Are We Up to the Challenge?:
Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community
The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows
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**VI. CONTACT DETAILS**

The DVD attached to the back cover of this book contains materials from the following API Fellows:

Jesus M. Santiago, Yeoh Seng Guan, Nadarajah Manickam, and Arturo Aristotle C. Solito, Jr. (Names listed in order of their presentations).

To access the contents, insert the disc into the DVD drive of a PC-based computer. The following programs may be required on the computer to properly view the DVD contents:

Operating system Microsoft Windows XP or later version  
Adobe Acrobat Reader 6.0 or later version for PDF files  
Internet Browser for HTML files and web links  
Media Player for video files (mpeg, wmv, avi, etc.)

If the DVD does not open directly to the menu, open Windows Explorer to view the contents.
ABOUT THE BOOK

Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community, is a collected work of the 2005/2006 Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellows. The 29 papers cover key areas as heritage, identity, change and conflict; engaging modernity; religion, gender, and art; changing lifestyle and health; the state, development and globalization; empowering the poor and the vulnerable; and social justice, human rights, and civil society. API publications can be downloaded at http://www.api-fellowships.org.

The API Fellowships Program

As Asian enters the 21st century, it faces political, economic, and social challenge that transcends national boundaries. To meet these challenges, the region needs a pool of intellectuals willing to be active in the public sphere who can articulate common concerns and propose creative solutions. Recognizing that opportunities for intellectual exchange are currently limited by institutional, linguistic, and cultural parameters, The Nippon Foundation (TNF) has launched the Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowships Program 8 July 2000. The Program’s primary aim is to promote mutual learning among Asian public intellectuals and contribute to the growth of wider public spaces in which effective responses to regional needs can be generated.

The API Fellowships Program is open to academics, researchers, media professionals, artists, creative writers, non-governmental organization (NGO) activists, social workers, public servants and others with moral authority, who are committed to working for the betterment of society by applying their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience. It is designed to stimulate the creation of a pool of such intellectuals in the region.

Each participating country—Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand—has a designated academic institution called Partner Institution. Representatives of these Partner Institutions comprise the API Executive Committee that discusses and decides on program policies in consultation with The Nippon Foundation. A Coordinating Institution, selected on a rotational basis amongst the Partner Institutions, manage the Program regionally.

The three main themes determined are:

- Changing identities and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
- Reflections on the human condition and the quest for social justice; and
- The current structure of globalization and possible alternatives.

Within these themes, the Fellows are required to:

- Propose and carry out a research and/or professional activities in a participating country or countries other than their native country of country of residence;
- Conduct research and/or professional activities in compliance with the schedule accepted by the Selection Committee;
- Attend the API Workshop to exchange results of their research and/or professional activities with other fellows;
- Disseminate their findings and results to a wider audience; and
- Pursue a deeper knowledge of each other, and hence of the region.

The API Follow-Up Grant was initiated in 2005-2006 to encourage API Fellows to undertake collaborative work.

The Nippon Foundation

The Nippon Foundation (TNF) is an independent, non-profit, grant making organization that was founded in 1962. It supported projects both in Japan and overseas. It funds activities in three areas: social welfare and volunteer support; maritime research and development; and overseas cooperative assistance. It works with other non-profit organizations, government, non-government organizations and internationals organizations.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

API Coordinating Institution secretariat team at the Institute of Asian Studies (IAS), Chulalongkorn University, oversaw the publication of this book and wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the following:

The API Fellows for their papers/presentation materials and revising them whenever necessary for content and technical purposes;

Uthai Dulyakasem, the 5th API International Workshop Director, who guided the Fellows for their preparations of the papers/presentation materials;

Tatsuya Tanami and Michiko Taki of The Nippon Foundation;

API Program Directors, Program Coordinators, and Program Assistants for their valuable inputs and cooperation;

Marian Chua, the Workshop rapporteur for her meticulous work;

Rebecca Dawn Sooksom who handled most of the technical editing with patience and dedication; and

Gundh Supasri for his assistance in layout work.
THE CONTRIBUTORS
(in alphabetical order according to names as they are spelt)

A snapshot of the contributors in their own words is provided here.

ALISA HASAMOH is a lecturer in the Social Development Department, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani. She is interested in “Identity in Muslim Society,” such as Muslims in the Southern Provinces of Thailand and Muslims in Aceh, Indonesia. She works with widows on a healing project and is also interested in local citizens’ media in the Southern Provinces of Thailand.

AURAEUS SOLITO is an internationally acclaimed and award winning filmmaker. His first feature documentary, “Basal Banar,” won Best Feature Documentary at the Montreal First People’s festival and was In Competition at the prestigious Yamagata International Documentary Festival. His first feature film, “The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros,” won 15 international awards. He has indigenous Palawanon blood.

CAHYO PAMUNGKAS has been a researcher at the Research Center of Regional Resources, Indonesia Institute of Sciences (PSDR-LIPI) since 2003. He also worked for the Research Division of the Institute of Society and Economics, Research Education and Information (LP3ES) Jakarta in 2001-2002. The field of his study is ethnopolitical conflict in West Papua and Asian countries.

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FE A. DELOS REYES is Executive Director of the HELP Learning Center Foundation. She has been involved in various organizations as a member, such as the Council for Exceptional Children, the International Child Neurology Association, and the Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines (DSAP). As a pediatrician with a special interest in disabilities, she has been dedicating herself to working with children and adolescents with disabilities.

ITSUE ITO is a ceramic artist from Miyazaki, Japan, and has received numerous scholarships to work and study ceramics worldwide. Currently, Itsue is working on her JE (House) series for gallery work and her SEN (Tile) series for commissioned work. Itsue is also currently experimenting with porcelain in a ceramic factory in Japan. She is currently active in showing her work at Mikimoto in Ginza and the Takashimaya Department Store in Shinjuku, both of which are located in Tokyo, Japan. Civically, Itsue is involved with numerous regional think-tanks and educational programs for people of all ages to promote ceramics in Japan.

JESUS M. SANTIAGO writes verses and tries to set some of them to music. With the help of a decades-old guitar, he tries as well to sing his creations before small and big gatherings of people who care about other people and for anyone who cares to listen. He hasn’t stopped trying.

JOSEPH T. SALAZAR teaches at the Department of Filipino of the Ateneo de Manila University. He is a prize-winning writer and a self-taught photographer and graphic designer. Aside from pursuing interests related to literature and the arts, he has also devoted time in numerous advocacies for different independent organizations working for responsible media, equal opportunity and education.

JUNKO SATO is a Doctoral Candidate at the Department of Cultural Anthropology, University of Tokyo. She completed her B.A. in Social Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Sussex and her M.Sc. in Social Research at the University of Edinburgh, UK. Currently, she is interested in the social relations created by the agency of materials, labor management, and the conceptual variation of morality.
LIM HOW NGEAN has been practicing theatre in Singapore and Malaysia for the past 18 years. He has worked with some of the most critically acclaimed directors in the region, including Ong Keng Sen, Krishen Jit, Kuo Pao Kun and William Teo. His continual performance interests include physical theatre and contemporary dance while having an active interest in researching ethnographic theatre, intercultural and multicultural performances with political and social issues. He also contributes arts writings to Malaysian publications and the arts website Kakiseni.com.

MICHAEL C. MORALES is an Associate Executive Director of the International Graduate School of Leadership in Manila. Prior to this post, he was a member of the faculty of the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City for over two decades. He earned a B.S. in Mathematical Sciences from the United States Coast Guard Academy, an M.Sc. in Computer Science at the Ateneo de Manila University, and a Ph.D. in Defense Simulation at Cranfield University, UK. He has received the highest award for teachers as well as the national award for outstanding soldiers in the Philippines. He retired with the rank of Lt. Col. from the Armed Forces of the Philippines in 2007.

NADARAJAH MANICKAM is a sociologist focused on work related to culture, communications and sustainability. Presently, he is associated with initiatives covering social communications and documentation, philanthropy and alternative forms of human resources development.

NARUMOL APHINIVES is a consultant specializing in projects related to environmental education. Her area of expertise includes strategic planning, project development, and project management. Previously, she was a Member of the Board of Directors and General Manager of the Green World Foundation, a Thai non-government organization, as well as a journalist.

NERFITA PRIMADEWI is a lecturer at Indonesian Art College Surakarta. Her interests cover media and visual arts. She has organized a number of exhibitions, not only as a lecturer, but also as an artist.

NINA WIDYAWATI is a researcher at the Center for Society and Culture, Indonesian Institute of Sciences. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Mass Communication, University of Indonesia. Her areas of interest include the political economy of media, political communication, international migration and identity.

NORAMALINA BINTI MUSTAFFA currently lives in the United States. She is still interested in the field of criminology and criminal justice studies and hopes to develop this field in Malaysia in the future.

ORANUCH LERDKULLADILOK finished her studies in political science and has been employed at the Bangkok YMCA as the program director for social development projects. She has been working to improve quality of life for disadvantaged children and their communities in urban poor areas in Bangkok as well as the countryside. She is also involved with the YMCA camping program to develop leadership among children and youth by encouraging them to volunteer themselves to help children and senior citizens in society.

PENCHOM SAETANG has spent her career on NGO work for almost 20 years. At present, she is the director of the Campaign for Alternative Industry Network (CAIN), which formed up in late 1997. She and her colleagues at CAIN have monitored and conducted some relevant researches on environmental and health impacts caused by the industrial pollution and toxic hazards, particularly in the eastern region of Thailand. The purposes are to provide support to local communities who have been affected by industrial pollution and to further social and environmental justice through grassroots’ capacity building and legal and political empowerment. Pursuing a role that closely involves environmental protection and support of the affected communities, she has been appointed as a member of the health impact assessment special committee under the National Health Commission and a member of the National Coordinating Subcommittee for Policy and Planning on Chemical Safety under the Thailand National Chemical Safety Committee, Ministry of Public Health.

RITSUKO MIZUNO is Artistic Director of the Japan Contemporary Dance Network. As a nonprofit arts service organization, JCDN aims to develop an environment for dance creation and to reform and improve the overall situation of the arts in Japan. JCDN started “We’re Gonna Go Dancing!! in Asia” with the aim of creating “a sustainable dance network in Asia” — a new cultural exchange beyond political or cultural barriers with contemporary dance, the new performing art form that does not require language.
SAID HALIM SAID NONG is an associate professor of drama and theatre at the Cultural Centre University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. His initial research was on Malaysian television drama and its role in socio-cultural education. Since 2000, his interests lie in the area of the survival, preservation and development of traditional theatre through management and education. His research areas cover Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.

SARAWUT PRATOOMRAJ is an independent human rights defender. He is a coordinator of the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL-Thailand) on the Campaign for the Abolishment of the Death Penalty Project and a researcher on the National Human Rights Plan of Action under the Ministry of Justice. He also is an expert on basic human rights training programs for every level or sector of society, e.g. government, victims of human rights violation, students.

SITI KHADIJAH BINTI ABDUL GANI has been working at the Public Service Department of Putrajaya since April 2008. Instead of conducting research on wildlife, she is now conducting research on human resources. Last December 2007, she was selected by the British Council Malaysia to represent her country at a forum named the Asian Young Leaders’ Climate Forum (AYLCF). There were 30 participants representing 24 countries. After that, she was nominated by the group to join the UNFCCC Convention of Parties (COP13) in Bali. She learnt a lot there and she managed to get a clear picture of how Mother Nature has been damaged by humans. It is never too late to change for sustainable development.

SRI WAHYONO is head of the Sub-Division of Evaluation and Monitoring for Bilateral S & T Research Program, Deputy Minister for S & T Research Program, State Ministry of Research and Technology, The Republic of Indonesia. He is also an officer in charge of administration for foreign research permits at the Ministry Office. He completed his B.A. in International Relations at the University of Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta in 1997. His research interest is migration.

THERESITA V. ATIENZA is an associate professor at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and a senior lecturer at the School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR), University of the Philippines-Diliman. She has been involved in training health and science teachers as a volunteer of the Foundation for Upgrading the Standards of Education (FUSE), Inc.

TOSHIYA TAKAHAMA is an artist. At the beginning of his career, he presented numbers of large-sized etching works with abstract form. Through his study in Thailand and by engaging himself in some workshops and Artist in Residence Programs, his area of interest has expanded to the field of architecture in addition to the field of arts, cities and the development of society. He worked on “House in Koide” at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale in 2006.

YEOH SENG GUAN is a senior lecturer in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University, Sunway Campus. He researches and publishes on anthropologies of the city, media, religion, and gender, and has also recently started experimenting with ethnographic video documentaries. Seng Guan is also a member of Suaram and Aliran, both leading human rights groups in Malaysia. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh.

YUKI NAKATA is a lecturer at Nanzan University and others in Nagoya, Japan and a Ph.D. candidate at Department of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University. Her areas of interest are comparative education and Islamic education in Southeast Asia.

YULI NUGROHO is an activist with the DAMAR Foundation, an NGO based in Yogyakarta that is concerned with community forestry issues. Since 2000, he has been working with this foundation to advocate for people in three villages in Kulon Progo district of Yogyakarta province to gain access and control to manage state forests in these villages. For more than 15 years, he has also been involved in several studies related to rural and regional development throughout Indonesia. He completed his Social Development Masters degree in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines in 2003.
FUTURE OF API COMMUNITY

Yohei Sasakawa
Chairman of The Nippon Foundation

Today I am delighted to be here with the fifth group of API Fellows. It is also a great pleasure to have with us Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, a renowned public intellectual and former foreign minister of Thailand; Professor Soottiporn Chitimtrarap, the vice president of Chulalongkorn University; Professor Supang Chantavanich, the director of the Institute of Asian Studies; members of the International Selection Committee; members of the Executive Committee; and representatives of our Partner Institutions.

Furthermore, I would like once again to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Surichai Wun’Gaeo, Ms. Michiko Yoshida and Ms. Saowaros Saetang of the Institute of Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University.

Since June 2005, they have played a central role as the Coordinating Institution of the API Fellowships Program. Without their dedicated efforts, together with the support of the Institute of Asian Studies, the API Fellowships Program would not have become what it is today.

I would also like to thank them for their hard work in preparing for this workshop, and for their efforts not only as a Coordinating Institution but also as a Partner Institution to the host nation.

Last year, at the 4th API workshop in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, I expressed my desire to see the API Community become a truly influential body—a “Think Tank and Do Tank” that proposes, disseminates and implements initiatives to solve regional problems.

Over a six-month period from April 2006, 180 API Fellows from five countries held meetings in each country to discuss the future direction of the API Community. I am delighted to learn that these discussions have continued here in Phuket over the last few days. Representatives of API Fellows from every country have debated how the API Community should proceed.

You API Fellows—a selected group of public intellectuals—have a deep interest in many different social questions. Using your specialist knowledge and experience, you seek answers to them in your chosen fields.

With the opportunity provided by the API Fellowships Program, you have traveled to neighboring countries to further this knowledge and broaden your experience. On your return home, you have continued your activities for the betterment of your own country or region. I would like to praise all of you for applying what you have learned from the API experience. I am very proud of you.

Today, Asia faces a variety of political, economic, social and cultural challenges. As API Fellows, you confront such issues on a daily basis.

Because of the nature of the world we live in, many of these problems are multi-layered and complex. National borders count for less; technology—IT included—is advancing; people, goods and information flow more freely; and there is growing interdependence among peoples and nations.

With these developments, the issues have moved on from those we faced twenty or thirty years ago.

Problems such as environmental destruction, human trafficking and terrorism have many different aspects. These touch on law, economics, human rights, religion, ethnicity and culture. Expertise in one area alone is insufficient to tackle them. Multidimensional approaches are needed to find solutions.

Under these circumstances, pooling the individual knowledge and experience possessed by experts in diversified fields, and using them collectively, will be crucial.

When I think about the API’s purpose, this is how I hope it will develop.

What makes the API Community unique is the diversity of its Fellows. You include researchers, journalists, artists, NGO activists and more. Each of you is a leader in your chosen field—be it development, the environment, poverty, human rights, media or the arts.
Together you represent an aggregate of experts. Given this diversity, the API Community has tremendous potential. If it can organically integrate the individual knowledge of each Fellow and create collective knowledge, it will have the ability to solve all kinds of issues.

To date, many intellectual networks have emerged in this region, only to disappear without generating effective solutions to the pressing problems it faces. Most of these were transient gatherings of critics and intellectuals, or groups of like-minded people working in the same field of specialty. It was rare to have a continuous and lasting forum like the API Community, where people from different fields and professions could meet and share their knowledge and experience.

There is another characteristic of the API Community that distinguishes it from other intellectual networks. The API Community is an action-oriented intellectual group of people who share a long-term commitment to the API's goal, to serve the public and to make society better. The API Community does not have physical facilities. It is a virtual organization organized and integrated by information technology. In other words, it is a think tank, but it can also be a “Do Tank” that implements the ideas generated by the community.

New ideas and solutions that emerge from the API Community must benefit society. Many individuals and organizations have made discoveries and come up with ways to solve social problems. But often these solutions are expressed in language that only experts can understand, and are published in academic journals and books that only experts read.

Here again, the API Community has a comparative advantage. Thanks to its diversity, the API Community includes journalists, artists and professional communicators who have their own ways of reaching the public. They have a knack of making complex issues easily understood by people.

Many challenges face us, sometimes on a scale that is difficult to imagine. All of us, I am sure, still have vivid memories of the devastating tsunami that struck different parts of Asia, including Phuket, two years ago. Thousands died, and the socio-economic consequences are still being felt today.

But I believe that the API Community, as a community equipped with collective knowledge, and acting as a collective force, is capable of tackling regional issues that test us as human beings.

Over time, I envisage the API Community playing an important role in the evolution of society.

Please, therefore, consider how best to put your collective knowledge to work. Please think deeply about what the API Community can do to make a positive contribution to society; how the API Community can best be utilized; and what direction it should go in.

None of us know what the API Community can achieve. But without question it has enormous untapped potential and I look forward to seeing how you API Fellows develop it.

Thank you.
It is with pleasure and a high honor for me to be invited to join you all at your 5th Workshop of API Fellowships Program here in the island of Phuket tonight.

The API Fellowships Program is yet another ambitious undertaking by The Nippon Foundation under the leadership of H.E. Yohei Sasakawa. In the last few years I have had many opportunities to participate in many activities that The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and The Nippon Foundation support. As an Asian, I can only say that we are fortunate to have such a visionary and effective philanthropic organization like The Nippon Foundation and The Sasakawa Peace Foundation. We have all been enriched by their vision and activities, inspired by their dedication and commitment, and encouraged by their unwavering goodwill towards all of us in Asia and beyond.

I just came back from New Delhi where we just made a presentation to the Government of India on how to integrate the 8 states of Northeast India to the rest of Asia. It is an undertaking by the Asian Dialogue Society (ADS) also under the sponsorship of The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, a subsidiary of The Nippon Foundation of Mr. Yohei Sasakawa.

The Asian Dialogue Society dreams of a better Asia in the future. The same dreams as the API and you all are dreaming as a part of your intellectual exercise here during the next few days. So I am very pleased to share some of my views with you all tonight.

Your theme this year is “Are We Up to the Challenge?” The question for me is “A Challenge to do what?” And I think it is high time for all of us gathered here tonight to try to respond to that question individually and personally.

As a group of “Asian Public Intellectuals” you are the “Barometers” and “Weather Wands” of all the challenges facing us in the 21st Century.

This is considered “An Asian Century”.

An Asian diplomat has just been chosen as the new Secretary General of the United Nations.

The phenomenal economic growth that we have achieved in the past few decades has surpassed any growth rate in human history.


During the same periods, Africa grew by 1.9, 3.9, 4.5 and 5.4 respectively.

The oil rich Middle East did not fare as well. Only at 2.7, 4.5, 5.1 and 4.8 respectively?

Latin America and the Caribbean countries did even worse. Logging in only at 2.8, 2.6, 4.6 and 3.6 during the same periods.

Developing Asia’s Average Annual Growth in Real Per Capita of GDP at the current rate will double every 14 years, while it will take Africa 24 years, the Middle East 27 years and Developing Western Hemisphere 30 years.

Developing Asia has the combined foreign reserves in dollar term, a whopping 972.1 in 2005 and increasing. More than the rest of the world by one third! (Only 662.8)

As for Greenfield Foreign Direct Investments in new projects, Developing Asia took 65% of the world total
in 2002, 70% in 2005. The rest of the developing world took only 35-40% in those two years.

In terms of dollars, FDI Inflows for Developing Asia took 56% of all FDI to all developing countries in 2003. Almost half of all FDI in developing countries worldwide (49%). In other words, the rest of the world combined, equal to FDI coming into developing Asia!

And we have 58% of world population living on our continent!

All indicators of life expectancy, internet penetration, education, innovation, science and technology, Asia is pushing ahead at a pace unprecedented in human history.

I am relating all these figures and indicators to you all to illustrate one simple fact: Asia is experience its rebirth known as the Asian Renaissance.

A recent study by the World Bank released only last September indicates that: “As a result of the growth spurred by global and regional integration, almost everyone in developing East Asia will be living in a middle-income country in a few years.”

Can you imagine the purchasing and consuming power of almost 4 billion people of the world’s middle income in Asia alone? What will that do to our societies, our economies, our political systems, our cultures, our environment, and indeed, our Planet Earth?

“What is going on now in East Asia is something quite new—a renaissance,” says the report.

“The old Asia relied on the famous flying geese analogy that saw mature industries move to low-wage countries. The new Asia is more innovative and networked—it’s characterized by a very competitive business environment that encourages new products and processes and labor force able to absorb new ideas.”

It is now assumed and feared that the rewards from knowledge-based economic growth can be concentrated, geographically and socially, and public policies are needed to spread the benefits more evenly.

For the growing number of middle income countries in the region, it recommends that a focus is needed on improved management of small and mid-sized cities, broader access to social services and greater transparency and accountability in national and local governments.

There is a need for clean governments prepared to tackle these issues. This is now underway in many countries in the region which have embarked on transition from a mode of governance based on the “rule of man” to one based on the “rule of law” or as the Chinese say, from renzhi to fazhi.

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Back to our theme and my initial question: Are we up to the challenge and a challenge to do what?

My challenge to you all tonight is: How can we Asians do better than others and what can we Asians contribute to the Asian Century? What difference can we make the 21st Century, with all its problems and challenges, from the 20th Century when it was said to belong to other peoples of other continents?

We began the 21st Century with the Clash of Civilizations, with 9/11, with the violence of genocide, human insecurity everywhere, with the specter of HIV/AIDS and other pandemic diseases, with increasingly disastrous natural catastrophes, here in Phuket and the Indian Ocean only two years ago, the volatile weather patterns, and the looming threats of global warming as a consequence of our environmental degradation.

We, Asians and all humanity, have inherited a world already imbalanced both in its physical and spiritual forms.

We are consuming ourselves to death and destruction of our own environment. We have become more selfish, individualistic and competitive for the aggrandizement of ourselves, our egos.

Sixty million years ago, the Dinosaurs faced extinction due to the heavy clouds covering our Earth atmosphere as a result of a giant meteorite falling on the earth surface.

We are now emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, causing global warming that is threatening our species’ own survival.

Our self-destruction is very possible by the causes that we humans are the prime culprits.

The extinction of the Dinosaurs had not moral implication. A specie of God’s creature expired out of the natural phenomenon.
But the Planet Earth is running out of steam, depleted of its natural resources, poisoned by its own most intelligent inhabitants, damaged by human greed and insatiable desires.

The challenge before us all, Asians and non Asians alike, but this being a forum for the Asian Public Intellectuals, let us confine to ourselves at the risk of being arrogant, is how to rescue the Planet Earth from its untimely demise, and thereby saving the human specie from self-destruction?

We must reach back into our history and cultural heritage to find answers and inspiration for the task before us.

Our is a continent of Great Religions and Enlightened Prophets. We were taught, and are being taught, to conform with the force of nature. To live within the nature world.

To respect the nature rhythm of change and impermanence. To contain our greed and control our desires. To be compassionate and to extend mercy to all beings.

As oppose to the teaching of the West, we are not taught to tame the force of nature to our own use. We are not taught to seek satisfaction to the Self, but to find a common happiness for our society and communal units. We are not taught to destroy the natural world in order to live in superfluous luxury. We are taught to share in order to live a decent life in peace with each other and in harmony with our natural world.

If an Asian Century is to be different from the last one, it will be in the spiritual dimension of our global community.

Asians are less individualistic, but more communalistic. Naked individualism has lead to mindless consumerism, exploitation, materialistic life style, senseless competition and uncontrollable desires for more of everything. And that is occurring in a world of finite resources and delicate balance of the eco system.

We caught in a Race to the Cliff of Extinction.

Asians will have to remind the world of these basic truths. We need to lead the world in the resurrection of “common consciousness” or “global awareness”.

A consciousness that we belong to the same specie. An awareness that we live and share this finite Planet Earth with the rest of humanity. That if we are not careful, we can drive ourselves and our entire specie to total extinction.

Hinduism teaches us about the unity of all beings in their relations to the Parama Atman.

Buddhism teaches us of the wisdom of selflessness or non-self and total detachment. To follow the natural flow and cycle of birth, aging, illness and death. We are all unified in that natural rhythm of the world.

Christianity teaches us of our commonality in the original sin of desires and defiance against God’s will, the course of Nature.

Islam teaches us really that men are the Custodians of the Nature World. That we are the creatures of the One Same God. That we are all his children.

Somewhere along the way we went astray from all these teachings. We have become blindly selfish, mindlessly materialistic, competitive to the point of being antagonistic toward one another for no apparent reason than our individual selfishness.

The world must be brought back to its senses.

The Bagawagita talks about Spiritual Oneness of all beings.

Charles Darwin once theorized the principle of “survival of the fittest”. That was a physical meaning of “fittest”.

Henri Bergson talked about “creative evolution”, which added a spiritual-dimension to the physical survival of Darwin. Certain specie, especially humankind, is capable of a spiritual growth in its process of evolution.

Julian Huxley introduced “the science of human possibilities”. Edward Wilson suggests “socio-biology”. James Redfield comes up with the idea of “global awareness and global consciousness”.

They are talking about the same thing. The need to be aware of the fact that our fate is intertwined inextricably connected. We either survive together or we disappear together.

Most, if not all, of the ills of the world that we inherit from the past centuries can be remedied by these hidden wisdoms from the previous ages.

The same growth rates that I have outlined above would
be meaningless if we continue to pursue them for the sake of growth, devoid of any spiritual dimension.

Do we need to grow at the expense of others, at the expense of our Mother Earth?

Should we share the products of our growth more equitably so as to put less pressure on our natural resources and our environment?

Do we consume to survive, or gobble up everything for the sake of luxury and decadence?

It is up to us Asians to continue on the road of “business as usual” and stay the course of consumerism and materialism.

Or are we going to accept the challenge of correcting the course of the world and via away from the Cliff of Extinction.

The Choice is yours. The Choice is ours.

Let me end by invoking another Sage of four centuries ago. He was Jalaluddin Al-Rumi. A Muslim Sufi. A Persian Sage. Living at the crossroads of divergent cultures and turbulent times, Anatolia of the 17th Century.

Surveying the scenes of changes and conflicts, caught between the burden of the past and the lure of the future, he mused:

“The Vendors of old goods are gone. We are the new Vendors, this is our Bazaar.”

So, to you all, Asian Public Intellectuals, You are the New Vendors of New Merchandises.

The 21st Century is your Bazaar.

Make it a good one. Better than when it was the Bazaar of those who came before you.

I know you all are up to the Challenge.

Thank you.
Questions for public intellectuals

As the Workshop Director of the 5th Workshop of the API Fellowships Program, I posed the following questions.

As an academic closely involved with the work of NGOs in various fields in the last few decades, I am in total agreement that we are now confronted with serious crises, which I prefer to call a cultural crisis. Here the term "culture" is defined broadly to include economic, social, political and ecological aspects. These are not only Asian crises, they are global crises. For those of you who can remember, on 18 March 1995, the International Conference on Social Development was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, attended by a number of world thinkers and world leaders. At that forum, it was concluded that the World was then faced with four major social crises, namely:

1. Income Inequalities among nations and among the people within each nation. It was estimated that approximately 20% of the world’s population controls and consumes about 80% of the world resources. At a national level, the picture is not much different, particularly in the so-called developing countries, that is, the top 20% of the national population control and consume about 80% or so of the national resources, where as 80% of the national population have access to only 20% of the national resources. In addition, it was also agreed that the resource poor nations are getting richer while the resource rich nations are getting poorer. I believe I do not have to single out the names of the nations because these facts are widely known and we can see it clearly in own region.

2. Ecological Depletion is clearly seen almost everywhere, all over the world, in the form of deforestation, water pollution, the depletion of fossil resources, air pollution and the like. The destruction of our ecological structure has also led to many other serious environmental problems, such as solid waste, global warming, severe floods, severe drought, severe hurricanes, etc. This crisis has a very serious effect on our lives.

3. Family and Community Dis-cohesiveness. Also, we have seen this crisis around the globe. The current statistics concerning the divorce rate in many countries are quite alarming. The number of single parent families is on the rise. These phenomena have led to many serious social problems among children and youth. A great number of families around the world have lost their learning abilities and are not effectively functioning as a learning source for their children. In addition, in communities, especially rural communities, there has been a constant outflow of the community capitals, i.e. human capital, ecological capital, social and cultural capital, and wisdom capital as well as financial capital. These community capitals have been continuously drained from rural communities, seriously weakening our rural communities to the point where they can no longer effectively function as communities.

4. Ethical deterioration. Here ethics means the relationship between human and human, between human and nature and between human and super-nature. When the relationship between them is normal, it means that humans are not exploiting other humans, nature or super-nature. However, we are now witnessing that the relationship between these things is deteriorating; for example, males are exploiting female, adults are exploiting children, employers are exploiting employees and humans are exploiting the earth. This is a clear indication of the ethical deterioration crisis.

One full decade has passed since the forum in Copenhagen. If we were to ask ourselves whether these social crises are getting better or not, the honest answer would be that they are getting worse.

These crises may have been caused by various factors, but it is undeniable that one of the most important factors is the globalization process, which has aggressively penetrated into every corner of the globe. It is true that globalization has brought about many positive results, but its perils are far more devastating.

From the research projects this batch of API Fellows has
undertaken in different societies in Southeast Asia, it is very clear that many issues reflect these socio-economic, cultural and ecological crises. The situation in Japan may be different; while her economic condition is much better than that of many Southeast Asian nations, she shares many social and cultural crises with Southeast Asian societies.

The crucial question for us is how we, as members of the SEA Region, or, specifically, as Asian Public Intellectuals, can “contribute to the growth of public spaces in which effective responses to regional needs can be generated”, as intended by the API Fellowships Program.

If our public intellectuals continue focusing on very basic and fragmented issues and study them superficially for personal interests, how can public intellectuals contribute to the growth of public spaces in which responses to regional or national needs may be generated, not to mention the actual responses and their consequences?

This is not to say that the basic and the fragmented issues are not important, as they truly are. However, these basic and fragmented issues do not help us to see the whole picture of the problems, which are complex and dynamic. I am afraid that if we are still focusing on piecemeal issues and put our hope in nation-states to play a vital role in handling the crises, we will not be able to make much contribution to meet the current and future challenges. My personal biases tell me that in order to effectively tackle the current and future crises we need to constantly and collectively promote rigorous interactive learning among ordinary people and among marginalized groups. I believe that without strong and knowledgeable critical masses in our societies, our attempts to meet the challenges are bound to fail.

Furthermore, I think that we, as public intellectuals, must be fully aware that we are working to meet the challenges in a rapidly changing environment. In this kind of environment, new social values are created and we, knowingly or unknowingly, have absorbed into ourselves these new social values to some degrees. A few examples follow:

1. The Value of Speed. Careful reflection reveals that we are now much less tolerant of slowness. We all prefer being fast in our daily lives. We want to get rich fast regardless of the means, we want to have sex fast and get divorced fast. Can we solve complex and dynamic crises fast? I feel that if we have absorbed this value into ourselves without being critically aware of it, I am afraid that we will not be able to effectively meet the current challenges.

2. The Value of Superficiality. Because we do things fast, our relationship with others become superficial. As we have seen, the relationship between the physician and the patient becomes superficial, the relationship between the teacher and the student is superficial, the relationship between parents and their children is also superficial, not to mention the relationship with our neighbors in our community. We have now become much more individualistic. While individualism in itself may not be necessarily a bad thing, the superficial relationship among the members of a community undoubtedly weakens the collective power to tackle the complicated and difficult problems we are facing in the world today.

3. The Value of Competition. As many of you know, in the traditional Asian societies, the governing value in our societies was and to some degree still is the cooperative value. We help each other in almost all activities in our daily life including economic activities as well as social and cultural activities. However, in the past few decades, the value of competition has gained strength and replaced the value of cooperation. While competition may not be that bad in and of itself, the fierce, cutthroat competition that we see in our everyday lives not only weakens our effectiveness in doing things but also destroys the very concept of community. We ourselves have also internalized this value of competition; it is therefore very important to be fully aware of this issue when we want to promote interactive learning among ourselves and among the people we work with.

4. The Value of Consumerism. I believe I do not need to say much on this issue because it is obvious that the value of consumerism is widespread in our societies. We consume much more than what we need. As the late Gandhi once said, we consume according to our wants, not our needs. The value of aggressive consumerism has led to the depletion of natural resources. The more we consume, the less we are concerned about community problems.

5. The Value of Symbolism. Our present world has started to operate on symbol rather than the substance. We assign the meaning in our life to
symbols more than the substance of what we do or do not do. For example, we drink Coke not because it has useful nutritional value but because it symbolizes modernity and, as Coke advertisements put it, a younger generation. We buy a mobile telephone at a very high price because it signifies or symbolizes modernity or fashion.

When people in a society have internalized these new values created by the globalization process, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to take a keen interest in interactive learning and in caring for and sharing with others. Under these circumstances, are we, as the public intellectuals, up to the current challenges in our own societies and in our region? My hope for the Fellows’ presentations was that they would be able to link the issues of their concern to other connected issues, so that we could look at each issue in a holistic manner. I also hoped that the commentators would help to link the presentations in each session or each paper, so that we could look at the issues in each session in an integrated fashion. This was not simply an academic exercise. I believe that what we ultimately expected from this Workshop and from the API Fellowships Program in general was a process of building collective wisdom and collective effort among the Asian public intellectuals, so that the community of Asian public intellectuals would be strengthened and would provide creative and innovative solutions for current and future cultural challenges.

There are two short stories which I have learned and inspired to continue working. These stories will, I hope, inspire you to keep on working for the betterment of your own society as an individual or as a community of public intellectuals.

The first story goes like this. This story was about the three construction workers. The three men were busily working on laying bricks. They work tirelessly from the morning until the evening everyday. One day while they were busily laying the bricks at the construction site in the village, there was a senior monk walked towards them and asked the first man, “What are you doing, young man?” And the man said, “I am laying the bricks, sir.” After answering the question, he paid no attention to the monk and continued laying the bricks. The senior monk walked further and asked the second man the same question. “What about you, young man? What are you doing?” The second man turned his fact to the monk and said, “I am building a wall, sir.” He not only answered to the monk, but also carefully laid the bricks and walked around the complete work to make sure that would be strongly and beautifully built to become a beautiful temple.

The senior monk then asked the third man who worked nearby. “What about you? What are you doing?” The third man answered “I am building a temple, sir.” After answering the monk, he beautifully and carefully laid the bricks and walked around the complete work to make sure that would be strongly and beautifully built to become a beautiful temple.

The second story as we all know, India as a country was once colonized by Britain for a long time. During the time of colonization, many Indian leaders tried to free India from British control. They used all kind of strategies to decolonize India but unsuccessful. The main reason for India not to be able to free herself from British control, was the fact that her leaders had the same thinking system and employing the same strategies that was eyes-to-eyes fighting. However, there was a man whom I believe even here knows his name, Mahatma Gandhi who saw things in a different angle. He proposed that if India were to be free from British control, India must think in a very different and innovative way, and fight with Britain with different and innovative strategy. He then, proposed what he called a “non-violent method” as a strategy to fight with Britain to free herself from British control. His proposal was really killed and laughed by many Indian leaders at that time, and one of the leaders who was against his proposal was a teacher by the name of Grai Porani. So the following was the quote from their conversation:

Gandhi said, “Grai Porani, people of your thinking are in the majority of the world, but I belong to a minority. So I need to proof the efficacy of non-violence. And Grai Porani said, “Babu (father), I am a teacher of history. I have never come across any evidence in history of human kinds that non-violence can help liberate the nation from foreign domination.” And Gandhi said smilingly, “My dear Grai Porani, you are only a teacher of history whereas I make history.”

Asian public intellectuals as I mentioned before, we are expecting to build a strong Asian public intellectual community with collective wisdom to help meet the
challenges in the present and in the future of our region. My simple and humble question to you is “What would you like to be a teacher of history or a history maker?”

**Summary of Workshop**

The community that came together in Phuket, Thailand from 26-30 November 2006 were the 29 recipients of the 2005/2006 API fellowships and other participants, all there to take part in the 5th Workshop of the API Fellowships Program under the theme: “Are We Up to the Challenge? The Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community: How the Asian Intellectuals Respond to Crises Caused by Cultural, Religious, Social, Political, Economic and Ecological Factors.”

At the opening ceremony, the keynote speaker, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Foreign Minister of Thailand, challenged the Fellows by asking what they can contribute to the Asian century that is now and what difference they can make. Continuing in the same vein, Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, brought that challenge closer to the aspirations of API. In his welcoming address he asked them to “think deeply about what the API Community can do to make a positive contribution to society”.

**Objectives and Issues**

The workshop set three objectives to realize:

- To provide a forum for each public intellectual topresent the issues of his or her great concern;
- To share and learn from each other with the hope that the issues presented may help shape public opinion and influence policies in the Asian societies; and
- To help facilitate the building up of the Asian public community.

The crucial issues of concern to the Fellows and the other Workshop participants were:

- the need to constantly and collectively promote rigorous interactive learning among peoples and marginalized groups so as to effectively tackle issues related to the crises.

**Workshop Sessions**

The Workshop had a total of nine sessions with the presentations from the Fellows clustered under the relevant session theme. In a novel move that utilized the expertise inherent in the growing API Community, members of the newly formed Regional Committees shared in the roles of serving as chair and/or discussants at some of the sessions. The open discussion that followed each session was engaging, entertaining and even tinged with emotion at times. At the Concluding Session, as Workshop Director, I attempted to sum up what had been learned and shared and emphasized that to effectively face the challenges ahead, collective effort and wisdom are needed, two assets that only a community possesses.

**Session 1**

The first session focused on “Human Rights and the Underprivileged”. Mary Racelis (Philippines) chaired the session and the two discussants were Supang Chantavanich (Thailand) and Colin Nicholas (Malaysia). There were three presentations for this session:

- Sri Wahyono (Indonesia) “The Protection of Migrant Workers’ Rights: Experiences in Malaysia and Learning from the Philippines”
- Junko Sato (Japan) “Workers’ Conceptions of Decent Work: A Case of Female Workers’ Identities and Better Conditions of Work”

The three concerns brought to the fore pertained to the problems of migrant workers in Malaysia, the perceptions of workers in Indonesia’s batik industry and the role of human rights institutions in human rights education. In relation to migrant workers, they face problems vis-à-vis their labor rights and legal protection in Malaysia. The findings revealed that migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation. In the case of Indonesia’s batik workers, there is a need to assess their value beyond their economic contributions. It was pointed out that society should recognize and give due importance to their skills and knowledge. And where human rights are concerned, it was acknowledged that the training of trainers for a human rights education program is an effective role of human rights institutions.
The comments made by the discussants as well the participants during the Q & A session recognized that exploitation of migrant workers is an issue that will remain for a long time. API Fellows were urged to focus on this issue and actively campaign with others in the region to address this problem and the corruption attendant to it. Parliamentary participation in policy formulation on migration policies was one suggested method of engagement. As for craftspersons and their waning crafts, the challenge is to know what can be done to revive interest. In the area of human rights education, a question was asked on whether this has benefited the community including those who have suffered from human rights abuses. It was also proposed that Asian intellectuals come up with a definition of human rights appropriate to the region. And as public intellectuals, the Fellows were reminded that their role is to serve as “intermediaries for people who do not have the platforms that we have”. Hence, the challenge here is to present issues and situations in ways that would provoke responses that lead to change.

**Session 2**
The second session was on “Ecological Destruction and Modern Resource Management”. Koji Tanaka (Japan) chaired this session with Wataru Fujita (Japan) and Herry Yogaswara (Indonesia) serving as discussants. The three presentations were:

- Yuli Nugroho (Indonesia) “Decentralization and Devolution of Forest Management: Fostering Relations between State and Local Communities to Improve Forest Management in Thailand and the Philippines”
- Darunee Paisanpanichkul (Thailand) “Compensation in Environmental Litigation Cases: Experiences from the Philippines and Japan”
- Siti Khadijah binti Abdul Gani (Malaysia) “A Management, Behavior and Public Perception of Asian Wildlife: A Case Study of Malayan Tapirs (Tapirus Indicus)”

The issues highlighted here had to do with the role of local governments in the Philippines and Thailand in the decentralization and devolution of forest management; the question of fair compensation for people affected by pollution-related diseases in Japan and the Philippines; and the conservation needs of Malaysian tapirs kept in Indonesia’s zoos.

The findings on forest management revealed that the application of decentralization and devolution has shifted the attitude of governments from command and control to interaction and facilitation. On compensation for pollution-related health damages, it was reported that in the Philippines it is possible to receive compensation whereas in Japan, its compensation law allows compensation for those medically certified as patients of pollution-related diseases. As for tapirs kept in captivity, implementing appropriate conservation interventions are needed to ensure their long-term survival.

**Session 3**
The third session centered on the “Young and Old in the Modern World”. Ragayah Haj. Mat Zin (Malaysia) chaired the session with Mary Racelis (Philippines) as the lone discussant. There were four presentations:

- Noramalina binti Mustaffa (Malaysia) “The Management and Development of Social Services for Senior Citizens in the Philippines and Malaysia”
- Ekawati Sri Wahyuni (Indonesia) “Gender Issues in Elderly Care in Malaysia and Japan”
- Fe A. delos Reyes (Philippines) “Looking at Programs and Services for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities across Cultural Boundaries and Economic Conditions: A Study in Chiba City and Selected Neuromuscular Centers in Japan”
- Oranuch Lerdkulladilok (Thailand) “Punishing Delinquents: Incarceration vs. Community Work, a Study on Juvenile Systems in Malaysia, Thailand and Japan”

All four presentations dealt with people who are excluded in society. The two presentations on care for the elderly highlighted service management systems implemented in Malaysia and the Philippines and issues related to gender in the case of Malaysia and Japan. The types of programs and services offered to people with disabilities in Japan was the focus of the third study while the last one dealt with the subject of alternative methods of punishment for juvenile delinquents in Malaysia, Thailand and Japan.

The findings with regard to the elderly showed that in the Philippines social services for them are more varied and there is active participation. In Malaysia more social service projects are supported by the government. On gender issues related to care of the elderly, it has been observed that gender roles have been changing as social and economic changes impact society. Where people with disabilities are concerned, Japan’s extensive and efficient welfare system provides different levels of health care facilities to cater to the needs of the community including those with disabilities. And when it comes to disciplining juvenile delinquents, there are community based approaches to alternative punishments.

During the discussion, there was shared consensus that care of the elderly is still a cherished value in Asian
societies. At the same time, it was recognized that the study of ageing is cross-disciplinary and factors such as demographics, social changes and economic aspects need to be considered. On the matter of people with disabilities, one question raised was whether there are regional networks (e.g. e-groups) concerning them as well as those dealing with juvenile care as it has been observed that regional networks not only benefit participants but also serve to mobilize the issue thus allowing for a powerful voice to emerge on the global level. It was also suggested that in looking at how able-bodied persons regard the disabled, the religious perspective should also be included. Correlated to that is this thought-provoking question: For so many young people who no longer have the quality associations with the elderly or those with special needs, what needs to be done to provide them with this quality engagement so they can gain insight? Where juvenile delinquency is concerned, the justice system should be focused on rehabilitation rather than punishment because the offenders are expected to return to society. At the same time, there is a need to take into account the side of the victims when this issue is considered. While community care was advocated by all four presenters, they were also asked to think about strengthening the community, too; otherwise, expectations on what the community can do would not be met.

Session 4
The theme for the fourth session was “Human Learning in the Contemporary World”. Jose M. Cruz, S.J. (Philippines) chaired this session with Tatsuya Tanami (Japan) and John Haba (Indonesia) as the discussants. The four presentations were:

- Penchom Saetang (Thailand) “Learning from Pollution Campaign Experiences in Japan”
- Narumol Aphinives (Thailand) “The Integration of Environmental Education into School Curricula in the Philippines, Japan and Indonesia”
- Theresita V. Arienza (Philippines) “Open and Distance Learning Institutions in Thailand: Lessons for the Philippines”

With learning as the concept running through all, the presentations ranged from the campaign against industrial pollution in Japan and the lessons they offer for NGOs in Thailand, to the extent environmental education has been integrated into the school curriculum in the Philippines and Indonesia, the role of independent musicians and their music in articulating social realities as observed in Okinawa, Chiang Mai and Yogyakarta, and the insights gained from a survey of open universities in Thailand and the invaluable experiences gleaned for the Philippines.

Citizens’ groups campaigning against pollution are now focusing on sustainable development and alternative economic strategies to sustain the environmental movement and support the victims of pollution. This was the finding conveyed by the first presentation. As for environmental education, there are various ways of integrating this subject into the curriculum that educators can apply to their specific situations. Sadly, however, environmental education is still given low priority in schools. And where music is concerned, there is the hope that an Asian community of socially engaged musicians will emerge. The main lesson gained from observing open and distance learning institutions in Thailand is that this form of education is dependent not only on the country’s needs but also on its culture, capacity and constraints.

In the engaging discussions that followed, it was noted that as environmental concern is a worldwide issue, the experience of one country should be related to those of the other countries. It was also suggested that discussion on environmental destruction should focus not only on physical issues but also on the social impact on the inhabitants, the issue of local rights versus the government’s power. Education obviously plays a key role here, everyone agreed. It is seen as crucial in inculcating in society the importance of environmental awareness. But the sad fact that environmental education is not given the due importance and urgency it deserves drew questions. Are there factors that hinder its expansion? Would it be possible then to draw up a standard model integrating the good practices observed? However, it was also pointed out that environmental education should not be based solely on ecology but must also take into account social, commercial and spiritual concerns and should be included in both formal and informal learning. As for distance education, it means not only learning outside of the classroom but also across national boundaries. Thus this question was raised: how can local culture be used in the learning process, taking into account cultural disparities between countries? API has been urged to take a look at the delivery process (i.e. open learning), which would allow for social change. This session ended with a moving rendition by Jess Santiago of his own composition “The Village”, a song that captured the essence of API’s aspirations.
Session 5
The fifth session was on “Bridging Tradition and Modernity”. Wataru Fujita (Japan) chaired this session while Danilo Francisco M. Reyes (Philippines) and Sumit K. Mandal (Malaysia) served as discussants. This session had three presentations:

- Said Halim bin Said Nong (Malaysia) “Key Players in Sustaining the Survival and Growth of Traditional Theatre”
- Toshiya Takahama (Japan) “Modern Development of Thai Contemporary Art and its Social Significance: Chalood Nimsamer and Printmaking”
- Lim How Ngean (Malaysia) “The Bridging of Cultural Divides in Contemporary and Traditional Theatre in Japan”

Concern for the survival of the arts was the unifying idea that ran through these presentations, which brought out issues ranging from the survival and growth of traditional theatres in Indonesia and Thailand, to printmaking and the growth of Thai contemporary art, and lastly to bringing together traditional and contemporary theatre in Japan.

The findings showed that artists are the prime movers in ensuring the continuity and growth of traditional theatre. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that new changes are penetrating the art world; how the field of printmaking deals with them is a crucial question.

The discussants’ comments and the discussion that followed raised a number of questions, among them: how does our Asian heritage go along with modern society? Where do we put art in our efforts as API Fellows? In the context of the discussions on art, it was argued that being intellectual means finding an authentic way of describing our experiences and creating our art and out of this, the Asian view can emerge on its own terms. While much discussion focused on the ethnic influence on art, notably absent was the class analysis/angle to art. It was thus proposed that this aspect be included and linked with globalization’s effect on art.

Session 6
The sixth session centered on “Art in a Borderless World”. Danilo Francisco M. Reyes (Philippines) chaired the session and Nick A. Deocampo (Philippines) was the lone discussant. The three presentations in this session were:

- Ritsuko Sato (Mizuno) (Japan) “Building a Contemporary Dance Network between Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Japan”
- Itsue Ito (Japan) “Keeping the Kilns Burning: Revitalizing the Thai Ceramics Industry”
- Joseph T. Salazar (Philippines) “Projections of an/other Space: The Cities of Three Contemporary Southeast Asian Cinemas—the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand”

The three presentations, respectively, conveyed the need to set up a network of contemporary dance practitioners in Asia, pointed out the impact of ceramics on Thai culture, and highlighted the articulation of urban representations in film.

The findings showed that setting up a network opens possibilities of collaborative work, mutual understanding and enhancement of the arts. When it comes to ceramics, it was noted that while ceramics is an industry that enjoys healthy growth in Thailand, its products are not widely used by the people. Where urban representation is concerned, there is a need to re-conceptualize urban space according to socio-cultural contexts.

The comments and discussion occasioned a lively debate. It brought out a wide spectrum of responses which varied between expressions of concern and suggestions to questions that confronted all. These were not specifically focused on the subject of the presentations but highlighted broader issues. For instance, on the common issue of power relations among different groups, there is a need to look at power relations among ourselves and among the members of the region. It was also deemed desirable to have an exhibition space that would serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and advocacy. Where the arts are concerned, it was pointed out that if people do not have respect for the arts, human rights, etc., this will result in a breakdown of perspective in society. Related questions were also raised. Among them: how do we make art sustainable in a world where homogenizing forces are powerful? As the arts break out of their national mode, who produces them? Are we ready to face a level of hybridity (in the arts) that cuts across the barriers set by national interests? Are we ready to create a regional art—(if so) what form would this take? In view of the need to redefine the way we view the films we make, the other questions asked were: what was the cinema’s role in nation building? To what extent does cinema lead to real change in society; are their messages brought into their own (the viewing public’s) discourse in their sectors; and, in relation to documentaries, can they be a real force for social change? Finally, in the field of dance, NGOs can serve as a bridge in bringing dance and art to audiences.
Session 7
The seventh session focused on “Identity and Self-Determination”. Herry Yogaswara (Indonesia) chaired the session with Colin Nicholas (Malaysia) and Prangtip Daorueng (Thailand) as discussants. The three presentations were:
• Cahyo Pamungkas (Indonesia) “The Effectiveness of the Autonomous Region in Minden Mindanao (ARMM) in Coping with the Separatist and the Role of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) in Peace Building”
• Alisa Hasamoh (Thailand) “Regionalism and Inter-Ethnic Relations: The Case of the Acehnese in Indonesia”
• Yuki Nakata (Japan) “Constructing New Stages of Education for Muslim Children: Impacts of the Dissemination of the Iqro’ Method Textbook on Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia”

The first presentation centered on the current separatist movement in southern Thailand and the southern Philippines and the peace efforts made to resolve the crises. In both situations, the findings indicated that the root causes need to be addressed. The second presentation focused on the cultural identity of the Acehnese. The study revealed that understanding the Acehnese’ diverse and complex identity would be a way of comprehending a society that has been subject to conflict for a long period of time. The impact of Iqro’ as a method for teaching the reading of the Qur’an was the subject of the last presentation. Expansion of the Iqro’ method has revitalized educational services for Muslims in Indonesia and Malaysia.

It was observed that the common concept that ran through the presentations was the question of who defines history, identity and ultimately how people can work together to attain peaceful solutions. While comments varied, it was generally agreed that stories of experiences with the people encountered need to be included and shared because humanity defines public intellectuals. The need for dialogue was also acknowledged, but in relation to education the question raised was whether it should be done between Muslims and non-Muslims or only among Muslims? With reference to Aceh it was recognized that the root of the conflict does not lie in inter-ethnic differences but in the unequal sharing of natural resources.

Session 8
The eighth session dealt with “Self-Perception in a Changing Southeast Asia”. Herry Yogaswara (Indonesia) chaired the session. The two discussants were Sumit K. Mandal (Malaysia) and Prangtip Daorueng (Thailand). There were three presentations in this session:
• Michael C. Morales (Philippines) “Molding Asia’s Future Leaders: Perspectives in Education and Training
• Nerfita Primadewi (Indonesia) “Text Messages and Images: Art and Short Message Service in the Philippines”
• Yeoh Seng Guan (Malaysia) “Sidewalk Capitalism: Notes on a Critical Visual Ethnography of Street Vending in Baguio City, the Philippines”
• Nina Widyawati Purnomo (Indonesia) “Representations of Migrant Workers in Malaysian Newspapers”

Three different issues were explored in this session: the usage of SMS art in the Philippines, life as a street vendor in a Philippine city (Baguio) and the depiction of migrant workers in Malaysia’s newspapers. With its popularity of usage, SMS art is seen as a way of humanizing technology. On the ubiquitous street vendors, the ethnographic study found that they continue to be socially undervalued and economically misconstrued. As for the migrant workers, the research showed that the Malaysian mainstream newspapers depict them in a negative light.

The comments and ensuing discussion brought out varied yet related concerns. One point raised was how much voice do groups have to share their own images and identities and how do they do so? Related to this was whether low status, marginal and voiceless people can shape their own destinies. It was generally accepted that representation matters because it shapes how we are viewed. So the question is to what extent do we have control over how we are represented? When it comes to migrant workers, specifically those in Malaysia, they are defined by how they are depicted in the newspapers. This raised the point on whether their depiction is a reflection of class or political interests. It was also obvious that a channel for expression by migrant workers is absent. With texting or the use of SMS being pervasive, is this limited to the middle class or do migrant workers also engage in this? If they do, what kind of culture will they (migrants) build out of this new technology which is transborder by nature? On the video made of the street vendors, it was seen as helpful to give a face to a marginalized group often considered ‘invisible’. Summing it all up was the comment that “intellectual work can help us evaluate situations to try to find hopeful ways out of terrible conditions”.

Session 9
The ninth and final session focused on “Culture and National Pride”. This was chaired by Surichai Wun Gaeo (Thailand) with Taufik Abdullah (Indonesia) and Nick A. Deocampo (Philippines) as discussants. This session had three presentations:
• Michael C. Morales (Philippines) “Molding Asia’s Future Leaders: Perspectives in Education and Training
This session’s broad theme covered three areas. In the area of military training, specifically in the five military academies in Asia covered by the study, the presentation pointed out the need for understanding the education and training given with a view to molding future leaders. Effective policies and practices noted from the five academies are offered as a checklist of “best practices”. Where sustainability is concerned, Asia is faced with a crisis. And for a young filmmaker, rediscovering his roots in an indigenous culture come through his exploration via filmmaking of the island rituals of Borneo and Okinawa, as well as his own native Palawan.

The discussion drew diverse comments from the conceptual to the practical. Collective memory is seen as important in adjusting to the modern world for if there is no rootedness in the past what will happen to our world? This applies not only to military education but also to issues related to sustainability as well as the rediscovery of one’s cultural roots. On military authority, it was pointed out that it is not formed by education alone; it is also based on values absorbed from the prevailing society (e.g. the acceptance of a strong military to ensure economic stability). It was also recognized that sustainability and spirituality are two sides of the same picture. So one question that arose was how can we help the urban poor/ middle class who do not have the experience of being with/seeing nature have access to this experience, especially in relation to its spiritual side?

**Ending Note**

This Workshop opened with the idea of the challenges facing the Asian intellectual community. Of course we were already aware of the challenges that we, and the region, face. The media reports on them everyday. We were even aware of some positive lessons before we joined the API program and before we came here to this Workshop. However, although we were aware of the challenges, we may not have taken much interest in some of them. Because we only focused on the areas related to our careers or disciplines, we were becoming like eucalyptus trees, rather than our traditional banyan trees. A eucalyptus tree does not share or offer very much to others. It competes with other trees to take the largest share of underground resources for its own growth, unlike the banyan tree, which offers and shares much of what it has to other trees, plants, birds and soil. We, in our rapidly changing world, are becoming like eucalyptus trees.

The API Fellowships Program, as well as the Workshop, has helped the Fellows to critically look at the issues through different perspectives. Despite their different fields of interest, all have started to see the connection between what they do and other issues present in their own societies and in the region. Because problems in a rapidly changing environment are complex and dynamic, it is thus important for all to realize that in facing these challenges, be it in society or in the region, integrated knowledge needs to go hand in hand with collective effort. Therefore, the Fellows must continue to learn and to engage with social issues, remaining consistent in what they say and in what they do in their daily lives.

Now that the API Fellowships Program is five years old, the community of Fellows is now large enough that we can think about how we can scale up our impact and reach out to our respective societies and the Southeast Asian region as a whole. A number of comments and suggestions were given at the concluding workshop that addressed how we can improve the study work, the presentations, and the workshop and how API’s presence and impact can be expanded throughout the region. For example, to a manual of best practices derived from the work of the preceding years could be used to guide the work of future Fellows. Including stories of people interviewed or sharing real experiences encountered in the course of the research can add a human dimension to the presentations. Allowing time and space for small group discussions among Fellows with common interests at the Workshop can improve linkages and networking. Fellows should think about what other disciplines, concerns or issues exist that they can link with their personal advocacy and can lead to practical projects to address the problems of the region. In order to give the results of the study a wider audience, each country should choose an issue on which a number of papers have been written, compile them, and have them translated into the local language if necessary, for dissemination to the general public. Furthermore, a repository or archive of all the materials that have been produced as part of API Fellowships, including visual materials, films, and documentaries, should be set up.

When the Workshop came to a close, the two related questions foremost in Fellows’ minds were: where do we go from here? and: is there life after the API Workshop?
These questions were answered after the Concluding Session with the introduction of the Regional Committee to the group and their presentation of the API Community Vision & Charter of the Regional Committee.

The members of the recently formed Regional Committee (representatives selected from among the API Fellows from the five member countries), presented the Charter and gave their views on how the group evolved as well as its purpose: the formation of an API Community that will realize the vision of the Program.

The Fellows’ response was positive. There was the shared feeling that although many of the challenges appear daunting, there is strength to be found in a community of public intellectuals coming collectively to work for the betterment of our societies, making differences with the contribution each one makes. And Jess Santiago puts this aptly in his song, *The Village*.

There’s a village in the making
A community of friends…
Come together and in friendship
Build this village of our dreams

(The author expresses his appreciation to Marian Chua, rapporteur, for providing the session summary and Rebecca Dawn Sooksom and Michiko Yoshida for editorial assistance.)
THE PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS’ RIGHTS: EXPERIENCES IN MALAYSIA AND LEARNING FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Sri Wahyono

INTRODUCTION

An economic boom in Malaysia in the 1970s caused a massive demand for migrant workers from neighboring countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. According to statistics from the Malaysian Immigration Department, there were 1,581,755 migrant workers who stayed and worked in Malaysia in 2005. Of the sending countries, Indonesian migrant workers held the highest rank in numbers (1,105,083).1 Besides legal migrant workers, many Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia are illegal workers who come into the country without legal documents (undocumented workers).

The migration of Indonesian workers to Malaysia occurs because Malaysian companies can gain higher profits from Indonesian migrant workers, particularly the illegal ones who are underpaid. In many cases, illegal migrant workers can easily be deported from the country if they are not needed anymore. Since they are in a weak bargaining position with the company where they work and they lack information about the legal system in Malaysia, the rights of both legal and illegal migrant workers, especially illegal, are very vulnerable to exploitation by their employers. They bear many of the problems with rights and legal protection in labor affairs. Many Indonesian Migrant Workers are subjected to various kinds of abuse and mistreatment both from their employers and recruitment agents. The most common types of abuse and mistreatment suffered by Indonesian workers are physical and sexual abuse, the withholding of wages, unpaid wages, being underpaid, the withholding of passports, and poor housing conditions.

Methodology and Scope of the Study

This study took place over a period of less than five months and was conducted in both Malaysia and the Philippines. Since the problems of migrant workers are very complex, this study has the following limitations:

1. Limitations of time (especially since this issue is very sensitive and complicated in both the sending and receiving country and needs an in-depth study and analysis);

2. Method and analysis limitation. Since most of the respondents were Indonesian workers, this study might have a weak analysis or bias on the part of the researcher.

This study is qualitative research. Data collection was conducted through interviews, informal discussions and limited participant observation in the research sites, and the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

In this study, most of the respondents were Indonesian workers (TKI). A few of respondents were Filipino and Vietnamese workers. These workers were employed in a variety of economic sectors, such as the construction, plantation, manufacturing, and retail (supermarkets, stores and cafes) sectors, as well as in domestic work. Research was conducted at the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur with female Indonesian workers who had run away from their employers to avoid abuse and seek protection. Most of them were domestic workers; a few of them were retail workers. For construction, manufacturing and retail workers, research was conducted in Kampung Segambut, the City of Kuala Lumpur and in Kajang City, as well as in Kampung Sungai Tangkas in Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan State.

The research was conducted in Pahang Darul Makmur, especially in Kampung Sungai Penjuring, Kampung Lurah Bilut, Kampung Lebu and Kampung Baru. Research was also conducted on the FELDA Estate, the largest plantation company belonging to the Malaysian Government, in Krau II, Bentong to investigate the labor conditions of plantation workers. All of the interviewed respondent were Indonesian migrant workers from Central Java, East Java, Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara and Riau.

Besides the Indonesian Embassy, research also was conducted at the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru and the Indonesian Consulate General on Penang Island. In Johor Bahru, interviews were conducted with domestic workers, manufacturing workers, and retail workers who had run away from their employers to avoid abuse and seek protection. On Penang Island, interviews were conducted with...
manufacturing workers who were employed in a rubber products factory, while at the Indonesian Consulate General on Penang Island, interviews were conducted with domestic and construction workers who had fled from their employers to avoid abuse and seek protection. Besides the afore-mentioned research sites, research was also conducted at a granite and marble factory to investigate the labor conditions of Indonesian migrant workers in Simpang Pulai, Perak Darul Ridwan State.

Besides migrant workers, interviews were conducted with some key officials at the Ministry of Human Resources in Putrajaya, the Federal Government Administrative Centre and at the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Malaysia in Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor.

We also conducted interviews with Ms. Florida Sandanasamy, the Programme Officer for Tenaganita Sdn. Bhd., the main NGO that has protection programs for migrant and women workers in Malaysia. Interviews were also conducted with Mr. Syed Shahir, President of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), the main trade union in Malaysia, and with Mr. Hj. Indra Putra, Vice President, Trade Union of FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) Workers.

Interviews with Mr. Eka A. Suripto, First Secretary, and Mr. Malik, Labor Attaché, of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur were conducted. Interviews were also conducted with Mr. Maryadi Hadisuwiryo, Indonesian Consul General for Johor Bahru, and Mr. Didik Trimardjono, Consul/Consular Affairs at the Indonesian Consulate in Johor Bahru, as well as with Mr. Erick H. Setiawan, Indonesian Consul General, Penang.

Interviews were conducted with some agencies or recruiters, a company that provides foreign worker recruitment services in Malaysia and with Prof. Kamal Halili Hasan, labor law expert and the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University Kebangsaan Malaysia.

In the Philippines, some interviews and discussions were held with Mrs. Elvira A. Ador, Chief Planning and Program Development Division, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and with Mr. Carlos F. Canaberal, Chief, Policies and Programs Division, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). Interviews and discussion were conducted with some NGO activists who have programs in promoting OFW rights protection and welfare, such as Mrs. Maria Angela Villalba, Executive Director, Unlad Kabayan (Migrant Service Foundation, Inc.), Ms. Loida B. Bernabe, DSDP Coordinator, Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. (Center for Migrant Workers), and Mr. Edmund H. Ruga, Luzon Regional.

Aims of the Study

The aims of the study were as follows:

a. to identify various migrant workers’ rights and legal protection problems in Malaysia;

b. to analyze how Malaysian labor laws are applied to migrant workers in practice;

c. to analyze efforts to promote migrant workers’ rights, dignity, and legal protection as carried out by Indonesian Representatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Malaysia;

d. to understand the legal protection framework for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Philippines.

The Problems of Rights Protection

This study found that there is no legal protection program for migrants workers provided by the Malaysian Government. In general, there is no legal discrimination in Malaysia. In principle, labor laws are applied to both Malaysian workers and foreign workers (migrant workers). There are many existing acts and regulations in the labor code that have relevancy for migrant workers’ rights and legal protection. As a migrant labor recipient country, the Malaysian Government has no interest in ratifying the 2003 International Convention on the Protection of The Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This paper looks into common issues with the status of migrant workers’ rights and the application of labor laws to migrant workers in Malaysia as the recipient country.

We obtained some information from respondents in the field research concerning the legal protection problems of migrant workers in Malaysia. Although there is no legal discrimination in Malaysia and, in principle, the labor laws are applied to both Malaysian workers and foreign ones (migrant workers), there are double standards, discrimination and inconsistency between practice and policy. In practice, the rights of migrant workers, both legal and illegal, are not fully protected.

a. Undocumented Migrant Workers, Corrupt Practices, and Abuses of Power

Sometimes, the Malaysian Royal Police conduct raids
on undocumented migrant workers and arrest them, whipping them before deportation to their home countries. Meanwhile, many Malaysian employers harbor and employ illegal migrant workers, and most of them seem legally untouchable. We found that many employers preferred to employ undocumented migrant workers in their plantations in Bentong and Kuala Lipis, Pahang Darul Makmur State. The same practices occurred in Kuala Lumpur where many employers employed illegal migrant workers in the construction sector.

There are simple reasons why employers prefer to recruit and employ undocumented workers. The first reason is that employers do not need to spend as much money to apply for the required legal work permits and pay for health insurance for their employees. Although the work permit as well as the levy is reimbursed by employees over several months, if employees run away before the charges are paid off, as happens in many cases, the employers will lose a great deal of money. On the other hand, these jobs are an opportunity for many illegal migrant workers who want to realize their dreams. The second reason is that time is money for employers. The employers have to wait for more than one month to receive foreign workers if they follow the Home Affairs Ministry’s Application Procedures for the Recruitment of Foreign Workers.

In Kuala Lumpur and Kajang, Selangor State, Simpang Pulai, Perak State, and Alor Setar and Bentong, Pahang State, most of respondents reported that Malaysian policemen often demand some kind of collateral money from migrant workers if they fail to produce legal travel documents. Moreover, the policemen confiscate all valuable goods such as cellular phones, watches and gold jewelry brought by migrant workers instead of cash money. Collecting the money is usually done through intimidation: “You give us some money or you will be arrested, detained and finally deported to your home country!”

The extortion of money from illegal migrant workers is also done by recruitment agencies in Malaysia and Immigration officials in airports or at ports. Illegal migrant workers who wish to return to their country of origin usually contact a recruitment agency that provides services in processing immigration documents for leaving Malaysia. One person must pay RM1,000 for this service. It is presumed that there is collusion between the agency and Immigration in issuing an exit permit. After obtaining an exit permit (commonly known as a paspor tendang) from the agency, illegal migrant workers must spend extra money when they pass Immigration checkpoints in airports or at sea ports. Immigration officers in both Malaysia and Indonesia will ask for some money from each migrant worker if they fail to show their original travel documents. They can pass through the immigration checkpoint if they pay RM1,000 or more, but they will be arrested and detained at an immigration depot if they refuse to pay.

According to data from the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, there are an estimated 1.5 million illegal Indonesian workers (TKI) who work and stay in Malaysia. In the field, we found three categories of illegal or undocumented migrant workers, as follows:

1. **Non Work Permit migrant workers**, who entered Malaysia with tourist visas or social visit passes and stayed on and worked in the country even though their visas had expired. A foreign worker is allowed to take employment in Malaysia with a social visit pass;

2. **Escapee migrant workers**, who have run away from their employers and then been employed by new employers. Their escapes are due to very bad working conditions, such as unpaid wages and very low wage rates, very long working hours, physical abuse, and sexual abuse including rape. In September 2005, there were 190 female Indonesian workers (TKWs) who were staying in the shelter of the Indonesian Embassy awaiting the completion of the legal process for their repatriation. Most of them were domestic workers who had escaped from their employers to seek assistance. All of them had suffered very bad treatment from their employers such as unpaid wages, intimidation, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and rape resulting in pregnancy and the birth of a baby. Some of them were victims of trafficking who were sold by their recruiters to be forced prostitutes in Malaysia. When migrant workers run away, they automatically become undocumented or illegal. This is because their original passport is held by their employer. In addition, according to regulations, foreign workers must work for the employer whose name is clearly stated on their work permits (visas) and are not permitted to move to another employer until the termination of their employment contract;

3. **Overstay migrant workers**, who have kept working and living in Malaysia although their employment contracts and temporary employment visas have expired. Many employers would like to employ undocumented migrant workers due to the profit motive while many migrant workers want to get a job quickly and easily without going home to their country of origin. Many Indonesian migrant workers said that they had to pay at least IDR9 million...
Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community

The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows

Kampung Sungai Penjuring and Kampung Lurah

by many migrant workers in a rubber plantation in

insurance. An unhealthy work place was also occupied

the employees in the edible mushroom farm had health

a mask, his employer cynically laughed at him. None of

wore particle filter masks. When an employee asked for

operation where the work place was very damp, none

Lebu, of those who worked in an edible mushroom

high risk of falling down from the pointed, heavy stems

Krau II Felda Plantation Sdn. Bhd., all migrant workers

as pesticide sprayers without masks and safety glasses. In

health equipment in Bentong, Pahang State. They work

employed on plantations with insufficient safety and

It has been found that many migrant workers are

sectors where basic safety procedures are often ignored.

The Malaysian Parliament passed an Occupational

Health and Safety Act in 1994. Based on this Act,
some regulations, orders and guidelines connected with

occupational safety and health were issued and applied

but the health and safety of migrant workers continue
to be a serious concern. Many migrant workers are

employed both in the plantation and construction

sectors where basic safety procedures are often ignored.

A wage is the most basic of workers’ right. Taking home

their wages after the completion a job is the hope of

all workers. Ironically, they must fight for this right in

Malaysia, a country that has good and comprehensive

labor laws. Moreover, the Malaysian Government

enacted the 1947 Council Act (Act 195). At the present
time, the National Labor Advisory Council (NLAC) has

agreed on the need to draw up a set of guidelines on a

wage reform system that would be in the immediate and

long term interests of employees in the unionized and

non-unionized sectors, employers, and the nation. Such

guidelines would facilitate employers and employees in

formulating the types of reform systems that would best

suit the interests and environment of their companies.

Many migrant workers employed in the plantation

sector in Kampung Sungai Penjuring, Kuala Lipis, and

Krau II Felda Plantation Sdn. Bhd. in Bentong complained that their wages had not yet been paid by

their employers. The amount of unpaid wages ranged

from RM300 to RM1,000 in Krau II and RM2,500 in

Kampung Sungai Penjuring.
In Kuala Lumpur, we also found that many migrant workers who were employed in the construction sector had not received their wages for five months. In fact, many Indonesian Domestic Workers (TKW) do not receive their wages for as many as twelve months, or more if they flee from their employers’ abuse. According to the statistics issued by the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, in the last three years (January 2003–June 2005) there were 1,213 Indonesian workers (TKI) who made reports that their wages had not been paid by their employers.

**d. Unfair Employment Contracts and Practices**

In both the plantation and construction sectors, most large projects have complicated systems of jobs and responsibilities. They are operated through a job tender system. In this system, the employer has no direct industrial relation with the employees (migrant contract workers). Those who have direct relations with the workers are the contractors or sub-contractors who receive the job tenders from the employers. The contractors or sub-contractors (commonly known as *tauke*) are the real employers for migrant workers, and are responsible for their wages, working conditions, occupational safety and health and other matters concerning the work place. Many of them are illegal contractors without any license. Some individuals can receive a closed tender and become an employer who hires five to twelve migrant workers. Many Indonesian migrant workers are employed by these employers without any written employment contract. However, this is allowed under the 1955 Employment Act.

The Indonesian migrant workers who are employed in the plantation and construction sectors in Malaysia face particular exploitation because of the system of contract labor, whereby an employer hires a control actor and devolves all responsibility onto him (we found no women contractors) for recruiting and paying workers. The employer is often uninterested in how much of the money s/he gives to the contractor actually reaches those working under him/her, and it is the contractor, not the employer, who is legally responsible for the workers under Malaysian law. They receive few benefits, and work under conditions below international labor standards. Many of them are also illegal migrants and without valid travel documents. They depend on the mercy of contractors who can turn them in to the police to be arrested and deported to their home country if they do not accept the wages and working conditions offered.

In Kuala Lipis and Bentong in Pahang Darul Makmur State, many Indonesian migrant workers (TKIs) run away from their employers due to very bad working conditions and underpayment. Some of them who fail to escape are bound and subjected to physical abuse by their employer’s bodyguards. Employment contracts in practice are like modern bondage. Hanif and Luminto, Indonesian migrant workers who successfully escaped from their employer (a contractor) said that they only received RM20.00 per day. They underwent a terrible experience when working for this employer. When they asked for their wages for the past five months, which had been suspended, they were beaten by three bodyguards under the employer’s strict orders. Finally, Hanif and Luminto escaped without receiving their five months of wages, amounting to RM3,000.

Ahmad and his colleague TKIs, most of whom were from Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara, and were working as oil palm fruit stem cutters in Kampung Sungai Penjuring, Bentong, Pahang, complained that working conditions were very difficult and strict. Their monthly earnings depended on how many tons of palm oil stem they could cut, collect, and deliver to the factory in a month. Their average monthly earnings were RM470.00. If they did something wrong such as cutting down unripe oil palm fruit stems, they had to pay a fine of RM10.00 for each stem but the fine was increased to as high as RM50.00 if the unripe oil palm fruit stems were delivered to the factory.

In Krau II Felda (Federal Land Development Authority) Plantations Sdn. Bhd., the biggest plantation company belonging to the Malaysian Government where written employment contracts are signed by the Indonesian workers, all original Indonesian workers’ passport are held by Felda officials. All workers are given only a photocopy. This means that the workers’ physical mobility is limited by their employer. Under this condition, the workers are very afraid to go anywhere on their holidays or even in case of an emergency to see a doctor. In public places, migrant workers are very afraid if they see a police officer even if they are carrying proper travel documents. This is because Malaysian police officers usually demand money from Indonesian migrant workers. The similarity of the Bahasa Indonesian and Bahasa Malaysian languages allows the money to be extorted smoothly. Without any language barrier, the Malaysian policemen can easily demand money and confiscate other valuable goods such as cellular phones or gold jewelry from their OLD KIN BROTHERS.

Most of employers who hire migrant workers withhold the workers’ original passports until the employment contract is terminated or at least until the levy
reimbursement is paid off. Only a few employers let the migrant workers retain their passports. The employers usually only give the migrant workers a photocopy of their passport, their foreign worker’s identity card (Kad Pengenalan Pekerja) that is issued by the Immigration Office, and their insurance card if they are insured. In fact, most Indonesian domestic workers (TKWs) have only touched their passports once, when they are requested by the recruiting agency to sign it. After signing, the passports are kept by the recruiter and finally submitted to the TKW’s employer.

