Since 2008, an active group of public intellectuals in Asia has worked together to create collaborative activities that support community-based initiatives to tackle environmental and social challenges. Forest degradation, water quality, the urban environment, and marine coastal ecology have been the focus of the initiatives under the API Regional Project (RP), which worked with five community sites—Biwako in Japan, Batanes in the Philippines, Kali Code in Indonesia, Tasik Chini in Malaysia, and Khiriwong in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Thailand.

The results of these endeavors were presented in a culminating event titled "In Search of New Practices: Common Challenges to the Human-Ecological Balance in Asia" held at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, on June 14-15, 2012. The event aimed to address regional concerns and exchange knowledge derived from API’s three-year regional collaboration with the communities.

Highlights of the culminating event included a keynote address, "The Force of Interconnectedness," by Sombath Somphone, Director of the Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC), Laos and 2005 Ramon Magsaysay awardee for Community Leadership; public seminars addressing the perspectives and actions of local communities; the premiere screening of the documentary Cross Currents: Journey to Asian Environments; an exhibition and art performances.

Three years of collaboration across five countries were highlighted at the API Regional Project Culminating Event

Public Intellectuals and Local Communities: Working Together

continued on page 2
Participants included community leaders and representatives from the five participating countries:

- Totok Pratopo of the Yogyakarta Code Community Forum, Indonesia
- Tetsuya Imakita, Community Forester, Japan
- Awang Alok of the Orang Asli Community in Tasik Chini, Malaysia
- Florentino Hornedo, Ivatan expert from the Philippines
- Yongyuth Krachanglok, former kamnan (sub-district Head) of Khiriwong, Thailand, and Wirat Srichote, committee member of Agro-ecology, Cooperatives, and Youth Training Group of Khiriwong, Thailand.

API Fellows who had engaged with the sites also participated in panel sessions, discussed key issues and exchanged experiences with the community leaders with a view to finding ways forward on local and regional challenges. Decharut Sukkumnoed of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University, and Frankie Abreu, Coordinator of the group “Another Development for Burma” were invited to share their experiences in community engagement and to engage in critical discussions on current issues in the region.

Keynote Address:
The Force of Inter-connectedness
Sombath Somphone shared his views on the force of inter-connectedness. He presented a conceptual framework for a balanced development model for sustainable livelihoods, amidst massive population growth and mounting tensions. Multiple emerging problems have become much more complex, causing suffering to mother earth and human lives. Sombath urged everyone to work together to connect best practices and create a shared vision for better livelihoods.

Voices from Local Communities

“Local Strategies for Environmental Revitalization”
- Tetsuya Imakita from Biwako, Japan

The aging society of Harihata (in the area of Biwako) and decreasing households threaten its sustainability, Tetsuya said. Addressing environmental challenges in the surrounding mountains would hopefully help effect revitalization of the community. This could be done by managing forests through controlled burning to spawn rapid growth and regeneration of natural resources.

Since many people think such fires are bad for the environment, the government has been reluctant to support burning. However, by illustrating that some 50 years ago another village had employed these practices, and joining forces with a representative from that village to help publicize this historical precedent, Tetsuya managed to elicit the support of more local people at Harihata and within the government. Only through such networking has the area been able to pursue its fire management and restoration strategies. The restoration of a more balanced, traditional ecology to the area has made the community better mobilized and engaged, stimulated interest among tourists, and motivated young people to return.

“Learning from Past Mistakes”
- Yongyuth Krachanglok from Khiriwong, Thailand

Yongyuth from Khiriwong recalled that the Khiriwong people had practiced suan som rom (mixed orchard) cultivation within forests for at least a half-century, under a kinship system in which most residents belonged to only seven or eight major clans. The Buddhist temple of Wat Khiriwong has been the center of the community. This ecologically-balanced livelihood activity endured until 1975, when the national government declared Khiriwong a red (Communist) zone. In addition, the local people began to use chainsaws for forest clearing, resulting in serious flooding. In 1988, floods and landslides devastated the entire village.

Khiriwong survived by turning crises into opportunities. In 1989, the community, supported by Royal Projects, government agencies and charity foundations, undertook rehabilitation. After community residents evaluated their situation intensely, they concluded that greed was the root cause of their problem.

Learning from past mistakes helped them establish leadership and community efforts to restore livelihoods. These initiatives related to co-exsisting with nature through sustainable natural resources management practices that utilized local wisdom. The people of Khiriwong conducted community activities focused on reviving culture, tradition, and local wisdom to nurture a sense of community ownership from generation to generation. They also learned to generate additional income through ecotourism and textile handicrafts. Their goal now is to live sustainably through forest protection and cultural preservation which, together, can assure ongoing kinship and sustained livelihoods for future generations.
“Raising the Principles of Religious, Cultural, Social and Environmental Justice”
- Florentino Hornedo, Ivatan Expert, the Philippines

After studying the oral traditions of Batanes, Hornedo found that local people had their own practical scientific knowledge, much of which was expressed through rituals and practices rather than words. These were not easily compatible with the formal educational system. Young people who succeeded in higher education were often forced to leave Batanes. Hornedo saw his role as encouraging local people to know themselves and their problems, and to solve their own problems with confidence.

In around 1980 his studies began to receive broader attention, just as the people of Batanes began to afford greater importance to their local culture. This resulted in the evolution of the Batanes Development Foundation which supported local communities in establishing and running their own local services, such as water distribution and electricity cooperatives, and the establishment of a graduate school for teachers.

Another key challenge for Batanes was in how its people managed to protect themselves from business exploitation. In 1996 a foreign company tried to enter Batanes to transform it into a casino resort, and to develop a neighboring island into a golf course. These could have had a tremendous impact on both the environment and the communities. Extensive social disruption would occur as gambling and its associated activities would take hold, while fertilizers and pesticides required to maintain a golf course could jeopardize local fishing. Local leaders were later forced to concede that they had not foreseen such consequences, instead only thinking about the potential infusion of money to the area. Environmental protection legislation was passed in time, helping advance a longer-term cooperative effort with local businesses. These were encouraged to recognize that beyond being profitable, they needed to operate within the parameters of religious, cultural, social and environmental justice, and where possible, provide support for the betterment of Batanes. Local businesses pursuing tourism development should do so consistent with those principles.

“Multi-stakeholder’s Combined Efforts”
- Totok Pratopo from Kali Code, Indonesia

Totok Pratopo addressed flood as a key challenge for Kali Code communities, following the 2010 eruptions of Mount Merapi when sediment from the eruption clogged a river channel, exacerbating annual flooding throughout the watershed the following year. This natural disaster, however, helped mobilize greater community and government cooperation toward a functional management strategy.

Since 2001, several efforts were underway to organize communities, upstream and downstream for the improvement of river management and for educational activities. API Fellows helped the Kali Code communities strengthen their capacities in environmental protection, water management, human resource development, small-scale business improvement, negotiation skills, and political capabilities. They encouraged communities to embrace their independence from the government and build networks with other stakeholders.

In 2011, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by various stakeholders from government, universities, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities establishing a committee to address Kali Code’s key issues and support capacity building. The multi-stakeholder effort empowered Kali Code communities to be more vocal in challenging unnecessary studies or policy moves, as they were no longer acting singularly but could have matters addressed by the larger committee.

“Come Together for the Action Plan”
- Awang Alok, Tasik Chini, Malaysia

Years ago, an NGO came to help the Tasik Chini community by organizing an action group to reverse the degradation of Tasik Chini, but the initiative failed. Recently, a new effort emerged to establish a network of indigenous Orang Asli communities throughout the country. This occurred without any assistance from government and its Orang Asli department. The Orang Asli communities were determined to formulate their findings into a memorandum to the government, outlining environmental threats and demanding that their rights be officially recognized. (The MoU was later submitted to the Malaysian prime minister on April 10, 2012).

The problems facing the Tasik Chini were man-made rather than the result of a natural disaster. Thus, everyone had to jointly develop a common understanding, position, and approach.

To facilitate matters, they established a separate committee that oversaw the development and monitoring of an action plan. Seeking the support of every household, they set up a trust fund to help finance their projects. The formation of cooperative businesses to further strengthen the collective atmosphere within Taski Chini communities was in the works.

Community Engagement: Transforming Knowledge into Action

This session provided an opportunity for reflection and shared perspectives from five former API Fellows who had visited the communities. In addition to the presentations, an activist in API’s network discussed the evolving situation in a mega-development project underway in Burma (Myanmar).

“Promoting Ecological Awareness through Music”
- Tomoko Momiyama, Music Composer (Japan Fellow Year 2003-2004)

Contemporary music composer Tomoko promotes ecological values by creating music that reflects interactions between people and their environments. As music also reinforces the act of listening, listening to nature helps promote a more eco-centric as opposed to anthropocentric relationship with the world around us.

After jointly conducting a collective music composition “Code Purnama Hatiku (Code, The Full Moon of My Heart)” with the community...
in Kali Code as part of the API Regional Project and to bring traumatized community together, Tomoko developed another performance “The Zoo, The Ship and The Beggar” with children from communities in Borobudur, Indonesia whose families had lost their lands and experienced conflicts. The performance took place at a temple which used to be the central pillar of the community’s identity.

In composing “Ballade of Lost Water”, she collaborated with visual and sound artists, in cooperation with the municipal government and the water management institution in Indonesia, by recording the different sounds of water merged with percussion and electronics, to formulate a composition that brings the flow of water back into people’s consciousness.

