seemed much more marked in the Filipino context with a range from Catholic to secular discourses on the means and ends of education.

**A modest proposal**

What I see as a real possibility is the creation of an awareness of the intellectual heritage of Southeast Asia in the world, of the contests over the meaning and role of the intellectual and the university as they engaged with their newly independent nations. This debate needs to be made contemporary and our program is well placed to initiate one, not just for ourselves, but also for the larger community. By broadening the term intellectual beyond the professional academic and at the same time recognizing the importance of the “public” character of the university, this dialogue can help the region to mobilize the cultural resources it will need to move itself forward.
APPENDIX I

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
The Sixth Workshop of Asian Public Intellectuals
Davao City, Philippines, 25-29 November 2007

Day 1, Sunday, 25 November 2007

1700 - 1730 Registration
1730 - 1800 Cocktail
1800 - 1820 Group Photograph
1820 - 1940 Opening Ceremony and Dinner

Welcoming Speeches:
Surichai Wun’Gaeo, Program Director of API Coordinating Institution;
Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J., Director of API Partner Institution in the Philippines; and
Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation

MC & Introduction of Keynote Speaker:
Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J.

Keynote Address:
Edilberto de Jesus, Director of Southeast Asian Ministers of
Education Organization (SEAMEO)
“In Search of Asian Public Intellectuals”

Dinner:
Toast by Fr. Antonio Samson, S.J., President of Ateneo de Davao

Day 2, Monday, 26 November 2007

0830 - 1030 INTRODUCTION SESSION
Moderator: Surichai Wun’Gaeo
On API Fellowships Program and API Workshop: Tatsuya Tanami
Overview of the Workshop: Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu
Introduction of Workshop Participants

1030 - 1050 Coffee Break

1050 - 1310 PARALLEL SESSION I: Intermingling of Continuity and Discontinuity
Chair: Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J.
Discussant: Danilo Francisco M. Reyes

PARALLEL SESSION II: Specificities of Globalization
Chair: Koji Tanaka
Discussant: Wataru Fujita

1310 - 1410 Lunch Break

1410 - 1610 PARALLEL SESSION III: Collages of Civil Society’s Mediations
Chair: Surichai Wun’Gaeo
Discussant: Pranong Thongtai

PARALLEL SESSION IV: Circles of Power and Counterbalances
Chair: Ragayah Haj. Mat Zin
Discussant: Fr. Jose Magadia, S.J.

1610 - 1900 Coffee Break
Dinner
Day 3, Tuesday, 27 November 2007

0830 - 1030 PARALLEL SESSION V: Blurred Borders and Social Integrations
Chair: Taufik Abdullah
Discussant: Herry Yogaswara

PARALLEL SESSION VI: Persistent Problems, Promising Solutions and Beneficence
Chair: Mary Racelis
Discussant: Narumol Aphinives

1030 - 1050 Coffee Break

1050 - 1310 PARALLEL SESSION VII: Reconfiguration of Identities and Futures in Times of Transformation
Chair: Louie David
Discussant: Khoo Su Nin (Salma) Nasution

PARALLEL SESSION VIII: Cultures as Ordinary and Everyday
Chair: Tatsuya Tanami
Discussant: Yeoh Seng Guan

1310 - 1400 Lunch

1400 - 1600 Mindanao Talk: Fr. Albert Alejo, S.J.

1600 - Coffee Break

1900 - Dinner

Day 4, Wednesday, 28 November 2007

0830 - 1930 Field Trip

Day 5, Thursday, 29 November 2007

0900 - 1010 PLENARY DISCUSSION: Contexts and Processes of Social Transformations
Chair: Muktasam

1010 - 1030 Coffee Break

1030 - 1210 PLENARY DISCUSSION: Origins and Consequences of Social Transformations
Chair: Theresita V. Atienza
SYNTHESIS: Asian Transformations in Action
Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu

1210 - 1330 Lunch

1330 - 1430 Response from the Fellows: Reflections and Applications
Moderator: Surichai Wun’Gaeo

1430 - 1530 Closing Remarks: Tatsuya Tanami and Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J.

