

OVERVIEW

Encountering Asian New Horizons: Contesting and Negotiating in Fluid Transitions

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Introduction

“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 24-27, 2013. Participated in by twenty-one API Fellows well-selected from various professions and countries in Asia, the Workshop provided a tremendous opportunity for them to share and to exchange their wealth of research experiences and well-grounded insights, in order to establish the embryo of transformational change through a meeting of ideas in the context of encountering Asian new horizons with new hope. These new horizons will be positive contributions towards a new Asian future; but, simultaneously, it will also be a period of transition for almost all Asian countries filled with contestations and negotiations in fluid situations.

The Fellows were engaged in dynamic discussions on how different Asian peoples in a variety of plural and multicultural settings encounter the future with new hope by way of the various processes of contestations and negotiations in different transitional phases. Continuously, these processes will directly and indirectly influence how peoples in different Asian communities experience their daily lives, including how their lives are being engendered, how they negotiate their cultural identity, how the local fights for their existence, how to survive natural disasters, and how to establish strategic policies in the context of social justice. The future of Asia will evolve into new horizons with hope, but only if we can learn to understand clearly how the processes of contestations and negotiations in the fluid transitional phases that we are now experiencing directly and indirectly influence the future. Thus, it is important to have a regional perspective with cross-national engagements as well as a multi-disciplinary perspective.

The Workshop theme also highlighted the processes that we are now experiencing in our daily lives in almost all Asian countries. These processes are almost always occurring simultaneously and are often paradoxical. Thus, in this transitional phase towards encountering new horizons with hope, Asian countries with their huge variety of different communities are experiencing both contestations and negotiations in very fluid situations at the same time. The processes of contestations and negotiations are not dichotomous, but they are two different sides of the same coin. In reality, as many of the research findings have shown, there is no single community where only the process of contestation or the process of negotiation is occurring; but, often, both processes are simultaneously experienced by the same community. Transitions, as these research findings have highlighted, are fluid and almost never fixed; thus, the various projects of the API Fellows show that contesting and negotiating are part of the fluid transitions towards encountering new horizons with hope for Asian countries with their varied communities.

More specifically, the Workshop focused on how different Asian countries with their multiple and varied communities, and in a variety of plural and multicultural settings encounter the future with new hope through the various processes of contestations and negotiations in different transitional phases. The Workshop emphasized how these processes will continuously shape and reshape the new future in which both the global and the local interact — what are the implications of this particular interaction on engendered lives, the cultural identity, the existence of the local communities, the strategic policies, and the natural disasters experienced in the daily lives of various communities. These processes of contestations

and negotiations in fluid transitional phases will occur not only within one single country, but across countries. Therefore, a regional perspective with cross-national engagements and a multidisciplinary perspective was the main context within which the various themes and issues of the Workshop were shared among the participating public intellectuals.

The main objectives of the 12th API Regional Workshop were:

1. to give a forum for the 12th cohort of API Fellows to share and discuss their research findings, experiences, and insights in the context of a regional perspective with cross-national engagements and a multidisciplinary perspective
2. to exchange ideas regarding the common research themes and, if relevant, to find possible solutions in the context of a regional perspective with cross-national engagements and a multidisciplinary perspective
3. to gain direct experience on how a Balinese traditional community organization has played important roles in Balinese social life through a short field trip
4. to promote and develop a network of API Fellows in order to increase Asian regional collaboration and action
5. to publish and disseminate the research findings in line with the public accountability and public discourse

In response to the main objectives above, the following key questions based on the Fellows' research experiences and findings need to be raised and highlighted.

- What processes of negotiations and contestations are relevant?
- How will these processes of negotiations and contestations contribute towards transformational change for different Asian communities in various Asian countries?
- How will these processes of negotiations and contestations shape and reshape the future where both the global and the local interact in the context of the regional perspective with cross-national engagements,

habits of border crossings, and a multidisciplinary perspective?

- In the future, what will the implications of the interactions between the global and the local be in the context of the regional perspective with cross-national engagements, habits of border crossings, and a multidisciplinary perspective?
- What are the solutions, if possible and relevant, to encountering Asian new horizons with new hope in the context of regional perspective with cross-national engagements, habits of border crossings, and multidisciplinary perspective?

