



The Nippon Foundation Fellowships
API Newsletter
for Asian Public Intellectuals (API)

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THE ASIAN FACE OF GLOBALIZATION: FIRST API WORKSHOP

The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals held its first Workshop at Shangri-la's Mactan Island Resort, Cebu, Philippines, on November 19-23, 2002. The Workshop with the theme "The Asian Face of Globalization: Reconstructing Identities, Institutions and Resources", provided a forum for the first cohort of Fellows to meet and exchange opinions, advance ideas, and share their project results on focused issues in an atmosphere that fostered interaction.

Organizing, facilitating and running a Workshop can be a difficult test. Attempting to draw together a divergent range of information, keeping to an agenda and dealing with a range of personalities can be a challenging experience.

Bearing in mind that the first API Workshop was neither a conference nor a formal academic seminar, the organizers successfully coordinated all efforts and the moderators fostered the diverse creative potential of the participants.

The Workshop presented the results of the projects, which the first cohort of API Fellows (2001-2002) had undertaken. It saw the participation of 21 Fellows who deliberated on 25 papers with topics ranging from migrant workers, to natural resources, identity construction, economic development in Southeast Asia, NGO printed media, to the dynamics of religion in Asia.

Presentations at the three-day Workshop centred around three sub-themes - the Powerful Presence of Globalization, the Contradictory Consequences of Globalization, and the

Alternatives for Change in Asia.

Individual Fellows' projects further defined four key divisions of the Workshop that laid the foundation of the panel presentations. The four divisions were 'Globalization in the Asian Context',



Fellows, Programme Directors, Programme Coordinators and Assistants with Mr. Yohei Sasakawa (fourth from right) and H. E. Corazon Aquino (fifth from right)

'Outcomes of Globalization', 'Possibilities for Change', and 'Future Issues'.

Senior Fellows Dr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, a professor in the Applied Economics Department at the University of Malaya, and Phra Paisal Visalo, the Abbot of

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From *The* Editorial Desk

This is a time for reflection, for looking both back and ahead. We live in interesting times, times when events shake the core values of our existence.

Who would have thought that the tragedy of September 11 was destined to become a day of global significance. In the aftermath of 9/11, lessons from the past have become critical. September 11 was, truly, as many have said, the Pearl Harbour of this generation - a 'sneak' attack, an attack on many facets of our lives.

For many nations, 2002 was a gloomy year. Many countries struggled with slumping economies while watching nervously for threats of terrorist attacks and dreading the US-led war against Iraq.

Terrorism hit Asia when a bomb wrecked a nightclub in the Indonesian resort of Bali last October, killing nearly 200 people, mainly young western tourists. In the Philippines, the radical Muslim group Abu Sayyaf, was blamed for a rash of deadly bombings.

Elsewhere in Asia, India and Pakistan continued with their nuclear-tipped standoff over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir. In India, domestic violence erupted when a Muslim mob torched a train carrying Hindu pilgrims killing 60 people.

Meanwhile, the communist rulers of North Korea also raised anxieties when they confessed to a senior US official that they were developing nuclear weapons.

A little further away, the Europeans' fear of terror unfolded last October in Moscow, when a theatre siege by Chechen rebels ended in a raid by Special Forces that left at least 129 hostages dead.

In the past, isolated communities could afford to think of one another as fundamentally separate. Some could even exist in total isolation. But nowadays, whatever happens in one region eventually affects many other areas as evidenced by recent happenings across the world.

These are among the challenges that are posed by globalization.

Globalization / Globalism, n.: as the Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines, is the idea that events in one country cannot be separated from those in another and that a government should therefore consider the effects of its actions in other countries as well as its own.

In this context, it was timely, fitting and germane that the first API Workshop carried the theme, "The Asian Face of Globalization: Reconstructing Identities, Institutions and Resources".

The increasing interdependence across the world has brought about basic shifts in the institutions of our lives. It came through clearly in the course of the Workshop that globalization is changing our personal lives as much as it is

changing the big institutions. It's changing the sovereignty and the nature of states, and it's also changing the family and our emotional lives.

The first API Workshop marked the first physical output of the API Programme with 25 papers presented for discussions. The results of the research projects were impressive. The Workshop was extremely successful in that it had sufficient academic rigour coupled with lively debates and discussions among the Fellows. It was for us, and it must have been also for all others who worked on the API Programme, a very rewarding and enriching experience seeing the fruition of all our efforts.

This editorial would be incomplete if it failed to comment on some of the Fellows' papers. Due to space constraints we cannot comment on all here. However, the cover story does so for all the papers.

K.S. Jomo gave a comprehensive overview of the various economies in the region in the aftermath of the financial crisis in 1997 and the economic outcomes of globalization, while Phra Paisal presented an interesting perspective on religion and spirituality in this era.

With the increasing migration of people in this region, it was timely that Pande and Pataya spoke about the vulnerability of certain groups of people to social diseases and the exploitation and discrimination some of them face in foreign lands.

Several Fellows, including Nuryanti, Herry, Colin, Tatsuki, Benny and Razzaq, presented papers that delved into identity problems faced by ethnic minority groups and issues surrounding the identity formation of majority groups.

Globalization creates new challenges and opportunities for all. We all have a role to play in relation to globalization. We should monitor the impact of globalization in all sectors and reinforce our efforts to address the needs of the people.

At this juncture, let me quote H.E. Corazon C. Aquino, guest of honour at the opening ceremony of the API Workshop. In an address to the Fellows and guests she said, "The world faces challenges in the 21st century that our forefathers never dreamed of. In Asia and everywhere, economic, social and political realities have invaded cultures and lifestyles, transcending national and regional borders.

"In the past, we in Asia used to be aware of our neighbours but kept them at arm's length, separated from our daily lives. Today, our world has become borderless. Its natural boundaries, once dictated by geography, culture and language, have been rendered ineffective by advancing globalization."

Here lies the challenge. Within the context of this new interdependence, self-interest clearly lies in considering the interest of others.

The world is changing, and so are we. But the mission and values that the Nippon Foundation API Fellowships are anchored upon continue to provide us with a course for the future.

In his speech during the opening ceremony of the API Workshop, Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, President of The Nippon Foundation said, "Looking at what we have witnessed and experienced in these past few years, I think this program is very timely and significant. We must unite our efforts to address the challenges faced by the region. We can no longer merely look at the West or the East. We must look to our neighbours. We need to have more committed public intellectuals for the region, who I define as 'those who can apply their professional knowledge and experience to the common good in a proactive and practical manner'."

In tune with Mr. Sasakawa's call for more public intellectuals in this region, let me take this opportunity to announce that the International Selection Committee has chosen 29 Fellows for the 2003-2004 Fellowships period. Congratulations to the successful applicants! Selection was difficult as many of the applications received were of excellent quality with exemplary project proposals.

The words of Mr. Sasakawa to the first cohort of Fellows during the API Workshop would have the same significance to all other Fellows. He said, "I hope ...each of you will share the fruits of your research and creative activities, nurturing strong bonds along the way and helping to construct a cohesive network for the peace and prosperity of the Asian societies of the future."

On a different note, allow me to say a few words about this issue. You will find that it has a wider coverage of contents and more photographs. We have introduced a new section titled "Spotlight on Fellows", where from time to time we hope to feature mini-profiles of Fellows.

News from the Fellows who are now "In the Field" indicates that they are actively pursuing their projects. Senior Fellow Mustafa Anuar writes about his positive experiences in Thailand and has no end of praise for the personnel at the Thai API Office. We invite more Fellows to write to us about their experiences in their host countries.

It was extremely gratifying to receive a write-up from a Fellow recognizing and appreciating the efforts of the API Office. Thank you to all API Offices for your tireless coordination and support offered to Fellows. Keep it up as the success of the Program depends on your efforts.