“Learning Points from Biwako, Batanes, and Khiriwong Site Visits” - Myfel Joseph D. Paluga, Department of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines, Mindanao (Philippines Fellow Year 2006-2007)

In Myfel’s opinion, visionary individuals play important adaptive roles to connect local ideas and concerns to the larger social landscape. Since API Fellows have sought such individuals to help gain information about an area, more investments (grants, trainings, social trips, technical support, etc.) should be provided to support such leaders for the services they provide to outside researchers. The support would also broaden the network and disseminate knowledge across sites.

There is a growing need to re-conceptualize and modularize vocabulary for sharing ideas and approaches across spaces for varied forms of reuse. There are old terms such as balance, nature, and the environment that also need to be re-conceptualized.

The five local sites presented here may have a strong relationship with natural environments, but they are nonetheless tied to urban centers. And while efforts to fend off encroachment and other development challenges to protect their ecological resources are important, part of the larger challenge is to better connect urban people with nature, to the non-human elements that surround us.

“Emergence of Local Initiatives in Natural Resource Management: Reflection from Biwako, Khiriwong and Kali Code Site Visits” - Yuli Nugroho (Indonesia Fellow Year 2005-2006)

In addition to his extensive work at Kali Code, Yuli visited Khiriwong in Thailand and Biwako in Japan. He found that in Khiriwong and Biwako, upstream management is key. But in Kali Code, the focus is downstream due to the large population of Yogyakarta city which the Kali Code river bisects. This has created some urban-rural challenges with the less densely populated areas upstream.

On reflection, whether it be Kali Code or other sites, Yuli concluded that there are three key drivers that can affect local initiatives:

1. Networking: among communities, within various levels of government, the private sector, universities and NGOs.
2. Capacity building: training, advocacy, and conflict resolution. The latter is particularly important as societal pressures discourage people from speaking up publicly about a problem, thus limiting opportunities to address conflicts.
3. External/international initiatives such as CDM, PES, CSR, REDD++, the Kyoto Protocol, certification schemes, premium prices, etc. These can diffuse community efforts by highlighting benefits that will not necessarily be realized by the communities themselves.

“Experiences and Understandings of Human-Ecological Issues: Taski Chini and Khiriwong Sites” - Penchom Saetang, Director of Ecological Alert and Recovery (Thailand Fellow Year 2005-2006)

Penchom compared similarities and differences between Taski Chini in Malaysia and Khiriwong in Thailand in terms of government policies, legal frameworks, and political structures that enable a community’s power to affect natural resources management.

One thing common to both sites is their shared respect for nature, since their livelihoods are intertwined with their ecology. Differences in political, social and economic contexts, however, have yielded different destinies. The ecology surrounding Khiriwong is well protected, while Taski Chini’s ecology is suffering from commercial logging, land clearing for oil palm plantation and other large-scale mono-cultured plantations, as well as water contamination from mining and factories. Thailand’s constitution and other legal mechanisms have allowed communities to protect natural resources locally, and Khiriwong has demonstrated how such policies can be put into practice, including negotiating with the state on key livelihood issues such as the state forest vs. community land demarcation. State policies governing the Taski Chini community seem to afford it far less negotiation power.

Penchom offered recommendations for knowledge- and capacity-building exchanges supported by tangible activities between the two communities, to enable their self-empowering potential. The exchange may include learning from Khiriwong’s savings group, self-directed handicap enterprises, sustainable produce cultivation and marketing, ecotourism strategies, the sharing of traditional medicinal skills,
conservation and rehabilitation strategies, youth group organizing, and cultivating effective negotiation and communication skills.

“Tasik Chini: Policy Capture and Orang Asli Struggle for Land and Identity”
- Josie M Fernandez, Secretary General of Transparency International, Malaysia (Malaysia Fellow Year 2006-2007)

Josie started her presentation with a question: what really is the role of public intellectuals? API and its networks needed to look at themselves as playing a more public role, since one key issue that failed to be addressed during this workshop was the role of the state. How well are government agencies meeting their responsibilities, and how well are public intellectuals pushing them to do so?

Malaysia’s Tasik Chini and the Orang Asli case illustrated these failings rather well. Many government agencies have been given millions of dollars to work for the Orang Asli, but these agencies are not building up the capacity of communities to challenge state failings. This failure of the state, public institutions, and academia has led to a very uncertain future for the Orang Asli. In August 2011 a petition was sent to the prime minister, documenting the blatant violations of laws and regulations related to governance of catchment areas and the need to protect the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

In Malaysia, dissent by public universities is still sharply controlled, at times by self-censorship to ensure political correctness. The safest path for academics is to “develop a tool” or “discover a fact” and leave it to others (politicians, bureaucrats) to oversee how the tools and facts are used. Moreover, when the Orang Asli invite universities to join them in presenting their findings to the press, the universities are unwilling to attend.

The state has clearly failed the Orang Asli, but so too have public intellectuals, and this dynamic is certainly not limited to Malaysia.

“The Clash of Global and Local Cultures”
- Decharut Sukkumnoed, Lecturer at the Department of Agricultural and Resources Economics, Kasetsart University

National governments in the region tend to push development/modernization policies that are fairly consistent with those of other countries around the globe. The degree to which local communities have power is largely influenced by the level of institutional power exercised by national governments which determine land rights, natural resources management, and environmental protection. This unfair institutionalization is based on three pillars*: authority, knowledge, and, possibly, most critically, social thinking/behavior.

It is beneficial that all API Projects aim to address each of these pillars. Governments typically pursue quantitative approaches through planning efforts, such as Environmental Impact Assessments. But Asian public intellectuals should attempt to advance knowledge using the qualitative and bottom-up approach with the local people. Frankie Abreu illustrated this when describing how the communities impacted by the deep-sea port and industrial development projects in Burma have been attempting to quantify their losses in property and livelihoods. It is this combined, holistic approach to knowledge that must be pursued and advanced.

The challenges to the API Community are not only cultivating and documenting old and new knowledge, but advancing this knowledge inside and outside communities, while respecting community views, feelings, and the natural resources they rely on. Even more important, however, is how to utilize this knowledge in a synchronistic and strategic fashion to influence social perceptions and build sustainable power for self determination. Absent such an approach, it will be difficult for local cultures to survive amidst the ongoing global changes.

Open Forum
After Decharut’s discussion, vibrant exchanges focused around five key issues: violence, modernization, conceptualizing ecology, the Regional Project’s future, and the existence, or not, of an Asian perspective on the environment.

(The three pillars* are: authority, knowledge, and social thinking/behavior.)

(For more information, please see the publication: www.api-fellowships.org/body/download/other/public/API%20pocket%20book14-15June2012.pdf)
The API Regional Project Documentary was premiered on June 14, 2012. With water as the central theme, the documentary took viewers across five Asian ecological sites and showed how local inhabitants, often without scientific help, have developed indigenous ways of taking care of their environments in the face of natural and man-made calamities.

Across the region, spirituality has been seen as the Asian people’s first line of action toward environmental threat. But while spirituality is pervasive, local peoples are also practical enough to take physical action in order to effect real changes in their communities. Director Nick Deocampo (Philippines Fellow Year 2001-2002) remarked; “Over the past three years when I made this documentary, I could not but be humbled by the strength of the human spirit to overcome both natural and man-made disasters. I stand before you tonight with much humility, having been in the presence of real heroes of our time. So I wish to salute the communities which I had the honor of visiting.”

**RP Exhibition**

The Regional Project Culminating Event exhibition beautifully showcased significant community inputs into environmental revitalization, fragile cultures, and local heritage at the Regional Project sites. It also presented key issues derived during site visits over the past three years. The Regional Project book, documentary and website were presented in the exhibition.

**RP Art Performances**

Art performances featured the following artist collaboration with communities:

1. “Code Purnama Hatiku (Code, the Full Moon of My Heart)” by Tomoko Momiyama (Japan Fellow Year 2003 – 2004)
API Fellows worked in two villages, Harihata and Biwako. Traditional paddy cultivation was undertaken to learn the benefits of these practices. A photo exhibition and an art installation were held and numerous community members were engaged with the project.

Khiriwong, Thailand:
Video-making training for Kiriwong youth, and a performance in water choreographed and performed by youth emphasized the community’s experience with flooding. API Fellows also provided support to sustain Kiriwong’s biodiversity.

Batanes, the Philippines:
A heritage-building workshop raised awareness on the importance of the area’s history and culture. An art installation illustrated local knowledge and wisdom to communities and tourists. A teacher-training seminar on environmental conservation was held for local educators.

Kali Code, Indonesia:
Capacity-building assistance was provided to the Kali Code communities to help them constructively engage with various stakeholders in developing solutions to the environmental challenges facing the communities.

Tasik Chini, Malaysia:
A youth photography workshop was organized, as were trainings with local artists and the community on devising public awareness programs to respond to the environmental degradation in and around Tasik Chini.
Learning from People’s Resilience and Empowering Communities in Challenging Times

A Discussion Seminar and Screening of the Documentary “A River Changes Course”

The Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowships Program held a discussion seminar and a special screening of the award-winning documentary “A River Changes Course” on June 20, 2013 at Chulalongkorn University (CU), Thailand. Co-organized with the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) and the Master of Arts for International Development Program (MAIDS), CU, the event addressed critical issues in Asia that are captured in the documentary. It also sought to identify a shared vision for a sustainable common future, as countries, especially in the ASEAN region, face tremendous political, economic, social and environmental challenges. The seminar brought together 110 participants from academe, civil society, diplomatic circles, and media.