The Workshop consisted not only of closed and indoor activities as usual, but also included a half-day field trip to the Bali countryside in order to gain insights on how a particular traditional Balinese community organization such as *banjar* (neighborhood community) or *Subak* (agricultural rice community) has played important roles in maintaining and developing the Balinese social fabric over different periods of time. (See Note)

The context of the key theme, core ideas, the main objectives, and the key questions of the Workshop above led to the following panels:

Panel 1: Engendering Lives: Being Women Does Make Unique Differences

This panel addressed the research issues on how the processes of both contestations and negotiations that have important implications and consequences for the future are evolving in women's lives across the region. One important implication is that being Asian women does make for unique differences in the everyday lives of different communities across the Asian region. The consequence is that in order to face the future with hope, engendering lives is the new horizon.

Key questions addressed were:

- A. What kind of unique differences do women make in their everyday lives in different communities?
- B. What constraints and support do women to encounter the future with new hope?

The contributing papers were:

- A. Kuntum Melati (Indonesia): “Gender Challenge: The Economic Resilience in Coastal Community Household”
- B. Makiko Wakai (Japan): “From Asahi to Abucay: The Video Archive Project”
- C. Janarthani A/P Arumugam (Malaysia): “Hidden Faces, Unheard Voices: Women Oil Palm Plantation Workers in the Philippines and Indonesia”
- D. Isnira A. Baginda (Philippines): “The Dynamics and Elan of *Ijtihad* to Provide New Readings of Islamic Laws and Customary Practices on Women Human Rights”

The research papers of Fellows in this panel discussed the economic resilience of Thailand and Philippine coastal community households, the interaction of Filipino women living in Japan with their families in the Philippines, how women plantation workers organize themselves in plantation unions in Southeast Asia, and how the dynamics and elan of *Ijtihad* provide new readings of Islamic Laws and Customary Practices on Women Human Rights in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. These various research findings showed the processes of both contestations and negotiations evolving in women’s lives across the region, particularly those with important implications and consequences for the future. One important implication is that being Asian women does make for unique differences in the everyday lives of different communities across the Asian region. Its consequence is that in order for these women to face the future with hope, engendering lives is the new horizon. Engendering lives means we have to have a new perspective of how both the women and men live and give meaning to their daily lives in different communities while acknowledging that both groups contribute in different ways to their community.

Panel 2: Strategizing Development: Policymaking, Its Impact, and Challenges for Social Justice

This panel raised the research issues on the possible solutions especially strategic policymaking with its impact and in encountering the challenges of establishing social justice for the people in the

context of regional perspective with cross national engagements, habits of border crossings, and multidisciplinary perspective.

Key questions addressed were:

- A. What are the most relevant and significant impacts of the different strategic policymaking in the context of the regional perspective and the multidisciplinary perspective?
- B. What are the challenges faced in strategic policymaking in establishing social justice for the people, especially the most marginalized in society?

The contributing papers were:

- A. Boni Setiawan (Indonesia): “The Political Economy of the Supply Chain: The Dynamics of Industrial Policy and the Supply Chain in East and Southeast Asia”
- B. Leakhana Kol (Cambodia): “Addressing Social Housing and Livelihood Needs in Cambodia: Learning from the Thai Experience”
- C. Raul C. Pangalangan (Philippines): “Politics Above Law: The Tension between Democracy and Social Justice”
- D. Ruayrin Pedsalabkaew (Thailand): “Investigating the Problem of Land Grabbing by an Oil Palm Plantation in Aceh: Its Impacts on the Local Ecosystem and Community Rights”

The research issues of this panel emphasized the study of the development of the Global Supply Chain (GSC) in the ASEAN context, and in Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Japan, and China, and whether the GSC will become a threat to national industrialization in each country. Also studied was the need to formulate alternative industrial policies in line with GSC. The research issues also included a study on addressing the social housing and livelihood needs in Cambodia by way of learning from the experience on social housing and livelihood by supporting development policy in Thailand; the fundamental misconception that democracy most naturally promotes social justice, partly because in Asian countries, such as, Thailand and Indonesia, normative discourse is weak and serves only as a thin veneer for raw power and naked interests; and the impact of land

grabbing by multinational companies in Aceh and measured the destructive impact on people's basic human rights and their traditional way of life. After discussing how the processes of negotiations and contestations manifest themselves in different Asian communities and across different Asian countries, the second panel offered possible solutions, specifically, on strategic policymaking and its impacts, and on encountering the challenges of establishing social justice for the people in the context of the regional perspective with cross national engagements and multidisciplinary perspective.