More activity was seen at CSEAS, Japan API office, when three Fellows, namely Mary John Mananzanan, Pateep Methakunavudhi and Allan Villarante, presented papers about their respective areas of research at a seminar. In Malaysia, Senior Fellow Arnold Azurin generated considerable interest and amusement with his lecture at IKMAS on the possible composition of the Malay identity.

We are also very pleased to announce that three Fellows from the second cohort have completed their Fellowships. They are Mustafa Kamal bin Anuar, Mohamad bin Salleh and Fumio Nagai. Kudos!

Last but not least, please take note of the important dates particularly for the next round of applications for the API Fellowships, which are posted on the 'Notice Board'.

Enjoy this issue. And do let us hear from you.

Ragayah Haji Mat Zin, Director, IKMAS



REGAINING LOST ASIAN-NESS: OUR COMMON DESTINY

She led a revolt and ruled a republic without relinquishing her calm. In a nation that was dominated for decades by a militant brand of macho politics, she conquered with grace. In the melodrama of Philippine history, Her Excellency Corazon C. Aquino's "People's Power" triumph inspired many. Once again she displayed her moral leadership as she addressed the Fellows, participants and guests at The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals (API Fellowships) first Workshop in Cebu, Philippines. Following is her speech that was presented during the opening ceremony on November 19, 2002.

I am very pleased to be with you this evening and I congratulate the Nippon Foundation for its wonderful initiative to assemble Asia's public intellectuals in a continuing dialogue, building in the process a community of leaders who will articulate our region's concerns and come up with creative solutions.

The world faces challenges in the 21st century that our forefathers never dreamed of. In Asia and everywhere, economic, social and political realities have invaded cultures and lifestyles, transcending national and regional borders.

In the past, we in Asia used to be aware of our neighbors but kept them at arm's length, separated from our daily lives. Today, our world has become borderless. Its natural boundaries, once dictated by geography, culture and language, have been rendered ineffective by advancing globalization. The convenience of modern travel, the intrusions of cable TV, the Internet, pop music and Hollywood movies have seen to that.

The result is a uniform popular culture that has made of our children generic citizens of the world, whether or not they have physically traveled out of their countries. Bombarded relentlessly by the global mass media, they have embraced values and lifestyles that are alien even to the generation just preceding them.

Even in the farthest reaches of our own countries, in the hinterlands, where our indigenous peoples are trying to live within the ancient rules of their tribes, the young people catch MTV and dream about leaving their villages and joining the rest of the modern world.

To the outside world, it will soon begin to look like this is all there is to Asia. That this rich, diverse and ancient region is nothing but another mass market for pop culture and globalization. Which would be a shame because Asia is the most fascinating part of the world, the cradle of civilization, its history and culture pre-date those of Europe, Africa and the Americas.

Asia is where nearly all of the world's great religions originated. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shintoism were all born in Asia, making it the center of the greatest and most profound philosophies the world has ever known.

There are diverse races and ethnic groups, languages and cultures found in Asia, each one with fascinating traditions of its own.

Asia is marked by a pluralism of political systems. Across this vast continent, varying grades of democracies co-exist with nations under autocratic rulers, harsh military dictators, and royalty.

For centuries, Asia has been preyed upon by the West, for its spices, its minerals, its precious stones, its cheap labor, its trade routes, among others. Centuries of colonization - all countries in Asia have been colonized, except for Japan and Thailand - left the continent largely impoverished and ignorant, its peoples and cultures damaged by the impositions of foreigners.

Today, Asian society has a thin layer of very rich people and a broader middle class, but the majority of its people are poor. This continent, which is home to nearly two thirds of the world's population though it covers only 15 per cent of the earth's land surface,

has the largest concentration of the world's poor who survive on less than a dollar a day.

Recently, Southeast Asia enjoyed an economic boom, which helped improve living standards and reduce poverty. However, the success was short-lived. During the 1997 financial crisis, much of the gains were lost. And as investors pulled out of the region, poverty began to resurface, with the urban population among the worst affected.

Asia is a continent in conflict, where home-grown insurgencies continue to fester, and disputes between neighbors add to the region's general instability. Given its unhappy past, it is no wonder Asia has become a breeding ground for terrorists, who are, after all, the products of the ancient and modern injustices that the continent's marginalized majority have endured for centuries.

Taken all together, Asia is a heavy brew. Its ingredients are both fascinating and frightening—for the ancient culture, history, traditions and values that have so absorbed the attention of scholars and academics are the same elements that make Asian society so combustible.

The Asian public intellectual fellowship program initiated by Mr. Yohei Sasakawa has its work cut out for it. There is much that we must learn about our region, and it would be good to learn it as Asians, from Asians, with Asians. We must also find our bearings amid the constant intrusions into our cultures and traditions through the centuries up to the present, with strange and confusing—but somehow attractive—alien concepts, trends and values.

I believe the idea of the fellowship is not for us Asians to isolate ourselves by retreating

into our comfortable cultural cocoons, shunning globalization and everything foreign, but to develop and encourage in the region a healthy outlook that the Nippon Foundation describes as “regional in scope and universal in value”.

The prospect of intellectual exchange must excite both the Nippon Foundation and its chosen fellows. But more importantly, we hope that the researches and interactions result in relevant and effective responses to the real needs of the peoples and nations of Asia—such as poverty, spirituality and people empowerment.

Poverty

No one who visits Asia can avoid seeing the poverty that envelops most of its people. Even before the richness of our history and culture, poverty is the most obvious characteristic of the Asian continent.

Feudal and royal rulers, foreign conquerors and colonizers, low literacy, racial and gender discrimination, unsustainable development models, poor economic policies, environmental abuse, unchecked population growth, natural disasters - you name it-Asia has it in mega-doses, resulting in poverty not only of the body but also of the spirit. Given these realities, we need to re-take not only our land, our natural resources and control over our lives, we also have to re-gain our spirit. We must re-acquaint ourselves with our indigenous ways and search for native alternatives in economics and politics that will give us back our wealth, our identity and our self-respect. We must also re-learn our age-old values so that we can challenge the dehumanizing and alien culture of consumerism that seems to have overtaken our lives.

We look to our Asian public intellectuals to take up the historic roots of our poverty and come up with recommendations on how our peoples and governments can address them in ways that are culturally sensitive and environmentally correct.

You may want to look for the best practices in the region and beyond, in the struggle against poverty, and the complex human relationships that govern such efforts. Specifically, you may want to find out what makes individuals in such initiatives transcend their personal interests for the welfare of the larger community.

In the process, we hope you will help us re-gain our lost Asian-ness, our collective Asian spirit.

Asian spirituality

This brings me to my second concern-

spirituality-which, I believe is what has made Asia, poor as we are, endure.

A Jesuit priest defines spirituality as “the basic, practical, existential attitude of human beings which is the consequence and expression of the way in which they understand their existence and the meaning of reality. It is the way they act or react throughout life according to ultimate objectives which flow from their world view.”

For a people who lack so much materially, we Asians are rich—in inner

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resources, in spirituality. In spite of the enormity of our problems, we seem to be able to endure a lot of pain, to hope in the midst of grim realities, and to dream of a better life.

There are those who shake their heads and say that Asians are hopeless daydreamers, which is why we haven't gotten anywhere. I am afraid they mistake our capacity for long-suffering for weakness, and our spirituality for fatalism. They must learn to see the world through our eyes, in the context of our history.

We know that after pain and suffering comes sweet victory, and that anything worth having is worth striving for. This is what makes our people leave their families to take on lonely jobs as migrants in foreign lands, to earn enough and bring prosperity back to their homes. This is what made my husband, Ninoy Aquino decide to return to our country from comfortable exile in the United States in spite of the possible dangers at home to help Filipinos liberate themselves from the bondage of martial rule.