1530 - 1550 Coffee Break

1610 - 1730 API Hour

1900 - 2100 Farewell Dinner / Cultural Night
APPENDIX II

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
The Sixth Workshop of Asian Public Intellectuals
Davao City, Philippines, 25-29 November 2007
(information at the time of participation)

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APPENDIX III

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

Circles of power and counterbalances

POLITICS AND TIMBER IN MALAYSIA
Akiko Morishita
This paper discusses who controls timber resources and how in a forest-rich state in Malaysia. The federal government has given great autonomy to the state government, including the entire control over forest concessions. Here, the state Chief Minister has retained his strong political influence for more than 25 years. Local entrepreneurs, especially those with timber interests, have to rely on his patronage for their business success. The paper examines how he has concentrated political power into his hands, how local business people have made links with him and became successful in business, and what factors have brought the concentration of power into the Chief Minister’s hands.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND OPPOSITION FORCES IN MALAYSIA: THE POLITICAL PROCESS OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT AND THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL
Ayame Suzuki
The interaction between Malaysia’s political institutions and people’s perceptions of and attitudes towards these institutions are examined to explain the dynamics of opposition forces in Malaysia. The study focuses on a series of amendments to the Official Secrets Act (OSA) in 1986, which aimed to restrict the right to know and freedom of speech. When the government drafted the restrictive OSA, various actors, including opposition and governing parties, NGOs, business groups, and trade unions opposed the bill. The increased opposition forced the government to relax some of the act’s provisions. This was followed in turn by a decrease in the size of the opposition when governing parties and business groups realized that the new law did not violate their opportunities for interest articulation. The diminished size of the opposition has remained constant because of the law-abiding nature of the implementation of the OSA and because the National Economic Consultative Council (NECC), a deliberative institution, provided business groups and governing parties with alternative channels for interest articulation. The findings of the study show how the current non-liberal political institution came to be in force, how the institution thus established affected the size of opposition forces, and why this institution has been maintained in spite of the persistent opposition from pro-liberal actors.

THE DISCOURSE OF THE ISLAMIC STATE AND ISLAMIC LAW IN MALAYSIA
Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad
This paper discusses the debate on the Islamic State and Islamic law in Malaysia after the reformasi. It will argue that this discourse can be seen through different Muslim and non-Muslim interpretations of Islam as a political source in Malaysia. The Muslim voice in the state on this debate shows that their understanding of Islam follows their interests in the political arena. However, in between these spectrums there are Muslim groups that act more like a civil society rather than promoting an Islamic state and Islamic law in Malaysia. By doing ethnography with one Islamic missionary group in Malaysia, Jamâ’ah Tablîgh, I argue that there is an Islamic movement that plays an important role in disseminating Islamic teaching through ‘reform from below.’ In contrast, for non-Muslims, the issue of an Islamic state and Islamic law is to turn Malaysia into a theocratic state, which is against the constitution and the context of Malaysia’s plural and multi-ethnic citizenry.
**Persistent problems, promising solutions and beneficence**

**FROM CHARITY TO SOCIAL INVESTMENTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: A STUDY OF PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA**

*Josie M. Fernandez*

Philanthropy is a complex social intervention phenomenon constituted by values and organizational and community activities through an array of local, national and international institutions. It takes the forms of voluntary giving, voluntary service and voluntary association for the benefit of people and the environment. Charity provides immediate relief while philanthropy is a long-term commitment for building the capacity of people, facilitating social change and promoting global peace and security. In Indonesia, contemporary philanthropic practices are profoundly driven by religion, cosmological practices, social justice concerns and a growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility. Philanthropy is conditioned, too, by the social, political and economic conditions of particular periods. The last two decades have seen tremendous growth in Islamic philanthropy given the huge potential for Islamic obligatory giving and voluntary contributions, with institutional philanthropy on the rise. Indonesia has harnessed pluralism in philanthropy for strengthening diversity and addressing socioeconomic needs.

**SOCIAL IMPACT OF JAPANESE PRIVATE-SECTOR PROJECTS ON LOCAL PEOPLE IN THE PHILIPPINES AND MALAYSIA**

*Hozue Hatae*

While the defects of public aid by the Japanese government, or Official Development Aid (ODA), have been discussed and criticized in many books and reports, Japanese private-sector projects which are also playing a large role in the development initiatives in Asia have yet to be examined more closely. A great number of Japanese private-sector projects have been found to have added up to more suffering in the lives of local people and made them much poorer in the name of sustainable development. This report, mainly based on interviews with local people affected by three Japanese private-sector projects in the Philippines and Malaysia, considers the factors that have turned sustainable development projects into destructive ones. One such factor is the failure of developers and investors to anticipate and avoid the social impact of projects by neglecting local peoples’ voices and concerns. To have genuine development for local people, it is necessary to respect and uphold the basic human rights of the locals affected by the projects, including their right to determine their own plans for their community’s development.

