“Encountering Asian New Horizons: Contesting and Negotiating in Fluid Transitions” was the main theme of the 12th API Regional Workshop held in Bali, Indonesia on November 23-27, 2013. Participated in by twenty-one API Fellows well selected from various professions and countries in Asia, the Workshop provided the Fellows a tremendous opportunity to share and discuss their research findings, experiences, and insights in the context of a regional perspective through cross-national engagements and a multidisciplinary perspective. The Fellows also sought to find possible solutions in response to key challenges and learn from the cultural strengths of Balinese traditional communities.

continued on page 2
The Workshop started on November 23, 2013 with welcome addresses by Surichai Wun’Gaeo, Program Director of the API Coordinating Institution and Thailand Partner Institution (Chulalongkorn University); Taufik Abdullah, Program Director of Indonesia Partner Institution (Indonesian Institute of Science: LIPI); Lukman Hakim, Chairman of LIPI; and Tatsuya Tanami, Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation. The keynote address delivered by Sangkot Marzuki, President of Indonesian Academe of Science, was an empowering and scientific address on the global cooperation in scientific research.

The following key questions based on the Fellows’ research experiences and findings were addressed and discussed among the Fellows.

- What processes of negotiations and contestations are relevant?
- How will these processes of negotiations and contestations contribute toward a transformational change for different Asian communities in various Asian countries?
- How will these processes of negotiations and contestations shape and reshape the future in which both the global and the local interact in the context of the regional perspective with cross national engagements, the habits of border crossings, and the multidisciplinary perspective?
- What are the implications of the interaction between the global and the local in the future in the context of the regional perspective with cross national engagements, the habits of border crossings, and the multidisciplinary perspective?
- What are the solutions, if possible and relevant, on encountering Asian new horizons with new hope in the context of engendering lives. Engendering lives means having to share a new perspective on changing the women and the men, both in hidden and visible ways. How intersectionality between gender/class/ethnicity/race/faith is a significant factor in reframing women was also taken up. The contexts of both globalization and regionalization as processes are relevant to discussing engendering lives.

Panel 1: “Engendering Lives: Being Women Does Make Unique Differences”, was chaired by Janet Pillai (API Malaysia Fellow of the cohort) and the discussion was led by Azyumardi Azra (API ISC member and Director of the School of Graduate Studies, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia). Isnira A. Baginda (Philippines) analyzed the dynamics and Elan of Ijtihad to provide new readings on Islamic Laws and customary practices on women’s human rights. The discussion highlighted the importance of reframing women in the context of engendering lives. Engendering lives means having to share a new perspective on changing the women and the men, both in hidden and visible ways. How intersectionality between gender/class/ethnicity/race/faith is a significant factor in reframing women was also taken up. The contexts of both globalization and regionalization as processes are relevant to discussing engendering lives.

Panel 2: “Strategizing Development: Policy-making, Its Impact and Challenges for Social Justice”, was chaired by Farina So (API Cambodia Fellow of the cohort) with Mary Racelis (API ISC member and Professorial Lecturer of the Department of Anthropology, Graduate School, University of the Philippines-Diliman) as Discussant. Boni Setiawan (Indonesia) analyzed the issue of political economy of the supply chain. Leakhana Kol (Cambodia) addressed the problem of social housing and the livelihood needs in Cambodia with a comparative perspective in Learning from the Thai experience. Raul C. Pangalangan (Philippines) discussed the fundamental issue of politics above law with focus on the tension between democracy and social justice. Ruayrin Pedsalabkaew (Thailand) investigated the problem of land grabbing by multinational companies in Aceh, particularly its impact on human rights and local traditions. The discussions centered on several issues. The first issue was social justice in the context of the continuum between the global and the local. The local almost always contested the global. The second issue raised was on rural-urban relations in the context of globalization. The solutions offered were in heterodox economics and not orthodox economics with
community, local, gender, and ecologically based social justice serving as new ways of thinking and new values brought by everyone together. This kind of new thinking and new values can change existent systems in various societies.

Panel 3: “Contesting The Global: How the Local Fights for Its Existence in a Fluid Transition” was chaired by Supara Janchitfah (API Thailand Fellow of the cohort) with Yeoh Seng Guan (API Malaysia Fellow Year 2007-2008) as Discussant. Kadek Wara Urwasi (Indonesia) analyzed the cultural landscape urban design: preserving local identity in the global environment by a comparative study of Japanese and Malaysian cities. Mizuho Ikeda (Japan) raised the issue of research for the educative use of the cultural heritage and the development of human resources. Sayamol Kaipoomawongs (Thailand) discussed the legal pluralism in the ASEAN Community: preserving local wisdom, community rights and the eco-cultural system. Janet Pillai (Malaysia) presented her study of approaches in mobilizing the local community in research, promotion, conservation, and revitalization of local culture. Wiwik Mahdayani (Indonesia) highlighted the issue of ecotourism in Thailand’s great national parks.

Various ideas were analyzed and discussed in this panel: the ideas of community engagement, shared responsibility, a sense of Asian-ness, and heritage as the common language. Heritage can take the form of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. There should be a sustainable management of cultural heritage with alternative ways of community development applied to local and globalized issues inclusive of various cultural, religious, and ethnic groups. The idea of legal pluralism is influenced by both the processes of globalization and modernization. Legal pluralism is needed to protect local wisdom, customary laws, and the ecosystem.

Another idea, communities of practice can be strengthened by creative cultural initiatives with creative innovation. Communities of practice are characterized by joint initiatives, mutual engagement, and a shared repertoire of communal resources. These characteristics can be sustained by cultural capital and cultural ecology. The idea of ecotourism in national parks can be developed and implemented by public understanding, community involvement, and the involvement of small and medium enterprises. All these aforementioned ideas are related to social practices which transform power relations within the context of everyday forms of power. Thus, there are the shifting centers of power across boundaries and the marketability of culture.

Panel 4: “Negotiating Cultural Identity: Looking for New Horizons in Shifting Boundaries” was chaired by Kadek Wara Urwasi (API Indonesia Fellow of the cohort) with I Ketut Ardhana (Professor of Asian History; Head of Balinese Studies and International Office, Udayana University) as Discussant. Makoto Nomura (Japan) analyzed the practice and documentation of collaborative composition in Southeast Asia. Dina Zaman (Malaysia) discussed the influences of saints and their teachings on faith in Malaysia and Indonesia. Noor Mahnun Binti Mohamed (Malaysia) presented a printmaking archive for reference, research, and regional links. Ken T.
Panel presentations and discussions on how the local fights for their existence in a fluid transition

Ishikawa (Philippines) discussed the Children of the Pearl, the Children of the Sun in reference to Japanese-Filipino families, Filipino-Japanese individuals and their trajectories. Farina So (Cambodia) highlighted the lives of Cham Muslims in Malaysia and Thailand, then and now. There were several issues highlighted in this Panel. The first issue was new traditional music that works as an intersection related to new traditional life. The autonomy of music implies that new traditional positive music is the same as new traditional positive life. The second issue was on the responsible truthseeker’s having to take on many contexts as in the case of studying the influences of Muslim saints. The third issue was on how a printmaking digital archive will add to the chain of interconnections and formal linkage. The fourth issue focused on how in self-actualizing their identities, the Japanese Filipino children can become not Japanese nor Filipinos, but Asians in every sense of the word. The fifth issue was on how identity construction and intergenerational relations in Cham Muslim families can emphasize the relevance and significance of political refugees, diaspora groups, and increased relations between these two groups. Another important issue was the relationship of identity with citizenship. Identity is constructed and reconstructed. Identity is not static. Thus, there is a need to contextualize identity.

Panel 5: “Encountering the Inevitable: Natural Disasters and Their Aftermath” was chaired by Raul Pangalangan (API Philippines Fellow of the cohort) with Yoko Hayami (API ISC member and Professor of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University) as Discussant.

Supara Janchitfah (Thailand) analyzed the Japanese nuclear industry after March 11, 2011. Walaiporn Mooksuwan (Thailand) discussed her study of academic scientists’ roles and works in managing problems associated with natural disasters and related industrial hazards from a non-governmental organization’s perspective. Nguyen Thi Kim Cuc (Vietnam) discussed marginalized populations and whether they are segregated in the wake of disaster, highlighting lessons learned from Japan and Thailand.

The discussions centered on several issues, especially possible transformations through both contestations and negotiations. Three options surfaced: the exercise of power, scientific discourse, and lines of marginalization already existing in society. Another issue was reconnecting with the grass roots, marginalized people and the scientific community. The issues of connection and connectivity were also emphasized. The role of social media in the future was also raised.

Panel 6: ‘Concluding Panel Reflections and Applications’ reflected on the main theme of the 12th Regional Workshop. This session focused on several questions based on the Fellows’ research findings and experiences, as follows:

A. What kind of new horizons will various Asian communities encounter in different Asian countries?

B. What challenges and the opportunities will various Asian communities continue to encounter in different Asian countries?

C. What possible and relevant applications will come up when new horizons are encountered in the future?

In addition to these questions, there was one more question on feedback during the presentations and open forums in the workshop. The API Fellows appreciated the diverse backgrounds, the opportunities for self-expression, and the many options for presenting. But there were questions on the issue of selection of discussants and political incorrectness during the discussions. Hope for a lot more immersion with the local Balinese people and more time with them during the field trip was expressed. More rich and collaborative interactive forums are needed in the future, to ensure more networking and collaborations.

This last panel was closed by an overall summary and synthesis of the workshop. As “Encountering Asian New Horizons: Contesting and Negotiating In Fluid Transitions” was the main theme of the 12th API Regional Workshop in Bali, Indonesia, negotiations can take myriad and different forms simultaneously. They can take the form of contestations, conflicts, and harmony simultaneously. These myriad forms of negotiations need to be disseminated to the wider public. They occur in the context of encountering Asian New Horizons which are taking shape in more and deeper interconnections and connectivity between various Asian communities in different Asian countries.

Francisca S.S. Ery Seda is the 12th API Regional Workshop Director and Lecturer of Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia.

The workshop was also extended to a field trip to the Tegalarang Subak Community, as it has an excellent reputation for being one of the most successful Subak communities in Bali. At the Tegalarang Subak Community, the Fellows learned from the head of the community about how particular traditional Balinese community organizations such as Banjar (neighborhood community) or Subak (agricultural rice community) have played important roles in maintaining and developing the Balinese social fabric throughout different periods of time.
**Furthering Regional and Global Connectedness, Creating Initiatives for Future**

**Tatsuya Tanami**

Coming from a country where many people died or were forced out of their homes following the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan in 2011, I truly feel for what the people in the Philippines are going through after the recent typhoon. I appreciate how hard it is to lose one’s loved ones, friends, homes, and possessions.

After March 11, 2011, we gained strength and encouragement from the compassion shown by people in this region, which we remember still. We owe much to the API community.

This kind of tragedy, terrible though it is, strengthens our bonds; it confirms our connectedness.

When API was started in 2000, there were two objectives.

The first was to create an opportunity for leading public intellectuals to conduct research and carry out projects on issues of common concern to this region, and provide answers to the various problems and challenges facing society.

The second was to connect those public intellectuals, form a community, and create an influential collective entity that would collaborate on finding solutions.

In terms of the first objective, I would say we have been very successful in identifying public intellectuals and helping them achieve success in their work.

But I think we are only halfway to achieving the second. We have “connectedness”, we share a sense of being connected. Yet we have still to succeed in creating an initiative or mechanism that utilizes this collective cooperation to solve problems.

The biggest success has been the regional project that required significant resources and considerable effort on the part of the participants.

To do the same again would be difficult. So the big questions as we consider the future of the API are: “Where do we go from here?” “What do we do and how?”

API has many key words. Asian—which represents the region and our identity; Public—this is who and what API is for; and Intellectuals—the kind of human resources that make up API, seek out challenges, carry out the research, consider results, and come up with solutions. “Intellectuals” also stands for people with wisdom, knowledge, and experience. Two other words—regional and collaboration—also often come up, because we collaborate on regional issues and come up with solutions.

In his keynote speech two years ago, social activist, Sombath Somphone underscored the importance of connectivity, or connectedness. These words are important in describing the relationship between us in the API community, yet they had not been used very much until then. I believe they are going to be key words for API from now on. We can see this connectedness in our collective desire to help the Philippines.

“...More than links between nation states, what has been conspicuous is the growth of transnational ties between citizens, citizens’ groups, and groups that share a common vocation or face a common problem. My expectation is that API will play a significant role in fostering this interconnectivity....”

Unfortunately, we are not connecting with the person who used these words, Sombath Somphone. He disappeared last December* and his whereabouts are unknown. I truly hope that he will reappear soon and that we will reconnect.

Historians are now turning their attention to this concept of connectedness. Recently, I had the opportunity to hear Harvard Emeritus Professor Akira Iriye speak. Asked about the prospects for an Asia Pacific community, he foresaw the strengthening of links between citizens, more than a coming together of independent sovereign states.

Along these lines, the focus of recent historical research is shifting from the history of states to the history of connections—in other words, looking at history through connections within human society. Connections or connectedness are thus important.