Farina So (Cambodia API Fellow Year 2012-2013), Head of the Oral History Project, DC-Cam, introduced the 83-minute documentary, which received the 2013 World Cinema Documentary Grand Jury Prize at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival. The film focuses on three Cambodian families: 1) an ethnic Jarai family in the northeast highlands, whose life depends on the forest, 2) a Cham fishing family living around Tonle Sap Lake, and 3) a village family in the eastern part of Phnom Penh City. Despite their differences in language and customs, the families share many common challenges, including problems relating to deforestation, overfishing, and overwhelming debt.

After the screening, Youk Chhang, Executive Director of DC-Cam and executive producer of the documentary, addressed the forum. He provided some historical background on developments in Cambodia since the Khmer Rouge period, which ended in 1979. He noted that it had taken 24 years for Cambodia to begin to emerge from the genocide. From 1979 to 1991, the country was extremely poor and women comprised 60 percent of the population. Since 1999, members of the international community have been trying to ensure that leaders of the genocide would be brought to justice through a tribunal. The 15-year period from 1999 to the present has thus seen multiple forms of action relative to justice and social issues. In order to move forward, he said, the Cambodian people must reconcile with the past and live on looking towards the future. Further, it was also crucial that neighboring countries such as Thailand learn about and understand Cambodia, since no country can exist in isolation, he said.

Premrudee Daorueng, the Director of Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA), identified two vital issues tackled by the film, which are also a key focus for TERRA: land and rivers. She discussed how land grabbing by private corporations through economic concessions is one of the most damaging issues currently being experienced in Cambodia because of the large impact the practice is having on local people’s livelihoods and cultures. She noted that it was interesting to see the common sense articulated by people in the film who said: “When you work for yourself, you get something. When you work for others, you get nothing.”

Nick Deocampo, Director of the Center for New Cinema and API Fellow 2001-2002 from the Philippines, also joined the discussion. Through his experience in making API documentaries as part of collaborations by API Fellows and communities in five countries, Nick shared his observations on how local people such as fishermen, farmers, and the marginalized have shown considerable spiritual power and resilience in the face of disasters. He further emphasized the role of documentaries as a tool for education and empowering communities.

Like Deocampo, Youk Chhang also believed that human beings have resilience. But he added that Cambodia has been perceived as a “victim country” for many years. This has become part of the problem and Cambodian people must stand on their own feet and cope with what has happened. He said that “I think if we look closer at human beings, we can find so much strength for the future. We need to learn how not to be victims forever, but how to reconcile with the past and move into the future, as we are part of ASEAN.”

After the forum, there were lively exchanges on how neighboring countries can help each other in the search for a sustainable future. Conflicts of interest were also identified, including the issue of private corporations seeking the lowest production costs. As consumers, a participant said, we are all part of this exploitation.

1. “A River Changes Course” Documentary produced by DC-Cam
2. From left: MAIDS Deputy Director Jakkrit Sangkhmanee, Youk Chhang and Nick Deocampo
ROLE OF DOCUMENTARY:

Who are the main target audiences of the film "A River Changes Course"?
How has the success of the film at the Sundance Film Festival brought more recognition for the film's key message?

Global audiences are our main target because the film deals with issues that are both local to Cambodia, and global. The film focuses on individual lives. It's all about ordinary people. It's a kind of reality check. We are facing new challenges like industrialization and globalization which affect people whose lives are based on natural resources. Land and forests are being expropriated and cleared for the sake of industrialization, while local people receive no benefits from what is then produced. Farmers are forced to borrow money from microfinance institutions in order to survive. Young kids are forced to work in factories where they earn very little. But Cambodia is not alone. Similar issues exist elsewhere. We hope that policy makers and investors will be more conscious of the issues when they make decisions to invest. The film also aims to encourage local people to protect their own resources, defend their own territories and define their own futures.

The award is not our trophy but an encouragement for us. It shows the value of the film as people everywhere can relate to the issues it presents. We thus have a campaign to show it at as many international film festivals and universities as possible. To really give the issues a voice, the film has to be globally recognized. So far the film has been shown in 24 film festivals around the world.

How do you handle pressures from stakeholders, like the business community?

To stand on your own feet for what you believe, in relation to human rights, you have to be ready to sacrifice everything. When you are honest to your subject, you shouldn't be fearful.

As for the pressure, nobody at all has threatened me. I think the process itself (of making the documentary) was of benefit to people. As for the pressure, nobody at all has threatened me. I think the process itself (of making the documentary) was of benefit to people. I am a victim and I am a survivor. Why should I be afraid? That's my belief. There are many survivors to back me up too.

PEACE-BUILDING THROUGH MEMORIES:

DC-CAM holds large documentation archives. How do you handle the pressures involved in gathering information?

Documentation is a political act. That's what people have to understand. If I gather or create a document related to the Khmer Rouge, it's a political act that involves and affects many people. Reflecting on genocide is also a political act. It's all political, right?

There have been many challenges along the way, including network and technological challenges. I also faced desperation. Back in the early days, there was no Internet, no YouTube, nothing. We had to think hard about how to archive the materials, including the documentary film footage. In terms of networking, often no one wanted to associate with me because the Khmer Rouge is a highly sensitive issue, both inside and outside the country. Inside the country, threats and intimidation were a challenge. But when Ieng Sary and his wife, or some unknown person, threatened me, I threatened them back, because I had nothing to fear from them. I am a victim and I am a survivor. Why should I be afraid? That's my belief. There are many survivors to back me up too.

I also had to deal with regional politics causing barriers to the research. For example, I was chasing files on Nuon Chea in Thailand for many years, but failed. Vietnam is very open but I couldn't access everything. I had to go to Laos, North Korea, China, East Germany, Western European countries and Africa. So it was about grabbing information from around the globe because you have to understand the Khmer Rouge from the outside, too. You have to understand them from different perspectives, including who they associated with and how that affected their policies. So I have worked on this both inside and outside the country.

The film held their attention because what they saw in it was not what they think of as success. They felt like their investments were somewhat failures. One of them said he felt strong regret, and that his firm would no longer make awards to a local microfinance institution. So I call this an impact of the film. We want this kind of message to be heard globally, so more members can shift their investment policies in accordance with their interest to save the lives of the poor. If even one of the poor is negatively affected by their investment, their mission is not accomplished.
How much freedom have you had from the government; we know that PM Hun Sen was once part of the Khmer Rouge?

One hundred percent freedom. As for Hun Sen, we have his file too. The reason why I said 100 percent is because the DC-Cam is not a court. We have our own objectives. The issue of justice is for the Tribunal, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The government has seemed very open. One reason why the government supported the court is that they also perceive themselves as victims of the Khmer Rouge regime. Our research is actually seen by them as a benefit to them.

There were only two countries in the world supporting this process when it started. One was Cambodia because they saw this as a benefit to politics. Secondly, the United States government, because the US was under pressure to look into the crimes carried out by the Khmer Rouge. Before that, people never looked at these crimes as human right violations. Others around the world always felt like genocide was a very sensitive issue. When people looked at World War II, they felt the Holocaust was very complicated. But later we got support from European countries like the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, etc.

As now we have international support, it’s up to Cambodia to make the difference and to change course. And we are changing course now in terms of Khmer Rouge history.

What if people wish to avoid facing reality and painful memories? How does the theory that “knowledge brings relief” actually work?

If people don’t want to talk about their experiences, you should respect that. It's part of the documentation process. We have no right to tell people to forgive, or to apologize. We should respect people’s choices about how they want to live their lives. Healing is rather a personal thing for all genocide survivors.

Only about ten or fifteen per cent of victims wish to keep their experiences secret, according to regular surveys which have been conducted nationwide, not only by us, but also by other international institutions. We carry out surveys on this every two or three years. Usually 86-87 percent of victims support the process of documentation and justice. Most survivors want their children to learn and to know about their experiences of crisis. We also encourage students to get involved, as part of the process of healing, by interviewing their parents and neighbors. This work by students has been integrated into high school curricula nationwide. It’s very personal and it helps healing. I think parents want to talk to their own children more than they want to talk to me. I think most parents feel very appreciated if their children want to know their life experiences, as part of school assignments.

Before the first-ever Khmer Rouge History was integrated into the textbooks in 2007, how did the generation born after the "Killing Fields" era perceive that time?

Before that, the content in the textbooks was truly about politics, not even about history. After students read the new 78 page introduction to the history of the Khmer Rouge, they had many questions — including about the external causes, about Buddhist karma, beliefs in previous lives, and about coup d’état and the Vietnam War. The problem was that the teachers did not have the ability to answer all the questions. So we tried to identify the common questions from a total of 4-500 frequently asked questions nationwide, and we provided materials for history teachers to help them answer the questions and deal with the issues.

There is also a challenge with regard to Khmer Rouge parents. Most of those parents don’t talk straight to their children. We learned that in Pailin, one student once told a teacher “you don’t need to teach me, because I know my parents are Khmer Rouge.” The children became a bit aggressive rather than challenging for the truth, and the teachers got scared. Many areas in Cambodia are still facing challenges like this. It is not an easy process. But Cambodia needs to face this. So, we have many different formal and informal programs with institutions, and we air issues on TV and in media like magazines and other publications. You could call it a huge education program.
PM Hun Sen has proposed making it illegal to deny the genocide by the Khmer Rouge. What do you think of this?