In both the plantation and construction sectors, other common complaints from migrant workers are that they are underpaid, endure heavy working conditions, and are instructed to work on public holidays with normal wage payment. The labor conditions in the manufacturing sector are no better than the above mentioned sectors. On September 26, 2005, Priyono and his eleven colleagues people came to the Labor Department of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur to make a report. They complained that they were underpaid. Their wage was only RM18.00 per day plus a RM1.00 daily allowance and they were accommodated in a very bad container house. They worked as granite cutters at a granite and marble tile factory in Kampung Taman Muda, Simpang Pulai District, Perak Darul Ridwan State. The recruitment agency in Jakarta promised that they would be employed at a plastic goods factory but they were shocked when they read and signed the employment contract only one hour before their departure to Malaysia. If they had cancelled it, they would have lost the IDR7 million (US$700.00) that they had paid to the recruitment agency for their departure to Malaysia. If they had cancelled it, they would have lost the IDR7 million (US$700.00) that they had paid to the recruitment agency for their travel documents, work permits, medical clearances and transportation fees to Malaysia. Most of them had borrowed the money from their families or sold valuable goods such as gold jewelry and motorcycles.

The four most common complaints from female Indonesian workers are that they are not allowed to conduct their prayers five times per day, the withholding of wages, unreasonable working conditions, and having to handle and eat pork in the preparation of meals for Chinese employers. Most respondents who worked as domestic workers said that they were not allowed to call or contact anyone and that their passports were held by their employers. All the afore-mentioned complaints are direct contraventions of their employment contracts.

When a migrant worker seeks redress for unpaid wages or brings up other forms of labor disputes or abuse, the employer often retaliates by canceling his/her work permit. As a result, the migrant worker loses his/her status in the country and his/her right to stay. Without a visa, the worker is unable to continue his/her case through the courts. To enable a worker to pursue his/her case, the Immigration Department issues the worker a special three month pass for a fee of RM100.00 per month. The worker is not allowed to work under this pass.

e. Indonesian Domestic Workers and Human Trafficking

If the plantation and construction sectors pose risks for migrants, it follows that domestic workers are very vulnerable to abuse. The fact that they live in their employers’ homes means that they are separated from other workers and have neither witnesses nor protection from others if they face inhumane working conditions or physical and sexual assaults. Female Indonesian workers (TKWs) mostly work as domestic workers in Malaysia, but the exact number is uncountable if we include both legal and illegal female workers. There seems to be an endless demand for their services. Many of these women are treated well and paid regularly, but abuse is both common and frustratingly difficult to prosecute. According to the data issued by the Malaysian Department of Immigration, the number of Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia is nearly 233,285 workers while the number of foreign domestic workers from other neighboring countries such as the Philippines, Cambodia, Ceylon, Thailand and India is 9,390 workers.

The domestic worker is nowhere recognized as a worker. In the Malaysian Employment Act of 1955, the domestic worker is defined as a servant, but not as a worker. The work is undefined since there is no clear job description. It is even seen as unproductive labor as it does not produce surplus cash and profit; therefore, the protection given to these workers is unclear.

According to information from respondents in Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru and Penang, many Indonesian domestic workers (TKWs) suffer from some form of abuse in their work places from their employers and recruiting agents. The most common abuses that they are subjected to is the withholding of wages, a heavy workload and very long working hours, physical and psychological abuse, sexual abuse, the withholding and falsifying of their passport, forced confinement and restricted communication, lack of access to health care, discrimination among the salary rates of migrant workers from different sending countries, being jointly hired by three employers, having no off days, and having no freedom to practice their religion (no praying and no fasting as well as being forced to handle and eat pork).
Most of respondents reported that they were recruited and sent to Malaysia by their recruitment agencies in Indonesia without making any cash payment but they had to reimburse all costs incurred by the recruitment agencies with their first five months of salary. Each prospective employer who takes a Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) must pay around RM5,000.00-RM6,000.00 to a Malaysian supply agency. The Malaysian supply agency has to pay a recruitment fee to the Indonesian agency that has born the recruitment costs. This means that debt bondage is being applied to Indonesian domestic workers who are recruited by the Indonesian recruitment agency. The recruitment and employment practices in the domestic service sector are equivalent to modern slavery.

Trafficking in persons among young, female Indonesian workers recruited by illegal agencies is a common issue today. From mid-August until September 30th, 2005, there were more than eighteen Indonesian young girls who ran away from their workplaces. In the last three years, more than 6,425 young Indonesian females have been the victims of trafficking in persons. All trafficking victims were sold to Malaysian syndicates (commonly known as Bapa Ayam) by Indonesian recruitment agencies and forced to work as commercial sex workers in Kuala Lumpur.

f. Limitations of Trade Union Membership

Administrative practices and unscrupulous employers often discourage migrant workers from joining trade unions. Many Malaysian employers individually intimidate migrant workers in order to have them focus only on their jobs. Employers even design employment contracts with terms and conditions that leave the migrant workers no chance to join a union. Withholding the migrant workers’ passport is a common practice conducted by most employers to restrict workers’ physical mobility and, automatically, their association rights.

The Role of NGOs and Indonesian Representatives

There are two NGOs that are highly concerned with promoting migrant workers’ rights and dignity, namely the MTUC (Malaysian Trade Union Congress) and Tenaganita. The MTUC’s commitment to promoting migrant workers’ rights was shown in their press release responding to new foreign worker levy rates on July 31st, 2005: “…We urge the Government to impose a minimum wage rate for all sectors applicable to all employees including foreign workers. The Immigration Department announcement on new levy rates on Friday surprisingly says nothing about countless complaints published in recent weeks regarding nonpayment of salaries, arbitrary reductions of agreed wage rates, beatings, withholding of travel documents which resulted in imprisonment of legal workers…” The MTUC recognizes the positive contributions of migrant workers in the development of the country and its economy and the principle that all workers should be treated with fairness, dignity and equality without distinction, whether they are migrant or local workers. The commitment of the NGO was reflected in the Resolution of the MTUC Conference on Migrant Workers: “We recognize that migrant workers are workers with equal rights and dignity. These rights must be protected in law and policies. Such laws and policies must be effectively and justly enforced by the various agencies. Key principles for migration policy should include non-discrimination and equal treatment of workers—nationals and migrants alike, respect for basic human rights and labour rights of migrant workers, protection of migrant workers in both regular status and irregular situations and regular consultations among government, employers, workers, NGOs and other representatives of civil society.”

The MTUC also encourages all migrant workers to join a trade union in order to obtain protection of their rights as legal workers.

Tenaganita is another Malaysian NGO that has a high commitment to promote migrant workers’ rights and dignity. Besides conducting participatory action research to find out which factors brought about an increase in the vulnerability of migrant workers in Malaysia to HIV infection, the organization also established a migrant desk in 1993 and has developed various programs to address the problems, issues and concerns of migrant workers.

As the largest sending country, Indonesian representatives have some programs to protect Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia. The legal protection programs provided consist of shelter services, legal assistance and repatriation to the home country.

All Indonesian representatives in Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru and Penang provide a shelter for Indonesian migrant workers who run away to seeking redress. The shelter at the Indonesian Embassy has the capacity for seventy persons only but sometimes it is filled to over-capacity. In November 2004, the shelter was occupied by 260 people and in October 2005, it was occupied by 190 Indonesian workers who came to seek redress. The over-full shelter and lack of food posed serious problems for the health of the occupants, leading to stress and sexual deviation. The Indonesian workers occupying the
shelter have to wait until completing the legal process in Malaysian Courts or completing negotiations with their former employer. This takes a long time so they have to stay at the shelter while awaiting repatriation to their home country. The shelter conditions are better at the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru and the Indonesian Consulate General in Penang because both Consulates conduct intensive negotiations with Malaysian Immigration to smooth out the exit process, leading to lower occupancy rates.

The Labor Department of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur along with the Indonesian Consulates General in Johor Bahru and Penang are tasked with providing legal assistance to migrant workers who come seeking redress.

Learning From the Philippines

As a sending country, the Philippines has already ratified the 2003 International Convention on the Protection of The Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The country has comprehensive laws to protect the rights of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) who work and stay in foreign countries. The scope of the legal protection system is very comprehensive and applied during the recruitment process, the preparation of the employment contracts, and the deployment as well as the returning process for OFWs.

The Philippines government has expressed its objectives with regards to employment as: “to protect every citizen desiring to work locally or overseas by securing for them the best possible terms and conditions of employment” and to “facilitate and regulate the movement of workers in conformity with the national interest” (Labor Code, 1974).

In 1995, the Philippines Congress passed “the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995” (Republic Act 8042) to improve the protection of migrant workers by raising standards of protection and welfare not only for Filipino migrant workers and their families, but for overseas Filipinos in general.9

The underlying policies promoted by RA 8042 were: dignity, human rights and freedoms of Filipino citizens; protection for female and young workers; provision of adequate and timely social, economic and legal assistance to migrants; participation of migrants in democratic decision-making processes; and representation of overseas Filipinos in relevant institutions.

The scope of the legal and structural frameworks to protect the rights of OFWs is very comprehensive and applied throughout the recruitment process, the preparation of the employment contract, and the deployment as well as the returning process. The legal framework includes the following: 1) regulation of recruitment activities; 2) licensing and supervision of recruiting agencies; 3) monitoring of recruitment agencies and mechanisms to check abuse by recruitment agencies; 4) processing and documentation of OFWs; 5) benchmarks for fixing minimum standards of OFWs’ employment contracts; 6) role of private recruitment agencies in labor migration; 7) regulations and mechanisms for vulnerable workers; 8) penalties for malpractice by recruiting agencies and employers; 9) illegal recruitment and unlawful emigration; and 10) redress for violations of OFWs’ rights.10

a. One Gate and One Roof Administration System

In the Philippines, the primary structure for regulating migration and the activities of private recruitment agencies is the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration or POEA. The POEA is the sole and exclusive authority for the formulation and implementation of policies and programs for the systematic deployment of Overseas Filipino Workers. All administration affairs concerning OFWs are conducted by the POEA. It is the government agency that is responsible for optimizing the benefits of the country’s overseas employment program. This agency is tasked with promoting and monitoring the overseas employment of Filipino workers, responding to changing market and economic conditions, and strengthening workers’ protection and the regulatory components of the overseas employment program. The most important programs in the Republic Acts 8042 defining specific policy thrusts for the POEA in the light of emerging issues are as follows: 1) guarantee of migrant workers’ rights; 2) stricter rules on illegal recruitment activities and the corresponding penalties; 3) selective deployment; 4) the repatriation of workers; and 5) a reintegration program for OFWs.

The POEA has maintained an organizational structure with the POEA Governing Board at the helm. The Secretary of Labor and Employment heads the Governing Board, and the POEA Administrator serves as Vice-Chair. There are representatives on the Board from the private sector, women’s groups, and the sea-based and land-based labor sectors.

The Deputy Administrator for Employment and Welfare oversees the Pre-Employment Services Office (PSO) and the Welfare and Employment Office (WEO). The PSO is tasked with the issuance of
overseas employment certificates and the development of employment standards while the WEO provides welfare assistance services to contract workers and their families. It evaluates and processes the employment documents of workers who secured jobs without the help of any licensed agency. It also conducts a Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar, an orientation given to prospective applicants for overseas jobs as well as the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar given to hired workers prior to their departure.\footnote{11}

Under the Deputy Administrator for Adjudication and Employment Regulation, the Licensing and Regulation Office evaluates and recommends the issuance of licenses to private applicants, monitors the performance of licensed agencies and recommends the renewal of licenses. It assists victims of illegal recruitment and at the same time conducts surveillance on suspected illegal recruiters. It also assists in the prosecution of cases in court and provides airport assistance services to workers prior to embarkation. The Adjudication Office handles the adjudication of cases arising from violations of recruitment regulations and disciplinary cases, conducts legal research in aid of policy, and operates a watch system listing not only contract workers who are facing charges and complaints arising from the violation of employment terms but also erring foreign employers and principals.\footnote{12}

\section*{b. The Role of NGOs and Churches in the Philippines}

Considering that OFWs make significant contributions to their families and the country, NGOs and churches play a critical and strategic partnership role with the Philippines Government. The main NGOs that have a high commitment in promoting migrant workers’ rights were united in the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW). PMRW is a registered civil society network that was established in 1995 to encourage the recognition, protection and fulfillment of Filipino migrant workers’ rights both in the Philippines and abroad throughout the entire migration process.

The objectives of PMRW are as follows: a) to carry out education, lobbying, and monitoring activities towards the recognition, protection and fulfillment of the rights of all Filipino migrants and members of their families before departure, during migration, and upon return; b) to monitor respect for and expose abuses of Filipino migrants’ rights towards the pursuit of justice; and c) to disseminate information among migrant workers and their associations, and in dialogue with them.\footnote{13}

\section*{Implications and recommendations}

1. Migrant workers are very vulnerable to exploitation by employers, recruitment agents and government officials (police and immigration officers) both in sending countries and receiving countries. Factors that contribute to the exploitation are as follows:
   a) Low achievement of formal education and lack of relevant training;
   b) Lack of information on how to get travel documents, how to apply for jobs and visas, and how much are the relevant fees;
   c) Lack of knowledge and understanding of labor laws and immigration regulations in receiving countries; and
   d) Falsifying of ID cards, passport data, and other travel documents in the recruitment and deployment process by recruitment agents, with the collusion of immigration officials.

2. Some efforts must be taken by the Indonesian Government as a sending country to eliminate corruption practices and abuses of power and to promote migrant workers’ rights and dignity. It is very important to arrange and review a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the sending country and receiving country based on the highest appreciation of human rights and dignity and mutual benefits. Professional management must be applied by the related government agencies in the recruitment process, deployment process and returning process by using a ‘One Gate and One Roof System’. Parliament and NGOs should take the lead in strengthening the political and social controls on the performance of government agencies in connection with labor migration.

3. Encourage the Malaysian Government as a receiving country to ratify the 2003 International Convention on the Protection of The Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, since the government recognizes the positive contributions of migrant workers in the development of the country and its economy.

\section*{NOTES}

\footnote{1 Department of Immigration, Malaysia, ‘Statistics on Migrant Workers by Country of Origin’. Data as of 1 May 2004-30, accessed April 2005.}

\footnote{2 The most importance existing acts and regulations concerning labor that have relevancy for workers’ rights and legal protection and regulation are:}
a. Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)  
b. Employment (Restriction) Act 1968 (Act 353)  
c. Workmen’s Compensation Act 1952 (Act 273)  
d. Workers’ Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act 1990 (Act 446)  
e. Employees Provident Fund Act 1991  
f. Wages Council Act 1947 (Act 195)  
g. Occupational Safety and Health 1994 (Act 514), the latest amendment 2005  
h. Factories and Machinery Act 1967 (Act 139), the latest amendment 2005  
i. Weekly Holidays Act 1950 (Act 220) & Holidays Act 1951 (Act 369)  
j. Industrial Relations Act 1967 (Act 177)  
k. Trade Union Act 1959 (Act 262)  
l. Immigration Act 1959/63 (Act 155), the latest amendment 2002.


Department of Immigration, Malaysia, Loc. Cit.

http://www.ksm.gov/osha. Kuala Lumpur, August 5th, 2005. The formal data on the death toll and all type of accidents as well as physical disabilities does not automatically show that all of the victims are migrant workers, but the fact is that most migrant workers are employed in the Three D sectors (Dangerous, Demanding and Dirty), and so are very vulnerable to accidents, especially in the construction, plantation and manufacturing sectors.


Department of Immigration, Malaysia, Loc. Cit.


The scope of the legal protection system for OFWs in the Philippines is very comprehensive and applied during the recruitment process, the preparation of the employment contract, and deployment, as well as the returning process of OFWs. Some important existing acts and regulations are:


c. POEA Rules and Regulations Governing the Recruitment and Employment of Seafarers;

d. POEA Revised Rules and Regulations Governing Overseas Employment of Land-based Workers, June 2002;

e. Omnibus Rules and Regulations of Implementing the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995;

f. Labor Code (Presidential Decree No. 442), the primary legal system regulating the activities of private employment agencies in the Philippines, promulgated on May 1, 1974;

g. Presidential Degree No. 1694 concerning the Organization and Administration of the Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers; and

h. Executive Order No. 392 amending EO No. 182 dated February 14th, 2003 entitled “Transferring the Medicare Functions of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to the Philippines Health Insurance Corporation.”


Ibid.

http://www.pmrw.org. The members of PMRW consists of a) the Apostleship of the Sea Manila Chaplaincy; b) Center for Migrant Advocacy Philippines (CMA-Phil); c) Daejon Moyse; d) Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC); e) the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN- Phils); f) Episcopal Commission on Migrant and Itinerant People; g) International Catholic Migration Commission; h) Scalabrini Center for People on the Move; i) Scalabrini Lay Association; j) Seoul Archdiocese Lanor Pastoral Commission; and k) Stella Maris International Service Center.
REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

The International Labour Organization (ILO) sets international labor standards that identify those who are in the informal economy, including agricultural workers, home-based workers and workers in small enterprises, who are excluded from labor law protection and are thus subject to protection from ILO standards. The standards are supposed to be universally applicable and universally applied. In the case of Indonesia, about half of the total population subsists through self-sufficient agricultural activities and the rule of the government has a very limited effect on them (Soemardjan 1993, translated by Nakamura 2000). Furthermore, half of the Indonesian non-agricultural labor force is in the “informal” sector, and the absence of collective action and written contracts among home-based batik *tulis* workers in Java is problematized as requiring social protection (Mehrotra and Biggeri 2002: 16). For example, as well as the absence of other protection measures Mehrotra and Biggeri found that the home-based female batik workers did not have a women’s collective, and concluded that the workers need to gain bargaining power by collective action in order to increase the gain (ibid.: 49, 66-9). Thus the question I would like to pose is about how the workers so far manage the absence of such protection rather than about the formalizing of the “informal” sector, nor the extension and enforcement of the universal standards by law. Do the workers themselves share the opinion that these standards will create good working conditions for them?

In order to answer this question, the first step was to explore the workers’ views on their work. My research in the API Fellowships Program chose batik *tulis* (hand-drawn wax-resistant dyed fabric) workers as the target population. According to the existing literature, batik *tulis* workers who draw batik motifs on cloth (“the workers”) are one of the occupational groups that occupy the lowest position in the social and economic strata of Indonesian society (Brenner 1998: 112). Mehrotra and Biggeri (2002) also identify batik *tulis* workers who work at home as in need of legal protection. The aim of this research required investigation into two important aspects. Firstly, the workers’ own views on their identity have not been sufficiently expressed in the literature. Various components of this identity are valued and given different statuses, and they become the basis of certain work conditions in any society. The reasons for valuing one over another vary from one society to another. The employer is said to see the workers as the mere manual extension of him/herself and expects the workers to suppress their desires (Brenner 1998: 111-113). Their skills are not particularly valued by the employer nor the workers themselves (Brenner 1998: 114). From this illustration, one would imagine passive, powerless female workers.  

Batik *tulis* workers are recognized as females who also perform unskilled work such as cooking and cleaning (Brenner 1998: 114-6). The primary reason, then, for the workers’ low wages is that batik *tulis* work is done by village women in their spare time and their main economic activity is farming their own fields. However, it has been contended that this illustration contradicts the reality of the workers. Batik *tulis* work is an important, and often the main, source of income for the workers’ households (Joseph 1987: 14, 185; Mehrotra and Biggeri 2002: 66). Ambigious verbal contracts, low wages, and the absence of collective action are the reasons that Biggeri and Mehrotra call for the workers’ social protection (ibid.: 2002). At the same time, this simple conclusion about the batik *tulis* work as an economic activity requires careful treatment because it does not allow a space for extra-economic meanings of the work. Hence, this research explored extra-economic aspects of the work.

By carrying out this case study on the batik workers’ views of their work, the research aimed to take steps towards understanding those who are not visible beneficiaries of the national labor administration. Although the number of respondents in this research was small and could not show statistical significance, the study explored in depth what the workers thought, did, and wanted.

The research took place from July 2005 to early May 2006 over a period of ten months in Yogyakarta City, Central Java, Indonesia. The informants in this research were batik *tulis* workers, workshop owners, and members of the Batik Lovers’ Association Parang. In addition, those who were knowledgeable about the batik industry in Yogyakarta such as batik artists and the Batik Research
Center also provided me with information on the general pattern of work organization and the locations of batik workers’ homes. I was able to interview thirty-seven batik *tulis* workers in two batik workshops in Yogyakarta. Eight batik workshop owners/managers, including the owners of the two main workshops, were interviewed in order to understand the different systems of work organization and the profiles of the workers. The research employed interviews and personal observations. Structured interviews were conducted twice with each of the workers, semi-structured interviews once with six workshop owners/managers and twice with the two main workshop owners. Participant observation was carried out in the batik workshop. This method requires an extended period of time since the researcher participates in the informants’ activities in a natural setting to elicit an understanding of the cultural and social meanings of their activities. Direct observation was also carried out in the workers’ home and surroundings, and in the events of Parang.

**FINDINGS**

In this section, first, the findings from the research will be presented. Second, the findings will be positioned within the wider social context. This will be followed by the discussion. Finally, suggestions will be made in order to utilize the research results in society.

The number of batik *tulis* workshops and batik *tulis* workers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province cannot be precisely known. The Large and Medium Manufacturing Statistics of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province count only manufacturing establishments with more than twenty workers (BPS D.I. Yogyakarta Province 2003). In 2003, there were twenty-eight establishments engaged in textile spinning, weaving, and finishing with 4,705 female production workers; these numbers included not only batik workshops but also other textile enterprises. The amount of the average annual salary of a worker (including non-production workers and male workers) was Rp.5,327,000 in this industry, which meant about Rp.444,000/month a person.

I knew of fifteen batik workshops in Yogyakarta Province including those I interviewed, and the total number of production workers in these workshops was at least 203 persons. Some of these workshops were small in scale; however, there were also workshops which employed more than twenty workers. Nevertheless, the latter were not included in the official statistics, and it is expected that many more workshops were also absent from the statistics.

Javanese batik *tulis* is known as a traditional textile, the motifs and colors of which vary according to the region of production. Batik usually means fabric that is processed by wax-resistant dyeing techniques. Hand-drawn batik is called batik *tulis*, and the stamp technique is called batik *cap*. Textile with printed batik motifs is frequently referred to as batik; however, it does not use wax in the production process. More than two techniques are often combined. Batik is made not only for traditional wrap skirts (*sarong*, *kain panjang*, or *jarik* in Javanese). The material is also used for shirts, blouses, T-shirts, trousers, table cloths, wood carvings, and many more items.

There was gendered division of labor in batik workshops, whereby women did the *tulis* work while men performed the *cap* work. Some of the workshops at which I conducted interviews had both *cap* and *tulis* workers on site. According to the owners, *cap* requires physical strength because the stamp is heavy. Normally in a batik workshop the *tulis* workers were called *pembatik* (a person who does batik), while *cap* workers were called *tukang cap*. However, this difference was blurred in one workshop where both men and women were working on site and were both called *tukang* batik. The word “*tukang*” is normally used for male occupations that require the use of tools for manual work, such as carpentry, wood carving, stone sculpturing, and *becak* (pedicab) driving. In this sense, batik *tulis* could be one—perhaps the only—female occupation that has the possibility of being recognized as *tukang* among the realistic range of their occupational choices.

The production process of a piece of wrap skirt with Yogyakarta motifs can be used as an example of batik *tulis* work. Normally a piece of white cloth is prepared by drawing outlines of motifs with a pencil; however, experienced batik *tulis* workers sometimes do not need this preparation. Batik *tulis* workers draw the motifs on the white cloth using a tool called a *canting* (pronounced...
The main informants worked in two workshops in Yogyakarta City. One of these workshops was Indah, which had been a batik tulis production enterprise in Yogyakarta for four generations. Workers who worked at Indah originated from only three villages in Bantul Regency. The ages of the workers were between twenty-three and fifty-one. Indah’s products used typical Yogyakarta motifs and colors, and the final products were sold as sarongs and material for men’s shirts. Indah’s sales outlets were the traditional markets of Beringharjo and Mirotu Batik, which sold batik as well as various handicraft products. The payment method to the workers in Indah was by piece-rate only, and this was applied to both the workshop workers and the home-based workers. The pay rate for the work depended on the production stage (normally accompanied by specific kind of canting). The first stage of material for a shirt was paid Rp.13,000; this stage took two days.

Another workshop was LIMA, also in its fourth or more generation of the business, although it originated from Pekalongan, on the north coast of Central Java. The locations of the workers’ homes were predominantly in three regencies in central Java. The workers’ ages ranged from fifteen to thirty-three. The types of products produced were various shirts, skirts, sets of kains (pieces of cloth longer than a sarong), shawls, table cloths, and sarongs. LIMA produced batik with Pekalongan motifs in various colors. It sold the products at a showroom on the workshop site, a shop in Jakarta with a location close to the residences of wealthy foreigners, and some boutiques in Bali and Medan. LIMA had three different groups of workers who worked at the workshop. One group was paid Rp.10,000 per day on daily-wage basis to perform additional work on the stamped batik. The second group was paid piece-rate at the workshop, and produced finer work than the first group of LIMA and the products of Indah. They were paid Rp.105,000 per sarong and shawl set, which took about twelve days to complete. The pay rate for the stamped batik was Rp.80,000 per set, which took six days to finish. The third group was paid on a daily-wage basis, and made the finest work in these two workshops. The reason for paying a daily-wage of Rp.15,000 per day to this group was that the piece-rate work tended to be rough in order to produce as many as possible to increase the workers’ income. On average, a piece-rate worker’s income ranged from Rp.6,500 to Rp.13,000 a day. This did not mean that a piece-rate worker had a fixed salary: she might earn Rp.6,500 one day, but earn Rp.13,000 the next—it depended on the type of piece she was working on, and how many she produced.

The workers had older family members such as sisters or mothers or neighbors who engaged batik tulis work. At about the age of ten, they began learning the batik tulis skill from these family members. Their educational achievement was either primary school (65%) or junior high school (31%). There was one high school graduate. Around the age of fifteen or sixteen, they started to work in the workshops, either staying there or commuting from their village homes. The workshops recruited new workers through already employed workers. The new workers normally judged by themselves whether they had enough skill to perform the tasks required. If they thought that they were not competent, they simply left the workshop after they finished their first piece. The
workshop owners could not force the workers to take on tasks beyond what each worker claimed to be capable of—according to the owners, the workers would leave the workshops if the owners assigned them undesired tasks. When the workers wanted to work at home, they received the cloth, wax, and instructions from the owner, did the work at home, and then returned the finished cloth to the workshops. The home-based workers of Indah and LIMA delivered the work on their own by using public transport; however, in the case of LIMA, one home-based worker played a mediating role between three other home-based workers and the workshop. This middleperson was paid Rp.2,000 per piece by the workshop for quality control.

More than half of the workers were married, although not all of the married workers worked at home. Some were accompanied to their workshop by small children, especially if they had family members who worked at the workshop or if the children were their grandchildren. However, most of those who had household responsibilities worked at home. For these workers, batik tulis work enabled them to perform both reproductive work and productive work at the same time, because they did not need to fix their physical position in one place for a long period of time. The workers identified their occupation as batik workers, although there were three home-based workers who answered that their occupation was housewives. There was no concrete division of the workers’ working style, since home-based workers were not only married women; single women also worked at home.

All of the workers originated from rural areas, and they normally chose permanent residence only in villages. The average number of members in the workers’ households was five. The households were formed by a nuclear family (a couple with children) and with one or two of the couple’s parents. About half of the households owned productive land, including small horticultural land. About 70% of all households had one or more members who worked in agriculture; among these, 25% worked on sharecropping contracts, 15% did wage work, and about half worked on their own land. The number of households that participated in unpaid agricultural work was 72%. Of these households, 77% helped neighbors while 19% helped their relatives, normally receiving not cash but rather a portion of the harvest. A total of 67% of the respondents’ households had one or more members who engaged in agricultural wage work.

The interviews also asked the workers what kind of work conditions they assumed they would work in. The most common expectation was that the employer would provide food to the workers (100%), followed by that the employer would help a worker who had an accident while working (97%), that the employer would give zakat (the tithe paid in the end of Islamic fasting month) (94%), that the employer would provide the sacrificial offering for Idul Adha (the Islamic feast of the sacrifice) (91%), and that the employer would lend money to a worker when s/he needs it (83%). With regard to an increased salary in accordance with the duration of continuous service in one workplace, only 65% of the interviewed workers expected this. While the employers assumed that an employer also should look after the family members of a worker by, for example, helping with the school fees of a worker’s children if needed, the workers did not expect this (only 34% answered yes), nor did many of them expect medical help for their families (37% yes). These expectations showed that the workers largely viewed the relationship with the owner as a social tie. Both the zakat and the offering for Idul Adha were not only for the workers; non-workers in the owners’ communities also benefited from them. The workers seemed to restrict their benefits from the owners by placing themselves in a wider social context. Moreover, all of the workers, without exception, answered that they were to perform batik tulis work and the owner had no right to assign other tasks such as domestic tasks for the owners. This was contrary to the explanation given by Brenner, that the owner could ask the worker to take domestic work, which equalized the values of the two different jobs (Brenner 1998: 113, 115). Furthermore, Mehrrota and Biggeri (2002: 67) saw the absence of collective action as a cause to weaken the workers’ bargaining position, while the workers in actual fact chose a strategy of moving from one workshop to another in order to get better pay, better friends, and/or more fun than at their present workshops. In this respect, the workers were not passive victims of these work conditions, but were active and conscious agents.

Furthermore, the results of the participant observation at the workshops raised the question of the division between on-site workers and home-based workers. It has been already explained that the workers brought children to the workshops. There were some other workshops which did not allow the workers to do so. My informants said that it was very strange because the workshops should provide an environment for their “normal” life. I did not see any workers who resided in the workshop with her children. However, there were no clear divisions among those who stayed overnight and worked in the workshops, those who commuted from their houses, and those who worked at home. When a worker had close friends who stayed at the workshop,
she sometimes slept with them and worked at the workshop. Others stayed in the workshop because the owner of Indah had asked them to be companions for her daughter (in her 30s) while the owner was away.

The workers were also asked about their expectations of themselves. The answers were that they had to be friendly (100%), should be skilled in batik \textit{tulis} when looking for this job (97%), should clearly understand the instructions given by the employer (89%), and should follow the instructions and not use their own ideas (71%) except when they were not instructed about the details, in which case they should use their own ideas (79%). The distance of an employer from his/her employee was ambiguous: 69% expected that an employer should not give different treatment to workers, an employer should not enter into the workers’ circle (47%), and a worker is usually not close to his/her employer (54%). Although differential treatment from an employer was disliked by the workers, 54% of them thought seeking a larger salary than their colleagues was acceptable. These results could show the workers’ recognition of the importance of their occupational experiences for batik \textit{tulis} production. In a nominal explanation by both the owners and the workers, there was no difference among the workers: all the stages and skills were similarly good, all the workers performed tasks well. Normally piece-rate work was standardized according to the stage of the work and the value of the fabric such as silk and dyed fabric, although in actual fact, the more experienced workers were assigned to higher paid tasks. The workers themselves recognized the differences in their degrees of experience and accompanying knowledge, and the possibility of being paid according to what one could do.

Along with the interviews, participant observation was carried out in Indah, and this gave me a rich understanding of the batik \textit{tulis} work and its conditions. I sat with the workers in a circle with two kerosene stoves and pans with wax in them in the center. One stove and pan set was exclusively for Suti, since her work was usually the first stage of drawing the motif outlines and the temperature of the wax needed to be hotter than for the other stages. The remaining four workers shared another stove and pan set for the second stage of \textit{tulis} work. They worked in one space on the second floor of the workshop, where the owner rarely entered, and it made a sort of autonomous space. If it was ever necessary to fix the tools, for instance, the workers never asked the owners but normally managed by themselves. The workers never seemed to be in a hurry, although they could earn a larger salary for a larger volume of finished work. The atmosphere in the workshop was always relaxed, and the workers chatted, laughed and shared snacks together while working. When they wanted to have a nap, they did so in the corner of the space. It seemed to me that they were the masters of the work, but not controlled by their work. Still, their hands steadily worked while performing their tasks, and the production time was not foreseen; it finished when it was completed.

During the initial observation period, the workers expressed their view that batik \textit{tulis} work was easy, and that this work was no different from other wage labor. They gradually expressed their views while the observation period proceeded. The expression used by the workers on how they perceived their work was still the same; however, “easy” work did not mean “no experience required”. The interview results showed that they thought that batik \textit{tulis} work required more occupational experience (92%) than other job options. During the observation period, they expressed professional concern about their skills and knowledge, although to different degrees. Their discussions on motifs and appropriate methods of \textit{tulis} work were sometimes heated, while normally they maintained a friendly atmosphere during work. If there was a disagreement about the motifs and the work, the eldest, the most professionally knowledgeable, and the economically poorest Suti closed it. However, this did not mean that the workers were committed to, and/or specialized in, batik work. Their own occupational knowledge was normally understood as the result of their life experience. In other words, they saw it as an extension of everyday life and the accumulation of what they had done so far, which did not mean they made special efforts and inputs, but that they had just followed the course of their life and done what they had had to do.

An incident that occurred during my observation period tells how they perceived their occupational competency. Suti had the highest educational background—and possibly the highest economic status since she had rice paddy—among the workers. She normally undertook second stage \textit{tulis} work, so she was paid less than Suti. When one day, after Suti had been absent for several days in order to help with her neighbor’s rice harvest, Sami proudly claimed that she was also capable of Suti’s job. The worker accepted this endeavor as long as the worker herself was confident. However, during the process Sami was not sure: how many parts one box was to be divided into, which parts were later filled in inside and outside of the motif, and so on. As a result, Sami had to ask some others who worked downstairs about these, and it took many days to finish. After this, Sami
never took on the first stage task again. In short, the batik workers recognized the importance of experience in doing their work, but it was not gained by efforts and artificial inputs. The work required the knowledge of an almost unlimited number of motifs and the rules for them. As can be seen in the case of Suti and Sami, the workers sought competency based on occupational experiences in order to show their capacity, but the wealthier Sami could not win against Suti: it required experience through time, and could not be gained by money or formal education.

Another surprising finding was that the workers valued batik tulis products more than other kinds of batik. Moreover, batik tulis work was given a more positive evaluation than other occupational options, except for in the area of amount of pay. The options compared were domestic work, batik lukis, sales, agricultural wage work, farming one’s own land, construction, quarry work, being a housewife, and operating a small-scale business, which were the typical, realistic options for the informants and had actually been experienced by them. According to the interview result, batik tulis work was the most “refined” (batlis, 83%), the highest status (50%) option, and the most secure source of income (51%), requiring more occupational experience (92%) compared to the other options. With regard to larger income opportunities, they thought farming their own land (84%), working in sales (75%), doing factory work (68%) and operating a small-scale business (57%) gave a larger income than batik tulis did. Agricultural wage work had almost the same income evaluation (50%) as batik tulis work. This can be interpreted as meaning that the workers recognized that measuring their skill with money was not always accurate when different occupations were compared. Highly skilled work might be paid poorly, or might be paid better than other kinds of work.

The workers seemed to attach extra economic value to their batik work and recognized it as a positive job option. In sum, the work conditions assumed by the workers hinted that they defined their identity as part of larger society and had a basic economic transaction of waged labor with the workshop owners. Compensation for an occupational accident was a universal standard shared by the workers. However, if a written contract was given, the workers would be at a loss because they enjoyed the flexibility of the work. Collective action was also not desired because the workers did not hesitate to move to other workshops in search of a better workplace and better work conditions. They expressed the opinion that their work was not superior to other waged work, but at the same time this position coexisted with the workers’ confidence that their occupational experience gave them an advantage and their positive evaluation of batik tulis products. They perceived wage labor of any kind as being low in status since they were “commanded” by their employers. They nevertheless formed their own autonomous spaces in the workshops and acted relatively freely within it. They explained that the workplace should be an extension of their “normal” everyday life, for example, where workers could look after children, chat, sleep with friends, and get together—some workers identified their causes of “stress” as quietness and working alone. Moreover, they could have freedom in the tasks of batik tulis—to fill in the motifs—although within the restriction of the rules posed by traditional motifs.

However, part of this conclusion conflicts with the views presented by the explanation of batik workers’ identity given by the Batik Lovers’ Association Parang. For example, some members implemented a talk show on the value of batik tulis in order to promote its use. The show presented a definition of batik workers as villagers whose primary occupation was farming their own land, and for them batik tulis was an artistic activity done as a hobby. They did not identify the workers as laborers who produced commodities, probably because such an image did not fit into the image of batik tulis as a cultural inheritance from the past that was subject to preservation and protection.

An interesting comparison can be made between the representations of the batik tulis image and the batik tulis workers’ identities. The workers enjoyed using their occupational knowledge and executing their own choices in filling in the motifs, although within the limits posed by the motifs. They knew other job options would give them a larger income than batik tulis; however, they seemed to compromise because it was the safest job option in terms of guaranteeing a continuous income, and it allowed the workers the flexibility to combine the work with their everyday “normal” life. For them, batik tulis products had value both in terms of economic value (prices) and of the experience and knowledge required for its production. In contrast, Parang and the owners presented the view that their skills were interchangeable with domestic work and agricultural work, and that the work was economically of secondary importance to the workers.

The latter did not enhance the value of the workers’ occupational experience. At the same time, it was a resource for the workers’ professional competence both in economic and extra-economic terms. In this respect, it was understandable that the workers answered yes to
the image of batik *tulis* as traditional as well as modern and progressive in order to escape from the traditional image, which was not of benefit to them. The workers identified themselves as wage laborers who performed a job that required occupational experience.

These differences further suggest the shortcomings of existing concerns. The extra-economic meanings of the work are not treated within the framework of the universal labor standards. For example, the local NGO Yasanti advocates female workers’ rights, promoting the realization of minimum wages and educating the workers for collective bargaining. At the same time, they admit that this approach does not work because of the abundance of labor in Java, although they are not willing to change their position of advocating the universal labor standards or adding another approach. Fortunately, I met one Indonesian activist who aimed to empower female workers in low social status jobs, and we agreed that not only the workers but also the perceptions of society should be addressed in order to change the taken-for-granted low social status attached to certain occupations.

**IMPLICATIONS**

Finally, this paper would like to present suggestions on how the above-mentioned shortcomings can be treated. An increase in the sale of batik *tulis* will be beneficial to both batik workshop owners and workers in an economic sense. This can be promoted by enhancing the value of batik *tulis*. For this, Parang is an important actor since its aims include this, and the workers themselves highly value batik *tulis*.

With regard to the workers’ concerns about the value of their occupational experience, it seems that a change in and/or another representation of the workers’ identity would benefit the workers. First, the recognition that batik *tulis* work is not of secondary importance to the workers will bring a positive change in the economic and non-economic status of the workers. This would also be true for other workers who produce handicrafts. Second, the promotion of the workers’ own discourse on the value of batik *tulis* and the value of their occupational experience would establish an alternative standard with which to evaluate batik *tulis*. It seems that the status of their occupational experience is ambiguous: it is not said to be “skilled”; however, no inexperienced person can perform it. This ambiguity allows the workers’ to balance—sometimes to create—their own lifestyles: they are not dominated by the work, but they have established and lead lives in which work occupies a part. All these factors would provide an interesting discourse on the value of batik as seen through the workers’ participation in the value of creation and sharing, rather than the image of the past that is currently used by others. The alternative discourse may open up new needs for batik, and the appreciation of the workers’ lifestyles by society would improve the workers’ social status as well. The *Mingei* (handicraft) Movement in Japan is an example of this. So far, such an approach is not employed in order to negotiate workers’ status; however, it challenges societal views and has the potential to create a new community that understands that work done by hand is richer than economic activity.

**NOTES**

1. This required further exploration with a focus on the workers, since the main focus of Brenner’s study was the employers.
2. The identification of the different kinds of batik (*tulis, cap, printing, and combination skills*) is difficult for those who are not familiar with batik, and sometimes even knowledgeable people find it difficult.
3. For example, the work of traditional motifs using a *cantiing* with a large tube to draw the first outline (*klowong*) of the motifs normally took at least one day. Adding small dots (*cecek*) took about three hours or more in the workshops observed.
4. If the workshop uses chemical dye, it takes only a day, but the use of natural dye takes longer.
5. The names of the workshops and respondents are replaced with fictitious names in order to protect their privacy.
6. The workers had homes in Wonokerto and Siwalan (Pekalongan), Pandak (Bantul), and Bayat (Klaten), with an additional few living in Lendah (Kulon Progo) and Ngawen (Gunung Kidul).
7. The figures and percentages in this section should not be taken as statistically significant since the number of informants was very small.
8. For example, they could work in the kitchen while cooking, in the living room after their children returned from school or while guarding threshed rice that was spread to dry in the front yard from being eaten by chickens.
9. For this evaluation, the informants were asked to evaluate each job option on a scale. For example, a larger number of informants evaluated batik *tulis* work as a very refined/refined job than evaluated quarry work as a very refined/refined job. All the options were compared in this way, and batik
tulis work had the most positive answers in all categories except for the opportunity to earn a larger salary in comparison with other job options.

10 This line of representation was similar to that of the owners’ views explained in the existing literature, as we have already seen in the introduction.

11 The image of the past was further constructed by the invocation of the image that noble women produced batik tulis for their families in the past. In actual fact, this simplified explanation ignored the fact that the Kraton (royal court) produced batik tulis for sale as well, at least in the sixteenth century (Joseph 1985: 100). The well-known Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Commercial Union), which later became Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union) in 1912, was formed largely by Muslim merchants who profited from batik production (Brenner 1998: 43). Thus batik has been produced commercially for long time.

REFERENCES


THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ROLE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Sarawut Pratoomraj

INTRODUCTION

The National Human Rights Institution is a new mechanism for the protection and promotion of human rights. Following the UN guidelines for National Human Rights Institutions, the Paris Principles, the National Human Rights Institution should be an independent institution and have a mandate and authority to carry out investigations, receive complaints about human rights violations, and make recommendations to the government or other government parties, as well as disseminate human rights values and promote and ensure harmony between national legislation and international human rights instruments.

In Thailand, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was established in 1999 according to the National Human Rights Commission Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas-HAM) was established in June 1993 by Presidential Decree Number 50/1993 under the rule of President Soeharto.

OBJECTIVES

The study had the following two objectives:
1. To learn about the functions, roles and impacts of the Komnas HAM in the area of human rights education between 1994 and 2003; and
2. To recommend an effective role for Komnas HAM in human rights education in terms of approaches and methods.

METHODS

The study used two main methods, a review of secondary data including Komnas HAM’s legal framework, guidelines, annual reports, case reports, and human rights dissemination materials along with interviews with thirty-two people from six interest groups, and visits to and observations of the work of the Komnas HAM.

FUNCTION AND ROLE OF KOMNAS HAM

Komnas HAM was established on 7 June 1993, with the Commissioners appointed by announcement of Presidential Decree on 7 December 1993. There are a maximum of twenty-five Commissioners. Komnas HAM first met to work and function in its office on 10 December 1994.

The structure of Komnas HAM in the period from 1994 to 1998 consisted of a full Commission, which had twenty-five individual members with one Chairperson, two Vice Chairs, a General Secretary and Sub-commissioners. There were also three Sub-commissions charged with overseeing the following areas: 1) education and guidance for public/education and dissemination; 2) study of human rights legislation/instruments; and 3) monitoring of the implementation/execution of human rights and investigations.

In 1999, Act No.39/1999 Concerning Human Rights was promulgated, which governs human rights and includes provisions governing the Komnas HAM. This act regulates the roles and aims of Komnas HAM in promoting conditions that lead to the execution of human rights in accordance with Pancacila (the State Philosophy), the 1945 Constitution, the United Nations Charter, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Act also emphasized that the Komnas HAM was intended to improve the protection and enforcement of human rights for the development of the individual people of Indonesia and their ability to participate in various aspects of society.

Under Act No.39/1999, the function and structure of Komnas HAM are established with two working mechanisms: a Plenary Session and sub-commissions. The Plenary Session is the highest authority of Komnas HAM, and is composed of all of the members of Komnas HAM (a total of thirty-five members). Act No.39/1999 also established that the members of Komnas HAM are to be selected by the House of Representatives and confirmed by the President as head of state. The term of membership is limited to five years and Commissioners can be re-appointed for only one more term. The leadership of Komnas HAM consists of one chair and two vice-chairs. The chair and vice-chair are appointed by and from the members.
Also in Act No.39/1999, Komnas HAM is given a role in mediation and the ability to establish representatives in the regions. Since 2001, Komnas HAM has functioned through four sub-commissions, as follows:

1. Sub-Commission for the Study of Human Rights Instruments
   This sub-commission carries out the function and has the main authority to study and research various international human rights instruments with the aim of providing recommendations on the possibility of accession and/or ratification and to study and research various legislations to provide recommendations concerning the formulation, amendment and repeal of legislations in relation to human rights.2

2. Sub-Commission on Education and Information
   This sub-commission has the task and authority to disseminate concepts concerned with human rights and make efforts to raise public awareness on human rights through formal and informal educational institutions and other channels to the people of Indonesia.

3. Sub-Commission for Monitoring the Execution of Human Rights
   This sub-commission has the task and authority to investigate and inspect incidents that are suspected of being human rights violations and compile a report based on its results to the President, the House of Representatives and government agencies.

4. Sub-Commission for Mediation
   This sub-commission has the mandate and duty to promote peaceful settlement, resolve cases by means of consultation, negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, and expert evaluation and develop networks to build up the capacity of groups to implement mediation methods that will lead directly to a community-based resolution and reconciliation of the conflict.3

In 2000, Act No.26/2000 Concerning a Human Rights Courts was passed, which gave more power to Komnas HAM in the investigation of gross human rights violations.4

Komnas HAM reviewed its functions and restructured its organization again in June 2004 by grouping the roles of the sub-commissions into categories of human rights violations, as follows:
1. Sub-commission on Civil and Political Rights
2. Sub-commission on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
3. Sub-commission on Special Groups Protection

Under the new structure, every Sub-commission carries out all four functions of Komnas HAM, which are research and study, education, monitoring and mediation.5

OUTCOMES
The term “human rights education” in this study follows the definition used during the UN Decade for Human Rights Education 1995 - 2004: “Human rights education may be defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes.”

The study focused on the role of Komnas HAM in human rights education (HRE) during the period from 1994 to 2003, dividing its work into three phases: the first stage from 1994 to 1996, the second stage from 1997 to 2001, and the third stage from 2002 to 2003.

The study found that during the period from 1994 to 2003, Komnas HAM carried out various kinds of HRE activities, both directly and indirectly.

Indirect methods
Indirect activities refers to activities that cannot make public understand the concept of human rights. These activities are done routinely and continuously in the work of Komnas HAM. This report groups three kinds of activities that occurred during the ten-year study period (1994-2003) that are indirect methods of human rights education.

a. Informal education

The Commissioner gave lectures, speeches, seminars and discussions with various parties in both the government and non-government sectors. Coordination with other parties on human rights issues and the study of human rights legislation/instruments also served as informal education for the public. For example, in 1997, Komnas HAM studied three pieces of human rights legislation, the Labour Bill, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and Land cases. In 1998, it examined two covenants, the Covenant on ESCR and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

b. Lobbying the government

From 1994 to 1998, Komnas HAM introduced its Commissioners and the functions of the Commission to various government agencies by visiting the President and government agencies. From 1999 to 2003, it
coordinated with and lobbied government agencies involved with UN instruments and met with the President and the House of Representatives to talk about how to combine the roles of various institutions to address human rights violations.

The visits paid by Komnas HAM served not only to introduce them to the government and some important agencies but also allowed them to try to share the idea of human rights and how to cooperate in human rights work in the future. This is a good strategy for working for human rights in Indonesia.

c. Official statements/reports on cases of human rights violations

Press statements and case reports give concrete guidelines to explain what human rights standard was violated in a particular case. At the end of each report or statement, Komnas HAM gave a recommendation to advise the government, state parties or other parties on how to handle the victims and refer the perpetrators to the criminal justice system. For example, there was a case of an authorized military operation at Liquisa, East Timor on 12 January 1995 in which six non-combatant civilians were killed by the military because they were suspected of supporting a group that aimed to create disorder. Komnas HAM said in its press release that:

...this incident occurred as a consequence of wrongful acts carried out by certain elements of a regional security patrol, in contravention to their assigned orders... deeply regrets the incident which in essence is a violation of human rights. At the same time it wishes to extend its appreciation to the Armed Forces leadership for its policy of forthwith establishing an Officers Council of Honor to comprehensively deal with the problem in accordance with the law.6

There were six people dead in the district of Liquisa, and human rights violations in East Timor. After Komnas HAM sent a monitoring team to determine the truth of the case, their press statement said:

If the reports are accurate, the National Human Rights Commission deeply deplores the abuses, because human rights abuses essentially do not only harm the victims but also damage the interests of the nation and the state.

(statement issued on 8 February 1995)

Another case addressed by Komnas HAM was the riot of 27 July 1996 to seize the building of the Secretariat of the Central Board of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) in central Jakarta. Komnas HAM formed a fact-finding team and released a statement and case report that said that “…the upholding and protection of human rights is the responsibility of all parties. For this reason, Komnas HAM advises all parties to use restraint and put a stop to the use of violent methods in settling every problem, and to create social harmony.”

Komnas HAM issued a number of statements and press releases on human rights violations in 1997. The form of the statements or press releases was to stress what had happened in that situation, the outcome of the rights violation, what kind of human rights were violated under domestic and international law and then urging or giving recommendations to the involved parties, both the government and the other party to the conflict.

From 1998 to 1999, there was an economic and human rights crisis that shifted the power in Indonesia. The people could not endure the Soeharto regime any longer. Indonesia changed its President after Soeharto resigned in May 1998, and the new government governed the country under its “Political Reformation Regime” policy instead of the previous “New Order” policy. At the same time, the cases of the conflict in Aceh and autonomy for East Timor, which became an independent country, were challenging for the new government to handle. Komnas HAM released statements to comment on these issues, such as the Statement Concerning Government Policy Impacting on Human Rights Violations, the Statement Concerning the Conditions of Human Rights in Indonesia and National Responsibility, the Statement concerning the Follow Up to Reformation, the Statement on the Bloody Events at the Trisakti University Campus, the Statement Regarding Enforced
Disappearances of Persons, and others.

The press statements or case reports gave concrete guidelines to explain what human rights standard was violated in that case and at the end of the report or statement Komnas HAM made recommendations to advise the government, state parties or other parties how to handle the victims and in some cases, a gross human rights violation was submitted to the Human Rights Courts, but this activity made little impact in terms of rights violation was submitted to the Human Rights to handle the victims and in some cases, a gross human rights violation was submitted to the Human Rights Courts, but this activity made little impact in terms of human rights education for society at large in the view of some non-government organization activists. This was because there was no action to follow up on what was done after the press release or statement. The public are alert on that cases and follow to what is to do next to solve the problem.

**Direct Methods**

There were two activities undertaken by Komnas HAM that acted as direct methods of HRE, namely holding TOTs or Trainings of Trainers for Human Rights Educators and publications and campaigns.

It seems that Komnas HAM had a clear mandate and activities on HRE during the period from 1997 to 2001. Starting in 1997, Komnas HAM conducted various activities related to HRE, such as workshops, colloquiums, coordination with related groups and agencies, studies, and other such activities at both the national and international levels. In 1998, Soeharto fell from power, and Komnas HAM began to work more on organizing a number of training programs, especially Trainings of Trainer (TOT), as well as disseminating information by starting to publish a newsletter and many other publications. In 1999, Komnas HAM was given a new role under Act No.39/1999, which increased its powers and duties and made it more independent from the government. In 2000, the Act on the Human Rights Court was passed, which gave more power to Komnas HAM in investigating gross human rights violations. During this period, Komnas HAM received a large number of complaint letters and many victims came to its office, so it was holding press conferences and issuing press releases almost every day; this was the best time for educating the public on human rights issues. In 2001, Komnas HAM started a radio program and began dissemination work following its strategic plan for the 2000 to 2005 period that was significant for Indonesia society as a whole.

a. Workshop on Human Rights Education

In 1997, Komnas HAM coordinated with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Human Rights Foundation and the Quebec Human Rights Commission to organize a Workshop on Human Rights Education and National Institutions with the aim of making a strategic plan for concrete actions by Komnas HAM in the area of HRE and learning about HRE from other human rights institutions. Komnas HAM used this workshop as a starting point for future human rights education efforts. The outcomes of the workshop were two new programs: (1) the Human Rights Education System Development Program; and (2) the Program to Raise Public Awareness of Human Rights through the Mass Media. Both programs were executed by the Sub-commission for Education and Information.

According to the first work plan developed, Komans HAM had four strategic plans. The first plan was to build a cooperation network with various educational institutions and NGOs for implementing an HRE system. The second was to integrate a gender perspective and analysis in HRE activities organized by Komnas HAM. The third was to develop a pilot project for HRE among four strategic groups: the police and military, religious leaders, government official and educators. The fourth strategic plan was to organize a human rights awareness raising campaign through the mass media (television, radio, the press).

The Pilot Project on the Training of Trainers (TOT) was structured by dividing the four strategic groups up among three phases. Strategic Group I was comprised of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI), the police, NGOs, the mass media, and educators. Strategic Group II included representatives of the six main religious groups: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Strategic Group III was made up of law enforcement personnel such as judges, public prosecutors, lawyers and others.

Komnas HAM selected these four strategic groups because of the political and human rights situation in Indonesia at that time where there was a need to approach the military, which was the most common human rights violator, to have it learn more about respect for human rights standards and approaches. At the same time, Komnas HAM wanted to give the military the opportunity to exchange knowledge on human rights with other strategic parties, such as NGOs and academics. The other reason was that a strategic group was defined as a group of people who have broad access to the community such as religious leaders, the media and educators, who are informal leaders who are more frequently listened to and guide their individual
groups. In addition, it cannot be ignored that they are usually the ones in closest proximity to victims of human rights violations.10

After defining the four strategic groups, Komnas HAM held a workshop on Pre-Training of Trainers (Pre-TOT) for Human Rights Educators. This activity used a more participatory approach with the strategic groups by setting up the National Education Team, consisting of twenty-five people from three groups: NGOs including women’s organization, universities and government education agencies, and other education groups including from Komnas HAM, that were experienced or had been involved in curriculum development as well as training, to determine the participants, training materials and to develop curriculum.

The next step was to hold four workshops for the four strategic groups. Each workshop had thirty participants and was facilitated by the National Education Team. After holding a workshop for each of the groups, there was a second TOT for the same groups to follow up and share experiences in using the curriculum. The final activity of this program was to print a curriculum manual for each of the strategic groups.

Komnas HAM conducted the TOT for Human Rights Educator Program from 1997 to 2001. In 1998, Komnas HAM organized TOTs for the Armed Forces/Police, NGOs, academics and the media. In 1999, it organized two TOT workshops for spiritual leaders of Islam, Christianity (Protestants and Catholics), Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism and a workshop on Integrating a Gender Perspective into Human Rights Training. This workshop was designed for the strategic groups who had passed the workshop on human rights to have them integrate a gender analysis and perspective. The participants consisted of military, police, NGOs, the media and educators, as well as staff of Komnas HAM. In 2000, Komnas HAM organized a TOT for the Legal Professions aimed at producing facilitators for human rights trainings from amongst the various professions with the hope that they would disseminate their new knowledge in their respective communities.

After that, four groups of participants were asked to carry out training exercises within their respective professional communities. In 2001, a series of training exercises were held for four legal professions: legal professionals from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, lawyer-trainers, judges from the Jakarta High Court and the Jakarta Military Court, and public prosecutors. The Training was organized in two phases. The first phase was trainings among each law profession group. The second phase was for thirty participants selected from each group who shared their experiences in holding human rights training exercises in their groups and also the evaluation of the various training activities implemented by the different groups.11 After this program was implemented, the outcome was the Standard Human Rights Training Curriculum for Law Enforcement Personnel and the human rights educators setting up a Human Rights Educator Network for the exchange of information about human rights education activities among the educators.

Since 2002 there has been no more work planned in the area of holding TOTs for Human Rights Educators.

According to the second work plan, the Program to Raise Public Awareness of Human Rights Problems, Komnas HAM planned to set up a campaign team with representatives from the media, NGOs and women’s organizations to conduct various campaign activities through radio, television, talk shows, and printed materials and also to occasionally publish and distribute pamphlets and posters. This work plan was to finish in 1998. There were a few activities that were implemented, such as setting up its home page on the internet <http://www.komnas.go.id> in 1997, and a public campaign on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998, with a number of printed brochures, posters, hats, T-shirts, and stickers. These activities did not have much of an educational impact or raise public awareness on human rights problems. In 2000, Komnas HAM prepared to hold a campaign for improving public awareness of human rights issues and respect for basic human rights standard by holding a workshop to organize the campaign. The topic of this campaign was Anti-violence and there were two target groups: youth and agricultural communities.

In 2001, Komnas HAM drew up a human rights campaign against violence aimed at improving the general awareness of human rights for the first target group, youth, in Jakarta, Medan (North Sumatra) and Jayapura (West Papua). There were two methods used in the campaign, audio-visual media and a print campaign to stop human rights violations, as well as a radio campaign. It is interesting that this was the first time that campaigning had ever been done through a radio station. The radio campaign was coordinated with the News Radio Office Network-KBR 68 H, which is one of the largest networks in the country, covering 200 cities from Aceh to Papua (western coast to eastern coast) and from Taluad to Rote (north to south). Coordination with the radio station was done with the mandate of raising public awareness on human rights issues. Unfortunately, this program was stopped in 2002.
and the second target group, agricultural communities, is no longer the target of any campaign activities.

This work plan should be a priority mandate of Komnas HAM over a continuous time period of campaigning for public awareness of human rights.

b. Publication and dissemination

The publication work done from 1998 to 2001 was the routine work of the Sub-commission for Education and Information. During this period, Komnas HAM began to disseminate regular publications in three forms: newsletters, books and leaflets or brochures and posters. For example, in 1998 Komnas HAM printed and disseminated leaflets and brochures on children’s rights, women’s rights and eradicating torture.

In 1999, Komnas HAM published its first newsletter to raise public awareness on human rights issues. This newsletter was named SUAR, meaning “Lighthouse”. This newsletter came in two forms, regular newsletters that were issued monthly and pocket book newsletters that were issued for specific incidents. The target groups of SUAR were the middle classes, NGOs, institutions and government officers. The contents of SUAR consisted of letters from subscribers, hot issues on human rights violations, an interview with a person involved in human rights work, articles by columnists, book reviews, special reports, events, profiles and case data from Komnas HAM’s work. Printing began with 500 copies per issue in 1999 and increased to 2,000 copies per issue by 2006.

The second regular publication was Wacana HAM, meaning “Talking about the Idea of Human Rights”. This is a bi-monthly newsletter first published in 2001. Komnas HAM made Wacana a lighter reading than SUAR, so the target group of subscribers of Wacana are ordinary people who want to read about and easily understand various situations. Komnas HAM disseminates Wacana in public places such as train stations and hospitals. The content in Wacana is brief news stories or issues related to the human rights situation.

The third publication is Fakta HAM, or “Human Rights Facts”, which was first disseminated in August 2000. The content of Fakta HAM is similar to that of Wacana HAM. After an evaluation in September 2001 where a questionnaire was sent to readers and a mailing list, the editorial team decided to change the name of Fakta HAM to Wacana HAM and continue publication under the Sub-commission for Education and Information.

Komnas HAM has disseminated booklets since 1999. “Human Rights and State Responsibility” was a book publishing the summary of a workshop on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998. Komnas HAM published one thousand copies for distribution to NGOs, government offices, universities, the military, police and religious groups. From 2000 to 2001, Komnas HAM continuously printed a number of books for dissemination to the public, including translations from English and summaries of seminars, such as Popular Education for Human Rights, which was a translation from English used as a manual for participatory workshops on human rights for facilitators or teachers, and Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice, Justice in a Time of Transition.

Journal HAM—Human Rights Journal was first disseminated in 2003. This is bi-annual journal that focuses on human rights issues and aims to provide facts about human rights issues and give some analysis with reference to society. The first issue in 2003 was about Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) and, in 2004, an issue focused on Crimes against Humanity.

CONCLUSION

The study found that from 1994 to 2003, Komnas HAM engaged in various kinds of HRE activities, both direct and indirect, even though Komnas HAM does not have a direct mandate for HRE. An analysis of the effectiveness of these activities follows.

Official statements/reports on cases of human rights violation

As the report mentioned earlier, the press statements or case reports gave concrete guidelines to explain what human rights standard was violated in each case. At the end of the report or statement, Komnas HAM gave recommendations to advise the government, state parties or other parties on how to handle the victims and respond or identify the perpetrators to the criminal justice system.

The problem with this approach is that Komnas HAM’s work is done after giving the recommendations and these recommendations are usually neglected by the parties involved. We understand that making recommendations in human rights violation cases to the involved parties is one of the roles of Komnas HAM in the protection and promotion of human rights to lead to a peaceful society for the Indonesian people. However, these recommendations have little impact in
terms of educating the public.

A stronger approach might be that after issuing a press statement or case report to the public, Komnas HAM should study the case further and analyze the role of the offending party to solve the case problem. This analysis should detail an effective role for Komnas HAM, examine how existing laws or regulations can be used for such cases, and outline the process and steps for the implementation of a solution or identify the conditions that prevent implementation. Next, Komnas HAM should organize a training program or seminar for state parties to share their experiences in handling cases of human rights violations. The output of each such seminar or workshop would be a manual on how to address cases of human rights violations. Finally, Komnas HAM should strengthen the victims or its other partners, such as NGOs, by supporting their work on the case. These may be ways to provide education and strengthen its human rights approach with the public.

Training courses

The TOT for Human Rights Educators Program was the most effective human rights education activity carried out by Komnas HAM because it had a clear mandate to focus on four strategic groups. This program should be made the Komnas HAM’s priority mandate in HRE, especially for the strategic group of the military and police because most human rights violations are perpetrated by these two groups. Komnas HAM should continue this program and try to work together with the heads of the military and the police bureau by presenting human rights concepts to cadets or in military and police academies. Komnas HAM Commissioners themselves should learn from the former Commission by continuing this activity regularly and also evaluating the program with the participation of its target groups. Furthermore, the Human Rights Educators Network that was organized by Komnas HAM in 2001 should be given the task of increasing the number of HR Educators in various occupational groups. Komnas HAM should create a new TOT for HR Educators for different target group and ask the former HR Educators to facilitate the program.

The effectiveness of Komnas HAM’s role in holding the TOTs for HR Educators can be seen in the continuance of the training program by the Curriculum Centre of BALITBANG, Department of National Education. The Curriculum Centre was one of the strategic groups for the initial round of TOTs, and it now uses the Komnas HAM manual for facilitators in its training program for school teachers and administrators.

I interviewed a staff member at the Curriculum Centre who had attended a TOT, who said that the Centre is still using the curriculum from Komnas HAM in training teachers about basic human rights in the Centre’s work. At the end of the training, the teachers are assigned to write lesson plans that integrates human rights values and concepts in each lesson for each level of student classes.

Publications and campaigning

The newsletter and book publications aim to provide knowledge and give updates on human rights standards and situations to the public. However, only a limited number of targets received the publications. The list of newsletter and book subscribers should be wider than academics, institutions, and NGOs that are already close to Komnas HAM or its Commissioners. Other groups, such as village leaders, government parties, students, the police and military, and local administration people, should be included in the list of subscribers.

Furthermore, Komnas HAM should identify who are its target groups in the so-called “public”, such as the strategic groups for the TOT for HR Educators, subscribers and recipients of its publications and campaign work, government parties through the Visiting Government Parties Program, and coordination work with NGOs and academics through seminars or workshops. Komnas HAM should prioritize its target groups within the general public and work continuously to follow up with these groups and seek to work with new target groups including those it has planned to target in the past, such as agricultural communities, fisher folk, victims of human rights violations, etc.

This program is one where Komnas HAM has an effective role in HRE work that should be implemented on a continual basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Disseminate a rights—based approach aimed at changing public attitudes to build a culture of human rights

This can be done through the TOT program or any other kind of activity to which a human rights based approach can be added to make clear the value of human rights and to change the attitudes of the target groups or participants.

In the long term, Komnas HAM should coordinate with radio stations to organize a regular human rights
program. This program should be the highest priority HRE activity because Komnas HAM already has experience in using a radio station in its anti-violence campaign and because radio broadcasts can disseminate messages and information quickly, are easier to access and are more effective than other forms of information dissemination.

Administration and Organization

a. Set up a Human Rights Education Bureau in the Komnas HAM office

Komnas HAM had a mandate on HRE for more than ten years, which was actively carried out by the Sub-commission for Education and Information. However, in the new structure established in 2004, each Sub-commission plays a role in HRE and there is no longer an HRE desk or unit. Such a desk or unit should be set up in the near future. This unit should have the responsibility to organize and implement Komnas HAM’s work in the area of HRE.

Duties and functions of proposed HRE Unit/Bureau

• Develop personnel capacity building material on HRE and support coordination, networking, and creating or producing material for HRE trainings run by Komnas HAM staff under the mandate of Komnas HAM.
• Monitor the National Plan of Action for HRE by following the guidelines of the UN Decade for HRE.
• Prioritize strategic groups: prioritize new strategic groups for HRE activities for HRE, follow up with the HR Educator Network, and work with more strategic groups, e.g. mass media (radio stations, television), the business sector, labor unions, agricultural communities, etc.
• Have Focus Points for HRE aimed at building a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes.

b. Continue holding TOTs for HR Educators
c. Continue the radio broadcasting program. Komnas HAM can learn the impact of reproducing an idea again and again from product advertising on television or radio that changes consumer behavior. Human rights concepts are also a product that can be repeated again and again in the media to promote the value of a universal culture of people living in harmony within a diverse society. The radio broadcasts should be the highest priority mandate in the HRE program. Examples of radio broadcasts could be daily Human Rights Talks, which can easily be organized, because radio broadcasting is cheap and easy to access by every sector in society.
d. Eliminate the general conditions of human rights violations in Indonesia in three dimensions: (1) strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; (2) have full development of the human personality and its sense of dignity; and (3) promote understanding, equality and unity among all nations, indigenous people, and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups.

The general condition of human rights in Indonesia has its root in the history of the nation, which is full of conflicts between races, religions, ethnic groups, languages and cultures. The Father of the State, Dr. Sukarno, tried to make unity out of the nation’s diversity by establishing the State Philosophy called Pancasila, which is a good strategy for Komnas HAM to adopt as well.

Komnas HAM’s long term work in the protection and promotion of human rights must address the general condition of human rights in Indonesia by implementing a rights-based approach in three dimensions: fundamental freedoms, human dignity, and the equality of human beings without discrimination. These concepts can be addressed by HRE programs at every level with the strategic groups.

Integration of the mandate and function of the Sub-Commission on HRE

Komnas Ham has reviewed its organization three times since was established in 1993. The latest review was in June 2004, when it divided the Sub-commission on HRE into three Sub-commissions, each of which was to play a role in HRE. This report is by no means a review of the structure or function of the institution; however, the point can be made that each function of the institution should integrate its role in unity to fulfill its mandate. In that case, there should be one sub-commission or unit to handle HRE effectively and the other units should play an indirect, supplemental in HRE to unify this role of Komnas HAM.

NOTES

3 Komnas HAM leaflet.
6 The Human Rights Court was established in Indonesia based on Law No.26/2000 on the Human Rights Court, which was adapted from the Rome Statute on International Criminal Court 1984. In this statute the court will try serious human rights violations, which are stated as gross human rights violations, in the form of Crimes against Humanity and Crimes of Genocide. A Crime of Genocide under the responsibility of a human rights court includes any one of a number of acts aimed at the destruction of all or part of such acts: a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a group; c) creating conditions of life that would lead to the physical extermination of the group in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within a group; or e) forcibly transferring children of a particular group to another group.

Crimes against humanity include any action perpetrated as a part of a broad or systematic direct attack on civilians, in the form of: a) killing; b) extermination; c) enslavement; d) enforced eviction or movement of civilians; e) arbitrary appropriation of the independence or other physical freedoms in contravention of international law; f) torture; g) rape, sexual enslavement, enforced prostitution, enforced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or other similar forms of sexual assault; h) terrorization of a particular group or association based on political views, race, nationality, ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or any other basis, regarded universally as contravening international law; i) enforced disappearance of a person; or j) the crime of apartheid.

The Human Rights Court is a special court. The judges come from two sectors, either ordinary judges who are selected by the Supreme Court or ad-hoc judges selected from among experts in human rights and human rights law. Human Rights Courts have been established in Central Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan and Magassar.

The procedures for trying serious human rights violation are based on the regulations for criminal procedures. The first stage of the case before coming to the Human Rights Court is the Komans HAM or the National Commission on Human Rights inquiry or hearing of the case, which considers the seriousness of the human rights violation and submits a solution to the Attorney General. Next, the Attorney General remands the perpetrator(s) to the Court. The state guarantees that every victim and witness in such cases is entitled to physical and mental protection from threats, disturbances, terror and violence from any parties. The state also guarantees that every victim can obtain compensation, restitution, and rehabilitation as stated in the Human Rights Court’s decision.

Prior to the Court’s establishment in 2000, Human Rights Tribunals were formed to process crimes against humanity in East Timor in 1999, Tanjung Priok in 1984 and the case of Abepura, West Papua in 2000.

8 Interview with Papang, campaign officer of KontraS, 9 October 2005.
12 Interview with Atikah Nuraini, Head of Documentation and Information Center-Komnas HAM, 1 June 2006.
13 Interview Noor Indrastuti, Curriculum Developer, 12 March 2006.
14 Interview with Prof. Judhariksawan, Faculty of Law, University of Hasannudin, Magassar, 18 October 2005.
15 Pancasila: The Birth of Pancasila.

On 1 March 1945 Sukarno, father of the Indonesian nation and first President, was selected as a committee member of the Investigating Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence by the auspices of the Japanese occupation authorities. The Committee consisted of secular nationalist leaders trying to establish a philosophy of the state that could represent all cultural, religious and ethnic groups in Indonesia as a united country when independent. Sukarno suggested using an ideology that arose during the struggle with the Dutch colonists in 1928 of “one people, one language, and one nation”.

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To ensure that such a diverse nation comprising hundreds of ethnic groups and most major religions would be viable, Sukarno exhorted his fellow nationalists to accept five basic tenets as the common ideals upon which the state could be built. *Pancasila*, a Sanskrit word meaning “five principles”, was birthed at that time. The five principles consist of:

1. “Belief in the one and only God” meaning that the state will be based on religious belief and that every Indonesian citizen, no matter which religious denomination or faith they follow, should respect each other’s belief for the sake of the harmony and peace of humankind. This Principle contains the precept of religious tolerance and the freedom of all to adhere to the religion or faith of his or her choice.

2. “Just and civilized humanity” is closely identified with balancing fundamental individual human rights and freedoms with the individual’s obligation toward society and state. This Principle highlights the idea that relationships within society and state should be based on a just and civilized morality.

3. “Nationalism or Indonesian Unity”, which in Sukarno’s formulation as the first principle stressed the imperative of maintaining the unity and integrity of Indonesia as a single state.

4. “Democracy through consultation and consensus”, which means the democracy of Indonesian should be made by Indonesia traditional concepts. In Indonesia there is a traditional concept of village governance based on the idea is that decisions are reached only after all members of a community have had an opportunity to present their opinions (consultation) and then all participants agree by consensus. At the national level the consultative decision-making process is done by elected representative in the lower house of Parliament.

5. “Social justice” contains the basic principle that the growth of economic development is the state of being successful and results in social justice. Sukarno stressed that the existence of political democracy did not guarantee economic democracy, so it is the obligation of the government to make conditions that improve the living standards of the people. All Indonesians can receive common endeavors to attain a just and prosperous society, materially as well as spiritually, and any form of exploitation of human beings is prohibited.
DECENTRALIZATION AND DEVOLUTION OF FOREST MANAGEMENT: FOSTERING RELATIONS BETWEEN STATE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES

Yuli Nugroho

I. Introduction

It has been observed that there is an existing trend and tendency towards decentralization and devolution in forest management. This can be seen in the transfer of some authority and power from the national level to the local or village level. This trend has been driven by several factors such as the demands by locals for benefits reaped from the forests, equity between the central and the local politics, as well as democratization.

The processes of decentralization and devolution have far-reaching implications for forest management and for the livelihood of the communities living in and around forested areas. One positive side of the decentralization is that forests are now being utilized with greater concern for sustainability and equity in mind, with greater participation by communities in the process of policy- and decision-making, and a more equitable distribution of the benefits between communities and government.

The decentralization of forest management, however, also carries significant risk. This is because the decentralization processes have certain prerequisites. For example, there is the potential of the local level to adopt authority and power in forest management but there is currently a lack of technical skills among them. There is also a need for assistance, whether in the form of a budget, staff, or information, from central government in the initial phase.

This paper attempts to analyze the implementation of forest management via stakeholders’ perception, interpretation and understanding of their power, authority and responsibilities over decentralized and devolved forests.

A. Objectives and scope

The research investigates how stakeholders perceive the decentralization and devolution of forest management by considering their interpretations. Specifically, the research has the following three objectives:

1. To describe the policy of decentralization and devolution of forest management in the Philippines and Thailand;
2. To describe the processes and implications of the decentralization and devolution of forest management in these two countries; and
3. To analyze the power relationship between governments (central and local) and communities in the processes of the decentralization and devolution of forest management.

B. Project framework

To understand the implementation of the decentralization and devolution of forest management, particularly at the local or village level, this study applied two theoretical frameworks. First, forestry is a resource from which people derive usable products, both timber and non-timber. Here, the state and people interact with each other through the processes of control, access and authority to manage the forest in a sustainable way. Second, the state, through forestry bureaucrats and apparatus, is assumed to be the more “powerful” actor and tries to monopolize information and dominate other actors.

The research was guided by Foucault’s works on power and the role of the state, which explains power relationships among actors, in order to find out how each stakeholder participates, and how even the powerless actors, such as farmers, can influence other actors (Flyvbjerg 2001). Moreover, it investigated how the state, viewed as the "powerful" actor, also shapes and reshapes its policies and regulations by taking into account other actors’ points of view.

Regarding the decentralization and devolution process, the research was viewed according to Anderson’s principles of subsidiarity, empowerment, pluralism, and capacity-building (2001, 11-20). Subsidiarity means decisions should be made at the lowest possible level where competence exists. Empowerment is imperative to decentralization; otherwise, such decentralization will just become another form of centralization. As decentralization implies a new and more open relationship between stakeholders, it should consider also the principle of pluralism and the building of each stakeholder’s capacity.
C. Research methodology and techniques

The research used descriptive and exploratory methods, which were suitable for determining the dynamic power relationship between stakeholders in the research sites. It also employed an actor-oriented perspective whose core concept was that social actors should be regarded as “people with knowledge” and “capability” to process social experience as well as to devise and employ strategies under situations of constraints and prohibitions (Giddens 1984 cited in Resurrection and Sajor 1998).

Research instruments were used to gather either primary data or secondary data. Primary data were collected through observations and interviews with key informants such as farmers, NGO activists, local government staff, etc. Secondary data, meanwhile, were collected from official documents, newspapers, and existing government regulations.

D. Research site

The research was conducted in selected villages to understand how decentralized and devolved forests are managed by village institutions or farmers who live in these villages. Banacon and Cangmundo villages in Getafe District of Bohol province in the Visayas were selected as the research site in Philippines. Meanwhile, Mon Ya Nuea, Huy E Khang, and Mae Mut villages located in Mae Win sub-district of the northern province of Chiang Mai were selected as the research site in Thailand. These villages were chosen to represent a spectrum based on a variety of factors including ethnicity (in the Thailand case), geography (lowland and upland), and the socio-economic characteristics of the communities.