Sombath told us that our links, our interconnectedness would create our future. Connections and sharing between people, communities, experiences, knowledge, good practices—those would be our strengths, and social media would assist us.

ASEAN is heading toward the formation of an ASEAN community by 2015. This involves connecting states; it also means strengthening links between peoples and building a people-centered community. And as the movement of people increases, we can assume interconnectedness to increase as well. We can also expect transnational connections between NGOs and CSOs to play a key role in problem solving.

In the 13 years since API started, the political, economic, social, and cultural contexts of this region have changed enormously. More than links between nation states, what has been conspicuous is the growth of transnational ties between citizens, citizens’ groups, and groups that share a common vocation or face a common problem.

When I think about these developments, I feel proud that API has played a significant role in fostering this interconnectivity.

The role of public intellectuals is to be a catalyst for connecting citizens and states. For us, the place where we make those connections is Asia. Encountering different races and cultures, and learning to respect and understand other points of view lead to an awareness of human rights.

The future will be a future of regional and global connectedness. What I hope to see is the API community playing an even stronger catalytic role in furthering this process.

It is also my hope that the 12th batch of Fellows at this workshop will form the core of the API community soon.

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*Sombath Somphone has disappeared since December 15, 2012.
The Power of Networking

Masaaki Ohashi, Professor of Development Studies at Keisen University, currently serves as chairperson of the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) — the largest network of Japanese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in international cooperation. In responding to the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, he generated support from both Japan and overseas including those from developing countries, through JANIC. Ohashi is also the head of the Japan CSO Coalition for 2015 WCDRRR established to prepare for the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, scheduled in Sendai in March 2015. The Coalition comprises 104 civil society organizations (CSO) and non-governmental organizations that tackles a variety of issues, including support for disaster-hit areas, disaster prevention, poverty, and environmental problems. Actively involved in NGO activities for almost 40 years to date, he still prefers not to be called “NGO” (worker), saying “Please call me a social activist.” Despite his role as a university professor, he also claims he is not a pure academician, but more of an activist, or probably an “activism-centered academician”.

Ohashi gave API this interview in July 2014, after the Fukushima Solidarity meeting in Bangkok that shared the local people’s experiences, and analysis of up-to-date circumstances after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster by the experts. (see p.8) His talk touched upon civil society development in Japan that began its active presence in the 1980s, also citing an important historical movement surrounding the challenging case of Mutsu-Ogawara industrial park.

Journey as a social activist and the emergence of civil society in Japan

I started my activities relating to the Vietnam War when I was in high school in 1969, onto the time I entered university in 1972. Following a big student movement by the left-wing parties in the late 1960s, one of them, which dominated the student union of my university, a friend of mine was killed by the student union leaders who baselessly suspected him as a spy of a rival student group. We students got very angry, not only with the left-wing party, but also with the university authority that didn’t prevent such a thing. We repeatedly requested to have a meeting between the students and the university president, but it was consistently refused. So we kidnapped the president from his classroom. The police charged me and eventually I was arrested, but not prosecuted. Later, my father tried many times to change my focus from political activism to something else, by encouraging me to studying abroad. As he was a mathematician, he suggested me to go to India because statistics was very advanced in India and he had some friends there.

Thus, in 1974, I went to India where I was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s social works namely Sarvodaya Movement. He initiated the social activism across the region to improve the livelihood of the poor. I had stayed at a Gandhian’s ashram in Bodhagaya in Bihar state for six months. It was a totally different lifestyle and I loved it. I had been fascinated by India then as now. I then continued to study Hindi in Tokyo even after my graduation. As he was a mathematician, he suggested me to go to India because statistics was very advanced in India and he had some friends there.

From 1980 to 1982, I worked in Bangladesh and between 1982 and 1987, served as the Secretary-General of ShaplaNeer in Tokyo.

Finally, I got a scholarship and studied at Cornell University, where I enrolled in the International Agriculture and Rural Development Program from 1988 to 1990. At the end of my study, my university classmate who was working for the Japanese Red Cross invited me to join the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). I worked for IFRC from 1990 to 1992 again in Bangladesh. That was a very interesting experience compared to my previous working with ShaplaNeer because I could see many different areas.

After that, I was invited to join Keisen University in Tokyo. The first president of this new university was the president who was once kidnapped by us. I have worked there for 21 years. When I joined Keisen University in 1993, I also returned to ShaplaNeer as a board member. Since then, I have always been a board member of ShaplaNeer for 20 years until now, and have served as its Chair for six years. I was elected as JANIC chairperson and have remained in this position since 2006.

Based on your study on NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Japan, comparing the case of Rokkasho village in the late 1960s where local movements became activated without the external NGOs presence and the case of the Ishigaki Island in the 1980s where the local community was linked with NGOs, do you evaluate that successful campaigns by CBOs have linkages with national and international NGO movements? Are there other forceful factors necessary to make the movements successful?

For the case in Rokkasho village of Aomori Prefecture and the case in Ishigaki island of Okinawa, I was bound to conclude that a locally specified movement by a rural community has strong ties or networks with national/international NGO movements and other CSOs. These ties make more people, including mass media, aware of the problem. In case of Rokkasho village, which has been turned into the sole reprocessing plant and storage of all nuclear waste for Japan, only a small number of villagers

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who acted against the development. As a result, they faced multiple harsh pressures from both within and outside the village and they failed to deal with these multi-layered pressures. In comparison, the Ishigaki island anti-airport construction movement had relatively many ties with outsiders, although, finally, the airport was constructed. Outsiders could provide appropriate information and/or make media and other organizations indirectly support the movement. Of course, there is always a risk that outsiders may take over the movement, thereby dividing the local people. The Sanrizuka anti-airport construction movement was such a case. But, anyhow, the oppressors also try to divide activists.

You mentioned that “an NGO must retain its own position as an outsider and a supporter of local people, CBOs and their movement”. Could you please clarify what you mean by “an outsider”?

For instance, I was an outsider to the Sanrizuka movement in which local farmers were standing against the construction of airport in their village risking their property and future in the process. In contrast, I could leave anytime I liked. This is similar to an NGO in a city helping slum dwellers or poor villagers. So outsiders must always reaffirm their commitment.

What was the main motivation in establishing JANIC?

JANIC is a networking organization. We are in the era of globalization; industrialized countries including Japan can keep exploiting other parts of the world. As a global citizen, I can’t accept such social injustice. This problem could spread to anywhere, including Thailand. We also have to work on this issue in Japan, but my main concern is Asia. I feel this is my job. I think my father was half successful in diverting his son’s attention from political dimensions because I am more like a social activist now.

What do you think of Asia’s NGO networking in general?

Japan and Korea have solid NGO networks, while it is hard to say the same for China. As far as I know, Thailand used to have NGO coalitions but the NGO networking seems still loose, while NGO networking in the Philippines is messy. Laos and Vietnam are out of the question. In Malaysia and Indonesia, they don’t have any NGO network.

As JANIC implements various activities such as training, making NGO directories, and many others, what could we learn from you to sustain NGO networking?

JANIC does three areas. First, training Japanese NGOs to enhance their capacity. Second is improving the NGOs’ status, for better recognition in society. Unfortunately, the Japanese people don’t know enough about what an NGO is and they basically think NGOs are only begging for money for charity. To improve the NGOs’ status, we need to have quality dialogues with private sector, labor unions, consumers’ cooperatives, and so forth. Thirdly, JANIC’s is committed to advocacy. We maintain several meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japan International Cooperative Agency (JICA).

In Japan, when we talk about NGOs, we also talk about NPOs (non-profit organizations). NGOs are mainly for international cooperation or global issues, while NPOs are mainly smaller organizations that focus on local or domestic issues. They are not very well united and don’t have many solid networks. Thus, the Japan NPO center* was established to support them. NGOs and NPOs have different counterparts as well. Working internationally, Japan’s NGOs always encounter the Minister of Foreign Affairs as their counterpart. But NPOs have different counterparts such as the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education. In the case of Thailand, my impression is that Thai NGOs are more like Japanese NGOs that deal with many different issues. For example, one of them may focus on a forestry issue, another might work on a poverty issue. Thus, Thai NGOs would have less common interests to share with each other whereas, in Japan, we have JANIC for international cooperation** working on common agendas. I think if you have many CSOs, NGOs, NPOs working on common issues/grounds together, you can build stronger solidarity.

What are the main challenges of being NGOs?

Low organizational income is one of the core challenges. Sometimes it becomes very difficult to sustain ourselves as we don’t receive sufficient donation from the public and funds are limited. Civil society has not yet been well established in Japan. We need a stronger civil society and social contributions, including financial support. That’s why I got another job as a university professor. In Japan, university lecturers have more flexibilities and in my case I have enough free time for my social activities.

Which “social movement or key activity” do you consider as your achievement as a social activist and why?

While most social movements I participated in could not achieve their goals, I feel that some of them have created strong sense that we can make changes — if not fully, at least partially. This can be said especially of a movement that has many and good ties with other sectors of society as already mentioned. The Minamata movement seems to be a good example, among others.

How could people in the Asian region engage more in working together and fostering information exchanges in the future?

Considering our work in the past 30 to 40 years, the exchange level has become much bigger although I don’t think it is good enough. But we need quality and more powerful exchanges. We should have clearer views and more common purposes in our information and knowledge exchanges.

* Japan NPO Center (JNPOC) was established in 1996 to strengthen the infrastructure of non-profit organizations (NPOs) in Japan, to support the activities of Japanese civil society, and the growth of its non-profit sector. It also seeks to establish effective partnerships among the non-profit sector, the government, and the private sector.

** In Japan, there are three large networking groups of NGOs in Tokyo, Nagoya and Kansai regions. Among them, JANIC is the largest.

More information on JANIC: www.janic.org/en
More information on Japan NPO Center: www.jnpec.ne.jp/en
Lesson Learned: Multi-dimensional Impacts of Japan’s Great Earthquake and Fukushima Nuclear Disaster

On June 25, 2014, Fukushima Solidarity meeting was organized at Sasa International House, Chulalongkorn University, in collaboration with Japan CSO Coalition for 2015 World Conference on Disaster Reduction (JCC2015), Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University and API Fellowships Program. Sucharit Koontakakulvong, Head of Water Resource Engineering Department of the Faculty of Engineering, Chulalongkorn University, was invited to give opening remarks highlighting the challenges of the related issues. He made important relevant reference from the lessons of the 2011 Thailand floods that resulted in more than 800 deaths and serious damage to the livelihood of a large number of people. It caused 1,435 billion baht (US$45.7 billion) in economic damages and losses according to the World Bank estimate. The regional impact was tremendous since the industrial estates were inundated which paralyzed some manufacturing sector.

As part of the preparation of the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Sendai to be held in March 2015, the meeting aimed to share the Fukushima’s bitter experiences, real-life situations as well as scientific data. Participants were updated on community reconstruction in preventing and reducing hazards caused by a nuclear disaster. As a large number of nuclear power plant projects are being planned in developing countries including Asia, preparing for a potential future nuclear disaster in the region is a real issue. In such context, participants were very keen to learn fresh insights.

The meeting started with the overview of “Japan’s Great Earthquake and Fukushima Nuclear Disaster from 2011 to the Present” presented by Masaaki Ohashi, Chairperson of the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation. It followed by presentations “the Impact of Nuclear Accident to the Industries in Fukushima and Measures” by Noritsugu Fujimoto, Fukushima University; “Situation of Evacuees in Fukushima” by Fuminori Tanba, Fukushima University; “Radiation Released by the Nuclear Accident and Its Effect to the Health of the People” by Hisako Sakiyama, M.D., Takagi School; “Experience in Running the Biggest Evacuation Center in Fukushima” by Kazuhiko Amano, Fukushima University; and “DRR* and Risk of Nuclear Accident” by Satoru Mimura, Fukushima University.
It was highlighted that experiences of Fukushima share certain backgrounds and common issues with rural communities of developing countries. In order to generate jobs and more income, Fukushima Prefecture government decided to accept the construction of nuclear power plants. In the post-World War II period, there was a serious anxiety among the prefectural leaders that without the opportunities that could be generated by the Nuclear power plants construction, Fukushima could be left behind from economic growth of Japan at that time. It was first commissioned in 1971, having Nuclear energy being a national strategic priority of Japan.

Following the nuclear disaster in 2011, Fukushima residents have been suffering from diverse consequences—on family, community, economy and environment. There continues to be a serious concern on exposure to the radiation. While whether or not the low-level of radiation will result in severe impacts on health requires long-term scientific monitoring, heightened risks of indirect health damage—both physical and mental—need to be immediately recognized. Fukushima residents are facing family separation, financial problems, loss of cultural heritage/practices and harmonious livelihood they once enjoyed. From approximately 2 million of total population, nearly 140,000 people have become displaced. About 90,000 evacuees from Fukushima currently stay in temporary hosing or apartments sponsored by the government, of whom over 50,000 evacuees live outside the prefecture. Their problems are similar to those of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The nuclear disaster seriously affects the eco-system due to the radioactive substances that can widespread. This also results in the increase of unemployment rate and economical damages. The cause is not just because of direct damage by the radioactive substance but due to “Fuhyo” or harming rumors that may claim agricultural/marine and other produce are contaminated by radioactive substances. Because of the “Fuhyo”, consumers tended to avoid any produce from Fukushima regardless of the absence of official suspension orders.