You do not need a Cambodian law to protect the truth of what happened during the Khmer Rouge. I think it’s a violation of free speech and that it’s truly about politics. It’s the election season (Note: this interview was conducted before Cambodia’s general election on July 28) so every politician will do anything they can to win the election. After doing many decades of research, it’s my opinion that everyone believes in the realities of the Khmer Rouge period. No one denies it. Even the former Khmer Rouge members believe the crimes took place. Why should there be a law of denial? This could also impact youth as they could feel “forced” to believe. The young shouldn’t be forced to believe but free to learn. Having questions doesn’t mean they don’t believe. They just want to know, and we have to explain things and teach them. They are simply young!

FUTURE WORK AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION:
What are the aims of the Sleuk Rith Institute**, as a permanent hub for genocide studies in Asia, comprising a genocide museum, a school and a research center?

The program is already up and running, but the physical building has not been established because the Sleuk Rith Institute should be housed in an architectural setting that helps change the mindset of Cambodians. My ideas for that are around gender, culture, and environment. The building should be uniquely Cambodian, but also contemporary, inside. The genocide museum part should be built underground, like in a tomb. That’s because the topic of genocide should be placed below us, like hell is below us. Above the genocide museum, there would be a contemporary art museum. I want to make a distinction between heaven, earth and hell. Of course, there is a transitional from hell to earth where museum education will play an important role—healing.

As for the program, the museum works with other Cambodian museums to incorporate issues around the genocide. Film is a part of the research and the work. Research is focusing on genocide and minorities in the region. We work in partnership with Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and institutions in Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines, Brunei, and so on, at different levels. Laos is the only nation with which we have no connection. We want to work with all the ASEAN countries.

Is there any similar center in Asia? What do existing learning centers/ museums in Asia lack the most?

I think there is a lack of understanding about human rights in Southeast Asia. There are also many conflicts around domestic politics and policies in Asian countries. How to teach people about peace? It’s actually about human rights.

and we are very open. In addition, I have a 50-year agreement with the government (starting from 2010) to operate this (the Sleuk Rith Institute). We were nominated by the International Association of Genocide Scholars as a hub in Asia on genocide study and we are part of that network.

How do you think awareness of human rights can be enhanced in Asia?

It’s very hard. In the past, you could see many Asians chose to study subjects such as accounting, banking, engineering, or food. Anyway, now it’s perhaps different. Studying human rights is beginning. More Asians now study human rights and do research on genocide. And since it is now more convenient to travel between ASEAN countries, recently we are seeing growing numbers of ASEAN students.

There are two different groups. People in post-conflict countries like Syria, Iraq, Myanmar, East Timor, and so forth, are interested in history. In stable countries like Thailand and others, people are more interested in courses and scholarships than in documentation. But in general, interest in the study of human rights and genocide is rising.

What are your expectations around collaboration between public intellectuals in Asia?

In the media sector, some journalists in ASEAN could be experts in the topic of genocide and human rights. In academia, genocide should be studied within formal programs. Scholarships provided to young scholars in Asia would be good as this would enable them to go back to their countries and teach and integrate the issues in the fields of sociology, history, geography, politics, etc. Genocide study should be in a formal program. There could be a study focusing on the implications of genocide and international law in the region. API could support that.

In relation to the ASEAN Community in 2015, I think we have to understand the principles of human rights. It would be a failure to only integrate in terms of economics and the English language. For example, we should be proud of speaking more than English, as this is a principle concept of human rights. ASEAN youth populations have to understand human rights because they will become leaders of the region. If ASEAN wants to compete with the European Union or others around the world, each of our countries needs to share challenges and visions in order to survive. It will take time, but we can do it. We are not blind and we have learnt. We have technology. There are also opportunities. One day we will have a good ASEAN community.

Chadapan Malipan

More information on the ECCC: www.eccc.gov.kh/en
More information on the DC-Cam: www.d.dccam.org/
More information on the Sleuk Rith Institute: www.cambodiasri.org/
More information on A River Changes Course: www.ariverchangescourse.com/
More information on Cambodia Tribunal Monitor: www.cambodiatribunal.org/

* A law of denial is a legal framework providing that whoever publicly denies genocides or other crimes by perpetrators will be punished by prison.
** Built on DC-Cam’s work, the Sleuk Rith Institute is the center of genocide studies in Asia, fostering memory, justice and reconciliation in Cambodia and throughout the region.
Independent filmmaker **Nguyen Trinh Thi** (Vietnam Fellow Year 2011-2012) joined the Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Visions at Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. A film **Jo Ha Kyu** was produced during her API Fellowship in Tokyo and it was one of the series of “Public Diary” films from Hanoi Doclab where she is the director. **Jo Ha Kyu** was screened in Tokyo on Saturday, February 23, 2013.

**Phra Paisal Visalo** (Thailand Senior Fellow 2001-2002) received honorary doctorate degrees from the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University and the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, during December 2012, for his outstanding devotion to promoting non-violence activities over three decades. Phra Paisal is also a committee member of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB).

**Persida V. Rueda-Acosta** (Philippines Senior Fellow 2003-2004) received “Best Public Service Program Host Award” for her reality mediation program “Public Atorni: Asunto o Areglo? (To Sue or To Settle?)” at the 26th PMPC Star Awards for Television 2012 held on November 18, 2012 at the Henry Lee Irwin Theater, Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines. She is currently the Chief Public Attorney of the Public Attorney’s Office, an agency mandated to give free legal assistance to the poor, the oppressed and other marginalized sectors in the Philippines.

**Ukrnist Pathamanand** (Thailand Senior Fellow Year 2008 - 2009) has been appointed Research Professor. President of Chulalongkorn University Professor Pirom Kamolratnakul M.D. (right) congratulated him on the occasion of the appointment. Currently he is the Director of Mekong Studies Center, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University.

**Benigno C. Balgos** (Philippines Fellow Year 2009-2010) and **Ekoningtyas Margu Wardani** (Indonesia Fellow Year 2008-2009) participated in an International Workshop on Natural Disasters and the City, organized by the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University during January 16-17, 2013. The workshop was sponsored by the “Life and Green: Towards Sustainable Humanosphere” Research Initiative. They also presented their papers at an API seminar hosted by Japan PI on the following day at Kyoto University.

**Music composer and pianist Makoto Nomura** (Japan Fellow Year 2012-2013/middle in the picture) performed a trio concert of Melodica (in Japanese: Kenban Harmonica) on February 3, 2013, in Ashiya, Hyogo prefecture, Japan. There were 15 works in this concert, including a new work composed by Motohide Taguchi (Japan Fellow Year 2002-2003), works by leading composers in the Kansai area of Japan, and works by non-Japanese composers.
**NETWORK COLLABORATION**

Penchom Saetang (Thailand Fellow Year 2005-2006), Director of Ecological Alert and Recovery-Thailand (EARTH) co-organized the International Conference on Risk Communication and the Possibility Towards Constructive Solutions for A Healthy Future of Map Ta Phut, with Kumamoto Gakuen University and EnLAW on March 1, 2013 at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She was also a key speaker in the session titled “Development in Map Ta Phut and the Complexity of Impacts” in which she addressed key issues related to toxic risks and impacts, which also reflected the knowledge she accumulated during her API Fellowship.

This international conference presented the results of a study on the problems and recent developments in Map Ta Phut area and the Pollution Control District in Rayong Province, conducted during 2010-2012. The conference also provided a platform for exchanging opinions and experiences among all relevant sectors, including affected communities and concerned parties in Japan, Thailand and the Mekong Region.

**NEW POSITION**

Saya Kiba (Japan Fellow Year 2009-2010) started working at the Japanese Embassy in Thailand as Reseacher/Adviser in the Political Affairs Division, in May 2013. She will be based in Bangkok for the next two years. Her recent publications include “JSDF-NGO Cooperation: Issue and Challenges in JSDF’s ‘All-Japan’ International Cooperation Doctrine” in the Journal of International Cooperation Studies, Vol.21 No.1, Kobe University, Japan, July 2013.

Sol Santos (Philippines Senior Fellow Year 2009-2010) co-edited a book with Doods Santos entitled Jess Robredo: Proud Nagueño Memories, which was launched on January 19, 2013 at Powerbooks Greenbelt 4, Manila, the Philippines.

The book is a collection of prose and poetry about Robredo by his wife Atty. Leni Robredo, daughter Tricia Robredo, his eldest brother Butch Robredo, and his high-school teachers Fe Lanuza Olin and Rose Ora’s-Fuentes, among others. It introduces a timeline of Robredo’s life: from his birth and early education in Naga up to his graduation from De La Salle University, Manila and his Master-level studies in Public Administration at Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. Professionally, he worked for the San Miguel Corporation and after the Aquino assassination, he started working for the government as Mayor of Naga City and as Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government until his tragic death on August 18, 2012. Robredo received several awards, including the Ramon Magsaysay Award for government service in 2000.

Source: http://www.anvilpublishing.com

**PUBLICATION**

Kokeaw Wongphan (Thailand Fellow Year 2004-2005) contributed two articles for the publication Chao Leh (Sea Gypsy): Life in Crisis. Completed on November 5, 2012, the publication has been disseminated to libraries, relevant NGOs and local community networks in Thailand.