**POLICIES AND VICTIM SERVICES IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT: LESSONS LEARNED FROM INDONESIA, JAPAN AND THAILAND**

*Heru Susetyo*

Asia is a continent prone to disasters, both human-made and natural. Natural disasters occur frequently in Asia in various forms, from earthquakes in Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Japan; floods in Bangladesh and Vietnam; tsunamis in Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka; and typhoons in Taiwan, to volcanic eruptions and landslides in the Philippines. However, only a small number of Asian countries seriously pay attention to disaster management. One such country is Japan, which is one of the best countries equipped with natural disaster management and policies. Scholars believe that natural disasters are unavoidable since they are part of nature or God’s plan. However, the state has a strict obligation to mitigate or reduce risks/damages due to disaster by introducing a disaster preparedness program. Part of a disaster preparedness program is creating policies or laws related to disaster management which will serve as guidelines or grounds in dealing with the disaster management programs. Providing services for the victims as part of disaster response is also important in disaster management. This paper describes policies and victim services in natural disaster management based on fieldwork in Japan and Thailand from August 2006-February 2007 to use for comparison in order to understand the current situation of Indonesian disaster management and polices. For Indonesia, the legislation and enactment of natural disaster management policies are among the country’s top priorities since it has been seriously affected by earthquakes, tsunamis, massive floods, landslides and fires for the past several decades.
**Intermingling of continuity and discontinuity**

**REVALUING JAVANESE COURT DANCES (SRIMPI AND BEDHAYA) WITHIN THE CURRENT SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

*Michi Tomioka*

Surakarta Court dances were allowed to be performed for the public in the 1970s as part of a national project. The Indonesian people, however, did not preserve them as they had been and made shorter versions instead. They thought it more important to innovate in accordance with the changing times. In this project, I tried to search for the meaning of the full versions of court dances among the public under current circumstances by producing stage performances and documenting these in videos and music recordings with the involvement of Indonesians. The project was highly appreciated by participants, audiences and the mass media. Performers found they could get more absorbed in their playing and dancing as time passed, which then enchanted the audience. This proved that there is now every possibility that performing arts in their pre-innovation form, which was denied in the 1970s, can still appeal to the public. The value of the arts can be limited or changed according to social and cultural contexts. Indonesian performing arts have been influenced largely by government art policy. It would be effective to spontaneously revalue and reconsider the results of former art projects in search of their own roots or demand by the public.

**TRANSFORMING THINKING, TRANSGRESSING BORDERS**

*Jo Kukathas*

Our global civilization is a world heritage and not simply, as nationalists would have it, a collection of disparate local cultures. Persistent global movements of the curious and the entrepreneurial have often had a positive impact on culture, providing fresh challenges to artists and authority figures. These challenges have led to exploration and innovation. Hundreds of years of isolation and a rift between traditional and contemporary theater engendered by the Meiji Restoration has created a unique theater in Japan. However, artists in Japan come from a long tradition that is cumulative, syncretic, pluralist and evolutionary. The challenge now lies in bridging the divide between contemporary and traditional art and balancing cultural recovery with a critiquing of tradition.

**TRANSMISSION, PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION: A CRITICAL STUDY OF ASIAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC CULTURES IN POST-COLONIAL AND POST-MODERN TIMES IN THAILAND AND INDONESIA**

*Ramón Pagayon Santos*

As a contribution to the discourse on changing identities and their social, historical and cultural contexts, this study was undertaken to gain deeper insight into the transformative state of Asian expressive cultures as reflected in the contemporary modes of the transmission of traditional artistic practices in Thailand and Indonesia. With reference to the teaching and learning of the musical arts, this study investigates traditional and indigenous techniques of knowledge transfer *vis-à-vis* the present formalized institutional structures for professional artistic training and education. While pursuing the initial assumption that orally transmitted practices are highly vulnerable against the overpowering effect of formalized and literate teaching strategies in modern times, the study has found a much more complex phenomenon. It focuses on three major factors by which musical traditions and their essential expressive and cultural properties could be either eroded and undermined or preserved and developed for future generations through imaginative and creative negotiation and exploration. These three factors are: a) human resources; b) institutional agency; and c) the social environment.