Panel 3: Contesting the Global: How the Local Fights for Its Existence in a Fluid Transition

This panel discussed the research issues on how the various processes of contestations from the different local communities against the influences of what are considered global in the context of fluid transitional processes.

The key questions addressed were:

- A. What are the main causes of the processes of contestations from the different local communities?
- B. What are the solutions, if possible and relevant, for these various communities to try to contest global influences in the context of the fluid transitional phase?

The contributing papers were:

- A. Kadek Wara Urwasi (Indonesia): "Cultural Landscape Urban Design: Preserving Local Identity in the Global Environment. Case Studies of Japanese and Malaysian Cities"
- B. Mizuho Ikeda (Japan): "Research for the Educative Use of the Cultural Heritage and the Development of the Human Resources"
- C. Sayamol Kaiyoorawongs (Thailand): "Legal Pluralism in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand: Preserving Local Wisdom, Community Rights, and the Eco-Cultural System"
- D. Janet Pillai (Malaysia): "Communities-of-Practice: Creative Resources, Collaborations and Processes in Community-based Revitalization Projects in Japan"
- E. Wiwik Mahdayani (Indonesia): "Ecotourism in the National Parks of Southern Thailand"

For this panel, the research findings showed the processes of contestations mainly from the local communities against the influences of what are considered global, in the context of fluid transitional processes. The Fellows discussed how to establish urban design guidelines based on the cultural landscape, by examining and preserving the local identity in the global environment; the establishment of the synthetic heritage management plan through the practice of a participative educational program which encourages the autonomous involvement of the local inhabitants in the cultural heritage; the study of approaches to cultural research promotion, conservation, and revitalization efforts that harness the active participation of local communities in Japan and in Indonesia, particularly involving organizations and projects which engage the local community in response to cultural sustainability; the revelation of the nature and forms of the laws enacted by the capitalist economy in the context of Free Trade in ASEAN by 2015, in the sense of preserving local wisdom, community rights, and the eco-cultural system; and how to develop awareness, communications, and marketing strategies for the ecotourism sector in Thailand's National Parks and the development of adequate tools for their implementation. Thus, the first two discussed the processes of negotiating and contesting in the context of shifting boundaries and fluid transitional phases in various communities within Asian countries.

Panel 4: Negotiating Cultural Identity: Looking for New Horizons in Shifting Boundaries

This panel addressed the research issues on how different communities try to negotiate their different cultural identity in the context of always shifting boundaries.

Key questions addressed were:

- A. What are the factors influencing the various communities in choosing the process of negotiation in the context of their different cultural identities?
- B. What are the solutions, if possible and relevant, for these different communities to try to negotiate their different cultural identities in the context of always shifting boundaries?

The contributing papers were:

- A. Makoto Nomura (Japan): “Practice and Documentation of Collaborative Composition in Southeast Asia: A Response to the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Disaster”
- B. Dina Zaman (Malaysia): “Two Families: A Comparative Study on the Influences of Saints and Their Teachings on Faith in Malaysia and Indonesia”
- C. Noor Mahnun Binti Mohamed (Malaysia): “Printmaking Archive for Reference, Research and Regional Links”
- D. Ken T. Ishikawa (Philippines): “Children of the Pearl, Children of the Sun: An Outrospective Look on Japanese-Filipino Families, Filipino-Japanese Individuals and Their Trajectories”
- E. Farina So (Cambodia): “Cham Muslims in Malaysia and Thailand: Then and Now”

In the fourth panel, the research issues focused on practice and the documentation of collaborative composition in Southeast Asia mainly, composing music with Thai and Indonesian musicians through discussions on the situation of nuclear power plants; the influence of saints and their teachings on faith, its people in Malaysia in the context of how saints such as the Wali Songo of Java and Buddhism have made an impact on religious histories; printmaking archive for reference, research and regional links in the sense of printmaking as a point of reference accessible to the artistic community and the general public; Japanese Filipino children and youth with their issues, struggles, and the plight of children born to intercultural marriages between the Japanese and Filipinos, and the Cham Muslims’ experiences and their ethnic identities after they settled in Malaysia and Southern Thailand, their connection with their fellow Cham Muslims in Cambodia, and vice versa. Though varied and broad in scope, all these issues indicate how different communities are trying to negotiate their different cultural identities in the context of always shifting boundaries.