At the end of the sharing, one of the participants asked how the affected people can deal with the devastating reality as they have been living with the presence of radioactivity since 2011. Representatives of the JCC2015 responded that we cannot escape from the reality but there are some solutions particularly by using the network of experts that bring different disciplines to discussions and raise the awareness of the issue. The JCC 2015 encouraged everyone to engage in disaster prevention. It might be difficult for humans to completely prevent natural disasters, but we can reduce manmade risks, particularly those related to the nuclear disasters since the technology is created by humans. We need more cooperation and strong determinations to change our future into a sustainable livelihood.

* DDR: Disaster Risk Reduction
** Internally displaced persons, or IDPs, are among the world’s most vulnerable people. Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find sanctuary but have remained inside their home countries. Even if they have fled for similar reasons as refugees (armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations), IDPs legally remain under the protection of their own government – even though that government might be the cause of their flight. As citizens, they retain all of their rights and protection under both human rights and international humanitarian law. (Source: UNHCR)
THERE'S IRONY AND THERE'S IRONING.

When I received an invitation to participate in “The Good Malaysian Woman (Ethnicity. Religion. Politics)” exhibition last year, I was in the middle of ironing. The exhibition was a charity event and half of the proceeds would go to AWAM—All Women’s Action Society.

The exhibition “The Good Malaysian Woman” focused on what it means to be a woman in Malaysia through a prism of ethnicity, religion and politics. The AWAM is an independent feminist organization based in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. AWAM envisions a just, democratic, and equitable society where all persons, in particular women, are treated with respect and are free from all forms of violence and discrimination. To meet this vision, AWAM conducts lobbying and networking activities to bring about positive changes in the law for women, by focusing on public education and training activities to raise awareness about women’s rights; providing services such as counseling, and a legal aid clinic for women in crisis; and issuing publications and press statements about gender-based violence and how the politicization of ethnicity and religion affects women.

The first association that came to my mind from the exhibition’s title was Bertolt Brecht’s Der gute Mensch von Sezuan, a play that is translated as The Good Woman of Sezuan. I was also looking high and low for Kurt Tucholsky’s book of short stories — my library has been a work-in-progress since 2008, meaning it is still in disorder — because of his take on “goodness”, about being a good person. For example, in one story, a man lets a mosquito suck his blood. The word spreads among the mosquitoes of his good deed and they all come to feast on him until he dies.

Sad. So the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

I still cannot find the book...

Surfing the Internet linked me to the site of a German production of the Der gute Mensch von Sezuan in Braunschweig. One part stood out and I have translated it below:1

Can a person be good, in a world that is not? When the good woman presents herself to the gods at her trial, they see they have created an impossible problem to solve but they refuse to admit it. The audience is left in limbo, and the question lingers as the curtains close. Can a person be good? And when yes, under which social conditions? From Erich Kästner we know: “There is nothing Good. Except: By doing Good.”

Domestic duty calls. Let me go back to ironing out the details.

Noor Mahnun Mohamed teaches the Fundamentals of Art Criticism at the Malaysian Institute of Art, and Arts at University of Malaya’s Faculty of Built Environment, and the Centre for Foundation Studies in Science in Kuala Lumpur. As a painter she has had several solo and group exhibitions. Noor Mahnun graduated with an M.A. in Fine Arts from the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Germany. 

Rethinking AEC Integration:
A Concern over Military Prowess and Tension

Ukrist Pathmanand, THAILAND SENIOR FELLOW YEAR 2008-2009

According to an executive who has worked for several multinational corporations which have invested in Asia:

"...In twenty years, there will be a rapid increase in the world’s population, from 7 billion to 9 billion and even to 10 billion in another few years’ time, while production factors and resources, such as personnel, agriculture, water and cultivated areas, will decrease because parts the cultivated areas have been transformed into residential areas, where other activities take place. This signals the prospective issues and challenges of food…”

The views of that particular multinational corporate executive might suggest a bleak future, but should nevertheless be considered to be more optimistic than predictions for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which will be established in 2015. ASEAN believes that the AEC will transform member countries into food resources and manufacturing bases, which will facilitate a more effective distribution of food. However, such a rosy vision will be difficult to achieve if the relentless escalation of political tensions, territorial disputes and displays of military prowess continue in ASEAN countries, and East Asian countries such as China, Japan, North Korea and Taiwan.

Military Prowess
According to the latest report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2014), Asia’s military expenditures have, for the first time, soared higher than Europe’s. In 2012 the top five arms importers were located in Asia: India, China, Pakistan, South Korea and Singapore (which is unexpected).

China has the largest military expenditure ratio in East Asia. It spends 170 percent more than it did 10 years ago. China has also announced that there will be a 12.2 percent further increase in the expenditure ratio in 2014. However, China is not the only country responsible for Asia’s sharp increase in military expenditures. In South Asia, conflicts between India and Pakistan are responsible for more arms sales. In both Northwest and Southeast Asia military intensity is precipitated by territorial disputes over a number of small islands and competition for access to abundant natural resources.

Even Japan, which has traditionally limited its military expenditures to less than 1 percent of the country’s GDP, has announced that it will increase its expenditures by 2.8 percent in 2014-2015.

The Increasing Tension
The AEC already seems destined to fail to deliver on its promise… it seems to be ignoring political tensions, territorial disputes and the sharp increase in military weapons, which is shaping the future of Asia.

The increasing tension is rapidly changing. Japan may no longer limit its military expenditures to less than 1 percent of the country’s GDP, and the increase in both military expenditures and armament imports in East Asian countries are both signs of escalating military conflicts, territorial and resource disputes and increased risks of confrontation within this region.

Ukrist Pathmanand is a research professor at the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University. He co-wrote “The Thaksinization of Thailand” which was translated into Burmese in 2005 and reprinted twice. His research paper entitled “Pattern and Strategy of Thailand’s Aid toward Neighbouring Countries” received financial support from Thailand’s Ministry of Finance and from Chulalongkorn University’s prestigious Ratchadapisek Sompo Endowment Fund 2014. His main interests are democratization and regionalization in ASEAN.

An Intercultural Romeo and Juliet: Not Lost in Translation

Ricardo Abad, PHILIPPINES SENIOR FELLOW YEAR 2013-2014

I took a break from my API Fellowship in Malaysia to supervise the restaging of my play Sintang Dalisay (Pure Love) for the inaugural conference of the Asian Shakespeare Association at the National Taiwan University from May 15 to 19, 2014.

Sintang Dalisay is a Philippine rendition of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. But references to Shakespeare's play cover only a third of the script; the rest has passages from a long Filipino poem written in 1903 by G.D. Roke. The narrative follows Shakespeare's story. Two clans are mired in an age-old hatred towards each other. Two lovers, one from each clan, get separated from each other after the young man, in self-defense, slays a member of the opposing clan. A demand for justice, a lover's exile, a clandestine tryst, a missing letter, and deadly potions culminate in the death of the lovers and the reconciliation of the two families. Roke's variations on the narrative are kept, among them: the absence of key characters like Mercutio and the Nurse; the long wait before the meeting on the balcony; the emphasis on pre-marital purity; and a prolonged death scene.

But the manner of telling is the production's centerpiece. The audience is taken to an imaginary Sama-Badjao community in southern Philippines. The set consists of a platform and three mats. Then Sintang Dalisay unravels using dance (the igal of the Sama-Badjao), chants, speech, and live music, all of which stem from indigenous traditions. For the Taiwan show, all ten performers played multiple roles and used multiple performance skills.

The accolades were unanimous. “It's the best staging of Romeo and Juliet I've ever seen,” exclaimed the President of the International Shakespeare Association. "Very well done, most enjoyable: the play is so relatable, and deserves a wider audience…I think it should be shown to a wider audience…" What I couldn't elaborate on during the post performance discussion — the time had elapsed — was the social context of the production. Beyond being an aesthetic imaginary, Sintang Dalisay was also our attempt to bridge the chasm between the dominant Christians and the marginalized Muslim communities in Philippine society. That it was performed by Christian students and taught by local Muslim artists was a liberating experience for both groups. The students learned to respect Muslim performance styles, while the Muslim teachers felt empowered as instructors. I’d like to think, then, of Sintang Dalisay as a modest, but important, contribution to the task of peace-building, a link between theater and nation.

This connection between theater and nation is what I seek to study. So far I've found that in Malaysia, productions like Sintang Dalisay, which entails a fusion of western drama and traditional styles, have occurred more often in the past than in the present. Present attempts at intercultural performances represent, by and large, vehicles that explore, examine, and extol interracial connections within national borders. What this focus means for nation building is what I wish to answer.

Asian aesthetics resonate across many Asian societies. The Taiwanese scholars, along with delegates from Hong Kong and Japan also said that the play, though staged in Filipino, was understandable even without subtitles. The play was not lost in translation. Shakespeare is known for his verse but in this production understanding the language did not matter. “The movement, music, acting and staging blended so well that we could follow the story.” An Indiana State University director revealed, “I was watching the play with English subtitles in mind.” A delegate from Pomona College agreed, adding that “Romeo and Juliet was my least favorite Shakespeare play… Sintang Dalisay changed my view.”

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The accolades stretched through the remaining days of the conference. Three reactions were frequently cited:

One was the synergistic blend of dance, speech, singing and music that, to the delegates, gave the show an exhilarating energy, a force abetted by the youthfulness of the cast as well as the “passion of its creators.”

Second was the “joyfulness” of the production. The original plot involved a double suicide but in this production, the two lovers rise from the dead, put on wings, and dance like butterflies. The lovers then released a pack of live butterflies to symbolize their love soaring happily above earthly concerns. Many delegates found this a joyful moment, noting that it also reflected the Asian view that the dead continue to live in the present.

Third was the innovation in dramatic form. Since the igal is a dance form and not a theater style (like the Japanese kabuki, for example), the dance had to be transformed to suit the demands of theater. This transformation, the delegates believed, was most successful, calling the production style an excellent example of the “invention of a tradition.”

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Ricardo Abad is a sociologist and theatre artist, and the fusion of both fields has informed his professional practice for the past thirty-five years. He served as the Conference Director for the first API Regional Workshop in Cebu City. The book of conference papers that he edited from that workshop, The Asian Face of Globalization: Reconstructing Identities, Institutions, and Resources, served as a model for future volumes. It also won him the Most Outstanding Scholarly Research Award from Ateneo de Manila University. He has earned national awards as theatre director, was cited for his lifetime achievement in the Humanities at Ateneo de Manila University, and was honored by the Metrobank Foundation for being one of the Most Outstanding Teachers in the Philippines. Upon completion of his Fellowship in Malaysia, Dr. Abad returned to Ateneo de Manila University to assume the post of Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.
In 2010 I began collaborating with Indonesian artists to compose music for a contemporary dance project called To Belong, initiated by leading Japanese choreographer Akiko Kitamura. I was the director of the project’s sound and music. I went to Indonesia to experiment with field recordings of traditional Javanese instruments, songs, voices, and natural sound. The end result is a unique form of electronic music.

I had spent a lot of time self-studying Indonesian music culture and I wanted to see how technology could be used to bring traditional and modern music styles together. I collaborated with three inspiring traditional and modern artists: Slamet Gundono; Endah Laras; and Marzuki Mohamed, a.k.a Kill the DJ from the Jogja Hip Hop Foundation.

Slamet Gundono is a well-known Indonesian singer, musician and puppeteer. He reinterprets traditional folk tales with his beautiful yet explosive voice and string instruments. We call his music Javanese Blues!

Usually, Japanese artists want to get things done as soon as possible because they don’t want to waste any time. But since this was a collaboration and cultural exchange, I wanted to take the time to truly understand Javanese music and culture. Thus, at first, Slamet and I just ate, talked and joked around until he felt comfortable to work with me. I told him: “I do not want to record in a studio. I want to record your music outside in an environment that is meaningful to you.” So, he chose a place very close to his house! That way he could relax and keep an eye on his children. Recording was quite tricky because it was outside and his improvisations reflected his various moods at the time. But it turned out so well that we decided to release a CD. I appreciated not only Slamet’s music, but also the environment during the recording.

Slamet also sang to my music, which became part of the score for the To Belong project. We had such an amazing time working together that we even planned to collaborate in a concert this year. However, on January 5, 2014, he passed away due to a sudden illness. I could not believe the news because we had communicated just a week before his death. Slamet never heard our CD. It was released three days after he passed away. I felt empty and depressed until I realized that for me, he is alive. Inside our CD, his voice, music and spirit will never die. Now, my mission is to share his music with the world.

I also released a CD with an amazing Javanese soprano: Endah Laras. She sings traditional Javanese Kroncong (a ukulele-like instrument) songs. When I first watched her sing in Garin Nugroho’s movie, Soegiya, I immediately knew I wanted to work with her.