**THEATER CHRONICLES: LESSONS IN THEATER DOCUMENTATION FROM TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY THEATER PRACTICES IN THAILAND AND INDONESIA**

*Glecy C. Atienza*

The task of interpreting the artistic craft and documenting the aesthetics of theater practice for posterity has remained a challenge for artists. This study identifies concerns and practices in developing a theater documentation system for traditional and contemporary theater practices from an artist’s point of view through observation of and interaction with various artists, theater groups and theater institutions, and visits to libraries in Thailand and Indonesia. It discusses the critical role of artist and artists’ interactions with the community in realizing theater documentation.
**EXPLORING ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS AMONG FILIPINO MUSLIM URBANITES IN THE QUIAPO AREA: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION AND URBAN LIFE**

*Mokhammad Yahya*

The fusion of religion and politics, a key feature of Islamic fundamentalism, is very much a part of the aspirations of Filipino Muslims, although they may differ in their positions on whether or not an independent nation (*Bangsa*) for Moros (Filipino Muslims) can actually be achieved and whether or not their goal can be reached only through armed struggle. Clusters of Muslim groups in the Quiapo area have been formed around these aspirations and the struggle of political movements, and around emerging schools of Islamic thought. The differences among these clusters can be understood in the context of three types of Filipino Muslims’ struggle: armed struggle, collaboration with the Philippine government, and an apolitical movement. The first and the second are operating politically at societal levels while the third type is primarily a struggle in the cultural realm at the individual level. The factors that have shaped the rhetorically fundamentalist but pragmatic and moderate approach to the Islamic state of a sample of Filipino Muslim urbanites are: the experience of centuries of *Bangsamoro* struggle against colonialism and continuing political and economic imbalances; the enclave character of Quiapo and the mosques that have allowed Muslims living there to retain their ethno-cultural identity against the onslaught of the Christian majority ideology; the modernizing/secularizing tendencies of urban life; and an orientation toward the imagined community of Muslims in the Philippines.

**FLUID BOUNDARIES: TOWARD A PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH TO BORDER ISSUES IN NORTH SULAWESI**

*Djorina Velasco*

This paper explores border issues on the Indonesian side of the Indonesian-Philippine border. It surfaces the contestations between state and society over the maintenance of the border and the social construction of identities. It traces the history of the porous maritime border in order to contextualize contemporary problems relating to “illegal” cross-border flows. In so doing, it puts forward a critique of the predominant frameworks of understanding border issues, namely, the security and cultural approaches, for not being sufficiently attuned to realities on the ground, and proposes a more people-centered perspective in addressing the needs of border populations.

**THE HISTORY OF TOMORROW: THE DISCOURSE OF SCIENCE AND THE IMAGINATION OF THE FUTURE IN ASIAN SCIENCE FICTIONS**

*Alwin C. Aguirre*

This study presents a reading of Japanese and Indonesian science fiction (in translation) in various media. Through discourse analysis, we attempt to examine the representation of science and technology (ST) in these texts and, along with it, the representations of the future. We aim to make palpable the political in our constructed relationship with science and technology, especially highlighting skepticism toward pervasive discursive binary oppositions between science as truth and others as myth. At the risk of exposing an offhanded attitude, the texts as subject matter in this project are seen as repositories of both personal and shared psyche of particular societies and their members. Though seen as (just) fantastical and even frivolous at times, science fiction as a cultural product is a representation of the sentimental, ideological, theoretical and philosophical musings of a people’s inescapable interaction with ST. For the marginalized and oft-disregarded members of the “third world”, the significance of this extends to its continued existence as a sovereign and actively engaging agent and recipient of change.
Reconfiguration of identities and futures in times of transformation

BONES IN TANSU—FAMILY SECRETS
Yoshiko Shimada
From an interactive art project which I conducted in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, I found underlying problems behind the façade of “family values” in Asia. Many secrets seem to be written by women and young people. The project provides those who are silenced a safe place to voice their experiences and share them anonymously with the public. Through workshops and talks, I learned about the social, political, religious, geographical and historical background of these problems. Furthermore, I interacted with some of the victims of these problems and conducted a workshop to seek the possibility of visual art as a tool for recovery from traumatic experiences. Some problems are particular to the region/country; others seem to be more universal. However, regaining human dignity should be a basic and universal human need. I hope this project contributes to the effort of achieving this purpose.