Inderlina B. Mateo-Babiano (Philippines Fellow Year 2006-2007) had the results of work produced during her API Fellowship published in the journal *Habitat International* Vol. 36, Issue 4 (October 2012), in a paper titled “Public life in Bangkok’s urban spaces.”

The paper examines public life within Bangkok’s urban spaces on the premise that user needs and satisfaction should play an integral component in the design of these spaces. An ecology-culture behavior paradigm is introduced to appropriately rationalize the relationship between urban design, ecology and sociology. Bangkok, a canal- and river-based port city, echoes the urban morphological processes of early Southeast Asian coastal settlements, but differs in its social and physical construct because of its lack of exposure to colonial dominance. Only in the latter part of the 19th century, when Western influence was introduced and became stronger, a change in its physical form was manifest, but the city still retained the earlier social constructs within its urban spaces and activity nodes (i.e. informal, commercial and religious spaces). Bangkok street users and their corresponding activities within the contemporary urban street space are also examined through field observation and surveys, to paint an overall picture of the behavior and attitudes of street users. The Bangkok experience presents a case of a dynamic city with competition between its traditions and Western contemporary influences. Finally, the paper reiterates the significant need to reconsider the intrinsic relationship between ecology, culture and behavior to better understand the life between structures to create an urban space that satisfies its end users.

Ahmad Suaedy (Indonesia Senior Fellow Year 2009-2010) is currently a board member of the Wahid Institute and a coordinator of the Abdurrahman Wahid Centre for Inter-Faith Dialogue and Peace (AWCentre-UI), Universitas Indonesia (UI).

Source: http://www.anvilpublishing.com
**Bringing Back Hidden Voices:**
Cham Muslim Oral History Project

**Farina So, CAMBODIA FELLOW YEAR 2012-2013**

Oral history is an effective way of making unheard voices become heard. While written history is important to help us understand large events, oral history delves deep into individual and collective memory and experience, to reveal hidden aspects of people’s lives and their experience of events.

Since oral history is related to individual memory and narratives, it inevitably faces questions about its validity and credibility. However, it has proven its efficacy for oral historians, folklorists and others who value its combination of psychological, journalistic, sociological, linguistic, and anthropological approaches.

Oral history can also help in the legal arena, including in cases dealing with sexual abuse and human rights violations. The Documentation Center of Cambodia’s Cham Oral history project was launched in 2005 to collect stories and interviews from the Cham Muslim community, comprising about 5 percent of the total 14 million population of Cambodia. Together with others, this group suffered from gross human rights violations during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979).

Over an eight-year period, the project interviewed approximately 400 Cham Muslim survivors and youth and collected about 50 essays from Cham Muslim youths throughout the country. The interviews resulted in published articles and a book The Hijab of Cambodia: Memories of Cham Muslim Women after the Khmer Rouge.

These have contributed to the ongoing legal proceedings against senior Khmer Rouge leaders as various legal parties have requested copies and also to conduct some interviews. I was invited to speak about the project by two universities while I was conducting field research on Cham Muslims in Malaysia under an API fellowship. One workshop was organized by Yeoh Seng Guan, School of Arts and Social Sciences and 2005 API fellow at Monash University, Sunway Campus, in October 2012. A second workshop was organized by Siti Nor Awang of the Anthropology and Sociology Department at the University of Malaya in December 2012. Both events were attended by undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members and staff.

The talks focused on the role of oral history in documenting Cham Muslims’ experience under the Khmer Rouge, and on the publication of the Hijab of Cambodia.

The participants posed a number of questions relating to the crimes of the Khmer Rouge, the chain of popular reaction to the Khmer Rouge tribunal, the language used in conducting interviews, the sense of ownership Cambodian people have over the Khmer Rouge tribunal, the challenges in conducting interviews with victims of rape or sexual violence against women under the Khmer Rouge, how memories are fragmented, the influence of location in conducting interviews, and how parents are passing on oral history to young generation.

The discussions were lively and the events proved an effective way of bringing the voices of Cham Muslims in Cambodia to a wider audience. This is a powerful message to survivors that their suffering is recognized, and to young generation that they should learn more about the past.

I am trying to incorporate this method in my current research under an API fellowship which is titled “Cham Muslims in Malaysia and Thailand: Then and Now”. This project addresses questions around what kind of identity Cham Muslims in both countries are constructing and how this affects their social integration and social relations.

More information on the Documentation Center of Cambodia’s Cham Oral history project: d.dccam.org/Projects/Public_Info/Public_Information.htm

Farina So is head of the Cham Oral History Project at the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam).

*About The Hijab of Cambodia: Memories of Cham Muslim Women After The Khmer Rouge*

**Author:** Farina So

**Publisher:** Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2011

The book examines Cham Muslim women’s experiences under the Khmer Rouge regime through the complexities of memory and narrative. It also uncovers compelling stories of survival and resistance. The Khmer Rouge genocidal policies ruptured ethnic and religious identities, resulting in disproportionate deaths among the Cham group. Guided by their desire to preserve their families and their cultural identity, Cham women sometimes complied with Khmer Rouge policies, and sometimes developed a hidden sense of resistance. Their recollection of this era and lost family members contributes immensely to the preservation of the Cham identity for future generations, as well as to the collective memories of all Cambodians.
Food Fight: Negotiating Ethno-Religious Differences in West Lombok

Eni Budiwanti, INDONESIA SENIOR FELLOW YEAR 2008-2009

Located just 112 kilometers east of the resort oasis of Bali, Lombok is seen by many as the “other” exotic tourist island to visit in Indonesia. Lombok has a population of three million people from multiple ethnic groups that display rich and diverse cultures. Today, the history of conflict among its main ethno-religious groups, the Sasak Muslims and Balinese Hindus, has been all but erased by unprecedented tolerance and harmony. It is a lesson the rest of Indonesia, which is experiencing a rise in religious and ethnic violence and intolerance, would do well to further explore.

Sasak Muslims are Lombok’s indigenous people and account for 87 percent of its population. Balinese Hindus are the largest minority ethnic group, estimated to account for about 7 percent. The remainder are Sumbawanese, Bugis, Javanese and Chinese. Prior to the Balinese conquest almost 300 years ago, Lombok was divided into four major regions—Pagesangan, Pagutan, Mataram and Cakranegara—each of which was ruled by a Sasak king. After their conquests in Lombok in the late 17th century, the Balinese kings oversaw development of the arts and the construction of impressive palaces with beautiful temples and gardens. These temples are all located in West Lombok and symbolize Hindu unity.

The Lombok Balinese predominantly continue to practice Hinduism, while Islam, of course, is the dominant religion of the Sasak. The Balinese appear to have integrated peacefully with the Sasak despite a violent history between them. This is affirmed through an annual religious festival at Pura Lingsar, Temple named Perang Topat, held to symbolize Hindu-Islam tolerance.

The ritual of Perang Topat literally means a fight marked by the throwing of topat (rice cake wrapped in coconut leaves) between fighters from different ethno-religious backgrounds: the Balinese and the Sasak. Pura Lingsar became a shared sacred site during this yearly ceremony, with the Balinese and Sasak affirming their religious partnership by performing the ritual together.

Previously, the Perang Topat ritual was intended to end enmity within the Sasak community by way of a symbolic war and to re-establish relationships to promote social unity, security and prosperity. Battles are usually synonymous with anger and violence—a physical clash between two parties in dispute. But in Lombok Perang Topat, which involves hundreds of Balinese and Sasaks on rival sides, gives no impression of being fierce or hostile. On the contrary, the tradition is played out annually to strengthen harmony between the Muslim and Hindu communities.

The village holds Perang Topat on the 15th day of the seventh month of the Lombok Sasak calendar, or the 15th day of the sixth month in the Balinese Hindu calendar.

The end of the Perang Topat ritual is marked by throwing all leftover offerings into the Sarasutra, a nearby river.

This is the only war in the world fought without hatred, victims and casualties, and the only one symbolizing brotherhood and tolerance.

Besides the rice cake, other offerings are prepared for a procession into the Kemaliq. With a Kebon Odek offering, one male is symbolized by a pineapple, and one female is symbolized by a papaya fruit. Kebon Odek literally means “miniature garden.” The male and female Kebon Odek symbolize binary opposition but mutually dependency between man and woman, body and soul, and rain. The coupling of Kebon Odek (female and male) symbolizes fertility and prosperity.

This is the only “war” in the world fought without hatred, victims and casualties, and the only one symbolizing brotherhood and tolerance. It’s also the only one where rice cakes replace bullets. Ethnic and religious differences in Lombok have been managed and reconciled through a symbolic medium of this ritual. It helps to revitalize the cultural identity of each group. At the same time, it is also a shared collective image of one Indonesia despite its differences.

Perang Topat serves as a model for mutual understanding and shared excitement since, for a moment, religious and ethnic differences are set aside. On one level it is a respected religious tradition, and on another it has been embraced as a shared cultural celebration.

Ethnic and religious differences in Lombok have been managed and reconciled through the symbolic medium of this ritual. It helps to revitalize the cultural identity of each group. At the same time, it is also a shared collective image of one Indonesia despite its differences.

Indonesia’s need for national unity while maintaining cultural pluralism is crucial. The durability of Indonesia’s nation-building project relies on national integration while preserving the integrity and heterogeneity of all ethno-religious groups. Cultural festivals such as Perang Topat are one symbolic way of touting Indonesia’s spirit of cohesion and its individuality. This event helps further promote Lombok as a diverse but unified multicultural society.