Endah and I exchanged a lot about how we could collaborate. She wanted to record her music in an open-air studio that her father used when he was alive. When we started to record, we purposely opened all the doors so the spirits could come in. Even though I wasn’t using professional equipment, I was quite happy with our work, and Endah was very impressed with the sound quality.

In addition to Slamet and Endah’s traditional approach to Javanese music, I wanted to find out more about modern music from Java, such as Indonesian hip-hop. I looked for a rapper that separated all the sounds, including the rap. So, I had to rearrange everything. We made interesting music together.

I ended up with three unique collaborations. I played around with the recordings, sampling, and then edited in voices, natural and electronic sounds, and a string quartet. This became the soundtrack for To Belong.

Working with Marzuki was different from my collaborations with Slamet and Endah. Marzuki sent me a digital audio file of his music that separated all the sounds, including the rap. So, I had to rearrange everything. We made interesting music together.

Marzuki Mohamed is a former visual artist, Marzuki Mohamed. Friends told me about a group called the Jogja Hip Hop Foundation and its leader, former visual artist, Marzuki Mohamed.

The Jogja Hip Hop Foundation has fans all over Southeast Asia. When I first met Marzuki, I was quite impressed by his knowledge of Javanese history and philosophy. Not only is his rap rooted in that history, he uses both modern drum machines and the Indonesian gamelan for his hip-hop beats.

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We are now updating To Belong for a Tokyo premiere at the Aoyama Theatre in October 2014. There will also be a concert of sonic narratives, which is like a movie, but without images. I call it Anabiosis Passage, and it is a rearrangement of the To Belong soundtrack. We presented it as a concert in Japan last year with string quartets and multi-surround sound diffusion. On December 3, 2014, we will present it at the opening of the Gedung Kesenian Jakarta (GKJ) music festival. This will be our Indonesian premiere.

Yasuhiro Morinaga is a sound designer, sound archivist and music director. He composes concrete music and soundscapes for film and the performing arts. He also specializes in field recording to document ethnic music and the natural environment. His work has been showcased at the Cannes, Venice and Berlin Film Festivals, the Pompidou Center in Paris and the world’s largest museum, the Smithsonian Institution.
Reflections and Experiences from the Asia Pacific Sociological Association Conference (APSA)

Rina Shahrullah, INDONESIA FELLOW YEAR 2007-2008

Putting all ideas under one umbrella

Today Asia is in the wake of rapid social transformation, thus various challenges and difficulties in Asian countries should be addressed and responded wisely to benefit our communities and the rest of humankind. As Asia goes through this transformation, we can apply sociology to better understand our problems. But we can appreciate the consequences and impact of our actions even better when we combine sociology with other social science perspectives. These interdisciplinary approaches give us more options.

The API community is committed to the interdisciplinary approach and applies it to improve society. Four API Fellows from Indonesia, namely Prijono Tjiptoherijanto (Year 2007-2008), Dias Pradaddama (Year 2007-2008), Rina Shahrullah (Year 2007-2008), Yonariza (Year 2008-2009) and one non-API Fellow (Agustina Fitrianingrum of Universitas Internasional Batam) went to Chiang Mai, Thailand with these ideas. From February 15 to 16, 2014 they applied them to social problems at the 12th Asian Pacific Sociological Association (APSA) Conference.

The theme was "Transforming Societies: Confrontations and Conversions in Asia and the Pacific". The establishment of a special API panel, which consisted of API and non-API Fellows, was a unique addition to the conference because all panelists were from different academic backgrounds and they presented divergent issues based on their own expertise. After intense communication by email, the panelists decided to call their presentation the "Sociopolitical and Economic Implications of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015 and the Roles of Asian Public Intellectuals (API)".

Under this broad theme, each panelist focused his/her discussions on a particular issue. Prijono discussed "Civil Service Reform towards Good Governance in Indonesia and Thailand". Dias focused on: "A Food Regime Analysis of Global Agro Commodity Production and Trade Sectors among ASEAN countries". Rina examined "Transborder Human Trafficking: Migration Challenges for ASEAN Countries". Yonariza told us how we could consider: "Enhancing Farmer Groups to Strengthen the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)". Agustina analyzed: "The Significance of Supply Chain Performance in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015".

Sharing insights and expanding horizons

Since their presentations were on the second day of the APSA Conference, the panelists had ample opportunities to attend the presentations of other panelists based on their own interests. The Conference topics covered both Asian and global issues and problems, such as climate change; regional integration; migration; the media and popular culture; youth women and the family; as well as religion; conflicts; and ethnic identity. There were 364 participants from 18 countries who were divided into 45 English language panels and 14 Thai panels.

Surprisingly, the AEC 2015 was one of the most popular topics at the Conference. Three other panels were also related to this topic: “Regional Integration in Southeast Asia viewed from the grassroots (A presentation of the SEATIDE Project)”; “ASEAN Integration through People’s Participation: Voices from Below” (a roundtable discussion); and “The ASEAN Community, Democracy and Values”. To all of us, the APSA Conference was unique because even though it was organized around sociology, it turned out to be more of an Asian Studies conference. Hence, in addition to presenting and discussing their research, the API panelists encouraged all Public Intellectuals in the region to play a greater role in responding to such challenges, and to get involved in the process of helping the poor in the market economy. Since many challenges and problems in Asia remain unsolved, Asian Public Intellectuals need to apply their professional knowledge and competencies to more concrete actions for the betterment of society and humanity.

The API panelists agreed that the AEC 2015 would provide more opportunities for the ASEAN economy and its people. They also pointed out however, that the AEC 2015 could also pose a number of challenges that would affect our collective financial, physical, environmental, human, and social capital. Therefore, the API panelists encouraged all Public Intellectuals in the Asian region to play a greater role in responding to such challenges, and to get involved in the process of helping the poor in the market economy. Since many challenges and problems in Asia remain unsolved, Asian Public Intellectuals need to apply their professional knowledge and competencies to more concrete actions for the betterment of society and humanity.

The APSA Conference benefited all API panelists, who learned about different methodologies that could be applied to tackle current issues in Asia. In addition, the Conference was a reunion for API Fellows. Hence, in addition to presenting and discussing their research, the API Fellows also spent time together discussing the future of the API community and how members could develop possible collaboration opportunities for API and non-API Fellows.

Rina Shahrullah is Head of Postgraduate Study of Law, Universitas Internasional Batam and a law lecturer. Her areas of specialty include human rights, comparative and international law.
Debris left after the 2011 disaster. Behind is the 3km-long bridge that transfers millions of tons of soil from the mountain to the construction area months after the March 11th Tohoku earthquake 2011, when I was an API Fellow. I arrived about six months after the disaster. The damage to the city was so extensive that some reports claimed Rikuzentakata had been wiped off the map and that up to 40% of the population had died.

I am a Thai photographer and I traveled with a Japanese photographer. We drove along the coast, stopping at nearby towns that were heavily hit by the tsunami. Each town looked the same: unbelievably huge areas still covered with debris, mountains of damaged cars, and garbage that workers were still trying to clean up.

When I visited Rikuzentakata again in 2012, there were only a few changes that I could notice, less debris, but still very few people. No sign of life in the city.

I returned for the third time in November 2014 to participate in the Rikuzentakata Artist-in-Residence Program (<www.rikuzentakataair.com>). This one-month program invites three artists from different countries to stay in Rikuzentakata to conduct art-related activities for the local people. The main purpose of this program is to use art and local resources as tools to inspire and lift the spirits of the local citizens. The other two artists in the program were a sculptor from Germany, and a choreographer from Wales.

I arrived in mid-November. Rikuzentakata was so different from my memories of the city. I could not find anything that reminded me of the extensive damage from the 2011 tsunami. There was no debris at all. There were many convenience stores and shops along the street, new buildings and houses. Life seemed to be completely back to normal, and residents were no longer victims of the disaster. The coordinator of the Artist-in-Residence Program introduced us to many places and interesting people. We visited a hundred-year-old temple, temporary housing, newly rebuilt shops, houses and even cool resorts. We met many people who had rebuilt their lives on their own. The stories they shared were very touching. Life after the tsunami was so hard and yet they still managed to have positive attitudes to cope with the situation. These survivors believed it was their responsibility to share their hard times with strangers and with the younger generation.

Some local people however, were still really suffering, almost four years later. They didn’t want to think about the past, and only wanted to concentrate on the future.

I have been an Artist-in-Residence in Japan before, and also in Taiwan, but Rikuzentakata was a very different experience that I really appreciated. First, there were two full-time coordinators who also acted as translators. Second, traveling and working with two other artists, it became very special to me. As in the same profession, it was our great time to share similar attitude and experiences about the situation. I learned a lot from them.

After three weeks in Rikuzentakata, the next mission was to present the experience to the public at the Japan Foundation’s headquarters and to the students at Tokyo’s Joshibi University of Art and Design.

The Sakura Hall at the Japan Foundation was almost full on the evening of the presentation. My theme was lost memories, reflected in the city’s changing landscape. German sculptor Cornelia Konrad presented a sketch of the sculpture she made from broken pieces of porcelain that she collected from devastated sites. Welsh choreographer Sioned Huws presented a new interpretation of the traditional Takata-odori dance and also danced.

Rikuzentakata is now in limbo, between the past and the future. People are still experiencing hard times as they wait for mega construction projects to shape the future of their city. They are waiting for permanent housing.

Did the visits of three artists who stayed for such a short time change anything? I can say yes. I think we did a good job. We met with local people. We were good listeners and good friends. We organized some small parties and one art event for local people. We managed to turn some sites. Welsh choreographer Sioned Huws presented a new interpretation of the traditional Takata-odori dance and also danced.

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Tawatchai Pattanaporn, photographer, delivers social issues to the public by conveying his message in the form of photography. He also founded Patani studio in 2014 which works mainly on analog photography and related workshops.
Penchom Saetang (Thailand Fellow Year 2005-2006), Director of Ecological Alert and Recovery (EARTH), organized a seminar entitled “Phraeksa’s Model and the Management of Landfills in Thailand”, in collaboration with the Network of Anti-Praeksa Landfill and Affected People of Samut Prakan, and the Social Research Institute of Chulalongkorn University, on July 7, 2014 at the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University. The seminar focused on best practices for waste management in Thailand, by discussing the recent burning of garbage at Praeksa landfill in Samut Prakan, to highlight illegal methods of garbage disposal, especially of toxic waste in this area.

Noor Mahnun Mohamed (Malaysia Senior Fellow 2012-2013) and Norhayati Kaprawi (Malaysia Fellow Year 2011-2012) collaborated in an art exhibition entitled “The Good Malaysian Woman” to examine what constitutes a “good” woman in Malaysia, by addressing issues of identity and self, community and nationality. Together with twenty other artists, they explored how women’s identities and choices are shaped by the politics of ethnicity and religion in Malaysia today. The exhibition was held from May 18 to 25, 2014 at Black Box, MAP Publika, Solaris Dutamas, KL, in aid of the All Women’s Action Society (AWAM). A workshop and panel talk with the artists was also organized in conjunction with the exhibition.

Ronnarong Khampha (Thailand Fellow Year 2010-2011) performed a Solo Lanna Contemporary Dance entitled “I” on June 28, 2014 at Chiang Mai University’s Arts Center. The new solo pieces showed body movement techniques combined with voice, a dance screen, and installation art. For over ten years, Ronnarong has been developing a unique style of contemporary art that mixes modern elements with traditional styles.

Prijono Tjiptoherijanto (Indonesia Senior Fellow Year 2007-2008) was appointed as one of the seven members of Indonesia’s Civil Service Commission (CSC) on November 27, 2014. The Commission is Indonesia’s first CSC since the country’s independence in 1945. The ceremony was led by Indonesian President Joko Widodo and attended by government Ministers and senior officers.

Ramon P. Santos (Philippines Senior Fellow Year 2006-2007) was recently named one of six National Artists of the Philippines (“Pambansang Alagad ng Sining ng Pilipinas”) in 2014 for the category of Music. The title of National Artist is an honor bestowed on Filipinos who have made significant contributions to the development of Philippine art, through the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Yasuhiro Morinaga (Japan Fellow Year 2010-2011) received a grant from the Asian Cultural Council to conduct a field research project in Yunnan, China. In July 2014, he began to record the music of ethnic minorities in the Yunnan region, mainly in Dali and Lijiang provinces. Morinaga specializes in collaborations with local people that involve integrating natural recorded sounds on location, with ethnic music and other media to produce a unique sonic experience. (more about his work on p.13)

Dicky Sofjan
(Indonesia Fellow Year 2007-2008) published three books. First, a 336-page book entitled Sejarah dan Budaya Syiah di Asia Tenggara (History and Culture of the Shias in Southeast Asia) that comprises fifteen articles in Bahasa Indonesia. The book analyzes the arrival of the Shia Muslims and their long-term presence and influence in the region. It explores little-known knowledge about how Persian Shia intellectual traditions and practices have influenced Southeast Asian governance and cultural practices, literature, rituals and community festivities. The contributors included Indonesian scholars from five different provinces in Indonesia and experts in the field from Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Iran. The other two bilingual (English and Bahasa Indonesia) publications are a two-set monograph entitled Religion and Television in Indonesia: Ethics Surrounding Dakwahainment, which provides a critical review and lucid assessment of the dakwahainment (Islamic televangelism) industry in post-reform Indonesia. It discusses how Islamic propagation (dakwah) is complexly intertwined with the entertainment industry amidst the backdrop of an increasingly materialistic, nihilistic and voyeuristic culture in Indonesia. The work stemmed from a research project, in which Dicky examined the highly popular Islamic televangelism programs from a normative ethical viewpoint. The monograph was published by the Geneva-based Globethics.net, an organization that promotes the study of ethics from intellectual traditions throughout the world. The publication can be downloaded for free at Globethics.net.