CULTURAL ATTITUDES TO ANIMALS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONS AS A DIMENSION OF CULTURAL
IDENTITY FORMATION AND DYNAMICS
Myfel Joseph Paluga
Samples of animal-relating practices and attitudes happening in varying ecological and cultural contexts in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines show the extent of the diversity that Southeast Asians have woven as a result of their long-term interactions with nonhuman animals. The picture is both complex and patterned, so that although we cannot justifiably give a single unifying label to the phenomena, we cannot also discount the broad themes emerging out of the interactions. Monkeys, for example, are variously feared, venerated, and hated, but through all these, one also observes their propensity to actively assert themselves and, by their trainability and adaptability, to find niches despite the expanding spaces of humans. There are also enduring dichotomies (e.g., forest/village, wild/tame) that shape the attitudes of local people vis-à-vis animals. These patterns form the wide settings in which human-animal relations play themselves out in Southeast Asia. The paper argues that human-animal relations, to varying degrees, are involved in the shaping of identities—as humans, as communities, or as selves. In these dynamics, the animal threads might be explicitly evoked or may be only implicit in practice but always integrating these in our narratives is important in forming a broader view of Southeast Asian realities.

NARRATING THE NATION: MODERN HISTORICAL
REPRESENTATIONS OF IDENTITY IN INDONESIAN FILM
Iskandar Sharifuddin bin Mohd. Said
Indonesian films in the past tended towards a martial ideal in their depiction of the national struggle for Independence. The first part of the paper will be devoted to the ideas surrounding the construction of the idea of nation; this necessarily incorporates issues on identity and history and the manner and ways it is constructed textually via the moving image, taking two feature films as examples. The principles or narrating the nation organizes itself towards a homogenous perspective. What this homogeneity excludes and denies are alternative histories, other representations and spaces of public memory that express the heterogeneous as an absence. And absence assumes finding and recovering, as a beginning, a cycle of beginnings, as texts and practices that are engaged and defined via spatial categories and thereby its articulations and contestations as spatial politics. My paper proposes to look at the construction of identity and the ideas of nation by way of textual analysis of filmic texts and ground practices and their articulations and narrating of the nation, across Indonesian films as culturally, socio-politically and historically located.

RECONSIDERATION OF LOCAL IDENTITY THROUGH
PERFORMING ARTS IN THE ERA OF OTONOMI DAERAH
Kaori Fushiki
This study attempts to indicate how people recognize and practice their local identity through the performing arts. It focuses on Bali in Indonesia, which is well-known for its flourishing performing arts. In recent years, a concept, Ajeg Bali, has infiltrated Balinese society, and the number of people who want to practice performing arts as a representation of Ajeg Bali is increasing. The study, thus, surveys the concept of Ajeg Bali, which has become
the basis of local identity and examines people’s activities \textit{vis-à-vis} the concept. The \textit{gamelan} activities of women, children and youth, and two non-traditional performing arts are presented as examples. The study arrives at the following conclusions: 1) the local identity is not yet firm and includes fluctuation and anxiety; 2) \textit{Ajeg Bali} may become ethnocentric and create social tension; and 3) the performing arts, which are performed as representations of the local identity, have become tools of agitation by those in power and are always deeply wrapped up in politics.
Specificities of globalization

TRANSFORMATIONS IN AGRARIAN LIVELIHOOD AND THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT UNDER GLOBALIZATION

Supa Yaimuang

Trade liberalization has forced countries to open their territories to trade and competition. It has impacted the agricultural sector in terms of food self-sufficiency and caused changes to the agri-food systems in both developed countries like Japan and developing countries like Indonesia. Small farmers have to confront huge changes; meanwhile, they are not allowed to participate in decision-making on national and international policies. However, there are concrete examples of farmers’ adaptation to the new situation based on their culture and through the development of community innovations such as the so-called “sustainable agriculture.” Sustainable agriculture, with its promise of self-sufficiency and freedom for small farmers, has been challenged by trade liberalization and consumerism. However, the role of civil society has grown and is moving towards the sustainable development paradigm in creating a balance within global society. The movement has gone forward with people’s participation and cooperation within the nation and beyond national boundaries.