Before August 21, 1983, the day Ninoy was killed at the Manila International Airport most of our people patiently endured the misery of martial law. They were also very afraid of going against the dictator. After the assassination of Ninoy, millions of Filipinos finally shed their fears and realized that it was time for change. But we would deal with

that in a way that astounded the world and even ourselves. More on this later.

There is much to admire about Asian spirituality. We have a deep sense of the importance of the community over self. We accept, almost without ego, that the whole is greater-more significant than the sum of its parts, that the individual is not as important as society as a whole.

We also have a strong sense of eternity, of knowing we have time because, depending on our religion, we believe in physical or spiritual rebirth. But no matter what our religion, we know that we are not limited to a single lifetime, that there is a better place that awaits those who keep faith with their God.

These are where we draw our tranquil strength from. These are what make the Asian strong, resilient, enduring.

But these very strengths can also be our worst enemies. Underneath our calm exterior is the enduring belief by many that we are powerless in the face of fate, and this has made our peoples unassertive, laid back-unempowered.

Our sense of community, while admirably selfless, can make us conformists, unable or unwilling to rock the boat, even when it is necessary to be subversive. And our sense of eternity, while highly spiritual, robs us of a sense of urgency to make our lives better.

I ask our Asian public intellectuals to explore the phenomenon of Asian spirituality and help convert it into a positive force for our development and prosperity.

People empowerment

My last concern is people empowerment.

In 1986, the Filipino people unseated a powerful dictator in a manner that was totally unpredicted by scholars and political observers. In fact, even those of us who participated in the peaceful overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos by what has come to be known as the EDSA People Power revolution, were surprised that it was at all possible to do so.

I like to think that the images carried by international television of defenseless citizens in Manila standing up courageously to the soldiers of the dictator inspired imitation throughout the world: the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the people's victory in Belgrade. It may have emboldened that solitary Chinese with a briefcase who stood resolutely on the path of a column of tanks on their way to

Tiananmen Square in Beijing in the summer of 1989. Since EDSA in 1986, dictatorships on both sides of the Iron Curtain have folded up before demonstrations of peaceful people power—a force as soft as water and unyielding as stone.

Many scholars have studied the Philippine People Power revolution of 1986 in search of answers to the questions: How did it happen? Was it a fluke? Was it really a revolution or merely a change of leaders? Can this kind of collective energy be harnessed for peaceful and sustainable societal change?

More recently, in 2001, when Filipinos again took to the streets to unseat a corrupt and inept but duly elected president in what was dubbed People Power II, another set of questions was asked: Should people power be encouraged as a legitimate form of political participation for the removal of undesirable public officials? More to the point, the Western media asked, wasn't the overthrow of President Joseph Estrada by people power extra-constitutional and therefore illegal? Some critics in the West said we should have waited. But we believe that time is too precious to waste. Besides, we should not allow any one to mock a constitution by using an impeachment to hide his guilt rather than show his innocence.

Four months later, the marginalized denizens of Manila's slums laid siege to the presidential palace in what they called People Power III, demanding the restoration of their acclaimed leader, the deposed president Estrada. This time, we raised questions like: Who 'owns' people power? Can people power be abused? And, is it still people power when it is used by the opposition for its own purposes?

I endorse these questions to you, to examine and debate.

Since 1986, scholars and academics have posited political and sociological explanations for Filipino people power. I have a few thoughts on it myself.

The intense desire for change, I attribute to the loss of freedom of Filipinos during 14 years of repression under martial rule. But the means finally utilized by the people to effect that change, I attribute to our innate spirituality, which is not only Filipino but Asian as well.

For how else can we explain the peaceful nature of our revolt in the light of the brutal abuse of civil rights, the greed and corruption and the economic failure of the hated regime we sought to oust? I submit, it took as much courage to face the armor unleashed by the dictator on the people with statues and rosaries

as with guns and grenades. While confronting the dictator's hardware with bullets would have required the mettle of seasoned guerrilla warriors, facing armed military might with prayer and fasting required the audacity and boldness that only faith could make possible.

The confrontation between people power and the armed might of the state could have just as well turned bloody, and a long and punishing civil war could have ensued. But, despite the odds, it did not. I can only think of one explanation—the faith of a peace-loving people in the infinite care of a benevolent God.

To the third display of people power in Manila, however, when the urban poor rose up armed with sticks and stones to demand that their political message be listened to, our initial reaction was, how dare they appropriate people power and abuse it for their political ends! But when the dust cleared, we realized that it was time to fast-track the mobilization of people power for development and not just for political purposes.

I submit that people power was not a fluke. It was, in fact, the culmination of a movement for social change that had been growing in the Philippines since the Seventies led by non-governmental organizations. It was also the beginning of a process of involvement of NGOs in governance. A year after EDSA, the Filipino people rewarded the efforts of NGOs in the movement to oust the dictator by approving the new Constitution which

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provided for people's participation on all levels of governance through NGOs.

Apart from its initial utility in the removal of the dictator and effecting political change, people power has fully evolved into a force for the empowerment of civil society for social and national development, in particular, the alleviation of poverty

Today, government and civil society work together, especially to reach grassroots communities and organize them into productive units that are politically and

economically empowered. Although the collaboration between government and NGOs is not without its tensions and disagreements, it has become a positive element in the progress of Filipino society.

The same dynamic is becoming a part of the political life in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and other parts of Asia where NGOs have taken root and are fast becoming a positive force in the service of the people.

I submit, the complex relationship between people power, poverty alleviation and spirituality is a worthy subject for in-depth study by the API Fellowships.

Conclusion

I don't know about other Asians, but to most Filipinos, until recently, Asia might as well have been the dark continent, a place we hardly knew, even if we lived in the midst of it. As a consequence of 400 years of colonization, we naturally looked westward, beyond Asia, for our friends and our development models. Though we look Asian and we lived in Asia, we didn't feel Asian. Happily, that has begun to change. Filipinos have become sharply aware of their neighbors, at least in Asean where cooperation among member states has been extended beyond economic, political and technical, but also among our peoples through tourism and cultural exchanges. We now realize that we share more than a region, we have inter-related cultures and histories, common problems and a common destiny.

We have also learned that the same force of globalization that we fear has damaged our culture with crass commercialism, has allowed Asia to emerge as a force unto itself in the larger world of business and politics. Even Asian culture—our artistry, our cuisine, our fabrics, our icons and religions have long enjoyed worldwide recognition.

The Nippon Foundation's public intellectuals fellowship program should take us further in this direction. But my fervent hope is that through this ever-growing pool of Asian public intellectuals, Asia's uniqueness and complexity can be preserved, and its many voices are magnified and heard around the world, as we join the often confusing and dehumanizing tide of globalization.

Congratulations to the fellowship and I wish you success in your forum. To Mr. Sasakawa and the Nippon Foundation, I salute your selfless efforts in making the planet earth a better place for everyone. I believe I speak for the peoples of the countries represented in the Asian Public Intellectual Fellowships when I say thank you for caring enough for our region and for the world. **API**

MAKING A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE



In the life of every entity there are a few individuals who, through the influence of their personality, have a fundamental impact on the processes of an institution and therefore the lives of people. Mr. Yohei Sasakawa is one of those exemplary individuals. As President of The Nippon Foundation, his inexorable sensitivity toward the needy, health concerns, social welfare and education, will influence anyone's perception of human progress.

Since taking over the leadership of The Nippon Foundation in 1989, he has devoted his life and the Foundation's activities to issues of global relevance and has come to embrace a firm belief in the inextricable role that non-governmental organizations can play to ameliorate certain happenings in the world.