Yeoh Seng Guan
(Malaysia Senior Fellow 2005-2006) was the editor of The Other Kuala Lumpur: Living in the Shadows of a Globalising Southeast Asian City, published in January 2014. 

Synopsis:
Kuala Lumpur, like many Southeast Asian cities, has changed very significantly in the last two or three decades—expanding in size, and becoming more modern and global in outlook. For many people these changes represent “progress” and “development.” This book, however, focuses on the more marginalized residents of Kuala Lumpur. Among others, it considers street hawkers and vendors, refugees, the urban poor, religious minorities and a gender/sexuality rights group, to explore how their everyday lives have been adversely affected by these recent changes. The book shows how urban renewal, the law and ethno-religious nationalism can work against these groups in Malaysia’s capital city. For further details see: www.tandfindia.com/books/details/9780415730860

Wilhelm G. Solheim II was regarded as a pioneer in the study of Philippine and Southeast Asian prehistoric archaeology. Solheim started his studies in Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley before arriving in the Philippines in 1950. Under the mentoring of Anthropologist Otley H. Beyer, he taught at the University of the Philippines. He also worked as librarian and curator of the U.S. Embassy’s American Historical Collection and as public information officer of the U.S. Information Service (USIS). He returned to the U.S. in 1954 and was awarded a doctorate fellowship at the Arizona State Museum of the University of Arizona. Upon his retirement in 1991, Solheim returned to the Philippines to establish the Solheim Foundation to promote archeology in the region. Filipino academics are truly grateful for his contributions.


Wilhelm G. Solheim II
was a faculty member of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the Ateneo de Manila University. She also taught at The Asian Center at the University of the Philippines. A sociologist by training, Diorina completed her bachelor’s degree (Interdisciplinary Studies, Minor in French Studies) and M.A. (Sociology) at the Ateneo de Manila University. An extensively published social action advocate, Diorina has contributed much to literature regarding Filipino urban poor and marginalized groups, border migration and security, Filipino identities and constructions, leadership in development, and the role of NGOs in the democratization of the Philippines. She worked with various NGOs, such as the Institute for Popular Democracy, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Philippines, and Amnesty International Philippines. Diorina went to Germany on April 9, 2014 for a structured doctoral training program in sociology at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology at the University of Bielefeld. She was awarded a scholarship to pursue research on conditional social grant programs in the Philippines, Diorina is survived by her mother, Christa R. Velasco, and daughter Naesega. Her cremation and interment were held in Germany.

Djorina R. Velasco was a faculty member of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the Ateneo de Manila University. She also taught at The Asian Center at the University of the Philippines. A sociologist by training, Djorina completed her bachelor’s degree (Interdisciplinary Studies, Minor in French Studies) and M.A. (Sociology) at the Ateneo de Manila University. An extensively published social action advocate, Diorina has contributed much to literature regarding Filipino urban poor and marginalized groups, border migration and security, Filipino identities and constructions, leadership in development, and the role of NGOs in the democratization of the Philippines. She worked with various NGOs, such as the Institute for Popular Democracy, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Philippines, and Amnesty International Philippines. Diorina went to Germany on April 9, 2014 for a structured doctoral training program in sociology at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology at the University of Bielefeld. She was awarded a scholarship to pursue research on conditional social grant programs in the Philippines, Diorina is survived by her mother, Christa R. Velasco, and daughter Naesega. Her cremation and interment were held in Germany.

Djorina R. Velasco
(Year 2006-2007)

Calendar of Events

- API Mekong Mobile Workshop will be held in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia during March 1-8, 2015
- API Country Workshop will be held in each PI country during February-May 2015
What’s Gone Wrong with Democracy?

Questions about the effectiveness of emerging democracies everywhere are on the rise, especially in Southeast Asia where there are growing concerns about flawed democratic institutions and manipulative elections. In an attempt to address debates about the national and regional implications of the recent incidences and democratic phenomenon in the region, the API Fellowships Program, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, organized a public forum entitled “What’s Gone Wrong with Democracy?: Issues for New Regional Community-Making” on March 14, 2014 at the Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University.

The public forum was opened by Nantawat Boramanand, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University. Key speakers and discussants were Raul C. Pangalangan (Philippines Senior Fellow 2012-2013), Professor of Law and Publisher of The Philippines Inquirer; Toh Kin Woon (Malaysia Senior Fellow 2008-2011), Honorary Chair of the Global Democracy, Governance & Social Justice Programme, Penang Institute; Kavi Chongkittavorn (Thailand Senior Fellow 2007-2008), Columnist of The Nation; and Attatchak Sattayanurak (Thailand Senior Fellow 2013-2014), Professor of the Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University.

Raul C. Pangalangan’s talk entitled, “The Philippines: Dysfunctional Democracy, Activist Courts”, pointed out several political similarities between Thailand and Philippines. For example, in the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos was a popular constitutional president (1965-72) who later became the cause of the first people’s uprising. Many similar incidents took place in following decades against presidents. Elected representatives were therefore ousted by the unelected and it was called “politics at court”. When the constitutional court became involved in politics, forcing the government to dissolve, the unelected body was basically overriding the majority. In the Philippines it is being debated whether the court should step in when this occurs. It is common in the region that the courts seem not to act independently but try to balance pressures from popular movements, including civil society.

Toh Kin Woon started his presentation by quoting Joseph E. Stiglitz: “Of the 1% by the 1% for the 1%”, which implies that countries in general are ruled by the few and rich people. As for events that involve million people protesting against political, economic, and social conditions in oppressive societies, the root of the problems include political oppression by the few; applying undemocratic means to hold on to power; and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. When wealth is a main determinant of power, it entrenches corruption and the wealthiest often oppose policies that would improve life for other people in general. In conclusion, the ruling elites in Malaysia continue to rely on flawed democratic institutions and an unfair electoral system to stay in power. In addition, various institutions like the judiciary, the legislatures, the bureaucracy, the police and the anti-corruption commission, aided by a slew of authoritarian rules, have been used to strengthen their hold on power. The pursuit of democratic ideals is then left to civil society and the opposition at the Federal level, both of which are growing in Malaysia.

Kavi Chongkittavorn talked about the trend in Southeast Asia that the regional scene is moving very fast, as a result of the 2013 ASEAN Community. Myanmar has become much more active and open. Indonesia, once considered solid and difficult to change, has also become increasingly driven to change due to pressure from external movements. Political reforms will help promote tourism. Regional reforms are taking place in all aspects including awareness. But this will become a big problem because ASEAN is diverse. Players in democracy have become sophisticated. There is nothing wrong with democracy but people who play the politics.

Attatchak Sattayanurak concluded the forum by sharing his thoughts on how Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines can overcome the glitches that come with our pursuit of democracy. There are four key issues to consider. First, the region needs a new political paradigm in order to understand a more dynamic populace by focusing on people’s cultural and social rights because the economic and social changes are very complex, while cultural and social rights are actually inter-related. Second, modernity and modernization in the region should be viewed in a new light by looking back on our own historical backgrounds which are largely influenced by the Western model, the concentration of resources in the hands of a few elites, and social disintegration, which has given rise to various social problems. Third, we need to understand the real functions of democracy in our own society. If we use the standards of Western democracy, such as the prerequisites of elections and parliament, we can say our countries have democracy. In reality, however, we all know that these democratic forms and procedures are not functioning as they should. Last, to understand the real dynamics of our societies and politics, we need to understand our own home-grown politics in a more dynamic way first. Attatchak called this “democracy on the move”, which does not necessarily mean a move towards democracy.

Various perspectives were shared among participants from the floor, focusing on developing and sustaining democratic values and institutions, with the hope of strengthening regional community.
A high-speed train (locally known as Shinkansen) is taking me from Kumamoto city to Minamata, once a small fishing village located on Japan’s southern island of Kyushu. I am wondering if I will become the first Burmese researcher to ever set foot in this city, known for the devastating 1956 methyl mercury poisoning tragedy. It is still one of Japan’s worst pollution cases.

Sitting quietly beside me is Prof. Takashi Miyakita, Director of the Minamata Disease Onsite Study Center. On the seat in front of us, there is another expert on the subject — Prof. Masanori Hanada, the Director of the Open Research Center for Minamata Studies at Kumamoto Gakuen University. As I think of their long-term commitment to studying the Minamata Disease, I can’t wait to ask a simple question: “Could you share with me your opinion on whether the issue of the Minamata Disease is over or not?” Prof. Miyakita said: “No, it is not over yet. You will better understand it soon.” This was on the morning of January 11, 2014.

As an API Fellow, I was very fortunate to attend the 9th Gathering of Minamata Disease Incident Studies held at the Municipal Hall of Minamata City from February 11 to 12, 2014. As soon as I entered the conference hall, I encountered passionate discussions all around me, among Japanese scholars, doctors, lawyers, and most importantly the victims, whose lifelong psycho-social and physical suffering is evidence of the disease.

The first diagnosed case of the disease was on May 1, 1956. The cause was traced to the methyl mercury effluents discharged by Nippon Chisso Hirýó Kabushiki Kaisha (renamed JNC Corporation). However, nobody has been able to determine the exact number of people poisoned after eating contaminated fish and shellfish from Minamata Bay. The government never conducted a comprehensive environmental and health impact assessment to find out. Thousands of victims have died since then. Many thousands living near the Bay and the Yatsushiro Sea were also affected, but they were never officially recognized as victims because they did not meet the government’s strict criteria.

So far, the official number of victims is only 2,275. Thousands more died waiting for the government to acknowledge their suffering.

Pregnant women who ate contaminated fish poisoned their children. Fujie Sakamoto was one of those mothers. She is 90 years old but she was an active participant in discussions at the conference. Her daughter, Shinobu Sakamoto, 58, was born with the disease. The Sakamoto family reflects the irreparable damage that innocent local residents suffered due to the industrial polluter’s irresponsible negligence.

Several remarkable people who cared for victims they didn’t even know also joined the conference. They originally came to help in the 1970s. At the time they were young social activists, who moved to Minamata and settled there.

The atmosphere in the conference room proved that Minamata is still haunted by the mercury poisoning nightmare. But despite the suffering, all the participants focused on the future. They made a solemn wish to never see or hear about another incident in Japan or anywhere else in the world.

Flipping through the conference handouts, I was shocked to see a data chart from Prof. Shigeharu Nakachi, a key speaker of the conference. It showed the details of mercury exports from Japan to other countries, including Myanmar. I never thought of this kind of relationship between Japan and Myanmar before.

Where was the mercury used in Myanmar? The question sparked a recent memory. Just a few days before my research trip to Minamata, I was catching up with news from Myanmar. A Burmese scientist had told a local reporter that he had tested mercury levels in fish caught in the Irrawaddy River — Myanmar’s most important river. He found that the fish contained five times more mercury than international standards permit. He urged the government to pay serious attention to this by improving the quality of the river’s water. Actually, several years ago, local journalists reported that gold mines in northern Kachin State used mercury and discharged their untreated waste into the river.

Japan is not Myanmar, which has neither the technological nor the financial capacity to address Minamata-like mercury pollution. Economically rich Japan had to spend at least 150 billion yen to clean up Minamata Bay and to compensate victims. In 1997, the Japanese government announced that Minamata Bay was clean and safe.

At the end of the conference, I walked out of the Municipal Hall and silently prayed for the Minamata victims. The last line of my prayer was: “Please don’t allow this tragedy to happen in Myanmar.”
API Country Workshops (CW) are important platforms for Fellows to exchange information, concerns and key issues of the region to discuss possible engagement in national and regional issues. This year, Fellows focused on post-2015 activities and potential platforms for future collaborations.