ACTIONS OF NON-STATE GROUPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: ORIGINS, DRIVING FORCES AND NETWORKS

I Ketut Gunawan

This paper discusses non-state groups’ actions related to terrorism or terror attacks in Southeast Asia with case studies from Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. It highlights the groups’ origins, driving forces and networks. First, it shows that while the origins of such actions in the Philippine and Thai cases are traceable to disputed territorial claims and have a strong link with insurgency, in the Indonesian case, terror actions have originated from a strong passion to establish a perceived ideal state and are inspired by the goals and struggles of the insurgent group in the past. Second, greed and grievance approaches are not sufficient to explain such non-state groups’ actions. The findings reveal that the ideology of violence contributes considerably to these groups’ actions in these countries. Third, the paper points out that groups have built their networks to sustain their movements and further their goals. A stronger link is found between the groups in Indonesia and the Philippines, while in the Thai case, the group is seemingly still in its “formative years” of establishing links with organizations abroad, particularly those in Indonesia. The evidence also shows that, besides utilizing its actual network, the Indonesian group in particular mobilizes a virtual network to sustain its movement. The virtual network is more resilient than the actual one and, therefore, the threat of terrorism is still imminent. In dealing with the current problems and future threats, the use of a multi-dimensional approach is necessary, particularly through investments in education, economic empowerment and the promotion of religious tolerance.

GLOBALIZATION, INFLUENCE AND RESISTANCE: CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE IN JAPAN AND THAILAND

Krisnadi Yuliawan Saptadi

The growing ties between the Asian and American film industries can be viewed as an indicator of globalization. While Hollywood has an increasing domination of Asian film markets, a growing Asianization of films is also happening. This study examines the complex relationship of cultural influence and resistance as shown in Japanese and Thai cinematic creations and concludes that globalization of cinema is no longer only about Hollywood.

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION AND CONSUMPTION: SPIRITUALITY IN JAPAN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A THAI

Sing Suwannakij

I expand my topic to cover spirituality in general, instead of only Buddhism as in the pre-research proposal. This was due to my ‘misunderstanding’ that Japan is primarily a Buddhist country; soon after arriving in the country, I realized that the reality is much more complex. Buddhism is only one part of a plethora of Japanese spirituality. Delving into this complexity, and trying to understand it, is one point, but I chose to focus more on this ‘misunderstanding,’ which was born out of the representation of Japanese religion outside of the country. I came to learn later that much of what I knew about Japanese spirituality, especially Zen Buddhism, is represented through
a certain Western perspective while what people perceive and practice in everyday life is another thing altogether. However, this represented image is also thrown back into reality and is equally consumed by local people, especially those who are susceptible to the flows of images, ideas, perspectives, and information in a globalized, consumerist society. Despite the fact that, after finishing the research, I was of the feeling that the characteristics of spirituality in Japan and Thailand could hardly be compared at all, this aspect of the representation and consumption of religions can be witnessed in both Japan and Thailand alike.

SPIRITUAL HUNGER AND THE CONSUMPTION OF SPIRITUALITY IN JAPAN (OR: WHILST I SEARCHED FOR MY SOUL IN A SOULLESS METROPOLIS...)

Mohd Naguib Razak

In this final paper, Mohd Naguib Razak presents a personal account of the evolution of his investigation into Spirituality in Japan’s Material Utopia, the unexpected problems and conflicts he encountered along the way during his one-year fellowship in Japan, the changing perspectives that emerged from his sense of frustration, isolation and dejection during this stay, the additional emotional crisis of losing his father within this period, his eventual emotional recovery and renewed sense of perspective, insight and empathy, and finally, the fruitful results of his return to Tokyo in April 2008. The paper was conceived within the context of this whole experience being a necessary interceding stage before embarking on the actual production of his documentary film on the same theme.
Collages of betterment

A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN PROCESSES ON THE ISSUE OF COMMUNITY RIGHTS TO BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Varintheta Kaiyournawong Boonchai

This research aims to study the communication strategies and patterns of the Southeast Asia Regional Initiative for Community Empowerment (SEARICE), a non-governmental organization in the Philippines, by focusing on its global Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation (CBDC) program. It also studies the social conditions and contexts that transcend sociocultural and economic differences and identifies what conditions contribute to the success and failure of such communication campaigns. The study indicates that a communication strategy has been devised at four levels: community, national, regional and international. Human and participatory approaches are practiced at the community level, while networking and collaborative approaches are considered at the other levels. The main message sent to the target groups focuses on plant genetic resources and farmers’ rights. Interpersonal communication, using both personal media and specific media, is fundamental in communicating with the main audience at the community level. At the same time, group communication and specific media are the communication methods used at the mainstream level. The identification of the target audience, participatory approaches and attitudes of farmers are the important conditions that contribute to the success of the project’s communication campaigns, especially at the community level. However, a lack of interactive learning between policy and field staff, including the lack of a full-fledged monitoring plan, are constraining conditions that prevent the project from having a broad effect on the general public.