These influences display themselves in many ways, and particularly clearly The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals (API Fellowships) which, for the last three years, has enabled and ennobled selected Fellows' efforts in research covering areas such as changing identities and their social, historical and cultural contexts; reflection on the human condition and the search for social justice; and the current structure of globalization and possible alternatives for change.

In an interview, Mr. Sasakawa said that he was pleased with the good reputation and recognition the API Fellowships had received since its inception. He was equally pleased with the broad range of topics that the pioneer group of Fellows had researched.

In response to a question concerning the API Fellows and how they could meaningfully contribute to social reform in Asia, he said, "I hope that the Fellows remain curious. They must select appropriate themes to be able to contribute and be able to see the value of their projects. Remember to take advantage of the research findings and apply it in a practical manner to solve societal problems or to address problems."

Any words of advice for the Fellows?

"People tend to feel self-content and may not work hard enough when things are going well. We all must work hard. Fellows – continue to build from your groundwork as API Fellows. Not as individuals, but build a strong network of Fellows for the good of society," Mr. Sasakawa offered.

The following is Mr. Yohei Sasakawa's thoughts on the API Fellowships Programme delivered during his address to the Fellows and guests at the opening ceremony of the first Workshop of The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals in Cebu, Philippines.



Today the pioneer Asian Public Intellectuals shall convene for the first time for an exchange of ideas. I am deeply honored to be here to greet you.

The API Fellowship program was conceptualized four years ago in Tokyo by a small group of leading intellectuals from around Southeast Asia and Japan.

They met to discuss the rapid march of globalization and the way it has had an enormous impact on the lives of people in Asia. At the meeting, it was found that various issues of common concern that transcended national boundaries have emerged. These included not only such things as economic and political issues, but extended as well to the environment, migrant workers, and ethnic, religious and cultural conflicts. Further, it was agreed that the most serious of all of the problems was destitution and the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

Another problem they discussed was that within Asia, the countries' knowledge of each other is surprisingly limited. It might be fair to say that we have tried to understand and interpret each other mainly through the eyes of Western scholars.

One of the proposals of the meeting was the need to create a new mechanism within the region to build a pool of proactive and committed intellectual leaders and to unite them as a new regional force to cope with these complex and intertwined problems.

The next question asked was, "In an age such as this, what kind of people does our region need? What is missing from existing regional networks?" Both questions can be answered with one term. "Public Intellectuals."

These ideas gave birth to the API Fellowship Program, which was then officially launched in July of 2000.

Looking at what we have witnessed and experienced in these past few years, I think this program is very timely and significant. We must unite our efforts to address the challenges faced by the region. We can no longer merely look at the West or the East. We must look to our neighbors. We need to have more committed public intellectuals for the region, who I define as "those who can apply their professional knowledge and experience to the common good in a proactive and practical manner."

Since its initiation, the API Fellowship Program has flourished steadily, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our partner institutions in the five participating countries. It is most gratifying to look out tonight at you, the very first API fellows. You have already finished your fellowships and accomplished a great deal. From tomorrow you will engage in discussion, exchanging your findings and seeking solutions for the region's common issues. I am sure they will be a milestone on the road toward a prosperous future for Asia.

It is significant that the Philippines is hosting this first workshop of Asian Public Intellectuals because this nation has produced many prominent public intellectuals who have served their people.

This evening, we are honored to have with us the distinguished public intellectual and leader of the 1986 revolution who restored

democracy to the Philippines: President Corazon C. Aquino.

The moral authority and commitment to the betterment of society that President Aquino represents is the essence of the public intellectual's mission. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to President Aquino for taking from her precious time to attend this meeting.

The Philippines has another significance for my own work as well.

This morning I visited Eversley Childs Sanatorium in Cebu Island which is the second largest hospital and community for the leprosy patients in this country. This is the place where the cure for leprosy was developed.

Among The Nippon Foundation's numerous activities, the elimination of leprosy is one of its most important projects. It is my life's work as well. As the WHO's Special Ambassador for the Elimination of Leprosy, I have been leading activities around the world in order to achieve elimination by the year 2005. As you may know, this disease generates social discrimination based upon prejudice.

Leprosy is today a curable disease. With Multi Drug Therapy, or MDT, you can be cured within a year. The Nippon Foundation has provided free MDT all over the world for the past five years. As a result, the disease has been eliminated in 116 countries. In fact, this MDT was developed here at the Eversley Childs Sanatorium

between 1981 and 1986 with our foundation's support. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the researchers there, leprosy has become a curable disease. Cebu Island indeed has made a deeply significant contribution, changing the very history of this centuries-old disease. I am delighted that the Cebu Island which means a great deal to me was chosen as the place for this historical first API Workshop.

The API Fellows gathered here represent a diversity of personal and professional backgrounds. The issues they have espoused are widely varied as well, showing the complexities of our regional situation. All of you have made great accomplishments in your respective fields and issues. I hope that in this workshop, each of you will share the fruits of your research and creative activities, nurturing strong bonds along the way and helping to construct a cohesive network for the peace and prosperity of the Asian societies of the future.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the API International Selection Committee and the members of the Partner Institutions for their commitment and cooperation. Last but not least, I would especially like to thank the people who worked very hard to organize this workshop for their tremendous efforts made behind the scenes: the people of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and the Ateneo de Manila University who jointly organized the Ad-hoc Committee and the Secretariat. **API**



Mr. Yohei Sasakawa (standing, left) talking to Fellows during the opening ceremony dinner.

THE ASIAN FACE OF GLOBALIZATION *cont'd...*

Wat Pasukato in Thailand, started-off the first session on “Globalization in the Asian Context.”

In his paper entitled “Southeast Asian Development after the Crisis”, Dr. Jomo reported on the prospects of future sustainable development in this region following the financial crisis of 1997. He emphasized that globalization was subject to interpretation as the term was used in many different ways. Jomo also discussed the various economies in the region and their response to various economic discourses. In wrapping up his presentation, he pointed out the importance of developing a robust economy and made a call for a serious consideration of “some kind of regional arrangement” particularly for the East Asian region in view of the challenges and consequences of globalization.

Presenting a different perspective of globalization, Phra Paisal’s report, “The Dynamics of Religion in the Age of Globalization: Lessons from Indonesia, Philippines and Japan”, assessed spirituality in this era of globalization. His research noted three new forms of religious revival around the world and particularly in the three mentioned Asian countries where he conducted his research. The three religious phenomena are the rise of religious fundamentalism, the explosion of new religions, and the growth of consumer religion (pervasion of consumerism; focusing on materialistic values). Phra Paisal explained that consumerism, now the most powerful quasi-religion, gives temporary comfort, but creates an endless craving for materialism that leads to social disintegration and environmental destruction at a global level.

An open forum followed the presentations with questions ranging from the alternatives to globalization, to the problems of development, to the spiritual needs of people.

Outcomes of Globalization

The second session looked at the macro- and micro-levels of the outcomes of globalization and focused on contested resources, institutional dilemmas, and identity reconstruction.

Pande Ketut Trimayuni, a project officer with Women’s Solidarity for Human Rights (Solidaritas Perempuan), probed into the phenomena of the vulnerability of Asian migrant workers to HIV/AIDS. Her presentation looked at the internal and external factors that contributed to their vulnerability, particularly Asian women migrant workers from the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia.

Since globalization has precipitated the movement of people across national borders, Pataya Ruenkaew’s paper aptly followed as she spoke about the migration of Thai women labour to Japan and their attempts at creating a sense of self and community in a foreign land. Pataya, Chairperson of THARA (Thais Articulate Their Rights Abroad) Association in Germany, had conducted numerous interviews with Thai migrants in Japan and found that many of them faced exploitation and discrimination in their work place.