This article is an excerpt from the article of the same title published in the Strategic Review, January-March 2013, Vol. 3, No. 1 For the full article, read on www.academia.edu/3452030

Erni Budiwanti is a researcher at the Center for Regional Resources in the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (PSDR-LIPI).
Small Theater for a Better Society

ASEAN, we are the same! This slogan heralding the ASEAN Community spooks me. It declares, from a capitalist perspective, that we are all “the same”. Has anyone questioned this? Why should we all be the same?

Globalization: The world becomes one
The profit-driven market economy is now the dominant influence the world over. This is destroying local identities. The world, in fact, is a place of rich ecological and cultural diversity. Failure to recognize this results in conflict and division.

Small theater and different identities
I believe that alternative plays in small theaters are a rich social phenomenon. The plays are not aiming for mainstream ratings, they are free from governmental influence (as seen in many TV soap operas for instance) and free from NGO influence as well.

The role of the small theaters in Tokyo
Apart from being a so-called “talent space” for local artists, small theaters in Tokyo are places where people can gather and see plays at an affordable price. Small theaters are spaces for: Unique expression. Artists can express themselves freely in small theaters. They are gathering places for people with similar artistic tastes. Audiences like this despite the popularity of large mainstream theater in Japan, alternative theater is also still alive, adding to Tokyo’s charm and cultural diversity.

Social communication. Audiences sit closely together, laughing, crying, empathizing with other and inspiring each other. This leads to a sense of community.

Strengthening democratic participation.
The director and actors often chat to the audience at the end of a play. This intimate interaction creates bonds and elicits diverse opinions, widening democratic space.

Small theaters are actually flourishing in Tokyo, though artists struggle to survive on small incomes. In any event, as flora for the development of creativity and understanding among diverse parties, I believe the theaters can be vehicles of “Soft Power”.

“Soft Power”: A powerful tool for friendship and peace
In international relations, “Soft Power” is understood as a means of influencing other states by means of ideas rather than military or economic force. As described by the theorist Joseph S. Nye, Hard Power creates fear while “Soft Power” cultivates acceptance.

Shimo Kitazawa: a community of small theaters
Like other districts, Shimo Kitazawa has seen its share of social problems. Stage play actor and theater owner Mr. Honda Kazuo was once involved in illegal activity, but gave it up after his daughter asked him what he did for a living. For her sake, he changed paths and became a full-time actor. He also founded his own small theaters; the Honda Theater, the Off Off Theater, the Ekimae Theater, the Gekisyo Theater, the Rakuen Theater, the Suzunari Theater and the 711 Theater. Shimo Kitazawa has since become a theater district, where artists, directors, actors and critics gather.

Theater Green: a temple theater
Theater can help cultivate a virtuous society. Just east of Ikebukuro subway station is Theater Green Road, which contains three small but influential theater studios. In this district there are two very different kinds of residents; Tokyo upper-class patrons and immigrants from all walks of life. Theater Green, founded by monastic monks, has existed here for more than 40 years.

After the Second World War, Ikebukuro fell into decadence and criminality. Yasunari Asahina, a monk from the Sengyoji temple, initiated art activities in the belief that art could help in purifying people’s minds and in reviving the area. Theater was one of those activities. At the start, the artists used the temple itself as a rehearsal space, but eventually a dedicated small theater was created within the temple grounds. By 1978 the activities had grown so much that the venture had to separate from the temple. In 2005, a new six-storey building was opened with a new director, thea monk Asahina Bunsui, son of Asahina. This young and energetic monk has the same mission of creating an ideal society through the art of theater. Stage play actor and theater owner Mr. Honda Kazuo was once involved in illegal activity, but gave it up after his daughter asked him what he did for a living. For her sake, he changed paths and became a full-time actor. He also founded his own small theaters; the Honda Theater, the Off Off Theater, the Ekimae Theater, the Gekisyo Theater, the Rakuen Theater, the Suzunari Theater and the 711 Theater. Shimo Kitazawa has since become a theater district, where artists, directors, actors and critics gather.

Theater Green, founded by monastic monks, has existed here for more than 40 years.

I believe that alternative plays in small theaters are a rich social phenomenon.

“If we have people of different walks of life, we should be able to live together.”
Lao PDR, or the old Kingdom of Lan Xang, is ethnically diverse and abundant with natural resources. Now the country is changing rapidly following economic growth and ahead of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to be launched in 2015.

My visit in October 2012 to Vientiane, the capital of Laos, felt different from my experiences visiting there just a few years ago. Today Laos is taking on a more modern look. Department stores, fast food outlets, cafes, beauty salons, franchise businesses from Thailand are mushrooming. Tourism is increasing and hotels and guesthouses offer high-speed internet.

In Vientiane I met with Ajarn Sombath Somphone, the director of the Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC), Ajarn Sombath showed me how participatory development is a sustainable way to create happiness for Lao citizens when he presented key findings from consultations with civil society groups to leaders at the meeting of the Ninth Asia-Europe People’s Forum (AEPF9). I was participating as a volunteer to prepare a report for general audiences on poverty reduction and sustainable development.

My perspective was really widened after I was exposed to Ajarn Sombath’s ideas about promoting sustainable development through happiness creation. He gave great examples on initiatives in relation to cooperation and conflict reduction and he provided useful advice based on the social and cultural context of Lao PDR.

I also had an opportunity to hear many opinions during the conference about the mega-power development projects in the Mekong region, particularly the Xayaburi Dam, which is aimed to strengthen the Lao economy. Critics of the dam believed it would have tremendous effects on the aquatic ecosystem of the Mekong River and its tributaries, as traditional fish runs and habitats will be interfered with. The livelihoods of fishermen and others in three countries may be lost due to changes in the natural flow of water. Those who support the dam argued that the electricity it would produce was important, as was the revenue the government would receive. They believed that infrastructure such as electricity and roads are important for improvements in other areas such as schools and health care provision.

Such different views are a challenge for policy makers as well as local people living on the watershed. The question of how to properly manage land and resources located in one country but generating diverse impacts on other countries is particularly challenging.

People in authority should focus not only on returns on investment to bring growth, social development and security, I believe. Rather, long-term benefits from shared resources for the people living throughout the basin should be a key priority. Regional cooperation in resource preservation from upstream to downstream should be promoted through local wisdom and traditions. This is because if most people can live in harmony with the environment and are self-reliant in their occupations, the economic, social and cultural foundations for long-term sustainability are achieved. This should be implemented in conjunction with the extension of education and healthcare from the center to remote areas. This is the kind of sustainable development that would allow people in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) to live happily together.

Pornsiri Cheevapattananuwong is a lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand. Her research interests include the impacts of environmental changes on local communities, health impact assessments (HIA) and their implications for community empowerment, and environment-educational activities for youth.
The Courts and Populist Democracy: When Hard Cases Make Really Bad Law

Raul Pangalangan, PHILIPPINES SENIOR FELLOW YEAR 2012-2013

On February 21, 2013, a special roundtable discussion seminar titled "The Courts and Populist Democracy: When Hard Cases Make Really Bad Law" was held and co-organized by API Thailand and Chulalongkorn University’s Faculty of Law. Raul Pangalangan, formerly Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Philippines, was the key speaker.

Since the end of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, the Philippines has increasingly turned to the courts to make hard choices which its fragile democracy is incapable of: on corruption and transparency, human rights, environmental issues, etc. This pattern of "judicialization" can be seen in other Asian countries that have emerged from dictatorships. In this process, the courts are transformed. They serve not as a check on popular power but as its handmaiden. They vindicate democratic norms through unelected institutions, and redefine the place of courts in democratic governance. But they also indicate a different source of legitimacy, away from democratic politics and toward constitutional norms that are beyond the reach of shifting political majorities. Therefore, this roundtable discussion looked at the common challenges that the region faces and reflected on a way forward, while sharing the experiences of the Philippines and Thailand.

In Memory of Loh Yin San

Loh Yin San (MALAYSIA FELLOW YEAR 2010-2011) passed away on January 9, 2013, after a three year battle with cancer. She was 42 years of age at the time of her death.

Loh Yin San was by profession a documentary filmmaker and the Coordinator of the Women’s Candidacy Initiative. Her API project title was “Political Participation of Women in Asia from a Feminist Perspective”. Her project countries were the Philippines and Japan. One of her documentary films, “Alice Lives Here”, was the winner of the 2005 Freedom Film Fest (FFF) human rights film competition organized by KOMAS, a human rights organization based in Malaysia. Loh Yin San was a co-producer of the documentary.

Another of her documentary films, “Twelve 11” won the Freedom Film Fest’s Most Outstanding Human Rights Film in 2006. This documentary was directed by Loh Yin San and Claudia Theophilus (who also sadly passed away recently, in February 2013).

Loh Yin San was a very active member of the API Fellows’ Community and continued with her enthusiasm even when in relatively poor health. She was a member of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) for Malaysia and while resident in Penang, she continued her participation in NCC meetings through the use of Skype.

May she rest in peace.
Reflections from History

API Panel at the 22nd International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) Conference

As a way to encourage more regional collaboration, API Fellowships Program created a grant scheme to support a panel at a conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA).