CULTIVATION OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE CO-CREATION OF THE ENERGY FIELD FOR DEMOCRATIZATION IN ASIA

Chaiwat Thirapantu

Civil society organizations, particularly in Southeast Asia, are struggling to respond to today’s increasingly complex problems: democratization, ecological destruction, migration, terrorism and social and cultural degradation. The idea of transformative leadership has been presented and is receiving considerable attention as a means to cope with the challenges. During the last decade, various civil society organizations around East and Southeast Asia, including Japan, the Philippines and Thailand, have produced leadership training programs, addressing personal mastery processes to foster transformative leadership. In this context, this paper aims to examine the intrinsic factors in which transformative leadership can engender social paradigm shift and co-create new and better realities for society. To gain insights into this, I applied an action research approach based on three-levels of observation. First, from the first person perspective, I reflected on my tacit knowledge, which has been acquired through a personal mastery process such as practicing aikido and Japanese calligraphy and conducting trainings for over five hundred change agents and local leaders during the last seven years. As a second-person observer, I conducted interviews and discussions with some civic leaders in three Southeast Asian countries to understand how these scholars dealt with leadership development issues. Last, as a third-person observer, I studied some of the literature on transformative leadership. The research shows that transformative leadership programs seem to fall short of delivering necessary leadership qualities, reflecting on the way in which they are not conducted to support collective learning communities. The next step, then, is to find the means to tap people’s commitment and to cultivate a community of committed leadership.

INFORMING GOVERNANCE? SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING IN INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

Adnan A. Hezri

Governance for sustainable development necessitates multiple flows of information. As natural resource and environmental management requires improved partnership between the state and civil society, information is needed as a tool for social justice. One of the main informational policy instruments is a sustainability indicator system. This paper presents a comparative case study of national sustainability indicator systems in Indonesia and the Philippines. The overall goal is to understand the dynamics of the interaction of sustainability indicators with policy systems and processes. Evidence suggests that many of the goals enunciated in Indonesia’s sustainable development...
strategy found their way into a business-as-usual mode, largely assimilated into existing planning mechanisms and processes. By contrast, the Philippine policy processes for sustainable development have been considered as one of the most innovative strategies by global standards. Despite popular acceptance of sustainability as a policy goal, the provision of data and statistics on environmental conditions, however, still lags behind. Within this milieu, most indicator systems are still in their early stages of development. At present, these indicator systems are only useful for government and civil society officials participating in their development. More strategic approaches are needed before these indicator systems can inform governance effectively.

REDEFINING THE ASIAN SPACE: A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF EVOLVING STREET CULTURE AND PEDESTRIAN SPACE DEVELOPMENT IN BANDUNG, BANGKOK AND MANILA

Iderlina Mateo-Babiano

Asian cities reflect a strong traditional knowledge distinct from their Western counterparts. This justifies the need to study a city’s local knowledge to serve as potential input for a better understanding of pedestrian behavior and street use. The study is an extensive examination of streets in Bandung (Indonesia), Bangkok (Thailand) and Manila (the Philippines) on morphology, street sociology and pedestrian behavior. It identifies factors that affect local street culture, including the influence of historical trends, to further understand street morphogenesis, the interplay of movement and non-movement behavior and street space utilization. Asian space use, being unique from its Western counterpart, must be treated accordingly; the insights derived from this study may provide the key towards increased street livability in Asia.

ACADEMIC LIFEWORLDS, THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND DEEP DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES

Sharaad Kuttan

This essay outlines the process which transformed an abstract academic proposal into a re-examination of personal as well as collective struggles over the notions of the “intellectual” in both its institutional and social settings. It ends with a call to document intellectuals’ histories as well as re-kindle the debates about the role of intellectuals and universities in society.
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