The schedule of the 2014 Country Workshops was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>August 8-9, 2014</td>
<td>Law Faculty, Universitas Indonesia, Depok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>May 10-11, 2014</td>
<td>CO-OP Inn, Kyoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>September 28, 2014</td>
<td>Dorset Hotel, Kuala Lumpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>May 17, 2014</td>
<td>Social Science Building, Anteneo de Manila University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand &amp; CLMV</td>
<td>August 2, 2014</td>
<td>Mahachulalongkorn Building, Chulalongkorn University</td>
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**INDONESIA**

The 2014 Indonesia Country Workshop was attended by about 60 participants including Universitas Indonesia (UI) lecturers, and officers of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). The welcoming speech and opening remarks were conveyed by Indonesia Partner Institution (PI) Program Director Taufik Abdullah, Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation (TNF) Tatsuya Tanami and Dean of UI Law Faculty Topo Santoso. The first-day agenda consisted of three sessions under the theme “Penyelesaian Permasalahan Perkotaan Dalam Berbagai Perspektif” (Solutions to Urban Problems from Various Perspectives).

The first session, “Urban Problems & Sustainable Solutions”, focused on various urban problems in Asian cities. Three API Fellows—Tatak P. Ujiyati (Indonesia Fellow Year 2002-2003), Addinul Yakin (Indonesia Fellow Year 2003-2004) and Heru Susetyo (Indonesia Fellow Year 2006-2007)—and Yogyakarta Code Community Forum (Pemerti Kali Code) Leader Totok Pratopo, shared their experiences and insights into solutions to urban problems in Asian cities. The second session was a special seminar for Fellows from Year 2012-2013—Boni Setiawan, Kuntum Melati and Wiwik Mahdayani—to discuss their research findings. In the third seminar, Kohei Watanabe (Japan Fellow Year 2009-2010) presented results from a collaborative grant project titled “Risks and Challenges of Urbanization: Focusing on Solid Waste Management Issues”. Sri Nuryanti (Indonesia Fellow Year 2001-2002) closed the first day of the Workshop.

The second day emphasized API’s future collaborative activities. TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami unveiled the new API Program platform that will link the different stakeholders, networks, organizations and individual public intellectuals working in public policy, knowledge production, and advocacy, so they can contribute toward the betterment of societies in the region. The new API Program will focus more on generating innovative interventions with optimal social impact through the collaborative work of public intellectuals. Regional Committee (RC) Chair Kohei Watanabe (Japan Fellow Year 2009-2010) and RC Deputy Chair, Cristina Lim (Philippines Fellow Year 2008-2009) sought input from the API Community to revise a working draft paper about the Regional Cooperation Center (API RCC).

The launch of the Kali Code Book in Yogyakarta was also announced. Indonesia Fellows contributing to the publication were Ekoningtyas Margu Wardani (Year 2008-2009), Dwi Any Marsiyanti (Year 2009-2010), Pande Ketut Trimayuni (Year 2001-2002), and Mangestuti Agil (Year 2003-2004), who discussed their articles. After this, API Fellows provided their updates and voted for a new RC representative. Rina Shahriyani Shahrullah (Indonesia Fellow Year 2007-2008) was replaced by Yonariza (Indonesia Fellow Year 2008-2009).
The 9th Japan Country Workshop was attended by 40 participants including Japan Fellows, other Fellows as special guests, and the representatives of TNF, the Coordinating Institution (CI), and the Japan Partner Institution (PI). Japan PI Program Director Yoko Hayami opened the session and introduced TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami, who expressed TNF’s continued commitment to support and utilize the pool of over 300 Fellows, even after the current API framework is terminated. He said that as TNF celebrates its 50th Anniversary, it is in a transition period, but still aims to be a hub for social reform, which is also API’s mission. He also explained TNF’s decision to conduct a thorough review of the API program. The review results will determine the direction of the new post-2015 API Program.

**Introduction and Updates of the Fellows**

The Fellows were requested to report on their activities in the past year and give updates. It was a good opportunity for the Fellows to learn about the activities of their colleagues, especially those from different fields who do not regularly communicate with each other. As in previous years, copies of printed booklets with biographical introductions and updates from each Japan Fellow (including the ones who did not attend this CW) were also distributed.

**RC/NCC**

Before the CW proper meeting on May 10, RC members convened a meeting of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) to share the results of the last RC meeting and the CW agenda. At the NCC meetings, the membership of the RC and NCC were also confirmed. Motohide Taguchi (Japan Fellow Year 2002-2003) has been the RC for the past three years, so it was agreed that Tetsuya Araki (Japan Fellow Year 2002-2003) will replace him starting from May 2014. Kohei Watanabe (Japan Fellow Year 2009-2010) was selected as RC Chair at the last RC meeting to replace Thitipol Kanteewong (Thailand Fellow Year 2009-2010).

The following NCC members were approved for another year: Tatsuki Kataoka (Japan Fellow Year 2001-2002), Mokoto Kawano (Japan Fellow Year 2002-2003), Motohide Taguchi (Japan Fellow Year 2002-2003), Wataru Fujita (Japan Fellow Year 2003-2004), Mizuki Endo (Japan Fellow Year 2004-2005), Tetsuya Araki, Kohei Watanabe (Japan Fellow Year 2009-2010), Itsue Ito (Japan Fellow Year 2005-2006), Tomoko Momiyama (Japan Fellow Year 2003-2004), Kaori Fushiki (Japan Fellow Year 2006-2007), and Kenta Kishi (Japan Fellow Year 2010-2011). The three new NCC members are Michi Tomioka (Japan Fellow Year 2006-2007), Ayame Suzuki (Japan Fellow Year 2006), and Yuria Furusawa (Japan Fellow Year 2011-2012).

**RC Proposals for New API**

Motohide Taguchi (Japan Fellow Year 2002-2003) and Kohei Watanabe (Japan Fellow Year 2009-2010) presented discussions and resolutions from the last RC meeting using the slides prepared by RC members. In the report, two major proposals were highlighted: 1) the proposed RCC organization and 2) E-group discussions. After the plenary discussion, parallel discussions continued in smaller groups.

Many questions were raised about the organization, feasibility, and sustainability of the RCC. Some Fellows said they would prefer a bottom-up, as opposed to a top-down, approach for future API activities. After a long discussion the Fellows concluded that there needs to be a roadmap for the new API program in order to meet the needs of a new organization. The idea of E-groups and their objectives was well received but there were some negative reactions to some activities planned for the Regional Project that had already been tried and had not worked well.

**From TNF**

TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami discussed plans for the future API Program, which included a Regional Forum, Collaborative grants, Fellowships, API Fellowships, and co-funding programs. He welcomed the RCC plan and said he hoped there would be more such initiatives.

**Collaborative Grant Projects**

API Fellows Kohei Watanabe (Japan Fellow Year 2009-2010), Kenta Kishi (Japan Fellow Year 2010-2011) and Kaori Fushiki (Japan Fellow Year 2006-2007) made presentations about the Collaborative Grant Projects (both 1st and 2nd rounds). Fellows from other countries, Hezri Adnan (Malaysia Fellow Year 2006-2007), Wimonrat Issarathamnoon (Thailand Fellow Year 2003-2004), Yuli Nugroho (Indonesia Fellow 2005-2006) and Dicky Sofjan (Indonesia Fellow Year 2007-2008), who were visiting Kyoto for the Project, were also invited to the Collaborative Grant session and the dinner that followed.

**Presentations**

Mizuo Ikeda’s (Japan Fellow Year 2012-2013) talk was entitled “Educative Use of the Cultural Heritage and the Development of the Human Resources”. Makiko Wakai (Japan Fellow Year 2012-2013) screened her documentary film “From Asahi to Abucay”, and Makoto Nomura’s (Japan Fellow Year 2012-2013) presentation was entitled “Collaborative Composition in Southeast Asia in response to the Nuclear Power Plant Disaster”. Each presentation was followed by a lively discussion.
There were 29 participants at the Country Workshop. TNF was represented by Executive Director Tanami Tatsuya and Chief Manager of International Network Team Tatsuaki Kobayashi and API Malaysia Program Director, Rashila Ramli.

The Workshop started off after the usual preliminaries with three of the four Fellows from Year 2013-2014 namely Zulkifli Zakaria, Shieko and Zulhabri presenting initial findings from their projects.

The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) reported on the various activities by the Fellows since the last Workshop, and mention was made of the Memorandum on the Need for Freedom of Expression which had been signed by most of the Fellows. The Workshop was also informed that the business magazine The Edge still needs contributors for a column specifically for API.

Representatives from the Regional Committee (RC) reported on proposals for the post-2015 API organizational structure and activities submitted by Philippines Fellows. These proposals were circulated to all the Malaysian Fellows and their views obtained. The Malaysian Fellows were of the view that it might be advisable to wait until TNF had responded to proposals already made, before making any further proposals.

TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami gave a slide presentation about the post-2015 API Program. He said that the results of the evaluation by Oberlin University were still not available (results have since been made available). He said more time was needed to study the Oberlin University Report to consider the proposals made. However, he reiterated that TNF was still open to ideas on the future direction of the API Program. He also mentioned there would be no objection by TNF to the continued use of the API logo, or the use of the name ‘API Fellows’ and that the API website would continue to be made available to the Fellows, although website maintenance details had yet to be determined.

After considering the current position of the API Program the Fellows agreed they would like to continue as a post-2015 API community. With this in mind the Workshop commissioned Susanna George (Malaysia Fellow Year 2011-2012) and Lim Mah Hui (Malaysia Senior Fellow Year 2007-2008) to communicate with the Fellows and determine views on how the Community could function both substantively and organizationally post-2015. These suggestions would be further discussed at the next Country Workshop scheduled for March 2015.

Rashila also informed the Workshop that the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) would support the Fellows in their post-2015 activities. The Workshop ended with Fellows providing updates on their work areas and taking questions on these areas.
The 2014 Philippines Country Workshop was a platform through which Fellows were able to envision concrete plans for the continued involvement and proactive response to local and regional issues. The main focus of the post-2015 API discussions focused on the API Regional Cooperation Center (API-RCC) discussed at the Regional Committee (RC) meeting.

Support for the API Regional Cooperation Center
RC representatives, Theresita Atienza (Philippines Fellow Year 2005-2006), and Cristina Lim (Philippines Fellow Year 2008-2009), presented and discussed the output of the RC meeting held last April in Bangkok. The RC members drafted a paper suggesting the establishment of API-RCC. They hoped the API-RCC's organizational structure would maximize and sustain the existing network of API by expanding beyond API Fellows and academics to include local and regional industries, government and non-government organizations, and communities.

The proposed API-RCC has five main programs: (1) Research and Creative Work, (2) Training, (3) Advocacy, (4) Networking, and (5) Support Services. The RC also included initial suggestions regarding the organizational structure of the API-RCC and some points to consider in running the programs of the Center.

The Philippines Country Workshop was designed to be a local consultation regarding the API-RCC. Theresita and Cristina walked the workshop participants through the proposal. They provided the rationale behind the initiative and accommodated questions and comments on the initial draft.

The idea of an API-RCC was well received in the Country Workshop. Philippines Fellows expressed support for the initiatives of the RC because the organization encouraged collaboration and social commitment and action. Some Fellows even expressed relief because the RC proposal seemed more concrete. Although the proposal is still a rough draft, it was acknowledged that there was much promise in the direction taken by the RC members.

One Asia – Asia today, the world tomorrow
The day was filled with lively discussions as Fellows fleshed out details of the API-RCC. Many concerns were raised regarding the API-RCC’s structure and operations, framework, and even branding and marketing. The sessions had the Fellows fully engaged in idea and energy exchanges. To further encourage Fellows to think about their involvement in the API-RCC, the participants divided into four groups and each group developed ideas about four programs of the API-RCC. The Fellows thought about current themes and issues in the region that needed to be addressed by the RCC and made recommendations on how to set up the mechanisms for the different programs. Danilo Francisco Reyes (Philippines Fellow Year 2003-2004), suggested the name “One Asia” if the initiative is accepted. The participants agreed the name was catchy and captured the principles that the API-RCC is trying to promote.

Doable Dreams for API Fellows not API “Alumni”
Much imagining was done in one day. The Fellows’ interest and participation was very much fueled by the RC proposal and TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami’s presentation regarding the future API Program added greatly to the excitement of the participants.

The wealth of data produced in the Country Workshop was quite overwhelming but was very much appreciated. API Philippines’ Program Director, Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J., expressed gratitude for the generosity of the Fellows in sharing their visions and challenged them to work on translating them into feasible goals.

Workshop participants left the event with a renewed sense of commitment, especially after Fr. Cruz reminded them that the API Fellowship is not just a year-long affiliation. Even after their fellowship year API Fellows are never referred to as “alumni,” because this term emphasizes the past. There is much that needs to be done and the future is what the API is all about: the work of the API Fellows is far from over, it has only just begun. ❖
THAILAND & CLMV

The Thailand & CLMV Country Workshop attracted approximately 50 participants, and began with opening remarks from the Director of API Thailand and the Coordinating Institution (CI) Surichai Wun’ Gaeo and TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami.

Updates from the Regional Committee (RC) and National Coordinating Committee (NCC) Patpoom Phootong (Thailand Fellow Year 2010-2011) updated participants about the RC meeting in February 2014, when RC representatives from five countries shared ideas about how to sustain the API community after the Program’s closure in 2015. The Philippines RC representatives proposed an API Regional Cooperation Center (API-RCC), while the Japan RC representatives proposed an E-group discussion as a platform for the API community to discuss and share thematic issues of interest. In a questionnaire that was sent to all Thailand Fellows, some disagreed with the establishment of an API-RCC as it would involve massive human, logistical and administrative resources, and the related complications, such as legal implications for a new organization and drafting a budget. Thai Fellows agreed to communicate on possible collaboration via the existing email groups.