II. The Emergence of CBFM

In several countries in Asia, there is an attempt to implement effective forest management in which environmentally sustainable use is assured that simultaneously benefits local communities. This type of management is generically called community-based forest management (CBFM). It adopts different modalities in accordance with the socio-economic diversity of the places where it is developed.

CBFM emerged from the failure of state-based forest management (SBFM), which was implemented from the 1960s to the 1980s. SBFM focused on economic development and was operated by national institutions, such as forestry departments or corporations, but caused a high rate of forest depletion. It has been observed that the high rate of forest deterioration in the cases of the Philippines and Thailand has contributed to several national disasters such as floods, drought, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity. The failure of SBFM is also linked to the marginalization of weaker grassroots actors.

The development of community forestry in the Philippines and Thailand, however, can be seen in the evolution of policies and programs which have been promulgated by their governments.

In 1995 the Philippine government issued Executive Order (EO) 263 to adopt Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) as the national strategy to ensure the sustainable development of the country’s forest and forestlands. CBFM was adopted to address the continuing destruction of Philippines’ remaining natural forests as well as to respond to the issue of upland poverty, considered as the root cause of the country’s deforestation problem.

CBFM is currently the Philippines’ major strategy for the sustainable development of the country’s forest resources and improving social justice in these areas. Compared to previous people-oriented forestry projects, CBFM has some interesting features (Pulhin, et al. 2006). The program:
1. involves the tripartite of communities, local government units (LGUs), and the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR);
2. promotes sustainable forest management and improves economic conditions;
3. recognizes and supports the capacities and indispensable roles of local communities; and
4. recognizes and supports long-term a tenurial instrument lasting for 25 years and renewable for another 25 years.

CBFM, which is based on the concept of “People first, and sustainable forest will follow”, covers all areas classified as forestlands including the allowable zones within the protected areas. In the strategic plan of CBFM, the DENR has set a target of 9 million hectares of forestlands to be managed according to the CBFM strategy. As of mid-2005, 5,503 projects had already been established. These encompass an aggregate area of 5.97 million hectares involving 690,691 households. Of these, 1,557 sites with a total area of 1.57 million hectares were allocated to organized communities through the issuance of long term CBFM Agreements (CBFMA).
In Thailand, the evolution of policies and programs related to community forestry started in the early 1980s when the government recognized the important role local communities play in forest management. Local people's participation in forest management could facilitate and support forest conservation as well as address agricultural encroachment into forestlands.

In 1981 the Thai government initiated the Village Woodlots program to increase forest production for local needs by communities outside forest reserves. Next, the Royal Forest Department (RFD) initiated the National Forestland Allotment (STK) Project, which provided land to households occupying depleted reserved forest areas before 1982. However, community forestry in Thailand is unfortunately plagued with conflicts, particularly in the development of a community forestry bill. The draft bill was proposed in 1991, but the Parliament has continually failed to approve it.

A. Progress with implementation – The Philippines

With a growing concern for natural resources development, the municipality of Getafe, Bohol began implementation of the CBRMP—GRACE (Community-Based Resource Management Project—Getafe Rehabilitation of Agricultural and Coastal Environment) program in 2001. The goal of the program is to eliminate rural poverty through the sustainable development of natural resources. According to the mayor of Getafe, Theresa Camacho, there are two main reasons why Getafe is interested in putting up natural resource management for its coastal and upland areas. First, uplands and coastal areas are at risk. This can be seen in the degradation of the uplands and of the ocean. Second, through this project Getafe residents will be given the capacity to undertake management of the resources that will enable them to learn or gain insights on how to rehabilitate the environment.

The project, which it has been implemented in twelve of twenty-four barangays (the smallest government unit in the Philippines), has four sub-components or activities. These are:
1. natural resources management (NRM);
2. income generating project (IGP);
3. small-scale infrastructure (SSI); and
4. project management (PM).

Based on the budget, natural resources management is said to be costliest, with PHP10,986,000 (USD247,711.39) followed by the income generating project with PHP3,994,000 (USD90,056.37), small-scale infrastructure with PHP2,996,000 (USD67,798.14) and project management with PHP1,997,000 (USD45,223.97).

The project also aims to create and strengthen twelve people's organizations (POs) in undertaking the above-mentioned projects alongside the local government unit and concerned line agencies. It also aims to capacitate both the local government and communities to be self-reliant natural resource managers.

Through the GRACE program, each village in Getafe is encouraged to develop a people's organization (PO) to run the program. PO Bafmapa in Banacan village was formed on 12 March 1996 and has 64 members. PO Banikkaca in Cangmundo village was formed on 8 January 2001 and has 65 members.

On 5 April 2004, PO Bafmapa was granted CBFMA Document 43582 as a holder to manage 1,778.04 hectares of mangrove area located on Banacan Island. The agreement includes the following components for implementation:
1. mangrove forest rehabilitation;
2. mangrove forest protection, development of alternative livelihoods; and
3. development and improvement of an ecotourism destination by using the mangrove resources.

On 25 November 2003, PO Banikkaca was granted CBFMA Document 43592 as a holder to manage 162.30 hectares that consist of 75 hectares for plantation and 20 hectares of agro-forestry.

The project has had an impact. In addressing environmental degradation, some achievements can be seen. There is an increased fish catch as a result of the establishment of seven marine sanctuaries. Fishery laws are enforced, which has led to the apprehension of many illegal fishers and the confiscation of their fishing equipment. In the uplands, there is increased soil cover.

In trying to address the poverty of the people, beneficiaries receive some additional income earned from direct and community-driven development contractual work in natural resource management projects.

B. Progress with implementation – Thailand

Even though the Community Forestry Bill has not yet been approved, the Royal Forest Department has been working to support local community management of its forests. The Bureau of Community Forest Management was designated in 2003 to serve the RFD in regard to
Mae Win Sub-district occupies approximately 445 square kilometers, covering most of the territory of the Mae Khan watershed. The nineteen villages under the jurisdiction of the sub-district include two Hmong villages, thirteen Karen villages, and four Northern Thai villages. The Hmong villages are located on the ridge tops at elevations above 1,200 meters, while the thirteen Karen villages are scattered over the uplands between 800 and 1,400 meters and the four Northern Thai villages are settled on flat land below 800 meters.

Together with other villages in four sub-districts, Huay E Kang and Pa Phai are considered part of the proposed/planned Ob Khan National Park. However, there is a serious problem concerning the boundary between the villages and the Park, which is planned to include an area of 300,000 rai (48,000 hectares). Fifteen years have passed but officials of Ob Khan NP still have not finished fixing the boundaries of the national park, especially along the Karen communities, including Huay E Kang and Pa Phai villages.

People in these villages worry that if their village area is included in the national park, they will not be allowed to practice shifting cultivation, farming, and harvesting or collecting timber and non-timber forest products.

The villagers argue that they too are aware and are concerned with the importance of environmental conservation. They acknowledge the important role of the forest plays: a source of food and water, a home for hunted animals, a sacred place. This awareness of the people can be seen from the methods they use to classify and manage the forest.

In Huay E Kang village, for instance, 7,563 rai (1,210 hectares) of the total village area (9,725 rai or 1,556 hectares) are classified as utilized and protected forest. Meanwhile in Pa Phai sub-village, the people established a Dong Seng forest of 200 rai and forest for education of 400 rai. Both villages have set up regulations, which consist of set of guidelines on what people can do or cannot do with regards to the forest as well as list of sanctions for people who break the rules.

**III. State – local community (power) relationship**

For this study, state refers to the local government unit (municipality in the Philippines and sub-district in Thailand) and the local community refers to non-state actors (people’s organizations) that actively engage with the state on the issue of forest management. The relationship of the state and the local communities will be described based on their interactions in different venues, both formal and informal.

**A. Local communities**

Philippines—In the Philippines, people’s organizations (POs) have become a significant actor in community-based forest management programs since their implementation. Other actors at the village level include village officials, non-PO members, informal leaders, and so forth. POs, meanwhile, are comprised of officers and members.

As an autonomous organization, a PO has the authority to set up its own vision, mission, objectives, structure and internal regulations. These direct the way the PO will develop in the future. Its structure comprises a president acting as the highest administrator, and some divisions, depending on the PO’s activities.

POs also develop internal regulations to maintain their activities, such as those governing the management of the land granted to them, both in technical (various tree species and crop patterns) and social matters (communal working shifts, monthly fees, and regular meetings). There are also internal regulations for sanctioning people who break the regulations.

Through their involvement with the GRACE programs, the people’s organizations in Banacon and Cangmundo villages in Getafe, Bohol gained some economic and social benefits. Economically, they benefited from some projects such as income-generating projects and small-scale infrastructure. Socially, the POs developed capacity through trainings in leadership, agro-forestry, ecotourism, and gender. PO members also express that they now have greater confidence and pride.

At the time of the study, PO Bafmafa had been running for three years and PO Banikkaca for four years since their establishment. During this time, the dynamics of each organization was influenced by either external or internal factors. The involvement of POs in CBRMP—GRACE programs had been driving its activities. However, in line with the completion of the CBRMP program, there was also a tendency towards a decrease in PO dynamics and activities, such as regular meetings and member participation. Only in communal activities (as in the case of Cangmundo) did the PO members...
still commit to attend because there was a fine for those who were absent from these activities.

Another problem was the conflicts between members and non-members in the same village as well as from different villages, particularly in Banacon where many illegal fishermen came to the village.

The economic value of the resources within the area granted to the PO also influenced the degree to which people expressed their interest. The success of managing the mangrove plantations in Banacon had created some positive results such as an increased fish catch, cleaning of the area, and the creation of tourist attractions. Even if they did not express it explicitly, one motivation for participation was the economic value of the area they claimed. Tree planters and absentee claimants wanted to be compensated for their role in reforesting the area in the past.

In contrast, the denuded area of Cangmundo does not attract the interest of many people. As far as the eye can see, the hilly area is covered by cogon (*Imperata*) grass. The great distance of the CBFMA area from their houses also discourages people from becoming PO members in order to have access to the area. In this case, only people who really needed land for their livelihood and who were really farmers who needed to farm joined the PO, while people who had an alternative livelihood did not join.

At the moment, there is no mechanism to manage and solve the conflicts faced by these POs. Conflict resolution still relies on the wisdom and leadership of PO officials, particularly the president of the PO. There was no assistance from the *barangay* captain and *kagawads* (councilors) who were mandated to help and advise POs whenever problems arose in the field. So far, the *barangay* officials had only helped the POs with the issuance of *barangay* resolutions endorsing the PO’s application for a CBFMA at the CENRO/DENR office.

Thailand—After being approached and assisted by NGOs, the villagers began to organize themselves to engage in local resource management. They were aware of the importance of natural resources for their survival (gathered food, agriculture, house construction, rituals, animal, and so forth). Therefore, they considered it also necessary to have the right to manage these resources. People’s rights to access and control over resources management is also a way for them to express their identity (which in certain cases is related to their need for self-determination). This is why people believe that resources should be managed by themselves, which will thus guarantee the sustainability of the resources and secure their livelihood.

Villagers set up internal regulations for the joint management and use of the resources. In cutting trees, for instance, the use of machines is prohibited. Traditional axes are preferred.

Even though these internal regulations are not formally written down, people respect and follow them in the same way as they respect their leaders (formal and informal) and elders.

People also pay respect to their culture and beliefs in the way they manage and conserve the forest. In Huay E Kang, for instance, people believe that a good and healthy forest should have “seven levels” of vegetation initially from the grass at the lowest level to the trees at the highest level. In Pa Phai sub-village, this is known as the *Dong Seng* system.

Since forests and other natural resources exist all over the area and cross the boundary lines of administration from village to village, it was necessary to cooperate among villages to divide these resources. Thirteen villages, including Huay E Kang village and Pa Phai sub-village have joined The (Upper) Wang River Basin Forest and Wildlife Conservation Network, which was established on 14 October 1993.

B. State/local government

Philippines—In the Philippines, state actors involved in the GRACE programs consist of the LGU Getafe Municipality and CENRO (Community Environment and Natural Resources Office) Talibon.

The local government unit of Getafe was implementing the CBRMP program in a participatory way in order to create a sense of ownership in the program. It believed that people with such a sense would continue running the activities even after the project was terminated. Residents, as the final beneficiaries of the program, were consulted and informed about the program before it was implemented.

Regarding the sustainability of the project, the Technical Working Group (TWG) of CBRMP is to have direct supervision of the POs after the project is terminated. Getafe Mayor Theresa Camacho viewed that the sustainability of the project would depend on the supervision. Based on experience, there is a tendency that POs neglect the project, especially if there is no
longer any financial support. It does not matter how many capacity trainings the PO have undergone. So far, based on what GRACE has seen, POs will always need some form of support (financial, administrative, or capacity building).

The second government agency involved in GRACE is CENRO Talibon, which signed the CBFMA granted to the POs. This means that there is an agreement between CENRO on the one hand and the PO on the other to achieve what is mentioned in the agreement. It is explicitly stated that both parties have rights and responsibilities to manage a certain area.3

One important venue that relates the people’s organization to the DENR is the development of a Community Resource Management Framework (CRMF). Supposedly, the CRMF is to be developed within thirty days after the CBFMA is granted to the organization. However, there are some constraints in the framework’s development. These include budget limitations (P1,000 or USD23 per PO), time, and technical staff. CENRO Talibon, for instance, is responsible in assisting thirty-eight POs in eight municipalities.

At the time of this research, PO Bannikaca had finished the development of a five-year plan (2004-2009), while PO Bafmapa had not even started yet.

Following the CBRMP program, the CRMF of Bannikaca consisted of: (1) NRM which has two parts: tree reforestation and agro-forestry; (2) IGP; (3) IEC; and (4) Procurement. PO Bannikaca had also developed a benefit-sharing scheme. For the tree reforestation area, the harvests were split, with seventy percent for the PO and thirty percent for the local government unit, which contributes capital during the initial phase. For the agro-forestry area, all of the harvests will be owned by the PO members who cultivated this portion.

The conflicting tenurial system of Banacon has made the PO Bafmapa delay the creation of a proposal for its management plan. As a protected area, the tenurial system for Banacon should be under PACBRMA, instead of CBFMA. Information from CENRO Talibon office says that the problem with titles is more about appropriateness. For protected areas, the appropriate title is PACBRMA. PO Bafmapa is questioning why it was granted a CBFMA, if the CENRO and the DENR knew that it was not appropriate. If the PO is asked to renew the title, it would mean that it must start over from the very beginning.

Thailand—A large number of government agencies engage in natural resource management in Tambon Mae Win, particularly the two selected villages. However, it is only the Royal Forest Department (RFD) that has been designated by law to supervise forest land all over the country. Additionally, at least two government units have been operating under the RFD in Tambon Mae Win. These are the Mae Wang Watershed Unit and Ob Khan National Park.

As previously mentioned, Ob Khan National Park has not yet been declared, since there is a dispute over the boundary line between the NP and some villages, including the two selected villages. The area in which the government wants to establish a national park is the villages’ agricultural land, settlement areas, and traditional reserve forest and community forest. In response to this, the Upper Mae Wang Network, which represents the villagers of the Mae Wang watershed, has made a resolution opposing the establishment of the Ob Khan National Park.

IV. Decentralization and devolution of forest management

The term “decentralization” embraces various concepts. There are at least three dimensions embedded in decentralization: politics (democratization, civil society), geography and administration (de-concentration, delegation, and devolution), and economics (privatization). In forest policy and management, there are also diverse definitions of decentralization and devolution, and the two terms are often treated as one and the same (Fisher et al. 2001, 4). However, this is not the case with political or administrative terms, which pay more attention to the presence of an autonomous body (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983 cited in Hossein 2001).

Decentralization in forest management is closer to the meaning of devolution; i.e., the transfer of authority and responsibility from the central government to lower levels such as the local government, NGOs, local entrepreneurs, and even local communities or user groups.

The emergence of the notion towards decentralization and devolution cannot be separated from the tendency to involve local communities in forest management because decentralization is considered a promising means to achieve more sustainable forest management (Fisher et al. 2001, 7). However, this tendency is limited to the granting of local communities the responsibilities to protect their resources without conferring on them
the right to use these resources for their own benefit. Even if local use is allowed, it is only limited to minor or non-timber forest products. In other words, some foresters have an obvious lack of trust and confidence in the capacity of communities to manage the forest. Fisher et al. (2001, 8) see that this condition is based on a simplistic understanding of tenure, with the assumption that absolute control over the forest must be vested in either the department or the community.

A. Philippines – a case study on Getafe Municipality

In the Philippines, the decentralization and devolution of forest management was realized through the enactment of the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991. The code, based on the 1987 constitutional provision, ensures the autonomy of local government. Through the code, some basic services that had previously been under responsibility of the national government were decentralized and devolved to local government units. These services included the environment sector or community-based forest project.

Under the 1991 LGC, local government units share with the national government, particularly the DENR, responsibility for the sustainable development of the environment and natural resources within their territorial jurisdictions. Under it, the municipality obtains new powers, such as the authority to implement community-based projects, manage and control communal forests with an area of 5,000 hectares or less, and build tree parks and greenbelts as well as similar forest development projects.

Work and experience through GRACE for almost five years has made the Getafe municipality more confident in handling its natural resources management. As mentioned by Mayor Camacho, the decentralization of power and the devolution of responsibilities have enabled Getafe to handle GRACE from the planning to implementation to monitoring and evaluation stages.

Part of the GRACE budget was financed by a loan. The local government unit took a risk in implementing this project, since the integrated protected area had become much bigger than before (before the 1991 LGC). However, as mandated in Section 129 of the 1991 LGC, when a local government unit can create a source of revenue, wealth is not sent directly to the state. Part of it becomes the LGU’s share, in this case Getafe’s.

Regarding the financial sustainability of the project, Getafe had already allocated some money not only for amortization but also for the maintenance of the project. At the time of the study, Getafe was paying around PHP1 million a year for the amortization. LGUs also have another sum of budgets and all of these are incorporated into the annual development and investment plan. For the next fifteen years, Getafe will be maintaining the project as part of its sustainability plan.

This sustainability plan showed the high commitment of Getafe in helping the poor, particularly the PO members. This was so despite the high risk, since it was uncertain that the money might return to the LGU. For instance, it was difficult to predict what the results of tree reforestation would be in fifteen to twenty-five years, from which the LGU would receive twenty-five percent.

Also if we look at the economic situation of the beneficiaries, most expected that the money should be a grant. It was no surprise that with regards to payment, the LGU feared that the contract with the PO will not work.

Another lesson learnt from GRACE was in capacity building, particularly of the ones who handled the program, both LGU staff and PO members. According to Mayor Camacho, one reasons for GRACE was to strengthen the people’s potential to undertake resources management. This enabled them to learn or gain insights on how to rehabilitate the degraded environment.

In line with the sustainability plan, all staff of GRACE who participated in the technical working group were to be deployed in the same function they are handling now. Even if the name of the body is no longer MENRO (Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office) as mandated by the LGC, it will have the same function as MENRO.

Teamwork and commitment among working group members are the compelling factors for sustaining the projects. However, there was also a need to cooperate with broader stakeholders, either among government or non-government actors and POs. Formal forums and events such as the PAMB (Protected Area Management Board) and monthly meetings of the MPDC (Municipal Planning Development Council) could be used as a means for coordination and collaboration.

With regards to the devolution, there was a need to give POs more power and authority to manage the granted area based on their approved CRMF. Apart from appointing the PO or the village as to act as a fish and forest warden, there should be some for of training on skills and using authority to apprehend illegal fishermen.
and illegal tree cutters. Due to limitations in LGU budget, it is important to consider building linkages and networking with other POs as other possible sources of funds.

**B. Thailand – a case study on TAO Mae Win**

The decentralization and devolution of forest management in Thailand can be traced back to the 1990s. In early 1990s, Thailand embarked upon an ambitious experiment in decentralized governance by issuing the 1994 Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO) Act that conferred on TAOs the responsibility for local development planning and implementation covering a wide range, including local infrastructure, education, health, welfare, and natural resource management (CARE 2000 cited in Dupar and Badenoch 2002).

In line with the decentralization and devolution of forest management, the RFD (Royal Forest Department) has tested a number of pilot projects that have involved TAOs in the project implementation (Pragtong 2006), including Community Forest and Buffer Zone Pilot Projects, Small-scale Forest Plantations, Forest and Forest Fire Protection, and Forest Management and the TAO.

Directly elected by the people, the TAO actually has the authority and power to design and implement a Tambon development plan that includes the use and management of natural (forest) resources. However, according to interviews with two TAO members from Huay E Kang and Pa Phai villages, environmental issues have not so far been a major concern for the villagers or TAO members, although they recognize the presence of some environmental problems such as the scarcity of water in the dry season, overuse of chemical inputs for vegetable and flower production, forest fires, etc. TAOs are generally more concerned with infrastructure development (such as the building of roads) than with environmental development.

Other problems mentioned by TAO members were the conflicts among members (between villages) in placing priorities, such as where and when a certain development should take place. TAO members from Pa Phai sub-village said that ethnicity and the number of representatives has had an impact on decisions. Since the number of Hmong people was lower than the other ethnic groups, Pa Phai village frequently failed to have its projects approved.

Conflicts also occurred between the TAO and the kamnan on the way that development projects should be run. The kamnan view the TAO system as having a number of problems. For example, organizing the development plan consumes a great deal of time, many conflicts among villages are present, and there is a lack of capacity among TAO members.

TAO members have also acknowledged that there were shortcomings in their capacity to make a good development plan, particularly how to incorporate and integrate natural resource management into the TAO development plan. That is why between 2004 and 2006, development by TAO Mae Win focused instead on infrastructure (roads, electricity, and water), which cost them around twenty-five percent of the total budget.

TAO members also acknowledged the TAO’s “inefficiency” in the sense that more than fifty percent of the total budget was allocated for office costs (including salaries), and the rest went to the development programs.

**V. Conclusion**

Since the 1990s, there has been a change in paradigm in forestry management in the Philippines and Thailand, which involves paying more attention to the local people. These two governments have been actively involved in the development of a community-based forest management system, as well as in trying to strengthen the role of communities in forest management by supporting people through a variety of policies and legal instruments, including decentralization acts and local governance ordinances.

However, such regulatory support and instruments do not guarantee that decentralization can be implemented smoothly at the field level because there are some weaknesses in these regulations and instruments. First, there is no clarity about power, authority, and responsibilities among different actors, and so implementation will depend on the interpretation and perceptions of the actors. Second, inconsistency among regulations makes people confused about the implementation. Third, the political structures and inequality among stakeholders sometimes lead to the violation of legal rules.

Since the 1990s, we can some see some promising achievements of the decentralization and devolution process. The first is the emergence of local governance (municipality in the Philippines and Tambon in Thailand) as a focus of power in forest management. The second is the emergence of empowered farmers or villagers (in the Philippines through people’s...
organization) who are ready to deal with other actors (particularly governmental agencies). And the third is the change in attitude of the government: from command and control to interaction and facilitation. The signing of CBFMAs in the Philippines shows the emergence of mutual trust and a new kind of relationship between state and local people and NGOs.

However, there are also some factors that could unfortunately intervene in the process of decentralization and devolution in the future, particularly those relating to government policies. In the Philippines, for instance, the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) in the early part of 2006 cancelled 3,767 existing forestry contracts. Over 5,000 tenurial applications are pending throughout the country, including 83 CBFMAs. According to former DENR Secretary Angelo Reyes (2006), “The tenurial agreements were cancelled mainly because of non-compliance and violation of the terms and conditions of the agreements by their holders”. In Thailand, the Community Forestry Bill, which is hoped to support the involvement of people in forest management, has been under discussion over questions of its legitimacy for more than ten years.

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NOTES

1 In the Philippines, the forest’s rapid depletion by logging, mining, and settler encroachment was officially acknowledged in the late 1980s (Colchester, 2002). During the twentieth century, the Philippines lost almost fifteen million hectares of its natural forests. In 1900, the Philippines had twenty-one million ha of forest or 70% of the total area. One hundred years later, by 1998 estimates, the forest area had been reduced to 6.6 million ha or 22.2% of the total area. The decline of the forest was mainly caused directly by certain activities, such as logging, upland migration, and agricultural expansion (Anonymous 1999). Thailand’s forests have also rapidly declined, from 27,362,850 ha or 53.3% of the total land area in 1961 to 12,838,812 ha or 25% of the total land area (Charuppat 1998 cited in Soontornwong 2006). The peak of deforestation was in 1979, when it occurred at a rate 1.12 million ha/year (Wichawutipong 2006).

2 An area declared as a Dong Seng in 1996 was basically a small spirit forest. The objectives of a Dong Seng establishment were: (1) to respect the spirits who inhabited in the area; and (2) to protect the headwaters of the Mon Ya River. Dong Seng refers to a large, old tree, with a beautiful shape and branches located in a forest near the community. The Hmong believe such trees are the home of spirits and ancestors. The Dong Seng tree and the forest surrounding it are strictly protected from encroachers. The Hmong believe that if the community respects the spirit forest and gives offering to the spirits that inhabit it, they will be blessed with good fortune and excellent harvests.

3 CENRO/DENR for instance has the responsibility to: (1) protect and ensure exclusive occupation and the use of the forestland covered by this CBFMA and the forest products therein to the CBFMA holder subject to prevailing laws, rules, and regulations and prior rights; (2) provide assistance to the CBFMA Holder as part of the DENR’s normal operations, more particularly in the preparation, updating and implementation of the CRMF, RUPs, and AWP; (3) in case the province is under a logging moratorium, exempt the CBFMA area; and (4) deputize qualified members of the CBFMA Holder as Environment and Natural Resources Officers (ENROS) upon request of the CBFMA Holder pursuant to DAO no. 41, series of 1991 and other pertinent regulations.

On the other hand, POs have the following responsibilities: (1) immediately assume responsibility for the protection of the entire forest land within the CBFMA area against illegal logging, illegal cutting of mangroves, and other unauthorized extraction of forest (mangroves) products, slash and burn agriculture, forest and grassland fire, construction of fishponds, destructive fishing in mangrove areas and other forms of fishing in mangrove areas, and other forms of forest destruction; and assist DENR in the prosecution of violators of forestry and environmental laws; (2) follow all duly promulgated laws, rules, and regulations pertinent to forest management; (3) prepare and implement CRMF, RUP, and annual
work plans with assistance from DENR and the LGU; (4) formulate and implement benefit sharing schemes among its members; and (5) pay the required forest charges and other fees.

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COMPENSATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION CASES: EXPERIENCES FROM THE PHILIPPINES AND JAPAN

Darunee Paisanpanichkul

INTRODUCTION

Many people believe that a ‘lump sum’ is the motive for victims who have been affected by pollution in filing lawsuits against the polluter. Rather, the good health and clean, safe environment that victims and their communities once enjoyed but were destroyed are the real reasons. When the good old days cannot be returned to, compensation is only way to represent a liability to the polluter, and to the governments that promote and support the industrial sector, as well.

Compensation might include payments for medical care and health monitoring, and any kind of loss that the patients face, including a rehabilitation program to bring their community back to its original state, insofar as possible.

However, compensation has never come automatically from the guilty parties—the polluters and governments—to the patients. The victims did not initially think about litigation, but continuously demanded fair compensation. Only when they were unable to obtain the expected compensation did they consider taking legal action. However, positive laws and procedures do not always open the way for fair and efficient compensation.

Moreover, compensation for medical care, loss of earnings, loss of future opportunities, etc., is not enough to compensate for the health damages from pollution. The serious clinical symptoms of pollution-related diseases take a long period of time to develop. Furthermore, pollution-related diseases are always difficult to diagnosis.

Therefore, to respond to a new pollution-related disease in an industrial society, all of the parties in the judicial system, especially the patient, need to exercise their right to good health and a clean environment to develop a fair and efficient compensation system.

Communities of Marinduque Island in the Philippines and of Minamata in Japan serve as representatives of communities affected by pollution-related disease. They have demanded not only payment and rehabilitation programs, but also an acknowledgement of guilt by the polluter and the government. Moreover, they insist that their situation should be the final tragedy, and that such suffering should not be allowed to happen again anywhere in the world.

FINDINGS

September 2005 – January 2006 in the Philippines

Many documents from the Rizal Library and the library of the Institute of Philippines Culture (IPC) in Ateneo de Manila University, as well as very helpful advice from Filipino lawyers and NGOs working on environmental issues—Ipat Luna, Melizel F. Asuncion and Ron—stated that although there are many pollution cases in the Philippines, the first case of environmental litigation where a community filed against a polluter for compensation for health damages and rehabilitation programs is the Marcopper case on Marinduque island.

It was found that in 1975, and again in 1991, the Marcopper mine dumped 200 million tonnes of heavy metal—contaminated waste into Calancan Bay—the same waters that 20,000 people relied on for fishing. A seven kilometer causeway of waste now stretches out to sea and continues to leach pollutants into the water. In 1993, a dam that had been built to contain mine waste burst, releasing a tide of toxic silt into the Mogpog River. The flood killed two children, destroyed homes, killed livestock and smothered farmland. Later, in 1996, a mine tailings storage site failed, releasing three million tonnes of mine waste into the Boac River and causing the worst man-made disaster in the country’s history.

Local communities blame their terrible and sometimes terminal illnesses on the thirty-four years of devastation. Heavy metal poisoning has caused the deaths of at least three children. Many others—some as young as three—have undergone traumatic blood detoxification. This painful process involved their blood being removed and cleansed during a three month stay in hospital. No more money is left to pay for other children who need detoxification. Fishermen have had limbs amputated because of arsenic poisoning, but must continue to fish.
to support their families. Dementia, stomach disorders and cancer are commonplace.

Marinduque in October 2006: damages still remain

Marinduque Island forms a single province and is the second smallest island province in the Philippines. It is located 170 km from southern Metro Manila, with a travel distance of around four hours by bus plus three hours by ferry (or 1.5 hours by speed boat). The province is classified as a fourth class province with six municipalities composed of Boac, St.Cruz, Mogpog, Buenavista, Gasan and Torrijos, further subdivided into 218 barangays. Boac is the provincial capital and the name of the main river of Marinduque island.

Outsiders are always told that there is no longer any fishing, swimming or bathing in the Boac River. But not all Boac people have heard this. In October and December 2006, from the afternoon till sunset of every Saturday and Sunday, the shouting and laughter of children could be heard in any part of the town. They enjoyed swimming and catching fish and crabs for a meal, although some only watched their friends playing in the water because they were afraid of getting an itchy rash.

On the way to Calancan Bay, it is unbelievable that the dead pipelines still lay down along the way from a closed mining to the beach of Calancan bay. It confirms that a quantity of sea and ecology system had already been destroyed by them.

Damage to and loss of the health and environment of the people of Marinduque over the past twenty years has forced them to struggle to return to their way of life.

Delays in the administration of justice

The complaint for compensation on the rehabilitation of the health and environment of Calancan Bay was submitted to the Court in 2004; however, in October 26, 2005 at the Regional Trial Court 4th Judicial Region Branch 94, Marinduque Island, eight plaintiffs, consisting of fishermen, housewives, and laundry women, came for the trial with the Court costs and fees exempted.

The Mogpog River case was filed in April. A motion to defend in forma pauperis was permitted by the Court; however, the defendant—Marcopper—has not yet submitted its answer.

In the view of the lawyers Mel and Ron, these cases have a great deal of strong evidence to prove the plaintiffs’ health damages. There have been many reports stating clearly the heavy metal contamination in the Mogpog River and Calancan Bay. However, they are not confident enough to say that the communities will win their lawsuits.

Damages and rehabilitation demanded in the complaint

The court case of sixty-one plaintiffs vs. Marcopper Mining Corporation and Placer Dome Inc. is recorded as Civil Case No.01-10. What the plaintiffs demand for damages are: (1) actual compensatory damages for the value of the real properties that were damaged by the flood; (2) moral damages; and (3) exemplary or corrective damages. They also demand the rehabilitation of the Mogpog River, and their legal fees.

February – September 2006 in Japan

While the shutters of reporters’ camera were continuously clicking, a reply letter from Chisso Co, Ltd. was torn up by Shinobu Sakamoto. A few minutes later, someone shouted to the employees, “Take them back to your boss!”

This incident happened on 1 May 2006 near the front gate of Chisso Co.’s office in Minamata City, Japan. After this, Shinobu and a group of Minamata Disease patients guided visitors to places related to Minamata Disease and told them the background of the disease that had changed their lives. In the afternoon, outside Minamata town, there was a small ceremony to recall those who had already died from Minamata Disease.

The above truth absolutely contrasts with the common perception that Minamata Disease is already over. Many people believe that all Minamata Disease patients have already received compensation and restitution. Moreover, Minamata Bay and Shiranui Sea have been rehabilitated.

From the literature review and interviews with some patients, Minamata Disease patients can be divided into two groups: (1) Minamata Disease patients, who had ingested fish or sea food contaminated with mercury on a regular basis; and (2) congenital Minamata Disease patients, who did not directly ingest mercury-contaminated food but were affected in their mothers’ wombs. The second group of patients was first found in 1962. In all cases, the clinical symptoms were consistent with those of cerebral palsy.
Mercury accumulated in the body will destroy the central cerebellum system. Patients lose feeling in their fingers and toes. They have problems controlling the movements of their hands and feet and keeping their balance, have difficulty seeing, hearing, and speaking, and, in many cases, are afflicted with uncontrollable tremors in their hands and feet. The first group of patients who had high levels of mercury in their bodies had serious shaking symptoms, went mad, and died.

Shinobu is a congenital Minamata Disease patient. Her body seems like that of a disabled person. She cannot stretch her neck, trunk and legs. Her ankles and feet are twisted and bent. She cannot walk straight. She has problems with speaking, carefully enunciating word by word, not clearly and very slowly. She has no peripheral vision. However, these symptoms are only bodily weaknesses; Shinobu herself is very strong. All of her life, she and the other patients have continued to demand liability from Chisso and the government. This is not only for herself and her family but also for every Minamata patient. Today, Shinobu is 50 years old, she has become a symbol of the struggle of congenital Minamata Disease patients.

Lately, Shinobu and some other Minamata Disease patients wrote a letter to Chisso demanding compensation for newly diagnosed patients who were in the process of submitting a complaint and also demanded a promise that Chisso will not discharge any more pollution into the Minamata community, because the community knew that Chisso has just released dioxin outside its plant. When the reply letter from Chisso had no words expressing liability, all Shinobu could do was tear the letter up and continue her struggle to demand that Chisso and the government take responsibility.

Victory in the past and the continuance of serious problems

It took some time before the Japanese government officially recognized Minamata Disease as a poisoning caused by methyl mercury compounds from the Chisso factory’s operation, which dumped contaminated waste water into Minamata Bay and the mouth of the Minamata River in 1968.

The obscurity of the disease’s cause, the cruel symptoms of Minamata Disease causing physical disability, and the separation of Minamata Disease patients from general patients created the misunderstanding that Minamata Disease was a contagious disease. Minamata Disease patients became repellent people in their communities. Many Minamata Disease Patients had to hide their cruel symptoms and pretend that they were not sick. Their children were ordered to stay inside their houses. Many of them migrated to other provinces for resettlement and new jobs.

Amidst being objects of disgust to their neighbors, the patients split into two groups. One decided to get some sympathy money. The other group continued their struggle, and on 14 June 1969, 28 households and 112 individuals launched a lawsuit against the company (first Minamata suit) at the Kumamoto District Court, claiming compensation totalling ¥642,390,444.

In March 1973, the court’s judgment stated that Chisso was guilty of negligence and ordered Chisso to compensate the patients in amounts of ¥18 million, ¥17 million, and ¥16 million (plus interest), depending on the seriousness of each individual patient’s symptoms, for a total of ¥927,300,000. Moreover, an amount was added as a special adjustment allowance: ¥60,000 per month for a gravely ill patient, ¥30,000 per month for a moderately ill patient, and ¥20,000 per month for a patient only slightly afflicted. The ruling that was handed down in the first Minamata lawsuit was a victory for plaintiffs.

Although this compensation was a very high amount in the history of the Japanese judiciary, for the patient this victory had an important meaning. It meant that their long struggle was recognized by the judiciary as legitimate and declared Chisso’s guilty.

The victory in the first lawsuit led to a turning point in the patients’ struggle. Unbelievably, bargaining power moved to the patients. Chisso began to accept their demand for direct negotiations and this led to an agreement between Chisso and the patients that compensation—including solatium (compensation for injured feelings) plus annual interest, medical expenses, nursing expenses, a special adjustment allowance, and funeral expenses—would be paid to the three groups of patients (A, B and C). Each group received a different monthly payment.

However, a serious problem still exists. Although patients may suffer from several symptoms or die of Minamata Disease, compensation is paid only to patients who are recognized as certified Minamata Disease patients.

Form 1932 until now, 74 years after the beginning of Minamata Disease, only 2,200 patients have been recognized as certified Minamata Disease patients. This number has not changed since 2004. As of June 2006, 3,000 patients were in the process of applying to be
certified. However, academics and NGOs who work on this issue estimate that there are 200,000 affected people around Minamata Bay, the Minamata River and the Shiranui Sea.

A never before heard recommendation

“Minamata has a long history of patients and no sign of ending,” said Dr. Harada Masazumi from Kumamoto Gakuen University on the way back from the ceremony.

He is a doctor who has been working on Minamata Disease for his entire life.

At twenty-one years old, from the first day that he went to the community, he was the first doctor who visited the patients’ houses, door-to-door, from one village to the next. At that time, many houses had put up big signs saying, “Reporters, researchers, and doctors, go away!!” In his retirement, he is still a Harada Sen-Sei, an academic who did not advance in his career. Now, at seventy-two years old, he still continues his work on Minamata Disease. Every weekend, he leaves Kumamoto city for Minamata City to do health monitoring on his patients and examine new patients.

In his opinion, the committee for Minamata Disease patient certification recognizes only the obvious clinical symptoms of Minamata Disease such as loss of feeling, problems with the movement of hands and feet, hand and foot tremors, vision problems, etc. However, from his experience, he has found that there are twenty-seven clinical symptoms in Minamata Disease patients and eleven clinical symptoms in the Congenital Minamata Disease patient group. He believes that there are many clinical symptoms that have not yet been identified.

“Compensation cannot bring back good health, as pain and disability still exist for the patient. Moreover, the certification system is created to deny patients. It is used to protect both the government and the company from accepting guilt. Besides, patients have to take a long time to access the certification process. It is a patient-deny system.”

All through his fifty years of work, Dr. Harada has recommended that the important thing to do is to investigate around the Shiranui Sea to find out how many people have been affected by daily seafood consumption. An in-depth study will show how many symptoms might be caused by Minamata Disease. All of these will lead Japanese society to guidelines for efficient and fair compensation for the patients.

Based on his suggestion, what Chisso and the government can do now for a treatment and compensation system is set up a health support system. This would consist of an examination and treatment system, and include any kind of support that is based on the demands of the patients’ symptoms.

After seventy-four or fifty years of Minamata Disease, the struggle of the Minamata Disease patients still continues

It is necessary to note that on the same day, May 1, 2006, some government agencies also organized a ceremony to mark fifty years of Minamata Disease, starting from 1956, the year of Minamata Disease officially discovered.

For the patients, however, there have not been fifty years of suffering with Minamata Disease but rather seventy-four years. The beginning of Minamata Disease was 1932, the year Chisso began dumping waste water into Minamata Bay.

Anyway, it does not matter whether there have been fifty or seventy-four years of Minamata Disease. The struggle of the Minamata Disease patients has gone on for around half a century but Chisso and the government have never listened to them. This might be only the beginning of another fifty years of the patients’ struggle for justice. “The struggle of Minamata Disease Patients is not over yet,” remarked Yoichi Tani, a secretary of the Minamata Disease Victims Mutual Aid Society Solidarity Network Asia and Minamata—a civil society organization that has been working more on pollution issues for more than thirty years.

IMPLICATIONS

Compensation in environmental litigation in the Philippines

According to the natural resources laws and pollution control laws of the Philippines, there is no specific compensation law for pollution-related diseases. Therefore, victims who would like to sue a polluter for any kind of damages must claim their basic rights according to the Tort and Damages principle under Republic Act No.386 or the Civil Code of the Philippines.

Under the Civil Code, damages may mean either: (a) the sum of money which the law awards, or imposes as pecuniary compensation, recompense, or satisfaction for an injury done or a wrong sustained as a consequence either of a breach of a contractual obligation or a tortoise act; or (b) injury or loss caused to another by the violation of his legal rights.
Furthermore, according to Article 2197, damages may be: (1) actual or compensatory; (2) moral; (3) nominal; (4) temperate or moderate; (5) liquidated; or (6) exemplary or corrective.

Compensation in environmental litigation cases in Japan

In contrast to the Philippines, Japanese law has a specific compensation law for pollution-related diseases. This law developed from (1) a local relief program in the Minamata case (mimaikin contract) that began around 1958, which led to (2) the 1969 Law for Special Measures for the Relief of Pollution-related Disease, which led to (3) the 1973 Pollution-Related Health Injury Act, and finally to (4) the Law Concerning Compensation for Pollution-Related Health Damage and Other Measures, hereinafter referred to as the Compensation Law.

At the beginning of the outbreak of Minamata Disease, the concerned local government, Kumamoto Prefecture, provided the Minamata patients with particular financial assistance for medical expenses, but there was no program to reimburse lost earnings. However, only patients officially certified as Minamata Disease patients by a prefectural council became entitled to an annuity under the mimaikin contract as well as to relief under the prefectural system. Furthermore, it must be noted that there were no diagnostic criteria for Minamata Disease symptoms.

In the 1969 law, the new points were the law’s demand that the central, prefectural and municipal governments and industry share the financial burdens of the 1969 system and its management. From the patients’ perspective, the 1969 Law was patently inadequate; for example, Article 24 permitted prefectural governments to terminate medical payments and under some circumstances even to ask victims to make refunds. Moreover, during the ten years preceding the establishment of a national relief system in 1969, the Kumamoto Minamata Disease Council had certified only thirty-seven patients.

Due to the lack of fair and efficient compensation responding to patients’ damages, they decided to sue Chisso on 14 June 1969 and won their suit in March 1973. However, an interview with law academic Sadao Togashi from Kumamoto Gakuen University revealed that compensation under Japanese law does not cover health damages in the long-term.

The victory of the Minamata patients in 1973 forced Japanese society to reform the compensation law, and in 1973 the Law for the Compensation of Pollution-Related Health Injury was enacted. Clear definitions of the various kinds of compensation were added. The Act provided compensation for medical care, including medical treatment and the costs of rehabilitation, a lump sum payment to survivors, a compensation allowance

Figure 1: Diagram of the Minamata Disease Certification System Under the Law Concerning Compensation for Pollution-Related Health Damage and Other Measures. 

A person who thinks that himself or herself is suffering from Minamata Disease

Medical judgement criteria (Ministry of the Environment)

Medical examination

Judgement by medical experts

Disposition by Prefectual Governor, etc.

Certificated

Application of compensation agreement

Provision of compensation based upon the Pollution-related Health Damage Compensation Law

Rejected

Certification work by prefecture and city

Reapplication
for children under fifteen, a medical care allowance, funeral expenses, and compensation for loss of earnings for the handicapped.\textsuperscript{13}

However, access to fair and efficient compensation was still far from the Minamata patients. The 1973 law was still based on a patient certification system. The Minamata Disease patients suffering from various symptoms were requested to be certified as Minamata Disease patients. If they were denied certification, they would not be compensated. The weak point of the patient certification system is that it still lacks diagnostic criteria, and these principles exist in the compensation law.

For the initial conclusion of this study, it could be said that it is possible to be convinced that health damages for pollution-related diseases would be widely compensated under the Civil Code of the Philippines. However, the Mogpog and Calancan Bay cases are still in the courts, and the outcome of the burden of proof on the relationship between the symptoms and the pollution is the important point upon which the verdict will be based.

Compensation based on Japan’s compensation law is provided to those who are certified as patients of a pollution-related disease as provided in the compensation law, and charged to the company responsible for the pollution, so sufferers of pollution-related diseases can receive compensation without raising suits and proving of their own accord the causal relationship between the pollution and their symptoms. However, compensation depends on a patient certification system that functions as a patient-denial system and lacks the diagnostic criteria. The definition of damages included in the Civil Code is not very broad (as it is in laws in the Philippines) and is not a factor that supports compensation for Minamata Disease patients.

The recommendation of Harada Sen-sei to conduct an epidemiological study on the symptoms of Minamata Disease and investigate who and where the people affected by Minamata Disease are should be implemented at the same time as the existing system is being run.

**THE NEXT STEP**

“How much a proper amount of compensation should be is not easy to decide,” was a comment raised by one of the API community. What a fair compensation system should look like is a big question for all stakeholders—the victims, lawyers, the government, and our societies. It is not yet clear yet what kind of system would be fair and how it would work but basically the compensation system should at least cover all real damages. To find a suitable system, there needs to be further interdisciplinary research done with cooperation from lawyers, doctors, economists, and experts from other fields.

**NOTES**

1 Many thanks to Atty. Ma. Paz G. Luna (Ipat Luna), who works as the President of the Board of Trustees of Tanggol Kalikasan (Public Interest Environmental Law). Its office is located on Rm.M-05 CRM III Bldg., 106 Kamias Road, Quezon City 1102 Philippines. Tel. (632) 434 8734, also see www.tanggol.org.

- Also thanks to Carmela B. Salazar (Rica), legal officer of Tanggol Kalikasan, for her very kind assistance.

2 The full name of the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, Inc. (LRC) is the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, Inc.-Kasama sa Kaikasan (LRC-KsK/Friends of Earth-Philippines). LRC’s office is located in Metro Manila and also has 2 branches on Mindanao Island. Visit LRC via www lrcksk.org.

3 For example: Mercury contamination in the Siocon and Lituban Rivers by the gold mining activities of TVI Resource Development Philippines Incorporated in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, mercury contamination in communities in Sta. Lourdes and Honda Bay by the silver mining operation of Palawan Quick Silver Mines, heavy metal poisoning from nickel mining in a joint venture company between Long Point and Sellar Gold Corporation of Canada, gold mining by Climax-Arimco Mining Corporation (CAMC) that destroyed an Ifugao indigenous community in Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya, and major impacts from Western Mining Corporation Philippines (WMCP) in the five provinces of Sultan Kudarat, South Cotobato, Cotobato Province, Davao del Sur and Maguindanao, in the south of Mindanao Island.

4 Oxfam Australia. *The case of Marinduque Island: Time to face up, clean up, pay up.*, 2005.

5 Many thanks to Elizabeth Manggol (Beth), a coordinator of the Marinduque Council for Environment Concern-MACED.

6 Two major river systems traverse the island, the Boac River and the Tawiran-Tagum River, with the former covering a larger drainage area of 209 sq. kms. It has a total land area of 952.25 sq.kms.,
subdivided into forest land (222.05 sq.kms.) and alienable and disposable land (737.20 sq.kms.). Based on the 1995 census, the employment rate was 94.7 percent while unemployment was estimated to be 5.3%. Regarding poverty incidence (proportion of families with an income below annual per capita), the poverty threshold was 47.9% (1994), while the average annual per capita income was PhP 8,367.80.

The agriculture land of the province can be summarized as follows: rice (18,149 Has.), corn (1,179 Has.) and coconut (35,155 Has.) Being an island province, Marinduque is surrounded by water bodies rich in freshwater and marine resources. The mineral reserves of the province consist of polymetallic copper deposits, iron and manganese. Non-metallic minerals such as limestone, marble and construction aggregates also abound.

7 Defendants are obliged to pay for the damage being done to the plaintiffs.

46. To date, as a result of the foregoing acts and omissions of the defendants that caused and continue to cause damage to the plaintiffs, they suffered actual, moral and exemplary damages in the total amount of at least P200,000.00 each, including the entitlement to attorney’s fees of plaintiffs’ counsels and which the plaintiffs will prove according to the legal bases and measure of damages:

46.1 As actual or compensatory damages, plaintiffs will prove the actual value of the real properties that were damaged by the flood.

46.2 As moral damages, plaintiffs will prove the measure and quantification of damages due to moral shock, fright, serious anxiety, physical suffering and mental anguish caused and continue to be cause by every flood that occurs.

46.3 In Barangays Bocboc and Magapua in Mogpog, Marinduque. In addition to actual and moral damages, plaintiffs are entitled to exemplary or corrective damages because the defendants are guilty of gross and continued negligence, motivated by greed and profit, with utter disregard for environmental ruination, displayed extreme callousness, indifference and insensitivity to the plight of the poor farmers, such as the plaintiffs.

46.4 Plaintiffs are entitled to attorney’s fees in the amount of ten percent (10%) of whatever amount will be awarded to the plaintiffs because they were forced to litigate to obtain justice for themselves.

46.5 The Maguila-guila dump is a nuisance per se that must be abated for the benefit, not only of them, but also of the whole community of Mogpog. It is not enough that there is partial closure of the dump. As it is, it continues to affected and damage the properties of plaintiffs because it remains as a block in the mainstem of Maguila-guila creek and it contributes to the recurrent flooding of the Mogpog river.

46.6 Finally, plaintiffs are entitled to the rehabilitation of the Mogpog River, from which they used to benefit. After several years of Marcoppper existence, the mining firm managed to destroy the natural beauty of the river and to poison the fish and other seafood that consider the river as their habitat.

IV. PAYER

WHEREFORE, premises considered, it is respectfully prayed that the Honorable Court issue judgment against the defendants and in favor of the plaintiffs:

(a) awarding to the latter damages as follows:

(1) Actual or compensatory damages
(2) Moral damages in the amount of P200,000.00 per plaintiff or a total of P12,200,000.00:
(3) Exemplary damages in the amount of P 200,000.00 per plaintiff or a total of twelve million two hundred thousand peso (P12,200,000.00)
(4) Attorney’s fee equivalent to ten percent (10%) of total damages awarded or a total of P3,744,842.50;
(b) Ordering the total closure and removal of the Marcopper dumps; and
(c) Compelling the complete rehabilitation and restoration of the Mogpog River to its natural state.

8 Published in Midnight University’s website, as “74 Years of Minamata Disease: The struggle of Minamata Disease patients is not over yet.”, see: [http://www.midnightuniv.org/midnight2544/0009999904.html](http://www.midnightuniv.org/midnight2544/0009999904.html)

9 Philippines laws on natural resources Law, for example: the Public Land Act (Commonwealth Act No. 141, as amended), the Mining Act (Commonwealth Act No. 137, as amended), the Petroleum Act of 1949 (Republic Act No. 387, as amended), the Coal Land Act (Act No.2719, as amended), the Forest Law Act (Revised Administrative Code of 1917, sections 1814-1842; Commonwealth Act No.452; Presidential Decrees Nos.389-705), the Spanish Law of Waters of 1866, including the Irrigation Act (Act No.2162, as amended); the Fisheries Act (Act No.4003, as amended) and Presidential Decree No.43 providing for the accelerated development of the fishery industry of the country, and incidentally
we shall touch on pertinent provisions of the Civil Code and leading court decisions on the matters of interpretation and construction of the above laws and their application to actual problems arising there under:


Laws on EIAs, for example: Proclamation No. 2146, Proclaiming certain areas and types of projects as environmentally critical and within the scope of the environmental impact statement system established under Presidential Decree No. 1586, December 14, 1981, Presidential Decree No.1586 (Establishing an Environmental Impact Statement System, including other Environmentally Management Related Measures and for other purposes), June 11, 1978.

Laws on pollution control, for example: Presidential Decree No.984 (Providing for the Revision of Republic Act No.3931, Commonly Known as the Pollution Control Law, and for other purposes, August 18, 1976).

Laws on the environment, emissions and monitoring standards, for example: Presidential Decree No. 1152 or Philippine Environment Code, (June 6, 1977).

Laws on health and environmental protection: for example: Presidential Decree No.1151 or Philippine Environmental Policy (June 6, 1977) in Section 3:

Right to a Healthy Environment

“In furtherance of these goals and policies, the Government recognizes the right of the people to a healthy environment. It shall be the duty and responsibility of each individual to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the Philippine environment”;

And in article II, Section 16 of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines:

“The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.”

10 Hilarion U. Jarencio. Tort and Damages in

REFERENCES


Lawyering for the Public Interest. 1st Alternative Law Conference, 8-12 November 1999.


SESSION II

MANAGEMENT, BEHAVIOR AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF ASIAN WILDLIFE: CASE STUDY OF MALAYAN TAPIRS (*TAPIRUS INDICUS*)

Siti Khadijah binti Abdul Gani

**Introduction**

‘Today more and more of us live in cities and lose any real connection with wild animals and plants.’

(Attenborough 2004)

Zoos operate within a time of decreasing biodiversity. The rapid exploitation of natural resources, climate change, pollution, flora and fauna extinction and overall environmental degradation have all continued. Therefore, zoos play a very important role in ensuring the survival of wildlife species all over the world from extinction.

Some zoos in modern countries have been established specifically to protect animal species through specific guidelines, awareness activities and education strategies. Specific methodologies are implemented to ensure the species’ welfare and to support the species’ survival in the wild. Meanwhile zoos in developing countries such as Indonesia put wildlife in prison to maintain their business and even take individuals from the wild to put in their zoos.

In this project, the Malayan tapir was used as a study case, and the zoos’ management behavior and public perceptions of the tapir were studied.

**Introduction to the Malayan tapir**

The Malayan tapir is an Asian wildlife species that is distributed only in southern Thailand, peninsular Malaysia and Sumatera Indonesia. It was listed as endangered during a recent Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) workshop conducted at the Krau Wildlife Reserve Malaysia (Medici et al. 2003). At the First International Tapir Symposium held in Costa Rica in November 2001, participants agreed that the Malayan tapir must receive very high priority in relation to immediate conservation efforts. So far there has been no long-term tapir field study for Asia’s only tapir species and the data and information currently available is insufficient to provide a clear view of the conservation status and future intervention needs of the species. As stated in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Tapir Specialist Group (TSG) Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan: Tapirs (Brooks, Bodmer & Matola 1997), the Malayan tapir is a very important flagship species, whereby many sympatric species may be placed under an umbrella of protection.

**General objective**

International researchers have reported that animals in Indonesian zoos are poorly managed (Agoramoorthy 2001; Water 2002). Focusing on the Malayan tapir as a study case, different aspect of Indonesian zoo management were studied, individual tapirs were observed and zoo visitors were interviewed.

**Specific objectives**

1. To establish a network between the IUCN/SSC/TSG and zoos maintaining tapirs.
2. To determine the husbandry management of tapirs in captivity at different zoos in different countries based on the revised version of the American Zoo Association (AZA) Minimum Husbandry Standard for Tapirs prepared by IUCN/SSC/TSG and the Houston Zoological Gardens (Barongi 1993).
3. To observe the animals’ behavior in captivity.
4. To classify public awareness about tapirs and their perceptions of this species.

**Study Areas**

The study areas selected were:

1. Ragunan Zoo, Jakarta, Java, Indonesia
2. Gembiraloka Zoo Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia
3. Surabaya Zoo, Java, Indonesia
4. Bukittinggi Zoo, Sumatra, Indonesia

Taman Safari Bogor prevented me from conducting the study on their premises while Taman Satwa Taru Jurug Solo, Medan Zoo and Pekan Baru Zoo no longer hold the species in their enclosures.

Individuals observed according to the different enclosures at the different zoo are listed in Table 1.
Table 1: Observed individuals’ backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Study Site</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Enclo.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ragunan Zoo</td>
<td>Wardha/Opi</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>+16.09.2002</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>± 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ragunan Zoo</td>
<td>Dini/Unyil</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>+31.10.2001</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>± 23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ragunan Zoo</td>
<td>Kentung</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>+08.12.2000</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>± 20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ragunan Zoo</td>
<td>Yatim</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>+01.01.1998</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>± 5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gembira Loka Zoo</td>
<td>Female 2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>+xx.xx.1998</td>
<td>Bukittinggi Zoo</td>
<td>± 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gembira Loka Zoo</td>
<td>Male 3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>+xx.xx.1998</td>
<td>Taman Safari</td>
<td>± 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Surabaya Zoo</td>
<td>Madun/Male 2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>+27.08.1996</td>
<td>Gembira Loka Zoo</td>
<td>± 15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bukittinggi Zoo</td>
<td>Big-Big</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>+10.11.2000</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>± 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bukittinggi Zoo</td>
<td>Berto</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>+10.08.2002</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>± 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bukittinggi Zoo</td>
<td>Alo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>+25.10.2003</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>± 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Network between the researcher & Indonesian zoo management

Compared to other countries’ zoo management, Indonesian zoos are far below the international standards. The main problem in accessing Indonesian zoos is the lack of a network. There is an Indonesian Zoo Association but it has a very limited budget. Therefore, there is a huge gap between each zoo in Indonesia and most of the zoo managers did not know what was going on in other zoos outside of Indonesia.

While conducting the project, I managed to meet a group of enthusiastic zoo staff. The whole zoo management is basically divided into two major groups, the decision makers and the animal keepers. The decision makers concentrate more on office work in order to manage all of the species existing in the zoo while the animal keepers are those who spend most of their time with the animals, taking care of their cleanliness and feeding the animals. I managed to work with both groups and we exchanged a great deal of information and experiences through both formal and informal communication.

As I am a member of IUCN/SSC/TSG, the network established will be linked to other organizations such as IUCN/SSC/TSG itself and other zoos. The Zoo Committee of the IUCN/SSC/TSG was informed about the updates on animal collection. A small workshop will be held in 2007 in order to prepare an action plan for Indonesia with coordination between IUCN/SSC/TSG and the Forestry Department of Indonesia.

National Zoo Malaysia will have further discussions about animal exchanges with Surabaya Zoo and Ragunan Zoo. Both Surabaya Zoo and Ragunan Zoo have a male adult giraffe in their collection while the females are dead. Meanwhile, National Zoo Malaysia has an extra collection of the same species. I discussed this with each of the zoo directors and now it has reached the paperwork level.

The network between each zoo in Indonesia was created long ago but it is very limited as the locations of the zoos are in different provinces and some zoos have very minimal communication access. I selected the vets and officers of every zoo and linked them through the internet including the yahoo group for international zoos. Here the major problem is the language barrier and, in order to help them to overcome it, they will email me for translation.

I also linked the zoos with local universities. Veterinary students from the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) will conduct further research on male individuals as breeding success in Malayan tapirs is very low and most males erected abnormally.

After the earthquake in Yogyakarta last June 2006, 60% of the animal enclosures were destroyed. I am now waiting for a response from WAZA so funds can be raised to help them. However, there is a great deal of bureaucracy to deal with during this process, not at the international level, but at the local Indonesian level.

Indonesian zoo history and concepts

Most Indonesian zoos were started as refuge centers or personal areas to keep wildlife as pets. As time went by, the animal numbers increased and the center or area was converted into a zoo. Some of the zoos were developed as long ago as the 1800s (Table 2).

After becoming a zoo, an area might be managed by different organizations (Table 2). If it was managed by the government, there was financial support from the government for monthly operational costs, including staff salaries and animal feed and medicine. However, if it is managed privately, the entrance fee is used to run...
the zoo including its operations. If petrol prices increase or any bird flu disease is reported at any other zoo, the number of visitors will decrease. Therefore, the whole system will be affected.

\textbf{Table 2:} Study site background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Managed By</th>
<th>Subsidy</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ragunan Zoo</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>140 ha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gembira Loka Zoo Yogyakarta</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20 ha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Surabaya Zoo</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15 ha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bukittinggi Zoo</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15 ha.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main concept of Indonesian zoos is that they are for recreation and this covers middle class and lower class people. The entrance fees average between Rp3000-Rp8000. As the zoo’s management focus is on recreation, the aspects of wildlife conservation and welfare are almost forgotten.

\textit{IUCN/SSC/TSG Minimum Husbandry Standards for Tapirs}

There are three different enclosures at the Ragunan Zoo housing four individuals. Basically, Enclosures 2 and 3 for Dini (Unyil), Yatim and Kentung following the standards. Unfortunately, Enclosure 1 for Wardha (Opi) is far below the standards. The related officers did claim that the zoo has very limited funds but they are aware of the matter and have suggested it will be included in the next upgrade project. Enclosure 1 was actually built for Komodo dragons (Varanus komodoensis) but was empty as the larger groups had not been separated. Wardha (Opi) had escaped from her previous enclosure (Enclosure 3). She was captured near Enclosure 1 and since then she has stayed there.

Gembira Loka Zoo Yogyakarta has two different species of Tapirus, which are Malayan tapirs (Tapirus indicus) and Lowland tapirs (Tapirus terrestris). I only focused on Malayan tapirs during this study. Generally, the enclosure follows the standards except for the structure of the pond. The enclosure was built specifically for this species. As both species of Tapirus were placed far away from each other, I suggested to management that they could be put next to each other as it is useful for visitors’ education.

At Surabaya Zoo, the enclosure was previously used for hippos (Hippopotamus amphibious), and after the Malayan tapirs (named Lisa and Madun) arrived from Gembira Loka Zoo Yogyakarta in 1996, the hippos were transferred to new wider enclosures and the old enclosure was used for Malayan tapirs. On 12th November 2000, Lisa died of pneumonia and Madun has stayed alone until today. The enclosure is small and there are two ponds although one is not working due to water leakage. The animal has to walk through the dry pond to get to the wet pond, which makes it look very unnatural.

At Bukittinggi Zoo, the Malayan tapir’s enclosure is actually a combination of old saltwater crocodile (Crocodylus porosus), Malayan tapir (Tapirus indicus) and wild boar (Sus scrofa) enclosures. The enclosure is quite huge for Malayan tapirs compared to the standards but there is no pond at all and some parts of the enclosure needs to be cleared of unnecessary rubbish. During the presentation, the director was concerned about the pond issue. The old pond was subsequently modified at the end of last June and now it is working.

According to the Minimum Husbandry Standard for Tapirs Matrix shown in Table 3, only individuals at Ragunan Zoo Enclosure 3 (Yatim & Kentung) met the standards with a value of 3.75. The enclosure was built for Sumatran rhinos (Dicerorhinus sumatrensis) but when one of the pair died, the single individual was sent to the Sumatran Rhino Centre at Way Kambas National Park Sumatra Indonesia. As the structure of the enclosure was not suitable for deer, the zoo management decided to put Malayan tapirs there as they are close siblings of the rhinos.
Table 3: Minimum husbandry standard for tapirs matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Rag 1 R</th>
<th>Σ</th>
<th>Rag 2 R</th>
<th>Σ</th>
<th>Rag 3 R</th>
<th>Σ</th>
<th>Gem 1 R</th>
<th>Σ</th>
<th>Sur 1 R</th>
<th>Σ</th>
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W=Weights; R=Rating; 0 (Weak); 4 (Strong); Σ=Weighted Score
Rag 1=Ragunan Zoo Enclosure 1; Rag 2=Ragunan Zoo Enclosure 2; Rag 3=Ragunan Zoo Enclosure 3; Gem 1=Gembira Loka Zoo Yogyakarta Enclosure 1; Sur 1=Surabaya Zoo Enclosure 1; Buk 1=Bukittinggi Zoo Enclosure 1

The average value of the matrix is 3.00. Other individuals were placed in substandard enclosures. Ragunan Zoo Enclosure 2 (Dini a.k.a Unyil) was close to standard with a value of 2.30. She is an adult female living alone there. If the zoo management could find her a mate, it would increase her matrix value to exceed the minimum standard.

The weakest enclosure is Ragunan Enclosure 1 with a value of 0.95, followed by Surabaya Zoo Enclosure 1 with a value of 1.25 and Gembira Loka Zoo Yogyakarta Enclosure 1 with a value of 1.75. During my presentation, all zoo management staff became aware of the situation. However they have to decide whether to follow the standards or not and it really depends to their financial status.

History of keeping Malayan tapirs at each study site

The data recorded for each individual in each of the study sites varied. There were no standards used. When an animal dies, there is no postmortem report and when a new calf is born or first transferred to the zoo, there is no recording system for the origin, sire and dam number.

Studbook of Malayan tapirs in Indonesian zoos

There is no studbook for Malayan tapirs in Indonesian zoos. This system is needed as it will help with the management of the species. As the system used for recording now is very weak, a studbook may be a solution.

General behavior of Malayan tapirs in captivity

Individuals observed spent 51% of their daily activity resting followed by walking (24%) and activity in water (14%). Erection, urination and defecation showed the smallest value (0.04%).

Anderson & Jones (1984), Nowak (1991), Leopold (1959), Medway (1969), Tweedie (1978) and Walker (1964) reported that except for females with young, tapirs are primarily solitary and nocturnal in the wild. Recent field studies by Fragoso (1987) and Williams (1978) have suggested that they are more tolerant of conspecifics than previously realized and demonstrate crepuscular rather than completely nocturnal activity in undisturbed forests (Eisenberg 1989; Emmons 1990).

Only individuals at Ragunan Zoo Enclosure 3 (Yatim & Kentung) were nocturnal. The others were either passive most of the time or showed unbalanced activities. Suitable space and enrichment would change this situation.

Use of enclosure space by Malayan tapirs in captivity

Four of the individuals observed used the cemented area more often than the natural area (Figure 1). They were Wardha/Opi, Dini/Unyil, Madun and Big-Big. Wardha/Opi and Big-Big were injured. During the study, Wardha/Opi could not walk properly. She always avoided using her hind foot. Big-Big was totally blind. Dini/Unyil and Madun were alone. Dini/Unyil’s...
physical problem was obesity while Madun’s enclosure structure was packed with two ponds, one of which was leaking. All of these factors may have led to passive activity such as resting under the shelter rather than exploring the enclosure.

**Figure 1:** Percentage of enclosure space used by Malayan tapirs in captivity.

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**Public perception of Malayan tapirs**

Education for zoo visitors is almost non-existent, meaning none of the zoos have any sort of package for kindergarten, primary and secondary-school students. These levels of youngsters are very enthusiastic when they visit the zoo but yet they did not manage to gain any information from their visit. None of the zoo educators or signage were being used to give them information.

Out of all the study sites, 87% of visitors at Bukittinggi Zoo knew that the animals in the enclosure were Malayan tapirs, followed by visitors to the Gembira Loka Zoo (42%), Ragunan Zoo (21%) and Surabaya Zoo (11%). Most of visitors at Bukittinggi Zoo claimed that they had seen the animals in their area before. Malayan tapirs live in Sumatra but not in Java. Considering that the number of visitors that knew about Malayan tapirs was very low, especially in Java, there is a need for a specific education program. Signage is also a powerful tool for educating visitors.

Malayan tapirs were thought to be wild boars by a number of visitors, 46% at Ragunan Zoo, 38% at Surabaya Zoo, 21% at Gembira Loka Zoo and 7% at Bukittinggi Zoo.

According to the visitors that knew that the animals in the enclosure were Malayan tapirs, 35.4% knew it from a former visit, 31.5% were first time visitors, 10% knew from television and radio and 8.5% from biology lessons. Others knew from other sources (6.2%), general knowledge (5.3%) and literature (3.1%).

**Tapir Talk at the study sites**

Before I began my project, I discussed it with the headquarters of the Forestry Department on 23rd November 2005 and the Indonesian Zoo Association on 30th November 2005. Then, I had a meeting with Dr. Nico van Strien, South East Asia Coordinator, International Rhino Foundation and Mr. Wilson Novarino, Lecturer of Universitas Andalas Sumatera. Both of them are also members of IUCN/SSC/TSG.

A formal presentation and group discussion was held on 19th January 2006 between zoo managers and veterinarians, and on 23rd January 2006 an informal discussion was held with zoo keepers at Ragunan Zoo. There, I presented my recent input during the study at Ragunan Zoo and compared my findings to the IUCN/SSC/TSG Minimum Husbandry Standards. On 24th February 2006, I had a small meeting with the vets at Ragunan Zoo discussing the health status of the Malayan tapirs at the zoo. As for Gembira Loka Zoo Yogyakarta, I presented my study there on 26th April 2006 with the zoo’s veterinarians, lecturers and veterinary students from Universitas Gajah Mada. Informal discussions were conducted at Surabaya Zoo with the keeper and veterinarians. A presentation at Bukittinggi Zoo was held on 17th June 2006 between the zoo director, the education officer and the keepers.

During my stay in Indonesia, I visited nine private and government universities to give two hour Tapir Talk sessions (Table 4). The main objective of this activity was to raise university students’ awareness about the species, and to create indirect networks between different organizations so that more wildlife researchers would be developed.
Table 4: List of universities where Tapir Talk sessions were held.

<table>
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REFERENCES


Introduction

The report presented to the Second World Assembly on Aging in 2002 identified the current demographic situation as follows:

1. Population aging is unprecedented, without parallel in the history of humanity. Increases in the proportion of older persons (60 years old or older) are being accompanied by declines in the proportion of the young (under age 15). By 2050, the number of older persons in the world will exceed the number of young for the first time in history. Moreover, by 1998 this historic reversal in relative proportions of young and old had already taken place in the more developed regions;

2. Population aging is pervasive, a global phenomenon affecting every man, woman and child. The steady increase of older age groups in national populations, both in absolute numbers and in relation to the working-age population, has a direct bearing on the intergenerational equity and solidarity that are the foundations of society;

3. Population aging is profound, having major consequences and implications for all facets of human life. In the economic arena, population aging will have an impact on economic growth, savings, investment and consumption, labor markets, pensions, taxation and intergenerational transfers. In the social sphere, population aging affects health and health care, family composition and living arrangements, housing and migration. In the political arena, population aging can influence voting patterns and representation; and

4. Population aging is enduring. During the twentieth century the proportion of older persons continued to rise, and this trend is expected to continue into the twenty-first century.

Globally, the population of older persons is growing by two percent each year, considerably faster than the population as a whole. It is estimated that the proportion of persons aged sixty years and older in the world will double between 2000 and 2050 from ten to twenty-one percent (i.e. from 600 million to 2,000 million in absolute numbers). In 2025, it is projected that fifteen percent of the world population will be aged sixty and above. Fifty-two percent of the world’s elderly lived in Asia and the Pacific in 2002, and this is projected to increase to fifty-nine percent by 2025 (Shanghai Implementation Strategy 2002).

The Philippines and Malaysia are facing a similar situation with Thailand in terms of the rapid growth of the elderly in the population. As of 2004, the Philippines and Malaysia had 5.7 and 1.7 million people over sixty years of age who accounted for 6.9% and 6.5% of the total population in their respective countries. The rapid growth of this segment of the population is expected to continue in high rate. In response to this situation, different sectors, such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations and religious organizations, in the Philippines and Malaysia have developed programs and services with creative approaches to address the needs and concerns of older people under the support and supervision of the concerned ministries. One of these creative approaches is strengthening the existing support system in families and communities, which reflects traditional and cultural practices in providing care to older people.

Objective

The purpose of this paper is to study the main areas and policies concerning the services management system for senior citizens as well as ways to develop various models for service management systems for the elderly persons. This study was conducted mainly in the Philippines and Malaysia by collecting the information for analysis and research use.

Significance of the study

This study of management programs and social services in the Philippines and Malaysia will offer insights to various other organizations and enable them to modify and improve the welfare services for the elderly population in Thailand. The increase in the elderly population at present is critical, and will provide a major challenge to both the government and the general public.
Methodology

The study was conducted in the Philippines and Malaysia utilizing primary data-gathering methods such as interviews and participant observation through field visits. A survey was also conducted among various groups/regions. Secondary data such as information, plans, project proposals, reports and previous research on elderly persons were simultaneously gathered and reviewed.

Review of secondary data

Secondary data were obtained from organizations for the elderly in national and city-level government offices and local universities and libraries. Reports and other written documents were examined for relevant information. Some data were available in document centers or were gathered by institutions working for elderly persons.

Survey

The survey was done by interviewing older persons encountered during the research period.

Key informant interviews

Key informants were people who had good knowledge about elderly persons’ social services, such as those in charge of centers for the aged or social workers in government agencies, non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, the private sector and some members of senior citizens’ organization.

Participant observation

Attending activities of senior citizens such as meetings, field trips and group discussions helped in grasping the underlying meaning of what it means to be an elderly person by learning more about and understanding the reality of elderly persons’ daily lives.

Sampling

The researcher used a group of key persons. This meant that the researcher relied on people who could actually give accurate information about older people. There were more than two hundred persons included in this sample, such as:

1. Government staff of the country, especially of the agencies that work directly with/for senior citizens.
2. The staff of private organizations, including non-governmental organizations, charities, and volunteer groups, who work directly with senior citizens.
3. The senior citizens who are the direct beneficiaries of government and private services.

Selection criteria for research participants

Senior citizens are:
In general, service users, members of committees in senior citizen’s organizations.

Social Social Service officers are:
Social workers, health care service providers, organization founders in the private sector and non-governmental organizations, government officials directly in charge at each level (ministry, bureau, regional office, municipality, city and district).

Data analysis

1. Data from the literature review were analyzed and synthesized.
2. Data from the collected interviews were analyzed.
3. Data from participant observations were analyzed.
4. The main findings were set out.

Findings

The Philippines

As of 2004, the Philippines had a population of approximately eighty-three million people. The estimated Philippine population of persons aged sixty years old and above totaled 5,705,591 people. This number comprised 6.9% of the total population of the country based on the medium assumption of the National Statistics Office (NSO). The number of senior citizens was further broken down into the following categories: 1) 3,448,304 Young Old (60-69); 2) 1,694,170 Old (70-79); and 3) 563,117 Oldest Old (80+).

However, this number is growing at a faster rate than in many other countries and is expected to increase to 18.1 percent of the total population, or exceed 11.1 million by 2025. In a like manner, the projected average life expectancy for Filipinos is sixty-nine years. The average life expectancy for males is sixty-seven and seventy-one for females. This has been brought about by changing lifestyles and advances in medicine and medical technology.
By 2010, occurring simultaneously with this rapid growth in the elderly population will be the increase in their special needs such as health care, housing, income security and other social services. All these have to be addressed not only by their respective families and communities, but also by the entire government machinery. Preparatory measures should be undertaken to prepare not only senior citizens themselves but the whole citizenry in coping with this phenomenon.

Demographic forces are at work that will change the age structure in this country as seen from the latest Philippine statistics. The reductions in the birth and death rates as well as the improvements in health services and facilities have helped increase the population’s life expectancy and the increment of the aging population.

**Country policies concerning senior citizens (existing laws)**

* Republic Act No. 7432 (Enacted on July 22, 1991)
  An Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges and for other purposes.

The grant of a twenty percent (20%) discount from all establishments relative to the utilization of transportation services, hotels and similar lodging establishments, restaurants and recreation centers and the purchase of medicine anywhere in the country, provided that private establishments may claim the cost as a tax credit;

The Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) shall be established in the Office of the Mayor to provide the initial national identification cards and to assist in dealing with any complaints that any establishment is refusing to grant the privileges due to them under the law.

The definition of the term “Senior Citizen” shall be any resident citizen of the Philippines at least sixty (60) years old, including those who have retired from both governmental offices and private enterprises, and have an income of not more than sixty thousand pesos (P60,000) per annum (subject to review by the National Economic and Development Authority every three years).

* Republic Act No. 7876 (Enacted on July 25, 1994)
  An Act Establishing a Senior Citizens Center in all Cities, Municipalities and Appropriating Funds.

This law mandated the establishment of senior citizens’ centers in all cities and municipalities to cater to senior citizens and their interaction needs as well as to serve as venues for conducting other meaningful activities and result in an improved quality of life for all.

The Definition of the term “Senior Citizens”, as used in this Act, shall refer to any person who is at least sixty (60) years of age.