From human resources, i.e. the pain, suffering and coping strategies of the people, the presentations moved into aspects of natural resources. Henry Chan, an anthropologist, explored the differing views on ways to control and manage natural resources that have ignited many conflicts between the state and local forest dwellers in Indonesia and Thailand. In addressing the issue of conflict management, Henry proposed a new approach based on moral conflict as an analytical tool.

Surmiati Ali, a researcher at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Indonesia, investigated the effects of technology on the marine resource management of fishing communities in Malaysia and Thailand. She found that technological development can bring about a negative impact and the destruction of marine resources.

Institutional Dilemmas

The Workshop progressed into the third session that addressed the institutional dilemmas when confronted with global forces. Both Wong Soak Koon’s and Nick Deocampo’s papers dealt with the reconstruction of national images. Wong, an Associate Professor, School of Humanities, University Sains Malaysia, explored the changing identities of Filipinos and Malaysians as seen through their reception of modern literary works and via the use of a critical literacy framework. Meanwhile, Nick, Director of Mowelfund Film Institute in the Philippines looked at the changing identities of Asian countries as seen from the lens of history and regional cinemas.

In this session, Yasuhiro Mizutani also presented a paper entitled “The Development of the Modern Police Institution in Thailand” which was about the Thai police as an institution



Surmiati Ali presenting her findings as Dr. Taufik (left) and Henry Chan listen attentively to her.

Pataya Ruenkaew stirred emotions as she related the case studies of her research. On her right is Pande Trimayuni.

Programme Directors, Programme Coordinators and Assistants with Mr. Yohei Sasakawa (seated, third from right).

Wong Soak Koon interposes with her point of view during the open forum session. Dr. Ragayah (left) and Yasuhiro Mizutani (right) flank her.

Phra Paisal Visalo (left) clarifying a point on religion in this era of globalization as Pibhop Dhongchai and his wife, Rajani look on.

(From left) Mr. Tanami, Fr. Cruz and Dr. Shiraishi listen intently to K.S. Jomo as he responds to a question.



Nick Deocampo asserts a point of view as (from left) Prangtip Doarueng and Cecilia de la Paz ponder on that point.

Research Fellows, Moderators and Observers at the Workshop venue.

Workshop Director, Dr. Ricardo Abad kept the audience engaged with his animated presentational style.

Cristina Montiel poignantly speaks about political circumstances in the Philippines. (From left) Pibhop Dhongchai and Sukran Rojanapaiwong and (extreme right) Rene Javellana.

Enjoying a light moment during the coffee break are (from left) Benny Subianto, Prangtip Doarueng, Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, Pibhop Dhongchai, Sukran Rojanapaiwong and Cecilia de la Paz.

Dr. Taufik (extreme left) introducing the session on Identity. The presenters were (second from left) Herry Yogaswara, Colin Nicholas, Tatsuki Kataoka and Sri Nuryanti.

of legal enforcement and its questionable strategy of social control. Yasuhiro is a student at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University.

Sessions four and five dealt with identity reconstruction, the shifting identities of ethnic minority groups and the identity formation of majority groups. All presenters in this session clearly showed their concern with the ways ethnic communities have been marginalized by either state policies or global forces, or both. This marginality has become more apparent via the decline of traditional practices and the resulting loss of a collective identity.

Ethnic Minority Issues

Sri Nuryanti presented the case of the Thai-Moslems whose outsider status in mainstream Thai society had created a unique way of life for them, while Herry Yogaswara described the displacement of ethnic minority groups in the Cordilleras of Northern Luzon in the Philippines. Both Nuryanti and Herry are researchers at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Indonesia.

In another paper entitled, "Compromising Indigenous Leadership: Losing Roots in Southeast Asian Tribal Communities", Colin Nicholas, Coordinator, Centre for Orang Asli Concerns in Malaysia, stressed on the important role of indigenous leaders in the maintenance and growth of indigenous socio-political systems.

Tatsuki Kataoka who is completing his doctoral studies at the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies at Kyushu University, spoke about the case of the Lahu and other hill tribes in Northern Thailand. He spoke about their distinct local identities that have become blurred as a result of religious change and according to Tatsuki, a more nuanced understanding of ethnic identity and national identity is now necessary.

In exploring how minority groups preserve their identity and ethnic practice, Benny Subianto from the Centre for Chinese Studies, Indonesia, made a comparison of Chinese in Southeast Asia and assessed how the Chinese-Filipinos have managed to find a balance between marginality and inclusion. Following this, Abdur-Razzaq Lubis elaborated on the Mandailing people of Sumatra and Malaysia and how they are asserting their identity. He made recommendations on how to promote Mandailing studies and their cultural identity. Abdur-Razzaq is the Malaysian representative for the Sumatra Heritage Trust.

Identity Formation

While it is clear that globalization has threatened and compounded the problems of especially minority groups, and the issue of power as an important dimension of identity among minority groups, globalization has also produced problems for majority groups where issues of identities are affected by global encounters.

Prangtip Doarueng's paper addressed this issue as she examined the problem of national identity in Indonesia in view of the secessionist sentiments of the people of Aceh. Prangtip is a writer for Inter Press Service News Agency.

In her paper entitled, "Imagining Nations and Communities through Museums: The Politics and Aesthetics of Identity Construction in Japan and the Philippines", Cecilia de la Paz, Assistant Professor of Art Studies, University of the Philippines, looked at how museums can become spaces of engagement and a representation of historical memoirs to symbolize national identity.

Embracing Globalization

The sixth session dealt with the possibilities and alternatives for change. Four Fellows addressed the question of how one eliminates or eases the dislocating consequences or outcomes of globalization.

Phra Paisal introduced the session by emphasizing the importance of the notion of change as globalization had led to rapid cultural loss, environmental degradation and unbalanced power relationships. Following this, Rene B. Javellana, S.J., of the Jesuit Communications, Ateneo de Manila University, recounted how he had talked to many heritage conservation advocates in this region in view of assembling a network of people to develop mechanisms for heritage conservation. He stressed that this was necessary as the issue of survival of diverse cultures are threatened and are under pressure in this increasingly globalized and culturally homogenized world.

In reviewing structural alternatives, Cristina Montiel from the Ateneo de Manila University explored the possibility of the Philippines learning and adopting the Malaysian federal structure of government.

THE ASIAN FACE OF GLOBALIZATION *cont'd...*

The next presentation by Sukran Rojanapaiwong sought ways to protect and conserve the environment through the use of NGO printed media campaigns. Sukran is the Executive Editor of Green World Foundation in Thailand.

In the final paper "Main Trends of Alternative Development to Globalization", Pibhop Dhongchai, demonstrated that he was acutely aware of the hegemonic power of transnational capitalism, and called for alternative social and political movements in view of participatory democracy, the democracy of public spaces, and the

emergence of new social visions. Pibhop is the President of the Campaign for Popular Democracy and the secretary of the Foundation for Children in Thailand.

An open forum followed each session. The open forum sessions saw Fellows engaging in lively discussions, rendering diverse opinions on various issues and posing purposeful questions to one another.

Dr. Ricardo Abad, the Workshop Director, in his summarization and concluding remarks urged all Fellows to look into the consequences of globalization and to work toward advocacy and change.

The work of the Fellows fit into the

debate of our times. There is a lot more information on how globalization is changing the world. Similarly, we know more about the consequences of these changes and possible responses.

The Workshop has generated useful information that addresses the growing concerns of the consequences of globalization and in particular some alarming threats certain communities and countries in the Asian region are facing. As such, it is timely that more proactive participation in further collaborative works among Fellows take place concerning the multitude of issues that make the study of globalization challenging and fascinating. **API**



"Rasa Sayang, hey!" Part of the Malaysian team presenting a popular Malaysian tune.