Narumol Apinives (Thailand Senior Fellow Year 2005-2006) presented on the book launch of “Living Landscapes, Connected Communities” in KL, as an output of the API Regional Project. She expressed gratitude for the success of the book launch and specifically thanked TNF, community leaders and members, working groups in five countries, participating Fellows, and Director of the Hakubi Center for Advanced Research, Koji Tanaka, for their support. Narumol served as co-editor of the book.

Updates from TNF on Future API
Regarding API's future, TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami stated that new API Program will be designed to link different stakeholders and networks to create a platform for the betterment of societies and the region through collaborative works of public intellectuals. One proposal called for is an API regional forum in which 30-40 public intellectuals would gather to discuss key issues annually. Other plans included API collaborative grants for joint research and projects of an innovative and transnational nature and API individual fellowships for 10 ASEAN countries plus Japan.

API Thailand Director Surichai Wun’ Gaeo concluded the discussion forum

API Mekong Mobile Workshop Proposal
The proposal of API Mekong Mobile Workshop (MMW) was submitted. Aiming to support further collaboration among the API network, MMW was discussed and endorsed by Thailand & CLMV Fellows. The vision of the MMW is to provide API Community members and partners in the region with opportunities to understand the regional issues, to share and exchange views and experiences, and to develop ideas as to how we can both individually and collectively respond to critical issues facing the region. The MMW Organizing Committee comprising of Thailand NCC and API Fellows based in the region was set up accordingly to develop the detailed program.

Discussion Forum “Crossing Borders: Building Solidarity in the Region”
The discussion forum served as a kick-off seminar to gather key information and further conceptualize the MMW. Abhayuth Chantrabha (Thailand Fellow Year 2011-2012) led the Forum by providing a background on the urban poor movement in Thailand and linkages with NGOs in neighboring countries. Solidarity actions have been formed to tackle urban poor problems that exist throughout the region. Chheang Vannarith (Cambodia Fellow Year 2013-2014) talked about identity-building in Southeast Asia, to seek alternative solutions to increasing uncertainty and to promote diversity of identities in order to further develop solidarity. Leakhana Kol (Cambodia Fellow Year 2012-2013) raised the issue of land title in Cambodia, saying that land rights conflicts had been mushrooming, leading to the expropriation of residential and agricultural land and disputes between residents and land speculators. Finally, in 2009, the Land Management and Administration Program (LMAP) and the Land Administration Sub-Sector Program (LASSP) were implemented to build a functioning cadastral system, including land administration bodies and mechanisms to deal with disputes over unregistered land. Nguyen Van Chinh (Vietnam Senior Fellow Year 2011-2012) discussed how new Chinese migration to CLMV countries was closely linked with trade flows, investment, and aid from China, and that Chinese migrants were coming to seek their fortunes as opposed to settlement, as they had in the past. This meant it was important to build a coherent immigration policy at a regional level in line with social and economic development. It is necessary to promote bilateral and intra-regional social dialogue to help create regional agreements on standards for work contracts for migrant workers. Thitipol Kanteewong (Thailand Fellow Year 2009-2010) talked about how sharing music, art and culture in Southeast Asia has been transformed due to changing social paradigms through localism, nationalism, regionalism, and internationalism, as well as globalization in the 21st century. He said that now the question is how our API community can guide society to develop and preserve music and the arts in Southeast Asia. The presentations were followed by dynamic discussions among the participating Fellows.
In the past, my theater work mostly dealt with social problems, such as violence against women and family members, labor exploitation, human rights, migrant workers, and identity differences leading to violence. But I had not had an opportunity to become seriously involved with theater work that directly addressed violence through peacebuilding.

I came to the Salzburg Global Seminar with a question: What kinds of arts and culture could serve as agents for change in peacebuilding? During the seminar a different question came up: Whose art and culture could be used for peacebuilding? By the end of the seminar, I left Schloss Leopoldskron (SGC venue) with a question: How?

The answer to my first question became clearer when I attended a lecture entitled “Issues, Challenges, and Priorities”, presented by James Thompson, a professor of Applied and Social Theater from the University of Manchester. It was my favorite part of the seminar.

Thompson’s time/space matrix featured two axes of time and space that started from the ground zero point where “bombs are landing on your head”. The time axis extended from a current situation to months, years, and generations later. The space axis reached neighboring towns, refugee camps at the border, countries offering asylum, and diaspora communities. Each area on the graph showed “what” activity was appropriate for the corresponding time and space. Thompson’s clear presentation made me look back to try to see where I was on this matrix and what I could do. The time/space matrix would also help us to see the development of conflicts, and the relationships between people before the eruption of violence.

Another aspect of Thompson’s lecture that I liked was the set of questions that people who work in this field must always ask themselves. For example, projects that emphasize reconciliation often ask questions that do not go well with justice — so how could we balance the two? When we have the right to remember, we should also have a right not to. Thompson suggested that we could give our voice to celebrate life as well as to commemorate death.

It was a great opportunity for me to meet and learn from experienced artists and artist-activists worldwide who actually have applied art to their fieldwork. They helped me to see what kinds of arts and culture could be used as agents for change in peacebuilding. Some of their work revealed their ability to show how people in conflict areas can be viewed in a condescending way by outsiders. Some projects provided opportunities for local people in conflict areas to participate and express their opinions. Outsiders however, often have patronizing attitudes towards local people in conflict areas, and this can cause local people to feel discomfort instead of the comfort that is intended.

There are ethical questions for artists to keep...
in mind, especially foreign artists who must be aware that their artistic projects may be unfamiliar to local people and may have negative effects on them as well. Have we ever asked the local people what they want and whether they want us to come? Here is where my second question comes into play — whose arts that we bring to them?

Since I did not hear much about local perspectives in the final session of the seminar, I was left asking: How? Most of the artists I noticed were urban folks who did not actually live in the conflicting community. They had only been invited to operate projects and activities there.

It is clear that people in conflict areas may not mind projects brought to their community as long as they help to relieve suffering. But they may not be aware how invasive some heavily funded projects can be and how this can lead to additional conflicts in the future.

In my opinion, outsider views are prone to some sensitivities and may create unexpected problems. For example, when more outsiders become involved with projects, they may be questioned by community members as to why certain people are selected. Those selected may be the same old faces in many projects. We need to consider the selection criteria and procedures for projects, especially for ones that allocate large amounts of money for fees or incentives.

The kind of expertise offered to people in conflict areas is not so important. What is more important is determining what is meaningful for the local people — what do they want now? What resources do they already possess? What resources could have been applied in the past to manage conflicts? What should outsiders consider before stepping into the community to work? Only after we understand local needs can we answer the questions: What?; Whose and for Whom?; and How?

“Holocaust and Genocide Education: Sharing Experiences across Borders”

Farina So (Cambodia Fellow Year 2012-2013)

This was the second time that the Salzburg Global Seminar hosted a five-day symposium on Holocaust Education and Genocide Prevention, which allowed participants from various countries, especially post-conflict nations to share experiences and build a global network. I would like to thank the API Fellowships Program for making my trip possible.

The symposium had several purposes that included assessing the impact of Holocaust teaching in nations outside the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) member countries; capacity-building and enhancing the pedagogical skills of educators and museum/memorial curators; and identifying anti-semitism/genocide denial and proposing some counter-measures to combat these issues effectively.

The presentation was not done in a conventional style for the entire symposium. The panelists were asked to respond to main questions to engage the audience in an interactive manner. I began my response by stating that Holocaust and genocide education is our moral obligation. Thus, regardless of country context, we need to learn about the past and to help contribute to genocide prevention. The purpose of teaching about the Cambodian genocide is to ensure that the crimes are never forgotten and to create awareness among future young leaders.
The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) started its mission by documenting Khmer Rouge atrocities through documentation and mapping in 1995, long before any real genocide education took place in 2009. At least 3,000 national, provincial, and commune teachers in history and civic morality were trained, and nearly one hundred thousand students from grades 7 to 12 have been taught in schools about the Democratic Kampuchea regime, better known as the Khmer Rouge regime. And yet, the quality of the teaching remains questionable, since it has been subject to various challenges, including insufficient time, and insufficient materials, resources and qualified teachers. It is our goal to ensure that these challenges will be addressed effectively so that the quality of the education will be assured.

Perhaps the most challenging session of the symposium was about how to teach people in Islamic countries about the Holocaust. In these countries, particularly Palestine and Iran, it is impossible to even talk about the Holocaust at the state level. They also questioned the truth lies in the crimes were committed against the Jews. People in these countries expressed fear that by acknowledging or learning about the Holocaust they would be simultaneously recognizing or legitimizing the state of Israel and therefore disregarding the so-called Naqba, or killing of Palestinians. Two Palestinian speakers presented the main challenges facing educators in teaching about the Holocaust or genocide in the State of Palestine and they called for mutual understanding between the Palestinian and Israeli people. Two lecturers from Turkey presented similar challenges when they said that Holocaust teaching occurs only at individual or unofficial levels, because the Turkish government does not recognize the Holocaust.

Views on the Holocaust from Islamic societies and the various ways that were suggested to make the Holocaust, or genocide in general, relevant to young people in Asia were particularly of interest to me because these themes helped me to understand challenges facing educational policy makers in institutionalizing history in their educational programs. It also enabled me to recognize signs of genocide denial and ways to combat them effectively—namely through education—without affecting someone’s freedom of expression. In that regard, the role of civil society is crucial in initiating, facilitating, and tackling these issues and challenges.

I hope to utilize the skills, knowledge, and networking experience I gained from the symposium to improve my existing commitment to genocide education and prevention. To date, there hasn’t been any survey to assess how the Holocaust or genocide, especially the Cambodian genocide, have been taught in Southeast Asian countries and why we should learn not only about our own history but also others’ history. Therefore, I wish to join my research team on genocide education research in this region.

“Students at the Margins and the Institutions that Serve Them: A Global Perspective”

Mochamad Indrawan (Indonesia Fellow 2011-2012)
The diverse experiences of the participants resulted in progressive interpretations of "minority" and "marginalization". In South Africa, the Black minority is actually the majority. Admittedly, the term "minority" is applicable more to the U.S. "Minority" is a term that tends to restrict the subject, rather than to embrace the full complexity, and the potentially dynamic processes associated with cultural diversity. Since many other countries do not use the term "minority", the reference to "students at the margins" may be more appropriate.

"Marginalization" can be the result of diverse correlates such as ethnicity, language, faith/religion, gender, sexual orientation, income disparity, disabilities, refugees, adult learners, veterans, urbanization levels, geographic isolation, student-parents, students with no parents, just to name a few. Language can become an issue in many countries, such as in Central Europe (with the Roma minority), China (with its diverse ethnic minorities), and refugees worldwide. But race/ethnicity may not matter in the future. Consider that in 10 years' time American society will be significantly diverse that redressing diversity issues may not appeal to politicians or the public.

As far as Indonesia is concerned, a country of 17000 islands and 240 million people has a wide range of socio-economic diversity and its associated challenges. Indonesia also faces the issue of geographic isolation. For instance, official statistics state there are 183 disadvantaged regions in Indonesia, and 70 percent are in far-flung regions in the eastern part, including Papua and West Papua (the Indonesian half of the island of New Guinea). Many of the 250 indigenous tribes in Papua and West Papua do not speak the national (Bahasa Indonesia) language. Consider also that despite current marginalization, such that school-goers risk lives to cross white waters every day, Papua's school children regularly win global science competitions for mathematics and physics. Higher education solutions for Indonesia's disadvantaged regions can be made comprehensive. Larger universities (on the island of Java) should provide intensive monitoring for high school students, even before the students begin university. If students from the outer islands are to attend the larger universities, training in the national language (Bahasa Indonesia) would help. Above all, local governments should be encouraged to invest in school infrastructure and training for school teachers.

In conclusion, the Salzburg Global Seminar taught me how issues of marginalization are worldwide and continue to evolve, whereas solutions can be found in building strong constituencies and innovation. Asian countries have much to learn, share and contribute in these areas.
In this issue, the Regional Committee (RC) report covers two RC meetings in Manila during July 5–7, 2013 and Bangkok during April 25-27, 2014 as below.

I. RC MEETING IN MANILA

The roles of RC after 2015
The RC meeting in Manila discussed the roles of RC after 2015. The RC agreed to recommend to the Fellows’ community that the RC’s roles after 2015 are to gather Fellows’ opinions, suggest themes for the proposed API forum in new API (under discussion by The Nippon Foundation), take part in the governance of the activities of API, share information and facilitate networking among the Fellows.