Panel 5: Encountering the Inevitable: Natural Disasters and Their Aftermath

This panel discussed the research issues focused on how both the processes of negotiations and

contestations are present in this particular type of encounter. Only if we learn from both these processes and past experiences can we have new hope for a better future in dealing effectively with natural disasters.

The key questions addressed were:

- A. What are both the processes of negotiations and contestations experienced by different communities in encountering the inevitability of natural disasters?
- B. What are the important and valuable lessons learned from these processes of negotiations and contestations experienced by different communities in encountering the inevitability of natural disasters?

The contributing papers were:

- A. Supara Janchitfah (Thailand): “Japanese Nuclear Energy After March 11, 2011”
- B. Walaiporn Mooksuwan (Thailand): “A Study of Academic Scientists’ Roles and Works in Managing Problems Associated with the Natural Disasters and Related Industrial Hazards: A View from a Non-Governmental Organization’s Perspective”
- C. Nguyen Thi Kim Cuc (Vietnam): “Are Marginalized Populations Segregated in the Wake of Disaster? : Lessons Learned from Japan and Thailand”

In this panel, the Fellows discussed their research findings on the Japanese nuclear industry in the post tsunami period, the development of the nuclear industry and the history of advocacy and resistance; the roles of Japanese scientists in managing the industrial pollution problems in the case of the Minamata Disease and the management pollution problems in combination with natural disasters in the case of the leakage from the Fukushima nuclear power plant; and understanding the possible segregation of marginalized populations in the aftermath of disasters in Japan and Thailand. Encountering natural disasters is inevitable in various Asian countries. Both the processes of negotiations and contestations are present in this particular encounter. Only if we learn from these processes can we have new hope for a better future in dealing correctly and adequately with various natural disasters.

Panel 6: Concluding Panel Reflections and Applications

This last panel provided an opportunity to API Fellows to reflect on the main theme of the Workshop and to find possible and relevant applications based on their API research findings and shared experiences.

The following key questions were raised:

- A. What kind of new horizons will various Asian communities encounter in the different Asian countries, based on the research findings and experiences?
- B. What are both the challenges and the opportunities which various Asian communities will continue to encounter in different Asian countries, based on the research findings and experiences.
- C. What are the possible and relevant applications in encountering new horizons in the future, based on the research findings and shared experiences?

The panel was closed with an overall summary and synthesis of the Workshop.

The new horizons that will be faced by various Asian communities in different Asian countries based on the research findings and experiences are the multiple identities of various Asian cultural communities that will give new ways, new thinking, new paradigms, and new ways of storytelling. In addition, new connectivity and new interconnections will highlight the new contextualization of paradoxical processes that emphasize new experiences in the various ways of looking at myriad of issues in different Asian contexts.

The challenges and the opportunities which various Asian communities will continue to encounter in different Asian countries based on the research findings and experiences are the awareness and the actions needed to have better and more contextualized policies to be able to have borderless experiences not bound by the different countries' boundaries. Another challenge is to have more "thinking Asians" who are aware of their rights and obligations in the context of more porous

boundaries. Furthermore, negotiations between various stakeholders should be followed up by concrete actions in the format of more collaboration. The various collaborations should be based more on different strengths with concrete and realistic follow-up actions. These follow-up actions can be carried out in the form of different government policies and various websites.

The possible and relevant applications in encountering new horizons in the future based on the research findings and shared experiences are more collaborations and greater extension in the context of taking the various relevant ideas that had been raised to a wider community. The ideas and discussions need to go out to more people, in channels and in languages that people understand. In addition, more networking is needed such as that between concerned young scientists. Interconnectedness is also suggested as a way forward, especially in facing various anxieties caused by globalization processes. Mentoring as a way to support younger researchers and intellectuals, and also sharing research results and experiences with various concerned groups and wider audiences, especially the younger people.

Summary and Synthesis

After knowledge sharing and discussions on "Encountering Asian New Horizons: Contesting and Negotiating in Fluid Transitions", it was found that negotiations could take myriad and different forms simultaneously, including contestations, conflicts, and harmony at the same time. These myriad forms of negotiations need to be disseminated to the wider public. These negotiations 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.

For Asian public intellectuals, the major challenge for the future is the transformation of society. This future challenge of transforming various societies should be focused more on the synergic roles between the triangular relations between the civil