"Oh... Jakarta!" The Indonesian team displaying their vocal talent.

The Filipinos belting-out a Karaoke-style song with passion.

Tatsuki and Yasuhiro performing a traditional Japanese dance.

Fellows and participants clad in traditional outfits.

"Move to the groove..." Pande (left) and Sri Nuryanti showing the others some dance moves.

SPOTLIGHT *On* Fellows

Woman On A Mission



She works as an Associate Professor in the peace and political psychology department at the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines and is fast becoming an outspoken voice calling for a transformation in the political structure of the Philippines.

Cristina Jayme Montiel is passionately involved in presenting her paper entitled "Federalizing the Philippines: Insights from the Malaysian Experience" at public forums. Her most recent presentation was at the Ateneo's Center for Social Studies. Many dignitaries supportive of federalizing the Philippines turned-up for the forum. Among the audience were governors, mayors, councilors, a senator and a vice-governor, and academics from other universities.

Her next stop is Mindanao where she plans to present the same message to the people there.

"As an API Fellow, I visited Malaysia to study its federal structure of government and to experience its cultural terrain. I also wanted to find out what lessons the Filipinos could learn from the Malaysians," she said when speaking about her research in Malaysia.

And what can the Philippines learn from the Malaysian experience on Federalism?

Cristina outlined 10 ideas in her research project and hopes that these ideas will be transformed into workshops or seminars on Federalism to urge and prepare the people for a smooth transition to a decentralized political structure. She has a strong desire to see her ideas become reality, but is also painfully aware that she has no political aspirations.

"My gift is in thinking and reflecting, so I carry with me internal tensions. I am not a political operator, but I would like to see my ideas transform into action," she said.

Empowering People through Spirituality

Phra Paisal Visalo... a picture of calm composure, pensive yet self-assured. Perhaps this can be attributed to his being a Buddhist Monk for the last 20 years.



Phra Paisal's research paper entitled "The Dynamics of Religion in the Age of Globalization: Lessons from Indonesia, Philippines and Japan", which was recently presented at the API Workshop raised a lot of interest and questions from the audience.

"I wanted to look at the dynamics of religion in a broader context, beyond Thailand and from a globalized point of view. Many Thais are not informed about this topic and I want to be able to inform people about how spirituality can play an important role in globalization," Phra Paisal said.

The immediate research results that he attained on his fieldwork as an API Fellow will be used to compliment his current research on Buddhism in Thailand. This research will culminate in a book entitled "Future of Thai Buddhism".

The API Fellowship enabled Phra Paisal to embark on enriching engagements with the complex nuances of religion and spirituality, particularly in East Asia. As a public intellectual, he feels that he has been given a "great privilege" and in return is enthusiastic to share his understanding and knowledge of religion and spirituality with people.

"There is a failure of established religion to meet the needs of people. Another worrying trend is consumerism, and new religions are becoming popular because they can adapt to the consumerist attitude," Phra Paisal said as he related some of his research findings.

He spoke vehemently about consumerism and expressed deep concern about this growing trend.

According to Phra Paisal, the religious phenomena taking place indicate that spirituality is part of the human race's nature that yearns to be fulfilled. He maintains that

everyone needs a religion in whatever form it may manifest.

To a question on globalization and fundamentalism, Phra Paisal said, "Religious fundamentalism is not a healthy response to globalization. It comes from fear and leads to violence. Religion is about compassion and tolerance for one another."

What does a Buddhist Monk and the Abbot of Wat Pasukato do during his free time?

Smiling broadly he responds, "I meditate, do some physical exercise and read."

"Don't Worry, Be Happy!"

One's mind cannot help but hear these words from Bobby McFerrin's phenomenal no. 1 hit song from the late 80's, when speaking to Sri Nuryanti.



Nuryanti, a researcher at the Center for Politics and Regional Studies, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, is an upbeat, positive person and describes herself as, "I'm easy going, I eat whatever, and I choose to always be happy".

Upon arriving at the Cebu International Airport in the Philippines, Nuryanti found that the airlines had misplaced her luggage that contained items that were important to her. In reference to that incident she blithely responds, "Well...it's happened to me before. I will just manage with the clothes that I have".

She recently submitted a proposal and her application for a Ph.D. programme at the University of Melbourne where she plans to undertake a comparative study on the "politics of identity of the Thai and Indonesians toward Muslims".

Coming from a political science background, Nuryanti has focused most of her research work on the Muslim identity, Muslim movements, fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism.

"I have a keen interest in studying the Muslim identity, particularly concerning radicalism. This is the right time to clarify that Islam as a religion has no link, no bearing

to radicalism, especially after the terrorist attacks on the United States and the post-Bali bombings,” Nuryanti said.

In a very serious tone of voice, she said she would continue to spread this message through the presentations of her papers at seminars or workshops.

On her advise to other young researchers, Nuryanti said, “You should have a fair command of the English Language and carry out your research in a serious and responsible manner.”

Seeing Asia through Asian Lenses

He has always found himself questioning the themes of films and this has continuously echoed in his intellectual productions that have always related to some aspect of culture. Nick Deocampo feels strongly that the public needs to be informed about and understand certain less-talked-about aspects of culture. As such, his mission as a filmmaker for the last 20 years has and still is to make non-commercial or independent films, or as some call them, engaged films (for example, films about revolutions, homosexuality).



Nick views being a public intellectual as a service where one has to be socially engaged and practice compassionate intelligence, that is being able to empathize with the subject.

“Go beyond intellectualism. This is self-absorbing. We must not engage in ivory tower intellectualizing, but, we must be one with the people,” Nick said as he offered advise to future Fellows.

And how can filmmaking or research in this area contribute to the much-talked about consequences of globalization?

“Cinema is a very public art. Cinema can address issues like nationalism. It can be a tool for a reality check to affirm the existence of globalization. Globalism poses major challenges to our notions of nationalism. Cinemas can change a nation's identity.

“Cinema dominates our public entertainment. However, many national cinemas are threatened by extinction in the face of globalization. Countries in this region (East Asia) are making less and less films. National cinemas have been rendered

vulnerable by Hollywood's global dominance. How can we attain this kind of global identity to survive in a global market?” Nick stressed.

As an independent filmmaker and the Director of Mowelfund Film Institute in Quezon City, Nick is determined to journey onward in his mission of gaining more knowledge on Asian cinema with the sole intention of giving guidance to other filmmakers in Asia.

The “Minority Report”

He speaks fluent Thai and loves Thai food. It's no wonder that Tatsuki Kataoka found his way to Thailand to complete his API Fellowship research concerning the formation of the ethnic and national identity among the Lahu in Thailand.

“I am very interested in minority groups problems in Southeast Asia particularly Thailand as it has never been colonized. I am also interested in how the monarchy system and Buddhism is practiced and how it affects the minority groups,” Tatsuki said as he related the reasons he had chosen to study the Lahu in Thailand.



Tatsuki will also be using his Fellowship research findings as part of his Ph.D. research work. He is currently with the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies at Kyushu University in Japan completing his doctoral dissertation.

How does he see himself pursuing the role of a Public Intellectual in this region?

“As a Public Intellectual I will write and speak about my findings on minority groups as an academic and not as a professional since I am still a student. In relation to this, I did ask myself the question, ‘What should I do as a Japanese?’ and I have decided that I will share my work with the Japanese first. Once I better my English Language skills, I will then share my findings with other Asian nations,” Tatsuki responded.

Tatsuki disclosed that his time spent doing research in Thailand among the Lahu has changed his perspective on life as a Japanese and as an Asian.

“After meeting people from other nations, I realize that we sometimes take things for granted. We must work based on a conscious responsibility for our nation,

and help create a better understanding among the people that we live with,” Tatsuki said as he spoke about how his Fellowship research had enriched his understanding of life.