* Republic Act No. 9257 (Enacted on February 26, 2004)
  An Act Granting Additional Benefits and Privileges to Senior Citizens amending for the purpose Republic Act 7432, including funeral and burial services for the death of senior citizens;

The declared policies and objectives of this Act: it is the duty of the family to take care of its elderly members while the state may design programs of social security for them. The exemption from the payment of individual income taxes: provided, that their annual taxable income does not exceed the poverty level as determined by the National Economic Development Authority for that year;

The grant of twenty percent (20%) discount on medical and dental services; the grant of twenty percent (20%) discount in public railway, skyway and bus fare for the exclusive use of the enjoyment of senior citizens; the government may grant special discounts in special programs for senior citizens on the purchase of basic commodities;

Educational assistance to senior citizens to pursue post-secondary, tertiary, post-tertiary, as well as vocational or technical education in both public and private schools through the provision of scholarships, grants, financial aid, subsidies and other incentives to qualified senior citizens, including support for books, learning materials, and uniform allowances, to the extent feasible; provided, that senior citizens shall meet minimum admission requirements;

Provision of express lanes for senior citizens in all commercial and government establishments; in the absence thereof, priority shall be given to them.

The Government shall provide the grant of at least fifty percent (50%) discount for consumption of electricity, water, and telephone by the senior citizens center and residential care/group homes that non-stock, non-profit domestic corporations have organized and operate exclusively for the purpose of promoting the well-being of abandoned, neglected, unattached, or homeless senior citizens.
Monitoring and Coordinating

The Government has established an active and effective National Monitoring and Coordinating Board (NMCB) at the national and local levels and an Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA).

Objectives of the National Monitoring and Coordinating Board (NMCB)

a) Formulate a National Plan of Action for Senior Citizens in coordination with concerned government agencies and other stakeholders;

b) Develop an effective monitoring and reporting system towards efficient, consistent and uniform implementation of the law;

c) Develop and institute effective and innovative approaches and methods with which to address emerging concerns of senior citizens;

d) Coordinate the programs and projects of the concerned agencies to immediately and effectively address the issues and concerns of senior citizens;

e) Coordinate the conduct of nationwide information and education campaigns and other advocacy activities on RA9257;

f) Monitor the conduct of orientation, training and other capacity building programs to maximize the contributions and participation of Senior Citizens; and

g) Coordinate the conduct and evaluation of the plan of action, research and documentation of good practices and disparities for policy and program development.

Objectives of the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA)

a) To actively establish national, regional and international networks for resource generation and technical cooperation;

b) To prepare a yearly accomplishment report for the Office of the President, Congress and the concerned National Government and Local Government Units;

c) To plan, implement and monitor yearly work programs in pursuance of the objectives of this Act;

d) To draw up a list of available and required services that can be provided to senior citizens;

e) To maintain and regularly update on a quarterly basis the list of senior citizens and to issue nationally uniform individual identification cards and purchase booklets, free of charge, which shall be valid anywhere in the country;

f) To serve as a general information and liaison center to serve the needs of senior citizens;

g) To monitor compliance with the provisions of this act, particularly the granting of special discounts and privileges to senior citizens;

h) To report to the Mayor any establishments found violating any provisions of the Act;

i) To assist senior citizens in filing complaints or charges against any person, natural or judicial, establishment, institution or agency refusing to comply with the privileges exclusively granted to senior citizens; and

j) To establish linkages and work together with accredited non-governmental organizations, people’s organizations and the barangays in their respective areas.

Programs and services

Government officials and policy planners have recognized the rising need to address the predicament of the elderly sector. The 1987 Philippines Constitution includes a section aimed at upholding and promoting the welfare of the elderly with respect to health concerns, social services and elderly care.

Government programs and services

Pension system

The objective of the pension system is to provide social security benefits for retired workers of the government and private offices. The Philippines has one of the oldest social security programs in Asia, with very wide coverage and a broad range of benefits. The social security aspect is two-tiered, with the first tier providing mandatory basic coverage of the defined benefit type, and the second tier providing voluntary supplementary coverage through private sector pension plans. Coverage under the first tier comes from two sources. The Government Security Insurance System (GSIS), created in 1936 and administered by the Department of Budget and Management, is a retirement benefit plan for selected government employees. Benefits under GSIS cover the following contingencies: retirement, separation, unemployment, disability, and death (through both a compulsory and optional life insurance feature). Retirement benefits are available to those who have fifteen years of service and are at least sixty years of age. Compulsory age at retirement is sixty-five years. Those reaching age sixty-five with thirty-five years of service can obtain a pension of close to eighty percent of their last salary, up to a special wage ceiling. Retirees can claim benefits under two basic options, each of which combines a lump sum plus a life time annuity. The Philippines’ broader Social Security System (SSS), created in 1954, covers those in the private sector and
is of the defined benefit type, with contributions by the employee and employer, but with the government responsible for the solvency of the funds and as the guarantor of the mandated benefit levels. The SSS program also provides benefits for death, disability, sickness, and maternity (Ofstedal, et al. 2005).

Welfare services

The public delivery of services to disadvantaged sectors and populations in the country like the elderly is undertaken mainly through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). DSWD provides programs and services that are based on the following guiding principles:
- The individual senior citizen’s right to services and opportunities that will help them achieve a productive, wholesome and satisfying life.
- Family and community responsibility in recognizing the potential of elderly people and the need to provide opportunities to make minimum use of such potential.
- Government responsibility to provide basic and essential services for senior citizens well being through the provision of adequate care and relief from stress. There are twelve homes for the aged accredited by DSWD operated by both the government and other charitable or private institutions. The government manages three residential facilities, namely: a) Golden Acres in Bago Bantay, Quezon City; b) Tagum Home for the Aged in Visayan Village, Davao del Norte; and c) Home for the Elderly in Talon-Talon, Zamboanga City. Furthermore, there are homes managed by city administrations, such as Luwalhati run by the City of Manila, and Co So Gian run by the City of Davao and other charitable institutions.

Programs and services provided by private organizations

There are various types of private organizations who work for senior citizens; they can be categorized by their activities, as follows:

- Center-based programs

According to religion statistics, the great majority of Filipinos are Christian (80%). There are homes for the aged and nursing homes run and supported by the church through national and international organizations such as Hospicio de San Jose, CARE for the Elderly Foundation, Inc., St. Luke’s Geriatric Day Care and Antipolo Geriatric Centre: P. Ilusorio Center for Geriatric Care. The services provided are medical/nursing services, day centers for the elderly, geriatric rehabilitation, and temporary/permanent shelter, and differ for each organization.

- Community-based programs

Some organizations are involved in community organization, which means building senior citizens’ organizations by consolidating, strengthening and reorganizing existing organizations for elderly people, as well as training primary leaders and producing second-line leaders. Community-based programs include establishing community-based mechanisms involving senior citizens’ family members and community organizations in addressing local senior citizens’ issues and concerns, organizing community-based programs for elderly people such as livelihood development that includes setting up locally managed income-generating projects for senior citizens and their families and improving the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of senior citizens. Other programs set up senior citizen organization-led community-based mechanisms to address seniors’ health needs. There are also programs for network building, establishing federations of community-based organizations for elderly people, capacity building to improve the capability of local leaders to engage in federation activities, manage federation work, and engage in local, city, municipal and national advocacy work, and socialization and team building to enhance organizational cohesion and develop camaraderie among federation members.

One notable example of a community-based program is the Coalition of Services for the Elderly, Inc. (COSE). A group of people representing government, non-governmental and people’s organizations met in 1989 under the sponsorship of HelpAge International. Filipino culture has a tradition of respecting older people and forming community-based programs to confront important issues. The combination of the two has resulted in an organization and program that focuses on keeping senior citizens in the community who continue to contribute to the life of their community and an equitable society that upholds the rights and nurtures the potential of senior citizens, recognizes the elderly as a significant sector and allows them to remain healthy, self-reliant, secure and free to love God and other people. COSE promotes the Community-Based Program for the Elderly (CBPE). At present, COSE has forty senior citizens’ organizations included in the CBPE.

- Programs run by senior citizens

There are groups of senior citizens who are retired and want to continue their socialization who have
founded organizations and enabled themselves to share their experiences, talents and expertise in the spirit of camaraderie. Some of these have become established leaders in social development and promote the creation of productive opportunities for the fulfillment of their members and the community. The largest of these organizations, which is located in Baguio City in the north of the Philippines, is the Baguio-Benguet Association of Retired Persons Foundation, Inc. (BRAP).

**Malaysia**

In 2004, Malaysia had a total population of approximately twenty-five million. Its population is made up of Malays and other indigenous ethnic groups (66 percent), Chinese (25 percent), Indian (7 percent), and others (2 percent). Life expectancy for females is seventy-six and seventy-one for males (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2004; Tan and Tey 2005). The number of people considered elderly is further broken down into 1,322,200 Young Old (60-74) and 339,700 Old Old (75+).

The population of senior citizens has increased greatly in Malaysia. This is due to rapid economic development, increased urbanization, decreasing fertility and increasing life expectancy. At the same time, senior citizens have many added advantages because of their vast work experience, knowledge, skills and wisdom. Since the retirement age of fifty-six years seems to suggest that the threshold for aging is locally felt to begin at fifty-six years of age, a healthy person will still have fifteen to twenty-five years left to contribute to society (Elangovan 2005).

This increase in the number of senior citizens brings with it a greater responsibility on the part of the government to care for the older generation. The demographic changes will lead to greater expectations in terms of the social, economic, political and health care needs of senior citizens.

**Country policies concerning senior citizens**

Up till 1995, there was no specific policy for senior citizens in Malaysia. At best, policies or programs catering to the needs of the elderly have largely been incorporated into social welfare policy development in this country. The National Welfare policy promulgated in 1990 identifies the elderly, defined as those sixty years and over, as one of its many target groups. Although this marks an initial step in the provision of care for the elderly, institutional efforts are minimal as families and communities are encouraged or expected to provide care to the elderly. The principle is that institutional support is required as a last resort (Sim 2001).

A formal recognition of the elderly came about with the introduction of the National Policy for Older Persons in 1995, after a concerted effort by various NGOs pressing for the formulation of such a policy (Aizan 1995). The details of this and other Malaysian government policies are outlined as follows:

* National Policy for Older Persons, approved in October 1995

A united, tolerant and progressive nation with a populace that has strong moral and ethical fiber can help ensure a society that cares for the social well being of all its members. The inculcation of a caring culture is essentially nurtured through the family institution. It is therefore imperative that the support system for a strong and stable family institution is continuously enhanced and strengthened.

In this context the status and position of the elderly as important members of the family, society and nation have to be duly recognized. They have made significant contributions and recognition of their past, present and future roles at all levels, as well as their social well being, must be ensured.

The definition is in line with the one made at the “World Assembly on Aging in 1982” in Vienna; the elderly are defined as persons aged sixty years and above. The policy statement was made to ensure the social status, dignity and well being of the elderly as members of the family, society and nation by enabling them to optimize their self-potential, have access to all opportunities and have provision for their care and protection.

**Objectives**

1. To enhance the respect and dignity of the elderly in their families, society and the nation;
2. To improve the potential of the elderly so that they will continue to be active and productive in national development, and to create opportunities to assist them to continue to be self-reliant; and
3. To encourage the establishment and availability of specific facilities to ensure the care and protection of the elderly towards enhancing their well-being.

**Strategy**

1. respect and dignity;
2. self-reliance;
3. participation; and
4. research and development.
The Plan of Action for Older Persons is the mechanism by which the government set up agencies to facilitate aid, assistance and relief to senior citizens with the following major components:
1. social and recreational activities;
2. health;
3. education, training and religion;
4. housing;
5. research; and
6. publicity.

* The National Advisory and Consultative Council for Older Persons

In concordance with the National Policy for Older Persons, the National Advisory and Consultative Council for Older Persons presently under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development was established in May 1996. The Council consists of thirty-four members from various governmental agencies, NGOs, the private sector and individuals who have interest in aging. The Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry is the secretariat of the council and serves as the focal point for all issues related to aging.

The Technical Committee of the National Policy for Older Persons was formed in July 1996 to work on the Plan of Action. Under the Technical Committee, six sub-committees were formed to work on the major concerns of the Plan of Action to ensure the integration and participation of the elderly in the country’s development (Hajah 2005).

Programs and services

Government programs and services

Pension system

In Malaysia, formal social protection includes the Employees Provident Fund (EPF), established in 1951, and the Social Security Organization (SOCSO), established in 1969. Pensions are a non-contributory social security scheme for government employees. It is a pay–as–you-go plan. An employee who has served at least ten years is entitled to receive a lifetime monthly pension upon retirement. The maximum amount receivable by employees who have completed at least twenty-five years of service is half of the last drawn salary. The Employees Provident Fund Scheme contributes to the financial security of senior citizens who have retired from the private sector (Sim 2001).

Welfare services

Government services provided by the Department of Social Welfare include field and institutional services for the care and protection of senior citizens such as health care, guidance, counseling, recreation, and religious teaching. In addition, other programs that have been established to ensure the well-being of the older persons include:
1. financial assistance;
2. day care centers for senior citizens;
3. homes for senior citizens without next of kin;
4. programs and activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations; and
5. the celebration of the National Day for Older Persons.

“Institutional services” refers to shelter care in old folks’ homes (Rumah Seri Kenangan). There are eleven of these homes in Perlis, Kedah, Taiping, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Kelantan and two in East Malaysia. Senior citizens’ homes in Malaysia are administered by the federal government. These homes offer the following services: nursing and shelter, counseling and guidance, occupational rehabilitation, devotion facilities, recreational activities, and medical treatment.

Other services and programs offered by various agencies and organizations include:
1. The Health Ministry provides medical care for senior citizens, and has established Geriatric Care Units at the Seremban Hospital and the General Hospital Kuala Lumpur. Most health clinics in the country implement health care for senior citizens that covers the whole spectrum of services, encompassing health promotion, the prevention of ailments and rehabilitation services;
2. Major hospitals have special counters for senior citizens to receive their medication;
3. The Malaysian Railway and Malaysian Airlines System provide concession rates of 50% off the normal domestic fares to senior citizens;
4. The Immigration Department provides special counters for senior citizens submitting passport applications; and
5. Tax relief for family members who spend up to USD1,531 (RM5,000) per calendar year for medical expenses and the purchase of special appliances for their elderly parents.

Programs and services provided by private organizations

Due in part to the inter-group socio-economic differences, as well as the influence of historical, institutional, and economic factors, some in the private sectors and some...
non-governmental organizations were encouraged by the government to build homes and activity centers for the elderly through grants, advice and support. Major private organizations are charitable organizations that are run by associations and some private services that are run by businesses, such as nursing homes to support the elderly who can afford to stay there. There are also various services aimed at the different target groups of various private organizations that work together for the betterment of senior citizens, such as:

- Center based programs

**Majlis Pusat Kebajikan Semenanjung Malaysia (MPKSM)**

Central Welfare Council: West Malaysia

MPKSM is the oldest voluntary organization in the country; it is a voluntary organization that mainly looks after senior citizens. Their major financial support is provided by the government.

At present, MPKSM have nineteen day care centers throughout the country. The construction of all day care centers comes under the purview of a special project in the Department of Social Welfare.

The main functions of MPKSM are as follows:

- Operating the Rumah Sejahtera senior citizens' homes;
- Caring for sick and isolated senior citizens in their own homes (Home Care); and
- Operating the Pusat Jagaan Harian-Day Care Centers for senior citizens.

**National Council of Senior Citizens Organizations Malaysia: NACSCOM**

NACSCOM is a federation of senior citizens' associations/clubs in Malaysia. It was founded on 14 July 1990. It was established with the following purposes:

1. To set up a home with the help of the Mayor of the City Hall, Kuala Lumpur to rent ten of the low cost flats in the Setapak Old Folks' Home for elderly hardcore poor who have no children to rely on for support.
2. To set up an Information Communication Technology Center (ICT) as a life-long learning program to encourage senior citizens to learn how to use computers to enhance their quality of life in their old age. Computers were provided by the government and computer suppliers. NACSCOM has set up eight ICT centers in the following areas: Sungai Petani, Sitiawan, Petaling Jaya, Taman Mayang, Melaka, Batu Pahat, Kota Baru and Kelang.

The Eagle's Nest

The Eagle’s Nest Senior Citizens Community project is an attempt to rekindle the spirit of senior life and enable society to tap into the vast knowledge base they possess, as well as to ensure the active participation of healthy and able senior citizens in the establishment of mutual self-help income generating opportunities to realize their hopes and dreams.

The goals of the project are:

1. To help healthy senior citizens gain part-time or flexi-hour employment through networking;
2. To build a real time and interactive database of knowledge endowment for senior citizens;
3. To compile information critical to various categories of senior citizens;
4. To equip healthy, able senior citizens for greater employ ability and job opportunities;
5. To expand the scope of economic activities and opportunities through social and cultural activities and communication and networking nodes; and
6. To upgrade senior citizens’ skills through the provision of ICT training.

- Community programs

**Persatuan Kebajikan USIAMAS Malaysia (The Golden Age Welfare Association of Malaysia)**

USIAMAS is an NGO for senior citizens with a vision of harnessing senior citizens' energy and experiences for the service of Malaysian society. USIAMAS has three projects: the PRONOVA Initiative, the Living History Project and the Home Help Service project. It aims to utilize these projects to bring together the senior citizens of this country and to utilize their skills, experiences and wisdom to benefit senior citizens and other segments of the community.

- Programs implemented by senior citizens

NACSCOM also encourages senior citizens to take an active role and set up different clubs/associations for themselves. Currently, NACSCOM has twenty-five senior citizen association/club affiliates throughout the country with grass roots memberships. NACSCOM is also involved in advocacy. NACSCOM has also organized activities for associations/clubs in Malaysia, such as the NACSCOM Fundraising Dinner, NACSCOM Annual Sports Events and the NACSCOM Jogathon. In Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, NACSCOM has set up thirteen associations/clubs such as the Central Senior Citizens Association, the Evergreen Senior Citizens Association, Senior Citizens Subang Jaya, the Senior...
Citizens Club Klang, the Senior Citizens Association Wilayah Persekutuan and the Genting Klang Senior Citizens Association.

**Genting Klang Senior Citizens Association—Kuala Lumpur**

The Genting Klang Senior Citizens Association was set up by NACSCOM in 2000 with ten members and today their membership numbers more than 120 members. Most of their members are vendors in the local market in Setapak, who spend their free time by joining in activities after they finish work in the morning. They have an active senior citizens group with activities three days a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.30 a.m.-2.30 p.m.; the participants are members from nearby areas. Activities include health talks, language classes, karaoke sessions, dance sessions, trips to places of interest, Mother’s Day celebrations, celebrations on other special occasions, and NACSCOM activities.

**Research results**

The results of the study on senior citizens’ living conditions and their opinions about social services provided by the government in the Philippines and Malaysia are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**: Profile of senior citizen interviewees, their living conditions and their opinions about social services provided by the government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews were conducted with 68 senior citizens in Manila, Quezon City, Antipolo, Daet and Bunawan on Mindanao Island.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interviews were conducted with 38 senior citizens in Penang, Seremban, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee Characteristics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interviewee Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age and sex</strong>: Mostly women with an average age of 65 years old.</td>
<td><strong>Age and sex</strong>: Mostly women with an average age of 65 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong>: Most of them were living with their spouses while the others were widowed. A few were separated and some were single. Most of the widows lived with their children while the singles lived alone or with their relatives. There was an average of six people in each family.</td>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong>: Most of them were living with their spouses and their children while the widows and singles lived alone. There was an average of four people in each family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong>: The senior citizens earned their income from their pensions, from their children or from small business and employment. The average income per month was USD37.50(PHP1,500). Their main expenses were food, transportation, medicine, water and electricity.</td>
<td><strong>Income</strong>: The senior citizens earned their income from their pensions, their children and from rental fees. The average income per month was USD306.27(RM1,000). The main expenses were for food, transportation, household expenses, clothes and personal recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily activities</strong>: Their daily activities included household chores (cooking, cleaning and gardening), exercise, physical therapy, babysitting, church activities and social activities.</td>
<td><strong>Daily activities</strong>: Their daily activities included household chores, exercise (morning/evening walk, dancing, singing, Chinese cultural dancing), gardening, meeting with friends at a Senior Citizens’ Center, volunteer work and religious activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong>: Most of them are members of the Senior Citizens’ Organization in their own community while others are members of more than one organization.</td>
<td><strong>Membership</strong>: Most of them are members of the Senior Citizens’ Association and Day Center. Some of them are members of three organizations: the YMCA Senior Citizens Association, the Genting Klang Senior Citizens Association, the Central Senior Citizens Association and/or the Silver Jubilee Home for the Aged, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical treatment</strong>: Most of the senior citizens saw a doctor when they were sick. Only a few of them used herbal medicines or bought medicines on their own. Health care centers are provided in most communities. Many of the health centers have set specific dates to service senior citizens. The set dates vary for each health station.</td>
<td><strong>Medical treatment</strong>: Most of the senior citizens saw a doctor when they were sick. Only a few of them bought medicine on their own. Health care stations are set up near their communities. No specific dates are set to service the elderly. Services for elderly are arranged only once in two months at each health care station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The opinions of senior citizens about the policies and social services provided by the government</strong>: The opinions of senior citizens are positive. They agree that the government has good policies for them but some policies are still not implemented. In addition, benefits are limited. They want the government to provide more public health services such as free health check ups, free medicine, livelihood programs and also jobs or volunteer work in order for them to get additional income each month.</td>
<td><strong>The opinions of the policies and social services provided by the government</strong>: The opinions of senior citizens are positive. They agree that the government has good policies and services for them but some services are still insufficient such as health care stations, old-age pensions, special services for the elderly in the hospital, etc. They want the government to provide more services and benefits to them, e.g. special rate feres for public transportation, besides the airplane and train which the government has already provided, as well as disabled access for buses and trains, etc. They also want to have various social welfare funds for the elderly. Furthermore, young people should be educated to pay more attention to senior citizens.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community

*The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows*
**Discussion**

An aging population is not only an issue for western countries where living conditions are better. This study in the Philippines and Malaysia shows that the issue of an aging population is linked between different countries as well. For example, senior citizens in Japan need care givers and the Japanese government has issued a law that allows Filipinos to work as care givers for senior citizens in Japan. Meanwhile, there are some situations where senior citizens in the Philippines have to live in a very difficult situation and have no one to provide care and support. In some cases, senior citizens have to look after their grandchildren whose parents have migrated to work overseas for economic reasons. In Malaysia, the population is small and senior citizens' foreign care givers are mostly from Indonesia. However, senior citizens in Malaysia still lack psychological and emotional support. Some of them are left in homes for the aged and are rarely visited by their families.

As the elderly population continues to increase, government and senior citizens are growing more concerned. The Philippines and Malaysia are striving to promote successful aging and develop services and policies that will ultimately improve quality of life and well-being, following the U.N. Principles for Older Persons, such as independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity.

In the Philippines, there are specific policies concerning the elderly. Local governments and NGOs have set up senior citizens’ organizations as mechanisms for the development of self sufficiency amongst the aging population. There are various methods and activities that have been carried out successfully. Senior citizens can use the models and examples that have been set up in order to enhance their quality of life. In return, these senior citizens are able to realize their dignity as useful citizens. They are able to access the policies and programs that the government has laid down. However, due to budget and financial constraints, the Philippines government has difficulty in executing programs for the elderly even though it has very good ideas and programs for them.

The Philippines government has a policy of allocating one percent of the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s budget towards the senior citizens and the disabled. The use of this budget depends on the person responsible for executing the relevant policies. This budget is shared between senior citizens and the disabled. Whoever submits a relevant proposal will get a larger share of this budget allocation. If the people responsible for senior citizens do not submit a budget, the elderly community cannot partake in its shared allocation.

In the Philippines, the government has set up mechanisms for active and effective monitoring of policies for senior citizens such as the National Monitoring and Coordinating Board (NMCB) at the national level and the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) at the local municipal level. Senior citizens have also set up a group to run services in the community and have representation at all levels up to the policy level. They have the right to make policies that affect them and to ensure the continuance of the welfare structure.

In Malaysia, the National Plan of Action for Older Persons identified the system components that are not fully functional and determined alternative solutions to enhance the implementation of the National Plan of Action (2005). The most significant contribution by the government is the number of senior citizens’ homes built to cater to the growing numbers of elderly in the population. NGOs are the prime movers for the health and well-being of senior citizens. Welfare and privileges accorded to the elderly are provided by separate government entities such as special discounts on the transportation fares for Malaysian Airlines and the Malaysia Railway-Keretapi Tanah Melayu, special counters for the elderly in Immigration offices, Geriatric Care Units in hospitals and other, similar services. Most of these welfare activities are carried out in big cities but not in smaller towns and villages.

The government has set policies that lay out the principles for implementation but has not yet made any efforts to come out with plans and programs for the elderly. As for welfare, those in need come to the government for help most of the time but these cases happen only in extreme cases of poverty and abandonment. Currently, government personnel wait for those in need to come to see them for help. The government has allocated a certain amount of money to be paid as allowances and they also allocate equipments such as eye glasses and walking sticks for the poor elderly. However, the government should be more proactive in helping the elderly persons in this country.

The early retirement age of fifty-six has contributed to a large number of still active and useful senior citizens who find that they have a great deal of time and energy. Therefore, these groups of active retirees have initiated groups, clubs and associations that fulfill their needs.

The management and development of social services for senior citizens in Philippines and Malaysia are summarized in Table 2.
Table 2: Comparison of the management and development of social services for senior citizens in the Philippines and Malaysia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Care Service</strong></td>
<td><strong>Health Care Service</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free health care services by the government are provided through social service organizations only case by case, not for all.</td>
<td>• Public hospitals provide free health care services to all senior citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local government units have set up Community Health Centers in each community. Some set specific dates for services to senior citizens.</td>
<td>• Health check-up services are provided once every two months to the senior citizens at Day Care Centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-governmental organizations and senior citizens’ organizations have organized trainings to give knowledge on health care to the elderly.</td>
<td>• Non-governmental organizations and senior citizens’ organizations have organized trainings to give knowledge on health care to the elderly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nursing homes for senior citizens have been set up by religious organizations.</td>
<td>• Nursing homes for senior citizens have been set up by charitable organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Government provides free short-term vocational training for the elderly. The courses are arranged on request.</td>
<td>• The government and non-governmental organizations have provided free training on Information Communication Technology (ICT) for the elderly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language study, e.g. English, Chinese, Bahasa-Malaysia, is arranged for the elderly by non-governmental organizations and senior citizens’ organizations.</td>
<td>• Music classes and dance classes are held by senior citizens’ associations, e.g. harmonica, ball-room dancing and Chinese cultural dancing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Folk music classes are provided for the elderly in government Senior Citizens’ Homes.</td>
<td>• Folk music classes are provided for the elderly in government Senior Citizens’ Homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homes for the aged are run by government, religious organizations.</td>
<td>• Senior citizens’ homes are run by government, non-governmental and charitable organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group homes (homes for homeless senior citizens with the cooperation of government and non-governmental organizations).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment and Income Maintenance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Employment and Income Maintenance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senior citizens work as teaching assistants at Community Child Care Centers.</td>
<td>• Senior citizens work as assistants at the senior citizens’ homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No pension for the elderly.</td>
<td>• Career centers for the elderly are organized by non-governmental organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senior citizens receive USD61.25 (RM200) per month as their old-age pensions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recreation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recreation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Government and senior citizens’ organizations arrange places for activities or meetings for the elderly.</td>
<td>• The government supports con-struction and non-governmental organizations support the budget for the operation of day care centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Celebration of National Older Persons Day organized by government, non-governmental and senior citizens’ organizations.</td>
<td>• Senior citizens have formed their own activity clubs such as dancing, singing, exercise and meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Celebration of National Older Persons Day organized by government, non-governmental and senior citizens’ organizations.</td>
<td>• Celebration of National Older Persons Day organized by government, non-governmental and senior citizens’ organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the social services available in these two countries, we can see that the Philippines has a much greater variety of activities, with participation from senior citizens themselves since senior citizens in the Philippines are much more active and enthusiastic about addressing their own problems. They are very keen to participate in any activities. However, there are more social service projects that are supported by the government in Malaysia.

Social welfare for the elderly in Thailand still does not fully reflect the needs and concerns of senior citizens since programs are determined by the government. There are fewer opportunities for senior citizens who receive benefits to voice their concerns and opinions and determine appropriate services. In addition, senior citizens need not only welfare services but also intergenerational exchanges of knowledge and experiences to promote a learning process between.

**Implications**

From the study made in the Philippines and Malaysia, a model arrangement for social services for senior citizens can be visualized, with the following implications for Thailand:

1. In terms of Republic Acts in the Philippines, useful and practical Acts have been passed and these have been very beneficial for senior citizens. In Thailand, the 2003 Act on Elderly Persons covers a range of benefits for senior citizens. Its implementation began in early 2007, so it still remains to be seen whether the elderly will really benefit from the Act;
2. Senior citizens should have a chance to participate in social activities at various levels, from policy to practice. This makes senior citizens feel happy and gives them a feeling of dignity. The formation of senior citizens’ organizations and the establishment of a network of these organizations is an effective approach for promoting the participation of senior citizens in policy discussions and the implementation of policies and services that directly affect their lives. In the context of Thailand, this type of work could build on existing senior citizens’ groups/clubs and their network. The existing groups can be strengthened and supported to play a more active role in improving the situation of the elderly;

3. Services for senior citizens were arranged mainly as center-based, community-based, or senior citizen-based, which allowed the services to reach every group of senior citizens. A range of approaches for the provision of services is needed since the elderly are a diverse group. Different groups of senior citizens have different needs and concerns. Therefore, different approaches are required for the implementation of services and programs;

4. Senior citizens have different health care needs from those in younger age groups, so health care services specifically designed to cater to the elderly would improve access to services and the quality of services for senior citizens;

5. Services for senior citizens arranged in cooperation with organizational networks can make the arrangements feasible and not dependant solely on the government. The mobilization of resources from different sectors, including faith-based organizations such as temples, churches and mosques, is essential to meet the growing service needs of the elderly population;

6. Senior citizens should have opportunities to cooperate in various kinds of arrangements for them, such as in the operation of day centers for elderly people, which will lead to their successful management;

7. Senior citizens are a potential human resource that can be utilized to serve their own group and wider society since they have a wealth of life experiences and expertise. This idea has already been included in Thailand’s Second Long-Term Plan for Senior Citizens and it should be nurtured and further promoted;

8. Life-long learning opportunities will enable the senior citizens to stay active and continue to improve their capabilities so that they are able to effectively contribute to their communities, which will have a positive impact on society as a whole; and

9. Income security in old age is one of the key concerns for senior citizens. Senior citizens are often the poorest of the poor. The provision of social pensions (non-contributory pensions) is one of the key approaches for addressing poverty among the elderly.

Conclusion

The above research results suggest that Thailand can find a good model for service arrangements for senior citizens by applying the ideas listed above and using them in Thailand, especially the point that senior citizens should have opportunities to participate in various kinds of activities as well as the service arrangements for senior citizens. This should be arranged in of the form of center-based, community-based and senior citizen-based programs. Finally, services for the elderly should be organized with the cooperation of various kinds of organizations and groups, not solely by the government.

Moreover, Thailand really needs a good model to reform its social welfare and services for senior citizens as part of the country’s preparation for the growing number of elderly. Welfare programs and social services in the Philippines and Malaysia could be a good model for Thailand due to its similar social and cultural context as well as geographical proximity, particularly Malaysia.

The API community has opportunities to exchange experiences and ideas and conduct studies in almost all areas in order to enable people to live together in peace and harmony. Senior citizens, who are the segment of population that will form the majority in all societies in the future, should be studied in greater depth. There should be forums to share and exchange knowledge and changes related to older people. This should be done not only for our society, but also for us as individuals. Proper understanding and preparation will help us to stay active and can lead us to a healthy life in our old age.

References


Key Informants

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Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community
The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows
GENDER ISSUES IN ELDERLY CARE IN MALAYSIA AND JAPAN

Ekawati S. Wahyuni

Introduction

Background

Worldwide, the population over the age of sixty-five is growing more rapidly than any other population segment. By 2050, around fourteen percent of the total population (an estimated 1.3 billion people) will be over sixty-five, about eighty percent of whom will reside in less developed countries. In Asia, the proportion of the population over sixty-five has been growing at a high rate over the last fifty years. It grew from 55 million in 1950 to reach 207 million in 2000, and it is projected to reach 865 million by 2050 (Asia-Pacific Population and Policy 2000). Demographic changes have become an important phenomenon in the Asian continent in the last fifty years, and this has had a great influence on human living conditions. Ageing has become a research interest in various fields of study, such as demography, nursing, sociology, psychology, economics, and geriatric studies. In recent decades, gender scholars increasingly insist that elderly welfare is also a gender issue.

The gender issues surrounding elderly care can be identified from two points of view, that of the care receivers and that of the caregivers. The increase in life expectancy has led to the feminization of the elderly population, as women tend to have an advantage in life expectancy over men. According to Miller (1995) in Weaver, those in the oldest group of 85+ years are more likely to be women, on medical assistance, have less income and fewer economic resources, are less likely to be married and have no living spouse to care for them, and have chronic rather than acute illnesses. This means that the main care receivers will likely be elderly women.

On the other hand, in almost any society in the world, the main gender role of a woman is as the caregiver for any family members in need, whether children, husband or elderly parents. For most women, in their middle life they have to give care to all of these groups at the same time. A woman in this position has been described as a “sandwiched woman” (Hooyman and Gonyea 1999), and she will usually give up her own needs in life, whether a career, an interesting job, or just a moment for herself. However, when she needs to be cared for in her old age, sometimes no one is available for her. A woman who has spent her whole life caring for other people is more likely to end up in an institution.

The above situation may be more appropriate to describe women in industrial western societies, where formal elderly care is already established, and the elderly live in a nuclear-family household arrangement. In the majority of traditional societies in Asia, older persons live in extended, multigenerational households and rely on their adult children for financial and personal care support. The sons are expected to provide financial support to their elderly parents, while the daughters give personal care. An elderly woman is more likely to live with the family of one of her children following the death of her husband. However, as many young mothers and fathers have migrated to urban areas or overseas, the responsibility to care for their children is extended to maternal grandmothers. This means that the role of family caregiver is still carried to the end by elderly women in many traditional societies.

The on-going demographic, social and economic changes have challenged the traditional family support system in Asia (Asia-Pacific Population and Policy 2000). As a consequence of declining fertility and mortality, more people are surviving into old age. However, with smaller family sizes, the number of potential caregivers for the elderly is also decreasing. Some support of the elderly’s welfare, then, should be taken over by the state, community, or extended family. How quickly this pressure will undermine the traditional family elderly support system and the implications of this situation for gender roles in elderly care is examined in Malaysia and Japan.

Objectives

This report focuses on describing the on-going implementation of an elderly care support system by the state, communities and families in Japan and explaining the consequences arising due to on-going demographic changes for family life and gender roles in Malaysia and Japan. Gender issues will be examined from both the caregivers’ and the elderly’s points of view.
The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows

Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community

SESSION III

Methodology

Definitions

When does one begin to be called an old person? Hooyman and Kiyak (1992: 3-4) explain that gerontology, a field of study of the biological, psychological, and social aspects of the ageing process, acknowledges four distinct terms for the ageing process. The most known definition of ageing is *chronological ageing*, which defines ageing on the basis of a person’s years from birth. By this definition a forty year old person is definitely older than a twenty year old person. Chronological ageing is probably the most common definition used by people when they talk about ageing matters, and it is the easiest ageing definition to understand for most people. In addition to the chronological age definition, there are three other definitions of the ageing process with different references. *Biological ageing* refers to physical changes that reduce the functioning of the organ systems. *Psychological ageing* is related to the decline in sensory and perceptual processes, mental functioning, personality, drives, and motives. The last definition is *social ageing*, which is understood as an individual’s changing roles and relationships within the social structure. As people age chronologically, biologically, and psychologically, their social roles and relationships also alter. The social context determines the meaning of ageing for an individual. This report applies a chronological ageing definition, with “elderly” being defined as those above sixty-five years of age.

Another term used in this report that needs clarification is that of elderly care. There are two aspects that are interlinked in elderly care, economic support and physical care (Mason 1992). According to Mason (1992), financial support can be accomplished impersonally, whether by family members, governments, or a pension scheme, while physical care must be performed personally by a caregiver and involves more emotional attachment than does just providing financial support. These two aspects should be considered when formulating policies for the elderly support system. In their old age, people may need policies to ensure their physical care, or they may need both continuing financial support as well as care giving services. This report focuses more on physical care giving providers, while also considering the existence of a financial support system for the elderly.

The main focus of this report is to probe gender issues in elderly care. Gender issues are issues, concerns and problems arising from (a) the different roles played by men and women in society; (b) questionings of the relationship between women and men; and (c) undesirable or unjust gender inequalities. Based on this concept, gender issues in elderly care are concerns and problems that arise due to undesirable gender inequality and inequity in the implementation of elderly care in the family, community and state. Gender issues in elderly care emerge from the different roles played by men and women in society, which can create gender bias in the implementation of policies or programs concerning elderly care.

Data Collection Methods

This research employed qualitative methods, using a combination of direct observation, in-depth interviews and written documents to collect data. A sampling method based on convenience was used to decide which research subjects or informants would be interviewed or observed. The choice of subjects was based on the consideration of easy access to the households of the elderly or elderly care facilities by using either formal or informal permission. This study is intended to address the gender issues in the overall elderly care system in each country, although the data was collected only in small area of each country. This research was conducted in Malaysia between 18 August to 17 October 2005 and in Japan between 1 April to 30 May 2006.

In Malaysia, interviews were conducted with government officers in the Welfare Office and state nursing homes, with nurses and other caregivers in Ward 16 Kuala Lumpur Hospital and a private nursing home in Kuala Lumpur, with family caregivers and senior citizens living in urban and rural areas, and with NGO volunteers. In addition, observations were made in state and private nursing homes, the geriatric ward in Kuala Lumpur Hospital and a private nursing home in Seremban. In Japan, interviews were carried out with elderly-care providers and caregivers in private nursing homes in Kyoto Prefecture, Kochi Prefecture, and Mie Prefecture, with volunteer and family caregivers, and with senior citizens, while observations were conducted in private nursing homes at the locations previously mentioned. In addition to primary research, secondary research in terms of population data analysis and a literature study was also carried out during the research period.

Ageing Process in Malaysia and Japan

The ageing process in Malaysia is taking place at a different speed than in Japan. Based on the data presented in Table 1, the percentage of the population that is elderly in Malaysia at the present time is similar to that of Japan in the early twentieth century. Although the percentage of the population that is elderly in
Malaysia has been increasing over time, the Malaysian population is still categorized as a "young population", with less than five percent of the total population over sixty-five.

Japan’s population reached the level of an “old population” in the 1980s, and since then the Japanese population has been rapidly ageing. It has taken only twenty-five years to double the percentage of the elderly in the population from ten to twenty percent in Japan. In most European countries, the same process took more than fifty years (Horlacher 2002: 6). In 2005, the percentage of the elderly in the population in Japan was more than twenty percent, meaning that one in every five people in Japan is over the age of sixty-five.

Table 1: Percentage of Elderly to Total Population by Gender in Malaysia and Japan, 1920-2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Malaysia (65+) 1</th>
<th>Japan (65+) 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>5.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>6.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>7.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>14.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>22.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Source: Statistics Bureau and Japan Aging Research Center.
   *The estimated number of military personnel who resided outside of Japan was subtracted from the census data by estimated age group.
3) The 1991 and 2006 data are for Malaysia.

The rapid ageing process in both countries is a logical consequence of declining fertility and mortality, and increasing life expectancy at birth. In Malaysia, the decline in fertility has been significant since the introduction of the National Family Planning Programme in 1967. The total fertility rate (TFR) nearly halved between the 1960s and 2000, from a high of six to three. The increase in the average age at marriage and the lowering of marital fertility related to contraceptive usage has been contributing to the decline in overall fertility. In Japan, the main causes of fertility decline are similar to those in Malaysia, such as the delayed age at first marriage, the increasing number of never married women, and the high proportion of married women using contraception. However, the TFR in Japan is lower than in Malaysia. The TFR in Malaysia in 2005 had already been reached by Japan fifty years earlier. Table 2 shows the decline in the TFR between 1950 and 2005 in Malaysia and Japan.

In addition to their success in lowering fertility, Malaysia and Japan have also made achievements in medical and health services that have resulted in a significant decline in mortality rates among the young, and an increase in life expectancy at birth. Consistent with the timing of the fertility decline, on average Japanese people live longer than Malaysian people. Table 3 presents the life expectancy at birth in Malaysia and Japan during different time periods. We see that the difference in life expectancy between men and women in Japan is becoming wider over time. This situation will result in a greater number of elderly women in Japan in the future.

The demographic changes in Malaysia and Japan are an outcome of the modernization process that is related to industrialization, urbanization and education. Although modernization affects both men and women, its impacts on women are crucial to demographic changes. The delayed age at marriage among women is caused by increasing opportunities for women to pursue higher education and women taking wage work outside the home, which is not compatible with childrearing and lowers fertility. Industrialization has created more employment opportunities for men and women to work in non-agricultural sectors. The industrial sectors have mostly developed in urban areas, and this, then, drives young people from rural areas to migrate to urban areas. However, the effect of fertility decline and the increase in life expectancy at birth on the overall population situation is different between Malaysia and Japan.

Table 2: Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in Malaysia and Japan, 1950-2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950 – 1955</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955 – 1960</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 – 1965</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 – 1970</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 – 1975</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975 – 1980</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 – 1985</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985 – 1990</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 – 1995</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 – 2005*</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Skeldon 1995.

*Statistics Office of Malaysia and Japan.
Table 3: Life Expectancy at Birth in Malaysia and Japan, 1947-2025.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Malaysia¹ (yrs.)</th>
<th>Japan² (yrs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>61.64</td>
<td>65.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>66.44</td>
<td>70.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025⁵</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Japan, the decline in fertility and population ageing is followed by a population decline and negative population growth in the near future. This is caused by the very small flow of international migrants into Japan. On the other hand, Malaysia may take a longer time to experience a population decline or negative population growth, even with the decline in its fertility rate. This is attributed to the influx of international migrants into Malaysia. Since the 1980s, international migration has altered population growth. It has contributed about 0.4 percentage points to population growth, with the growth rate of non-Malaysians at six per cent per annum (POP Info Malaysia, January 2005).

The rapid ageing process increases the number of elderly who are in need of support in their daily life. The longer people live, the greater is the possibility that they will suffer from an illness of old age or have dementia. Therefore, to deal with the increasing number of elderly in the population, various long-term care systems, pension schemes, and medical care systems need to be built or rebuilt.

Aged-Care Support System and Gender Issues

Malaysia

In Malaysia, a specific policy for older persons was first stated in 1995. Before 1995, policies and programs to maintain the welfare of the elderly were integrated into general social welfare policy development, which considered elderly people as one its target groups (Ong 2001). The objectives of the National Welfare Policy for the Elderly are: (a) to promote the dignity and self-worth of elderly people within the family, society, and nation; (b) to improve the productivity of the elderly; and (c) to increase the number of elderly care facilities to ensure care and protection for them. The policy emphasis is on social aspects and does not adequately cover employment and income security (Ong 2001). To implement the National Policy for the Elderly, the Social Welfare Department initiated a Plan of Action, and established a National Senior Citizens Technical Committee in July 2006. There are six sub-committees under this Committee, namely social and recreational; health; education, religion and training; housing; research; and publicity. Under each sub-committee, various activities and programs for elderly care are planned and implemented. Various ministries and departments are involved in the implementation of the National Policy for the Elderly, while the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, plays the role of coordinating body.

However, Malaysia does not yet have a long-term care policy. The government encourages and expects families and communities to continue to provide care to older persons. The principle is that institutional support should be the last resort in elderly care. Malaysians still believe that the best place to care for the elderly is within the family home. Children have an obligation to take care of their ageing parents. It is considered disgraceful for the family to put their ageing parents in nursing home. Elderly people who currently stay in nursing home are homeless people or those without eligible family caregivers. The National Policy for the Elderly and other policies are basically gender neutral—the policy is applied to all senior citizens who meet the criteria for assistance, regardless of their gender.

Although various ministries and departments are involved in the implementation of the National Policy for the Elderly, two departments have already had a long involvement in elderly care, namely the Ministry of Health and the Department of Social Welfare. The role of the Malaysian Ministry of Health in elderly care became more apparent with the implementation of Health Care Programs for the Elderly in 1995, which integrated elderly health services and geriatric medicine into medical care programs. Meanwhile, for the Department of Social Welfare in Malaysia, elderly care has become one of its services to the community (Ong 2001). Below some of the two departments’ activities in carrying out elderly care are explained, with an emphasis on gender issues.
Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia

There are two programs for elderly care under the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development namely institutional care and financial support. There are several types of institutional care or nursing homes in Malaysia, some of them specific to a particular state. Only Rumah Seri Kenangan (RSK) or the “Home to Cherish Fond Memories”, a government fully-funded nursing home, is established in almost all states with a similar concept. There are nine RSKs in Malaysia sheltering 1,886 people. RSKs were established beginning in 1977 under the Akta Orang Papa 1977 (Dstitute Persons Act 1977), as part of the social welfare support system. In Selangor State, there are several types of nursing homes, such as an RSK in Cheras, community-based nursing homes with government support, special private sector and NGO-funded nursing homes (Rumah Tunas Budi), and Rumah Ehsan—a nursing home especially for poor elderly people who need long-term medical treatment.

Another program for the elderly is financial support or Bantuan Orang Tua (BOT). BOT refers to temporary financial support for poor senior citizens who live alone in their homes. In 2005, each BOT recipient received RM 135 per month. A single household with two elderly members can receive two BOT packages. There were 13,000 BOT recipients throughout Malaysia in 2005. The Department of Social Welfare also provides assistance for poor elderly people to obtain eye glasses, walking sticks, walking frames and other equipment to decrease their discomfort due to their declining physiological function and abilities.

Rumah Seri Kenangan (RSK), Negeri Sembilan State, Seremban

One of the RSKs is located in Seremban, the capital of Negeri Sembilan State. The capacity of RSK Seremban is 200 beds; in September 2005, only 153 beds were occupied by destitute people of all ethnicities, comprised of 83 men and 70 women. Several people were hospitalized because of their illnesses. Some of the occupants were homeless people aged less than sixty, as the RSK also sheltered homeless people who were not necessarily senior citizens to keep them from living on the street.

The RSK Seremban complex consists of several detached buildings with different functions. There are several separate wards to accommodate its inhabitants—for healthy, less-healthy, bedridden, and mentally ill residents—as well as individual buildings for a physiotherapy unit, meeting rooms, a counseling unit, the management office, and a kitchen with an adjoining dining room. Each ward is equipped with twenty single beds, toilets, a table for the RSK personnel in charge, and a dining table for frail or sick residents to have their meals at. The kitchen and dining room buildings are located at quite a distance from the wards. All residents are free to use the facilities in the RSK and move around the complex, and they are allowed to go out for recreational or family gathering purposes. Each resident received meals, snacks, medical check-ups, medical treatment, and pocket money of RM 10 per month in 2005.

According to the RSK’s manager, there are no special conditions applying to the residents based on gender differences, except that they sleep in different wards. However, the reasons for their stay in the RSK are slightly different between the male and female residents. Elderly women were sent to RSK because they had no children, they had no caregiver at home, they were poor, or sometimes because they had fought with their family. Meanwhile, elderly men stayed at the RSK because they had abandoned their family, were poor and had no caregiver, were sick and could not work, or were alcoholics.

The RSK had forty-five caregivers who worked in twenty-four hour shifts to take care of the residents, most of whom were women. The male staff worked as drivers, security guards, and general helpers to maintain the facilities in the RSK. Some healthy residents worked on a volunteer basis in the RSK, with women helping as cooks and men maintaining the gardens.

Rumah Tunas Budi (RTB) or Special Old Folks Home in Selangor

This is a new concept nursing-home, where the residents must be active elderly able to help themselves with day-to-day living without too much assistance from caregivers. The one year-old RTB intends to support senior citizens in surviving their ageing process as self-reliant beings. RTB is a cooperative venture between an NGO (the BAKTI Foundation), the private sector (Amway), and the government. The private sector provided the building and other facilities, the NGO runs and manages the home, and the government provides financial support and the land on which the RTB complex was built. The residents receive free meals, medical check-ups and medical treatment. Unfortunately, the concept of RTB is not yet popular among the active elderly. The two RTB buildings for men and women are almost empty. The capacity of
each building is twenty beds but, in September 2005, there were only five men and two women living in the RTB complex. One of the women residents clearly did not fit with the RTB’s criteria for eligible residency as she was ninety-two years old, bedridden, and needed continuous assistance. The management of RTB suggested that healthy and active ageing residents of an RSK be transferred to RTB, but the RSK refused the suggestion because the healthy and active residents are needed to help in preparing meals and snacks in the RSK.

Rumah Orang Tua (ROT) or Community-based Old-folks Home in Ampang, KL

This is an old nursing-home established and run by the Chinese community in Ampang, Kuala Lumpur. The ROT was established by a group of Chinese dignitaries. There were fifty-three elderly people living in ROT Ampang in September 2005, comprised of twenty-six women and twenty-five men. They were poor senior citizens with no children and family to take care of them, and they had no secure income to support their lives. The residents receive free beds, meals, medical check-ups and treatment, and can enjoy recreational activities in the ROT. The government provides financial support to pay for part of the operational costs, and provided land for the building, while the rest of the operational costs are paid out of donations made on a regular and casual basis. The ROT’s operation costs are around RM 15,000 per day. One source of casual donations is from visitors to the Chinese Temple near the ROT. These guests park their cars in the ROT compound and usually they will give a donation to the ROT. They might give money or food to the manager or give pocket money directly to the residents. In the main entrance to the building a table is set and one of the ROT management members sits there to receive donations from the many people who come and go throughout the day. The healthy residents also move back and forth from the parking area to the kitchen, bringing in cartoons of milk, sacks of rice, and other food stuffs. During that month, September 2005, a special prayer festival for Chinese people was held; therefore, many visitors came and made donations to the ROT.

One of the ROT residents, Miss Lay, who was 66 years old and had never been married, said that she had already collected RM33 in tips from the visitors. Usually the visitors come to the wards to distribute money to the residents, in amounts of RM1, RM3, and sometimes RM5. Miss Lay used to work as a waiter and later as a cook in various Chinese restaurants. Two years ago, her left knee-joint began hurting and the pain was unbearable when she stood too long; this made her stop working. She does not have any family to support her nor does she have any pension, so she applied to the ROT Ampang and, after three months of waiting, her application was successful. As she is still young and relatively healthy compared to the other residents, she voluntarily helps to prepare meals, and sometimes she helps other residents to wash their clothes, with compensation of RM0.50 per piece. The money she gets from washing clothes and donations is vital for buying the medicine that she has to take everyday to ease the pain of her left knee-joint, which is not covered by the ROT’s medical treatment expenses. There is also no rule or requirement that implies a gender consideration for acceptance to the ROT.

Community Care

Under the National Policy for the Elderly, the involvement of the community in elderly care is important, in line with the future reality of the rapidly increasing number of elderly. The role of communities in elderly care in Malaysia is still limited to specific NGOs, such as Usiamas, NASCOM, and GEM; within the wider community, elderly care is still considered a family matter. These NGOs are working to increase community awareness about elderly care problems in their own communities. Some activities being carried out by these NGOs for the elderly are home visits, cooking meals, accompanying them on errands, or helping them to get formal assistance. The staff of these NGOs are mostly middle-aged women or senior citizens themselves. For the middle-aged women, their involvement in elderly care is part of an awareness of their own path of life in the future that makes them want to prepare for their own ageing process. There is also no particular gender consideration in community elderly care except that most of the caregivers are, by nature, woman. Most of the NGOs still rely on government funding to do their activities.

A new community-based elderly care activity that is being developed by the Ministry of Health Malaysia in villages is Kumpulan Warga Emas (Golden Citizens’ Club). One of these is located in Klinik Kesehatan 14, Mukim Hulu Langat, Selangor. The Club members are people aged fifty-five years and over who meet every Wednesday and Friday to do activities such as exercise, counseling, and sharing. According to the Sungai Takali Village Head, there are around fifty members of the Club, although he is not sure how many of them are Sungai Takali Village residents. One of the village elderly, Mr. Umar, aged eighty-three years old,
said that he was too lazy to attend the Club meeting and, according to him, most elderly people in the village never go to the Club. A few elderly people who owned their own vehicles might be attending meetings regularly. Mr. Umar does not know about the activities of the Club, as it is a new activity in the village.

**Family Care**

“... children should take care of their parents until they die ... they cannot put their parents in nursing homes ...”

(Mr. Harry, forty-eight years old, Seremban Negeri Sembilan)

Caring for one’s parents is a form of the Malay principle of *balas jasa*. It is considered a great honor for children to be able to cherish and take care of their parents until they die. Therefore, according to Mr. Harry, it is not wise to promote institutional care in Malaysia, because it does not fit with Malaysian culture and beliefs about elderly care. The promotion of institutional care will erode children’s obligation to take care of their elderly parents using their own hands and merely replace it with money. He suggested that the elderly should live and be taken care of at home by their children, while the government should focus on improving health services that cater to the elderly. Better medical services for the elderly will help both the elderly and their caregivers to receive medical assistance. Mr. Harry and his wife are the prime caregivers to his sick and disabled mother, who is eighty-two years old. Although she is a strong-willed woman, with her health and physical condition, Mrs. Harry Senior has no other option than to accept Mr. Harry and his wife’s help in living her life at the moment.

In contrast to Mr. Harry, Mr. Umar, who is eighty-three years old, said that a nursing home might be a good alternative living arrangement for him in his last days because there, there would always be someone to take care of him, although it might be very expensive. He was talking about a private nursing home in Kuala Lumpur that costs RM1,200 per month per person. According to Mr. Umar, a nursing home is a good place for old people who do not have family members or relatives to be their care-givers. However, his sons might not allow him to stay in a nursing home, even in a private one. It is not common, as yet, for the Malay and Muslim community to send their elderly parents to a nursing home for care, even when they have a severe illness. This act will only make the children lose face in their community. There are still many possible living arrangements for Mr. Umar and his wife in the future. At the moment, assisted by a maid, Mr. Umar is the prime caregiver to his sick and disabled wife.

Mr. Umar’s home is next door to his son’s home, and everyday his daughter-in-law prepares breakfast and dinner for him and his wife; however, he has to provide his own lunch. Usually, he rides his motorcycle to buy lunch from one of the small food stalls near his house. The maid in the house is hired to care for his wife only during the day. She arrives in the morning at seven o’clock and leaves in the evening after Mr. Umar’s daughter-in-law returns from work. In the evening Mr. Umar gives full care to his wife. Besides caring for his wife, Mr. Umar also looks after for his grandchildren after school, although this does not imply any physical care for the children.

Anywhere in the world, women are the prime caregivers in the family. Although Mr. Harry and Mr. Umar claim themselves as the prime caregivers to their old and sick family members, physical care giving is still done by women, such as Mr. Harry’s wife or Mr. Umar’s maid and daughters-in-law. Mr. Harry’s mother refuses to bathe with the help of her son. Care giving is a traditional woman’s role. Even in formal care, caregivers such as staff in nursing homes or nurses in geriatric wards are usually women. The difference is in formal care, women get paid for care giving activities, while care giving within the family is done free of charge.

**Japan**

According to Ibe (2000), in Japan a policy on elderly care was first established by the Japanese government in 1989, called the Gold Plan. It was a ten-year strategy to promote health care and welfare for the elderly that consisted of seven main projects, including the urgent adoption of more effective in-home welfare policies in every municipality, the promotion of a campaign to reduce the number of bedridden elderly to zero, and the urgent establishment of related facilities. After five years, the Golden Plan was been revised in December 1994 to promote home-care services over long-term institutionalization, and was renamed the New Gold Plan. The New Gold Plan was then replaced by a public Long-Term Care Insurance system (*kaigo hoken*) on April 1, 2000, which was designed to cover growing long-term care expenses. The system covers ninety percent of the costs of nursing-care services received—either at home or in nursing homes—by elderly people who have been certified as being in need of care. Now, all Japanese citizens aged forty and over must pay a mandatory premium for long-term care insurance. The implementation of the new insurance system for the elderly has been boosting nursing care businesses,
such as care-related services, nursing products, and meal delivery services.

**Naimo no Sato (NS), a Group Home in Mie Prefecture**

NS opened in June 2005 under a private company, “Fuco”, owned by Mr. Naimo’s family. He is also the manager of NS, assisted by his wife. The property is owned by Naimo’s family and, to operate, NS is financially supported by the local government and its clients. It is the only such home in Tado Town, and one of seven homes in Kuwana City. In May 2005, NS was fully occupied with nine residents—one man and eight women. NS is a nursing-home for early dementia sufferers who are not eligible for overnight treatment in the hospital, as they are physically healthy. One of NS’s resident is Mr. Naimo’s mother who has been suffering from dementia for the past five years. She was not eligible to be treated in a hospital, and she refused to be cared for by her daughter-in-law at home. Mrs. Naimo Sr. had lived with Mr. Naimo and his wife since they were married, and did not reject her daughter-in-law until she began to suffer from dementia. She refused Mrs. Naimo Jr. because she was not her own daughter. She preferred to be cared for by her own daughter, which was impossible since she does not have a daughter. So Mr. Naimo admitted her into a group home in Kuwana City, while he started to learn about the procedures for operating a group home. When he retired from his job as a teacher, he started NS.

In May 2005, NS was operating with nine staff, all of whom were women aged forty to sixty years old and one of whom was a certified nurse. The staff worked on a part-time basis and their salary was paid by the local government. They worked in teams of four staff on each shift. The main job of the staff was to give close care to the residents, and assist them anytime they needed it. Besides the paid staff, there were also volunteers who occasionally visited the group home to entertain the residents. Volunteering was not yet common in Tada Town.

The “group home” concept is a modification of similar nursing homes in Sweden. Here, the residents live as if in their own home. They are allowed to bring their personal belongings and to decorate their bedroom similar to their own bedroom at home. They can do what they used to do at home, including cooking, gardening, walking or exercising accompanied by the staff. The dementia sufferers need twenty-four hour close care to prevent them from hurting themselves. Other types of institutional care for the elderly in Japan are roken (a transit-home care for elderly patients after discharging from a hospital before they return home), retirement homes and complete-care facilities. All types actually have similar concepts, in line with the long-term care insurance system requirement. Similar to Malaysia, gender is not a consideration for one to get formal care. One of the institution directors explained that there is no difference in treatment between men and women in the institution. Different treatment is given based on different levels of disability. Before an elderly person is admitted to a particular institution, a care manager together with a local government officer will evaluate the application and decide the level of disability and what treatment should be given to the applicant, how much the treatment will cost, and how much will be paid by the insurance.

The residents in the institution are those with a high level of disabilities, Level Two and higher, and therefore the quality of care is more important than other considerations. Even those who are in disability Level Four or Five are only in need of intensive physical care. Residents with Level Four or Five mostly are suffering dementia and already bedridden, so they will get a similar care without differentiating their gender. Another example of the least gender consideration in nursing home is the toilet facilities. If we are used to with information on “Gentlemen” or “Ladies” toilets in public places, but in a nursing home the toilets are differentiated by the equipment inside to support the residents who are left-handed or right-handed, because certain diseases can cause them to become disabled on one side. The indication of which toilet is the right one for use is shown with a picture of a left-hand palm or a right-hand palm instead of a picture of a woman or a man painted on the toilet door.

**Community and Family Care**

The role of the community in elderly care in Japan is important. Many people, usually middle-aged women, volunteer to visit institutions caring for the elderly or provide meals for them. They entertain and speak to the residents and, because of their intense involvement with elderly care, these women become aware about the situation that they might face in the future. They prepare themselves to welcome their old age. Not all Japanese women carry the burden of giving care to their elderly parents, as not all of them are married to the first son in the family. Nevertheless, they will become old in the future and will become care receivers. They also realize that they cannot expect too much to receive care from their children, and prepare themselves to live
in an institution later on. Based on their experiences in elderly care, these women realize that staying healthy in old age is a key to becoming a happy and worthy senior citizen. Two stories of Japanese women represent this point of view.

Mrs. Katana, the fifty-eight year old mother of a twenty-three year old daughter, is married to Mr. Katana, a retired sixty-four year old. She lives in a small town in Mie Prefecture with her husband, while her daughter lives in another city where she studies. Mrs. Katana is a housewife and once a month, for two hours, she teaches a painting class for the residents of a nursing home in her town. She has been a volunteer in the nursing home for ten months. She received elderly care training courses from the Japanese Red Cross. According to Japanese family traditions, as a daughter she is not burdened with a duty to care for her elderly parents, because it is her elderly brother’s wife’s duty, and she is also not responsible to care for her parents-in-law as her husband is not the eldest son in his family. However, according to Mrs. Katana, this Japanese familial system has been changing recently. Any daughter or son can become the primary caregiver to their own elderly parents. It is not the sole responsibility of the eldest son in the family anymore. As for the parents themselves, in recent times they prefer to live independently rather than be cared for by their children. Mrs. Katana herself will live with her husband in their old age, as the future of her daughter will be with her own family and perhaps she will carry a duty to be her parents-in-law’s primary caregiver. She is preparing for her old age by keeping herself healthy, physically and mentally, because she realizes that the cost of elderly health care is very expensive. She wants to live the elderly part of her life like her healthy, and independent eighty-three year old mother, and living in an institution at the end of her life is her least expectation.

Mrs. Araki, who is seventy-seven years old, is married to eighty-three year old, retired Mr. Araki. They have a son and a daughter. The Arakis have lived in an apartment built for elderly residents in Kyoto for nearly nineteen years. They chose this living arrangement to ease Mrs. Araki’s burden as a “sandwiched woman”. At one time, she had to care for her husband while also helping her son with his twin premature babies. The Arakis sold their property in the city and bought a mansion for their son and an apartment for themselves. By living in this apartment, Mrs. Araki can rely on the apartment staff, who are all trained in elderly care techniques, to look after her husband when she is away to care for her twin grandsons. The living arrangement between Mr. and Mrs. Araki and their son’s family is not a traditional Japanese family, because according to tradition the two families should live under one roof, and it is the duty of her daughter-in-law to care for her and her husband.

Mrs. Araki used to be a volunteer for community-based care for the elderly for many years and she has learned that Japanese society is changing. She observes that many problems emerge because elderly parents are not fit to live with their children, and she thinks that a multigenerational household is not an ideal living arrangement for elderly Japanese anymore. Mrs. Araki explained that her husband is a typical Japanese man who does not want to be involved with any household work or childcare matters and depends on her to do it for him, while her son shares the household work and childcare with his wife. Mrs. Araki lives her elderly life by accommodating the old style of living with her husband and the new lifestyle of her children in the changing Japanese society with dignity.

Conclusion

The ageing process is inevitable. The number of elderly people in Malaysia and Japan is growing rapidly, while the availability of caregivers is decreasing. This demographic process is accompanied by economic and social development processes that influence the elderly care support system.

The process of economic development has created more formal jobs in urban-industrial areas for women that are not compatible with domestic work including care giving. In the industrialization process, women have to juggle between their jobs and home, and women usually have to give up their job, or endure the double burden. Along with economic development, social development in terms of education has also been taking place. More and more women are become educated and financially independent, and they prefer to do paid jobs and buy substitute laborers to do the domestic work, including taking over their care giving role. In Malaysia, some women are able to pay for maids to take over their domestic jobs, including caring for their elderly parents at home, because it would bring shame to their family to put their elderly parents in an institution. In Japan, with a stronger economic position, the government has taken over elderly care with its comprehensive long-term care insurance system.

Although substitute labor and a long-term care insurance system can relieve some of women’s burden as elderly caregivers, there is another gender issue that needs attention. Elderly women are not in the same situation as elderly men. The current situation in Asia is that the situation of most elderly women is the product
of past discrimination against women, such as low or no education, never having had a paid job and therefore having no pension, fewer daughters to care for them, dependence on others to support them, and their natural tendency to live longer. Therefore, many elderly women are poor, living alone and still working to support themselves or staying in an institution.

"Are we up the challenge?"

Global ageing is inevitable. Are we ready for it? When we are young, our attitude towards the elderly is defined by the culture we are socialized in. In Asian society, we generally respect the social position of the older generation, but at the same time we underestimate them because of their decreasing biological and psychological condition. As a consequence of declining fertility and mortality rates, we expect to live longer but with fewer potential caregivers for us. This means that we should prepare to live our old age on our own, as our few potential family caregivers live far away from us, earning their living. For women, do we still expect that our sons will take care of us, and for men, are we preparing to anticipate that our wives may not want to take care of us without a similar obligation toward her from ourselves?

Do we have a secure income to support our old age without expecting too much from our children or the government for assistance? Do we have a pension? When do we start to save to secure our old age? Actually, we can start to prepare for our old age by keeping our health always in prime condition. Our health will be our savings in the future, as the inevitable problem of old age is our declining health status. Are we prepared to end up in an institution?

References


Fe A. delos Reyes

I. Introduction

All over the Philippines, recent years have seen the mushrooming of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with the development of children and adolescents with disabilities. For example, the Stichting Liliane Fonds, a Dutch funding institution, has over 130 lay and religious partners in the Philippines extending direct assistance to over 5,000 children and youngsters with disabilities.1

Naga City, a community of 138,000 people, has more than ten such NGOs and charitable institutions, which are funded by international NGOs or religious groups from their home base in Europe or Southeast Asia. The tremendous efforts of the international community to contribute to the development of people with disabilities and the hundreds and thousands of Euros spent for these projects merit at least one good impact study on the lives of individuals with disabilities.

I presented myself to the Asian Public Intellectual Fellowships Program with a study on the programs and services for children and youngsters with disabilities in Japan with a naive plan, having had no exposure to the Japanese culture and system of government. I wanted to put both cultures on the opposite end of a life scale and determine what factor or factors tip off the balance, i.e. what makes for a satisfying or challenging life for individuals and families with disabilities: money, supportive families, supportive government, spiritual and cultural ideation and/or community provisions. My experience as the parent of a child with a disability, and with other parents and families similarly situated in Naga City, (a place with deep religious fervor) told me that happiness and satisfaction may be interpreted on different planes: one, as a value judgment; and second, as God’s will that one has to live with and with which to find life’s purpose.

Nevertheless, the paper is about social justice for persons with disabilities, social justice as it concerns equality and inequality in the distribution of resources. Fundamental to the question of what social justice is for disabled people is a perception of the basic source of social injustice and the values that drive decisions about who should have what in society.

Prof. Robina Goodlad and Sheila Riddell in their discussion, “Social justice and disabled people: principles and challenges,”2 address these two questions. Social justice has its origins in the socially constructed differences between groups such as men and women, and disabled and non-disabled people, arising from differences in income, wealth and other resources. The distribution process, on the other hand, is driven by values held high in society. In an egalitarian society, equality, need and merit are seen as appropriate values to adopt within particular distribution processes. Yet these values are often not applied as expected to disabled people, and the problem of who is responsible for rectifying this social injustice is often invoked.

Children and adolescents with disabilities and their families in the Philippines and the developing world are daily witnesses to such social injustices, their lives reflecting a daily struggle for the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing. The basic right to live in a protected environment, to get support to actualize one’s potentials, to be able to live and participate in the mainstream society, all of which are spelled out beautifully on paper, become the daily challenges that feed into the lives and meanings of the NGOs dedicated to the cause of children and youngsters with disabilities.

At the opposite end of life scale, Japan, a First World country, should be the antithesis of the Philippines when it comes to wealth distribution. In this world, where both disabled and non-disabled people are entitled to a huge amount of resources, nobody should be left wanting. Nevertheless, development is much more than material resources, and this is best delivered by the scriptural line, “not by bread alone”.

The basic assumption on development used in this paper is the view of Coledridge that development is much more than material benefits. It is the sum of people’s own aspirations, efforts, and learning towards bettering themselves materially, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.3
This process is conceptually similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. The first level is meeting the basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health needs, and education. The second level, but equally foundational, is the need to be creative, to make choices, to exercise judgment, to love, to have relationships, to contribute something of oneself to the world, and to have a social function and purpose.

In poorer countries, the socio-economic issues are a priority and the principles of the indivisibility, interconnectedness and interdependence of all human rights are of paramount consideration. Development needs to be inclusive, respecting the full set of human rights of every individual, acknowledging diversity, eradicating poverty and ensuring that all people are fully included and can actively participate in developing policies and practices.

In developed countries, the issues of disabled persons go beyond the basic needs for survival, protection, health and education. The issues pertain to the interpretation and actualization of inclusive development for persons with disabilities (PWDs) as rights-holders who must be actively engaged in their development process.

The UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2004, addressed ten key areas of concern in the development of persons with disabilities. Foremost of these is the right to participate especially in matters concerning provisions and policies for persons with disabilities. In the words of David Werner: “Nothing about us without us…”

Persons with disabilities may not be able to articulate their needs or express themselves adequately to exercise these rights. Heavily medically-oriented societies and institution-based programs and services may fall short of the expectations on these provisions.

Likewise, inclusion is another key issue construed to address the needs for persons with disabilities to be included in mainstream society. This presupposes the removal of attitudinal barriers and the provision of appropriate support systems to allow persons with disabilities to live in a barrier-free society. Inclusive education, one of the ramifications of this provision, is frequently met with resistance because of a lack of openness and negative attitudes.

These basic ideas on social justice and inclusive development are the looking glass with which I planned to view the Japanese programs and services for persons with disabilities and to compare them with the state of the PWDs in contemporary Philippine society. With this, I set forth on my two-month exploration of an unfamiliar culture, minimally armed with elementary survival tools of the language and the very human instinct to learn and grow in the process.

The goal for this project was to compare services and programs for individuals with disabilities in Chiba City and selected areas in Japan with that of Naga City, a representative community in the Philippines. The specific objective was to gain an insight into the conditions of individuals with disabilities in Japan relative to the technological advancements and state-of-the-art facilities available in the country vis-à-vis the developmental indicators for individuals with disabilities. The indicators used are as follows: health, education and quality of life measures such as productivity, the extent of participation in the mainstream society, mobility, economic independence, relationships, family life and community participation.

I had the opportunity to observe in three well known hospitals and centers for neuromuscular disorders in Japan, Minami Kyushu Hospital, Tokushima University Hospital and the National Center for Neurology and Psychiatry in Tokyo, and one community, Chiba City.

My study was severely limited by the time frame (two months) that I had to finish my work in and the nature of the population chosen for observation. There are at least seven types of disabilities, with each type varying in severity from mild to moderate to severe. My study dealt to a large extent with patients with mental retardation and neuromuscular conditions rather on the severe side. My observations on the lives of patients with sensorial problems (hearing and visual impairment), and developmental disorders (autism and ADHD) were not sufficient from which to draw conclusions. Taking these limitations into consideration, the study was nevertheless fruitful since mental retardation and neuromuscular conditions are the most common handicapping conditions in most populations, including Japan. Furthermore, I was able to see representative communities in the hospital setting in various parts of Japan and noted the consistency in the quality of programs and services- holistic, adequate, and accessible, both in the medical and rehabilitative areas of care and in various settings involving the hospital community and the larger community outside of the hospital.

II. Findings

*Japanese Health Care Provisions for Disabled Persons*
Japan has a far reaching and efficient welfare system and health care delivery system for infants and children, the disabled population and the elderly. In both rural and urban areas, there are primary care facilities, secondary care facilities and specialized care centers catering to the health care needs of the community.

Primary care facilities and clinics or hospitals provide preventive and promotive health care and basic maternal and child care and address general medical concerns. They are located in the community in good numbers and within easy access of their patients. Secondary care centers or hospitals are equipped with general surgical and medical care facilities and more complex laboratory and diagnostic equipment. They are fewer in number, and are located strategically to serve wider areas and larger segments of the population. Tertiary hospitals and specialized care centers are referral hospitals located in the cities and carry the distinction of being national hospitals, university hospitals or government-affiliated hospitals, or hospitals with research facilities. In tertiary hospitals, specialization is expected and few patients are admitted for emergency consultations or for primary and secondary care. Most facilities, particularly in tertiary hospitals and research centers, carry state of the art equipment and use cutting edge technology for medical and rehabilitative care.

The Japanese Health Care System works through a very efficient government insurance system that pays for the diagnostic, hospital and professional health services of Japanese Citizens. In principle, the insurance system assumes 70% of the medical and health care related expenses and the patient assumes 30%. The rating system for medical treatments and procedures is fixed. For major surgery and surgery that entails a huge amount of money to perform, such as neurosurgical procedures, 30% may still total millions of yen and may not be affordable to some patients. However, with the present policy, the patient needs to pay only 70,000 yen at most and the excess will be paid by the government. The amount of money may still be reduced depending on the paying capacity of the individual. Hence, all patients can benefit from standard medical care, regardless of their social and economic status. Those who have less in terms of paying capacity are literally rescued by the insurance system and given the same health care benefits as those who can afford to send more.

The Comprehensive Health Care Delivery System in Japan is ideal and takes care of the citizens from “womb to tomb”. However, there is a downside to the system and, as in all types of systems, flaws naturally occur. Presently, health care expenditure exacts a heavy toll on the national budget and some revisions are being contemplated in anticipation of bigger problems ahead.

All over Japan, there are some 8,000 beds in the government hospital and the same number in private hospitals for patients with severe disabilities. The expenses allotted in caring for severely handicapped individuals are exceedingly high and beyond the reach of developing countries, especially the Philippines. For every patient, the government spends an estimated amount of ¥500,000 to ¥600,000, or roughly Php250,000 to Php300,000, per child per month. These are patients with no pulmonary, cardiac or infectious problems. The cost may escalate to ¥1,000,000 or Php500,000 a month if the patient is on a respirator or is in need of special procedures such as Non-Invasive Positive Pressure Breathing (NIPPB), cardiac monitoring, and other extended life support equipment. The income of the average family in Japan is around ¥200,000. This means that the government may spend more than the amount normally spent by three or four or even five families.

Living with Severe Cognitive and Neuromuscular Impairment: A slice of life of individuals with Cerebral Palsy, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and other devastating neuromuscular conditions

Minami Kyushu National Hospital and National Musashi Hospital

Musashi Hospital and Minami Kyushu Hospital are both national hospitals for the chronic care of patients with severe physical and cognitive impairments. Both are residential hospitals and provide holistic care that covers medical, rehabilitative, educational, and psychological aspects. Located in Kodaira, a suburban part of Tokyo, the Musashi Hospital has the unique position of being part of the National Center for Neurology and Psychiatry.

Minami Kyushu National Hospital, on the other hand is strategically located in the southern part of Japan. It has the best climate, warmer than in the northern region, with a fantastic view of the mountains and the sea—an ideal setting for restful living and communion with nature for patients with chronic neuromuscular conditions.

Each hospital is home to over two hundred children and adults with severe neurological conditions, mostly cerebral palsy (CP), Duchenne’s muscular dystrophy (DMD) and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).
These conditions may affect an individual at birth (CP) or during childhood (DMD) or adulthood (ALS). Nevertheless, once diagnosed, the progression of the illness can be relentless and devastating. Motor function deteriorates, progressively involving not only limb muscles but also muscles for swallowing and breathing. Most patients stay in the facility for a significant length of time, at times for an entire lifetime, because of the specialized care that their conditions require. In addition to medical support for severely handicapped individuals, the hospital provides rehabilitation, education and psychological support and counseling for both the patients and the family.