Regional collaboration beyond 2015
Three proposals were discussed by the RC representatives in relation to the regional collaboration beyond 2015. The first proposal is the plan to have training or education for and by API Fellows. Training for API Fellows is provided by the experts to improve skills for API Fellows on proposal preparation and project methodologies. The training could be a precursor to applications for the API Collaborative Fellowship and a potential program in new API. Training by API Fellows aims to give opportunities to API Fellows to offer their wide variety of skills in training courses to multiple clients including the grassroots. Given the diverse API Fellows’ background, API will be able to house an extensive skills courses library and provide skills training to fit the needs of the client. This could be a potential income-generating activity of API Fellows. The training plan by API Fellows can be conducted with TNF and other groups doing various projects in the region. The second proposal is the plan to have e-groups based on interests or sectoral group. The aim of the e-group is to gather API Fellows’ opinions and to foster regional collaboration by discussion in each group. The third proposal is the RC’s role as a platform of advocacy to regional problem. In this regard, RC as representatives for API Fellow can help to make collective statement of advocacy from API Fellows when the urgent problem happens in the region. The discussion on the issue, distribution of the petition and so on can be done through the API emailing list.

RC transitions
Thitipol Kanteewong was elected as the RC Chair in place of Tatsuki Kataoka, and Cristina Lim was elected the RC Deputy Chair. Tatsuki Kataoka (RC representative of Japan) was replaced by Kohei Watanabe.

II. RC MEETING IN BANGKOK

There were three main discussion topics, namely the RC-like Structure Post 2015, the API Regional Cooperation Center (the API RCC) and E-Group Discussion.

The RC-like Structure Post 2015
In order to facilitate collaborative action of API Fellows at the regional level, the RC representatives have resolved that RC should continue to exist beyond 2015, regardless of the TNF decision on the future of API. The RC representatives found that no major modification in the RC Implementation Guidelines is necessary at the moment. Therefore it decided to recommend each country’s API community to elect and renew their RC representatives as stipulated in the current RC guidelines, to serve the RC now and beyond 2015. It was also recommended that CLMV countries need to be represented, ideally by one focal point person for each country, but at least one person should be elected RC member representing the four countries.

The API Regional Cooperation Center (API RCC)
The “training” proposal discussed in Manila has been developed into the proposal on API RCC. This is a concrete initiative to uphold a vibrant API Community working effectively across borders and making an impact on society. It envisions a strong community of public intellectuals with diverse knowledge and skills and interests that proactively responds to the social, cultural, economic, political, and scientific challenges in the region and beyond. Guided by the principles of good governance, partnership and diversity, the API RCC envisions to serve as a mechanism to foster greater regional consciousness by promoting relationships among cultures, by initiating or endorsing collaborative activities, and by confronting public issues with discernment, integrity and commitment.

Five branches of activities were suggested for the API RCC Programs “Research and creative works” refers to activities in various academic disciplines and the creative arts. “Training” which is comprised of two types of training; one for junior API Fellows and researchers, and the other for civil society organizations (e.g. church, academe, private sector and NGOs). “Advocacy” which aims to provide a venue for researchers to disseminate the result of their studies, and engage the public on pressing issues. “Networking” Is a mechanism to expand the API Community’s sphere of influence through collaborative engagements. “Support services” which provide provision of legal referrals, and humanitarian assistance. The proposed API RCC structural organization is as indicated in the diagram below. The RC will continue to refine the proposal, based on responses from fellowship communities of the participating countries.

API E-Group Discussion
E-group discussion aims to engage more active communication and intervention among API Fellows. Non API Fellows may also join the E-Group by invitation. In this connection, the moderators will create the E-Groups and invite API Fellows to join. The themes of discussions cover Politics and Conflicts (Group leader: Rina Shahriyani Shahrullah), Economy, Education and Development (Group leader: Theresita Atienza), Social Policy and Social Justice (Group leader: Patporn Phoonthong), Communities and local movements (Group leader: Cristina Lim), Environment and Resource Management (Group leader: Yuli Nugroho), Culture and Identity (Group leader: Motohide Taguchi).

RC transitions
Kohei Watanabe was selected as the RC Chair replacing Thitipol Kanteewong. Thailand RC representatives of Thitipol Kanteewong and Kritsana Kaewplang were replaced by Patporn Phoonthong and Pornsiri Cheevapattananuwong.
I had never before experienced Kuala Lumpur in such scorching heat. On all my other visits to Malaysia the weather had never been less than favorable. But the heat that day on Sunday, March 2, 2014, was exceptionally uncomfortable. I could feel the heat consuming my spirit and energy.

However, all that discomfort was quickly forgotten as soon as I entered the lush green Subak Restaurant at Penchala Indah, located around 45 minutes from downtown Kuala Lumpur. It became a day of celebration for the API Community and a small reunion, as we launched the long anticipated Regional Project’s book. The ambitious project involved stakeholders in five countries, and required the cooperation of about 150 API Fellows who worked together from 2008 until 2012. At the venue, there were about 100 participants including API Fellows, academics, local media representatives and environmental NGOs. The book was launched by Professor Emeritus Mohd Nordin Hasan of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Professor Koji Tanaka of Kyoto University, who served as Technical Advisor to the Book.

The comprehensive and beautifully designed book, entitled Living Landscapes, Connected Communities: Culture, Environment, and Change across Asia was published by Areca Books based in Penang, Malaysia, and edited by Justine C. Vaz and Narumol Aphinives (Thailand Senior Fellow Year 2005-2006). The 372-page book includes contributions from about fifty Public Intellectuals from Japan, Philip-
Many people are being pressured into moving due to flooding when the dams are completed or can is why countries in the Mekong region are currently planning hydroelectric dams in several locations. Other villages will also be flooded. It appears there may be other villages as well though.

In response that will encourage the villagers to move. The villagers have written to the electric company and the government appealing against the building of the dam; however plans for the dam are steadily moving forward. Electricity is essential in supporting the expansion of economic activity in the ASEAN countries. That is why countries in the Mekong region are currently planning hydroelectric dams in several locations.

Electricity is essential in supporting the expansion of economic activity in the ASEAN countries. That is why countries in the Mekong region are currently planning hydroelectric dams in several locations. Many people are being pressured into moving due to flooding when the dams are completed or can no longer fish because of the worsening water quality. The diversity of fish species in the Mekong River is the second highest in the world and it is estimated that building the dams will have a huge effect on the ecosystem of the river and cause a great deal of damage to the natural environment. Through the MMW this time, we could listen to the villagers whose livelihoods are being threatened by the dam development. I was able to understand that this is an urgent matter that needs resolving quickly and also that this is not an issue limited to a certain area, but affects the whole of the Mekong River Basin areas. The MMW participants were Fellows who have worked in a variety of fields including environmental pollution, social change, and agriculture and I feel that these Fellows, through continuing their work of connecting communities, sharing common issues for regions, and searching together for resolutions, can individually and collectively act toward the better future.

I would like to finish by thanking the great efforts of MMW Organizing Committee which planned the tour and arranged the travel and accommodation, and the Fellows who made arrangements at the places we visited, as well as the dedicated staff of the API office in Thailand who gave back-up support.

Kiyomi Takahashi

MESSAGE FROM THE NIPPON FOUNDATION

My name is Kiyomi Takahashi. This is my first greeting for the readers of this newsletter, since I newly joined The Nippon Foundation in November 2014 and have been working for API since then among other things. Even though it has only been a short time as the closure of the API Program is nearing, I’m really glad to be able to work with the API Community.

In March this year I participated in the Country Workshop in Thailand and the API Mekong Mobile Workshop (MMW) and met with the people of CI and a number of Fellows. I was also able to meet a lot of people at the locations we visited and see a lot of splendid nature; it was a very rewarding experience for me. I would like to share with you briefly about this experience of MMW. This is my own personal view.

API Mekong Mobile Workshop (MMW) entitled “Crossing the Border, Building Solidarity in the Region”, is a workshop through which both API and non-API fellows visit local communities in the Mekong River Basin areas to hold seminars and other activities together, with the aim of sharing and exchanging regional histories, cultures, and social issues so that participants will find ways to move into action for betterment of the region. Over eight days, from March 2 to March 9, 2015, we went to three countries, moving across land through Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. We visited a wide range of sites, including plantation, village, university, museums, and urban community, and were able to listen to voices from the field. Further, in Phnom Penh, the last place we visited, we held a joint workshop and forum with local NGOs, and could share thoughts on conflicts and peace, development, and other common issues in the Mekong region.

The visit that left the largest impression on me was on the 4th day, when we visited a village in Cambodia. I would like to give a brief explanation about this for those who did not participate in this tour. We went to Bunon, an ethnic group village with a population of around 650 people. It is located next to a tributary that flows into the Mekong River and this river is essential to the villagers’ livelihoods in fishing and agriculture. From 2011, a plan to build a hydroelectric dam (Lower Sesan-2) approximately 10km downstream of this river has been moving ahead. We heard that when the dam is completed, a large amount of water will back up and the village will be flooded within 2 years, meaning the villagers will have to move to a new place to live. This is difficult for the villagers for both financial reasons and also for religious reasons, as they cannot move the spirit houses that protect their land. To explain a little more, the villagers practice animism and believe that even slightly mistreating the house that the spirit of the land dwells in badly will bring about great misfortune. The anger of the spirits affects only the villagers, so they are afraid that if the dam is built and the village flooded, something bad will happen to them in their new location. With this kind of reason, it is difficult to give an adequate response that will encourage the villagers to move. The villagers have written to the electric company and the government appealing against the building of the dam; however plans for the dam are steadily progressing. The government has announced that when the dam is complete, along with Bunon, six other villages will also be flooded. It appears there may be other villages as well though.

Electricity is essential in supporting the expansion of economic activity in the ASEAN countries. That is why countries in the Mekong region are currently planning hydroelectric dams in several locations. Many people are being pressured into moving due to flooding when the dams are completed or can no longer fish because of the worsening water quality. The diversity of fish species in the Mekong River is the second highest in the world and it is estimated that building the dams will have a huge effect on the ecosystem of the river and cause a great deal of damage to the natural environment. Through the MMW this time, we could listen to the villagers whose livelihoods are being threatened by the dam development. I was able to understand that this is an urgent matter that needs resolving quickly and also that this is not an issue limited to a certain area, but affects the whole of the Mekong River Basin areas. The MMW participants were Fellows who have worked in a variety of fields including environmental pollution, social change, and agriculture and I feel that these Fellows, through continuing their work of connecting communities, sharing common issues for regions, and searching together for resolutions, can individually and collectively act toward the better future.

In the forum on the final day of the MMW, one Fellow’s words were very memorable.

“If one region has a problem, it is likely that other regions have the same problem. It is important for people to connect to be able to share issues and resolutions.” I hope that the API Fellows will have a great impact on society by continuing to maintain their network and keep promoting the message for the betterment of Asia.

I would like to finish by thanking the great efforts of MMW Organizing Committee which planned the tour and arranged the travel and accommodation, and the Fellows who made arrangements at the places we visited, as well as the dedicated staff of the API office in Thailand who gave back-up support.

Kiyomi Takahashi

Be a Force of Change through Sharing and Networking

Information is power, so is networking. To be a force of change in each of our national and regional advocacy for more sustainable policies, public intellectuals must be fully equipped with some essential tools — comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of various disciplines and a powerful network.

We learn of such art through the interview with Professor Masaaki Ohashi featured in this issue. He emphasizes a strong potential of networking in balancing government-corporate power and addressing social injustice. He points out that greater participation of united civil society organizations will strengthen the networking and create public awareness of social issues that require serious attention. At the same time, networking needs to be sustained through meaningful activities, including capacity training and the generation of more dialogues to create greater understanding among key players in the society.

The API Regional Workshop in Bali entitled “Encountering Asian New Horizon: Contesting and Negotiating in Fluid Transitions”, also fostered the building of the foundation of a public intellectual network, apart from information exchange and sharing. API Fellows were provided with exchange platform in envisioning the work toward creating more positive impacts on our society in the future through collaborations at various levels.

This issue also highlights regional events in order to continue addressing the common key challenges we face today. Among them were the Fukushima Solidarity meeting that carefully reviewed Fukushima’s experiences after the 2011 nuclear disaster and a seminar on “What’s Gone Wrong with Democracy?”

Another outcome of API networking efforts is the publication entitled Living Landscapes, Connected Communities: Culture, Environment, and Change across Asia. Recently launched in Kuala Lumpur, the book includes contributions from about 50 public intellectuals which symbolizes the spirit of the API community. As one of the API Regional Project’s collective outputs, it features API Fellows’ joint efforts with local communities in five countries in Asia in identifying key regional challenges and learning community-based approaches and wisdom for potential practices in response to these regional challenges.

API’s collaboration with Salzburg Global Seminars (SGS) has witnessed fruitful outcomes over the years. As much as API Fellows have benefitted from this most prestigious retreat for global leaders expanding their scope of professionalism, Fellows’ contribution in such global setting sharing insights and perspectives from Asian experiences has been equally significant. We hope continuous dialogue and building of a larger network of public intellectuals in such manner can be strengthened.

Chadapan Malipan

MESSAGE FROM THE NIPPON FOUNDATION

From the Editorial Desk

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