Deframing Literature

The critical role of literature and nation building has never been so apparent to Wong Soak Koon as it is today. As she comes to terms with this paradoxical fact, that is, the implication of literature in the culture of politics, she is now more aware that “no piece of work is free from a slant or a conditioned presentation.”



“As an API Fellow I had wanted to study the teaching and learning of Literature, particularly to encourage students to study Literature in a socially conscious perspective and to encourage students to interface the traditional literary analysis with current subaltern cultural theories,” Wong related concerning her research paper entitled “Literature and Critical Literacy: English Language Writing from Malaysia and the Philippines”.

She finds it particularly difficult to teach Literature in a “demystifying” way in Malaysia, as there is little room for debate and dissent. She also said that many students are passive in nature and these students find it difficult to engage in a critical analysis of literary works.

Although faced with this arduous task of teaching Literature from an interdisciplinary approach, Wong does not tire easily and continues with her pedagogical strategy of teaching Literature using Freirean methods and situated knowledge.

“I want students to be able to deframe and analyze Literature from different perspectives, that is from the social, historical and political perspectives,” Wong said.

As she approaches her retirement, what has she planned for herself?

“I'm excited about retiring. I'll continue my involvement with research projects, read the books that I bought, do more writing, engage in Christian and voluntary work, go for voice training and learn pottery!” Wong expounded, clearly indicating her enthusiasm as she awaits retirement.



In The Field

A memorable sojourn in Thailand



The following write-up is by Senior Fellow Mustafa K. Anuar (Malaysia) on his experiences in Thailand. Mustafa, an Associate Professor at Universiti Sains Malaysia, was in Thailand conducting research for his research project entitled "The Alternative Media and Democracy in a Globalized World".

Living in a foreign country can be quite daunting especially when you don't speak the natives' tongue. It's worse when English is not spoken by many of them, and most road signs are in the native language. You may not be able to go – literally – that far in places such as Bangkok with a smattering of the Thai language. The day-to-day existence in Bangkok demanded more than the knowledge of some basic Thai salutations.

The information kit prepared by the API office in Bangkok was useful in terms of providing certain essential Thai phrases. However, the generous assistance of the staff there proved invaluable. Their warmth, generosity and accessibility made a huge difference to my short visit to Thailand. They showed genuine concern towards the research projects of visiting API Fellows. For example, they would suggest the names of certain people with the intention of helping the researchers to enlarge their circle of contacts with the relevant people in the country.

They went beyond their call of duty in assisting me even after the duration of my stay in Thailand. In this case, Puk had helped to photocopy a document found in Bangkok and sent it to me in Malaysia by mail.

"Kop kun krap, Khun Michiko and Khun Puk."

Fellows Present Papers at CSEAS

The following report is from the Japan API Office. They recently organized a seminar that saw three presentations by visiting Fellows from the Philippines and Thailand.



Allan making a point as Pateep (centre) and Mary John listen

The second Asian Public Intellectuals Seminar sponsored by the Nippon Foundation and organized by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) at Kyoto University was held on September 4, 2002.

The seminar spotlighted three API fellows who were visiting Japan at

the time, namely Mary John Mananzan, Senior Fellow from the Philippines; Pateep Methakunavudhi, Senior Fellow from Thailand; and Allan Jose J. Villarante, Junior Fellow from the Philippines.

Prof. Shigeyuki Abe, Acting Director of the CSEAS, delivered the welcoming remarks. Mr. Tatsuya Tanami, Director of International Affairs, The Nippon Foundation, and Prof. Takashi Shiraishi, Program Director, API Fellowships, Japan, also gave brief speeches on the API fellowship's active promotion and fostering of linkages, exchanges, and discussion among public intellectuals within the region.

Mary John Mananzan, president of St. Scholastica's College in Manila and a leading feminist scholar and activist, has been studying the impact of religion on the lives of Asian women. In her talk, "Committed to Empowering Women," she stressed the need for comparative study of religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, paying close attention to the aspects of these religions that are liberating or oppressive to women.

Pateep Methakunavudhi, an Associate Professor with the Faculty of Education at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, has been working on a comparative study of ethical awareness related to information technology (IT) security issues between Japanese and Thais. Noting that questions of the abuses of IT security, and the enactment and enforcement of legislation aimed at building safe and secure IT systems and infrastructure are "critical problems" in Thailand, she advocated a multi-pronged approach that tackles the problems from managerial, legal, and ethical points of view.

Allan Jose Villarante, a Senior Legislative Research Officer of the Philippine House of Representatives, is working on a comparative study of juvenile justice systems in Malaysia and Japan. His initial phase of research deals with Japan and its long tradition of child-rights advocacy and child-welfare legislation.

A discussion followed the presentations, with questions ranging from the deterrent value of capital punishment, to the ethical implications of copyright infringement, to the relationship between women's emancipation and nationalism.

Melayu: Diverse Meanings for Different Times and Minds

The following is an extract from a lecture that Senior Fellow Arnold Molina Azurin (Philippines), delivered at IKMAS, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in September 2002. Arnold was in Malaysia gathering information for his project paper entitled "The Question of Minoritization and the Quest for Justice (A Comparative Study of Two Muslim Minority Groups in Malaysia and Thailand)".



The Malaysian government's program to remove illegal aliens and undocumented workers from its population has stirred more than a hornet's nest. Probably a sleeping dragon has been aroused, and this is not meant to exaggerate but to be precise: Since the dragon is a mythical creature, it may be the most apt representation of the motives and direct responses to forced deportation.

The first dragon to emerge from its lair in Sabah was the sociopolitical fear or insecurity nurtured among the Sabah state police on account of the oversized migrant population originating from Sulu and Southern Philippines. Therefore, the purging of undocumented settlers and transient workers, including the young children born in Sabah.

At the same time, Amien Rais, chairman of Indonesia's People's Consultative Assembly, publicly railed against the mass deportation of undocumented Indonesians from Malaysia. His rationale for his populist reaction issues partly out of the widespread notion that the Malays came from Indonesia so, he said, "how [could] they do this to Indonesians?"

But this belief is nothing more than a sociopolitical mythology deeply rooted in the semantics of European colonization reinforced by travel writers and cartographers from the West.

For example, the Europeans in expressing their dubious knowledge in pursuit of racist imperialist motives first appropriated the term "Malay". In Southeast Asia, the original "Melayu" was then merely a term denoting the lingua franca emanating from the "Melayu" trade post in Sumatra, near the town of present-day Jambi. The paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould traced the term's early usage in academia to a certain German scientist, Blumenbach, who recast it at a time when European nation-states were impelled by racist typologies and semantics to categorize the "colored peoples" targeted for conquest and enslavement anywhere in the world. Before Blumenbach, the Dutch scholar Linnaeus had enjoyed a wide following when he propounded the innate racial inferiority of all "colored peoples" vis-à-vis the pale skins.

Consequently, colonial-era travellers and historians used the term "Malay" in a highly erratic or incoherent manner, sometimes referring to the whole of Southeast Asia, at other times only to the area of present-day Indonesia; or as an adjective for running amok, or being in the cutthroat trade of pirate bands in the Straits of Southeast Asia and the high seas.

Constant erratic practice makes perfect, and so Amien Rais' mindset is perfectly entrapped in this widespread ambiguous usage. Thus his emotional assertion that Malays in Malaysia originated from his country. But to say that the earliest Malay rulers came from Sumatra is just one historical fact. Another fact is that 13th-century Sumatra was not then a part of Indonesia since this nation-state was not yet in existence. Besides, the Malays could also have come from Champa. Or Kelantan and Kedah, when these two areas were still part of Siam. South China was definitely another point of origin, according to many historians.