Many patients with neuromuscular diseases have intact, and many times superior, cognitive faculty. However, they are in various stages of neuromuscular deterioration and may have to be fed by means of gastrostomy tubes or tubes inserted into the stomach to convey partially digested or blender-processed food. The deterioration of respiratory muscle function is inevitable. Respiratory support ranges from the intermittent use of respirators to permanent respirator support.

A systematic program of education and training is given to parents and siblings. The family is encouraged to become a partner in the care of individuals with severe disabilities. Both institutions are equipped with facilities where families can stay for short periods to look after their loved ones, assist the medical staff in the various activities and learn the intricacies of caring for persons with severe neuromuscular impairments. Importance is placed on learning physical therapy and rehabilitation techniques, feeding, respiratory care and bathing. The hospital staff provides intensive parent education program, as well as counseling and psychological support.

The families learn to manipulate the various life support equipment needed by their loved one. They learn to make the gadgets simply part of everyday living and everyday interaction and manage to spend meaningful family time together within or outside the hospital facilities. Many times, the family opts to bring their handicapped son or daughter home, with the full complement of respiratory and feeding equipment and with medical and technical support from the hospital. Thanks to advanced computer technology, they can equip rooms with touch sensitive computers adapted for the use of weak thumb muscles. Computers open the world to these individuals and allow them to optimize the use of their remaining faculties. They are able to paint beautiful digital pictures, study, chat and make friends over the Internet. In the event that the family or the main caregiver, parents, grandparents, or guardian needs to leave town, both hospitals have facilities for respite care and the patient can be left in the charge of the hospital for the needed length of time.

And life goes on...“What does one do when life dishes him out with lemons: make lemon juice.”

Tokushima University Hospital and the National Center for Neurology and Psychiatry: World Leaders in Neuromuscular Research, Philippine Partners in Research and Training

The Tokushima University Hospital is a tertiary hospital providing comprehensive neurological care in the Shikoku District of Honshu Island. It is the first medical school and university hospital in the area and enjoys academic fellowship with distinguished Faculties of Medicine from universities in Kyoto and Osaka. The Neurology Department is a young department, having been created only three years ago. Nevertheless it is already known in the area as a leader in neuromuscular research and in the treatment of movement disorders, specifically, the application of Deep Brain Stimulation (DBI) on Parkinson’s Diseases and other types of movement disorders.

Presently, the Neurology Department is involved in a joint research project in the Philippines on Lubag or Dystonia of Panay, a genetically X-linked (inherited through the mother and expressed only in male offspring) movement disorder predominantly seen on the island of Panay. The research has been going on for a number of years under Dr. Lillian V. Lee, the Retired Chief of Hospital of the Philippine Children’s Medical Center. The application of DBI among the patients suffering from Dystonia of Panay is promising, to say the least. There are plans underway to set up this system in the Philippines and train Filipino neuroscientists on stereotactic surgery and the application of DBS through a cooperative project of the Tokushima University Department of Neurology and the Philippine Children’s Medical Center.

The National Center for Neurology and Psychiatry was formed through a merger of the National Institute of Neurology and the National Institute of Mental Health. The original National Institute of Neuroscience, or NIN, used to be the research unit of the National Musashi Hospital, under the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Since a reorganization that took place in 1986, it has become a new institute equipped with a genome analysis center, two modern animal research laboratories and two research buildings. The Institute
is actively engaged in collaborative studies with other Centers for Neuromuscular Disorders in Japan and all over the world and figures as one of the world’s leading research facilities in neuromuscular disorders, gene technology and related fields.

The NIN works in partnership with Neuroscience Centers and Training Hospitals all over the world to train budding scientists or collaborate in neuromuscular research. In this reputable institution, I was fortunate to be introduced to Dr. Ikuya Nonaka, a recognized important leader and authority in Neuropathology, Dr. Ichizo Nishino, Director of the Department of Neuromuscular Research of NIN, and to the two young Filipino neurologists, Dr. May Malicdan and Dr. Mina Astejada, both researchers in the Institute. Idealists to the core, both Filipino scientists dream of going back to the Philippines to upgrade the present status of the Neuromuscular Research and Muscle Biopsy Laboratory in the Philippines.

It was also my privilege to be introduced to the scientists of the NIN. Coming from all over the world, they are dedicated and prolific researchers. In them lie the hopes of many individuals suffering from devastating conditions like Duchenne’s Muscle Dystrophy (DMD), Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), and Cerebral Palsy (CP) who hope to see the fulfillment of the promise for a cure in their lifetime.

Community Facilities in Chiba City: A Dynamic System

In Chiba City, I had the chance to experience community life and visit facilities both for mild and severely handicapped children and adults. The facilities I visited were: 1. the Sakuragien—a hospital for severely mobility impaired people; 2. the Chiba City Rehabilitation and Welfare Center—an outpatient facility for young children with physical impairments, mental handicaps, and hearing, visual and developmental problems; 3. preschool centers for physically and cognitively impaired children six years old and below; 4. daycare centers for mobility impaired individuals more than 18 years old; and 5. community schools for mentally handicapped individuals at both the elementary and high school levels.

The System of Care for Handicapped Individuals in Japan follows this algorithm:

- Health Check in Public Health Center
- Early Detection of Disabled/ Handicapped Children
- Early Rehabilitation in Rehab Center
- Special School for Disabled/Handicapped Students
- After graduation from senior high school at 18 years of age
- Workshop for Disabled Persons
- General work
- Welfare work

Individuals diagnosed with mental retardation, physical disability, hearing impairment, or visual impairment (and in the near future, developmental disorders), are provided by the government with free educational, medical and welfare support. Early intervention and pre-school programs are free of charge for children with diagnosed impairments and disabilities from birth to six years of age. After age six, the government school system takes over and provides free elementary and high school education until age 18. From here on, the family takes over, with assistance from the welfare department of the city government.

The Chiba Rehabilitation and Day-care Center is a four-storey building with multiple functions and is divided into several areas that serve various groups of children and adults. It has facilities to provide comprehensive care for children with cognitive impairments, physical disabilities, and hearing impairment from birth until six years old. The center is equipped with provisions for physical therapy, occupational therapy, developmental assessment, language and speech development and intensive parent programs. For adults with mild mental retardation but good mobility, a sense of independence and a willingness to work, there are facilities for vocational training and job coaching. Many Japanese business outfits are willing to take in adults with mental retardation who have undergone training and job coaching. The Center is also used for training volunteers on resuscitation and life-support, Braille and sign language, and taking notes to help students with disabilities. It also serves as a venue for sports activities and fellowship for groups of handicapped individuals.

Sakuragien: Hospital for Severely Mobility Impaired Individuals

Sakuragien, is a newly renovated residential hospital for severely and profoundly physically handicapped people. Similar to Musashi Hospital and Minami Kyushu Hospital, it is home to children and adults with cerebral palsy and other neuromuscular conditions, serving the community of Chiba Prefecture and Chiba City. The facility is equipped with provisions that the residents need in their daily lives such as fully mechanized single baths and big baths for groups of three or four, a barber and beauty salon (facial, hair cut, shampoo, hair spa, and
Daycare Services and Residential Facilities for Older Persons with Disabilities: The Role of Parent Support Groups

The government provides free special education and rehabilitation services for people with disabilities until they are 18 years old. After 18, persons with disability who are high-functioning and are capable of working for a living will be covered by the labor laws; the less functional will be government dependent under the welfare law. Children with disabilities are currently under the care of the family or on self-supporting status depending on the degree and type of impairment.

In the case of individuals with significant cognitive and physical impairment, the family may choose to place them in a residential facility or residential hospital if their health condition is not suitable for community living, or take care of them at home with provisions for daycare center stimulation programs.

Mobility and cognitively impaired individuals have varying capacities for work and for integration into general society. They also have varying needs which may be addressed by the different facilities within Chiba City and Chiba Prefecture. Where the disabled persons are high-functional and capable of working in the community, there are lodging and food services available in certain facilities at a minimal cost. Where there is a need for sheltered workshops, because such arrangements will best serve the cognitively impaired, there are certain facilities available with income-generating work, such as mushroom growing, gardening, making noodles, running food services and canteens, making souvenirs, artworks, paintings and postcards. In many institutions, severely handicapped individuals can do wonders with arts and crafts. With patient mentoring and the encouragement of teachers, the disabled persons are able to create fantastic works of art such as ceramics, paper mache, dolls, silk screen prints, origami, woven cloth, and carpets of all sizes.

Parents of disabled persons in Japan form very strong support groups for the benefit of their children. Through their efforts, many residential facilities and daycare centers have been built and are fully operational. These parent groups organized themselves to gain political leverage and negotiation rights with the government.

Presently, the government requires a partnership with community organizations in order to establish institutions or daycare centers for adults with disabilities who have finished senior high school. The partnership requires several million yen as the financial counterpart of the community. After the community has fulfilled the financial requirements, the government will then assume the responsibility for the physical facilities, equipment and the administrative expenses to run the facility.

Families of individuals afflicted with mental retardation and neuromuscular conditions are committed and dedicated to the cause of their children. They bind themselves together into support groups for the purpose of sharing experiences and knowledge and to provide forums for the discussion of various problems encountered by the parents and families. They form strong lobbying forces with the government for welfare and development programs, ally with National Research Centers and Medical Societies to lobby the government for funding to finance research that promises the amelioration and treatment of their illnesses, and drum up community support and volunteerism.

Some of these support groups are the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Society, Japan Muscular Dystrophy Association, Cerebral Palsy Association and Japan Association of Parents of Persons with Mental Retardation. All support groups are affiliated with the International Association support groups.

Parents with handicapped children in Japan dream of better things to come for their children. They negotiate for the modification of the welfare law to include more opportunities for inclusion of their children in mainstream activities. Inclusion International has a big membership in Japan working towards the inclusion development of children with disabilities of all types and severity.

The New Welfare Laws and Policies for Persons with Disabilities

Mainly because of the clamor of certain sectors like the student sector and the more progressive parents of handicapped children, the government is veering towards a more inclusive policy of development for persons with disabilities and more opportunities for participation. Japanese laws are now going through a period of reexamination and transition. The interview with the Welfare Agency of Chiba City shed light on the circumstances and reasons for crafting these new laws.5
The goal is to slowly deinstitutionalize the care of persons with disabilities and to gradually place them in the community. This schema will allow people with disabilities to live with their families, work their way up the education ladder and have jobs and opportunities provided for them to work and interact with normal people. The City officials of the Welfare Development Agency explained that this idea has long been accepted internationally as appropriate and consistent with human rights. The reason why Japan has taken a long time to shift to community-based service delivery is mainly because the parents have found that institutions effectively serve the interests of their children with disabilities. Furthermore, the financial boom at the time the institutions were established made it feasible to sufficiently cover the needs of an institutionalized setting. The present dispensation is inclined to see that community-based programs, when fully implemented, will be less costly and more consistent with human rights. However, there seems to be many contradictory opinions coming from the parents themselves, the health department and the education department. These institutions are wary of the repercussions such changes in policies will bring.

III. Implications

In a nutshell, my life-experience in three neuromuscular centers in Japan, Minami Kyushu National Hospital, Tokushima Hospital, Musashi Hospital and NCNP, and in the community of Chiba City has the makings of a Disney Tour of a rehabilitation dreamland. This is exactly the opposite of the Philippines where, everyday, people with disabilities wake up to the reality of poverty, inadequate programs and services, low priority for the needs of PWDs and, worse, the indifference of inept, if not corrupt, politicians.

Naga City is neither indifferent nor corrupt but the many concerns of the government and the limited financial resources spell disaster for a low priority budget proposal that intends to provide appropriate health, education and rehabilitation services to children and youngsters and job opportunities for adults with disabilities. The situation is even worse in the more impoverished parts of the region.

The basic difference between Japan and the Philippines rests on the economic conditions prevailing in the two countries, basically a difference between the developed and developing world. People with disabilities in the Philippines are caught in the downward spiral of poverty and neglect compounded by aggravating factors such as prejudice, misconceptions, and attitudinal barriers which are due in no small measure to the culture of poverty and the notion that disabled people will compete with the already limited resources in the community.

Japan is basically institution-based. However, it is catching up with the rest of the modern and developed world in its effort to shift gears to provide more and more opportunities for community involvement for persons with disabilities in the true spirit of inclusive development. The parent support groups and the progressive students of education in universities are leaving no stones unturned in sending this urgent message to the government agencies concerned.

In the Philippines, the hopes to bring about change are anchored on an educational campaign, information dissemination, the empowerment of stakeholders and making community development efforts translate into palpable benefits for the poor and disabled people. Community rehabilitation and community development has the promise to address the intricate relationship between poverty and disability by its participatory and consultative approach. The people become active participants in their development process and reap the benefits of their own efforts.

The International Disability and Development Consortium in 2004 identified as foremost in the ten key areas of concern the right to consultation and representation and meaningful participation in an inclusive society. As David Werner says, “Nothing about us without us.”

To level the playing field in consonance with the Millennium Development Goals, it is important to address the issue of poverty eradication through community-based approaches, international cooperation and the improvement of community support systems.

Sadly, even in developed countries like Japan, people with disabilities are climbing a steep hill to achieve meaningful participation. The situation is worse in the Philippines.

Advocating for social justice for persons with disabilities entails understanding three levels of conflicts: 1. that the problem is caused by a non-disabled world that refuses to accept disabled people on their own terms; 2. understanding that change has to start with disabled people neither negates nor eclipses the first circle of understanding, but rests on it; and 3. the question of integration versus segregation is the most difficult area in which to reach understanding because it touches very
specifically on the question of power and control.

The challenges of the study are threefold: 1. to address disability issues as a social concern in the context of community development; 2. to advocate for government and community support through local initiatives and international cooperation; and 3. to nurture a society that allows for diversity and provides equal opportunities.

Solution to Disability and Poverty in the Perspective of International Cooperation

The 2004 UN Convention addressing ten key areas for inclusive development emphasized the role of international cooperation as an essential element in the implementation of its development plans for persons with disabilities all over the world. In one of my talks with Dr. Fukushima and the officials of the Chiba City Welfare Agency, I laid down the possibility of an inter-governmental linkage between Naga City and Chiba City solely for the development of disabled persons. My thinking at the time was for both governments to agree on a program of exchange of technology and knowledge. The concept of a marriage between two cultures happens among people as among ideas. In the context of a community rehabilitation program, the idea sounded rather inviting.

Dr. Fukushima brought forth the difficulty in the situation considering the expenses that the development of disabled persons entails. I thought at the time that the solution would be in adaptation and accommodation. Institutionalization is definitely expensive and a totally unaffordable arrangement in Naga City. Community rehabilitation is a good option and has the promise of involving as many people and as much manpower as necessary. The crux of the problem is the willingness of the people in the community to come together for a change of attitude towards disabled persons and a shift in the paradigm from a government-initiated development program to a community—and stakeholder—driven program. Likewise, the transfer of skills from the professional to the grassroots and the training of paraprofessionals pose a problem regarding the source of the human resources required for such a huge endeavor. An attractive idea is a project called “Parents Teaching other Parents”, an idea that has taken root in selected areas in the Philippines and may hopefully catch on with parents nationwide. Many parents of children with disabilities have formed support groups and self-advocacy groups, a must in the community rehabilitation process.

Questions and answers from the panel during the presentation in Phuket

Question # 1 (Mary)

In all of them the question I would like to ask each of you to consider is what about regional networks. Do they exist for people with disabilities, for juvenile care?

Addressing the concerns of children with disabilities or the lack of it through regional networking will send a more powerful message to the people, governments and agencies concerned because of its regional or global perspective in addition to its cultural flavor. The basic issues of human rights and social justice, poverty, and social discrimination are all global issues. Its universal application will now be directed to and tested in specific populations such as people with disabilities, juvenile offenders and the elderly.

At the present time there are small pockets of regional networking for disability concerns that are initiated by foreign funded civil societies such as the Christofel Blinden Mission, Stichting Liliane Fonds, and Handicap International, most of which have international think tanks trying to make sense of the Asian situation. Addressing the issues with the perspective of an Asian Public Intellectual may be able to address the issues more effectively. It has the potential of creating an Asian community that can be a consultative as well as a working body, promoting fellowship, friendship and communication among neighboring countries to allow them to find their own unique solutions to a global problem.

Question # 2 and # 3 (Nick and Melissa)

While you did identify through statistics and presentations and articulated some of the problems that have a material basis such as comparing hospitals, prison houses, material things I just want to tease out the whole idea that the problems you identified do have an emotional equivalent—questions of healing, emotions, responses. Perhaps a future challenge for us—going beyond mere physical, material solutions.

I was wondering what is the feasibility for such an e-group. What is the possibility for this not only in the Philippines but all the other countries here as well?

Emotional healing is a very important part of conflict or crisis resolution and may be the key solution to very human problems of communication, cultural
differences and political disarray. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs problems may have solutions that may be approached differently and probably in a top down manner addressing emotions first, the need for acknowledgement, empowering affected individuals in a slow, gentle and supportive manner and using alternative ways of expressing themselves through the arts, music and movement. All these may awaken in them the feeling of opening up a deep resource that has been largely untapped.

The ways of addressing the issues may largely be defined by the affected populace, the needs of the group and the generation to which they belong. Certainly, email for the young and not so young generation of enthusiasts has the potential for instant communication and creating friendships world wide which will work favorably in many ways.

Question # 4 (Fr. Joey)

My question to the four presenters is: for so many and a growing number of young people who are either not raised anymore by their grandparents or who no longer have a quality association that will bring them close either to those with special needs or to others, what is it that we can do to provide them this affective engagement.

Otherwise, in a sense, I see a growing population who simply will not have the experience that Aureus is talking about of community life. Unless we tell them that all young people from hereon are really bad. Even if we credit them with a generosity that we can awaken, what experience can we provide so they can have insight that the heart can give.

Answer:

The answer will probably be found in the creation of support groups and addressing the issues through communities of similarly affected families and individuals. These communities will have a way of supporting families or affected individuals emotionally. The Down Syndrome Society, Philippines, for example, visits new families who are grieving because a child with Down Syndrome was just recently borne to them. It gives them the feeling that “you are not alone in your problems,” and that, if we work together and persevere we can bring out the best in us and see ourselves as part of a wonderful and beautiful quilt that defines our purpose in life.

There are many parent support groups in the Philippines such as, the Down Syndrome Association, Autism Society, Philippines, AD/HD Society and many more. In Japan, the parent support groups for people afflicted with muscular dystrophy and the Japan Muscular Dystrophy Association have been successful in working together for advocacy work and supporting the emotional needs of the members. Some societies, such as Inclusion International, have gone international in extending helping hands to similarly afflicted families, and bringing the issues to the WHO and the United Nations for a more effective collaboration.

Appendix

The 2004 UN Convention addressed ten key areas for inclusive development:

Consultation and representation
This refers to the key and clear principle of ‘nothing about us without us’. This ensures ownership, relevance, and appropriateness, but is primarily a basic right. The principles of “representation” and consultation specifically address the rights of disabled people and disabled peoples’ organizations to speak and act on behalf of themselves and others in the disability community as well as being involved in any decision process concerning the community.

Individual and structural empowerment
The removal of barriers alone will not create inclusion for disabled people. The conditions for their individual empowerment from birth onwards (to develop maximum functioning) and to be able to form into organizations from the community-level upwards should be present. It is important not to perceive ‘mainstreaming’ as the only answer. There needs to be a specific focus on the disabled people to enable them to become empowered to participate. It is essential that governments ensure the meaningful participation of disabled people and their representative organizations at all levels of decision-making and program and policy development relevant to inclusive development strategies.

Poverty eradication
Food distribution, poverty alleviation, infrastructure, development, water and sanitation programs are not designed to be accessible to disabled people, resulting in exclusion.

Conducive circumstances to ensure survival and development of basic life skills
In situations of poverty, disabled people require particular circumstances to ensure their survival and development. These include appropriate early childhood
Community based service development (CBR)
Disabled people live in communities, and inclusive development begins in the home and community. Families and communities are the primary resource. Eighty percent of the information, skills, and resources that disabled people need for full inclusion can be accessed at the community level.

Removal of attitudinal barriers
Lack of awareness and negative attitudes are the biggest barriers to promoting inclusive development. In poorer countries, accessibility is strongly linked to positive attitudes, knowledge, skills and general inclusion.

Creation of inclusive, diversity-friendly environments, institutions and communities
The removal of existing barriers is not enough to promote inclusion, because the mainstream is designed to be exclusive.

International cooperation
International cooperation should be understood broadly to mean cooperation between all countries and is an essential element in implementing the provisions of the Convention.

Specific inclusion of groups at risk
While the link between poverty and disability is prevalent across disability population sectors, it is particularly powerful for certain groups who are exposed to a greater risk of human rights abuses owing to their status, such as women, children and youth, elderly people, people from racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities, indigenous persons, and people living in rural, remote, and small island communities, people who are refugees and/or internally displaced as a result of conflicts and natural disasters, and people for whom non-institutional living options have not yet been made available.

Monitoring
An international monitoring mechanism and a national implementation mechanism are both essential parts of the Convention and should be fully set out in the text. This is an indispensable tool to monitor progress or lack thereof in securing the fulfillment of human rights.

Global Solutions and the Role of Community Based Rehabilitation, Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada, 5-6 March 1998.


Key Development Issues: The UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: 10 Key Areas of the UN Convention. 2004.


Concern for Disabled Filipinos XXVII.2 (2005).

Notes:


4 Appendix: Key Development Issues | The UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | 10 Key Areas of the UN Convention.


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**Punishing Delinquents: Incarceration vs. Community Work, A Study on Juvenile Justice Systems in Malaysia, Thailand and Japan**

Noramalina binti Mustaffa

**Introduction**

In general, all of us make mistakes. The difference in determining criminality is the graveness of the blunder committed by the person. Hence, be it adults or juveniles, we all learn and grow up from our mistakes. This phenomenon is not new to us. However, the subject of juvenile or child lawbreakers has gained greater recognition due to the national attention given to reforming the juvenile justice system in many countries and acknowledging the rights of children. Matters concerning the justice and welfare of these children are seen as a national problem that must be astutely dealt with.

Children and crime has always been a sensitive subject. No one likes to think of a child as a perpetrator of crime nor can we tolerate or fully understand the apparatus that contributes to the formation of delinquency among youth. It has not been an easy task for academics to uncover the crux and causes concerning juvenile delinquency. Historically, children were treated faultily, depending on their place within the structure of society and the family. Discipline and maltreatment for the sake of correcting astray children were imposed. Whippings, floggings, spankings and other forms of physical punishment have been the way of disciplining troubled children. It was recorded that crying babies were once given opium pacifiers to suck in order to ‘quiet’ them.¹ Children being the victims of crime can cause some children’s disturbed behaviors. However, over the years, we have become aware of some major changes in dealing with juvenile delinquency, especially in finding suitable ways to punish their delinquent behavior.

**Table 1:** Age definitions of juveniles in Malaysia, Thailand and Japan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>above 7 years old but below 18 years</td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>above 7 years old but below 14 years</td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>above 14 years old but below 18 years</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The definitions of age for juvenile have slight differences in the three countries of Malaysia, Thailand and Japan. In this research, the term juvenile delinquent will be used to refer to children who have been involved in the juvenile justice system.

The problem of delinquency is not something new. Juvenile deviation from societal norms has existed throughout history and it is usually tolerated unless the behavior becomes so extreme that the peace and balance in the society is threatened.

Everywhere, delinquency shares some common conceptions—regardless of the exhaustive explanation that are given by many—such as:

1. Delinquent behavior is caused by some disturbance or trauma in the youth’s development.
2. It is regarded as a psychological disturbance beginning not later than childhood and continuing during the maturation process.
3. Delinquency is a problem within the individual that must be approached through the direct treatment of this person rather than modification of external environmental factors.²

Therefore, in dealing with juvenile delinquents, one must treat a juvenile as a person and should try to penetrate into the juvenile’s mind rather than keeping them behind the cold walls. For a juvenile who committed a crime at a very tender age, the time spent in a cell will eventually mold his/her behavior later in the future. Without receiving correct and proper social skills, the juvenile will not be able to reintegrate himself or herself into society. This will cause nothing but problems.

**Objectives**

This paper will look at juvenile delinquency in the context of punishment. It will look at alternative way(s) or method(s) of punishing juvenile delinquents as a way of avoiding introducing children into the juvenile justice system. By keeping these children away from...
the juvenile justice system, the children are removed from being labeled and stigmatized. Furthermore, the problem of juvenile delinquency has to be nipped in the bud so that damage can be prevented, as well as so that the juveniles themselves can lead better and more meaningful lives. This will also help former delinquents not to relapse by giving them support and a second chance. Considering alternative ways of punishing them means dealing with each case through an agreed course of action, frequently in the form of some sort of public service or community work.

Evidently, some juvenile offenders who go to correctional institutions often become chronic juvenile delinquents simply because they are labeled as such. This is not because those juvenile have been “brain-washed” into believing themselves to be delinquents as has been proposed by some observers. Rather, it has been noted that stigmatization associated with the diagnosis and rehabilitation of juvenile delinquency contributes significantly to the degree and severity of delinquent behavior.\(^3\)

**Significance of the research**

Through learning from other countries’ experiences in dealing with juvenile delinquency, this research can be regarded as very important in tackling the problem of recidivism among juvenile delinquents. Suitable new approaches practiced by the other two countries can be introduced in Malaysia in supporting the existing punishments imposed on juvenile delinquents.

**Methodology**

Information related to the research was gathered via interviews, questionnaires and visits to the respective agencies. Other methods used in this research are from secondary sources, such as books, articles, journals and the Internet.

**Findings**

From the study in both countries, it is highly important to recognize the new approach in relation with punishing juvenile delinquents. The traditional approach used in the Family and Community Group Conferencing (FCGC) is seen as one unique idea that can be popularized in Malaysia. Though there are criteria and conditions to meet, this approach can be practiced widely with most juvenile offenders. On the other hand, the existence of the rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses in Japan can be considered as one of the best support systems for ex-juvenile delinquents. Though they are not a form of punishment imposed on juvenile delinquents, their existence facilitates of the lowering of recidivism amongst ex-juvenile delinquents. Halfway houses would be viewed fondly by many if they were correctly set and introduced in Malaysia.

The obstacle seen here in the development and implementation of community-based programs for handling juvenile offenders is a lack of research on traditional and informal systems of social control. The lacuna in the present sentencing program should be replete with studies and research so that it can be effective, while time, money and manpower spent and involved in dealing with this problem can be 100 percent utilized and mobilized. We should also put a stop to our attitude of putting the burden of keeping the peace and order entirely on criminal justice agencies like the police, the courts and the rehabilitation institutions.

There are two interesting ideas (as mentioned briefly above) that can be popularized in Malaysia and seen as alternative methods of punishment to the current style used to deal with juvenile delinquents. One is Family and Community Group Conferencing (FCGC) in Thailand and the other one is rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses in Japan. Both have their own line of history initiated by a combination of the community and the offenders in helping to resolve related problems affecting both their lives. For FCGC, a traditional method of dispute settlement is put into practice by the modern community and rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses become the primary refuge for ex-offenders in cushioning their search for jobs, residences and social acceptance.

**Rehabilitating juvenile offenders in Thailand: Family and Community Group Conferencing (FCGC)**

**Defining juvenile in Thailand**

A juvenile is any person below 18 years of age. Children under the age of 7 years old have no criminal responsibility in Thailand. Those between 7 to 14 years of age can be charged in court and can be given probation and cautions by the court. Children aged 14 to 18 years old can be charged in court, can be imprisoned and can be placed in any training school deemed suitable by the court.

Psychologically each child is different. A standard treatment may not necessarily be appropriate. Therefore in considering the best punishment for a juvenile delinquent, the treatment must be attuned to the needs of that particular child.
Most of the juvenile offenders interviewed came from an unstable family background. The most popular crimes committed by juveniles in incarceration were drug-related crimes. The juvenile had either become a drug pusher or was found in possession of drugs. This crime is regarded as a serious crime in Thailand. Those juvenile were also repeat offenders. However, there is a program for punishing first time offenders in Thailand. The program was introduced on 1 June 2003. It is called Family and Community Group Conferencing (FCGC). Historically, it was adapted from the traditional Thai method of dispute settlement; FCGC was inspired by New Zealand’s child-friendly procedures for abused children that were studied in year 2000 by a group of officers from the Ministry of Justice. It was then known as Family Group Conferencing (FGC). However, with Thai society having a strong sense of community that plays a very significant role in nearly every aspect of the lives and social functions of the Thai people, the process of FGC was adjusted to incorporate community as part of its process and it was later named Family and Community Group Conferencing (FCGC). From thereon, FCGC was introduced as a new approach in rehabilitating and giving juvenile offenders a second chance in their lives.

Who can join FCGC?

Juvenile offenders who have obtained a non-prosecution order can join in FCGC. The director of any Observation and Protection Center where the child is residing or has committed the crime should make this non-prosecution order application. Basically, the director has to consider three factors and two existing criteria (**):

1. Juvenile—a person aged below 18 years**;
2. First time offence**;
3. The offence committed is punishable by not more than 5 years of imprisonment;
4. The child can be reformed without prosecution in court; and
5. The child gives consent to be under control of the director in follow up monitoring.

The participants are:

1. The juvenile offender;
2. The parent(s) / relative(s) of the juvenile offender;
3. The victim and his/her parent(s);
4. A psychologist;
5. A social worker;
6. The police investigator;
7. One or more representatives from the community;
8. The prosecutor;
9. The director of the protection centre; and
10. The facilitator of the conference.

During the conference, all parties involved listen to every detail of the event. Later, the juvenile offender agrees on the details read before him or her. The discussion will continue until agreement is met on what would be suitable ‘punishment’ given to the juvenile offender. Should no agreement be reached, another FCGC will be conducted. An FCGC can only be conducted three times and if all three conferences fail to meet any decision or agreement, the juvenile will be referred to the prosecutor.5

Taking one case observed during the research period in Thailand, below is the manner of how an FCGC was documented by the researcher.

The first portion of the form requires filling in the conclusion of the FCGC.

For example:

**Conclusion of the FCGC:**
1. The accused admitted to the crime and apologized to his father, the prosecutor, the victim, and to everyone present for the FCGC. The accused agreed to pay 7000 baht to the victim as compensation.
2. The accused promised wholeheartedly that he will continue to study and to work part time and promised to only associate with well-behaved friends.
3. He agreed to be supervised by a social welfare worker every three months for a total duration of six months.
4. He will not go out of the house at night again.

This information is followed by the juvenile’s personal details such as:

**Name:**
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**Allegation:**
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**Address:**
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**The family background:**
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He is the eldest child in the family with one young sister.
His father's name is ……AA…. and his mother's name is ……BB…. His parents have not legally registered their marriage. His family immigrated from Sakaew Province and now he stays at Soi Hodeng, Lampathiew, Ladkabang, Bangkok with ……CC…. who is his wife. She is 16 years old. He resides in a dormitory apartment where he stays in room no.12 with his wife. Her parent stays in room no.14 in this apartment. His father works as a laborer in the Ladkabang Industrial Area from 07.00-16.30 and 18.00-22.30 o'clock everyday. His father's salary is 12,000.00 baht per month. He thinks his father is very kind. He himself drinks sometimes and smokes cigarettes everyday. His mother is a maid working from 07.30-16.30 everyday. His parents always warn him not to use drugs.

Education:
He dropped out from vocational school when he was in first year. His school was in Wangnam Yen in Sakaew Province. The reason he dropped out was because he fought with his senior. Later, he moved to Bangkok in October 2005. Now he does odd jobs. He receives about 190.00 baht per day.

Behavior:
He is a quiet person but very hot tempered. He trusts his parents. He loves playing football and sometime helps his parents to do housework. He has a group of 4 to 5 friends but they don’t go out often. He seldom goes out at night. His father gives him 40.00 Baht per day. Before this crime, he claims that he never fought with others and never owned a weapon. He never hurt himself and he was never involved in gambling, had never stolen and had never joined in illegal motorcycle racing at night.

Drugs:
He smokes and drinks beer sometimes but never uses drugs.

Health:
His health is generally good.

The facts of the case are recorded and read before the juvenile offender and the victim so that the stories do not contradict each another. For example:

The crime (facts of the case):
This event occurred on 3 December 2005 at 21.00 p.m. A friend of X named Yod who works at Jimjun Restaurant near Lumpini Park called X to invite him to have dinner at the restaurant. A friend of theirs named Nad came to the place where both of them were having dinner and joined them. They drank three bottles of beer. They were there until 2 a.m. on 4 December 2005. Yod told them that there was another waiter named Boon at another restaurant next to Jimjun Restaurant. Yod and Boon had an argument over the issue that one day Boon had brought a water tank and put it in front of Jimjun Restaurant. Yod asked Boon why he put the water tank in front of the restaurant but Boon pushed him right away. After Yod told the story to X and Nad, they both felt angry. So X went next door to search for Boon and he found him and hit him with a beer bottle. Meanwhile, Nad threw a bottle at Boon but missed him. Then, both X and Nad ran away. Boon and another friend chased them. X jumped into the lake until the police came. X surrendered to the police but Nad escaped.

After a serious discussion and passing advice back and forth, the agreement that is reached and agreed to by all parties involved is recorded in the following manner:

Results of the case:
The statements taken from both Boon and X are similar. After the event, Boon received 7,000 Baht worth of compensation from X. Since this case was not brought to court, X is lucky and X should not take this chance lightly. On the FCGC day, both Boon and his parents were unable to join the FCGC but they authorized the Juvenile Observation and Protection Centre to act on their behalf and said they would agree with decisions made by the FCGC meeting on X.

The agreement agreed to by all parties measures the successfulness of the program.

Overall, the juvenile offender in this case was given a second chance in his life. The FCGC provided a venue for a child and his/her parents to openly discuss the problem at hand and, hence, created a better understanding within the family. An FCGC also gives victims the right to speak, participate and share their feelings. It also gives the community a chance to support the children and their parents in solving the problems that affect the community and, as a result, social harmony is restored through the restorative practice. Umbreit and Coates (1992) conducted a study involving juvenile offenders interviewing people who participated in victim-offender meetings, those who were referred to the program but declined to participate, and others who were not referred to the program at all. The major findings of the study were that crime victims who participate in face-to-face mediation sessions are more likely to be satisfied with the way their case was handled, the crime victims are significantly more likely to experience fairness in the way their cases are handled,
the juvenile offenders who participate in face-to-face mediation sessions with the person they victimized are significantly more likely to experience fairness in the manner in which their case is handled and juvenile offenders who negotiate a restitution plan in face-to-face mediation session with the person they victimized are significantly more likely to successfully complete their restitution obligation than similar offenders who are ordered to pay restitution with no mediation involved (Umbreit and Coates 1992).

Therefore juveniles that commit trivial or minor offences can be kept out of the court and out of the juvenile justice system. The relevant authorities take juvenile offenders out of the judicial machinery and deal with him/her in a different setting and a different manner, which still serves the ultimate purpose of correcting the child’s behavior towards a more socially acceptable one. FCGC focuses on transforming wrongdoing by healing the harm caused by harmful behavior. It provides an opportunity for the primary parties involved to come together and communicate about an offence and how to repair the harm done. This can lead to the offender making reparation either to the victim or to the community at large.

Rehabilitating Juvenile Offenders in Japan: Rehabilitation Aid Hostels / Halfway Houses

Defining juvenile in Japan

In Japan, a juvenile is a person under 20 years of age. The term juvenile can be further categorized as:

1. Junior juvenile—refers to a person over 14 years of age but under 16 years;
2. Intermediate juvenile—refers to a person over 16 years of age but under 18 years; and
3. Senior juvenile—refers to a person over 18 but under 20 years.

The rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses are definitely not a form of punishment for juvenile offenders. From what they are called, they serve as a rehabilitation aid—a body that offers assistance for ex-juvenile offenders as well as ex-adults prisoners.

In 1995, Japan had 99 rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses—7 serving youths (one for girls), 89 for males (64 housing both youths and adults), and 3 receiving both sexes (one for adults) (Research and Training Institute 1996). As of 2003, there were 101 rehabilitation aid hostels—90 for males, 4 receiving both sexes and 7 serving females. (Research and Training Institute 2003). The rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses assist probationers, parolees or those who receive urgent aftercare of after discharged offenders whose care has been entrusted by probation offices or those who apply for aid personally when entrusted aid has terminated due to expiration of the prescribed period of urgent aftercare or other reasons.  

The rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses operate via a government subsidy that meets part of the costs of the meals, housing, maintenance, and staffing. To obtain a governmental subsidy for a reasonable portion of the expenses, a house would have to maintain an average of about 80 percent utilization of its beds. Theoretically, the residents can stay for their entire probation and parole period; some juvenile probationers can stay for more than two years. However, the limitation on the governmental budget shortens the stay considerably, making rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses a temporary refuge for discharged prisoners, parolees and suspects benefiting from suspended prosecution. The main task and function of the house is directed toward those individuals who are not assisted by families (parents, spouses, siblings and other relatives) or nonfamilial groups (friends, acquaintances, employers, social welfare agencies and others) in the community. The probation office can make the arrangement for admission to a halfway house while the parole candidate is still in prison. The probation officer in this case will contact an appropriate house when there are no families willing or able to lend support and no other residence is available. There are, however, criteria that must be met before admission to a rehabilitation aid hostel or halfway house. The candidate must be mentally and physically healthy, have no linkage whatsoever to the yakuza, and be mainly unlikely to bring objections to his/her presence from the hostel’s or the house’s neighbors. The hostel’s or the house’s management then makes the final decision on admission. The candidate applying to the rehabilitation aid hostels and halfway houses are not allowed to choose a particular house. However, for them, finding a place to stay is usually far more important than being selective. Though the halfway houses are established separately for men and women and for adults and juveniles, the hostels or the house may also accommodate these different groups separately but within the same house.

During the research period in Japan, the author managed to visit a well-known Keiwaen Halfway House set aside for juvenile offenders. Only the staff of the house were present during the visit since all the residents had gone out working.

Keiwaen ("Respect Harmony") Halfway House
The Keiwaen Halfway House was established in 1958 in the Nakano district of Tokyo by the Rehabilitation Aid Association. The house originally served only juveniles, but adults could also be admitted there. The house can accommodate eighteen persons at one time. During the visit, there were twelve house residents; three were juveniles and nine were adults aged below 26 years old. The house is run by seven staff; one is the Head of the House, three are rehabilitation staff and three are volunteer staff from Nakano district. This house, as well as other rehabilitation aid hostels, provides various forms of aid such as accommodation, meals, employment support, and counseling and advice for probationers and parolees. The houses managed by juridical persons for offender rehabilitations services are non-governmental organizations that undertake rehabilitation services for offenders and are established under a license from the Ministry of Justice in line with the Law for Offenders Rehabilitation Services. Offenders’ rehabilitation services include:

1. Continuous aid services for establishing halfway houses and providing offenders with accommodation and necessary aid;
2. Temporary aid services for providing expenses to return home, supplying and lending money or goods and providing life counseling; and
3. Liaison and assistance with aid services to assist the rehabilitation of offenders and delinquents.

Who are allowed to be in here?

Juveniles that are under probation can be accepted at halfway houses. Probation for juveniles is divided into those under protective measures and those under criminal disposition. Juveniles under protective measures who are placed under probation by a decision of the family court are called juvenile probationers and those who are allowed to be provisionally discharged by a decision of the Regional Parole Boards after being sent to a juvenile training school by a decision of the family court are called juvenile parolees. Meanwhile, juveniles under criminal disposition are those to whom parole is granted by the decision of the Regional Parole Board after they have served an imprisonment without suspension of execution of sentence and those who were given a suspended sentence and placed under probationary supervision.

For each category, these juveniles are accepted into the halfway houses in preparation for their living in the community. Therefore, halfway houses served as interim refuges that provide them with the basic necessities in preparation for them to live independently within the community.

Though many halfway houses’ residents are both adult offenders and juvenile offenders who have committed various kinds of crimes, the management of the houses are still very selective in accepting ex-offenders into their houses. Admittedly, it is better for the management to have both types of residents—that is to have both juveniles and adults in the house. For halfway houses that accommodate only juvenile clients, they face other problems such as grouping. The juveniles tend to divide themselves into several groups and will not associate themselves with the other groups that exist within the same house. That is why it is important for the halfway houses’ management to have adults as residents together in the house with the juveniles so that these juveniles can have a ‘brother’ figure in the halfway house. Hence, the selection of offenders is very important for each halfway house in determining their existence and in achieving their goals in helping these offenders, especially juvenile offenders, and helping them to reintegrate themselves into the community and society at large.

Most of the people who find shelter in the house have not had a stable family situation. They do not receive any visitors. The residents are advised to find a job and to save their money. They find a job themselves or with help and assistance from the staff and from the probation office. The Keiwaen Halfway House posts its own house rules: no smoking or drinking alcohol, no fighting, keep yourself and your room clean, no eating in your own room, be back in the hostel by 10 p.m. and do not leave thereafter. Each resident is expected to observe the rules.

Having this kind of rehabilitation service and assistance in the community means giving the juveniles a second chance in life. It portrays a level of tolerance in the community. It is a national duty to remove criminals, whether adults or juveniles, from the streets and to punish those who violate the law. No doubt some juveniles need to be punished for their heinous crimes and the principle of the juvenile justice system is to separate children that commit minor offences from those who commit very serious offences. Thus, only in severe cases will a juvenile offender be incarcerated to be rehabilitated. This is to teach the child to take responsibility for his action. The incarceration of juvenile offenders is to facilitate their rehabilitation and also to protect society. This is because a society that allows a child to commit such an offence cannot be completely rehabilitated if the child is left within the same society that made him a criminal. In this case non-institutional rehabilitation is risky as the child can still come into
contact with bad influences in his life, knowing s/he is unable to resist such influences. Therefore the decision to send the child to incarceration is to rehabilitate the child so that the child can be released into society and act in accordance with its laws. It should also be noted that whatever the dispositional option used, whatever the treatment approach used, the ultimate intention is to treat and to rehabilitate a juvenile offender for the mere fact that they are young, immature and easily influenced. No matter how serious the offence that they have committed a juvenile offender should always be given a second chance by being helped to reintegrate into society and the establishment of rehabilitation aid hostels or halfway houses can carry out this credence. They should be forgiven for the act they have committed out of recognition of their age and immaturity. Children are children, and their behavior is governed by their immature mind. They fail most of the time to realize the consequences of their own actions and behaviors. This is part of being “a child” or “juvenile”. Therefore, we, as the majority in society, need to think about the best treatment for each juvenile offender and most importantly need to be able to accept these juveniles or children and our country’s future assets within us without putting any stigma on them.

Suggestions

Community-based approaches to alternative punishment or sentencing are a part of the whole cake of restorative justice. Therefore, the idea of community-work is only a small portion of the community-based approaches. Generally, the fundamental principles of restorative justice are to repair the injuries resulting from the crime, have active participation from the government, victims, offenders and communities in the criminal justice process and in promoting justice, the government is responsible for preserving order, and the community is responsible for establishing peace (Umbreit and Coates 1992).

A quest for a perfect way in punishing juvenile delinquents is a quest for something impossible since there is no perfect way to deal with human behavior. No matter how harsh a punishment is imposed on one human being, other fellow human beings will still commit the same crime, over and over again. Crime cannot be abolished; it can only be controlled. Though there are noticeable problems in reliance on incarceration as a sentencing option, incarceration still may be suitable in certain cases while a community-based approach maybe suitable in another. Yet, the most important thing is to keep on looking for the ideal program for punishing juvenile delinquents.

We must steer away from thinking that establishing alternative sentencing programs is just merely a question of importing the right practice from somewhere else. Without genuine institutional commitment and support from all levels, alternative sentencing programs will fail. They will be seen as only as the “soup of the day” and just another historical glitch and, to me, that would be a real tragedy.

Holding a family and community conferencing allows both parties to gain a better understanding of what occurred at the time the crime was committed. How much damage was done to the victims’ livelihood determines the amount of compensation and restitution. Having witnessed similar family and community conferencing in Thailand, the idea might appear utopian.

In extending our hand to help ex-juvenile offenders, a house that provides basic human needs is highly desirable. This is to ensure that the program learnt during the years of incarceration does not slip away so it can be fully practiced and its benefits fully experienced. The rejection by family members experienced by some ex-juvenile offenders leads them to recidivism if they do not receive proper assistance. Hence, as long as incarceration exists in the punishment lists for juvenile delinquents, a house that gives temporary shelter is very much appreciated. The idea of halfway houses could be extended to not only serving juvenile offenders, but it could also serve ex-adult prisoners as well. The practicality of having halfway houses around in the country would at least give the assurance that these groups of people have a place to go to even when their own flesh and blood disown them. Apart from reintegration into the community, they also restore harmony and balance. However, at the house and detention centre I visited in both Thailand and Japan, there was no assistance and care for juveniles with psychological problems (i.e. physical disabilities) other than juveniles with psychological problems. For juveniles with psychological problems, the respective body provided them with medical assistance.

It is strongly believed that the idea of family group conferencing and halfway houses can be introduced and practiced in Malaysia by learning from the experiences of our two neighboring countries. We need to learn and accept guidance and assistance from experience agencies—be it government or non-government agencies in grasping this idea into Malaysia.

On the other hand, when we look at the victim’s point of view, the assistance given to ex-juvenile offender may be seen as far more than normal. The next question that then arises is: why should we bother giving so much
assistance and attention to someone who has contributed nothing to society other than trouble? There is no definite answer for such a question; however, we should consider some of these points—age, environment and culture. With age comes maturity and experience while the environment molds the behavior of a child and culture cultivates the idea of right and wrong, the dos and don’ts. What we are providing right now to any ex-juvenile offender is very similar to the chance we give to any ex-adult criminal, although maybe slightly more to the first group simply because we have agreed that they are juvenile. We set their age limit and understand that they are immature in making decisions on their own and need assistance from adults—whether their parents, guardians, or others. With this acknowledgment, we provide them with as much assistance as we can to bring back these ashtray children\[T8\] into the society. Being emotional and judgmental towards them will bring no benefit to anybody.

Individual participation is important so that children who suffered from a lack of affection from parents and guardian will feel the affection they need from others. For example, teachers at school should be more aware and alert of changes and mood swings portrayed by the students. This will help in relieving stress and understanding the problem(s) faced by them at home.

It is not impossible for programs set by rehabilitation institutions in each country to benefit those in other countries by establishing a good network. Adaptations of international programs should also be made and considered to cater to local environments and scenarios.

Notes

5 The information was given to me during my interview with Mr. Wanchai Roujanavong, the Director General of the Observation and Protection Department, Ministry of Justice Thailand. Ms.Varaporn Khiewpradit who works as Foreign Affairs Official at the same department assisted me in witnessing the FCGC at Pranee Juvenile Training Centre in Bangkok. Since the whole process is conducted in Thai, Ms.Varaporn Kiewpradit kindly translated to me the words of each of the participants of the FCGC. The report was given to me in Thai and was translated by Ms. Varaporn Kiewpradit and my own translator.
8 During the meeting with the management of one Keiwean Halfway House in Tokyo, the manager explained that most halfway houses accept offenders whose criminality is not serious. They do not accept juvenile offenders who have committed arson, drug addicts and habitual sexual offenders. However, considerations are given to juvenile offenders who have committed arson but with no repeat history.
LEARNING FROM POLLUTION CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN

Penchom Saetang

Introduction

This study was conducted from March to June 2006 in Japan. The topic was chosen out of personal interest, as Thailand’s industrial development pattern has closely imitated that of Japan. At the same time, the Japanese government and Japanese corporations have interests in and influence on Thailand’s transformation from an agricultural-based to industrial-based economy. This is clearly seen in the development of the Eastern Seaboard Development program (ESB) in the mid-1980s. The Thai government, through the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), designed the ESB Program by duplicating some industrial zones in Japan in the belief that this would shortcut Thailand into a Newly Industrialized Country (NIC) in Asia. After it began life in the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1981-1986), the ESB has become the biggest industrial development program in Thailand. The targeted area covers three strategic coastal provinces in the eastern region—Rayong, Chonburi and Chachoengsao. According to the ESB plan, the Map Ta Phut area in Rayong province is designated as a heavy industrial zone for petroleum refineries, petrochemical factories, iron and steel factories, and coal power plants. The construction of a huge industrial estate along with industrial deep seaports started in the late 1980s to facilitate the foreign investment inflows.

This retrospective study explores the history of Japan’s pollution problems and the anti-pollution movements of citizens. It was conducted with the expectation that it would provide lessons for NGOs and relevant groups to learn from in the reexamination and revitalization of anti-pollution campaigns in Thailand. It is also a good start in building a closer connection between Japanese and Thai public interest organizations working on environmental protection and contributing to a better society.

Although the experiences of pollution problems caused by heavy industry in Japan occurred decades ahead of those in Thailand, and the present social and environmental context is much different from what it was in the past, there are still valuable lessons from this study. The spirit, thoughts and experiences of those who support social and environmental justice are never out of date. The environmental crimes and cruel exploitation committed by business corporations with the collusion of government bodies from the days of the Minamata disease outbreak in Japan to the current Map Ta Phut syndrome in Thailand have stark similarities. Learning about the experiences of the Japanese citizen movement and developing solidarity among public interest groups will bring about a stronger transnational network in protecting the environment and building a common society-well being and sustainability.

Significance

Industrial pollution is not simply a matter of human error or technological deficiencies occurring in manufacturing processes. In fact, it is closely related to political and economic factors. Whenever it happens, there are similarities to the problems inherent in discrimination among human groups that are perpetrated against minorities and the poor, in which the oppressors and the oppressed have widely divergent views of the situation (Ui 1992: 6). Often, environmental technologies are made too complicated for common people to comprehend in cases where evidence is required to force polluters to take responsibility and to assess damage. Meanwhile, environmental scientists do not possess the humanity needed to grasp the central realities of the phenomenon they seek to study. It is not easy to understand it on an objective level (Ui 1992: 178). Consequently, when a problem breaks out, it is harder to cope with scientifically, legally, socially and politically.

In Thailand, although the degree and types of industrial pollution-related problems have not yet reached the level experienced in Japan, the cumulative social and environmental conflicts currently derived from industrialization policy and pollution problems have come closer to the point of crisis. From 1995 up to the present, many local communities have stood up against industrial and energy investment projects. With painful lessons drawn from many other cases, they have fought ahead despite the state’s usual indifference to their sufferings. In each year, there are many reports, from both public and NGO sources, about the increasing
Japan’s multi-faceted problems of environmental destruction began with the advent of modernization and induced the formation of voluntary organizations championing the anti-pollution movements nationwide between the late 1960s and 1970s. These movements faced a daunting task in trying to help victims and in influencing the central government to take concerted action in reforming pollution control laws and environmental protection policies. Such changes have caused Japanese industries—many of whom do not follow strict environmental regulations—to start moving out to Asia and Latin America in the late 1970s. Later, in the early 1990s, Japan’s industrial structure shifted emphasis from heavy and chemical industries to hi-tech, information and service industries. These industrial types need a smaller scale of resources and areas for investment. Thailand is one of many countries in the developing world to which heavy and polluting industries from Japan have been relocated to. This is a reason why the experiences of Japan have come into sharper focus in this study.

Methodology

1. Literature review from different secondary sources;
2. Site visits to the polluted places and affected communities;
3. Interviews with patients of Minamata disease and Kanemi Rice Oil disease, civil groups and NGOs, individuals and professionals; and
4. Participation in a number of activities held in Minamata and Tokyo.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study were compiled from exploration into the peak of Japan’s pollution situation during the 1950s and the 1970s, and into the citizen movements that supported the Minamata disease patients from the early 1960s to present. This paper also includes aspects of other movements organized to support the Itai-Itai disease patients, Kanemi Cooking Oil disease patients, and air pollution-affected communities in Kitakyushu and Yokkaichi. The first part of the findings gives a general background of pollution problems in Japan with a brief description of five major cases. It then reviews the environmental destruction, social consequences and unwanted legacies. The third part talks about the challenges of responsibility for the state and corporations. The fourth part describes citizens’ campaigns and strategies applied during the movement to support the victims. The final part is the conclusion and implications derived from the study.

1. General Background

Japan experienced severe environmental pollution during its push to industrialize in the late nineteenth century under the rule of the Meiji emperor (1868-1912), and again during the rush to rebuild the economy after World War II. The crash policy in building economic growth and modernization earned Japan a place among the world’s great powers by the early twentieth century. However, industrialization and modernization in Japan in both periods was led by nascent militarism. Human rights were, therefore, ignored as militarization gained a hold and took over all aspects of civil life (Ui 1992: 182). During the period, pollution in Japan was intensifying around the country and its citizens lived in the world’s most polluted land, breathing the world’s most polluted air, drinking the world’s most contaminated water, and eating the world’s most poisonous food (Nobuo 1973: 29).

During the late 1950s to 1970s, as Japan emerged as an industrially-developed society, its citizens suffered heavily and widely from a series of major pollution-related disease outbreaks. Anti-pollution citizens’ movements sprang up in many regions to support the victims. Later, environmental lawsuits were used as a tool to fight injustice. Lawsuits were filed in several courts against the big corporations for problems ranging from Minamata disease to asthma. These lawsuits serve as good historical records that make younger generations in Japan aware of their environmental history, in particular what became known as the “Big Four” (George 2001) or the “Four Great Pollution Lawsuits”. Two relate to the original Minamata disease in Minamata and the Minamata disease in Niigata. The third is for the Itai-Itai or cadmium-caused disease in Toyama, and the last is the Yokkaichi pollution case (Awaji: 45). This paper describes briefly the four cases which are the worst human tragedies caused by industrial pollution, and also the Kanemi Rice Oil or Cooking Oil disease which represents one of the worst industrial hazards caused by a consumer product.

1. Minamata Disease: the disease was first discovered...
in Minamata City, Kumamoto Prefecture, in May 1956. It is a neurological affliction caused by the ingestion of seafood with a high concentration of a methyl mercury compound, a by-product of the acetaldehyde manufacturing process released by Shin Nitchitsu or Chisso Corporation’s factory. The chemical company discharged wastewater contaminated with this compound into Minamata Bay, part of the Shiranui Sea Area. The disease develops complex symptoms in patients, such as a loss of sensation and numbness in their hands and feet. Patients become unable to grasp small objects and unable to run or walk without stumbling. Many have difficulty seeing, hearing and swallowing. In general, these symptoms deteriorate and are followed by severe convulsions, comas, and eventually death. It is estimated that around 200,000 residents, who were mainly fishermen living along the shore of the Shiranui Sea, contracted the disease. Presently, it is estimated around 12,000 affected victims have yet to be recognized as being affected by this disease (Harada 2006; Tani 2006).

2. Niigata Minamata Disease or the second Minamata disease: Discovered in 1965 in Niigata Prefecture, the outbreak was caused by effluents from Showa Denko’s factory at Kanose on the Agano River. The company discharged the same type of organic mercury as Chisso Corporation into the river. As of 2004, there were 800 patients in Niigata who had been officially certified (Pollution in Japan, Our Tragic Experience). In comparison, the number of patients in the second outbreak was much smaller because many experts and citizen groups rushed to help save the victims.

3. Itai-Itai Disease or cadmium-chronic disease: The disease occurred in a rice-growing area that was irrigated with water from the Jinzu River. This area spans four local governments across the river basin in Toyama Prefecture. Mainly afflicted were housewives in their forties or older. The main feature of the disease is osteomalacia accompanied by osteoporosis. The cause was the cadmium released into the upper streams of the Jinzu River at Kamioka in Gifu Prefecture, by the Mitsui Mining and Smelting Co., Ltd. Over many years, the people living downstream used and drank the river water in their daily lives. They had agricultural produce, mainly rice, which had been irrigated with contaminated water. The symptoms developed included extreme pain in the entire body. Those severely afflicted could break their bones just by moving their limbs. Itai-Itai is named after the screams of unbearable pain from the patients. There are 180 officially certified patients and about 400 people who require observation, while the number of people who died before being certified is over 1,000. About 148,800 acres of contaminated rice fields have been designated for remedial measures.

4. Yokkaichi asthma: Yokkaichi City on the Ise Bay is located near what has been the largest complex of petrochemical and oil refining facilities in the country since 1959. The air quality around the area had been damaged and was continually from sulfur dioxide and other pollutants in the factories' smoke that were causing contamination. After the factories' operation began, local residents in the Isozu area in Yokkaichi suffered from the air pollution and developed chronic illnesses. In October 1960, Yokkaichi City formed a Committee on Pollution Control to measure the severity of air pollution and conduct surveys on health impacts in residential areas. In 1974, the government began implementing the Pollution-Related Health Damage Compensation Law, requiring polluting companies to bear the victims’ medical costs and pay compensation for their loss of income (Pollution in Japan, Our Tragic Experiences: 14-15).

5. Kanemi Cooking Oil Disease: The disease was a sickness caused by PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), which have a wide range of uses including electrical insulation, heat media, and carbon paper. In Japan, they were manufactured by the Kanegafuchi Chemical Industry Co., Ltd. and their uses were expanded to include heat media in preparing foods. The Kanemi company used PCBs in their rice oil manufacturing process and some PCBs leaked into the process. Many consumers who used this PCB-contaminated oil in their cooking fell seriously ill in 1968. The symptoms that appeared were broad and complex and included eruptions over the entire body, eye discharges, abdominal pains, headaches, and total body fatigue. There were more than 1,800 people certified as contracting Kanemi Cooking Oil disease (Pollution in Japan: 10).

2. Environmental Destruction, Social Consequences and Unwanted Legacies

May 1st, 2006 marked the 50th official anniversary of Minamata disease. It is also the date when Shinobu
Sakamoto, a leading patient who made the disease known to the outside world, turned 50. Born in Yudou village on the western coast of the Kyushu Island to a fishing family, Sakamoto was poisoned in her mother’s womb by mercury-contaminated fish. While Shinobu survived, she grew up with a painful legacy. She became deformed at three months old. Her twisted body, fluttering hands, rolling-upward right eye, contorted mouth and chronic pain syndrome has kept her from leading a normal life. She lost her elder sister, Mayumi Sakamoto, who died at the age of five after succumbing to the disease. Her mother, father and youngest brother, all her remaining family members, became ill from the disease.

“It is very painful to have the disease with you, your whole life. We are deformed not by a naturally-caused sickness but by the Chisso’s greed and irresponsibility,” she told visitors slowly and exhaustedly. Her speech is difficult to understand and needs translation sentence by sentence. “Many people said we had to learn the lessons of Minamata. But even today it has never been made known to the public how many people developed the disease in the past. How many new patients are found nowadays? What responsibility does Chisso bear towards them? They said sorry, very sad about it, but there has not been any serious research on how it occurred. None of the government people have taken serious action on these problems. It is such an emptiness in these people’s minds,” she said.

Damages caused by the Minamata disease run deeper than what one can simply imagine and understand. Apart from complete economic disaster for the fishing communities located around the Shiranui Sea that Minamata Bay is part of, all the patients have suffered long histories of social discrimination.

Yoichi Tani, a student activist Kagoshima University, said the Minamata disease problem was very complicated and severe. It was related to so many aspects that they could not keep themselves still and do nothing about it. It was not only the indiscriminate practices of Chisso’s executives that were unbearable and that the attitudes of mainstream medical doctors and their diagnosis background were problematic, but the social discrimination to the patients was also distressing. During the time when the cause of the disease was unknown, the patients were thought to have contracted fatal communicative diseases. No correct treatment was given. They were relocated to remote places and were isolated from the general public. It was very hard for the victims to get any kind of jobs, associate with any social company, get married, or even obtain appropriate medical treatment in general clinics or hospitals. Most of them were refused treatment when they were known to have developed Minamata disease. Some patients could not bear the anguished situation and committed suicide. The social discrimination of these people was based on their deformed appearance. They were ostracized by society as patients who were faking illness to obtain compensation from the millionaire Chisso.

The stories of people’s suffering from industrial poisons have become widespread in industrial zones in Japan since the 1950s. In fact, the impact on human life and the environment was complicated and much more profound than what was physically evident. The exploration into the pollution-affected cases in Japan and direct interviews with a number of Minamata patients, as well as Kanemi Cooking Oil disease victims and members of their support groups, support what Nobuko Iijima describes in “Social Structures of Pollution Victims.” He divides the destruction of life and the environment by industrial pollution, occupational hazards and consumer product problems into four loci: 1) human life and health; 2) living situations; 3) personality; and 4) community environment and local society. All of these are interwoven into the fabric of environmental reality and attendant social structures (Ui: 154-156).

Environmental destruction is an attack on life and health. This is clearly evident in the cases of Minamata disease, Itai-Itai disease, arsenic acid poisoning, and air pollution-related asthma. Iijima explained that in relation to work environments, industrial accidents and occupational diseases are the main causes of health problems in individuals, while in the consumer field, disasters are caused mainly by medicine, food additives and ingredients such as thalidomide poisoning, SMON (sub-acute myelo-optico-neoropathy) disease, and the Kanemi Cooking Oil (PCB-tainted rice oil) disease. All affect the loss of individuals’ health and life.

These problems are all severe and result in a series of other interlocking problems centering on the second locus of destruction. When the main income earners of the family die or fall seriously ill, it greatly affects all other family members. Not only is there a loss of economic viability but every aspect of life is affected, such as living standards, human relations, and planning for future. The important aspects of life are all delicately balanced and when there is destruction of life and health all the other elements are thrown out of kilter. This is obvious when looking back to a demand that the Minamata disease patients have made to the government.
Sakamoto has repeatedly talked to many audiences with a hope that her demand would someday be heard. She is calling for a public, common “social” place where the patients in their aging and crippled conditions can live together with appropriate welfare. It would be a safe place that allowed them to freely share their common conditions and give mutual support, not a hospital with its restrictions and scheduled routines where they are treated like sick people in general. Nowadays, hundreds of Minamata disease patients are aging. They are over fifty years old. The parents who cared for them for their entire lives have passed away, one by one. The situation has deeply shaken their security of mind and life. However, the government has never taken this voice into consideration.

The destruction of health and life in this sense leads to the third locus of loss, which Iijima calls an adverse effect on personality. The pollution victims’ personality changes when they get no understanding and support in their negotiations with the polluters and the government and in their communications with members of their communities, the mass media, medical treatment officers, and the general public. Once a life is damaged, the living support system is subsequently destroyed. These changes manifest themselves in an accumulation of anger, hatred, and sorrow. In the cases of Minamata disease and Kanemi Cooking Oil disease, the patients who had the most serious and complicated symptoms suffered more deeply from all types of social and economic discrimination. In particular, in the first twelve years after the discovery of Minamata disease, it was regarded as taboo within the affected communities and the patients were badly isolated from all social relations and economic viability. What happened to them not only total changed the victims’ personalities but also left them living in a life-long state of trauma.

With the compounding of all these environmental problems, local communities and their environment become the victims. In Toyama prefecture, discharge from the Kamioka Mining Station contaminated 1,500 hectares of rice producing land in the Jinzu River Basin with a cadmium concentration of over one ppm. (Pollution in Japan, Our Tragic Experiences: 28), destroying the rice production that was the local communities’ main source of income. Although the government has a comprehensive plan for restoring the contaminated land, it can only help in some areas due to the huge budget required and the plan needs more than a decade to be completed. In the areas around Minamata City where some of the victims have been restructuring their lives with the help of support groups, human relationships have been so badly ruptured by discrimination that there is no hope of repair.

Many environmentalists and experts question the declaration by the local government on July 29th, 1997 that the Minamata Bay was safe after recovery activities were completed. Prof. Sanukida Satoshi, an ocean expert at Kyoto Gakuen University, said in an interview that, in the past, Japan did not have the appropriate technology to recover the contaminated water in Minamata Bay. The government did its best in its effort to solve the mercury problem, but the reclamation method used in Minamata might not have been safe enough to prevent methyl mercury leaks in the future. Tani, who has worked for over three decades in his support of the Minamata victims, agreed and shares concerns about the recovery method. It did not really clean up the contamination in Minamata, he said; on the contrary, it caused more trouble to people who lived along the mountainsides where the soil was taken away to reclaim the contaminated Minamata Bay.

There are many other contaminated areas over Japan, such as the Hibikinada reclamation project in Wakamatsu and toxic contaminated areas around the closed coal mines in Chikuho, Kitakyushu, that are the adverse outcomes of heavy industrial development during the 1950s to 1970s. All have become a painful environmental legacy for the following generations.

3. Struggles for State and Corporate Responsibility

The knowledge that the citizen movement on Minamata disease is still not over produces mixed feelings. The citizens’ struggle for state and corporate polluter responsibility continues to the present. In particular, the movement was highlighted with a series of activities that were held since the beginning of 2006 to mark the 50th official anniversary of the outbreak of Minamata disease.¹

On June 19th, Minamata disease patients and their support groups met with the representatives of the Chisso Corporation at its headquarters in Tokyo. Earlier, a big demonstration was held in front of the Chisso plant in Minamata on May 1st, when Sakamoto, surrounded by dozens of media cameras, tore up a reply from the company. Chisso’s letter to the patients rejected all demands to pursue the Supreme Court verdict of October 15th, 2004. The verdict orders them to take full financial responsibility for the environmental destruction and health damages of the victims. They also refused to reexamine the extent and degree of health damage, and ignored a demand to stop destroying the environment at Minamata Bay.²
According to Tani, as of November 2005, the tally of new patients stood at 3,348. They are awaiting an official medical investigation to determine if they have been poisoned with methyl mercury before claiming compensation from Chisso.

On the same afternoon of June 19th, representatives of the Minamata Disease Mutual Aid Society or Minamata-Byo Gojokai and the Minamata Disease Victims Mutual Aid Society or Minamata-Byo Higaisha Gojokai met and negotiated with the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Environment. Pursuing their open letter, they urged the government to consider the following demands:

1) To establish a governmental organization (structure) to investigate government responsibility for Minamata disease;

2) To conduct an investigation into the overall picture of the damages caused by Minamata disease, since amongst the new applicants for certification of Minamata disease are many victims between thirty to fifty years of age who were exposed to methyl mercury congenitally. Many of these people have had complaints of chronic severe headaches, aching of the shoulders, cramps (Charley horse) and tingling numbness over the last ten years. The causes of this damage require medical investigation, especially into the mercury content of the umbilical cords of people born during this period;

3) To radically reform the certification regime for Minamata disease in order to realize measures for victim relief including:
   - Reform the conditions for issuing the Shin Hoken Techo (New Health Passbook), so that there can be support for medical expenses even though an individual has submitted an application for Minamata disease certification or has initiated a lawsuit.
   - Investigate victim relief measures based on the Supreme Court’s verdict in the Kansai lawsuit.
   - Establish an investigation committee with membership that includes victims, doctors, scientists, etc. in order to clear up the problems with the present certification system.
   - Undertake victim relief measures while continuing investigation to disclose the full extent of the damages (caused by methyl mercury pollution); and

4) To set up and implement a system for the welfare, livelihood, and medical support of victims (mainly congenital Minamata disease victims), based upon the responsibility of the government as being party to having caused Minamata disease.

The certification regime for Minamata disease, which was established under the Ministry of Health and Welfare in December 1959 and called the Council for the Certification of Minamata Disease Patients, has been strongly criticized and questioned since the beginning for its criteria in designating Minamata disease patients. Dr. Harada Masazumi from the Kumamoto Gakuen University, who has dealt with Minamata disease since 1960, said it should not be called a “certification system”, but rather a “denial (patient) system”. The system “takes sides with the government and the company by setting the medical evaluation rules,” he said. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of patients that Chisso has had to compensate for the sake of Chisso’s economical viability. It, indeed, did not function any longer soon after the Supreme Court’s verdict in 2004 owing to the completion of its term of service. The government should take this matter seriously by appointing a new committee and reforming the certification criteria.

Aileen Mioko Smith, the director of Green Action, an environmental NGO, and a co-author with W. Eugene Smith of a renowned book entitled Minamata: Words and Photographs, said the certification system set up by the government has put a lot of pain on the patients. Since the government had made the certification system become tactful and put together the issues of health damage and money that made it more complicated and confusing in certifying the patients. With these tactics, the Certification Board, many of whose members are medical doctors appointed by the government, has caused many problems in terms of proving who contracted the disease and could be certified. Their prejudice appears to be based on fears that the patients would receive too much money from both the company and the government. Meanwhile, the methods used in classifying the Minamata disease patients into different groups are intended to avoid paying full compensation to the victims. These tactics have effectively decreased the amount of money paid in compensation to the patients.

In fact, the most appropriate way for the government to address environmental-related diseases is to first seek to stop the pollution immediately and then provide urgent public health support to unconditionally treat all those who live in the affected area or have been exposed to the pollutants. The governmental agencies involved need to arrange, as soon as possible, for epidemiological studies to ascertain the real extent of the environmental impact. It is unfortunate that, even after fifty years, these actions have never been taken.
In their struggle to seek redress for the loss of life and damage to their health, the Minamata disease patients, family members and support groups have mobilized several powerful protests to put pressure on the direct negotiations with Chisso, from the end of the 1950s to the 1970s. They filed a number of lawsuits in which the courts ruled in favor of the patients. The verdict of the first lawsuit in March 1973 recognized Chisso’s responsibility and awarded compensation amounting to 18 million yen for a dead family member and 16-18 million yen for a living family member. The second lawsuit’s verdict was issued in March 1979, which stated that Chisso had a responsibility to compensate 5-28 million yen per person for twelve out of fourteen plaintiffs. The third lawsuit’s verdict in March 1987 issued by the Kumamoto District Court recognized responsibilities for the first time of both the national and Kumamoto prefectural governments and Chisso, and ordered compensation totaling 3.3 million-22 million yen per person to seventy plaintiffs, including five certified patients (Tani 2006).

Most importantly, on October 15th, 2004, a suit filed by forty-five plaintiffs against the Japanese state and Kumamoto prefecture was successful in the Supreme Court in Osaka. The Supreme Court ruled that the national and prefectural government authorities were responsible for administrative malfeasance. The status of the plaintiffs as Minamata sufferers, until then persistently denied by the authorities, was upheld, and compensation was ordered. This action, launched in 1982, had been followed by an anguished quest for justice pursued for twenty-two years by the plaintiffs before the historic verdict. In that time, twenty-three of the fifty-nine patients died (the bereaved families of fifteen of them persisted in the action), and the average age of the survivors at present had come to be over seventy (http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=171).

An editorial in the Asahi Shimbun dated on October 16th, 2004 summed up the court decision that the spread of Minamata disease was due to the authorities of the national and prefectural (Kumamoto) governments folding their arms and ignoring it. It was official negligence that failed to put a stop to the release of effluent from the Chisso chemical company’s plant. The Supreme Court ordered the two governments to pay compensation and also criticized the company’s plant. The Ministry of Health and Welfare, saying “You must not find Chisso effluent to be the cause of the disease,” and that it had been blind to the fact that the water treatment system belatedly and grudgingly installed by Chisso was a sham in that it did not eliminate mercury. This latest judgment brought legal closure to the debate over responsibility once again after it had continued for almost half a century (http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=171).

Beside Minamata disease patients, other pollution victims of the Niigata Minamata disease, Itai-Itai disease, (or "ouch-ouch" disease in Toyama Prefecture, caused by cadmium poisoning), and Yokkaichi asthma had held different protests at different events demanding that polluters be held responsible. After filing their cases in court, many support groups sprang up during the 1970s to support them and mobilized these victims into large pollution-victim movements.

After the discovery of the second Minamata disease outbreak in Niigata in 1965, an independent movement started mobilizing from there and had influence on others, including the original Minamata disease group (Ui: 9). As many scientists, doctors, lawyers and activists rushed to limit the damage to local people, the Niigata Minamata disease patients changed their strategy to fighting a legal battle in advance of the original Minamata patients. They sued the company on June 12th, 1967 and won their case on September 29th, 1971. In the same year, the cadmium chronic disease patients in Toyama also won their lawsuit, after the court on June 30th found Mitsui’s Kamioka mine guilty. The case had been filed on March 9th, 1968 (George: 175).

Meanwhile, Yokkaichi’s air pollution victims took their struggle to court on September 1st 1967 and won on July 24th, 1972 (George: 175). Yokkaichi asthma became known widely after a group of petrochemical complexes built on the Ise Bay in Yokkaichi city that had begun operating in 1959 badly destroyed the local residents’ health and livelihoods. Starting in August 1962, patients thought to be suffering from pollution-related health problems were examined free of charge at the Mie University Hospital, and starting in May 1965, patients certified by the Yokkaichi Medical Review Board were entitled to have all medical expenses paid for by the city. However, the tragic circumstances of the patients were publicized after the suicide of certified patients due to their financial and other hardships, as well as the death of a union high school girl and other young patients from air pollution-related illnesses (Pollution in Japan, Our Tragic Experiences: 14).
The victory of Yokkaichi’s patients was attributed to the change in the compensation law and the total revision of environmental quality standards for air and other types of pollution in that year. It also led to the passage of the 1973 Pollution-Related Health Damage Compensation Law (Awaji: 41). Under this law, patients with Minamata and Itai-Itai diseases became eligible for health compensation in 1974 (Pollution in Japan, Our Tragic Experiences: 22, 28).

4. Citizens’ Campaigns and Strategies

The citizen movements against industrial pollution in Japan formed up nationwide during the late 1960s to the 1970s. Mainly, the movements were organized around environmental problems in heavily polluted regions of Japan. In particular, the Big Four cases fought in the courts eventually resulted in linking many concerned citizens, such as scientists, doctors, teachers, lawyers, artists, labor union members, journalists and students, who came together and built strong environmental networks to support the victims. In the early stages, most people thought problems of pollution were to be found only in restricted local environments. But gradually they came to understand that poisons were being disseminated everywhere, even in the large cities, and that the damage was much more extensive than previously thought.

These environmental groups adopted various strategies, including litigation, media campaigning, and lobbying local governments to pressure industries and governmental organs into assuming responsibility. Within these contexts, they could win litigations and make the central government responsible for the environmental problems in question. Within the broader context, their movements resulted in environmental policy and legal reform in the 1970s. This brought about stricter regulations in controlling environmental quality. The citizen groups in their long movement have succeeded in highlighting the importance of human rights over the profits of large polluting firms.

Amongst others, the citizen movement to support the Minamata disease victims became the most powerful movement organized to support the legal battle. In fact, during those early days of sufferings, there were no laws regulating industrial activities in Japan. There were no precedent legal cases upon which the victims could base their claims. Some regulations, like the one established in 1958 to regulate industrial effluents, were inapplicable because effluents containing acetaldehyde compound from allied chemical production facilities such as those which cause the Minamata disease were exempted by law. Therefore, the only course of action was the application of the civil code through the relevant courts. This made the lawyers for the plaintiffs think they might have lost their case from the beginning (Ui: 118).

In the struggle to address these concerns, the support groups mobilized different resources and adopted various strategies. Below are some important instances of activities conducted in the nationwide movement to achieve accountability from the government and Chisso. Through these strategies, the movement finally succeeded in bringing the Minamata tragedy to worldwide recognition (Ui: 118-119).