The 22nd IAHA conference was entitled Remembering the Past, Experiencing the Present, and Exploring the Future and was held at Surakarta, central Java, Indonesia, from July 2 -5, 2012.

The selected API panel was titled Confronting Disasters: Historical Underpinnings of People’s Agency, Human Solidarity, and Government Responses in the Climate Change Era.

It consisted of four presentations highlighting community-based experiences in Indonesia and the Philippines in relation to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Two API Fellows and two non-fellows were selected to participate. The participants and their papers were as follows;

- Benigno C. Balgos (Philippines Fellow Year 2010-2011) Sectoral Advocacy and Publications Coordinator, the Center for Social Concern and Action at De La Salle University, the Philippines;
  Paper: Whose Knowledge Matters?: Discourses on Local Knowledge in Disaster Risk Reduction.

- Ekoningtyas Margu Wardani (Indonesia Fellow Year 2008-2009) Researcher, Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia;
  Paper: Assessment of the Effectiveness of Forest Fire Reduction Programs in Indonesia: A Short Survey.

- Nur Widiyanto (Non-API Fellow) Researcher and Facilitator, Bingkai Indonesia (specialist in Disaster Risk Reduction and Natural Resources Management);
  Paper: Learning from Local Knowledge: The Earthquake in Yogyakarta & Volcano Eruption in Sangihe Islands, North Sulawesi.

- Jesusa Grace Molina (Non-API Fellow) Programme Officer, Center for Disaster Preparedness, the Philippines.

The API-supported panel provided compelling evidence for the region to strengthen the role of local knowledge in providing solutions to global disasters and climate change dilemmas.

Participants’ reflections on the event:

Ekoningtyas Margu Wardani

On July 2-5, 2012 in Solo City, Central Java, I had the opportunity to deliver my thoughts on disaster risk reduction in relation to local knowledge, during a time of climate change. I give thanks to the API Fellowships Program which generously supported the panel at the remarkable 22nd International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) conference.

Initially, I hesitated after receiving an invitation from API to apply to participate in the conference. This was because I am not a historian. However, my hesitation disappeared when I read the objectives of the API’s grant in relation to the conference. One objective was to encourage the API Community to collaborate in an interdisciplinary and cross-border manner to critically address the challenges that are facing the region. Moreover, API had set very specific panel themes. One theme was disaster-related issues; my long-time concern. Together with Ninoy Balgos, an API Fellow from the Philippines of year 2010-2011, I agreed to apply to participate. Ninoy and I have worked closely together for more than two years. We have tried to establish collaborations on many occasions as we realize that we have the same interest in disaster management issues. For this conference, we were joined by two colleagues with the same interests to create this panel.

It was a great experience for us and we learnt a lot from the event. From substantive point of view, although the four of us were anthropologist, economist, NGOs’ workers, and student of policy studies; we could put our perspectives on the different angles, which were from historian point of view on the issues of disaster risk reduction. We also could have met the historian experts from all around the world sharing their knowledge and expertise with us. From the seminar, we could widen our networking.
by changing contact to other historian experts. Most importantly, we could share our knowledge which is based on our past experiences to others.

As an academic, most of my work is related to food security, indigenous people, and rural development. I also work closely on public policy-related issues such as environmental economics, disaster risk reduction, and poverty. At the conference, I presented a paper titled *Assessment of the Effectiveness of Forest Fire Reduction Programs in Indonesia: A Short Survey*, which was based on research conducted in 2010. Historically, many forest fire prevention programs have been implemented in Indonesia at the local, national, and regional levels since the colonial era. Unfortunately the programs have not been sufficiently effective in handling the problem. By provided an historical perspective on the issue, I hoped to contribute to future policy development. I consider that this issue is still strategic and pertinent for Indonesia and similarly-affected neighboring countries.

**Ninoy Balgos and Jesusa Grace Molina**

The IAHA 2012 provided a venue for individuals from government, academe, the development arena and other professionals to establish an effective mechanism for knowledge exchange. The event gathered experts and practitioners to share their research on history, with particular themes including gender, politics, defense, disasters and climate change, culture, religion, demography, urbanization, literature, ethnic groups, literature, and medicine. More than three hundred participant-panelists engaged in parallel sessions.

A ceremonial dinner at the Sultanate’s Palace in Surakarta was organized to formally open the conference. High officials from various supporting organizations were present to give inspiring messages and to welcome participants. This kick-off activity also showcased Indonesian heritage as seen through its traditional dance and music. The ambiance of Kasunanan Palace helped the participants to understand the sophistication of Indonesian architecture and design. Sumptuous local food was served, giving the participants a taste of Indonesian cuisine.

The API panel provided compelling evidence for the region to strengthen the role of local knowledge in providing solutions to global disasters and climate change dilemmas. Panelists underscored how local knowledge and capacities have enabled high-risk communities to cope with the impacts of natural hazards, and to bounce back. They called on government and non-state actors to utilize these capacities and mainstream them into development plans.

**Future Applications**

Currently, the NGO, the Center for Disaster Preparedness – Philippines, has an ongoing partnership with UNESCO Jakarta entitled, “Strengthening Resilience of Small Island and Coastal Communities” (StResCom). The project aims to document and popularize indigenous practices in relation to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and to integrate this into disaster-risk policies and programs. The project is also being implemented in Indonesia and East Timor.

In the Philippines, the research was able to inventory local and indigenous knowledge in three areas; Angono, Rizal; Alabat island in Quezon province and Rapu-Rapu island in Albay province. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials will be produced during the second phase of the project.

With this in mind, the insights drawn from the panel and the discussions will enrich initiatives to mainstream indigenous knowledge in disaster policies and programs.
Transition at API Malaysia

Rashila Ramli was appointed the new director of the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) thus API Director of Malaysia during April 2013, replacing K.S. Nathan. Rashila continues as the director of the Institute of Occidental Studies (IKON) at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Rashila holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Northern Arizona University. She will be serving on the API International Selection Committee in addition to being a member of the API Executive Committee.

Transition at API Japan

Nami Yamamoto, Program Assistant
Nami Yamamoto took over as program assistant for the Japan Partner Institution from Motoko Kondo in March 2013, rejoining the API Community after two years' childcare leave. She holds a master's degree in development studies and has working experience with several NGOs in Japan and Europe. She is very interested in agro-ecology and sustainability, and loves farming, cooking and eating food grown on her own farm. She is very keen to learn from the diverse and rich cultures and experiences of API members.

Transition at API Philippines

Jean-Marie Isabelle D. Lau Wang, Assistant Program Coordinator
Jean officially assumed the position of assistant program coordinator in April, succeeding Kristine Santos. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Comparative Literature, majoring in Asian Literature, and is currently studying for her master’s degree in Environmental Management. She is grateful to have the chance to interact with different people and cultures through API as it is her dream to participate in the education of developing countries in relation to sustainable development and conservation. Passionate about wildlife and animal rights, she also aims to some day take her nation’s stray animals out of kill-pounds and off the streets, and give them purpose and loving homes.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **API Collaborative Grant**
  - Grant Announcement: August 22, 2013
  - Application Deadline: October 10, 2013
  For details and updates: www.api-fellowships.org

- **The API Regional Workshop** will be held in Bali during November 24-27, 2013.
Two API Regional Committee (RC) meetings were held during the period of this report. The first was held on July 13-15, 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and was attended by Dias Pradadimara and Rina Shahrullah (Indonesia), Motohide Taguchi and Tatsuki Kataoka (Japan), Josie Fernandez and Mustafa Kamal Anuar (Malaysia), Theresita Atienza and Rosalie Arcala Hall (the Philippines), Kritsana Kaewplang and Thitipol Kanteewong (Thailand) and Nguyen Van Chinh (a special participant representing CMLV countries). The second meeting was held on February 8–10, 2013, in Subang Jaya, Malaysia, and was attended by Rina Shahrullah (Indonesia), Motohide Taguchi and Tatsuki Kataoka (Japan), Josie Fernandez and Mustafa Kamal Anuar (Malaysia), Christina Lim and Rosalie Arcala Hall (the Philippines), Kritsana Kaewplang and Thitipol Kanteewong (Thailand).

RC Contributions to the New Grant Scheme
The RC was invited by the EXECO to make suggestions for the new grant scheme to replace the former Follow-Up Grants. The RC had been spending sometime working on it but completed its task by submitting its revision ideas to the EXECO, which then proposed to call the former Follow-Up Grants “API Community Grants,” emphasizing the dimensions of collaboration, sustainability and visibility. The July 2012 RC meeting thus focused on proposing additional grant schemes/mechanisms for post-fellowship activities and opportunities to supplement the “API Community Grant.” These would be “Civic Creativity Grants” and “Networking Grants.” The Civic Creativity Grant would be a short-term grant to support individual and collaborative activities to disseminate experiences and share expertise as presenters and resource persons for exhibitions, art festivals, artist-in-residence programs and public conferences, and as facilitators in workshops and other events within Asia. The “Networking Grants” would give opportunities to individuals to conceptualize cross-country collaborations and project ideas prior to application. The proposals were submitted by the RC Chair to the EXECO meeting in August 2012.

The EXECO integrated the two RC proposals into a single new grant scheme which became the “API Collaborative Grant,” and was launched in January 2013. This scheme covers both short-term and long-term collaborative projects, dissemination, conceptualization and other activities consistent with API goals. Until the end of 2015, prior to API’s new phase, there will be two rounds of opportunities for API Fellows through this scheme.