At this point, it is worth remembering that at least 20,000 years before there were kingdoms, colonies, and nation-states in Southeast Asia, there were aboriginal inhabitants in all the major islands. The fact that there was "Java Man" in primordial times does not necessarily mean that he was the progenitor of Southeast Asians. He could have died without any offspring, as indeed some pre-homo sapiens went the way of extinction.

A conventional wisdom in anthropology upholds the migration of varied peoples from continental Asia, and not necessarily

in a one-way journey to Indonesia, then Polynesia or Micronesia. It could have happened, and more likely, in a roundabout way or in a crisscrossing pattern or in the style of slave raiding as well as by intermarrying. If we can learn anything of value from the recent worldwide Genome Project, it is the empirical datum that every human DNA is traceable as to its primordial genesis to Africa, and thus there is only one human race—which is merely diversified in the color of skin, hair, eyes, etc., in response to the varied environmental conditions.

Another sociopolitical mythology mobilizing certain sectors in the region is that militant political Islam is the only way to be a Muslim, or is the only guarantee for lasting peace, self-determination, and happiness. In contrast, at the time of Prophet Muhammad, there was a long regime of mutual tolerance in faith and a multicultural concourse in the realm, for He Himself had taught His followers to "respect and protect the People of the Book", referring to those who adhered to their distinct spiritual doctrines, or a knowledge-based way of life.

Yet another sociopolitical mythology generating some social tension among states in the region is the belief that one state can impose its armed might on any other state, on land or at sea, in hot pursuit of what it unilaterally regards as "terrorist cells"—in total disregard of territorial rights as enshrined in International Law. And of course, the obverse of this imperialist hegemonic motive force is the urge of some states hereabout to impose a unidimensional cultural homogeneity.

Singapore outlaws the wearing of scarves among Muslim students in school premises. Buddhist-dominated Thailand has been trying to contend with the Muslim enclave in Bangkok. While some Indonesian groups react with violence toward Christian and Chinese Indonesians, the Philippines is still mired in three guerrilla fronts. First, for national liberation from a semi-feudal and neocolonial corrupt system of governance; second, for Islamic liberation and the right to live under Sharia tenets; and third, for the million-dollar ransom through a manifest regression to the slave-raiding and head-hunting forays in ancient times across this region.

Meanwhile, in Malaysia, racial concerns are seen among teenage students who segregate themselves in schools and dormitories. It is further made evident in the feedback commentaries in newspapers on the mode of using English in Math and Science, hence supplanting the "racial" vernaculars or mother tongues. That there are racial concerns in Malaysia is best ventilated in the Prime Minister's plea on Independence Day: "Let us forget that we are made up of different races and religions. Let us focus on our responsibility towards building a truly Malaysian race."

Taken in the context of the Prime Minister's recent statements

on the new dilemma resulting from the policy of providing special privileges to the Malay Bumiputera, and his admission in June this year to having failed as the prime helmsman of this affirmative-action project, it is clear that the newly launched ideal of "a truly Malaysian race" is going to efface the mentality and particularity of communal or ethnic identities in this country in favor of the "melting pot" strategy, most probably. It is a brand-new orientation of political identity to



Azurin with personnel of the Sabah Museum

Notice Board

Inviting applications for the next API Fellowship period (July 2004 - May 2005):

August 31, 2003 — closing date for applications from all countries, except Japan
Sept. 30, 2003 — closing date for Japan
Dec. 2003 — Award notification
July 2004 — Start of the Fellowship period

ISC Meeting — Dec. 2003
API Workshop — Dec. 2003

FELLOWSHIPS COMPLETED
 (2nd Cohort: 2002-2003):

- ◆ **Mustafa Kamal bin Anuar (Malaysia)**
 Project Title: The Alternative Media and Democracy in a Globalized World.
- ◆ **Mohamad bin Salleh (Malaysia)**
 Project Title: Literature: Roles and Functions for the Past and in the New Millennium, A comparative Study.
- ◆ **Fumio Nagai (Japan)**
 Project Title: Transformation of Political Structures in Decentralization: The Case of the Local Municipality in Thailand.

We Welcome Contributions To The API Newsletter In The Form Of Articles, Reports, Letters, Anecdotes Or Photographs.

Send To:

'API Fellowships' at IKMAS, UKM (contact details are on page 16).

Note: Written work may be edited for clarity and /or sapce.

Melayu : Diverse Meanings *cont'd...*

move people to think and dream beyond the historical and ethnocentric prejudices, and act accordingly. "We should forget our differences and instead project our Malaysian-ness," Dr. Mahathir propounded at the National day celebration last August.

However, such "forgetting" among Malaysians "who are made up of different races and religions", is no doubt easier said than done as a social and political innovation. The prospective project of mass amnesia over race or religion can easily backfire and may spark new bonfires in public squares and in partisan alignments of politicians. Primarily because human consciousness fermented by passionate and mythologized notions of racial identity and devotion to religious doctrine are hardest to erase-rooted as they are deep in the subconscious, as well as in immemorial genealogy and indelible affections to ancestry, mother tongue, cuisine, memories, songs, and myths of the clan.

In other words, it is worthwhile suggesting that instead of forgetting ethnic and linguistic diversities, it would be more viable to try harmonizing ethnic differences by surpassing the intrinsic particularities and rediscovering the primordial commonalities and kindredship in local and global heritage. After all, one can only harmonize what is diverse. In nature, as in culture, diversity has never been a curse. And in the long term there are more fatal distresses arising from homogeneity and hegemony-as in in-breeding, which leads to regression, senescence, and the cul-de-sac. While this overview is both informed and inspired by two ascendant discourses in scholarship- first, the Cognitive Science assertions of Dennett and Pinker, among many others, and second, the intercivilizational dialogue-the real point being underscored is that being a Malay does not at all issue from distinct racial pedigree but from a multifaceted intercultural experience in the course of a long historical struggle in forging self-identity and self-determination in Southeast Asia vis-à-vis the forces of colonization and decolonization.

To illustrate this dynamic of flexible or fluctuating political

identity in particular contemporary settings, some of the Anak Negeri (indigenous groups) in Sabah shift to the Malay identity as soon as they convert to Islam. And across the border, in southern Philippines, a recently published book by Marohombsar refers this Malay identity to the Bangsamoro people, or the Islamized citizens of that country.

In like manner, according to Malaysia's Muzium Negara Executive Director Dr. Adi Taha, certain minority groups in Vietnam are currently called Rumpun "Melayu" because they have long been converts to Islam, and still speak a variant of the Austronesian language family. To underscore this fact of present-day varieties of Malay ethnopolitical identity, Dr. Adi Taha gave me a book retracing the historical basis of such Rumpun "Melayu" in Vietnam. Co-published by the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient and the Jabatan Muzium dan Antikuiti of Malaysia, this book suggests that the Malay groups in Vietnam are the remnants of the Cham people who used to be adherents of Hinduism. After the fall of their kingdom's capital Negeri Vijaya in 1471, they started to shift from Hindu worship to an older animistic belief system thriving in maritime Southeast Asia. Eventually their descendants adopted Islam but fused this new faith with their ancestral beliefs rooted in animistic spirituality.

It is a sociopolitical process of changing identity and religious affinity very similar to the experience of other "Melayu" groups persisting today in Bangkok and elsewhere in Thailand. They are Muslims and descendants of Chams who migrated to Thailand centuries ago-and by self-ascription, they take pride in calling themselves "Melayu".

With this in mind, no one should be surprised when the upcoming Museum of Malay Civilization to be built this year in Malaysia would show a more nuanced vista of "Melayu Dunia", in all its diverse ethnopolitical facets through varied times and places-transcending the obsolete unscientific notion of an exclusive race-based polity. **API**

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