- Research was conducted to support the court battles. A voluntary general citizens’ group, named the Peoples’ Congress for Minamata Disease, was formed. This group joined forces with the Kumamoto City’s Association to Indict the Minamata Disease in setting up the Minamata Disease Research Group to support litigation. In this context, citizen volunteers, researchers, journalists, Chisso Company labor union members, and many other people joined in helping to continue research into the disease. For example, confidential records that the company tried to destroy were secretly taken out by labor union members. Dr. Hajime Hosokawa, a retired medical doctor previously working at the company hospital, decided on his deathbed to testify for the victims in court. He said the results of his experiments on cats with waste water contaminated with methyl mercury were kept secret by the company. These efforts, put together, were able to produce a clear report that proved Chisso’s liability in and responsibility for Minamata disease. The reports later became a well-documented archive at Kumamoto University. At present, research related to Minamata disease continues to make a contribution to medical and scientific advancement.

- Direct negotiation was sought. Several strategies were adopted to attempt to directly negotiate for recognition and compensation. These included a sit-down strike in front of Chisso Corporation in Minamata City. When access to the negotiations in Minamata was denied, Kawamoto Teruo, a patient group leader, decided to go to Tokyo to negotiate with the Company President by holding the sit-down strike at Chisso’s headquarter in Tokyo. This action has led to the most powerful sit-down strike in the history of Japanese civil society’s environmental movement. A contingent of supporters from Tokyo and its environs came to join their strike and gave fully support. The patient group who sat down inside the
corporate office was forcibly removed by riot police. Instead of dissolving, they continued their strike on the street in front of the corporate headquarters for eighteen months beginning in December 1971. During that time Kawamoto also went to other Chisso manufacturing plants to seek the cooperation and understanding of Chisso workers and their labor unions. The strike was later joined by university students. Between 1968 and 1969, the student movements were at their peak and young people became very aware of social issues and problems. The various supporters were united in their non-violent demonstration when the riot police were called in to break up the groups. This event was to become the longest and the largest sit-down strike in Japan’s history of social movements.

- Publications and informative materials were produced for distribution. This was done to keep the general public informed. There was a wealth of relevant documents and printed publications about Minamata produced to campaign at every level, including.

- A small newspaper published by the Association to Indict the Minamata Disease to report in detail the court procedures and the activities of various disease victims. The papers were delivered nationwide. This allowed news of the legal battle to spread from Kumamoto to other interested and concerned persons across the country.

- A number of books were published telling the stories of Minamata patients and their sufferings. Between 1968 and 1970, several books were written to introduce the facts and problems surrounding Minamata disease. Among those highly acclaimed was, for instance, Kukai Jodo (Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow) by poetess Michiko Ishimure from Minamata City who later received the coveted Magsaysay Award from the Philippines for her masterly work. Minamata: Words and Photographs is the well-known book of W. Eugene Smith and Aileen Smith telling of the devastating effects of mercury poisoning on a Japanese fishing village. It was published in 1975. Photographs taken by Aileen Smith in this book became a symbol of Minamata disease worldwide.

- Outreach campaigns were conducted. The Minamata disease patients and support groups participated in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in June 1972. They also attended several meetings of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) held in parallel. This allowed them to report to the world on the misery of many pollution victims in Japan and pleaded the case for a world in which such misery would no longer be allowed. Through this, the world came to know not only of the seriousness of the pollution problems in Japan but also of corporate and state attitudes toward environmental destruction. The support groups also produced a “Citizens’ Report” that described Minamata disease and many other pollution diseases in Japan that victims were suffering from after learning that the first official Japanese government report to the Stockholm Conference did not mention Minamata disease. This resulted in the Japanese government having to produce a special supplementary report on Minamata disease and other pollution-related problems so as to maintain a semblance of integrity at the international gathering.

- Films were made and cultural performances were held. These activities were arranged voluntarily to support the struggle and to help in fund-raising for the movement. The most famous activities in this area were:

- Seirinsha, the creation of Noriaki Tsuchimoto, who led Japan in the production of documentary films on Minamata disease and the supporters’ movement. These films were shown in many places, contributing greatly to spreading knowledge of the disease and it becoming recognized internationally.

- Akira Sunada, a professional actor, lives in Minamata with the patients and earns his livelihood from organic farming. He carries out his pilgrimage mission through the presentation of his unique but traditional plays. His plays tell the stories of Minamata disease and the City to a larger and more varied audience living from Tokyo to Minamata, and that the sufferings need continued financial and moral support. He and other consumer supporters have formed an organic product network for sales outlets of organic farms and have sought to treat patients with oriental medicine. Through their brave attempts, many other projects have been launched to give continuous support. All activities are sustained on a voluntary basis and have not been supported by any established funding organizations. This fact gives the community a certain feeling of autonomy.6

The strike was joined by a contingent of supporters from Tokyo and its environs. The citizen movement supporting Minamata had never thought of victory when they started. However, when the people became united together in their struggle, they were finally
able to win. There were some key factors leading to success. Aileen M. Smith, who was closely involved with the movement, said one of these keys was raising the campaign to the national level. The sit-down strike, for example, was an important strategy in opening up the involvement of many different people. Other factors, such as working equally with no bosses and no followers and having a clear goal with one clear enemy, were strategies that promoted unity amongst the varied supporters and victims and helped reduce many conflicts that broke out throughout the lengthy and difficult struggle.

However, other citizen movements with different strategies also met with success in bringing about changes and the acceptance of responsibility for the victims. The examples of the citizen movements in opposing the construction of a petrochemical complex in Shizuoka prefecture and severe air pollution problems in Kitakyushu are cases where different situations and environs led to different strategies that are worth studying, according to Prof. Awaji.

In 1963 and 1964, as pollution was intensifying from oil refining, the petrochemical industry, and steel production, and against the backdrop of the government’s plan to construct a new petrochemical complex in the Mishima-Numazu-Shimizu area of Shizuoka Prefecture, a new anti-pollution group was formed called “No More Yokkaichi”. The movement immediately built networks of local scientists to conduct environmental assessments and other studies and held over 300 meetings in order to study the problem. A new feature of this campaign was that instead of complaining to the central government, citizens focused their efforts locally by reforming the local government. Taking this seriously, the national government conducted the first environmental impact assessment in Japan by a government survey group and tried to head off the local opposition movement, but in the end the government’s attempt failed in 1965 (Awaji: 41).

This Mishima-Numazu-Shimizu campaign was the first full-fledged citizens’ movement in Japan since the end of World War II (Awaji: 41). Their victory was to become a guiding light for other citizen movements that were protesting against environmental destruction.

Furthermore, the anti-air pollution movement during the 1960s in Kitakyushu adopted different methods in its campaign and became a pioneer in mobilizing the women’s movement in Japan in dealing with environmental problems. Eidai Hayashi, an independent writer who moved to Kitakyushu in 1962 and worked for the Board of Education of Tobata city (now Kitakyushu city), played an important role in peacefully changing Kitakyushu from one of the most pollution-ravaged cities in the country into a modern and clean city. He said women were very powerful and at the same time peaceful in their fight. He spent time in educating housewife groups step by step and arranged investigation teams to identify the air pollutants released by the factories. The movement led by these housewife groups finally succeeded in solving the air pollution problem through negotiations with local government and industries. The Kitakyushu case was later acknowledged globally with the “Global 500 Roll of Honour” in 1990 from the United Nations Environment Programme and the “UNCED Local Government Honors” at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) held in 1992 (Eidai 1995: iii).

Eidai, now 75 years old but still retaining a sharp memory, kindly consented to an interview recently. He recalled the work on the issue in the early years. After finding the city to be widely damaged by smoke and soot from factories, such as Tobata Cast Iron, Nippon Steel, Mitsubishi Kasei, Nakabaru Power Plant, and Asahi Glass’ Makiyama Factory, with pollution starting to threaten lives of local citizens, particularly children, he initiated a social and environmental program in his office to educate housewives. This program turned into a training forum for organized housewife members in Tobata and other districts. The educational courses with tactics adopted during trainings were transformed into a strong movement that entered into negotiations with administrative organizations and then the polluters, backed by scientific data systematically collected by the housewife members. This made it difficult for the polluting companies to deny wrongdoing (Eidai: 41). There were reflections on the women’s movement in Kitakyushu that it was a pure citizen movement that drove their campaign through the data and information collected during their field trainings. He commented that a strong point of the women’s movement was that they were more sensitive to the issue of pollution and could work together as a group more easily.

Conclusion

My four months of learning from Japanese experiences left me with far beyond what I expected. It was an unforgettable time in my life to meet with so many people who have spent much of their lives working for human justice. Prof. Harada, a retired medical doctor who has spent his lifetime in helping the Minamata disease patients, for example, has kept on working on the methyl mercury problem and extended his
medical expertise in helping methyl mercury-poisoned patients worldwide. Yoichi Tani and his wife, Kimiyo Ito, have turned their anger and agony to strength and commitment in giving support to the Minamata movement both in the frontline and behind the scenes for over 30 years. At this moment, they are moving a step forward in building a better place and a community for the aging Minamata disease patients, amidst the support of many other like-minded people.

Shinobu and Fujii Sakamoto, Tsuginori Hamamoto and many other victims have never given up their quest to tell the world about the sufferings they endured, in the hope that Minamata disease will not recur in any part of the world, and ordinary people will no longer suffer exploitation by enterprises who build their wealth at the expense of the poor. So does Toyoko Yano, an 83-year-old victim of the Kanemi Cooking Oil disease. Although she is not able to reclaim her health from the contaminated consumer product, she can reclaim her rights and protect younger generations by striking back at the wrong-doers and bravely exposing the truth. She said, “If people forget how important life is, no one can live in peace.” Meanwhile, Jun Ui’s five principles will never be out of date as long as environmental and pollution problems do not change their characteristics and causes.

Many professors in different fields of knowledge and campuses, as well as lawyers, citizen groups and individual activists, are working endlessly for a better society and better environment. Many of them are working beyond borders, extending their knowledge and skills to support people in other parts of the world. This implies that the world is not ready to close the chapter on Minamata or other social and environmental sagas as long as justice and righteousness are ignored. This, too, is my belief.

Implications

Japan is now widely recognized for its good environmental laws and high standards of pollution control. Many of the environmental control and management technologies have been modernized. The younger generations in Japanese society generally live in better environmental circumstances. They owe a debt to the brave struggles of older generations who stood up against environmental destruction problems. What is important is that all the struggles in the history of citizen movements in protecting human life and environment have employed non-violent actions.

However, it is also apparent that pollution problems have yet to disappear. On the contrary, pollution is worsening in different forms and in different places, both inside and outside Japan. This is because what the polluting industries have done is to move from one place to another where they can earn the same or higher profits and pay little mind to the value of environmental sustainability. Therefore, the struggle for the environment and people’s livelihood seems to be never-ending. Experiences learnt from the Japanese people can benefit many if they are shared widely amongst the Asian Public Intellectual (API) communities where environmental problems and such forms of exploitation exist in the member countries. At present, injustice in the form of environmental destruction by dominant industrial investment exists in every developing country. This is a big challenge that is waiting for us to be ready to stand up against it.

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Notes
1. The official recognition of Minamata disease began on 1st May 1956 but the patients and support groups insist that Minamata disease began 74 years ago since Chisso Corporation started discharging waste water contaminated with methyl mercury into Minamata Bay and the Shiranui Sea in 1932.
2. In early 2006, Chisso Company secretly dumped dioxin into Minamata Bay. The Minamata disease patients and support group asked the company to explain to the public what had happened and to disclose information related to environmental problems.
3. It also called the Ad Hoc Certification Committee consisting of eight committee members—Associate Professor Tokuomi of the Department of Internal Medicine of Kumamoto University, the director and deputy director of the Minamata Municipal Hospital, an executive of the Minamata Medical Association, and the director of the Minamata Public Health office—who have the authority to decide who is a Minamata disease patient.
4. The Open Research Center for Minamata Studies is a legacy of this continuity. It was established in April 2005 at the Kumamoto Gakuen University in
Kumamoto City; later in August, the Minamata Studies Center Branch Office was established in the Minamata City. It aims to take the “negative heritage” of the Minamata tragedy and, by illuminating this heritage, to develop a new scientific field and methodology that will provide the foundation for “Minamata studies”. Minamata Studies is an academic subject that sets up a framework designed to increase interdisciplinary scholarship, provides learning opportunities that permits professional researchers and citizens to interact, provides real world truths from the epicenter of the tragedy, speaks to everyone, asking important questions of how to live and act, and makes the local global.

5 Chisso totally refused to negotiate directly with the victims, indicating the negotiations would take place only through a third party such as the national or prefectural government. Seen from a historical perspective, it is a well-known fact that third party negotiations, especially in relation to environmental pollution, end by the favoring the industrial polluter at the expense of the victims. A good example of this is the sympathy money negotiations that took place in 1959.

6 Kawamoto Teruo is a Minamata disease victim who struggled for the recognition of his father’s death of the disease and of himself. Through his radical struggle as the leader of the patients’ Direct Negotiation Group, he organized the sit-down strike in Tokyo that intensified the protest and finally led to wide-range national supports that made most Japanese citizens aware of the facts of Minamata disease.

7 When he visited the company-loyal labor union at the Goi plant in Chiba Prefecture, he met with violence. One of the causes of the early death of the famous American photographer, Eugene Smith, was an injury received as a result of accompanying Kawamoto to the Goi plant. This kind of violence against the Minamata disease victims’ movement was bitterly criticized in every quarter and these events strengthened citizen support for the sit-down strike in Tokyo.

8 One of the Minamata disease support groups is the Solidarity Network Asia and Minamata based in Minamata City. It was set up by members of citizen groups who have been involved in the struggle for over thirty years. Presently it is run by Mr. Yoichi TANI as General Secretary and has initiated a number of organic farming activities, such as orange orchards, toxic-free soaps and detergent, and other organic products, in order to maintain the Minamata disease campaign worldwide and give support to the patients.
THE INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION INTO SCHOOL CURRICULA IN THE PHILIPPINES, JAPAN AND INDONESIA

Narumol Aphinives

Introduction

The importance of environmental education in the preservation and improvement of the world’s environment as well as in the sound and balanced development in the world’s communities was first recognized in 1972 at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm. Since then, environmental education has gained greater significance on both local and international agendas. The World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002 reaffirmed Agenda 21 (a comprehensive blueprint of action for sustainable development, which was the catalyst for the Earth Summit in 1992), and the importance of environmental education, as well as proclaimed the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014.

Most Asian nations have undertaken initiatives to promote environmental education utilizing both formal and informal venues. Approximately ten years ago, many of these countries began to emphasize the integration of environmental education into the school curriculum at the policy level, as well as the development of guidelines for implementing environmental education.

This research initiative examines the integration of environmental education into the school curriculum at the implementation level and explores the linkages to organizations that collaborate with the schools. Particular emphasis has been given to the social and cultural context that influences the scope and process of implementing environmental education in the Philippines, Japan and Indonesia, the three countries covered by the research.

The research methodology includes visits to approximately five schools in each of the three countries, interviews with schoolteachers and students as well as observations in and out of classrooms, interviews with representatives from governments, educational organizations and non-governmental organizations, a review of existing documents, and attendance at training workshops and conferences. The research was undertaken during the twelve-month period from July 16, 2005 to July 15, 2006.

Findings

Overview of Environmental Education in Schools

All three countries examined in the research have adopted environmental education policies and have emphasized the integration of environmental education into the school curriculum. Most initiatives continue to favor nature conservation incorporated into the study of science, geography, social science, and eco-clubs in schools. However, there are attempts to integrate environmental education across all subject areas using a holistic approach based on the concept of sustainable development, although educators in these countries have experienced various obstacles to successful integration.

The Philippines

The National Basic Education Curriculum 2002 and the National Environmental Education Action Plan 2004 to 2013 have continued to emphasize the integration of environmental education into the school curriculum. Four schools visits were undertaken in Metro Manila including three public schools (Tambo Elementary School, Silvestre Lazaro Elementary School, Quezon City Science High School), and one private school, (Miriam College, Grade School and High School). All schools have implemented environmental education using the infusion approach. This method incorporates environmental education content and processes into established courses throughout the curriculum. The subject area or discipline dictates what environmental issues can be introduced in particular topics in different subjects.

The schools have also implemented ecological solid waste management practices on their campuses. The activities are under the Solid Waste Reduction Master Plan for Metro Manila (SWARMPlan). The SWARMPlan utilizes the solid waste management activities developed by Miriam College as a role model for schools (see Case Study One).

The level of integration of environmental education and environment-related activities in public schools varies due to limited budgets for procuring the necessary human resources, in-service training and reference books.
Furthermore, the environmental education materials developed by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have not reached the schools visited.

Japan

In 1998, the Curriculum Council produced a report on the “National Curriculum Standards Reform for Kindergartens, Elementary Schools, Lower and Upper Secondary Schools and Schools for the Visually Disabled, the Hearing Impaired and the Otherwise Disabled”, which outlined the educational reform plan for the 21st century. With regard to environmental issues, the report states, “In consideration of the actual situation in the region, the environmental education will be enhanced in related classes as well as in the Period for Integrated Study” (MEXT 1998). The schools subsequently began to follow these educational reform guidelines in 2001.

Of the five schools visited during the course of this research (Takaido Dai Yon Elementary School and Nunota Elementary School in Tokyo, and Dai-ichi Elementary School, Dai-ni Elementary School, and Dai-ni Junior High School in Minamata City), all have integrated environmental education and activities into the Period for Integrated Study (see Case Study Two), as well as into eco-clubs, but little integration has occurred in other subjects.

According to Dr. Kimiko Kozawa, President of the Japanese Society of Environmental Education, and Dr. Masahiro Takahashi, Researcher at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, environmental education in Japan is still not a priority. The perception of environmental education as only a part or a subsystem of the school curriculum is reflected in the low profile of environmental education on the entrance examination process, which continues to have a strong influence on school syllabuses. Furthermore, in response to the Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities initiated by the Ministry of Education, the number of hours for the Period for Integrated Study might be decreased to accommodate English language study.

Indonesia

Since it first began in 1969, environmental education has incorporated nature conservation into the study of science as well as extra-curricular activities such as “Clean Friday” (Nomura & Hendarti 2005). These approaches have been popular up until the present. However, the Ministry of Environment initiated the Green School Program in early 2006 to emphasize that environmental education is not only about the physical green and clean school, but also that the integration of environmental education into the school curriculum is crucial to increase students’ environmental knowledge and awareness. The project also encourages schools to use an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education.

Seven schools were visited in Indonesia. The schools visited in West Java included SMP Negeri 2 Junior High School in Ciamis, and SMA Negeri 1 Mandirancan Senior High School in Kuningan, as well as in Yogyakarta, Central Java, including SDN Ungaran 1 Elementary School, and SMP Negeri 2 Junior High School. All schools participated in the Green School Program. The SDN Ungaran 1 School, which has integrated nature conservation activities into its eco-club for more than five years, as well as implemented green and clean activities on campus, was one of three schools recognized for its achievements and awarded the Green School Model Award 2006.

The two schools visited in Jakarta (Menteng 01 Elementary School, and SMA Negeri 68 Senior High School), have incorporated environmental education into students’ daily life. For example, the third grade students of the Menteng 01 School learn about a healthy home in the “Environment in Jakarta Subject” while the fifth grade students undertake outdoor activities on the “Road in Jakarta Subject” near the school. The SMA Negeri 68 School has established the Jakarta Green Club for students to initiate and undertake environment-related activities by themselves. The students’ initiatives include the campaign for a Day Free of Pollution from Cars that encourages students to ask their parents not to drive their cars to school on that day, as well as planting one hundred trees in Jakarta.

Although all schools visited have realized the importance of environmental education, teachers are increasingly under pressure to adapt because of the significant changes introduced every ten years in the National Curriculum Standards. The 1994 national curriculum introduced the local curriculum, which emphasizes the integration of environmental education into a local context. A decade later, the 2004 national curriculum changed to a competency-based curriculum, which enables schools to decide their own educational plans as well as environmental education in response to local autonomy and decentralization adopted in 1999. As a result, the integration of environmental education and activities into eco-clubs is the most popular choice for implementation.

However, some wider ranging progress is being made.
One private school in Bogor, the School of Universe Elementary and High School, has attempted to integrate environmental education across all subject areas using a holistic approach as well as a coherent plan for the progression of environmental education from elementary to high school (see Case Study Three).

Case Studies

Regardless of the constraints, educators have continued to innovate in the approaches and practices of environmental education. The research from the three Case Studies presented in this paper highlights the influence of some of these innovations on the effectiveness of environmental education.

The three Case Studies presented in this paper are:

Case Study One: The Integration of Solid Waste Management into the Curriculum in the Philippines, Japan and Indonesia

Case Study Two: The Period for Integrated Study on the Issue of Minamata Disease in Japan

Case Study Three: The Integration of Nature Conservation and Entrepreneurship into the Curriculum in Indonesia

CASE STUDY ONE:
The Integration of Solid Waste Management into the Curriculum in the Philippines, Japan and Indonesia

The 3Rs of solid waste management (reduce, reuse and recycle) essentially aim to establish a sound material-cycle society where consumption of natural resources is minimized and the environmental load is reduced. The concept is also applied to the entire life cycle of production, from product designing and the extraction of raw materials to transportation, manufacturing, reuse and disposal.

The Philippines

The tragedy of the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City in 1999, when thousands of people were buried alive when heavy rains caused the collapse of a mountain of garbage, was the initial catalyst for taking solid waste issues seriously (EMB 2005).

The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 recognized this imperative. It mandates waste segregation at the source, such as household, commercial and agriculture sources; the establishment of a Materials Recovery Facility in every barangay (See Note 1); and the establishment of reclamation programs and buy-back centers for recyclable and toxic materials. Furthermore, the Act encourages conversion to more environmentally friendly products and packaging, covers penalties for non-implementation of this Act, and provides incentives for initiatives.

Three years after Congress passed the Act, legal compliance remained dismal among citizens (Galang 2005). The Environmental Management Bureau, therefore, initiated the Solid Waste Reduction Master Plan (SWARMPlan) for Metro Manila to promote segregation at source through municipal capacity building. Funded by the President’s Social Welfare Fund for the year 2004-2005, the goal is to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in dumpsites, landfills, canals, and streets and to maximize the return of recycling items such as paper, glass, metals, plastic, wood, and aluminum to factories and of compost to the soil.

In recognizing the need for a paradigm shift from garbage disposal to ecological solid waste management, the SWARMPlan coalition was established with representation from all sectors, from wet markets to business centers, barangays to schools. Participating sectors organized ecological solid waste management training and promoted active advocacy in their respective sectors. Before the enactment of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, most leaders of the current SWARMPlan coalition sectors were not interested in segregation, composting, and recycling initiatives.

With regard to SWARMPlan’s presence in schools, the Environmental Studies Institute of Miriam College is responsible for coordinating and training personnel from approximately 1,000 public and private schools, as well as monitoring activities for the SWARMPlan Model School Awards in partnership with the Department of Education and the Environmental Management Bureau. This is an opportunity for the public schools, which have limited expertise and budgets for undertaking in-service training, to learn about environmental education in practice by participating in the SWARMPlan.

The SWARMPlan utilizes the solid waste management activities developed by Miriam College as a role model for schools. Miriam College has undertaken solid waste management activities on campus for more than ten years using innovative approaches to conserve natural resources and develop the students’ way of life. After several years of trial and error, the segregation system and facilities have produced promising results. However, development is an ongoing process. The College is
currently testing the conversion of tissue paper and sanitary napkins into compost.

Miriam College has also integrated the solid waste management concept into the school curriculum and encouraged the schools associated with the SWARMPlan to participate. One of Miriam’s “Seven Environmental Principles” is, “everything must go somewhere”. This is the environmental principle for solid waste management. This principle opens up one’s eyes to the need to turn back from attitudes that are inherent in a “throw-away” society. Materials in the environment are not lost; they are only transformed from one form to another.

It seems that the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act cannot solely draw attention from schools and other sectors unless there are support systems and structures for implementation from both government and the private sector, as with the SWARMPlan. This might also be the reason that the SWARMPlan has attracted involvement from schools in a short period of time, compared with the nearly twenty years that Miriam College has tried to disseminate its solid waste management activities and environmental education modules to other schools.

Japan

The Japanese Government passed the Basic Law for Establishing the Recycling-based Society in 2000, with the aim of creating a zero-waste society based on quantitative targets as well as disseminating its experience and sharing the spirit of mottainai with the international community. The Cabinet decided in March 2003 to implement a ten-year framework of programs for changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns, as a follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

This regulation has had a significant impact as witnessed by the implementation of daily garbage segregation in schools, homes, offices, etc. Schools in Japan have implemented various degrees of 3R activities based on the local government policy of each Prefecture. One successful case study is the waste management program undertaken by Minamata City, Kumamoto Prefecture.

In 1993, Minamata City initiated waste management activities with the aim of building eco-friendly lifestyles and an environmentally aware society. Conceived by the Minamata Municipality, these activities were part of the Creation of a Model Environmental City, which emphasized people’s participation in the creation of a healthy living environment. Healthy environmental living conditions in Minamata were severely compromised during the outbreak of Minamata Disease in the midst of rapid industrialization growth in the late 1960s. Minamata Disease is a disease of the nervous system that results from chronic poisoning by methyl mercury compounds from industrial waste, usually contracted by ingesting large quantities of contaminated fish and shellfish.

Furthermore, the accidental explosion of a propane gas cylinder was also a catalyst for implementing waste separation. The cylinder, which was hidden inside a black plastic garbage bag, was unknowingly sent to a garbage crusher causing an explosion that destroyed machinery and the roof (Kusano 2006). This accidental explosion in 1992 made Minamata residents aware of the importance of separating garbage into appropriate categories (ibid.).

In 1999, residents began dividing garbage into twenty-one categories with further classification into twenty-three categories in 2000. The waste was then grouped into six broader types for further management: recyclable waste, hazardous waste, bulky waste, burnable waste, decomposable waste, and organic waste. Classification into twenty-three categories has only been implemented in Minamata City. Most cities have divided garbage into combustible waste and non-combustible waste. Some cities or districts also have garbage collection stations for recyclable waste and bulky waste.

Three hundred garbage collection stations, which are managed by the residents, have been established, one for every hundred households in Minamata. Waste is collected twice a week and sold to recycling dealers on a monthly basis, generating an annual income of approximately eight million yen (2.5 million Thai Baht) for the city (JBIC 2004). The income is distributed to each district as a subsidy according to the volume of recyclables collected (Minamata City 2002). The city also established an Eco-Town where recycling facilities are located and organic waste is converted into compost.

As part of solid waste management activities, during the first semester of the school year a community representative teaches students the correct procedures for separating garbage. Once a month, students also collaborate with their respective communities with regard to the separation of recyclables. This collaboration aims to restore a sense of community and solidarity among the citizens that collapsed during their thirty years of bitter experiences resulting from Minamata Disease (Minamata City 2002).

Effective waste separation into the various categories requires discipline and commitment from everyone
CASE STUDY TWO: The Period for Integrated Study on the Issue of Minamata Disease in Japan

In 1998, the Ministry of Education proclaimed the establishment of the National Curriculum Standards Reform for the 21st century and introduced the Period for Integrated Study. The Period for Integrated Study began to be implemented in all schools in Japan in 2002 with the aim of transforming education from “Knowledge—Transference type” (teachers transfer knowledge to students) to “Pursuit—Creation type” (students develop methods and discover knowledge by themselves), with an emphasis on problem solving, hands-on learning approaches and communication skills, and the participation of the local community with schools (Kozawa 2005). The Period for Integrated Study is undertaken from elementary to junior high school for approximately 100 hours or 10 percent of the total hours per year.

Educators perceive the Period for Integrated Study as a good opportunity for adopting environmental education, especially with a demanding school curriculum. However, the themes in this class are not necessarily related to environmental issues, but can focus on topics such as international understanding, information, welfare and health, etc. that students are interested in and closely relate to the community and school’s characteristics. The teachers’ role is to facilitate and encourage mutual learning between students and their communities.

In most schools in Minamata City, the Period for Integrated Study explores the issue of Minamata Disease and its effects on society and the environment, as well as develops communication skills. For example, Dai-ichi Elementary School first addressed this issue when the school adopted the Period for Integrated Study. Beginning in the third grade, teachers set a topic that included Minamata Disease. Students learn about Minamata disease directly from victims at the Minamata Disease Municipal Museum. The victims share their experiences and the lessons they have learned with the hope that the younger generation will be free from prejudice and misunderstanding related to Minamata Disease.

In the fourth grade, the topic is focused on student-initiated voluntary work. Students learn about different types of voluntary work and decide on a voluntary project for themselves, and exchange their ideas in a group. They also undertake a research survey of the Minamata River and further their learning on Minamata Disease through discussions with victims as well as writing a reflective report.
The topic for the fifth grade is Minamata’s industry and environment. Students learn about hospitals in Minamata and undertake a study tour at the Chisso Company, which discharged methyl mercury compounds into Minamata Bay between 1932 and 1967. This discharge was the direct cause of contaminated fish and shellfish, which were the main food supply of the local fishermen. Students also undertake a study tour at the Eco-Town. At the end of the year, students submit a report on their related experiences.

The sixth grade topic is focused on students sharing the information they have learned about Minamata City with the public. Students review what they have learned and experienced from the third to the fifth grade, including the school, Minamata Disease and its victims, hospitals, industry and environment. They also write a report focusing on the topic and deliver a presentation in the classroom.

It took almost forty years before the concept of learning from the Minamata Disease victims became accepted as a common practice in schools as it is today. The first initiative was launched by a few pioneering teachers in the 1960s shortly after Minamata Disease was officially discovered in 1956. It was officially recognized as a pollution-related disease by the national government in 1968. This pioneering group of teachers developed Kogai Education (Pollution Education) and encouraged schools to invite the victims of Minamata Disease to share their experiences and thoughts with the students. In the beginning, all schools refused the invitation because it was a sensitive, controversial issue and the parents of some students worked for the Chisso Chemical Factory (Tanaka 2006). Minamata, with a population of 30,000, once prospered with the operations of Chisso Company, but as a result of Minamata Disease, the City eventually became saturated with discrimination, criticism and mutual distrust among citizens.

In 1971, the Ministry of Education added a new course, Pollution and Health, to the National Curriculum. The course included the four major pollution-related diseases of Japan, specifically Minamata Disease, Itai-itai Disease, Yokkaichi Asthma and Niigata Minamata Disease. As a result, the teachers who pioneered the concept of Pollution Education began to move forward on the introduction of having Minamata Disease victims share their experiences in the classroom. In 1976, the Industrial Pollution and Environmental Study Group, comprised of the pioneering teachers and researchers, developed a handbook for teachers on Minamata Industrial Pollution Education, which has since been revised every ten years; teachers currently use this handbook for subjects related to pollution.

Controversial issues, such as industrial pollution, the construction of dams and deforestation, have heightened interest in the importance of natural resources and emphasized caution with regard to the impact of unsustainable development. The Period for Integrated Study has provided students with an opportunity to examine values, opinions and voices from various perspectives related to controversial issues, but when to undertake and how deep students can explore the issues would depend on how ready the society is for open discussion.

CASE STUDY THREE: The Integration of Nature Conservation and Entrepreneurship into the Curriculum in Indonesia

Lendo Novo founded the School of Universe in 2004 out of frustration with the Indonesian government’s outdated academic curricula and teaching methods, which place a high value on rote learning at the expense of critical and independent thinking (School of Universe website 2006). The School’s approach to learning promotes a broad range of practical life skills, entrepreneurship, IT literacy, appreciation for environmental conservation, adherence to democratic values and religious tolerance, harmonious and moral relationships with others, and the development of logic and creativity.

According to Lendo Novo, the concept of the school is based on the Qu’ran, the Islamic sacred book—the word of God, and Muhammad’s life, the prophet and founder of Islam. The school curriculum comes from God’s statement comprised of three pillars: 1) how to serve God, which is to serve the prophet by following his life path as an honest and successful trader; 2) how to manage the earth as the Qu’ran requires humans to obey what God has ordered, since all living things were created by God with different functions and they need to be looked after and protected; and 3) how to be a leader, in particular, the leadership of nature.

The three pillars have been translated into two key components, specifically, nature conservation and entrepreneurship. The school campus is, therefore, designed to provide open spaces with trees, garden plants and a nursery as teaching tools for learning about nature and the life within it. The school believes that expertise, academic knowledge in line with the School and the National Curriculum Standards, and business should be integrated. Three centers have been developed for:

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1) biotechnology; 2) communication and information technology; and 3) retail and distribution; the entire school uses a cross-curricular approach through various themes of learning with an emphasis on hands-on experiences.

For example, the topic of plants for the elementary level is integrated into science, social studies, mathematics, art and language. This topic is studied for two months. Students grow their own plants and learn about the plants through various aspects such as drawing and mathematics by measuring the height of each plant every week and transforming the information into a chart, as well as sharing the information and results with their classmates. Topics are not only nature-focused. There are themes on holistic medicine, Indonesian heroes and books. Students also learn how to manage a business. For example, kindergarten students bake cookies and then sell them to other students or at the school’s Eco-shop.

At the junior high school level, students learn by undertaking an organic farming project. They begin by writing a fundraising proposal, then grow the crops and sell them. The students also visit an organic farm and learn how to grow crops and manage the farm. They spend about six months on this topic and integrate it into all subjects. The school believes that, upon graduation, it is essential for students to know how to earn a living as well as give priority to producing healthy and environmentally friendly products.

Currently, there are nine schools in Java and Sumatra that follow the School of Universe curriculum. The school’s teachers have also produced 22 curriculum handbooks for the third and fourth grades and are in the process of developing material for additional grades. The founder and teachers of the school believe that if all schools followed the concept of the School of Universe and the school curriculum, many problems in Indonesia would be easier to solve. In particular, citizens would become more capable and knowledgeable and, therefore, better able to contribute to sustainable development and a healthier environment (Septriana 2006).

Lendo Novo has established three schools since 1988 including the Salman Kindergarten, focused on the integrated Islam and knowledge curriculum, the Sekolah Alam (Nature School), which has an additional element focusing on the natural environment, and the School of Universe, which has an additional business focus. As the schools became established, additional aspects were added to the curriculum. The development of Lendo Novo’s school curriculum in each school has responded to the societal situation at that particular period of time. Currently, the school has recognized that income-generating skills are important for students to become self-sufficient in their adult life along with concerns about the conservation of nature.

Although, it would be impossible to ensure a favorable outcome upon student graduation, the integration of nature conservation and entrepreneurship into the school curriculum should contribute to maximizing the potential of a sustainable economy and the natural environment in the future.

**Implications**

The three Case Studies presented in this paper highlight four areas that have an impact on the effectiveness of environmental education, including: 1) approach and practice; 2) content in line with the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; 3) environmentally friendly habits; and 4) the significance of educators.

**Approach and Practice**

The three Case Studies use different approaches and practices. Case Study One, the Integration of Solid Waste Management into the Curriculum in the Philippines, Japan and Indonesia, is mainly focused on the extra-curricular approach to waste segregation activities on campus. Although the emphasis is on how to separate waste into the appropriate categories, there is also an attempt to integrate the solid waste management concept into the school curriculum, in particular thought the efforts of Miriam College. In Case Study Two, the Period for Integrated Study on the Issue of Minamata Disease in Japan, environmental education is integrated into a special discipline or an individual study, which has its own methodology and approach. Case Study Three, the Integration of Nature Conservation and Entrepreneurship into the Curriculum in Indonesia, uses a cross-curricular approach through various themes of learning at all levels.

All three Case Studies emphasize both an interconnected teaching strategy and hands-on learning practices. An interconnected teaching strategy is a sequence of lesson plans that are appropriate for a specific grade level and are suitable for implementation on the respective school grounds or a local area. As the students advance to higher grades, they are exposed to a growing body of interconnected information that builds on their learning experiences from previous grades.

For example, with regard to waste management in schools in the Philippines, students in the first grade
learn about biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste and the environmental principle of “Everything must go somewhere” while fourth grade students learn how to recycle products and complete the seven environmental principles. In the “Period for Integrated Study”, third grade Japanese students learn about Minamata Disease, while the topic for fifth grade students builds on their existing knowledge of Minamata Disease by learning about its connection to industry and the environment in Minamata City. At the School of Universe in Indonesia, the cross-curricular theme for first grade students is plants, while the theme for junior high school students is the implementation of an organic farming project. Hands-on learning practices require active student participation through activities such as waste separation, having direct contact with Minamata Disease victims, and growing organic farm products.

There is no one formula for integrating environmental education into the school curriculum that is suitable for every school. Integration depends on the specific conditions and policies of each school, as well as the National Curriculum framework. However, the three Case Studies demonstrate that, regardless of the approach used, both an interconnected teaching strategy and hands-on learning are essential for effective environmental education.

Content in Line with the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 broadened the vision of Agenda 21 to encompass poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns, and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development (WSSD Report 2002). The Summit also proposed the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as a way of signaling that education and learning lie at the heart of approaches to sustainable development. With regard to the essential objectives and requirements for sustainable development, the three Case Studies demonstrate that, to some extent, content is already being utilized in line with the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. However, some of the challenges highlighted by the Case Studies indicate that environmental education has not yet met its full potential for contributing to sustainable development.

In Case Study One, the ultimate aim of solid waste management is to change consumption and production patterns. However, at present, the practical application of solid waste management in most schools has focused on how to separate waste into the appropriate categories and recycled products. There is a need for more in-depth investigation into the source of the waste and related problems in the process of production, distribution, consumption, and disposal, as well as understanding the impacts of consumerism, and incorporating these aspects into the school curriculum.

In Case Study Two, students in Minamata City learned about industrial pollution and its impacts, specifically Minamata Disease, through direct contact with the victims as well as by visiting the company that emitted the industrial waste that caused the disease. This process of assertive exploration encourages students to view the society they live in with a critical eye and challenges their understanding of the way the world works regarding the protection and management of the natural resource base for economic and social development. This approach to learning would greatly benefit students and communities beyond Minamata City.

In 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment identified the eradication of poverty as the greatest global challenge facing the world. Today, globalization has added a new dimension and developing countries face special difficulties in meeting this challenge (WSSD Report 2002). Although addressing this issue requires action at the international and national level through socio-economic policies and strategies, as indicated in Case Study Three, the School of Universe has responded to this challenge at the local level. The school curriculum is designed to equip students with income-generating skills, promotes a holistic consciousness by giving priority to healthy and environmentally friendly products, and promotes concern for the conservation of nature. These activities reflect the concept that sustainability should improve quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystems (UNESCO 2006).

Environmental education also deals with ethics because sustainability challenges people’s priorities, their habits, their beliefs and their values. In all three Case Studies, the school system regards the teaching of environmental ethics as somewhat controversial. Furthermore, many teachers are not trained to teach environmental ethics based on the values of social and ecological sustainability. Integrating ethics into the school curriculum will encourage students “to go beyond living out their values to thinking them through” (Weston 2006) and thereby contribute to the key requirements of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Instilling ethics will also increase students’ awareness of the impact of their decisions on their own lifestyles and the lifestyles of others.
**Environmentally Friendly Habits**

The solid waste management activities outlined in Case Study One are a practical example of supporting students’ efforts to take action, which they know would be good for the environment but often believe they cannot accomplish on their own. In particular, building environmentally friendly habits requires discipline, commitment, and time in order to become second nature. Students in Japan noted how difficult and time-consuming the process of separating waste was before it became part of their daily routine. Waste separation activities are an opportunity for students to form environmentally friendly habits at an early age with activities that produce visible results in a short period of time. These activities can encourage students to believe in their ability to contribute as well as promote an interest in participating in more complicated activities in the future beyond waste segregation.

**The Significance of Educators**

Educators play a vital role in the transition to sustainability. The teachers mentioned in the three Case Studies have demonstrated courage and commitment in their efforts to provide students with an education that contributes to shaping them into responsible environmental citizens. Furthermore, their achievements are innovative, pioneering and are in sync with trends occurring at a broader level.

Teachers from Miriam College initiated ecological solid waste management in the same year that the World Commission on Environment and Development produced the report “Our Common Future” in 1987, which emphasized the concept of sustainable development for the first time. A group of courageous teachers in Minamata City conceived and implemented an approach using direct experience for learning about Minamata Disease from Minamata victims during the same timeframe that the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held. These teachers also created the concept of pollution education, which is considered the origin of environmental education in Japan. Lendo Novo and the teachers at the School of Universe have continually improved their curriculum in response to the changes and challenges in society.

These pioneering achievements demonstrate that teachers are at the forefront of the transformation of the concept of sustainability into practice in schools. One aspect of the teachers’ contribution is the ongoing improvement in their teaching and learning approaches and practices in order to meet the challenges of social change as well as relevant environmental problems and situations. This kind of adaptive attitude, not only from teachers but from other educators involved in education, will be essential for reaching the goals of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

**Conclusion**

There are various approaches and practices for integrating environmental education into the school curriculum that educators can apply to their particular circumstances. These innovative approaches and practices are a valuable contribution for changing the scope, process and content of environmental education in schools in some levels but, perhaps, far from the expectation as a key agent for sustainable development, unless there is a change in both educational and social systems and structures in the same direction.

Without a doubt, influencing simultaneous social and educational change is a significant challenge. Regardless of the level of social and educational progress achieved by the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2014, both the successes and failures from this Decade can be used to make environmental education more effective and relevant for current and future generations.

**NOTES**

1. A barangay (Tagalog: baranggay, pronounced as ‘ba-rang-gai’, gai as in guy), also known by its former name, the barrio, is the smallest local government unit in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village, district or ward. Municipalities and cities are composed of barangays. In place names, barangay is sometimes abbreviated as “Brgy” or “Bgy”. The term barangay and its structure in the modern context were conceived during the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos, replacing the old barrios. The barangays were eventually codified under the 1991 Local Government Code (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barangay).

2. The Seven Environmental Principles or core messages of the environmental education framework were developed by the Environmental Studies Institute of Miriam College. These principles are an essential aspect of the Miriam curriculum and activities. All students from Miriam Grade School to College, as well as new teachers, are required to learn these Principles during the first two weeks of every semester. Suitable content is applied to the
various grades and year levels. The Miriam College believes that if students learn and internalize the Seven Environmental Principles, they will, at best, act so as to minimize environmental degradation or at least, be able to comprehend new problems. Thus, the principles are effectively reinforced by each topic of the modules being governed by one or more principles. These principles have also been a core component of documents produced by various government and private organizations, as well as handbooks related to environmental education. The Seven Environmental Principles are comprised of: 1) nature knows best; 2) all forms of life are important; 3) everything is connected to everything else; 4) everything changes; 5) everything must go somewhere; 6) ours is a finite earth; and 7) nature is beautiful and we are stewards of God’s creation.

Mottainai is a Japanese term, that has become a catchphrase for Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Maathai, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2004, equating it roughly to the English phrase “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”. In Japanese ancient writing, mottainai has had various meanings, including, “it was inconvenient”, and “modest as it is more than my situation, graciously”. Today, its meaning is roughly translated as, “it is so wasteful that things are not made full use of their value” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MOTTAINAI).

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Interviews


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**A VILLAGE IN THE MAKING: A VIDEO REPORT ON “THE SONG AS VENUE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION AND PEOPLE’S ADVOCACY IN OKINAWA, CHIANG MAI AND YOGYAKARTA”**

Jesus M. Santiago

**Introduction**

What is the role of non-mainstream or independent musicians in the articulation of social conditions and changing realities? As the voices of the poor face the threat of being drowned out and extinguished by the forces of modernity and progress, what role does the musician play in this context? How do songwriters respond to the issues of the day? How do they relate to their audience and their community? Are they able to expand the spaces for the articulation of peoples’ concerns? What factors facilitate or hinder this process? What forms, venues, and spaces for music have emerged in order to respond to these challenges and social tensions? What are the forms, styles, themes, and sources of their songs? How do they collaborate with other workers for social change?

These were some of the questions that we hoped to answer when we left the Philippines for a year-long journey to Okinawa (Japan), Chiang Mai (Thailand), and Yogyakarta (Indonesia).

We opted to present our final report in the form of a video. The script of the video follows, as well as the complete text of the theme song of our video report.

**The Script**

**ON JULY 12, 2005 WE LEFT THE PHILIPPINES TO EMBARK ON A YEAR-LONG JOURNEY TO REACH OUT TO FELLOW SINGER-SONGWRITERS IN JAPAN, THAILAND, AND INDONESIA.**

**WE WOULD TRY TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE SETTING UP OF A REGIONAL NETWORK OF LIKE-MINDED SINGER-SONGWRITERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF FACILITATING EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND BUILDING SOME SENSE OF COMMUNITY AMONG MUSICIANS WHO WISH TO MAKE THEIR ART RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR SOCIETY.**

**WHEN WE ARRIVED IN OKINAWA, OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENCE OF US BASES WAS GROWING. IN THAILAND, THE CAMPAIGN TO OUST PRIME MINISTER THAKSIN WAS REACHING ITS CRESCENDO. IN YOGYAKARTA, THE PEOPLE WERE REELING FROM THE DEVASTATION WROUGHT BY A KILLER QUAKE.**

**UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHAT ROLE SHOULD LOCAL MUSICIANS PLAY?**

**THE SANSHIN IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF OKINAWAN CULTURE. ONE IS TEMPTED TO SAY THERE’S A SANSHIN PLAYING IN EVERY UCHINANCHU’S HEART.**

**MEET KINA SHOUKICHI, THE SANSHIN-WIELDING MEMBER OF THE JAPANESE PARLIAMENT.**

**KINA:**

_When the war broke out, it was the Okinawans, Koreans, and Ainu who had to be in the frontline and not the Japanese people. It doesn’t matter whether we have the American bases or the Japanese Self Defense Forces in Okinawa. When a war breaks out, it is the Okinawan people who will suffer the most damage._

**WHETHER HE’S PLAYING THE SANSHIN OR THE ELECTRIC GUITAR, KINA SHOUKICHI DISHES OUT MUSIC TO PROMOTE HIS VISION OF A PEACEFUL, BORDERLESS WORLD. HE SINGS OF A “FLOWER IN EVERYONE’S HEART.”**

**WHILE KINA SINGS OF FLOWERS, SURACHAI JANTIMATORN SINGS ABOUT THE FULL MOON THATVOKE YEARNING FOR ONE’S MOTHERLAND. SURACHAI IS A POET, SHORT STORY WRITER, AND LEADER OF THAILAND’S MOST RESPECTED AND WELL-LOVED BAND, THE LEGENDARY CARAVAN. BORN TO A SCHOOL HEADMASTER AND AN UNSCHOoled MOTHER, SURACHAI GREW UP TO BECOME THE VOICE OF THE OPPRESSED PEASANT AND THE ACTIVIST YOUTH.**

**Surachai:**

_You know, when you committed to political things, then music became a weapon, more prominent than writing._

**SURACHAI, TOGETHER WITH CARAVAN, IS ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE PRIME MOVER IF NOT THE ORIGINATOR OF THE “SONG FOR LIFE” MOVEMENT.**
Meanwhile, Emha Ainun Nadjib or Cak Nun addresses with songs and prayers the leaders and residents of villages in Bantul, one of the places hardest hit by the recent killer earthquake in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Together with his kiai Kanjeng Gamelan Ensemble, the poet-essayist-musician-preacher tries not only to assuage the grief of the villagers through music, but brings them together to collectively discuss what they should or could do in the aftermath of the disaster that has claimed more than 6,000 lives.

Emha:
Music is a beautiful part of life but it cannot be beautiful without life. So what we create is a beautiful life together with all people. And we put music as something that can add... not only add beauty but sometimes music is also part of method, social method, social solution, problem solution.

Emha is not alone in making his art contribute to the alleviation of the plight of the quake victims. Elsewhere, Yayak and his group of friends are conducting music and art workshops to help children recover from their traumatic experience.

Yayak:
Ten o’clock we go there. First we build the center. While building it, we can ask the children to come and play games, with music and songs.

In a modest apartment in Yogyakarta, Tandabaca, a group of young writers and artists are collecting and sorting out relief goods for distribution to far-flung villages not reached by government and international relief organizations.

Astrid:
It was sort of incidental, actually. I was involved with Aceh but more to send stuff from Jogja. Then on the second day of the quake, we decided to set up a posko because of the condition. Then the next day we went to the south and saw the terrible situation. We had to do something.

Other young musicians, however, opted to organize fund-raising gigs.

Irwin:
They don’t have a spirit of life. And then some of them say that my family’s gone, my house is ruined, I have no money, well, the best thing for me is to die. So, we need some spirit. So I think that’s what we can give them, spirit.

One burning issue in Okinawa is the plan to put up a U.S. marine facility on Henoko Bay. Once established, it is feared that the facility could cause unimaginable damage to the coastal resources of Henoko and neighboring towns.

Yamashiro:
I’m from the next village, Ishikawa... If the construction is carried out, my area will be affected. Contamination will affect most parts of the Okinawan Sea.

Yamashiro, a fisherman, has been going around the villages along the bay, organizing the fisherfolk to protest against the construction of the marine facility.

To give voice to their protest, Yamashiro changed the text of a minyo and is now singing it, with some help from young activists, whenever and wherever he can.

He is grateful to some musicians who support their struggle in Henoko, especially Shinya Mayonaka.

Shinya uses his music not only to express his solidarity with the Henoko fisherfolk. He also uses it for awareness-building and raising funds for the campaign against the proposed marine facility.

Shinya Mayonaka:
Professional singers just sing. But me, my mind and heart is devoted to political action.

One sunny afternoon in July 2005, thousands of Okinawans gathered at the sunken park in Kin town, to express their growing sentiment against the presence of American military bases. It was one speech after another. Not a single song was sung, not a poem recited, not a skit performed. Conspicuously absent were the artists.

Kaori Sunogawa:
I think in Japan artists are not independent, politically, especially politically. Musicians don’t want to be damaged, they don’t want to hurt their image if they belong to specific groups.

Shinya Mayonaka:
It’s very hard to invite singers. Some may sympathize with the cause but they don’t want to participate directly in the protest activities.
Kaori Sunogawa:
For example, in the movement to protect the tidal front in Awase there are many activists belonging to the Communist Party. Even if some musicians want to join the movement, they don’t want to be seen as communists.

Yuzo Toyoda:
Japanese singers do not want to be labeled protest singers. Some think to sing protest songs is not smart. But I don’t think so. First I must sing what I must sing.

SING WHAT THEY MUST SING. THAT’S EXACTLY WHAT SINGERS FOR LIFE DO IN THAILAND.

Tog:
When we talk about songs for life, we necessarily have to talk about Caravan first. Caravan set a very high standard for song for life that means change in the people’s lives, for the poor people.

LIKE THE THAI SINGERS FOR LIFE, INDONESIAN ARTISTS ARE ALSO KNOWN FOR THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

Astrid Reza:
Before ’98, there were lots of singers, poets, even street singers who sang all the movement songs. They sang in the streets, on the bus, demonstrations…everywhere, they just come out and sing. Before that it was unimaginable to sing political songs in the streets.

Irwin:
Well, it was some years ago, there was a punk band singing about…Suharto should be killed, he should be shot dead. The police were in front of them, guarding the band, but they sang like that. So after they played, in the dressing room, the police went to the dressing room and, you know, they punched him, and he was bleeding, blood all around. They were laughing when the police punched them. They were laughing: “I win! I win!” “We succeeded!”

MENTENG PARK IN JAKARTA ON A SATURDAY NIGHT IS A NICE PLACE TO MEET, A COMMUNITY OF YOUNG INDIE MUSICIANS WHO GATHER THERE REGULARLY.

Gofar:
We sing about life, social issues, like politics against government; gender discrimination; it’s all about life.

Ambron:
We write about social issues and how to enjoy life to the max.

Sabrang:
In 2004, we counted how many independent bands there were in Jogja and on the record it was 1,000 bands in Jogja. 1,000 on the record. Who knows how many bands? It proves how alive the indie music scene is in Jogja. They all produce their music, distribute locally. It’s really happening in Jogja.

Irwin:
To be an independent musician, you should have a good brain, you know, because you need to have a good point of view, to respect people, because if you don’t respect people, how can they respect you?

Sabrang:
Each city has its own organization. So indie bands here, they know how to distribute in their place. They have friend in another city, he knows how to distribute their CD. That’s how the connection goes. I know that guy, he helps me. When he needs help, I help him.

Gofar:
We have a good community. We have a good relationship.


Khun Pae is a Karen village nestled 3,000 feet above sea level. Tonight, a 25-year old singer-songwriter is doing a concert and the villagers are all too excited to watch and listen to him. For good reason. The performer, Chi, is also a Karen. He speaks their language, plays their native instrument, and sings for and about them.

Chi:
Some call me an artist. Some call me a musician. But I am not. My music, the content of the song, the lyrics, come from my ancestors. I cannot create it. I can only give voice to it.

Chi’s advocacy for the cause of the Karen people has inspired other young tribal people in Thailand to assert their identity and culture.
THROUGH MUSIC.

GONGCHAI IS AN AKHA, ANOTHER HILL TRIBE IN THAILAND.

Gongchai:
I want to make all-Akha music mixed with modern music.

GONGCHAI IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE FOUND A VERY SUPPORTIVE MUSICIAN IN THE PERSON OF AJU. AJU WAS A FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE AKHA ASSOCIATION IN CHIANG RAI.

Aju:
In the old days, people would sit around the fire, sing and dance. But with the introduction of TV to the villages, no more singing and dancing.

TO BRING THE SINGING AND THE DANCING BACK TO HIS PEOPLE, AJU BEGAN TO WRITE SONGS.

AJU IS PROUD OF HIS GENEALOGY AND HE KNOWS IT BY HEART.

IN AJU’S NEXT ANTHOLOGY OF SONGS, HE PLANS TO INCLUDE A RAP-LIKE VERSION OF HIS GENEALOGY TO THE BEAT AND STRAINS OF AKHA INSTRUMENTS. A NEW MUSICAL FORM IS ABORNING: ETHNIC RAP, ANYONE?

ALL THE MUSICIANS WE MET EXPRESSED EAGERNESS AND WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL ACTIVITIES. THEY WERE ALL EXCITED TO LEARN ABOUT OUR PLAN TO SET UP A REGIONAL CENTER FOR ASIAN PEOPLES’ MUSIC.

Nui:
Very good project. A good idea. Asian people should show the ways of life and music in our region to the world.

Aju:
Good idea, because if we can have the center …. hiphop on Akha concerns…

Shinya:
Yes, I want to join the group and I can also invite others.

Ambon:
It’s a good effort, I think. It can help us so much to maybe distribute or promote our music and to get linked with other bands in Asia.

Franky Sahilatua:
It can be good because if with one hand you cannot lift something, with 2, 3, 4 countries we can do anything.

IT IS INSPIRING TO KNOW THAT AFTER SO MANY YEARS, PEOPLE LIKE KINA, SURACHAI, AND EMHA STILL SING OF PEACE AND THEIR PEOPLE’S STRUGGLES. IT IS EVEN MORE HEARTENING TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CARRY ON THE MUSICAL TRADITION OF COMMUNICATING IDEAS, EXPRESSING FEAR AND COURAGE, DISPLAYING RESILIENCE AND DEFIANCE, AND OFFERING PEACE, UNITY AND HOPE.

OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH SOCIALLY ENGAGED SONGWRITERS IN ASIA MADE US REALIZE THAT WE ALL SHARE A COMMON VISION, THAT OF BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS WILLING TO HELP CREATE AN ASIAN CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG MUSICIANS IN THE REGION AND FOSTER ASIAN SOLIDARITY AMONG THEIR AUDIENCES.

THE INITIAL NETWORK IS NOW IN PLACE.

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER HAS BEGUN.

The Theme Son

There’s a village in the making
For the hungry and oppressed
For the helpless and the dying
The uncared-for and unblessed
It’s for those whose lives are battered
But who keep on living on
It’s for those whose dreams are shattered
But who keep on dreaming on

There’s a village in the making
For the silent and the silenced
The unlettered and the nameless
The disabled and displaced
One may speak in ones and zeroes
Or in signs and muted calls
Yet the language of the heart
Is the mother tongue of all

There’s a village in the making
A community of friends
Who refuse to yield their hope
To the sirens of despair
There’s a village in the making
It’s no dungeon in the air
Come together and in friendship
Build this village of our dreams

Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community

The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows
There's a village in the making
For humanity in pain
Where the sun is source of healing
And no acid stains the rain
It's the home for all the homeless
The forsaken and forlorn
It's for people of all ages
And the children yet unborn

There's a village in the making
From the ruins of our greed
It's for people of all color
Of all gender and all creed
For the flora and the fauna
And the future of us all
For the child that dwells in each of us
And the friend we have in all

There's a village in the making
A community of friends
Who refuse to yield their hope
To the sirens of despair
There's a village in the making
It's no dungeon in the air
Come together and in friendship
Build this village of our dreams

Dream on...
HUMAN LEARNING IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN THAILAND: LESSONS FOR THE PHILIPPINES

Theresita V. Atienza

Introduction

Population growth is outpacing the world’s capacity to provide people access to universities. A considerable number of new universities will now be needed every week simply to sustain present participation rates in higher education. Meeting this challenge will require an innovative delivery system of education and training since conventional universities are expensive institutions to make, manage and maintain.

In developing countries, human resource development is vital since this not only increases the quality of trained human resources in response to national needs but also improves the quality of life and work for its people. However, opportunities for education at the tertiary level are restricted due to limited resources. Under an environment of insufficiency, disparities in educational opportunities naturally occur. Such circumstances necessitate the provision of unconventional directions to higher education. Diverse styles and systems have been explored in efforts to democratize education to level off such inequalities. In Southeast Asian countries, a key component of an overall educational reform agenda with the objective to provide greater access to and equity in educational opportunities is open and distance education.

The terms “distance education” and “open learning” have been utilized with an array of descriptions. At its most basic, “distance education” is defined as the educational process where a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone remote in time and place from the learner, and where a combination of educational media from print to radio/TV broadcasts, video recordings and new information and communication technologies (ICT) may be employed. Likewise, opportunities for face-to-face study and interactions are provided.

“Open learning”, on the other hand, generally refers to the practice of making learning available to learners regardless of situation or station. In some countries, “open learning” is synonymous with distance education while in other countries, a mix of methods, which include chalk and talk, face-to-face sessions and multimedia interventions are used for mass education. The notion of “open” universities implies the practice of distance learning techniques; however, in some countries such as the U.K. and Israel, it is taken to mean as “open” access to the university where there are no matriculation prerequisites and anyone can register to be a student (Ai Mee 1992).

For purposes of this study, the term “open university” does not imply an “open access university” but rather a university that teaches students at their own space and pace utilizing distance education techniques and media. Also, distance education at the higher education level shall be the focus of this work. Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU), officially Thailand’s lone Open University and with much experience in the distance delivery mode shall supply the benchmark for this analysis. Ramkhamhaeng University (RU), widely accepted by Thai people as an open university while not conforming to the definition given, will likewise be presented since it provides “open learning” practices.

Open and Distance Education Models in Thailand

Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

Initiatives to establish an open university in Thailand were inspired by no less than His Majesty the King’s desire to democratize higher education. The emergent demand for higher education prompted Thailand to explore potential options to respond to this demand effectively yet economically. Accordingly Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) was officially established by Royal Charter on 5 September 1978 as Thailand’s eleventh state university and the first university in Southeast Asia to use the distance learning system. It took roughly two years to lay its groundwork and on 1 December 1980, STOU admitted its first academic class in three schools of study—Educational Studies, Liberal Arts and Management Science.

Recognized as a “stand alone” open university, STOU is an independent distance education institution with a formal structure. As such, it establishes its curricula, creates courses, provides materials and support services for student learning, and conducts monitoring and
assessments of student performance and award qualifications. Academic staff teach, develop, and write curricula and have research responsibilities. Non-academic staff administer, provide human support programs, administer assessments and examinations, and run publishing services including fully independent printing operations. The mode of teaching is multimedia, utilizing print, audio and video technology.

Organization and Administration: Sukhothai Thammathirat is under the Higher Education Commission of the Ministry of Education. Its highest governing unit is the University Council charged with supervising and controlling all general activities of the University. An Academic Senate exercises authority over the University's academic work. STOU is headed by a President. Offices that provide administrative support include Educational Services, Educational Technology, Academic Affairs, and Records and Evaluation.

Academic Units: Unlike the traditional practice of organizing into faculties and departments, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University is academically structured into schools. Each school has its own Board of Studies charged with all academic and administrative matters pertaining to the school as well as other assignments from the University Council or the Academic Senate. The Board of Studies consists of the Chair, who is the Dean of the School, and three to seven members elected by the full-time staff of the school. Currently, STOU has twelve schools.

Organization of Studies: Degree programs offered at STOU range from Certificate, Bachelor's, Graduate Diploma and Master's programs while non-degree programs, or “Outreach Programs”, are of two types: joint programs with other agencies and certificate of achievement programs. STOU follows a semester system of fifteen weeks each term. The first semester starts in July while the second commences in December. Courses are arranged in blocks worth six credits each for a bachelor's degree and five for a master's degree.

Methods of Instruction: Relying on its regional and local study centers to provide the study facilities for its students, STOU does not have any classrooms of its own. Textbooks and workbooks are the main media used to impart instruction. Radio and television broadcasts with the broadcasting of video tapes and course materials recorded on cassette tapes are also utilized as support media to enrich course blocks. Five educational television programs spanning twenty to thirty minutes in length for each academic course are produced in its Education Broadcasting Production Center (EBPC).

Approximately 8,000 and 1,500 of STOU’s radio and television programs, respectively, are broadcast nationwide by government networks to roughly five million people a year. These radio and television programs, as well as satellite tutorial broadcasts, may also be viewed on demand through the University’s website at www.stou.ac.th. In collaboration with the Distance Learning Foundation (DLF), the University broadcasts almost 3,000 television programs on various topics to develop distance education and support and expand educational opportunities for people in remote areas via satellite through DLF’s Distance Learning Television Station. Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) is produced by STOU as supplementary media for its students and the public alike. CAI Service Centers are organized at its headquarters, ten Regional Distance Education Centers and the Police Cadet Academy in Nakhon Pathom province. Tutorial and counseling sessions at various regional and local study centers, usually based at the main provincial high school, are carried out to complement the instruction imparted through its main media.

Course Production: In the production of course materials, the University sets up a course team that includes subject specialists, a media specialist, an evaluation specialist, an editor and a secretary. From the onset, the University has sought the assistance of outstanding academics from other universities as well as experts from other organizations who are given prior training to obtain knowledge and understanding on course production for distance learning. The Office of the University Press produces printed course materials, including public relations publications for the University, while also accepting outside printing jobs.

Delivery System: The Office of Educational Services is responsible for sending out all instructional materials to the students. These are sent by mail in coordination and cooperation with the Communication Authority of Thailand.

Admission and Registration System: STOU, working closely with local study centers, regularly organizes orientations for counseling and guidance personnel of secondary schools throughout the country to make known the concept of distance education to prospective students. Students are admitted twice a year at least three months prior to the start of each semester. No entrance examination is required for admission to the Bachelor’s degree programs, while applicants for the Master's degree programs are required to write an outline of a research proposal.
Practical Experience Programs: All students are required to participate in pre-graduation programs organized by the University. Prior to graduation, students must undergo either the Professional Experience Apprenticeship or the Graduate Enrichment Program. These are five-day live-in seminars conducted on campus. The programs are organized to enable the students to realize the importance of their professions, apply the principles and theories acquired through their studies to actual practice, promote qualities and values that could ensure successful careers, and provide the opportunity to meet their classmates and tutors for the exchange of professional experiences.

Evaluation of Studies: Students in the Master’s degree program are allowed to enroll in not more than two subjects each semester. They are evaluated from the results of the assigned work, the semester examination and the thesis examination (Plan A) or comprehensive and independent study examinations (Plan B). The content course for Bachelor’s degree programs are divided into two types: theory courses and practical courses. For theory courses, not more than twenty percent of the total mark is given to the practical component and not less than eighty percent of the total mark is determined by the written examination. The educational assessment for practical courses considers practical grades as the main part and grades from the written examination as a component. The school determines the proportion of marks as it deems suitable for each subject.

Examination System: Final examinations are conducted in local study centers in the provinces twice each semester to give a second chance to those who fail the examination. Examinations are given on Saturdays and Sundays. The University’s staff take the examination materials to the centers while the staff members of local schools serve as proctors and test administrators. All examinations are brought to the main campus for correction and evaluation. Results are mailed to the students by the Office of Registration, Records and Evaluation within thirty to forty-five days after each examination. Students may also obtain examination results through the automatic telephones of the University, Krung Thai Bank, Telecom Asia Corporation and the STOU website.

Students: In the inaugural year of 1980, STOU admitted over 80,000 students. Today, the student population is around 180,000, comprised mostly of working adults although it has accepted high school graduates since 1983. Around 12,000 students graduate annually.

Staff: There are approximately 370 full-time faculty, around fifty full-time administrative staff and over a thousand full-time support staff. The University employs temporary/contractual staff to provide logistical assistance during examination periods. It is rather notable that staff qualifications in STOU are comparatively higher than the national standard ratio.

Ramkhamhaeng University

At a time when Thailand’s high school graduates seeking access to tertiary education exceeded the admission capacity of all its universities combined, Parliament passed a law that sought to resolve the country’s “crisis in the quest for higher education”. Thus in 1971, Ramkhamhaeng University (RU) was established. The capacity of its main campus, Hua-Mark, was augmented by the Bang-Na extension campus in the Pha Khanong District of Bangkok.

Organization and Administration: RU is within the regulatory parameter of the Higher Education Commission of the Ministry of Education. The University Council, its highest governing body, approves major policies for implementation, while the administration of RU is the responsibility of the Rector, assisted by a number of Vice Rectors and an Advisory Board consisting of the Vice Rectors, Faculty Deans, Directors of various administrative offices and other duly qualified individuals.

Academic Units: RU is academically organized, like conventional universities, into faculties. To date, Ramkhamhaeng University has nine faculties, including a graduate school in both social science and applied science.
Organization of Studies: Associate, Bachelor’s, Graduate Diploma, Master’s, and Doctorate degree programs are currently offered at RU.

Methods of Instruction: Classes are regularly conducted for freshmen at the Bang-Na campus while upper level students attend classes at Hua Mark. Undergraduate students have the option to attend face-to-face classes or study at a distance; however, all students must sit for the final examinations. A mix of media is exploited by RU to teach its students whether on- or off-campus. The Office of Educational Technology (OET) prepares and produces taped lessons for television broadcast in its studio. Lessons are broadcast daily in Bangkok through Radio Thailand’s Educational Program. Large lecture halls that can seat up to two thousand and are equipped with closed-circuit television are used by undergraduate students. The OET is also charged with providing lessons to the regional campuses via satellite. Instructors of undergraduate programs utilize video conferencing from the main campus to teach students in regional campuses. This way, students in all campuses listen to lectures at the same time and synchronously communicate with their classmates and instructors. On weekends, undergraduate lecturers take turns to personally meet classes in the various regional campuses. However, graduate study program mentors regularly visit the regional campuses to meet with their students.

Course Production: The University publishes textbooks, handbooks and supplementary materials in-house through its own printing facilities. “Khao Ramkhamhaeng” is published as the platform of communication between the students and the University, while the “Ramkhamhaeng Journal” serves as the venue for disseminating the research outputs of faculty members.

Admission and Registration System: Operating on an open-admission policy, prospective undergraduate students of Ramkhamhaeng University are not required to take any entrance examination. Applicants to the Masters’ Degree Program must possess a Bachelor’s degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution. Non-degree holders may also be admitted as special students on a case-by-case basis. This group of prospective students must pass a written examination consisting of the Ramkhamhaeng Graduate Record Examination (RGRE), a measure of the applicant’s career, verbal and mathematical abilities, and the Ramkhamhaeng University Test (RU Test), which measures English language proficiency. An interview by the Committee of Graduate Studies must also be passed for eligibility. A Master’s degree from a university accredited by the Higher Education Commission, a TOEFL score not lower than five hundred fifty (550) or having passed an English test from an accredited university, and a dissertation proposal are the pre-requisites for admission to the Doctorate Degree Program. Applicants are evaluated and admitted on the basis of their dissertation proposals, individual interviews and letters of recommendation from academic or Master’s thesis advisers.

Counseling and Student Activities: To assist and guide students regarding educational, career, financial, and even family or personal matters, the Student Counseling, Career Planning and Placement Services Center (SCPC) has been established, while a Medical Center provides routine medical care to both students and personnel. The Ramkhamhaeng University Students Organization (RUSO), the students’ governing body, serves as a venue for students to develop leadership qualities and initiatives in democratic processes.

Examination System: All students, whether attending classes on campus or studying at a distance, are required to take the final examinations. Special final examinations may also be requested by working students who were unable to take the scheduled final examinations because of work responsibilities. A test bank that stores a pool of questions has been instituted to facilitate the conduct of examinations to the huge student population and to enable the provision of special examinations.

Students: Acknowledging itself as a market academy, Ramkhamhaeng University accepts junior high school leavers with at least five years of work experience. The University also allows junior high school students to concurrently enroll in foundation courses enabling them to obtain a Bachelor’s degree within two years after their graduation from secondary school. At present, Ramkhamhaeng University’s enrollment has crossed the 600,000 mark. The student profile indicates a combination of high school graduates and working adults with a majority of the former observed. On account of an average of 25,000 to 30,000 graduates annually, the University prides itself on having a total of five hundred thousand 500,000 graduates since its first commencement ceremony in 26 November 1975.

Staff: There are full-time faculty and administrative and support staff, as well as temporary/contractual staff to provide logistical assistance during peak periods. The University’s staff qualifications reasonably meet the national standard ratio.
Lessons from Thailand: Quality Assurance in Distance Education

The key lessons learned from the open and distance education practices in Thailand focus on quality improvement in distance education that deals with the issues of size, clientele, content and modes of delivery.

For distance education, is relevance going to be the criterion for quality? Most open universities initially operated on a need basis. Approximately 85% of the 180,000 students of STOU are working adults. STOU has strongly emphasized not only its degree, diploma and certificate programs but also its continuing education and outreach programs. However, there is a predisposition to compare distance education universities with conventional universities. Concern over the quality of print and media materials used by the courses and reservations about the levels of achievement attained in distance education have often been expressed. Such views are sensible, although there is no proof to demonstrate that one approach is essentially superior over another. In fact, it has been reported that STOU graduates are doing equally well and in some cases even better than graduates of conventional universities in postgraduate entrance examinations and in the workplace.

Quality is relative. Yet, upholding quality must be an enduring vision. The interim benefit of “mass education” where numbers are the main parameter of success must not eclipse the need for quality. Attention to quality must pervade all levels of the university, from the development of materials to modes of delivery, student support systems, the training of personnel, and monitoring and evaluation, in order to ensure excellence.

Development of materials: There are currently numerous materials that have been developed and are suitable for Asian countries. The manner and extent to which these available materials can be utilized and the prospects of institutional collaboration in the development of new and common programs must, however, be explored. The setting up of a materials reservoir in Asia will facilitate access, whether for the use of the materials themselves or as prototypes for the development of country specific materials. In open universities, materials are prepared and are used for a period of time with revisions generally planned within five to eight years. Much attention is put into the production of quality interactive materials because for the numerous students in remote, isolated areas, it is possible that the course materials are their only teachers. Meanwhile, students in urban areas have tutor provisions and peer and study group support.

Good open universities have good course materials that serve the learning needs of their students well. At present, some of the best university teaching course materials are published by open universities and it is widely recognized in Thailand that many conventional universities and their students use STOU books as their preferred text materials. While good materials do not necessarily make good students, the effective use of good materials will ensure good learning, particularly at a distance. STOU course development is the task of a committee and the course writing is contracted to top national academics that are known experts in the particular subject and not confined to its faculty roster alone. Course development is time consuming and costs are high, particularly in the multi-media mode of distance education delivery. In STOU, much of this, from printing to videos to broadcast programs, is done in-house.

It is possible to keep the cost of operations trim by adopting an in-source/out-source mode for the production of books and multi-media materials. The open university staff may organize and supervise the materials production in collaboration with writers from other universities and media specialists from other sectors. The editing, lay-out and printing of books may take place in-house while printing may be contracted to private printers. Radio and television broadcasts may be contracted with government networks at a special, reduced rate, since the government is also concerned with providing education to its citizens. Minor operations utilizing computerized desk-top printers in response to orders appear to be more cost effective and may be considered, particularly for small institutions.

Curriculum design and development, responding to the specific needs of its immediate clients, is often country-specific. Materials to be used in other countries require not only translation but also a great deal of adaptation to make them suitable to the culture and context of the adopting country. The experience of STOU reveals that translation and adaptation costs far exceed the cost of developing their own curricula and material. In humanities courses, where geographical, historical and cultural norms dictate differences in the learning and teaching of subjects, this is a valid difficulty. On the other hand, this should be less of a problem in the science and technology and business courses. The solution lies not in open universities exclusively writing country-specific materials but in the modular presentation of the curriculum. The curriculum planning stage must identify “common” and “country-specific” content in
Delivery modes: STOU has made use of advanced communications technology through radio and television programs. Nevertheless, the use of new information and communication technologies has not yet been effectively and extensively utilized to deliver education at a distance. Distance education can be more interactive and less remote through the creative and innovative use of currently available information and communication technologies. The use of videos and computer-access terminals along with fiber-optics, broadband, wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi), online delivery and tele-conferencing are no longer complex tasks. Since cost considerations may be a constraint for developing countries, a cooperative strategy on a national and even regional level amongst distance education institutions with technology providers must be contemplated.

Student support systems: Systems for advice on courses and counselors to assist students with course problems were observed. The efficient implementation of a sensible student support system results in high success and low attrition rates because students studying on their own need assistance and guidance with their course work from time to time.

Training of personnel: Given the fact that the more established distance education institutions are those that have well-trained staff that administer and provide extensive student support systems, a shared coordinated regional training program in Asia will prove useful. Likewise, it would be practical for a regional training program to provide access to materials such as training indices and manuals to carry out training workshops in-house and within a country. Open universities have diverse natures; thus, the training program must cover the entire range of student support services. Administrators and staff alike require training in market-orientation and marketing skills. New skills have to be learned by educators to write distance learning course materials. Consequently, training is necessary in the areas of course development and course adaptation. The tutor takes on the new roles of linking and guiding that require training to be familiar with the task of directing students through the self-instructional courses.

Monitoring and evaluation: Aside from examinations, assignments based on question and answer strategies are also fundamental means to monitor student learning and assess achievement. The development of a computerized test bank for each course from which questions may be drawn for monitoring and evaluation is an approach that could work in the Asian setting. Digital scoring systems may dramatically increase the speed with which results are available and reduce the costs and time required for human scorers. Test-taking and test results may be almost simultaneous. Technology enables the creation of broader and smarter assessments that can provide accurate and timely measurements of student proficiency.

Postscript: A Framework for Open and Distance Learning Systems in Developing Economies

Policy and Planning: At the Core of Change
Advancements in technology, globalization and time-compression have encouraged conventional universities to offer courses online that may eventually lead to the dwindling of distance education’s competitive advantage. If open universities are to survive, careful consideration should be taken to strategically plan towards a strengthened educational service and quality to fulfill the fundamental task by which they were instituted in the first place—the democratization of education to the masses.

The significance of this educational innovation finds recognition in the policies and practices developed by international and funding agencies such as UNESCO, the European Commission and the World Bank. Policies for open and distance education in the public sector, while increasingly influenced by the private sector, are formulated at international, regional, national and institutional levels. Institutional and national policymaking levels do not have well-defined margins. The experience of Taiwan shows that while the decision to allow its Open University to offer full degrees was at the national level, this followed the experiment of the university and was assumed to be influenced by the university’s own wishes (Hung-Ju 1999). Conversely, despite globalization, the most significant policymakers are still governments who have set-up the greatest number of distance education institutions. These institutions are subsequently regulated by bodies that derive their authority from governments. Consequently, government policies for education do not pertain solely to funding but to administration and regulation, as well. Policymaking at the regional level is often geared towards enhancing regional competitiveness and meeting needs that are common across the regions. Recently, international agencies have increased participation in major functions, either through funding decisions or through international sharing of experiences (Perraton 2003).