Progress on RP Products
The RC discussed progress on the Regional Project (RP) products in order to update each country’s API Fellows’ community. Firstly, the RC reported on the RP Culminating Event Proceedings, which were published by the Coordinating Institution (CI). It was reported that copies have been distributed to each participating country’s Fellows and to stakeholders, through Partner Institutions (PI). Secondly, the RC was reported on the RP book, which is now in the final phase of production. The RP documentary Cross Currents: Journey of Asian Environments, was updated and is now in its initial promotion phase. Co-producer and director Nick Deocampo has gained many positive responses from film festivals and academic circles.

In terms of country-level publications, a pictorial book about Khiriwong as well as a bilingual book on Biwako are now available for sale. A bilingual pictorial book about Tasik Chini was recently published, edited by Adnan Hezri (API Fellow Batch 6) and Henry Chan (API Fellow Batch 1). Malaysia Fellow, Josie Fernandez (Batch 6) of Transparency International also produced and wrote the script for a documentary as part of a campaign to save Tasik Chini. The publication of books on Kali Code (Indonesia) and Batanes (the Philippines) are in progress. It is expected that the Kali Code book will be printed during 2013.

RC Recommendations on Invigorating Intra-Country and Inter-Country Collaborations
It was felt that some thematic and sub-regional collaborations taking place among Fellows are not yet widely known. Looking at 2015 and beyond, the RC recommended to enhance information-sharing among Fellows in order to encourage further networking and collaborations. If Fellows can share their ideas on thematic themes and activities more effectively, such ideas can be taken up as intra-country and inter-country collaborations. In this regard, the RC identified that ASEAN integration could be an over-arching theme for joint work. ASEAN integration is a real issue and concern and includes the sub-topics of human security, climate change and disaster management, governance and corruption, peace and conflict resolution, democracy and human rights, economic integration, employment and education.

Intra-country and inter-country collaborations can be conducted in various forms, depending on the diverse backgrounds and strength of Fellows. The RC suggested a number of potential activities, including round-table discussions seminars for the public, a series of articles by Fellows to be featured in newspapers, skills-based workshops with artists, and a semi-public exhibition. Some activities may be organized to coincide with Country Workshops.

RC Transitions
Cristina Lim replaced Theresita Atienza as RC representative from the Philippines and joined the RC meeting in February 2013. Due to the completion of his term, Japan RC representative and RC Chair Tatsuki Kataoka was replaced by Kohei Watanabe. Rina Shahrullah from Indonesia was selected as Liaison Officer, succeeding Dias Pradadimara who stepped down as RC representative of Indonesia. Dias was replaced as RC by Yuli Nugroho.

The RC prepared its common report and presentations on all of the above updates and discussion points for the Country Workshop 2013.
Warm greetings to members of API family. This will be my first greeting for most of the readers of this newsletter, as I joined the API team recently from last April. I have been working as a program coordinator at The Nippon Foundation (TNF) for nearly 10 years, spending the last 2 years in India on deputation to Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation. Having returned to TNF office in Tokyo, I am grateful for having an opportunity to join the API team and I very much look forward to meeting members of API community.

TNF offers programs in wide variety of fields such as maritime affairs, disaster relief and promoting independent living for people with disabilities, etc. Taking this opportunity, I would like to share with you briefly about the leprosy program which I look after along with Mr. Tanami and Mr. Seko.

Leprosy has been one of the focused areas for TNF for more than 40 years. The first goal was to eliminate leprosy medically. We have seen a dramatic decrease in the number of leprosy cases following the introduction of multi-drug therapy, an effective cure for leprosy, in the 1980s. In the recent years, the focus is shifting more to social aspect of the disease—eliminating discrimination against people affected by leprosy.

The approach TNF is taking in this regard has multi dimensions. Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, serving as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination and Japanese Government Goodwill Ambassador for Human Rights of People Affected by Leprosy, approached the United Nations to take up this issue as human rights violation. Seven years of lobbying resulted in the Resolution and annexed Principles and Guidelines (P&G) for elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members, which was adopted at UN Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly in 2010. The Resolution and P&G encourages States and all actors of society to ensure equal rights to persons affected by leprosy in all aspects of their lives.

However, the changes don’t just happen top-down. It has to correspond with the forces emerging from the ground. For this reason, TNF, along with Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation, supports networking of people affected by leprosy. In Indonesia, Philippines, China, Brazil and India, there are organizations of people affected by leprosy working for their empowerment and to fight stigma and discrimination they face.

In India, for example, an organization called National Forum India (NFI) started as an informal network among 700 self-settled leprosy colonies across the country. In 2007, NFI along with other petitioners submitted a petition for socio-economic empowerment of people affected by leprosy to the Petition Committee in the Parliament of India. Two discriminatory laws have been amended as a result of the Parliament Committee’s Recommendations. In the state of Bihar, northern India, Bihar state leaders of NFI requested the state government to set up a special pension scheme for people affected by leprosy. The three years of negotiation resulted in the introduction of monthly allowance of 18,000 rupees, which is a great leap from the amount of 200 rupees they were receiving before as disability pension.

It was very impressive to witness the leaders emerging from the poorest of poor communities, developing their capacities to identify their own problems, propose solutions and negotiate with decision makers to achieve their requests. The Parliament Committee’s Recommendations and UN P&G come into effect only when the social activists—people affected by leprosy in this case—learn how to use them.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my condolences for the passing of Prof. Yoshinori Murai, a professor at Waseda University’s Organization for Asian Studies and also actively involved in API program, who left us in March 2013. He was the one who first introduced me to the civil society sector, sensitized me about correlative international relations as well as emerging positive and negative consequences when I was studying at Sophia University. During the two years of my deputation in India, I always remembered his words— “The best solution to any problem will be found when you are walking on the ground where the problem is happening with the local residents.” That phrase refrained many times when I was walking inside the leprosy colonies in remote villages of India, listening to residents complaining about lack of educational and occupational opportunities and severe social stigma preventing them to join mainstream society. That principle is deeply imprinted in my heart and I believe it will continue to guide me through my carrier.

Chikako Awazu

From the Editorial Desk

People’s Resilience and Empowerment: Come together and learn!

Through its three-year Regional Project (RP), the Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowships Program nurtured a process of mutual learning through partnerships with various stakeholders at different levels, ranging from local communities in project sites to civil society groups and academic institutions, as well as municipal and national government authorities. Initiatives and activities to contribute to a better future for the region have been developed and regional collaborations have taken a firm root.

These multi-disciplinary collaborations among public intellectuals working with local communities across five countries were showcased at the API Regional Project Culminating Event and are featured in this issue. One of the highlights, in addition to the premiere screening of the RP documentary, an exhibition, and art performances, was the panel discussion in which API Fellows addressed the region’s key issues and exchanged experiences with community leaders for possible joint actions in the future. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Sombat Somphone for his inspirational address on connecting best practices and creating a shared vision for better livelihoods. We are deeply concerned over his disappearance since December 16, 2012 and praying for his safe return. Everyone can bring in support by keeping this issue alive. Please follow his updates at sombath.org/.

API’s commitment to linking knowledge production, networking and actions are ongoing efforts. API Fellows and offices are organizing several platforms to bring various groups together. Critical issues in the region were discussed at the discussion seminar and the screening of the documentary “A River Changes Course” in Thailand. Learning from Youk Chhang helps us realize the importance of resilience and community empowerment. In the Interview Column, Youk Chhang encourages us to understand neighboring countries (and human rights as one of the key issues) to facilitate the integration of the Asian region and help it grow, together and sustainably.

The importance of understanding human rights is also conveyed by our Fellows in these pages. “Bring Back Hidden Voices;” by Farina So emphasizes that collective memories through oral history can bring spiritual solace and foster harmony, humanity, especially for the Cham ethnicity that has long experienced human rights violations.

Chadapan Malipan

“Small Theatre for a Better Society” by Pradit Prasartthong shows us how a play in a small theatre can help express cultural diversity, facilitate social communication and strengthen democratic participation.

Cultural exchange also plays a key role in mutual understanding among different religious groups as discussed in “Food Fight: Negotiating Ethno-Religious Differences” by Ermi Budiwanti.

“Regional Challenges in Land and Resource Management” by Pomsiri Cheevapatananuwong notes that people in authority should balance the quest for returns on investments to bring growth, social development and security, with serving the needs of local people and sharing the land and resources. How the various countries compromise in regard to their different benefits will be a key determinant of how people can live together in harmony in the future.

We hope this issue will provoke you with some new thoughts and inspiration as you encounter the perspectives of others. Happy reading!

Chadapan Malipan
API FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

Public intellectuals - academics, researchers, media professionals, artists, creative writers, NGO activists, social workers, public servants and others with moral authority - are those who are committed to working for the betterment of society by applying their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience. The Nippon Foundation fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals (API Fellowships Program) are designed to stimulate the creation of a new pool of intellectuals in the region. They aim to promote mutual learning among Asian public intellectuals, and to contribute to the growth of public spaces in which effective responses to regional needs could be generated.

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THE NIPPON FOUNDATION

The Nippon Foundation is an independent, non-profit, grant-making organization founded in 1962. It supports projects both in Japan and overseas in three areas: social welfare and volunteer support, maritime research and development, and overseas cooperative assistance. TNF works with other non-profit, non-governmental, international organizations in Japan and overseas. For further information, contact:

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