**Important Issues, Crucial Choices**

There are basically three inclusive arrays of critical issues that precede policy formulation in open and distance education. The issue of funding is first, while matters concerning institutional structure and management, regulation and the relationship with the rest of the educational system is yet another. The last issue is clientele and the purpose for which the institution is being used.

**Funding:** In an economic world, the cost effectiveness of distance education programs cannot be ignored and must therefore be an essential consideration in Asian countries, like the Philippines, where financial resources are limited. The costing of distance education is an intricate matter as open universities are set up in various modes. Thailand’s Open University is of the stand alone type, while in the Philippines, open universities exist as an autonomous system but within the ambit of conventional universities. Hence, the cost structure of distance education systems is a snag even as there is general consensus among economists that distance education systems reap benefits from economies of scale.

Existing cost models manifest the tendency for several institutions to underestimate, if not miscalculate, the costs involved. These costing problems, complex enough with stand alone institutions offering government-subsidized undergraduate programs, are exacerbated when self-funded graduate and continuing education programs are also provided. In dual mode institutions, because of the absence of common measures to compare costs between conventional and distance education, the cost structure is a real complexity. However, some generalizations have been observed, to wit:

- High capital investment in infrastructure (e.g. buildings, equipment) during the initial stage;
- Types, variety and combination of media used (e.g. print, electronic) determine cost; and
- Course development costs in the production stage are high, particularly where country-specific materials have to be developed because of culture and language requirements.

Governments have implemented various funding mechanisms for open and distance education. This may be in the form of a government subsidy or international aid used for the initial capital outlay. Thereafter, government funding continues to sustain the larger part of the costs of distance education. There have been assumptions, however, that as distance education learners study part-time, they most probably have jobs and income. Some have thus articulated that, today, students are far more often expected to meet the greater part of the costs of their distance education (Perraton 2000).

**Governance:** Over the course of time, two distinct blueprints have emerged in the development of distance education. First, open universities have typically been established through a method different from that of conventional universities and, hence, enjoy a generous level of autonomy. Secondly, distance education units have been created within conventional universities that supervise their governance and structure. Corollary to
this pattern, the structures and methods of these units tend to follow those of conventional university practices. An analysis of the pros and cons of both the stand alone and the dual mode approach is crucial in deliberations to initiate or expand distance education. As postulated by Rumble (1992), dual mode institutions have a competitive advantage because they offer opportunities for sharing resources. Yet many confront conflicts in curricular, administrative and staffing policies with parent conventional universities that present a serious constraint to their development.

The relationship between distance and conventional education is influenced by preference and mobility amid structural models. For instance, in India, students of dual mode universities can move between studying on-campus and studying via distance mode, while in Indonesia, the open school structure means that conventional schools act as centers that provide support to students studying mainly through open and distance learning (Panda 2003). The tension between the autonomy of distance education institutions and the concern to develop an integrated system of education must therefore be resolved.

The expansion of open and distance education provokes questions on procedures and responsibility for regulation. Hallak (1990) opined that even where government did not itself provide some part of the educational service, it retained responsibility for regulating it. Therefore, it is imperative upon governments to decide where responsibility for regulation resides and the extent to which open and distance education requires different procedures from those of conventional education. Open and distance education institutions are likely to need policies and guidelines that cover areas irrelevant to conventional ones.

Purpose: Without a doubt, individual and social benefits are gained from education. However, configuring a sound policy must consider the balance not only between individual and social gains but also equity between students in diverse approaches. In the decision to establish open and distance learning institutions, several purposes—educational democratization, the expansion of educational service to respond to public or economic demand or quality enhancement—are often evaluated. At the level of higher education, these have often been reckoned as the rationale of open university systems. The merit of distance teaching institutions in terms of their contribution to workforce development through large student recruitment and comparable qualifications with those of the conventional institutions awarded at equal or even lower cost must be accurately appraised. Their image as a political force and influence in offering courses of major economic and social significance is deemed to provide an advantageous position in bids for funding support from governments. However, any relevant government funding will possibly diminish the autonomy that provides the freedom required to plan open and distance education separately from the occasional incompatible context of conventional education.

Open and Distance Education: Status and Directions

Changes in policies for financing distance education institutions have occurred over the course of time. The shift from dual mode to stand alone universities is one and from government funding to student fees as the main source of financing is another. Although distance education institutions have varying types of expenditures, lower costs and expanding educational opportunities are still their major advantages when compared with conventional universities. Determining the opportunity costs to students of the distance mode in comparison with those in conventional universities is not yet realistically and accurately possible, primarily because of the variance in the student profile of these two approaches. However, when the opportunity cost to working adults and the benefits to the country through students learning as they work and workers upgrading as they remain in the work force are considered, the cost advantage of open universities over conventional universities is seen by most to be far greater.

The nature and structure of a country’s open and distance learning system will be unlike the precursor but basically dependent not only on the country’s requirements but also its culture, capacity and constraints. Thus, the challenge to academics in Asia is to plan and assemble a distance education system that supports the priorities of their respective countries and exploits, in a cost-effective way, the learning resources available.

Changing politics, globalization, time-compression and new information and communication technologies are pertinent inputs to a new agenda for open and distance education. The promise offered by the use of technology to provide equity and access to educational opportunities has influenced the growth and development of distance education. Nevertheless, the availability and affordability of technology are very relevant issues because these present an acerb possibility that new technologies, which are relatively cheaper in the North than in the South, may dilate educational disparity rather than constrict it.
Distance education has made cross-border enrolment possible and new information and communication technologies have provided learners’ access to information anywhere in the world. With education going beyond national boundaries and technologies possibly furthering the gap between rich and poor countries in their access to information, government policymakers are at the crossroads of national interests and consumer protection. The relevant function of organizing, promoting and supporting a system of best practices has been conferred upon international agencies.

While Giddens (1998) declared that “education and training have become the new mantra for social democratic politicians”, the idea that this mantra will shatter social inequalities is not without its problems. Education, it may be noted, is as well a cause as it is an effect of disparities. In democratic, developed countries, the new demands in terms of sustaining their compulsive development cultures are founded and entrenched in education and training. “Not only does each rising generation have to be equipped to compete in the new ‘hi-tech’ world, but they also have to be instilled with the values of compulsive development so that they are always seeking, or at least compliant with, change and development.” (Evans 2000) These values of modern societies are swiftly infecting developing societies so that, in the era of rapid globalization and knowledge-based economies, the dependence on responsive educational innovations has largely intensified. Thus, a decisive comprehension of the political and economic drivers of compulsive development values is essential to good educational management and policy.

This being the milieu, a significant knowledge of the policy and development issues that permeate open and distance education institutions is crucial to the form and character the system within developing countries take. The balance among issues of equity, expansion, quality and economy amidst choices of cost effectiveness, political prestige and the influence of various institutions must be struck. Educational institutions, particularly open and distance, must, therefore, work towards providing courses that not only reflect government policies, but also critically reflect upon them, as well.

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KEY PLAYERS IN SUSTAINING THE SURVIVAL AND GROWTH OF TRADITIONAL THEATRE

Said Halim Said Nong

Introduction

In the concluding chapter in his book, Ghulam Sarwar Yousof (1992) wrote about the problems faced by traditional theatre in Malaysia. Some forms had already disappeared, while others, including the major ones like Wayang Kulit, Makyong and Bangsawan were on the decline. The number of practitioners was steadily decreasing and performances were becoming rarer. Professor Ghulam pointed out that this phenomenon was due to several types of problems: 1. social and economic problems; 2. religious factors; 3. problems connected with administration; 4. educational factors; 5. content; and 6. problems associated with transmission.

For the first problem, Professor Ghulam found that the practitioners themselves were no longer taking their art forms seriously, for they no longer provide the performers and artisans with a viable means of livelihood. They could not and did not depend for sustenance entirely upon their art. On the whole, the performers themselves have been disillusioned with their art.

Apart from that, religion played quite an important role in the decline of traditional Malay theatre. This was especially obvious in the late 1970s and the 1980s, when Malaysia experienced a form of Islamic revivalism. There was a rising sense of confusion and uncertainty with regard to performing arts and their locus standi from an Islamic point of view and, secondly, there was also a deliberate attempt to suppress some of these arts, or even to wipe them out altogether. The main contention on this matter was the question of the presence of animistic and pre-Islamic elements imbued in some aspects of traditional Malay theatre. Islamic purists were very much averse to these elements and for Muslim Malays to be involved in such syncretic activities was deemed unbecoming.

The third problem faced by practitioners in Malaysia was in the form of a lack of standard operating procedures in obtaining performance permits. The idea of censorship on the part of the authorities affected performance in many ways. Depending on the whim and fancies of the officer in charge, an intended performance may be asked to conform to some ‘rules/guidelines’ or be cancelled altogether. As an example of the extremes in administrative whims, in 1982, the National Theatre Competition was stopped short of its centralized finale, when a new, religiously-inclined (and immensely popular) politician was appointed minister of culture, youth and sports. For the next few years, the festival was stricken off the national cultural roster.

The fourth factor is more related to the education system of Malaysia. Until the present, theatre, music and dance have not found a real place in the school curriculum in Malaysia. In the 1970s, the Science University of Malaysia (USM) boldly started a performing arts program. However, other universities promoted arts and culture only as co-curriculum activities. Malaysia’s oldest university, the University of Malaya (UM), which was well known for its Kesuma dance troupe, only started a full fledged performing arts program in late 1997. The National Arts Academy was established in 1993 to produce trained performers. A handful of their graduates then enrolled for further studies in UM, USM and a few other universities that had started to offer some form of performance studies. Since then I practically no exposure, and few studies on theatre done at the primary and secondary level, the majority of Malaysians do not have the opportunity to get serious exposure to their own cultural art forms.

The fifth factor is on the problem of content. The repertoire of much of traditional theatre has remained static. Much of the Wayang Kulit (puppet theatre) of Malaysia derived its repertoire from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Indonesian Panji stories. The Ramayana and Mahabharata were originally Hindu in nature. This again presents a ‘sticky’ situation when the religious paragons come into play. This has led to some extent towards an over-reliance on ‘branch’ stories that dwell more on the antics of jesters and commoners, as in the case of Wayang Kulit Kedah. When a traditional form cannot hold onto a time-tested tradition, whether in terms of repertoire or other factors, its quality and continuity become questionable.

And finally, the problem of transmission is another factor to reckon with. The training of performers takes
time. Be they the puppet master, actors and actresses, dancers, musicians etc., time and discipline are very much warranted. Since traditional art forms cannot sustain their lives, not many people venture into traditional theatre. Even the offspring of traditional masters are not very keen to carry on with the arts. As such, the art dies with the demise of the masters.

Apart from the observations of Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, one should not dismiss that the changing times have in many ways affected the changing of tastes among the masses in not only Malaysia, but all of Southeast Asia. The advent of moving pictures and the cinema, a few years before and a decade after World War II, caused severe setbacks to traditional theatre forms in Malaysia. The films, especially from Hollywood (Los Angeles, USA) and, to some extent, Bollywood (Bombay, India) brought with them popular music which caught up very fast with the young and urbane. Cities and major towns started having cinema halls or movie theatres. There were also amusement parks built that catered for family outings with kiddy rides and fun fare. At the same time, a more adult form of entertainment sprang up in the form of cabarets and dance floors, with taxi dancers accompanying guests swaying to the tunes of the samba, rumba, conga and cha-cha.

The glitter of movie stars in the various characters of newfound heroes and heroines, who are shown in beautiful Western dress and pantaloons, swooping about in flashy Cadillacs and Buicks, mesmerizes many natives of this distant land called Southeast Asia. The number of movies churned out by Hollywood studios is enough to take away the attention and fancy of the younger generation of locals. So films were (and still are) a popular form of entertainment and a big business.

Making films was seen as an enterprise of high potential. In 1939, a company from India came to Singapore (which was a part of British Malaya) and produced the first Malay movie ‘Laila Majnun’.5 The story ‘Laila Majnun’, which was adapted from Middle-eastern folklore, was also part of the Bangsawan repertoire. Bangsawan was a form of traditional Malay opera that had evolved from the Mendu theatre of India. Since the turn of the century, Bangsawan was a thriving traveling theatre form. There were at least a dozen Bangsawan companies or troupes before the beginning of the War. Bangsawan actors and actresses were stars and were the main attractions of each company. When the Indian company produced the first Malay film, they naturally sourced their actors and actresses from the Bangsawan companies.

In 1941, the Shaw Brothers of Hong Kong set up Malay Films Productions in Singapore and started three decades of the Golden Era of Malay films. They managed to produce four Malay films before the War reached Malaya. After the War, they continued with more vigor and kept on sourcing talents from Bangsawan while giving opportunities for fresh faces. By 1950, another entrepreneur from Hong Kong bought a budding local film company and set up Cathay Keris Film Productions. From then on, both Shaw and Cathay operated on the big studio system whereby artistic crews and general workers were sustained on the payroll. While both studios churned out an average of five Malay films annually, Bangsawan was slowly dying. By the end of the 1950s, most of the popular Bangsawan actors and actresses had joined the film industry while the previous owners and workers retired to some other vocation, not to be recalled again.

Malaya then achieved independence in 1957 but the British held on to Singapore. The new government of the Federation of Malaya set up a ministry for culture, youth and sports in the early 1960s. As an agency responsible for cultural affairs, there was a great deal of planning to be done. As a multi-racial country, Malaya and later on (in 1963) Malaysia had national integration as the top item on its agenda. At the same time, the question of national identity was also a pressing issue. A government very much styled on the British parliamentary and bureaucracy system was fast in formulating policies to achieve its aims. Thus, the birth of the National Education Policy and National Language Policy occurred early in the sixties. These two policies were meant to ensure the ‘formation’ of common values and traits amongst the multi-racial and multi-cultured peoples.

The racial riots of 13 May 1969 were instrumental in motivating the ruling party to be serious about national identity and commonwealth among the citizens. The question of ‘Malaysianess’ arose from time to time. This then led to the convening of the Congress for National Culture in 1971. The Congress laid down the tenets for a National Culture Policy. By this time, it was about twenty years since Bangsawan had withered off. In fact, a score of other traditional theatre forms suffered neglect and a slow death. There was no significant attempt made at preserving them. Only a few gained prominence due to previous writings by Western scholars or a few Malaysian graduate students overseas. The Makyong dance-theatre and Wayang Kulit puppet-theatre had captured the interest of colonial officers and some writings on them were found in historical or cultural journals. In the 1970s, two graduate students

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researched and wrote theses on the *Makyong* and *Bangsawan dan Boria*.

At the same time, the early 1970s also saw Malaysia struggle for social engineering, balancing the distribution of wealth and opportunities amongst her people of various ethnicities. There was a call for a mental revolution, focusing on science and technology and the realignment of aspirations and ambitions. Indirectly, the arts, whether music, dance or theatre, were marginalized. The mainstream mindset slowly became dogmatic concerning art, which was deemed as entertainment, and entertainment could divert one’s attention from the all important study and pursuit of science and technology. The result of this shift in national priorities was that the majority of the people did not see much use for and hope in the arts.

The lethargy of the traditional theatres and performing arts in Malaysia had been going on for some time. The economic success of Malaysia under Dr. Mahathir further sidelined the pursuit of the arts. It was always the business and corporate sectors that triumphed over others. For more than a decade, cultural affairs were housed in a ministry also responsible for tourism. It was very clear indeed that the ruling elites perceived that cultural activities and heritage were potential commodities for tourism industry and nothing more.

It has only been very recently that there has been some sense of awakening in the government. The new prime minister named a new Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, which in turn managed to get UNESCO’s recognition of the *Makyong* dance-theatre as a world heritage in November 2005. Therefore, we can see that there was a lapse of many years between the neglected years (since 1950s) to the recent efforts to revive the old art forms and put them onto a pedestal of sorts.

On the other hand, a few years shy of the new millennium, I personally witnessed traditional art forms flourishing in Java. Not only were there regular performances from time to time, but theatre elements permeated the everyday life of the people. During a short visit to a village in Cikarang, West Java in 1998 I saw little children running around playing with *Wayang Golek* puppets. A visit to Central Java in 1999 took me to a theatre house in Solo especially constructed for the performance of the *Wayang Wong* every night. On another visit in 2003, I was invited to a live recording of the *Wayang Wong*, commissioned by Indosiar, a private television station in Indonesia. Flicking on the television there was always the chance to watch *Ketoprak* or *Wayang Golek* being aired.

What crossed my mind then was the fact that Indonesia, the biggest Muslim country in the world, was also known to be a poor country. Funding was not easy to come by. A large number of people lived in considerable poverty. Yet, when it came to culture, they reverted to their rich culture and, not uncommonly, they could even be extravagant. The traditional art forms were alive even though the whole nation was at times jiggling their hips to the heart-pounding beats of *dangdut*. While this ‘creolization’ of Hindi tunes produces glamorous stars in their own right, the *sindens* (singer-dancers) of *Jaipong* (another traditional art form) were still performing at weddings and other receptions. The *wayangs* (puppets or humans) were still drawing audiences. Furthermore, selected television stations aired regular traditional theatre form, especially the *Ketoprak*.

From 2003 to 2004 I visited Thailand three times, each time accompanying groups of students for some cultural performances. These visits were made at the invitation of some Thai government agency, whether a public university or a cultural centre. In the joint performance or shows, the audience would witness the strong grasp of tradition by the young student Thai performers, while Malaysian students would show more prowess in the techniques and mastery of contemporary movement study. Whatever traditional elements were portrayed would be more in essence rather than in substance.

**Objective of the Project**

As a student of performing arts and a manager for the development of arts and culture in a university that offers degree programs in performing arts, I wanted to get insights into factors that influenced Indonesians and Thais in sustaining the interest of their people in their tradition and heritage. I intend to impart to my students this extra knowledge and to share the experiences of my neighbors so that they will graduate to become functional and effective cultural managers, art educators, curators and professional performers.

This project attempted to study the overall policies, strategic plans and actions taken by various authorities and sectors in their continuous efforts to promote, manage and sustain traditional theatre and performing arts in Indonesia and Thailand. Based on my continuous study of the development of traditional theatre in my home country, Malaysia, and my casual visits to Thailand and Indonesia, I had an early assumption that these two neighboring countries have shown some success in sustaining healthy development and continuity in promoting traditional theatre and performing arts amongst their people.
I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the Asia Public Intellectual (API) Fellowships program, which gave an opportunity and support to me on this endeavor. This project, which came under the theme of *Changing identities and their social, historical, and cultural contexts*, intended to study the use of historical memory in building and rebuilding regional and national identities, the construction of mainstream culture, the role of media in the arts, and also the dynamics of cultural encounter.

I managed to learn many things, among which is that the initial scope of this project was somewhat wide and daunting. However, based on the advice of my newfound colleagues, I managed to narrow down my study to just a few forms.

**Methodology**

This project was based mostly on fieldwork and some library searches on the cultural and historical background of the people or related art forms. There were meetings and conversations with cultural officers, fellow academicians, people involved in traditional theatre forms, on-site visits, witnessing and documentation of live performances and courtesy calls on relevant authorities.

I started the project in Thailand and was based at Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok for two months starting in January 2006. Due to limitations in language proficiency, I could not interview performers and local masters. I had to be content with explanations from staff members at my host institution and some readings at Chulalongkorn University and the Siam Society. My research counterpart was very generous in taking me along with his class to areas nearby Bangkok to meet makers of masks and traditional musical instruments.

For my four-month stay in Indonesia, I was based at the Indonesian University of Education in Bandung. From there, I made visits to Jakarta, Solo and Yogyakarta. Towards the end of my project I stationed myself in Bali because the annual Bali Festival of Arts was on from mid-June 2006.

Though six months may sound like a long period of time, I found out that it was not sufficient to cover the length and breadth of these two cultures. In the case of Indonesia, the API coordinator in Jakarta suggested that I concentrate on a few selected areas within a reasonable distance from my base. Furthermore, the visit to Solo and Yogyakarta was not repeated due to the sudden earthquake in the vicinity.

I was able to gather some information on the general philosophy and the opinions of some people in terms of culture, arts, tradition and heritage. I gained some overall insight into the general practices that were conducive to the continuity and survival of traditional arts and culture, especially the theatre.

**Findings**

*Traditional theaters in Thailand*

The Thai people deeply and sincerely love and revere their king and queen. This high respect is also extended to the royal children: the crown prince and the princesses. During the months of January and February 2006 when I was in Bangkok, I was impressed with the numerous portraits and posters adorning buildings, billboards, roundabouts and road junctions. Most were either of the serene looking King or the perpetually smiling Queen. In addition, there were a few portraits of the Royal Family. The reason for such an elaborate display of affection from the people was the fact that HM King Bhumibol had been reigning for about sixty years. That made him currently the longest ruling monarch on Earth.

To celebrate such an auspicious and proud moment in Thai history, there were numerous cultural events being planned and held, not only in Bangkok but in all parts of the country. More interestingly, it was common knowledge that the King himself and also the Queen have a keen interest in the arts. Therefore, many a cultural event was held in the name of the royal anniversary.

As a people, the Thais incorporate arts and culture into their daily lives. Developments in their lives call for celebrations of sorts or the observance of customs and rites. During my stay in Bangkok, my Thai counterpart’s father passed away. In the course of the cremation, there was a big and significant observation of various customs. That was the tradition and custom of the Buddhist Thais, I was told. Being a professor of Thai music for many years, he was quietly pleased to see his former and current students contributing to various forms of cultural pieces. The traditional *Likay* theatre was among them.

This same professor conducted visits and tours for his students. Class visits to traditional art masters in and around Bangkok became a constant affair. Occasionally, he and his colleagues would accompany their students to perform Thai dance, dance theatre and music in various parts of Thailand. They even traveled south into
neighboring Malaysia to promote and showcase Thai traditional performing arts.

When questioned about the keen interest of a sizeable number of undergraduates in traditional Thai music and dance at his university, he mentioned a unique education system in Thailand. The education system established demonstration schools which were somewhat like a preparatory or pre-university program for secondary school students who intended to pursue studies in traditional arts and culture in local universities.

Walking around Bangkok, a visitor may be directed to theatre halls that schedule regular performances. The National Theatre, the Thailand Cultural Centre, the Sala Charoen Krung, the Patravadi Theatre and the Joe Louis Theatre are among the most well known. On any day, any one or more of these venues will hold performances. Apart from regular performances, some of these establishments also offer courses in Thai traditional dance or puppetry for young and old.

The Patravadi Theatre and the Joe Louis Theatre are very unique because they are privately owned and run. Patravadi is well known for nightly Likay performances. Madam Patravadi herself is a veteran prima donna of the traditional theatre forms. Her theatre complex also designated some space for the training of young children in the Likay tradition. Meanwhile, the Joe Louis Theatre is renowned for its unique puppet show called Hun Lakhon Lek playing the Ramakien stories. Each two-foot tall elaborate puppet is controlled and moved in unison by a team of three puppeteers. Watching the deftness of the puppeteers’ movements while controlling the puppets is a spectacle of its own. To ensure the continuity of the tradition, the Joe Louis Theatre also has its own training program for budding puppeteers.

The Sala Charoen Krung is managed by Bangkok Metropolitan Area authorities and is the home of the Khon, the Thai traditional masked dance theatre. The Khon can be considered the most elaborate of Thai theatres. It draws its narrative substance from the Ramakien, which is the Thai version of the Ramayana epic. The Ramakien embodies the essence of good triumphing over evil, and fits very well with Buddhist values of good and evil.

Apart from the above, the Thais also continue with the shadow puppet theatre or Nang Talung. I was informed that this form of shadow puppet theatre is still performed occasionally from time to time.

It can be concluded here that traditional theatre forms in Thailand are still very active due to the collective involvement of national and local government agencies, institutions of higher learning, individuals or groups of independent performers, royal patronage and the masses themselves. If we base our conclusions on Professor Ghulam-Sarwar’s observation of problem-typology, it is clear that traditional theatre in Thailand fares well on all aspects. Special mention should be given to aspects of religion, education and content. Traditional theatre in Thailand is very much tied to religious and cultural practice. At the same time, the education system there places an emphasis on the development of arts and culture. In terms of content, the repertoires have been consistent and relate very much to religion and tradition.

Traditional theaters in Indonesia

Indonesia is a big county comprised of thousands of islands, big and small. The major islands are Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Sulewesi, Papua and Bali. The latter is comparatively small in size but big in the cultural sense. During my stay in Indonesia, I decided to focus on three main cultural areas, namely West Java, Central Java (including Yogyakarta) and Bali. These three areas are the cultural capitals of three separate peoples: the Sundanese, the Javanese and the Balinese. These three groups of people speak different languages though there are some similar terms due to borrowing and intermingling among them for many centuries.

Before discussing my observations in the three localities mentioned, I would like to elaborate a bit on my impression of the Indonesian government’s commitments to arts. One prominent point that I want to make is that for a long time during the old regime called the New Order, cultural matters were governed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. That to me was a salient feature of Indonesian education. When education and culture share the same roof, culture becomes close to the hearts and minds of children from elementary to high school. Aspects of culture will surely be part of the national curriculum. Thus, there is no doubt that children will grow up having knowledge and also some skill in the arts.

In various parts of Indonesia there are colleges for Indonesian Arts. They are called Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI)—the High School for Indonesian Arts. There are STSIs in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra and Bandung, West Java. Meanwhile in Solo, Central Java, Denpasar, Bali, and Yogyakarta they are now called Institut Seni Indonesia (literally meaning the Institute
of Indonesian Arts). The curriculum includes studies and performance training in traditional and modern music, dance, theatre and drama, visual art, and puppet-mastering. At the same time, at the teacher training colleges, which are now upgraded into universities, there are programs of study in music, dance and fine arts. With such a scenario, it is no wonder that Indonesia is quite advanced in the study and performance of the arts.

It is interesting to note that the various STSIs and ISIs include traditional art forms as part of their core curriculum. STSI Padang Panjang gives emphasis to the traditional arts of Sumatra, especially of the Minangkabau people. Meanwhile, ISI Solo offers dance programs based on the Wayang Orang. ISI Denpasar gives preference to Balinese arts. As an effort to standardize teaching quality and at the same time preserve the arts, STSIs and ISIs have a Council for the Arts in Higher Learning (Badan Kerja Sama Perguruan Tinggi Seni Indonesia) that organizes an arts festival every two years. This event includes, among other things, academic seminars, exhibitions and cultural performances.

In performing arts (theatre and dance), generally Indonesians have inherited the narrative traditions of the Hindu Ramayana and Mahabharata and their own Panji repertoires. The two ancient Hindu epics became the mainstay of the original storyline for an ancient theatre form, i.e. the shadow puppet theatre, especially the Wayang Kulit Purwa of Java and the Wayang Kulit Bali. For these theatre forms, the puppets were made of carved cow hide. From the Wayang Kulit tradition in Central Java, Yogyakarta and Bali evolved the live human version of the Wayang (show or theatre) called Wayang Orang or Wayang Wong (orang is Indonesian for human and wong is the Javanese equivalent).

On the other hand, West Java is more known for another form of puppet theatre, namely Wayang Golek (golek means ‘to roll’ or more appropriately ‘move around’). The golek puppets of this theatre are made of wood with their heads the size of an adult human fist. Moveable arms are also made of carved pieces of wood held together by thread or small strings. The puppets are then dressed elaborately in costumes made of textiles of various colors and designs.

During my stay in Bandung, I had the opportunity to witness Wayang Golek performances live and also on regular television broadcasts. Its main proponent is the puppet-master (Dalang) Asep Sunanda. He is well known both in and outside of Indonesia. He has lost count of the number of times he has performed for Television Republik Indonesia (TVRI) and other local networks. However, his greatest love and interest is performing for school children, imparting his advice, counsel and motivations to the children. He mentioned that he hoped that such efforts would bring the traditional theatre form nearer to the children who were Indonesia’s future and hope. He also wished that such young minds would grow to love the traditional art form and continue to crave it in the future.

In Solo, the capital city of Central Java, there is an amusement park called Taman Hiburan Rakyat (THR) Sriwedari. Apart from kiddy rides, souvenir shops and eating places, THR Sriwedari boasts a theatre hall especially built for Wayang Wong performances. In this hall, there is a proscenium stage that overlooks an orchestral pit of sorts. In the pit sit the gamelan (traditional Javanese brass percussion) ensemble that accompanies the nightly performances. I was informed that the THR was managed by the city hall and also the Office for Tourism. The performers were either full-time government employees or part-timers and were remunerated by the mayor’s office. They performed in this hall six nights a week.

However, the building that houses Wayang Wong in Sriwedari is very much in need of proper maintenance. In several places, roof tiles are broken, paint is peeling from walls and there a sense of near neglect. It is a shame that such an important art form, which in many ways is synonymous with Javanese culture, is housed in such a neglected building.

Apart from the theatre in Sriwedari, Wayang Wong is also broadcast as a weekly radio show by the local Radio Republic of Indonesia. On the first Tuesday of the month, the show goes live on stage in the radio auditorium and is broadcast on the air. I was made to understand that, on the whole, remunerations to performers were somewhat token in nature. They carried on because they were proud of their art and felt a certain responsibility and commitment to it.

An hour’s car ride down south of Solo is the city of Yogyakarta, the capital city of the Special Province of Yogyakarta. This Indonesian province was accorded the special privilege of having its Sultan (a traditional ruler) as the governor. The present governor is HH Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X. The Sultan resides in a palatial complex called the Kraton, which had been turn over to the public. People from all over the world can visit the Kraton, which is somewhat of a museum in nature. Only the modest private quarters of the Sultan are off
limits. The Sultan as the governor is a royal patron to the arts in Yogyakarta. This includes the royal gamelan and also the Wayang Wong. However, unlike the one in Solo, the Wayang Wong of Yogyakarta is not performed regularly. It is only performed on special occasions or during a celebration at the behest of the Sultan. All the performers are supposed to be the Sultan’s servants and draw their salaries or allowances from the Sultan’s office.

Visitors to Yogyakarta will eventually be guided to an amusement park (THR) called Purawisata. At this park there is an open-air performance area for the Ramayana Ballet. It is especially formatted for foreign tourists and stylized for short live performances of the main Ramayana story. Visitors pay a considerable fee to watch the dance drama that takes a little under one hour to perform. A more elaborate Ramayana Dance Theatre can be seen on the grounds of the ancient temples of Prambanan, a 30-minute car trip north of the capital city. Word has it that the best time to watch the show is during the full moon. These shows are under the auspices of the local tourist board.

To the east of Java lies the island of Bali. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Bali is dubbed the Island of the Gods by its natives. The Balinese profess to be Hindus and practice the religion with some mixture of local animistic elements. Such a belief system influences the daily lives of the Balinese. One particular observation was that the Balinese had numerous celebrations, rites and rituals. For example, the daily offerings called sajen take up effort and resources in terms of time, energy and even money spent in the preparation and execution of the rites. Local cultural calendars play a big role in the lives of the Balinese. Socio-cultural demands for community involvement also nurture the Balinese character.

The priority given to community interests and events gives energy and character to Balinese people. In every locality there are community halls or banjars where people get together for meetings, briefings, sermons, feasts, celebrations and grievances. That is the Balinese way of bringing up children. The banjars are also venues for teaching children the gamelan and traditional performances. Not many can be exempted from participation, unless the person is an outsider or a non-Hindu. The community activities from individual banjars are then pitted against others in local competitions leading to the annual festival at the provincial Cultural Centre in Denpasar.

Balinese schools are very organized when it comes to extra-curricular activities for their pupils. Weekends are slotted for cultural activities. This is the time when young girls learn the traditional gamelan dance. Boys go for story telling or other more robust movements. The Cultural Centre and other centers at the sub-district levels are abuzz with cultural activities, especially on Saturdays. With such an orientation, it is not surprising to see many performance venues all over Bali catering to local and international audiences. The Kecak dance and the Barong and Keris dances are among the staple performances.

However, not all theatre forms get the attention of the masses and the authorities. An Italian scholar whom I met had been in Bali for the last 13 years. Her personal mission was to revive the Gambuh, a traditional Balinese theatre form. She lamented that such a ‘beautiful’ art form is dying but not many Balinese are giving any positive response to her efforts. A short version of the Gambuh was presented as a morning show once during the Bali Arts Festival in June and July 2006. She was busy preparing to have a major performance in one of the temples in July 2006.

From the observations above we can see that the major traditional theatre forms in Indonesia are still active, especially in Java and Bali. The parties involved are mostly traditional masters, the community institutions of higher learning and the media. Government involvement is mostly focused on making the art forms a commodity for the tourist market. It is also interesting to note that religious groups do not interfere with the form and content of arts. In fact, in Hindu Bali, art forms (theatre and dance) are very much related to religious and cultural events.

The community seems to support the arts directly or indirectly. Communal activities and festivities involve some form of performance one way or the other. One can look forward to some form of Wayang, dance or music, especially when there is a wedding or circumcision in the villages. The education system in Indonesia also places an emphasis on the development of arts and culture, especially those which are still quite popular among the masses. Finally, Indonesia can boast the involvement of radio and television in promoting traditional theatre. Government owned stations under TVRI and a few local private stations have regular slots for traditional art forms.

Conclusion

As discussed above, there are similarities in terms of the situation in Thailand and Indonesia when it comes to
the continuity and development of traditional theatres. The key people or parties involved are almost the same categories though there some exceptions.

In my opinion, the prime movers are the traditional masters, artists and the community. There still exist local masters and followers who have an overwhelming desire and commitment towards the survival and continuity of their art forms. These masters, artists and performers have persevered despite challenges due to changing times and outside influences. All of them know full well that their art forms may not be as popular as before. They may lament the fact but, still, they carry on. Without these people there is no art form to talk of. If any one of them dies or decides to stop their activities and involvement, it will take a great deal of effort and resources to revive the art forms that they are involved in.

The community where this group is directly involved lends tremendous support to the continuity, development and survival of traditional art forms. This is especially so within the communities where each of the art forms originates. The activities of the Balinese banjars are the most appropriate example. They are the kin and neighbors of the original artists. From amongst them also arise novices who will carry on practicing the art. They share common values, customs and mores with the artists and their masters before them, as well as their understudies. Whatever art form is propagated within their midst grows up due to their support, direct or indirect. The aesthetic and cultural values embedded in the art forms reflect their identity and culture. It is the manifestation of their being and values. The masses will also continue propagating traditional art forms if there is religious value and purpose to it.

The second important group is the institutions of higher leaning. These are the places where researchers and teachers, especially scholars and academics, local and foreign, congregate due to their interest in the performing arts. The efforts and influence of this category of people are tremendous. They invariably also become promoters and curators of the arts, and very knowledgeable ones at that. It is also very common practice for researchers and scholars to work closely with the above mentioned government agencies in their research. Their documentation and recordings become important resource materials for the future and continuous study of performance structures and artistic elements therein. These are later passed on in lectures, seminars, workshops and publications to their students and interested members of the public. Majoring students then go on in life as knowledgeable persons about the art forms.

The third category of people is the bureaucrats working in government agencies concerned with the promotion and development of local art: the departments of culture, so to speak. These agencies are entrusted with canvassing the length and breadth of the nation to have first hand knowledge of the situation on the ground. They make inventories and identify the needs and peculiarities of local art forms. These agencies are the bridges between the artists and the world - the audience, researchers, students, etc., whoever they may be. They are the planners, the financiers and the executors of art events and festivals. They also identify the market and the intensity of promotion. They are also the group of people who have worked to have selected art forms recognized at the national or international level. They form the web of communication, promotion and support. However, if they are not efficient enough or responsible enough in the course of their duty, many an art form can disappear or stagnate in this 'entangled web'.

The fourth category of people is the official patrons. These people are personalities with considerable authority over the masses. Above them is royalty or the political elites. This is very noticeable in Thailand due to the stature and personality of their King. In the case of Indonesia, the Sultan of Yogyakarta may fit the profile. Though the number involved is quite small, their social position and influence gives credibility to whichever art form they desire to patronize. The interest of these elites usually drives the motivation of government officers and draws the support of the business community because of the perception that there is something to gain when someone gets involved in high profile events attended by royalty or political elites.

The fifth group, which is more applicable to Indonesia, is the electronic media—television and radio. Being a vast country of separate islands, there are national and provincial television stations. The provincial television stations are very consistent in the transmission of local art forms, especially traditional theatre. Since television services in Indonesia are free, the coverage can be very wide indeed. Chances are, at some instance, every viewer would stumble upon a traditional theatre performance on television.

In conclusion, all these people or parties stated above work in tandem, though not necessarily at the same time, in making the 'mechanisms' of culture move. Actually, art forms may not necessarily need to be regulated by policies and empowerments if there is
awareness, love and a genuine desire from the masses to elicit the support of political elites and government agencies for the sake of development and continuity in sustaining their national identity.

References


Notes


2 The Islamic revolution of Iran could have some influence on this.

3 The theatre festival resumed only after the minister was promoted to a senior portfolio within the cabinet and another minister took over.

4 There were three traditions of leather puppet theatre in Malaysia. The first was a derivative of the Javanese Wayang Purwa and was very much localized in the southern part of Peninsular Malaysia. The second was Wayang Kulit Siam of the east-coast. This tradition was thick with Ramayana elements and was performed in the Kelantanese dialects. Wayang Kulit Kedah or Wayang Gedek was very much influenced by the Thai Nang Talung. However, the repertoire was very much improvised to suit the taste and interest of the locals.

MODERN DEVELOPMENT OF THAI CONTEMPORARY ART AND ITS SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE: CHALOOD NIMSAMER AND PRINTMAKING

Toshiya Takahama

INTRODUCTION

Thailand enjoys worldwide fame for its very high level of printmaking. It is fair to say that Thailand’s level of expertise is comparable to that of Japan, an advanced country in printmaking. Printmaking has been the mainstream of modern art in Thailand, whereas in the Western art world, it has been a trend on the margins of painting and sculpture. It is also a distinctive characteristic of Thai art that is not found in other countries that many Thai artists who have achieved international fame in advanced expression such as installation started their careers with printmaking. When looking at modern Thai art from a panoramic view to find out the reasons for this unique trend based on printmaking, an artist called Chalood Nimsamer stands out as the central figure behind this trend. He was born in 1929 and is still an active artist. He belongs to the last of a generation who went through a wave of rapid modernization in Thai art. He is an important artist who began Thai printmaking. This document attempts to describe this unique trend of modern Thai art from the viewpoint of printmaking by tracing Chalood Nimsamer’s activities and influences.

SELF-TEACHING AND ORIGINALITY

It is said that Chalood Nimsamer was the first person in Thailand who viewed the printmaking technique as a form of art and produced printmaking artworks. Chalood Nimsamer displayed his oil-based woodblock print “Evening Meal” (Figure 1) in the Seventh National Art Exhibition in 1956. Even a jury could not tell what kind of technique was used for the work. This work was the first print seen by the general public in Thailand. Earlier, Poh Chang School, an occupational school offering vocational training, had incorporated printmaking into the school curriculum mainly as a part of printing technology. However, it was nothing more than printing technology, and nobody had tried to apply it to artwork.

In 1954, Chalood Nimsamer studied at the Rome Art Academy with a scholarship, as well as at the Pratt Graphics Center in New York. After coming back to Thailand, he started to work on printmaking seriously. Mostly through a self-teaching process, Nimsamer acquired various printmaking techniques. Eventually, he was awarded many international prizes. This fact reveals a number of truths. In Japanese modern printmaking, most artists in the pioneer days also acquired or developed techniques mostly by themselves to achieve a new frontier. These artists include Kiyoshi Hasegawa, who revived the long-lost manière noire technique as an art form, Yozo Hamaguchi, who developed the technique of color mezzotint and realized his own tranquil space, Masuo Ikeda, who made his sensational debut with color etching and drypoint, Ryoji Ikeda, who was a pioneer in applying one printing technique, photo engraving, as a tool of expression in artwork, and Shiko Munakata of woodblock print fame. There are no footprints behind these artists because they did not use established techniques but rather developed their own. It is self-evident that everything was their own innovation.

It is not hard to imagine that in the 1960s when Chalood Nimsamer involved himself in printmaking in Thailand, no store had special equipment for printmaking. He had to develop his own techniques and the tools he needed for what he wanted to express by trial and error. This is still true in Thailand today. Even professional artists and university students who study printmaking use surprisingly simple equipment and materials, and produce artworks with remarkable techniques and concepts. If an artist wants pine resin, s/he shops around Chinese drug stores in China Town, or if s/he needs a woodblock, s/he takes a tuktuk ride to a district in the Old Town where a number of building material stores are clustered together. The sights and sounds of the town that artists go through and the reality of the social structure that they feel during their detours are clearly reflected in their works as motifs, making the works ideologically strong. In the process of modernization, paintings and sculpture started by following after modernism in Europe, whereas in printmaking, artists did not rely on past examples but tried and developed their own original techniques. What artists experienced under the circumstances made them stronger, which was the major factor that allowed them to equal European artists in the international arena after the 1960s.
Pioneer days: Establishing a printmaking department at a university

After Chalood Nimsamer made his remarkable debut in 1960s, receiving several prizes at consecutive international exhibitions such as the Biennial of Graphic Art, Ljubliana and the International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo (Figure 2), Prayat Pongdam emerged as part of the next generation. Prayat Pongdam graduated from Silpakorn University and studied at the Rome Art Academy in Italy in 1961, where he met Shiko Munakata, one of the most popular woodblock artists of that time, and was influenced by him. His study at the Rome Art Academy proved fruitful soon after he came back to Thailand. The woodblock print work “Gecko” (Figure 3) was awarded a prize at the Fourteenth National Art Exhibition and attracted attention in one fell swoop. The warmth and humanity found in all of his works depend largely on the essence of simple scenes from daily life in Thailand, such as animals and plants, which he used as his motifs. He taught at the Graphic Arts Department of Silpakorn University and his attitude of relying on what was around him had a significant influence on the successive generation.

One of the most important events that occurred during this period was that while Chalood Nimsamer served as the dean of the Faculty of Painting and Sculpture at Silpakorn University, he established the Graphic Arts Department in 1966 as a part of university reforms. Considering that most printmakers have been produced here, the frontier days were the most important period in setting the direction of modern printmaking in Thailand.
Second generation printmakers: Diversification of printmaking techniques

New generation artists made their debuts after studying with Chalood Nimsamer and Prayat Pongdam at the newly-established Graphic Arts Department of Silpakorn University. During this period, artists started to use not only intaglio and woodcut, but the two other printmaking techniques that were mainly used worldwide at that time, lithograph and silk screens.

Tuan Trirapichit mainly created abstract woodblock prints and silk screens using geometric patterns as his themes since the early stage of his career, which was rare in Thailand at that time. His style of trying to attain sophisticated expression through well thought-out systematic structures instead of specific images or stories influenced younger artists. A woodblock print, “Composition No 2” (Figure 4), is one of his most complete works. Along with the beauty of the color layers, the balance between the geometric patterns surrounding a circle catches our eyes. Besides this, there is a somewhat moisturized expression that comes from the delicate surface texture, unique to printmaking, which fascinates us. Later, Tuan Trirapichit taught at the Graphic Arts Department of Silpakorn University with Chalood Nimsamer and Prayat Pongdam, giving guidance to the younger generation.

One of the characteristics of Decha Warachun’s work is a strange sense of space that is created by differences in expressing each pattern applied to the surface with silk screens. The patterns, such as straight lines, rectangles, and dots, remind us of industrial products. It is almost humorous to see the contrasts between the organized parts with specific patterns and the trace of free-hand painting such as calligraphy and the parts that remain unpainted. His works have a deep spirituality that makes us believe that there are stories of some sort behind his works. After graduating, Decha Warachun taught at King Mongkut’s, Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang, devoting his efforts to art education mainly for students studying industry.

Pishnu Supanimit, who won the first prize at the Eleventh International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo in 1979, was famous for his excellent realistic painting skills since the early days of his career. It seems that the precise painting skills, which are revealed in seemingly simple layouts based on black, make the beauty of the margin stand out more than painted patterns (Figure 5). He is also talented as a critic, and he has published many books.

Thipol Thangchalok, who has recently concentrated in paintings, also graduated from the Graphic Arts Department at Silpakorn. After graduating, he studied at the graduate school of Washington State University. He came back to Thailand and started teaching in the Painting Department. Utilizing his experiences as a printmaker who had won prizes at many international exhibitions in the 1970s, he applied printmaking skills to the painting process, creating experimental works through the accumulation of layers, based on a printmaker’s way of thinking.

Kanya Chareonsupkul contributed to the domestic promotion of lithography, mainly using stones. After completing the Master’s program at the Art Institute of Chicago, she came back to Thailand to teach in the Graphic Arts Department of Silpakorn, and started to build a new lithograph atelier. She put the research results into a book and published it under the title, “The Possibility of Lithography in Thailand”, which is still a valuable reference, and can be considered a printmaker’s bible today in the tropics. In her artistic activities, she employs the plate-making technique that brings out the characteristics of stones, and creates delicate screens. Recently, she has incorporated installation, drawing, and monotype into her expression activities.

Laxmi Thangchalok, who graduated from Washington State University and taught etching at Silpakorn University until she retired in 2000, created many polychromatic etchings earlier in her career, and recently moved on to drawings using a great deal of embossing. “Color Boxes of Voids 2/98”, an installation she created for the Bangkok Art Project 1998, is the culmination of her art activities. The overlapped scenes on the other side of the cutout shape imply the printmaking principle that it is created by accumulating layers. We can hope for new possibilities of plane art forms in her works.

Somporn Rodboon is another important graduate of this period. After graduating from the Graphic Arts Department of Silpakorn University, she studied in a Master’s program at the University of Illinois, and started her professional career as a critic. She visits Japan quite often for symposiums and research, engaging in planning many major exhibitions related to Southeast Asia, including the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial. She is expanding her activities worldwide as a major curator in Thailand.
Printmaking boom: Development based on modernism

From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Pishnu Supanimit, Kanya Chareonsupkul, and Laxmi Thangchalok, who are former students of Nimsamer and other artists in the pioneer days, became faculty members of the Graphic Arts Department at Silpakorn University, and the educational quality of the program was enhanced. Thus, printmaking entered a flourishing period. Among those who emerged in this period, Thavorn Ko-Udomvit and Yanawit Kunchaethong are the most active artists in the printmaking world in Thailand; they have contrasting natures.

Thavorn Ko-Udomvit’s debut was groundbreaking in the sense that the printmaking screens he creates have a naïve subtlety that is built on a delicate balance that has never before been seen in Thailand (Figure 6). His choice of familiar items such as stones, ropes, plants, and local folk crafts as motifs is strongly influenced by Chalood Nimsamer and Prayat Pongdam, but by using the motifs in a more sophisticated way, he has attained a unique space in his art. His greatest achievement is that he has introduced new possibilities to Thai representational printmaking by combining silk screens and woodblock prints.

Yanawit Kunchaethong studied the latest printmaking techniques at Arthe Ichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music in Japan as the first art student to study under the scholarship program funded by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Japan (MEXT). After coming back to Thailand, he started his professional career as an artist. “Organic Print” (Figure 7), which he is currently working on, reveals his attitude towards creating art that is consistent with his lifestyle. It can be called a certain kind of “life”. From the minimal style which barely retains subtle emotion in his early stage, he went through a Braille Series, a Fabric Series, and installation for a while, and recently he has returned to plane art and creating monotypes. The characteristic of his recent works is its profound story-telling feature, which is not based on specific images. From the monotype screens filled with rich colors, we can read a certain message that speaks more eloquently than words.

Artists of this period are unique in the way that they follow a modernism that seeks the formal development of paintings. As a result, printmaking went ahead in achieving what painting could not achieve at this moment in the Thai art world.
From printmaking to installation: A generation seeking new value

Araya Rasdjarmrarnsook, who was Thavorn Ko-Udomvit’s classmate in the Graphic Arts Department of Silpakorn University, is one of the first artists who moved from printmaking to installation. She actively created copperplate prints in the early stage of her career, and she is currently teaching at Chiang Mai University. She participated in the Venice Biennale 2005 and raised her international profile. She is one of the most promising women artists. It goes without saying that her activities have significantly motivated next-generation artists who seek to move from printmaking to installation.

When Thavorn Ko-Udomvit and Yanawit Kunchaethong came back to Silpakorn University in the late 1980s and 1990s, a new generation emerged that seeks new styles of expression beyond printmaking, and new value.

One of the major artists who belongs to this generation is Surasi Kusolwong. He created sophisticated etching works, which reveal his early maturity, and received many awards at domestic and international printmaking exhibitions. At a turning point in his career he went to study in Germany under the DAAD program. Since coming back to Thailand, he has taught in the Graphic Arts Department of Silpakorn University while his artistic style has moved to more interactive installation. The social nature of Market Series (Figure 8), one of his major works, has a style of communicating with the audience mediated by a social nature, or a concept of the work of communicating with those who enjoy it mediated by the monetary economy. This concept works in the same way as printmaking works through transmission based on complicated plastic products as cheap mass production. He is an energetic artist whom international biennales identify as one of the internationally active Thai artists.

Kamin Lertchaiprasert currently lives in Chiang Mai, seeking innovative art forms by planning and operating Umong Sippadhamma and “The Land Project” (Figure 9) with Rirkrit Tiravanija, involving many people. These are introspective projects that question the relationship between an artist and art in a self-contained environment, while they cast doubt on Thai society, where excessive concentration in Bangkok has been promoted. We cannot take our eyes off these projects, which are central to the decentralization movement.

Like Yanawit Kunchaethong, Nipan Oranniwesna received a scholarship by passing the examination to be nominated for MEXT student financing. He studied at the graduate school of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music and since he returned has been teaching at the School of Fine and Applied Arts, Bangkok University. In Japan, he studied copperplate print with Tadayoshi Nakabayashi. However, he did not limit himself to printmaking, but expanded his styles of expression to drawing and installation. His use of materials such as rice, cloth, mud, and expanded fingerprints, which eventually connect to life itself, and his way of organizing those materials communicate Buddhist faith and mystical ritualism, and it seems that his styles of expression expand along with his spiritual thoughts.

Sutee Kunavichayanont is an installation artist who creates dynamic works that become complete through the process of visitors’ participation. A series of works titled “Breath Collection” (Figure 10) is completed by the visitors to the exhibition blowing into the balloons, which eventually take the form of a person or an elephant. He takes an approach based on printmaking methodology emphasizing communication with people, like Surasi Kusolwong does.

A significant number of modern Thai artists who are active in creating installations or projects started their careers as printmakers, which plainly shows how art history has developed in this country.
A group exhibition at a school textbook-printing house, “Book”

The “Book” exhibition was an event that defined the future direction of artists in the installation generation that derived from printmaking. In 1997, a group exhibition mainly for installation, “Book”, was held at a decrepit building located in a district called Kurusapa in Bangkok. Sculptors, such as Jakapan Vilasineekul and Montien Boonma, and artists who started their careers as printmakers, such as Yanawit Kunchaethong, Surasi Kusolwong, Nipan Oranniwesna, and Sutee Kunavichayanont, participated in the exhibition. The exhibition became a place to show works that were turning points to installation, although it was not originally intended that way. In particular, Yanawit Kunchaethong’s installation using the Thai alphabet (Figure 11) was filled with tension conveying the urgent feelings of the artist, in contrast to Braille themes and prints. During the exhibition, some parts of Thai alphabet that had been stenciled all over the floor with pigment were destroyed and it was no longer possible to make out what they said. But the exhibition went on. In this chaos, the reasons why he had to move from printmaking to installation and the reality of longing for materials in the real world were hidden. Yanawit Kunchaethong thus became interested in the storytelling aspect that is hidden behind pigment after creating some installations, and began to make organic prints with themes of cycling and transmission in nature.5 This exhibition was very important for him in deciding his later direction. It was a time when other participating artists started to switch their tools of expression from printmaking to installation. Now we know that it was a significant event in that it was a milestone in advancing to a new stage in the development of Thai modern art.

The building that the exhibition was held in happened to be situated on the historic site where the first school textbook in Thailand was printed. The building was built in the same era as printing techniques were brought to Thailand. In 1835, during the reign of Rama III, a missionary priest named Dan Beach Bradley, who came from the United States as a part of the process of a treaty negotiation, built the first printing house in Thailand. After more than 160 years, the building was going to be torn down, and artists who advocated the preservation of the building held the exhibition. It was the most significant exhibition in the late 1990s at which artists who had their origins in printmaking reviewed their trace at the birthplace of modern printing techniques in Thailand, and switched their styles of expression to installation.
Backgrounds of the movement to installation

Why did many artists switched from printmaking to installation? Tracing back the origin of this phenomenon, we encounter the fact that modern Thai art started with sculpture. About eighty years ago, Corrado Ferosi (whose Thai name was Silpa Bhirasri), an Italian artist who founded Silpakorn University, came to Thailand as a contract sculptor and taught artists and engineers in Thailand how to sculpture a king and other monuments as social capital (Figure 12). Even Chalood Nimsamer was taught by Silpa Bhirasri, receiving the first bachelor’s degree in sculpture from the newly established Silpakorn University. This fact influences today’s curriculum, in which not just printmaking is taught to acquire techniques, but courses are offered to teach students how to develop logical thoughts and how to establish images in three dimensions. Students are required to make presentations of concepts of works and transcribe plane works to three-dimensional works on a daily basis. The whole curriculum is traditionally based on three dimensions.

Chalood Nimsamer is another major influence in the sense that he, the father of printmaking who did not stick to this art form, followed the path from sculpture to printmaking to installation. A typical example is the “Rural Sculture” (Figure 13) series in the early 1980s, which presents various objects along with his own body in installation. The words and concepts of installation and performance were not common in Thailand at that time. It is easy to imagine how much impact and perplexity the works aroused.

It should also be noted that, in many cases, the interactive features of installations come from the social nature of printmaking, especially its communicating functions. If you look at Surasi Kusolwong’s works, the transmission of information in printmaking is replaced by the trading and giving-away of products in his market-form work whereby visitors take parts of the work, or offer and enjoy services in his entertainment-type work such as massage (Figure 14), lotteries, muay Thai (Thai kickboxing), smoking, and toilet services. Instead of trying to achieve sophisticated fixed visuals, dynamic installations make those who enjoy the artwork participate in the work to keep it changing. This is why the printmaking methodology of social participation effectively works for installation.
Social backgrounds accepting prints: originals and duplicates

When we think of the reasons why printmaking was accepted in the art world in Thailand and why it could reach the world-class level in such a short time, we should take into account factors other than artistic aspects, including social backgrounds, such as the nationality of Thai people and the social characteristics of Thailand.

For example, there are amulets called *pra krueng* (Figure 15) in Thailand. You can find them on the windshields of almost all the cabs in Bangkok, and also around the necks of many religious Thai people. They are mass-produced small Buddha images made of clay. On a street which leads to the Tha Phra-Chang wharf located behind Silpakorn University, there is a huge market where many *pra krueng* shops stand side by side. Some of the oldest *pra krueng* allegedly come from the Sukhothai period, and are priced at several million baht, which equals the price of national treasures, whereas there are also poor-quality products which you can tell at a glance are mass produced. This is an interesting place where, irrespective of age and sex, all kinds of people gather to find real bargains in a jumble of wheat and tares. *Pra krueng* used to be distributed in editions to believers by priests who had accumulated virtues. However, nowadays they can command a premium of several hundred or thousand times, depending on the divine grace they have. In addition, there are specialists and special magazines that give expert opinions on them. *Pra krueng* have changed into a product of a queer and manic world, and yet most people (although some of them have speculative purposes) own the charms for the true religious reason of purely taking refuge in the Buddha. However, we notice that the charms are duplications. They are the “copied image” of the specific amulet. By carrying it with them all the time, and by being surrounded by the image, people accumulate good deeds in this life and hope for happiness in the next life.

Owning prints is something like owning a *pra krueng*, although this is a somewhat misleading and simplified way to put it. There exist duplicates of the same work, and yet each of them has the same value as the original, and the owners share the equal enjoyment of owning it. The relationship between the original and the duplicates is, in a sense, a factor that facilitates the social participation of the prints and that has helped them become accepted by the whole of Thai society as well as the art world.

Social backgrounds accepting prints: Shared space

Another relevant social background is that the sense of sharing space that Thai people have in common in their daily lives is very similar to the sense of sharing space in the process of printmaking.

In my daily life in Thailand, I feel quite often that the Thais are more generous about sounds than the Japanese. The ear-shattering sounds of TV, radio, music, or voices from the next door in a hotel, or movies, concerts, or karaoke parties at full volume on the empty lot in front of an apartment are nothing but irritating for foreigners. At a construction site, construction goes on night and day, emitting roaring sounds, and people enjoy talking on the phone on the trains (subways, BTS), buses, and other public spaces. Of course, nobody complains about it. There is no right of securing silence in this country. In Thailand, it is common to have some kind of noise all the time. I am not arguing here if it is right or wrong, but what should be emphasized is that the line between private and public space is ambiguous. In other words, others are always intruding into one’s senses in the form of noise, and there is no way to escape from it. This is also true for many other Southeast Asian countries.
The concept of making a closed space of your own, blocking out the outside world, is very weak. Basically, space is something that everybody shares, and the will or existence of each “individual” is taken in it.

The sense of sharing space in that people are connected to others with noise and the ambiguous line between private and public is one of the reasons why the nature of having others (time and distance in the printmaking process and the effects it brings to a work, room for unintentional factors which are caused by detours artists should make, such as the process of drawing, preparing the surface, and printing), which is generated in the process of printmaking, is accepted comfortably and printmaking as a national art has flourished. This applies not only to collaborative works in the public space of an atelier, but also to adaptation to the creative environment such as sharing tools and equipments. Painting, on the contrary, is a solitary work in a closed space. Painting is a completely self-contained medium in that there is no room for a sense of others and, when you paint, you see immediate effects. In this sense, it is considered that printmaking has an advantage in Thailand.

Conclusion

When Silpa Bhirasri founded Silpakorn University in the process of introducing modern art in Thailand, he had a philosophy of “creating a new originality unique to Thailand, combining modernism and traditional culture”. It is not hard to imagine that the unknown technique of printmaking interested students who were seriously working on sculpture and painting while they were feeling several kinds of dilemmas. Instead of making a subspecies of Western art, they developed unestablished techniques by trial and error and acquired something that is completely original. This fact gave them great confidence. In particular, artists who experienced the history of Thai modern art, which started from sculpture, felt that screens created by printmaking were closer to three dimensions than those of paintings, which must have urged them to move to printmaking. Chalood Nimsamer was an artist who straightforwardly embodied this trend in his artistic activities.

While Silpa Bhirasri’s philosophy was handed down steadily by Chalood Nimsamer and his students through the form of printmaking, it is also true that the printmaking itself is in a crucial phase due to the rapid changes in the Thai society through the development of technology, globalization, and economic growth. For example, the emergence of digital printing technology has obscured the difference between digital printing and printmaking, and there are various arguments about how to interpret the definition. Also, printmaking is not an exclusive art form anymore as it was in Chalood Nimsamer’s period. Installation and media art are mainstream now, as we can see in the many international exhibitions that Thailand has participated in, such as the Venice Biennale that Thailand participated in, led by the government, for the first time in 2003. This may be proof that the medium of printmaking has secured a relative place of influence in the art world.

In the meantime, a huge subculture formed by the younger generation, probably influenced by Japan, is penetrating the art world (Figure 16). It is questionable how printmaking deals with this situation. Especially, now that it is possible to make prints without a hand through the development of digital printing technology mentioned above, it is worthy of notice how printmaking will absorb the new values as a contemporary method of expression.

Not only art, but also everything is getting more complicated, and it is difficult to grasp a big picture of society because various values and ideologies are jumbled up and conflict with each other. Thailand is no exception. The most important thing for artists to do under the circumstances is not to seek styles or techniques but to respond sincerely to the basic question of “what do I want to express?” or “why do I express?”

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**NOTES**

1. Chalood Nimsamer was born in 1929 in Thonburi, Thailand. He began his art education in 1947 at the Poh Chang Arts and Craft School, and then graduated with a BFA (sculpture) form the Faculty of Painting and Sculpture, Silpakorn University.

2. At Silpa Bhirasri’s suggestion, the Fine Arts Department initiated the National Exhibition of Art in 1949. The purpose was to promote national development and progress in art and encourage public appreciation and understanding of modern art.

3. Poh Chang School (Rajburana Technical Art School) was established in 1911. Poh Chang School has steadily developed, with still more specializations being incorporated into the syllabus (photography, bamboo craft, etc.).


5. Yanawit Kunchaethong, interview with the author, 18 February 2006.

6. The advocacy of a modern study program in fine arts by Professor Silpa Bhirasri for government officials and members of the interested public following the establishment of the Pranee Silpakum School in 1934, marking an important milestone in the development of modern art in Thailand. (“The Birth of Silpakorn University, Rattanakosin Art”, The Reign of King Rama 9.)

7. For example, “King Taksin the Great” in 1954, “Rama 1” in 1932, “King Naresuan the Great” in 1959, “Tharo Suranaree” in 1934, “Rama 4” in 1941, and other many monuments were sculptured by Silpa Bhirasri.


9. After the latter half of the 1990s, the environment surrounding the art has become enriched as manifested by educational institutions or art galleries for artists to present their works at, and the establishment of the Office of Contemporary Art Culture, Ministry of Culture.
SESSION V

THE BRIDGING OF CULTURAL DIVIDES IN CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL THEATRE IN JAPAN

Lim How Ngean

Introduction

My Background

My experience in contemporary theatre has been deeply influenced by Malaysian and Southeast Asian traditional performing arts as a whole. Although never schooled in formal systems of traditional performing arts, I have participated in workshops designed for contemporary performers in a diversity of traditional forms, such as Malay arts like silat (martial arts), Wayang Kulit (shadow puppetry), Balinese topeng (mask dance), and Chinese martial arts.

The result of this marriage or amalgamation of theatre styles, skills and aesthetics is a theatre that is urban—a result of being born and bred in the Kuala Lumpur capital and having received my tertiary education and practicing theatre in Singapore—and contemporary in themes, issues and aesthetics but colored by Southeast Asian elements in performative styles. It is contemporary intercultural theatre that I am entrenched in.

I have been involved in Shakespeare’s Macbeth where actors were trained in Chinese opera, a deconstruction of Chekov’s Three Sisters where performers were trained in Chinese martial arts, and Balinese topeng and Malay silat employed in deconstructed forms in Malaysian contemporary performances.

Even as I contemplated being in the director’s chair, my priorities in theatre have always been in performer training and process work: creation on the rehearsal floor. In an artistic environment where formal training and schools are scarce, it is imperative to explore and interrogate on-the-rehearsal-floor training methods and processes to tease optimum and ideal performances from actors.

As an advocate of physical theatre, the body and movement is an integral part of the theatre performance. Spoken text is valid and vital but the body must also act and convey the messages in the script. Therefore, the possibility to “dance” out a play with spoken words is the ultimate theatre performance in my eyes.

The Japan Mission

It was with these varied frameworks, multiple backgrounds and multi-disciplinary outlook in the performing arts that I ventured into my research into contemporary theatre and performance in Tokyo for my API Fellowship.

It was my objective to take a close look at nations that may have a strong foundation in traditional performing arts, while boasting a burgeoning contemporary and experimental avant garde performing arts environment. Japan presents itself as such a nation that is fortuitously located Asia, therefore providing an even stronger artistic link and, perhaps, a parallel for the rest of Asia. Japan is undoubtedly one of Asia’s foremost showcases in the preservation of traditional performing arts with stage arts such as noh, kabuki, bunraku and kyogen. They are not just museum pieces but alive and flourishing.

At the onset, my research was based on the assumption that traditional performances are deeply entrenched in rural communities while modern theatre is more relatable to urbanites and city dwellers. The urban audience seems to stay away from traditional performances because they cannot relate to them. An ongoing education program must be developed where urban audiences can have an entry point into local traditional performances with more than the “exotic” and “novel” elements being the attraction.

The Tokyo “mission” was to survey, examine, and explore artistic ventures in theatre and dance that have married traditional art forms with contemporary theatre and dance, with a focus on Nomura Mansai, artistic director of Setagaya Public Theatre (SPT), and also the traditional theatre form kyogen exponent.

The Imminent Possibilities of Diversified Research

Upon arriving in Tokyo, the myriad of opportunities to diversify from my initial research began to take shape as SPT’s resources and networks proved to be excellent. The strategy to infiltrate Tokyo’s contemporary and experimental arts community also began to take action as introductions and contacts were made and...
built upon. Also, an opportune meeting with Tokyo’s young, up-and-coming dance critic Muto Daisuke led to a wealth of resources in the contemporary dance community, resulting in my experience with cutting edge performances all over Tokyo.

As the networks and connections paved the way, I was introduced to new denizens in the Tokyo performing arts community who have been active for at least the last five years. As language proved to be a challenge, it was only natural that as a practitioner, my response to non-verbal performances, i.e. contemporary dance, intensified.

With the growing interest in tapping into contemporary dance from a physical theatre practitioner’s standpoint, the Tokyo contemporary dance landscape proved to be a “mother lode” of new creative and artistic experiences. Even more timely, the winter/spring season of performances was in full bloom when I arrived in Tokyo.

Methodology

The “active” research method is what a practitioner strives for. Therefore in my quest for my research subjects I:

i. attended performances;

ii. conducted formal and informal interviews;

iii. observed rehearsals and workshops; and

iv. participated in workshops.

In addition to the structure above, the research on my primary subject, Nomura Mansai, took on a more formal structure where efforts were made to engage in formal meetings with Nomura and also to conduct a formal interview with him. Due to the fact that Setagaya Public Theatre hosted my fellowship in Japan, access to materials pertaining to Nomura was effortless while securing dates and appointments to formally meet him proved to be a challenge due to his increasingly busy schedule.

Foundation work on the study of Nomura and his work in kyogen and also his role in SPT had been put into motion as early as 2005 before I left for Tokyo on 16 January 2006. Research material thus far on Nomura was garnered from the following sources:

- reading articles on the Internet;
- attending kyogen performances by Nomura Mansai;
- viewing video performances of Nomura Mansai;
- observations on the rehearsal floor; and
- formal interview with Nomura Mansai.

Based on my interests in avant garde/experimental theatre with influences in intercultural work and movement, my search began in Tokyo to seek out theatre and dance companies, artists and performers that might have similar resonances to those of mine.

Due to the very nature of performances with a niche interest among the public, it was a challenge to examine mass media such as national newspapers (i.e. *The Daily Yomiuri* and *The Japan Times*) to seek out performance schedules or articles about productions or about artists performing in niche productions. Initial research was carried out with the Japan Foundation in Kuala Lumpur (the Japan Foundation is a crucial source of arts resources due to the nature of their involvement in cultural exchange with Japan and the Southeast Asian region), where officials were familiar with critical works of Japanese dancers, directors and actors that might be similar to my own work.

Findings

The Focal Point: Moving Kyogen into the Contemporary

Nomura Mansai rose to fame in Japanese stage performance as a critically acclaimed kyogen performer. He is the eighth generation in his family’s Nomura house of kyogen Mansaku-No-Kai. SPT is one of the most notable contemporary theatre venues in Japan that pioneered the concept of a public theatre venue in the metropolitan of Tokyo that not only showcases cutting edge contemporary performances but initiates stage projects with international arts practitioners.

SPT has initiated landmark collaborative productions in Asia and Europe, attracting critically acclaimed theatre practitioners and choreographers. In addition, it has an equally essential arm that organizes outreach programs in dance, theatre and other performing arts to all levels of the general public, from elementary school to senior citizens.

Nomura has been successfully straddling the worlds of traditional and contemporary stage arts. In fact, he still actively promotes kyogen while working on many contemporary performances, including Ninagawa Yukio’s *Oedipus Rex*. He also studied noh theatre when he was young.

Nomura also successfully works in TV and films, and has a popular children’s television show promoting and educating on traditional and modern performing art forms. In the years 1994 and 1995, Nomura went to the UK to be attached to the Royal Shakespeare Company as an observer and later visited the critically
acclaimed company Complicite where he participated in contemporary performance workshops. All this led to Nomura adapting Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors* for a *kyogen* performance renamed *Kyogen of Errors*, drawing in a younger theatre audience.

While the older generation in Japan still honors *kyogen*, *noh* and *kabuki*, contemporary audiences are resisting such arcane performances and instead turning to modern forms of the stage. Nomura’s work with SPT in tandem with his artistic endeavors into *kyogen* has served to bridge this form of performance with contemporary elements.

His present project is a restaging of *Atsushi: Sangetsuki & Mei-jinden*, dramatized tales written by Japanese writer Nakajima Atsushi, which Nomura directed in 2005. *Sangetsuki* and *Mei-jinden* are two well-loved stories of Nakajima that are familiar to the Japanese as it is part of the elementary school literature syllabus. *Atsushi* boasts of a *kyogen*-based cast from the Mansaku-No-Kai company, including Nomura’s father, the celebrated Nomura Mansaku and two critically acclaimed *kyogen* experts Nomura Mannosuke and Ishida Yukio. I had the opportunity to observe his rehearsal for one week before I conducted a formal interview with Nomura.

These are some of my observations during the rehearsals:

1. Nomura has employed the *kyogen* style of acting to the contemporary piece *Atsushi*. Stage, lighting, sound and costume designs suggest a contemporary approach, away from the classical style guidelines of *kyogen*. Nomura does, however, make an effort to weave in contemporary elements such as physical gestures outside the realm of the *kyogen* style. It is indeed another step towards evolving (and involving) the traditional form to present times with modern texts and contemporary theatre techniques.

2. Nomura would fine-tune certain scenes and even change them even though this was a re-staging of a performance in 2005. He is approaching this production from a contemporary standpoint. Most traditional performances are fixed in the flow of the scenes and actions.

3. The codified or stylized form of acting in *kyogen* proves to be well suited for the dramatic story-telling of *Atsushi*. The clean and economical execution of physical *kyogen* gestures are adapted by the actors to the narrative of *Atsushi* while the sonorous and highly stylized speech pattern of the *kyogen* is also employed to good effect in certain segments of the play.

4. As a director, Nomura still conducts his rehearsal in the traditional manner of instructing his actors specifically in movements of the scene to delivery of speech. Almost all dramatic physical moments are choreographed by Nomura. Rehearsal and transmission processes of traditional art forms are by modes of mimicking.

5. Nomura also incorporated more fluid and flexible physical movements in certain scenes, a move away from the set gestures and movements in the *kyogen* vocabulary. However, Nomura does fall back on the “show-and-tell” method rather than to let the actors explore the possibilities. This could be due to the fact that there was very little time left as the rehearsal period that I observed was just about two weeks away from opening night.

6. Attempts were also made to ‘deepen’ the expressed emotions or feelings of the actors. Nomura would constantly ask his actors to ‘feel’ their lines, to ‘visualize’ in their minds the narrative they were telling. *Kyogen* theatre is an outward physical form of stylized theatre where stories are told by exaggerated movements and dances. Emotional aspects of a *kyogen* play are always intensified in facial expressions or physical contortions. There is actually no need for the actor to delve deep into his own psychological.

7. When required to act or perform outside the realm of their usual experience and training, the *kyogen* actor’s body presents a certain amount of rigid resistance. Nomura’s *kyogen* actors are superior in performing within *kyogen* styles but they have difficulty in dealing with scenes that require more free styles of expression.

In a formal interview to gain some insight to Nomura’s work, he believes that “the *kyogen* style is a discipline where one has to observe strict rules when performing the classical repertoire of *kyogen* or *noh* plays. It is also a medium in which you can interpret a play. Once you master these rules, you can become free to use them liberally with your imagination in other plays. *Kyogen* techniques are not only for *kyogen* performance.”

He acknowledges that none of his *kyogen* contemporaries are pursuing the efforts of using *kyogen* performance style outside the usual repertoire of plays. “I have been respected as a *kyogen* artist and I have been doing
He then talked about how he was inspired by Japanese film auteur Akira Kurosawa at the age of 17. Nomura had then acted for Kurosawa in the film Ran where traditional kabuki and noh styles were adapted for film. He did feel that Shakespeare’s plays would be effective in breaking his ‘mould’ as a kyogen performer and practitioner, thus putting him in a more universal category of ‘theatre artist’ rather than ‘traditional performer’. There is also a need by Nomura to ‘reclaim’ the kyogen art in contemporary performance: “Many foreign theatre practitioners have utilized noh and kyogen styles in their contemporary performances outside Japan. I think Japanese’ artists should also champion this effort.”

Although he is aware that his first attempt at using kyogen in Shakespeare (Kyogen of Errors) was wholly steeped in the form, his approach to Atsushi combines both kyogen and contemporary styles of acting. “I am not directing (Atsushi) to look like kyogen and noh. And I can’t tell you exactly where the kyogen or the noh elements.”

In the process of adapting Nakajima’s stories into performance, Nomura found that the narrative styles of the writer matched those of the traditional performing form. “Noh goes into the person’s mind (the psyche) in its stories but kyogen looks at the macrocosm of humanity in its plays. The story of Sangetsuki looks into the psyche of the main character while Meijinden contains caricatures for characters, much like the characters in a kyogen play.” This goes beyond just adapting the physical form of traditional work into the contemporary performance context. Serious consideration has been given to finding parallels of the narrative styles of the modern Nakajima (1909-1943) to the stylistic forms of kyogen (established circa fourteenth century).

As for future projects, Nomura has indicated he plans to take a step further in his ‘contemporizing’ the kyogen form where he will attempt Shakespeare’s Richard II where he will cast contemporary alongside kyogen actors. This raises the question or issue of the ‘unequal’ playing field where kyogen actors can rely on their formal training while contemporary actors usually do not have formalized and systematic training in any particular form. Nomura admits that the contemporary actors will receive a brief workshop in kyogen but did not indicate if the kyogen actors will receive any workshop in contemporary acting.

However what was interesting was Nomura’s idea to create his own theatre—the Nomura style of theatre. From the onset, Nomura has expressed that he does not want to be recognized as a theatre practitioner who uses kyogen elements in contemporary theatre. He would like to carve out his own theatre language that mixes traditional and contemporary theatre forms. He feels the new project (in 2007) will likely bring him closer to forging his own theatre language—whether it is a performance style or rehearsal methods—with the intermingling of contemporary and kyogen actors in one production. Neither does he shy away from the inherent problems of directing actors with polar opposite backgrounds. In his own words: “conflict makes more interesting theatre.”

Therefore the need for contemporary actors to participate in a brief kyogen workshop is to find a common theatre language (performance style) first for all actors, which Nomura can later mould or shape into through the rehearsals. Again the ‘theatre language’ that Nomura spoke of refers to both a performative style on stage and also a new system of rehearsal borne out of marrying traditional and contemporary theatre philosophies.

 Peripheral Findings

Being immersed in a city that boasts of a buzzing arts scene for more than seven months inevitably led to multiple discoveries, epiphanies, networks and friendships. These are but a few of my other findings while navigating through the performing arts geography in Tokyo.

1. The Traditional and the Contemporary are Separate
Although traditional artists such as kyogen artist Nomura Mansai enjoy working in various mediums of the arts, from film to television to contemporary theatre, the divide between contemporary and traditional arts is nonetheless wide. The contemporary theatre community continues to forge an identity that is urban in its performing style and the thematic content of their performances. In fact, Western theatre influence is alive and well with theatre companies staging works of Samuel Beckett, William Shakespeare, David Hare and Harold Pinter. Acting styles are also influenced by Western forms such as the Stanislavsky and the Grotowski methods, although most companies develop their own frameworks based on the two philosophies.

2. Intellectual Muscularity
Intellectual rigor is apparent in most works that I have seen, especially in dance. These dance performances were not merely beautiful pieces of work intended to
please the audience. Many choreographers I spoke to did not just have a visual idea to begin with when they created a new piece but more of a concept, a theory, an abstraction.

Dancer Kawaguchi Takao (a member of the critically acclaimed Dumbtype performing arts collective) has been doing solo work, exploring the body in terms of its threshold for pain and the idea of the sense of being alive through pain. There is also Natsuko Tezuka who focuses on the minute parts of the body to produce imperceptible movements that could be choreographed into a dance. She has also recently started investigating everyday physical movements and developing them into a dance.

In terms of theatre, the most exciting individual to have sparked controversies is director/choreographer and playwright Okada Toshiki of the Chelfitsch theatre company. His short performance, Cooler, was nominated for a dance choreography award in 2004 while winning the prestigious Kishida Playwrighting Award in the same year.

Okada’s distinct style of writing has been named “super-real verbal Japanese”, which is inspired by the Shibuya youth lingo. He has also developed a style of physical performance that mirrors the physical affectation of the Shibuya youths. It is a slouchy, slip-and-slide dance that suggests that the young urbanites of Tokyo have developed a physicality that is “soft and weak-spined”, contradicting the literally upright nature of the older Japanese generations.

3. The Amorphous Nature of Dance and Theatre
Having trained in movement theatre where the whole body is the actor or performer, it has become clearer that performance in the twenty-first century and beyond cannot be simply categorized into just ‘dance’ and ‘theatre’. Performances I witnessed in Tokyo blurred the delineation further when a dance piece has spoken text (e.g. Okada Toshiki’s short play Cooler) while theatre productions are choreographed in detail due to the physical nature of the performance.

4. Exemplary Case Studies
I. BankART1929
BankART1929 started life in 2004 as an experimental program where the Municipality of Yokohama would promote arts and culture through the use of former commercial buildings. The premise is that these buildings are “on loan” to be turned into arts centers. BankART1929 is housed in what was formerly the Daiichi Bank. It originally also had an extended space in the former Fuji Bank but was later taken over by a postgraduate school of film studies by the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts & Music.

A new extended space, renamed BankART Studio NYK, was awarded to BankART1929 in the form of a warehouse in the neighborhood of the former NYK Maritime Museum. While BankART1929 provides administrative support in terms of a full-functioning office and rehearsal spaces (nine separate rehearsal studios, different sizes), BankART Studio NYK provides performance spaces (five spaces of different dimensions).

Functioning more than a physical space for arts and culture, BankART1929 spearheads artistic initiatives in the artistic programs, in theatre, dance and visual arts. The mission was to reposition Yokohama as an arts city due to its rich cultural tradition as a historic trading port. The organization also boasts of a school that teaches arts to the adult public. By the year 2004, BankART School was offering 32 courses in theatre, dance and visual arts.

As a nurturing environment for artistic growth, BankART also offers working studios to artists on a two-month basis. These working studios are set up to encourage out-of-town artists to work in Yokohama City. BankART1929 is also active in publishing books and DVDs, documenting their artistic programs and projects.

II. Kohara Keito of Art Complex 1928 Kyoto
Kohara founded Kyoto’s Art Complex 1928 in 1999 and has since opened two more performing arts spaces: Namura Osaka (2004) and Creative Art Centre Osaka (2006). Formerly a lighting director who worked in France, Kohara decided to open Art Complex to provide performing art spaces for artists around Kyoto. According to Kohara, the key concept of Art Complex 1928 is what he calls “Complex Art”. He explains, “Kabuki is a well-known representation of Japanese Complex Art. In this spirit, we aim to promote a company or a piece, contemporary to traditional, which incorporates multiple elements of performance.”

Although he has the support of the Kyoto City government, Kohara works very closely with private corporations, from which a large part of his funding comes. The rental of space in Art Complex 1928 provides a certain amount of funding for the running costs of the complex. However, a new scheme was created by Kohara in 2002 called the Art Fund where members of the public are encouraged to purchase “stocks” for
a particular project, e.g. a theatre performance. When the project is successful, “investors” are paid back in full with a percentage of profits.

Other than the Art Fund investment program, events were also created where prospective artists and potential investors would meet so that investors have a better understanding of the kind(s) of projects that the artists were involved in. According to Kohara, this encouraged investors (who would inevitably be members of the audience) to enjoy a sense of ownership in the creative process.

In 2002, Kohara also set up a residence for visiting artists to lower the costs of accommodation for visiting performances to Kyoto. The artists’ residence was named Artist In Residence or AIR.

Since 2004, Kohara’s Art Complex expanded to Osaka with an interest in building arts links among cities in the Kansai region of Japan. Namura was a shipyard site and has a huge shipping factory (40,000 sq m) that has not been used for fifteen years. In 2005, Namura (named Black Chamber) opened as a new arts space with three performance spaces that has since successfully held various performances and an art conference last year. This year, Kohara has also become the artistic director of Osaka Creative Centre where he again initiated the Art Fund program with potential investors. He renamed it the “Angel Project” in the Creative Centre.

Implications
(Or What Do I Do With Such an Influx of Information)

The Japan “mission” has been an illuminating experience as there were numerous lessons to be learned everywhere even though there was a specific subject of research in Nomura Mansai. In fact, there needs to be a serious reconsideration in terms of my own journey in theatre and artistic endeavors.

There can be no doubt there must be a shift in my own paradigm in artistic and creative endeavors. I left Tokyo on 16 August 2006 to return to Malaysia. Even as my fellowship was drawing to an end weeks earlier, I had asked myself how this experience would influence the way I view the arts in my own environment, i.e. Kuala Lumpur, and how exactly would I affect changes in my process of creation and in turn affect my arts environment.

Below are just some of my immediate thoughts that I would like to put into action. They are, of course, not exhaustive, and the ongoing thought process of such a monumental fellowship will certainly bring about more creative projects and initiatives.

I) Establishing Networks for Exchanges

Contacts have been made to facilitate exchanges in the near future between Malaysian and Japanese artists. Although the cultural exchange agency the Japan Foundation has made inroads to artistic exchanges between countries in Southeast Asia and Japan, there is a need to seek out artistic exchanges at a more intimate level as opposed to huge projects in terms of touring performances.

The aim is to initiate artistic exchanges that are not just product driven, but rather to:

i. identify individuals such as Japanese dancers, choreographers or directors who will conduct workshops in Malaysia and vice versa, thus allowing intellectual as well as artistic exchanges; and

ii. identify concrete artistic relationships between Malaysian and Japanese artists that may have developed in the initial workshops above and then encourage proper collaborations.

It must be stressed that these exchanges and collaborations should start small in scale and that the process of the artistic exchange is the final product rather than the usual performance. All this can also be done in collaboration with Mizuno Ritsuko who is the Chief Coordinator of the Japan Dance Network Organization and also an API Fellow 2005/06 from Japan.

Potential Japanese artists who have been identified for the exchange project are (although this is not an exhaustive list):

- Tezuka Natsuko
- Sato Miki
- Okada Toshiki
- Yanaihara Mikuni
- Shirai Tsuyoshi
- Matsuda Masataka
- Motoi Miura
- Jareo Osamu
- Yamada Un
- Kim Itoh
- Kota Yamazaki
- Yamakawa Fuyuki
- Kawaguchi Takao

II) Promoting Performances

One of the most immediate proactive steps that was taken during the Fellowship was to establish concrete links for dancer Kawaguchi Takao’s solo performance entitled D.D.D. Kawaguchi performed his piece in
March 2006 and has since traveled to the Venice Dance Biennale 2006 and Zagreb Queer Festival 2005. In both instances, D.D.D. received favorable reviews from audiences and critics alike. Efforts have been made to secure contacts for Kawaguchi to perform in Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

The distinct quality of Kawaguchi’s performance puts D.D.D. in a performance category of its own where dance, performance art and theatre achieve a fine balance. As a dancer with twenty years of experience (with the renowned DumbType and on his own), Kawaguchi possesses intelligent instincts as a performer which he balances with well-thought-out concepts and ideas. His impending performances in Asian countries may also include talks or workshops to local dancers that may facilitate further exchanges.

Other artists to be considered:
Shirai Tsuyoshi;
Chelfitsch Theatre Company;
Tezuka Natsuko;
Un Yamada; and
Kim Itoh.

III) Reconsidering My Malaysian Project(s)
One of the foremost lessons learned from the fellowship in Tokyo is that intellectual rigor is of the utmost priority for the artist.

At the time I left Malaysia for Tokyo, I was already in the midst of rehearsing for a new project. As part of a larger experimental project, the new experiences have questioned, fuelled and inspired my own artistic imagination and creativity.

New methods of problem solving, approaches to rehearsals, means of conceptualizing, and ways of negotiating the director-performer relationship were all exposed to me due to this fellowship.

There is also the need for this practitioner to formulate new ideas on performer-training workshops that involve the body more and also involve the mind further. Although most performer-training workshops develop skills in acting or dance, there is a need to develop the intellect of the performer too. It is more important than ever that actors or dancers with no formal training must equip themselves with intellectual rigor to ‘think on their feet’ on the rehearsal floor and on the stage. Ultimately, intellect and intelligence is what will drive the creation process from page to stage.

IV) Reconsidering Arts Norms and Culture within Kuala Lumpur

i) Performance Spaces, Arts Housing: This is to systematically reconsider the conventional idea of a performance venue, going beyond the theatre venue structure. For instance, unused/disused shoplots could be transformed into performance venues with the assistance of the Malaysian Ministry of Culture and Heritage and the Municipality of Kuala Lumpur.

ii) Greater Private Sector Involvement: Inspired by the Art Fund or Angel projects spearheaded by Kohara Keito of Kyoto, a similar model or theatre project can be set up where new talents or performances can be showcased to invited potential corporate sponsors to ascertain the ‘value’ of investing in the new talents.

Conclusion

The negotiation between the traditional and modern is traumatic in any field or discipline, more so when it is an arts discipline drawing from many aspects of culture, whether foreign or autochthonous. The mutually exclusive growth and development of traditional and contemporary performing arts in Japan is only one model that multi-cultural Malaysia can examine and hope to emulate. Barring governmental contribution, private stakeholdership and the growing concern for globalization, Malaysian arts are already divided in its traditional and contemporary agenda.

As an urban arts practitioner, the journey into carving one’s identity in one’s artistic work is a treacherous and tumultuous one. At this point in time, my ongoing negotiation with the traditional-modern binary has found an equilibrium where I must develop, innovate and experiment with the currency of performance issues with an understanding of the tradition that has been rooted in me. I do not seek to romanticize nor do I seek to preserve traditional practices as is. I seek to carve out a modern Southeast Asian way of performing arts that is informed in history, with an acute awareness of the traditional.
BUILDING A CONTEMPORARY DANCE NETWORK BETWEEN INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THAILAND AND JAPAN

Ritsuko Mizuno

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the possibility of creating a contemporary dance network in Asia

First, I would like to discuss the reason I focused on dance among other art forms in my research. Dance, in contrast to other art forms, employs one’s body to communicate, and uses neither language nor tools. The substantial elements of dance are the capacity to look into oneself, the capacity to express oneself, and the capacity to establish a relationship with others. These are the essential capacities that bring vitality to human life and survival. Our society is indeed in need of nourishment for this up-coming vitality. Dance can be a platform on which to foster such abilities. This is why I am convinced that applying and nourishing the potential of dance in society is one way to confront and resolve the problems of our modern society. There is a great deal of room for the potential of dance to contribute to the betterment of modern society.

Upon this idea, this research project aims to create a contemporary dance network among Asian countries, specifically between Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Japan at this time. By promoting inter-influence among Asian artists, a platform for international communication for dance in Asia can emerge, which can contribute to the creation and generation of new ways of dance from Asia that can represent new values and perspectives to the world scene. This would also have a great impact on all participating countries. The objectives of this project are outlined below:

1. To enhance and foster the activities of dance artists, representatives, dance critics, and all those who are involved in dance communities in the four countries of Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand;

2. To investigate the potential of contemporary dance and to build new ways of communication through deeper understanding about each other, by learning about each country’s culture, its history, and its performing arts;

3. To establish a network between these four countries that brings out the maximum influential power of dance for people to better their lives in this present world; and

4. To discover new values and perspectives of dance and introduce them worldwide by utilizing this network among the four countries.

Creating a dance network can also lead to artist collaborations in productions, exchange programs at dance schools and organizations, artist residency programs, and symposiums/summits with various professionals. Once each country shares its information and resources, not only do individuals benefit, but an artistic environment, interaction and communication among personnel can also be easily formed. That structure should reflect a new relationship between dance and society. Creating a cross-nation system in which people can share their issues and problems and try to deal with them together is a way to enhance the potential of dance as mentioned above. I believe that this network would contribute to Asian society as a whole as well.

In order to achieve its objectives, the research focused on the following two points. One focus was to find out what is happening in the world of contemporary dance in Asia today by interviewing as many personnel as possible, such as artists, producers, administrators, theater personnel, educators and critics, with the intention of finding out and analyzing the present condition of the industry, what it has achieved in each country and what is has not. I interviewed thirty-nine people in Indonesia during a period of one month, eleven people in Thailand over two weeks and nineteen people in Malaysia over two weeks.

The second focus was to investigate how traditional art, dance and ways of life have influenced contemporary dance in each country. Asian countries, including Japan, have a history of internationally recognized traditional art and dance. Thus, it seemed essential to look into the influence of traditional dance on contemporary productions in order to understand their particularities and, in other words, identify Asian contemporary dance. The main questions for the interviews are listed below:
1. Right now, I’m unable to feel sure about the true meaning of building a network. For whom should it be built and then by who, etc.? I want to find out if networking is really necessary for us to begin with;

2. I want to find out how we can create networks in a realistic sense. And I would like to hear your original ideas, not a general idea. Please tell me your specific concerns and local problems if you have any, and the current situation you are in;

3. Your country has produced brilliant and highly skilled traditional performing arts, developed through the rituals and social customs. In the mean time, how do you see the contemporary dance scene or the idea of contemporary dance in your country? Contemporary dance means a dance that emerges from the different and new values of contemporary times;

4. What is the root of your dance? Where does your dance come from? What is your focus when you create your piece; do you want to influence the society, or the originality of the work itself such as movement and so on? In Japan, Butoh was influenced by traditions such as Noh, Kabuki and Animism. And Butoh established its famous evaluation globally as a Japanese artistic invention in this century. There seems to be a similar artistic background in your country to Japan;

5. What kind of contemporary dance has been born in your country? Or is about to be in the future?;

6. Which do you think the younger artists are more interested in; traditional dance or Western dance? Are they more curious to go overseas to study Western dance than learning their own traditional dance at home? What is your opinion about this matter?;

7. What factors are lacking in order to improve the contemporary dance environment in your country?;

8. I would like to know about the current situation of the contemporary dance in your country. Are there more artists coming up year by year? How about the quality of the artists? Is it getting better and better? If so, how much of the range of the artists’ activities has expanded?;

9. Is there any regional (local) difference and gap in your country?;

10. What do you think is necessary to enrich the contemporary dance environment?; and

11. What do you think it is necessary in order to create a contemporary dance network between Japan and the rest of Asia?

   a. What do you think the goal of the contemporary dance network is?

   b. Why do we have to do this and why are we doing this?

While I conducted interviews, I also watched as many contemporary and traditional dance performances as possible and examined what would need to be done in order to create effective networks among the three countries and Japan.

**Findings**

**Lack of organizational staff**

One of the common issues that the three Southeast Asian countries have is the absolute lack of organizational resources. In Japan, non-profit organizations (NPOs) and non-governmental organizations took on a more active role about five years ago. However, there has been no organization such as an NPO or an alternative system that functions in areas not covered by private companies in the other three countries. In addition, government grants are rarely given in the field of arts and culture, including dance programs. When it comes to Indonesia and Thailand, some even say there are none. In Malaysia, it is said one needs to know someone in the government or it is even difficult unless Malayan is involved in the project. In either case, one has to contribute private money or be in debt with a small amount of grant money if one wants to put on contemporary dance events. As a result, the producers are not in a condition to hire enough staff and they become worn out physically and financially by the end of the event. It is also often the case that artists themselves interlock with the producers.

These are not ideal conditions for fostering professional organizers or producers. These individuals are the ones who specialize in coming up with the programs and content that audiences and contemporary society require. There have not been any programs in which artists can develop their creativity in production planning and organization, either. All of these elements create conditions whereby artists can only have small-scale productions for audiences composed mainly
of their families and friends. Even at so-called dance festivals, the terms for the artists are harsh and prevent their working environment and the level of production from improving. These are the reasons that dance is unable to play a societal role and remains alienated.

**Importance of information sharing**

It is particularly the case in Indonesia and Malaysia that information is only shared among specific organizations and artists. This practice generates a sense of unfairness and jealousy among dance personnel. For instance, once an artist is recognized internationally, all the offers from overseas come to him/her and s/he has access to the most up-to-date world news. I was very impressed by the number of young artists in Indonesia, whom I would have never known about if I had not come to visit the place in person, since there is no information source about them available in Japan. The reason for not sharing information or one’s experiences seems to be not only a case of self protection but also arises from the local custom that it is considered arrogant to talk about oneself.

This lack of information sharing also has something to do with the fact that dancers and dance troupes in these countries lack sufficient organizational personnel. If professional organizers play a role in the distribution of information, such as reports of artists who have come back from overseas, the artists do not have to do it themselves. Since there is still only a small number of artists who have overseas experiences, it is essential for the rest to know and share the information that these few bring back.

Having such closed-off sources of information could result in negative effects on young artists. At the same time, some have commented that artists also have to work on collecting the information by themselves, which is not too difficult in these Internet-based, modern times. This may seem to be quite a simple issue and too obvious for discussion but it is a fundamental issue for the dancers in these countries.

In fact, a similar situation, whereby information circulated only among certain people who tended to get work all the time, was seen in Japan until seven years ago. That is when JCDN created a “Dance File” to record who worked where and what kind of work they did. This file is accessible to anyone who wishes to see this information. After the file was established, there was no longer an excuse for the artists and it was entirely up to them if they wanted to make something happen. The production of the “Dance File” was funded by the Japanese Agency of Cultural Affairs.

**Trends in the productions: the relationship among the artists, their work and society**

The last day of a three-day long weekend performance in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was cancelled by the police force due to its acts in violation of Islam’s commandments. The performance involved slamming raw pork against the floor many times, eating pork ham and drinking beer conspicuously. These acts could be taken as insulting the Islamic scriptures. Furthermore, it was also possible that not only could the performance have been cancelled but the performers could have been arrested. We do not know how much the artists were aware of the risk they were taking, although, at the end, there was no apprehension.

It is rare to insert such a politically or religiously resistant message into a contemporary dance piece in Japanese these days. At the same time, there is no major intervention from the government. This is not to say that works of art have to express such messages directly. However, recent trends among contemporary artists have themes that have become too personal or internal and neglect to express a sense of the lives in our contemporary society and its contemporaneousness. That seems to create more distance between the contemporary dance and the society, and loses the general audience’s appetite. The artists are indeed the people who present to the audience a new way of looking at things. Yet they cannot ignore social needs. They need somehow to go back and forth between the world of creation and the world of reality.

Despite the differences that exist among this group of countries, the artists from the three countries and Japan have some trends in common. Since the tsunami disaster in Aceh two years ago, as far as I know there has been only one Indonesian artist who has performed in Aceh.

**Influence from the West and local traditions**

Countries in Asia have rich traditions and histories in the performing arts and culture. When it comes to contemporary dance, there have been two streams in this direction. One is based on traditional training and seeks for new originality derived from this origin. Another is mixing traditional dances with Western influence and creating new methodologies. In Japan, “Butoh” was established and introduced internationally in the 1960s, influenced by Noh, Kabuki and traditional animistic rituals. Twenty years since its prime, most
Japanese contemporary artists are influenced by Western techniques and methods, and rarely look into Asian influence in their movements. If you ask them about the artists they were influenced by, most of them would name famous Western artists. For Western artists, on the other hand, it appears strange that Japanese artists find Western tradition as close to them as Western artists do. The Japanese contemporary dance scene is very much inclined to a Western bias without realizing to how great an extent. The artists are not exploring their standpoints within the frame of Japan, let alone Asia.

Contrary to my expectations, there was not much of a chance to see traditional dance performances in Indonesia. My expectation was that they performed their ritual/traditional dances more often in their day-to-day life. Miroto, a Yoguya-based artist, told me about a “dance camp” project at which traditional performing artists from different islands are invited to have workshops. Since every island in Indonesia has different cultural and dance forms, they exchange their techniques at the camp. One of the purposes of the camp is to teach and stimulate young artists through the workshops. When Miroto was younger, traditional dance was more accessible and he was able to meet great artists more often. However, the situation has changed over time and young artists no longer have a chance to be influenced by their own traditions and culture, said Miroto. He felt that the preservation of Indonesian traditional dance was threatened. There are no government grants for preserving traditional dance, let alone for fostering contemporary dance. Artists have to perform at touristy events in order to continue their practice and support themselves. However, he said that even this type of practice has become difficult these days due to the expansion of Islamic culture in Indonesia. In Hinduism, people embrace the relationship between dance and rituals in their day-to-day life. However, as Islam has become more powerful in Java, the role of dance and performance has become less important. In Bali, since Hinduism is their main religion, music and dance have a close relationship to the lives of the Balinese and I had many chances to run into these moments as I was walking through the town. Also, performing for tourists is a viable profession in some parts of Bali. Ironically though, this relatively stable condition for the artists makes it harder to foster contemporary artists in Bali. Anyhow, it was mostly the case for Indonesian contemporary artists that they find their roots in their traditional dance and create new pieces out of that stream. They train themselves in their traditional techniques first and adopt new methodologies later on. There also have been a few cases where artists have received grants from Western foundations and studied abroad in order to adopt Western techniques. They have been the pioneers in introducing Indonesian contemporary dance to the international scene.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was the most deeply influenced by the West among the three countries I visited for this study. At one of the performing art schools, they had lessons for Chinese, Indian and Indonesian traditional dance in addition to lessons for classical ballet, modern dance and contemporary dance. The teachers are mostly established artists and the school’s educational and creative degree reaches certain recognition.

However, Malaysian contemporary dance is not yet recognized internationally. Many artists say they want to create original pieces based on their traditional dance background. However, their work seems to be more inclined to Western influence. Also, even when they explain that their contemporary works are based on Chinese traditional dance or Malay traditional dance, it is often hard to tell unless you are an expert in the traditional dance. Anyhow, right now in Malaysia, when someone wants to support him/herself as a professional dancer after graduating from a dance school, s/he has to perform in the commercial industry. No choice is given for them to pursue an artistic career as a professional dancer. This is not particular to Malaysia, and is due to a lack of social recognition of the potential and the value of contemporary dance. Unless there is a demand in society, there will be no one who aims to achieve this mission. Right now, most of the young artists in Malaysia are pursuing their way to the commercial music industry, such as the hip-hop and break dancing fields. Sometimes, once they become well known, they move their base to Europe and leave Kuala Lumpur.

In Thailand, since not many Western techniques and methods have been introduced yet, we do not see much Western influence. There are a few artists influenced by Butoh since Japanese Butoh artists have had workshops and done collaborative work in Thailand. The influence is not quite established, though, as they have created Thai original Butoh. The contemporary artists in Thailand tend to respect their traditions and try hard to leave its influence in their works. What is interesting in Thailand is that they call contemporary dance “physical theater”. Most of the people I interviewed considered themselves physical theater artists. According to one of the theater directors I interviewed, the definition of physical theater is a creative dance. In Thai traditional performing arts, they do not categorize theater and dance separately. A dance always descends from the master, the guru, to the students and there is no room for the
dancers to change any of the choreography. So when you say dancer in Thailand, there is no connotation of artistic freedom. Those who consider themselves artistic by creating works out of their imagination and artistic freedom tend to call themselves physical theater artists.

In Thailand, contemporary visual art is much more advanced than contemporary dance, including industrial design. Thai contemporary art has been internationally recognized. Urban development in Bangkok is rapidly growing and you find many similarities to Western capitals. Compared to the growth in these fields, the field of contemporary dance is less influenced by the West and has a long way to go before being fully developed.

There is a legend of a naga in the region surrounding the River Mekong. A naga is a sacred snake and people in the region believe that they are the descendent of nagas. Some artists told me that they wanted to pass along this spirit, sharing it among Asians. They said “We as Asians should aim to create an original contemporary piece that respects our own spirit and traditions.” Since they take their traditions more seriously in Thailand than in Japan or Malaysia, I see a great potential in them to develop very original creations within a few years.

**Government cultural policies and economic differences**

Throughout the research, the fact that Japan is in a very unique position in Asia was reaffirmed. The economic difference between Japan and the other countries is more severe than I imagined and it affects not only the artists’ daily lives but also the environment for dancers and artists. Since there is no budget in the government to invite productions from overseas, the local artists never have a chance to be exposed to the international scene or a chance to be inspired by great works. Exchanges among Asian artists are not yet active enough. Only in rare cases does a host country send its dance troupes to other Asian countries on its own budget in order to introduce and promote their work. There are one or two performances or workshops a year coming from Japan. Probably due to the limited number of occasions, the influences from the works introduced on the Thai artists are quite extent. Since one of the characteristics of contemporary dance is to admit to and reflect the variety of values and perspectives that exist in society, it is even threatening to witness that narrow samples become everything they believe in. Programs that support artists are in great demand in order to foster their talents and exercise the potential of dance in this country. But there are no economic resources to reinforce this reality.

One may recall the “Lear” production, in which Asian artists collaborated with a grant from the Japan Foundation at the end of the 1990s. There have also been other collaborative productions with Japanese money in the past. Through the interviews, a few people commented “no one wishes for such a collaborative work where Japan hits our faces with their bills any more”. They complained about the fact that their artist’s fees were different from Japanese artists although their contributions to the work were the same. It is true that the cost of living is different in Japan than in countries like Malaysia and Thailand. However, I am not sure how fair it was to provide different rates while they were all staying and working in Japan. The attitude that once was seen in the business world, whereby Japanese corporations sought inexpensive labor in other parts of Asia, should never be applied to the world of art.

There were many comments expressing a desire for smaller but continuous programs that focused more on the exchange process itself, such as workshops or collaborations where young Asian artists from different countries stayed in the region and created a production through exchanges with local artists and people. Japan is no longer in its bubble economy era. In addition to that, with over ten years of experience, we have realized the nonsensicalness of superficial collaborations. It is the time to think about sincere collaboration among Asian countries, regardless of our economic differences. There must be a way to utilize this difference effectively and come up with something only performing arts can achieve in terms of collaboration. We also have to think how we can reflect the outcome to society.

**Contemporary dance and contemporaneity**

What is the definition of contemporary dance? There are many ways of describing it even in Japan. However, one thing reaffirmed by the research in the three countries is that insofar as there are different issues and conditions in the lives of people in each country, contemporary dance in each country differs. That is natural as long as works of art reflect the contemporaneity of the people who live and create in each country. It is also natural to feel there is a certain level of deviation and not to find contemporaneity when we see their work from our own perspective. To be honest, with my full respect to their creations, there were not many works that I found stunning. However, this is only my point of view and their work should not be judged only by my opinion. On the contrary, it is also one of the significance aspects of contemporary dance that we can have a glimpse into people’s ideas and the conditions of their society through their work. Art, including...
contemporary dance, is a mirror of the society in which it is created. What is required for us now is to accept and enjoy each other’s differences, instead of judging by global standards, with the exchange of ideas based on these differences in order to move forward towards mutual development.

Implications

What a contemporary dance network among Asian countries can bring

Throughout the interviews in the three countries, there was not a single person who thought a contemporary dance network was not necessary. Every interviewee thought there was a demand for such a network based on their own professional standpoint. The question now is how to realize a system for this network and think about what sort of programs are most effective for the Asian dance scene. I hereby would like to explore the possibilities.

Programs to rediscover dance in Asia

Despite the physical and ethnic proximity between Japan and the rest of Asia, Japanese dance personnel know very little about the dance scene in the rest of Asia. We have ignored each other’s rich and beautiful histories of traditional dance. Let us not so easily accept the reality that artistic trends and information come from the West but try to seek out the possibilities in Asia by looking into what is going on in each other’s scenes today.

- First, it is necessary to organize information about the artists and venues. “Dance File: Asia Version” can be a resource for future contacts and exchange programs. Making this filing system accessible to anyone who wishes is a first step for the dance scene to be recognized in society as well.

- A “Dance Tour” program, in which two selected artists from each country tour the other countries, can be a way to exchange artistic experiences, which can lead to mutual understanding and possibly inspire new creations. Not only giving performances but also giving workshops to local people can be a great opportunity for a wide range of people to understand each other as well. This program has to be done on a regular basis.

From Asia to the world: a collaboration program aiming at the international scene

There have been some collaboration projects among Asian countries yet it has been mostly in the theater field and not so much in the dance field, despite its nonverbal characteristics. This program will encourage artists to stay in each other’s country for certain period of time and collaborate on a new piece based upon their understanding of each other’s cultures, histories and conditions in contemporary society. The collaborative process should present new perspectives rooted in Asian values. The completed work will be introduced to the international scene as a new possibility in dance collaboration. This can be a way to explore how the rest of the world is looking at the Asian scene. One of the purposes of the project is to create an environment for artists to be able to concentrate on their collaborative creation without a gigantic budget.

Searching for a new methodology: holding dance meetings and forums

It makes great difference whether the artists have a place to share their problems or have to keep them to themselves, which is as true of the Japanese dance scene as elsewhere. Since contemporary dance is not yet a recognized genre in general, artists from every country have to confront many issues and problems. For that reason, it is very meaningful to hold meetings that can be a platform to share problems and seek possible solutions together from various perspectives. Forums with certain discussion themes can be held at the same time as the meetings. They will be a place to hear interesting methodologies or trials in different countries and hopefully be a trigger or inspiration to start a new system in one’s own country. One interviewee from Malaysia mentioned that there is no point in just talking and having many meetings when nothing changes in reality. This program aims to hold meetings that not only satisfy people’s intellectual interests but also are appropriate for the actual scenes and possibly change things for the better. Ideally, the meetings and forums would be held every two years.

Establishing a new system in order to solve the economic disparity

Compared to Western countries which have established cultural policies—“art contributes to humankind and society”—there is not enough political attention in Asian policies given to art and culture, let alone contemporary arts. However, compared to other Asian countries, Japanese artists are relatively favored in terms of grants and a budget from the government. Although the idea of having other priorities over art in society is a perspective shared by the various administrations, the economic disparity between Japan and other Asian
countries is significant. Japanese administrators have to think of a way to use this disparity so that every participant is treated equally. We have to learn from cases in the past. One way is to establish an international organization, such as an NPO, to work on fund raising. When we start new programs, we may need to look for a new way of securing the resources. If this new organizational system can be run multilaterally, the issues of economic disparity between Japan and other countries can be solved.

**What the establishment of dance network in Asia can bring**

What is the ultimate goal for the dance network among Asian countries? Mutual understanding, influencing each other, active collaboration leading to the enhancement of artists’ potential and improving their environment are all significant goals and will enrich local dance scenes. Yet these are not the ultimate goals of the project.

The aim of this project is broader in that it seeks ways to have the “potential of dance” fulfilled in presenting new ideas, enriching people’s perspectives and, finally, influencing society. By sharing the power of art, especially the power of contemporary dance, which can even change the world’s concept of values among Asian society, the project seeks to foster this potential further. My research project focused on establishing a feasible system that can embody these goals among Asian countries. An outline of my proposed system is shown below.

>>&Asia Dance Network “DANCE PROJECT”

Each program is executed once every year or two.

**Production and Publication of the Asia Dance File**

Information Accessibility: as a tool for sharing information and reducing the isolation of each country. The Asia Dance File contains the profiles of people concerned with dance (including dance artists, producers, venues and critics) in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Asian countries.

**Asia Dance Performance Tour System Development**

Select two or three sets of artists from each country, and four or five pieces of approximately 20 minutes each as a performance program. Performance Tour takes place in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan and other countries.

Collaboration with each country

**Creative Residency Project / Exchange Program**

A participating dance artist from each country stays in a participating city, and creates a collaborative work through mutual influence and stimulation. In addition, the choreographers of each country will choreograph a dancer from another country as an “Exchange Program”. The pieces created will be performed in each other’s countries.

**Dance meeting / Dance Forums**

Those concerned (including dance artists, producers, venues and critics) gather to discuss possibilities for extending the natural borders of dance, and to discuss each other’s situations and problems and simply to exchange information.

Asian contemporary dance network’s mission:

Create an organization aimed at Asian countries that can carry out a program on equal terms for each member. Each country will be equally represented in the network’s administration.

**Special thanks to people who cooperated in interviews**

**Indonesia**

*Jakarta*>

Bianca Sere Pulungan / Maria Bernadeta Aprianti / Jecko Siompo / Mira Tedja / Chenrda Effendy / Sardono W. Kusumo / Jefriandi Usman / Sukarji Sriman (Choreographer) / Dr. Sal Murgiayanto (Japarata Institute of The Arts) / Iskandar K. Loedin (Lighting Designer) / Amna Kusumo (Executive Director, Kelola) / Helly Minarti (Manager Pengembangan Program, Kelola) / Linda Hoemar Abidin (Chair of Executive Board, Kelola) / Fransisca Dewi Ria Utari (Writer of TEMPO)

*Solo*

Bobby Ari Setiawan / Eko Supriyanto / Tentang Sahita / Inong / Ni Kadek Yulia Puspasari / Mugiyo Kasiido / Fitri Setyaningsih / Rini Endah (Choreographer) / Agung Gunawan (Management) / Fafa Gendra Nata / Choki Sapta Wanusi / (Performer) Suprato Suryodarmo

*Yogyakarta*>

Bimo Wiwohatmo / Besar Widodo Djarot B. Darsono / Martinus Miroto (Choreographer)

*Pekanbaru*>

Iwan Irawan Permadi (Choreographer) / Hirfan Nur (Management)
Jambi> Tom Ibnu (Producer)

Bali> Ketut Rina / Nyoman Sura / Imade Sidia, Ssp (Choreographer) / Kadek Suardana (Director, Arti Foundation) / Mari Nabeshima (Management, Arti Foundation) / The Bali Purnati Center For The Arts

Malaysia

Zulkifli Mohammad / Gan Chih Pei / Judimar Hernandez / Umesh Shetty / Loke Soh Khim / Choo Tee Kuan / Lee Swee Keong / Aimy Len / Shafru Zumi Suhaimi / Goh Chen-Fui / Suhami Magi / Wong Kit Yaw (Choreographer)

Mew Chang Tsing (President / Malaysian Dance Alliance) / Anthony Meh (Founder & Executive Director, Dua Space Dance Theatre) / Aman Yap (Artistic Director, Dua Space Dance Theatre)

Marion D’cruz (Director, Five Arts Center) / Joseph Gonzales (Head of Dance Department, National Arts Academy) / Syed Mustapha (Tandak Dance Theatre) / Rogayah Shahariman (Dance Prompter) / Sutra Dance Theater / Joe Hasham (Artistic Director of Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Center) / Dato’ Faridah Merican (Executive Producer, Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Center) / Ken Takiguchi (Consultant, Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Center) / Pang Khee Teik (Editor of Kakiseni) / Smith K. Mandal (UKM) / Dr. Mohamed Anis (President, World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific, teaching at University Malaysia) / Seiya Shimada (Head Cultural Affairs Dept., The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur)

Thailand

Pichet Klunchun / Sirilak Songklub / Krit Chisilboon (Naka Suvarnabhumi Director)

Teerawat Mulvilai (Director of B-Floor Theater) (Choreographer)

Varavuth Bukakul (Managing Director, House of Indies)

Chattiya Thaipiromsamukkee (Managing Director, House of Indies)

Phatravadi Mejudhon (Artistic Director, Phatravadi Theatre)

Panisa Puvapiromquon (Artist in Residency Program Director / Phatravadi Theatre)

Narumol Thanmapruksa (Actress, Writer, Management)

Pradit Prasartthong (Director, Makhampop Theatre Group)

Tang Fu Kuen (Administrator)

Vararom Patchimsawat (Director, My Dance Fes)

Hiroshi Uchida (Deputy Director General, The Japan Foundation, Bangkok)
KEEPING THE KILNS BURNING: REVITALIZING THE THAI CERAMICS INDUSTRY

Itsue Ito

INTRODUCTION

Context. It is not certain how ceramics started in Thailand but one could surmise that the Chinese culture had something to do with it. Besides a possible Chinese connection, there have also been found ties between other neighboring countries and cultures such as the Vietnamese to the south and east, the Khmer to the east, and the Mon to the north. Ceramic shards dating 6,000 B.C. have been found in caves of northern Thailand near Burma. There is also documented proof of ceramics from around 3,000 B.C. from Bang Chiang. However it appears as if ceramics got a big boost from China around 1,000 A.D. at the Sawankaloke kilns. The Sukotai period, and then the Ayutaya period following that, probably hit its peak of ceramic production from the 14th to the 16th centuries. After the second Burmese attack of 1767 and the consequent ruin of the old kilns, the large-scale Thai ceramics industry declined over night. Only recently in the later half of the 20th century has Thai ceramics witnessed a renaissance of its past form and style and has hit the international stage once again.

Unfortunately, Thai ceramics today is nothing compared to its glorious past. One can speculate on the cause being the shift from rural/agrarian culture to an urban/industrialized one. Or perhaps the cost of ceramics is too expensive for the average Thai person to buy. Other factors may have come to play, such as the shift from ceramics to plastics.

This paper will take a look at ceramics in Thailand using qualitative research techniques of interviews with extensive fieldwork to find out the reasons for the lack of ceramics in Thais’ daily life. This paper will then focus on a discussion of possible options to address this gap with the help of the Thai government, education agencies, the ceramic industry, and ceramic artists. Finally, implications of this research will be discussed in the form of a final recommendation.

Objectives. The objective of this fellowship was to investigate the state of ceramics in Thai culture today. It was also the fellow’s objective to bring together ideas from four stakeholders: government agencies, schools of art and ceramics, artists, and industry to figure out the future direction of Thailand’s ceramics industry.

Significance. The significance of this research is to explain how to promote ceramics use among Thais as well as to produce high quality ceramic goods that are in demand for international export. The researcher is hoping that with government encouragement through programs such as the One Town, One Product scheme (OTOP), artisans and crafts people can make affordable ceramics for all Thai people. The researcher also suggests that schools of art as well as teachers in elementary schools should teach the history and cultural significance of ceramics. The researcher also sees the significance of training professional designers that will work in unison with the numerous industrial ceramic factories found in Thailand.

METHOD

The fellowship period was divided into two parts: The first stay (one month) was to get an understanding of the situation; the second stay half a year later (two months) was to do the bulk of the research.
following qualitative data gathering methods were used for this research:

(1) Interviews. Extensive interviews with government officials, artists, professors, and directors of industrial ceramic factories.

(2) Fieldwork. Visiting sites of ancient ceramic production, ceramic art galleries, ceramic department stores at tertiary levels, artists’ studios, upscale hotels that use ceramics, department stores’ ceramics sections and industrial ceramic factories.

(3) Observations. Spending time in local areas such as markets, shops, department stores, hotels, and street corners to observe how Thais use ceramics in their daily lives.

Verbal permission to use notes from the interviews and fieldwork was granted by all interviewees. Taking part in the interview showed participants’ consent. I was also given permission to observe in places such as hotels and department stores. The Data Protection Act 1998 was taken into consideration for research purposes.

Interviews were both structured and unstructured. Interview notes and documented observations were reviewed at the end of each day. Translation, when necessary, was done with the help of Thai university students doing a course in English. Some meanings may have been lost in translation, but overall, I feel the translation was more than adequate. Overlapping data were put into one general comment in the Findings section.

FINDINGS

Artists and Art Galleries. Currently there are an estimated 300 to 400 functional ceramic artists in Thailand, many of them have been heavily influenced by Japanese ceramics. One artist said that he learned to throw on the wheel in Japan and could understand how ceramics coexists with life. But when it came to selling ceramics, he found the task difficult because it is too expensive for the average Thai. So foreigners buy his ceramics. Ceramic artists also tend to be professors at universities but they said it is very difficult to teach young people who cannot integrate ceramics into their daily lives.

There aren’t many ceramic art collectors in Thailand and the people who do collect ceramics are usually foreigners who are attracted to the old style of Thai ceramics. A few Thai collectors are now noticing modern ceramic artists because of the recently expanding Thai economy.

In the 1990s, there were three active galleries that exhibited artists’ work in Bangkok but two are now closed. It is starting to make a come back but most galleries focus on industrial ceramics. It is still difficult for galleries to survive by selling only ceramic. A perfect case of this is the oldest private modern art gallery which is just 7 years old. (Gampell)

Department Stores and Markets. I found none of the department stores very helpful for academic research. What I did find, however, was that department stores have areas for ceramics, but only Thai ceramics and not from other countries. Therefore, the availability and knowledge about ceramics is limited. There seems to be better quality and choices in department stores than in small shops and markets which tend to make the same thing.

Government Agencies. It was difficult to set up appointments with government agencies. When granted an interview, no specific days were set to meet. A list of possible questions for them to answer was also needed.

There are many government programs that support the arts in general but the budgets are small. One such project is called OTOP or One Town, One Product. OTOP has greatly influenced ceramics through training programs and financial help. Unfortunately, the elderly are the ones working in ceramics and not the youth who could benefit the most from such programs. Another problem with OTOP is that sometimes it trains people for something they cannot do. Balance and financial concerns are also paramount to this project. If these village people earn money quickly through this project, two things happen. Their lifestyle changes and they may no longer want to be part of OTOP because they are earning a great deal of money. Many of them will not be successful at the end of the project period because they have no marketing skills. The King is also worried about how Thais will balance monetary gains with their lifestyles.

The Ceramic Development Center (CDC) in Lampang is the largest research center for ceramics in the north that promotes the ceramic industry and gives monetary support for academics. Recently, they have focused on design aspects with scheduled design workshops for 2007.

Since 1983, the government has sponsored a national annual competition for ceramic students. There are two categories: ceramic arts and ceramic craft. Local people have their own category called hand crafts, which consists of terra cotta with no glazing. But from 1992, it changed to a biannual event.
Hotels and Resorts. Hotel usage of Thai ceramics has recently increased due to improved quality over the past 7 years. Several managers stated that in the last 10 years or so, they have been using tableware made in Thailand instead of imported china. The finer hotels in Bangkok and Chiang Mai areas also use ceramics for functional purposes, like flower pots and pot holders as well as for accents such as vases in the entry way and tiles in the bathrooms. Unfortunately, I saw no other esthetic usage of ceramics such as what the tile companies are making. The hotels cater to foreign clientele and therefore put in ceramics which appeals to the foreign eye. Cheaper hotels do not have or use considerably less functional or decorative ceramics.

Newspaper Companies. Newspaper companies gave out information about how the government is promoting Thai restaurants and food throughout the world. One newspaper company stated that this may increase the exposure and sale of Thai ceramics overseas.

Industrial Ceramics. In the north, there are well over 200 ceramic factories ranging from small to medium. Most managers stressed that things were going well if they had their own designs and didn’t have to compete with cheaper wares from China and Vietnam. They are all looking for some speciality that will ensure their success such as blue and white pottery or the chicken design of Lampang. They all seem to be eager to get information from outside of Thailand and are updating their machines. It is very labor intensive with workers being mostly females. They do not switch jobs due to poor education or location. Export accounts for 90% of their business. Their markets are as follows: USA/Europe (40%), Asia (30%), and Japan (20%). However tax problems and health hazards cut into their profits. So they are pushing for licensure of hazardous-free products. Factory defects reach up to 50% primarily due to poor training of workers and/or inadequate machinery.

The Bangkok Ceramic Association (BCA) is the largest association while the Lampang Ceramic Association (LCA) is the oldest in Thailand with 120 factory members and another 30 or so suppliers, etc. LCA is pushing for more ceramic usage in restaurants. Recently it was given 400,000 Thai Baht as seed money for the promotion of ceramic usage in restaurants and hotels.

An average Thai student spends about THB100 on a ceramic present, a normal Thai person about THB400, and foreigners about THB1,000.

Non-ceramic Companies. Some businesses that were once labor intensive are moving towards industrial/machine-oriented businesses. Others stated that there isn’t much consciousness about public art in Bangkok. But most agreed that there is a large market for finer ceramic products for kitchens and bathrooms because the import of such goods from the USA and Europe are holding steady and now generating an interest for factories in Thailand.

Universities. Some universities have ceramic departments offering four-year undergraduate and three-year graduate degree programs. Graduate students can spend up to 5 years for their studies but only a few students will become ceramic artists and/or designers. Most will work in ceramic factories or will make their own businesses, usually a gift shop type business. Most university programs stress industrial design, not artistic expression; but with more universities having foreign enrollment, they are starting to stress artistic expression. Few universities stress artistic expression only. Some professors in ceramics are trying to work for closer ties with the ceramic industry.

Other Places. Plastic has taken over in almost all areas of Thai life from eating to drinking to storage of just about anything. Local shops that do use ceramics buy their ceramics from overseas even when the import tax is high (130%) because Thai designs, according to them, are not so interesting. Grocery stores stock plenty of plastic containers but carry very few ceramic ones. The ceramics available are usually the lower end type ceramics. Rachaburi has one ceramic factory whose owner was educated in Germany and now has special program for ceramic artists. Norway and Japan sometimes sponsor artists’ shows.

At Koh Kret, one can buy either plastic or ceramic drink containers. Foreigners tend to buy the ceramic containers. This island was founded by the Mon tribe and has existed for less than 20 years. Seven years ago, the Princess helped establish the island as a center for ceramics. Unfortunately, the big storage ceramic pots that Mon have been famous for were hard to find. Tourist trinkets, however, were everywhere.

Other places known for handmade ceramics, such as Muang Goong, Bahn Guan, and Bahn Mua have lost almost all of their ceramic craft workers. Only a few elderly people still work in these once famous ceramic villages. The typical response of the elderly living there was, “The youth aren’t interested in ceramics and the hard work. They prefer to work in factories in big cities.” Once again, tourist trinkets can be found but there seems to be no real ceramic artist in the area.
Temple also use ceramics, but according to monks, architects, and landscape developers, there is less of it. One example of this is Wat Arun in Bangkok. Thirty years ago, the main stupa was covered with handmade ceramics. Today there is less of it. Major reasons for this are the cost of the ceramics today and the labor to install it.

DISCUSSION

In the past, ceramics in Thailand had a strong connection with its people. Today, ceramics is a healthy industry but has lost touch with the general population. What appear to be the primary factors that cause this situation are cost, durability, and a lack of closeness to ceramics.

To find out more about the lack of ceramic usage from Thais, I looked at four areas of interest to see if there were any relationships between them. These four areas were: artists, the government, ceramic factories, and higher education at universities. I not only investigated the four areas above, but also visited art galleries, department stores, markets, hotels and resorts, newspaper companies, non-ceramic companies, and spent many hours on the streets looking for ceramics and how it was used or not used in Thailand over a period of three months.

When looking at ceramic artists, there are very few. This, in part, is due to the lack of support artists and the arts get from all areas. Copyright infringement, a major concern of ceramic artists, is rampant. Artists tended to shy away from showing their creative works because of copyright theft. It is not unheard of to have a great idea one day only to find it being copied the following day. Artists and industry must be protected by laws that can be enforced. If not, artistic and industrial expression will grind to a halt.

The government could also help with more programs supporting ceramic artists, but funding is limited at all levels, including art appreciation in the primary and secondary schools. As a result, there is little interest in traditional crafts like ceramics among the youth of Thailand. They would rather move to large cities and work in factories or start a street side business. In just one generation, ceramic crafts have all but disappeared except for trinkets for the tourist industry.

More funding should be put into education of the arts and crafts. What you will then have is art and culture bringing economic growth and a greater sense of Thai culture to the youth. One only needs to think about tourism in Thailand to understand this proposal. It is true that foreigners come to Thailand for various reasons, but one big reason is Thai culture. As culture and the arts expand and help the economy, the government will then be in a better position to offer more fellowships and scholarships for craft persons and artists and other creative professionals. Promotion of Thai culture has the potential to bring more economic growth to Thailand.

I do not have any statistical information to back up my claims, but I assume most foreigners who come to Thailand spend a proportional amount of money on craft items such as ceramics. I am also assuming that foreigners participate in cultural events like Thai dinner shows that use Thai ceramics for tableware. The Thai economy is reliant on tourism and the purchasing power of foreigners and Thais alike. It would seem unwise not to consider further education of artists and craft persons.

As previously stated, the government needs to do more to promote and fund the arts in education, to implement copyright laws, and to improve quality control and marketing. Quality control in ceramics has come a long way in Thailand, but needs to improve if this industry wants to compete internationally. Some Thai products like silk have international reputation. Other goods have not reached this level yet. Ceramics is one such area that could do well to have higher levels of quality control, not only in the production stages, but also in the packaging and marketing stages. It is also important that advertising is done on TV, billboards and in print.

For any good business to be successful, it must understand its market, both inside and outside the country. Seeing what others do and the direction they are taking is essential in any business. Thailand needs the help of the government for such marketing and development, like OTOP. Thai agriculture-based businesses have long been supported by the government and can therefore compete on an international level. This is what the ceramic industry also needs.

Besides low government funding for ceramics, university art faculties with ceramic departments are also in short supply. Rightly or wrongly, industrial design is the focus of most university ceramic programs which is the sector that benefits the most from this decision. But it seems reasonable to assume that without a strong ceramic department that also focuses on ceramics as a fine art, there will not be as much creativity happening in ceramic arts. It would also seem to be a good idea if the ceramic industry would work on better support the ceramic arts through scholarships and funding universities that have ceramic departments.
Having said all of this, I believe there is no shortage of ceramics in Thailand. You can see varying levels of quality ranging from superior ones in upscale department stores to mediocre pieces in the local markets. Export-based celadon and the traditional Benjarong Thai ceramics have been slowly increasing the past few years. Hotels and resorts use ceramics extensively for both functional and aesthetic purposes. What is missing is good, affordable ceramics for the general population. Once again, the problem here is that ceramics caters to the rich and tourists.

Who should take the lead? Once again, educational institutions and government have something to do with this. As stated before, universities are very good at producing industrial designers for ceramics and the government is good at supporting the ceramic industry in regards to economic growth. After all it is one of the larger industries in Thailand. Therefore, both education and government should cater to industrial ceramics. However the problem here is that industrial ceramics is export and tourist-based and once again leaves out the average Thai person from participating in this industry beyond being a source of cheap labor.

The production of ceramics is still very much labor intensive with high rates of manufacturing defects and now high energy costs to fire kilns. After observing numerous ceramic factories, it became evident to me that labor was cheaper than the ceramics being made. Many hours were spent on ceramic goods that would not make it to the targeted areas such as a shelf in a showroom or in a box bound for export. Some factories I visited had almost 50% damage ratio of their wet green ware stage ceramics. It is evident that the ceramic industry relies too much on cheap labor provided by uneducated and poorly trained women. Thailand can no longer rely on this cheap labor if it wishes to expand its economy because other countries in the region have cheaper labor. If technology can improve the ceramic industry, more funding could be spent on design, artistic expression, and packaging.

There is also what I refer to as design burnout. There seems to be no shortage of very Thai looking ceramics that is either mass-produced for export or hand-crafted for tourists. Regardless of production scale or purpose, most of the ceramics look similar to each other. In other words, the market has not expanded to meet the demands of normal Thais and the Thai society.

The ceramic industry is also slow to develop its own designs. Many small to medium-sized factories do not have their own styles but rely on copying designs and patterns that have been successful in the past. This means many factories have works that look the same. The end result is a high supply of similar looking goods that are now sold for a very low price made by people who are generally underpaid and under trained.

There are organizations of ceramic industrial companies in Thailand such as the Bangkok Ceramic Association and the Lampang Ceramic Association. I am not exactly sure what they do to enhance their industry but they probably could do a lot more. One area that could be improved would be quality assurance. Better training of workers may cut down greatly on wastage that seems to be the norm for most factories. This would improve their revenue margins and could, in turn, be given back to the workers in the form of more training as an incentive to be more productive.

The Ceramic Development Center (CDC) located in Lampang also takes a very active role in helping the local ceramic industry. Workshops, presentations, training and other activities are an ongoing part of what CDC does. But in my opinion, it could do even more if it were to set up a center that invites ceramic artists to do work there and to show the local factories what the possibilities are with clay. Both domestic and international artists would be invited for a period of time to do work and more importantly, to share new ideas.

In closing, I am sure Thailand’s ceramic industry will continue to prosper but am worried about the loss of creativity. I would also like to see more efforts by education, government, artists, and the industry itself to work together for the common goal of a healthy and artistic industry.

**IMPLICATIONS**

A great deal of knowledge has been generated by this research. Most important is the idea of linking together all parties concerned with ceramics in Thailand. If it were possible to link together these parties, I think the results would generate an interesting discussion on how ceramics should proceed in Thailand for Thais, tourists, and export purposes. These parties are: government organizations, educators at all levels of education, universities, ceramic factories, ceramic designers and painters, ceramic artists and their patrons, and galleries that show ceramic art. If these members could all work together to improve Thai ceramics, something wonderful may come out of it.

Unfortunately, today we live in a world dominated by economics. Thailand’s economy, although doing
exceedingly well in the past few years, has not achieved the wealth of a middle class that will allow its people to spend excess money on something as fragile as ceramics. Think about plastic for a moment. Because of the nature of plastic, such as durability and low production costs, it has taken over as the most used material for storage and eating in Thailand. It is difficult to find ceramics, wood, bamboo, or even bamboo leaves being used on the streets today. Thailand, unfortunately, may not be ready yet for the usage of ceramics by its entire population.

It is still my hope that as the economy expands and wealth is distributed more evenly, the middle class will expand and so will the usage of everyday ceramics for Thais. This in turn will help the industry to grow in new directions and would bring about a new found pride in a craft that had its roots in the east bringing pleasure and enjoyment to all Thais.

WORKS CITED


Internet Sites
http://www.asia-art.net/thai_ceramic.htm (More on history of ceramics. Used for introduction background.)
http://www.shoal.net.au/~sdaly/8%20Ceramics%20in%20Thailand.html (A site for the basic history, places to go and see, but basically historical in context. Used for introduction background.)
http://www.maritimeasia.ws/turiang/dating.html (Important info on big sunken ship with Thai ceramics, very detailed. Used for introduction background.)

Artists and Art Galleries Visited
Akko Art Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
Amornthep Mahamart, Artist, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Dr. Bhichai Rattakul, Bangkok, Thailand
Chetta Subbumr, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Eakrit Pradistsuwara, Lampang, Thailand
Ittikorn Pornmingmas, Artist, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Ji-Qoo, Art Gallery, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Kasumi Katagiri, Artist, Bangkok, Thailand
Kirikong Tilokwattanotai, Artist, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Matana Uthaivathna, Artist, Bangkok, Thailand
Mieko Saho-Okuno, Artist, Chiang Mai, Thailand
The Studio of the North, Bangkok, Thailand
Takuji Kouno, Artist, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Thomas Vitayakul, Ceramic Art Collector, Bangkok, Thailand
Torsak Prakhamthong, Lampang, Thailand
Vipoo Srivilasa, Artist, Sidney, Australia
Yoichi Katagiri, Artist, Bangkok, Thailand
Takuji Kouno, Artist, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Thomas Vitayakul, Ceramic Art Collector, Bangkok, Thailand
Vipoo Srivilasa, Artist, Sidney, Australia
Yoichi Katagiri, Artist, Bangkok, Thailand

Department Stores & Markets Visited
Carrefour, Bangkok, Thailand
Central, Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Thailand
Chatuchak Weekend Market, Bangkok, Thailand
Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, Ratcha Buri, Thailand
Erawan Bangkok Shopping Mall, Bangkok, Thailand
Isetan, Bangkok, Thailand
Landmark Plaza, Bangkok, Thailand
Night Bazaar, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Robinson, Bangkok, Thailand
Siam Paragon
Siam Square, Bangkok, Thailand
Tesco, Bangkok, Thailand
The Jim Thompson House, Bangkok, Thailand
**Government Agencies Visited**
Ceramic Development Center (CDC), Lampang, Thailand
Lampang Ceramics Association, Lampang, Thailand
Ministry of Commerce, Department of Export Promotion, Chiang Mai, Thailand
OTOP, Bangkok, Thailand (scheduled to meet but couldn’t due to scheduling problems)
OTOP, Chiang Mai, Thailand

**Hotels and Resorts Visited**
Chiang Mai Orchid Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Four Seasons Resort, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand
Inter Continental, Bangkok, Thailand
Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Monkey Club, Resort Restaurant, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Plaza Athenee Bangkok, a Royal Meridien, Bangkok, Thailand
Rose Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Bangkok, Thailand
Sheraton Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai, Thailand
The Dusit Thani, Bangkok, Thailand
The Oriental, Bangkok, Thailand
The Peninsula, Bangkok, Thailand
The Shangri-La, Bangkok, Thailand
The Sukhothai, Bangkok, Thailand

**Newspaper Companies Visited**
Asahi Shimbun, Bangkok, Thailand
Nishi-Nippon Shimbun, Bangkok, Thailand
Yomiuri Shimbun, Bangkok, Thailand

**Industrial Ceramics Visited**
Ceramic Land Co., Ltd., Lampang, Thailand
Chieng Sang Blue & White Pottery, Samsut Sakorn, Thailand
Earth and Fire Co., Ltd., Lampang, Thailand
Karamos, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Kenzai Ceramics Industry Co., Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand
Lampang-Thai ceramics Tile Co., Ltd., Lampang, Thailand
Mae-Rim Ceramic Studio, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Paradornbricks Co., Ltd., Chiang Mai, Thailand
Sansai Celadon, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Siam Celedon Pottery Co. Ltd., Chiang Mai, Thailand
SOR. Rungsang Ceramic Factory, Lampang, Thailand
Siam Ceramic Handmade, Bangkok, Thailand
Tao Hong Tai Ceramics Factory, Rachaburi, Thailand
Tonpo Craft & Clay Co., Ltd., Lampang, Thailand
Thai Isekyu Co., LTD, Bangkok, Thailand
TW ceramics Co., Ltd., Lampang, Thailand
Vang-Kwang Ceramic Craft Factory, Lampang, Thailand

**Non-ceramic Companies Visited**
Ark Enterprise Co., Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand
Design One, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Paradon Bricks Co. Ltd., Chiang Mai, Thailand
PL Design Co., Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand
Studio Kachama, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Thai Takenaka International Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand

**Universities Visited**
Chiang Mai University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Ceramics, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Industrial Design; Faculty of Decorative Arts, Department of Ceramics; Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts; Bangkok, Thailand
Silpakorn University, Faculty of Decorative Arts, Department of Ceramics, Nakornpatom, Thailand

**Other Places Visited**
Bangkok: Grand Palace, Wat Prakeo, Wat Pho, Wat Arun, Koh Kret, Vimanmek Mansion Museum, Erawan Phum, Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, Benjarong ware shops, and various street corners throughout Bangkok
Chiang Mai: Night Bazaar, Walking Street Bazaar, Mung Kung Pottery Village, Mon Kaon Kaew, San Kamphaeng RoonArun Hot Springs, Wat Phra Sing, Wat Chiang Man, Wat Phra that Doi Suthep, Kad Suan Kaeo
Lampang: Wat Hariphunchai, Lampang: Mon Kaon Kaew
Sukhothai: Sri Satchanalai Historical Park, Celadon Kiln Site Study and Conservation Center, Sawankhaworanyok National Museum

Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community
The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows
Table 1: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>GDP*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Average**</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*GDP per capita (2005)

**Average of top 25 EU countries

Table 2: Human Development Index (HDI) Comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>Level of HDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>0.948</td>
<td>High HDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>High HDI</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU Average*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.922 (est.)</td>
<td>High HDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>High HDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>0.784</td>
<td>Medium HDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>Medium HDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>Medium HDI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*EU as a whole has no ranking World average is 0.741 (2006)

HDI measures average achievements in life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate and educational enrollment rates, and standard of living measured by GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) in SUS.
The attempt of Third World countries to define their national cinemas demonstrates the unconscious consequences of unifying international practices and the compromises made by different societies and cultures to accommodate the power implied by the infinite networks and systems in which they take place. Film's reconstruction of urban space as the center of national affairs is one manifestation of the very function of accommodating power defined and determined at a global scale. Even if cinema is often regarded as a low form of mass entertainment in Southeast Asia, its practice as an economic, social and cultural device has always been at the heart of many countries in the region. State censorship and the freedom of expression, the success of a local film abroad, the imminent extinction of local filmmaking because of Hollywood, and other issues affecting filmmaking and its exhibition have all made their mark on the collective life of the region's nations. Films in Southeast Asia have also codified the very structure of how audiences understand their realities.

**Locating Nations in Urban Spheres: Philippine and Indonesian Cinemas**

Central in this inquiry is the positioning of film within an agglomeration of social, economic, cultural and technological shifts influencing the region. Cinema first entered the consciousness of many nations in the region since the 1890s. Despite the fact that film is not indigenous to Southeast Asia, film has thrived and been appropriated widely in different countries through a massive effort on the part of local filmmakers to apposite the medium to reflect local concerns, and project visions and narratives that are significant to their respective local audiences. In the Philippines, these efforts resulted to the alteration of theatrical forms for the silverscreen, paving the way for the popular melodramas in contemporary Philippine cinema. Local films localized the cinematic medium, incorporating not only stories and contexts familiar to local audiences but also the manner in which films were to be manufactured and distributed. By the late 1970s and the early 80s, filmmaking in the Philippines has been transformed into a lucrative commercial enterprise with stringent formulas and conventions that demonstrated the mastery of local tastes. While this helped organize the industry to target the widest possible markets for maximizing profit during that time, it became disadvantageous as many films relied on conventions that eventually dulled audience appreciation (Lumbera 1984).

An influx of notable films arose in the same period, and challenged the industrial and economic functions attributed to the medium which many exploited as a source of revenue. Lino Brocka paved the way for the reconceptualization of cinema as a social and cultural apparatus, one which addressed the need to revaluate and reformulate the identity of the nation and the systems it perpetuates in an attempt to uphold that identity. It was in this period that Manila’s socio-political and economic spatial transformations were questioned. Once a parochial and idyllic setting, Manila is projected as an urban location besieged by the promise of a good life on one hand, and despair, poverty and exploitation on the other. Two major films emerging from that era—and still considered by many local critics to be the most significant in the country—are Lino Brocka’s *Maynila, Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (Manila, In the Claws of Neon, 1975) and Ishmael Bernal’s *Manila By Night* (1980). In these films, Manila is depicted not only as a setting but also as a symbol characterizing the conflicting ideals projected on the city. Adapted from the novel of the same title by Edgardo M. Reyes, the exploration of Brocka’s *Manila* happens through the eyes of the probinsyano Julio Madiaga who searches the city for his childhood sweetheart, Ligaya Paraiso. He works as a low-paid construction worker, and experiences the maltreatment of the city’s numerous systems. When Julio finally finds Ligaya trapped in Misericordia as a sex slave of a Chinese businessman, the city’s exploitative nature becomes clear to Julio. Refusing the trap of city life, he does all he can to take himself and Ligaya away from the nightmare that became their life in Manila.

If Brocka’s *Manila* is a locality indifferent to the aspirations of its inhabitants, for Bernal it is a place of renewed dreams. By taking a look at the inhumanity breeding in Manila’s crevices, the film features a number of characters whose lives connect through their acceptance of the city. Working in Manila’s underworld, they are able to imagine their life apart...
from the traditional and feudal dreams they once held. They endure the hardships and poverty of the city and reconfigure their lives to accommodate its uncanny and unbelievable living conditions. Not surprisingly, Manila in Philippine cinema from the last decade has been projected as a tense locality polarized between the rich and the poor. This dialectical relationship has been the persistent logic structuring the filmic representations of Manila.

Cinema, as these two films prove, becomes a crucial apparatus in determining the social, economic and political positions of its subjects within the confines of the national agenda. These films have been crucial in providing a device for understanding and representing the different systems that affect the determination and location of identities within a vast array of urban networks. This implies that cinema’s value can be understood beyond, first, its function as an industrial enterprise that has paved the way for new means of accumulating wealth for its producers and shareholders. These two films provided an important synthetic narrative that foregrounds the various social, political and economic conditions that mediate in the experience of urbanization. Second, and more importantly, these two films underscore the fate of the city’s image in numerous films to come after it, signifying its role in determining the manner in which urban space is formulated, perceived and reconstructed.

Like Philippine cinema, Indonesian cinema seems to suggest that the experience of its capital is not only determined by the place itself, it is also produced and manufactured in a number of ways by the different cultural tools and constructs that pertain to it. Since contemporary city spaces undergo processes of production, distribution and consumption, it is possible to also see them as constructs narrating ideological positions that influence the manner of how we understand and imagine its purpose and functions in connection to the entire nation. Boasting of a rich archive of films that project a multitude of ideals regarding its capital Jakarta, one can see in the history of Indonesian cinema an ongoing discourse regarding the capital’s transformation from an idyllic but promising setting into a modern dumpsite besieged by despair, poverty and exploitation. The 1955 film by Usmar Ismail Tamu Agung (Exalted Guest) is about the much-awaited visit of a dignitary from Jakarta to a small isolated village, Sukaslamet (‘Playing it Safe’) near a mountainous area in East Java. Here, Usmar Ismail examines modernization and the political control of the center with much skepticism. While the movie was set entirely in the remote village of Sukaslamet, the role of the national center is put into question immediately at the early stages of Indonesia’s nation-building efforts. The village mistakes a quack doctor for their exalted guest. They welcome him with pomp festivities and reveal to him the hopes of a better life they expect the government to bring to them. The quack doctor could do nothing for the village, but in the course of finding out the truth, the villagers and its leaders discover that they themselves could provide much of the reform they needed from the capital city. Widely acclaimed as a brilliant political comedy, Tamu Agung’s satire is primarily directed at the increasing role of charismatic political leadership from the national center in the newly created Republic of Indonesia, which had gained independence only five years before the film was made.

Like the problem posed by Tamu Agung regarding the presence of the capital and its role in the development of the communities located outside it, much of Indonesian cinema constantly reflects on how developments at the center of the nation are brought out to the peripheries. However, unlike the buoyant disposition shown in the 1950s film by the villagers of Sukaslamet towards their own initiatives and participation in the development of their own locality, many Indonesian films probe the capital itself and its contained systems, questioning in the process how one can be able to penetrate such a powerful and unchangeable center whose activities and preoccupations assume a central position in the nation’s affairs neglecting the concerns of various local identities and their respective cultural and religious heritage.

The period from the 70s up to the early 90s saw the emergence of directors such as Teguh Karya, Ami Priyono, Wim Umboh, Sjuman Jaya, Garin Nugroho and Arifin C. Noer. These directors tackled pressing issues that besieged Jakarta’s divisiveness. Indonesian cinema prior to 1998 articulates these divisions through the deployment of narratives concretizing the make-believe boundaries of the city’s segregation. Different narratives and images projecting specific features of urban space ritualize the very presence of categories such as gender, race, age, religion, social and economic classes, all of which provide the means of enabling and containing cultures and identities situated in the city. These images of Jakarta in popular cinema reinforce the concept of the national capital as a threatening locale as it solidifies into a setting populated by individuals with no coherent and singular concept on which to ground their collective identity. Jakarta crystallizes in film as an impenetrable city, bearing no shared national experience for its inhabitants to infiltrate and appropriate its many systems for their own use. Interestingly enough, many of the concerns projected by cinema after
1998 have mutated into forms that suggest Jakarta’s transformation into a fiercely competitive and highly commodified setting, multiplying the struggles that its citizens need to confront in order to gain control. While many critics I have spoken to contend that many of the films produced after 1998 seem to have no social relevance, I see these films as products indicating the manner in which power and control is manufactured in contemporary Indonesia. If the last three decades problematized segregation because of differences in culture, gender and class, films after 1998 expose the fact that such segregation has only muddled up the social avenues to facilitate the mobility of its citizenry. Instead of finding different identities a place within the city’s confines, the control of much of the lifestyles and systems occupying the city has been transferred to the newly constituted yet notably voiceless and still powerless middle class.

The City as Global Locus: The Case of Thai Cinema

If the Philippines and Indonesia have managed to reconstruct the functions of their respective cinemas by looking at them as agents capable of producing and manufacturing concepts of space pertinent to the mobilization of modern states, Thailand’s cinema is still regarded as a medium or artistic form detached from the travails of everyday life. Often regarded as escapist fare that is not taken seriously even today, the historic development, collective sensibility and critical appreciation of Thai Cinema reflect this meager status assigned to it and its supposed lack of importance on the socio-cultural affairs of the nation.

This detachment needs to be understood in relation to the gruesome events that the Thai media is still recovering from. Thai cinema, like the Philippines and Indonesia, did take its first steps in realigning the functions and concerns of their filmmaking practices. With the escalating social and political turmoil in the 1970s, Thai cinema became respondent to calls for radical change and development. Local productions became more critical of the social and political conditions surrounding the nation’s affairs. The 14 October 1973 uprising following the release of Khao Chue Karn was a significant turning point not just for Thai history but also for the country’s filmmaking and film viewing practices as well. For one, local viewers became interested in films that made comments on the turmoil and unrest characterizing the period, and many film companies registered increased profits from this kind of audience demand. However the involvement of the film industry seemed to extend beyond finding a marketable formula. For the first time in its history, the film industry mobilized itself for different causes such as the raising of funds for the National Student Centre of Thailand. By then, Thai cinema had realized its impact on political issues surrounding the country’s collective affairs as many of its workers strove to use the medium to influence the public imagination.

Media freedom during this period was short-lived as tensions between left- and right-wing forces escalated. On 5 October 1976, newspapers published a photograph of Thammasat University students reenacting the hanging and killing of two student protesters the month before. The photograph depicted one of the students impersonating the King’s son Prince Vajiralongkorn. This culminated in a bloody brawl between police and student protesters in Thammasat University where at least a hundred students protesting were killed, and at least a thousand arrested. The military took control and the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) was established, signaling a dramatic and ironic turn in Thailand’s venture into democracy. These events put an intermittent stop to the media’s progressive stance in examining the affairs of the state.

Thai cinema would never be the same again. The following years saw the industry negotiating between what once was seen as an open society and the painful consequences of challenging those holding power. Thailand has also begun to open itself economically at this time. The active promotion of foreign investment in the 1970s helped create an industrial sector with practices and lifestyles that seemed to be in discord with prevailing traditional norms. By the 1980s an export-oriented manufacturing sector, based on labor-intensive output such as textiles and garments, began to develop. As the economic and political transactions became more and more concentrated in the nation’s developing capital, a number of films zeroed-in on the lives of the numerous laborers migrating towards these industries, documenting the activities available to them and how this new environment and the practices they espouse affected the nation’s progress. Security guards, factory workers, prostitutes, taxi drivers and blue-collar workers became the subjects of many of these films, and their lives demonstrated the skepticism to the steps the nation have made towards achieving progress.

While these films continued to actively explore the socio-political changes affecting the nation, many of them were caught up with the woes of challenging the boundaries of free speech. The events in Thammasat impressed upon many filmmakers that they could not question the systems governing their collective affairs for fear of another tragedy. The uncertainty
and apprehension brought about by the Thammasat tragedy became such a formidable force that the local industry became cautious in engaging issues that could be perceived hostile to the state. With harsh censorship laws that remain unchanged since 1930, filmmakers have taken the initiative to censor themselves in matters deemed too sensitive in the nation’s affairs. Even after the government curbed the entry of foreign imports by taxing them heavily in 1977 to give way for the local industry to produce more films, the products were of a questionable quality. Socio-political issues were so volatile at this point in Thai film history that it became easier during this period to get away with sex and violence onscreen rather than talk about more pressing topics that needed public attention. Sex flicks became rampant and somehow gave Thai cinema momentary profits. This development could easily be frowned upon from a moral standpoint. In some way however, this was also one means for the local industry to continue liberalizing itself. Through films depicting sex and violence, freedom of expression was cultivated, although a bit inadequate. Filmmakers made features on lifestyles, identities and cultures commonly relegated to the fringes of society. Themes involving homosexuality, bisexuality and the objectification of women came to the fore. Vichit Kounavudhi’s *First Wife* questioned the prevalent practice of men taking mistresses. However, no matter how much these films championed the need to allow free ideas to surface, the productions they made did not completely bring into focus the issues that their subject matter was supposed to advocate. Instead, many of these films only managed to trivialize them in their attempts to maximize profits. Until today, the 1976 Thammasat tragedy is still affecting Thai cinema. Films continue to be regarded as brainless entertainment and no serious study has been made to explain its connections to local customs and culture. Not many filmmakers strive to transform the medium into something more than an escapist fanfare prioritizing public consumption. Comedy and horror appear as the dominant genres, poking fun and fright even at subject matters of a sensitive nature for fear of provoking negative attention from the censors.

It is in this context that the urbanization and development of Bangkok is brought into focus. Compared to the filmic representations of Manila and Jakarta that strive to characterize urban space and the manner in which it controls the identities of the subjects contained by it, Bangkok in Thai cinema remains an empty void: a token space whose features are shapeless. Its citizens remain faceless, hence their concerns are left unarticulated. Furthermore, it is portrayed as a capital with functions and attributes that seem to have no stake nor impact in the nation’s affairs. This comes as an ironic development given the relative commercial success Thai cinema has enjoyed in the last few years. It has been at the forefront of Southeast Asia in finding an international audience. The cult success of the action flick *Ong Bak*, the multi-million dollar budget of the historical epic *The Legend of Suriyothai* and the winning of Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s *Tropical Malady* of the Jury prize in the 2004 Cannes Film Festival is unparalleled in the region. Thailand is also producing the greatest number of film features in Southeast Asia, surpassing that of the Philippines, whose output has declined in recent years. Similarly, the 1997 financial crisis has proven the mettle of the local film industry. While many other businesses collapsed, Thai cinema remained afloat and even managed to register growing profits at a time when, theoretically, locals were believed to be unwilling to spend on movies.

The reproduction of Bangkok as a void in Thai cinema can be interpreted, however, as a means to examine how the capital’s global flows are framed within the consciousness of the rest of the nation. As Bangkok absorbs larger proportions of economic activity through globalization, the capital finds itself increasingly alienated from the travails affecting the rest of the country. Bangkok in Thai cinema assumes a more specific identity as another node within a series of global networks, abandoning the manner in which Philippine and Indonesian cinema frames the function of the city as sites for articulating and contesting the national character. Thai cinema suggests that Bangkok lends itself to consolidation under a network of concurring business practices, education, technology, media, governance and a plethora of other systems signifying the rise of Western and First World cosmopolitanism. By doing so, the cinematic city of Bangkok alienates itself further from interactions within its own local sphere, increasing the possibilities of expanding gaps between groups from the real and imagined centers of society and those in the peripheries.

**Manila in Recent Philippine Cinema**

Philippine Cinema facilitates the deployment of make believe boundaries that reinforce the city’s segregation. Different narratives and images projecting specific features of urban space ritualize the dichotomy of rich and poor to such an extreme that any other possible fissure or gap in describing social positions becomes outmoded and even irrelevant. Factors such as gender, race, age, religion, regional and cultural identities, and other possible means of facilitating public positions become subsumed under the dichotomy of rich...
and poor that it becomes impossible to grab hold of the numerous concerns raised by different identities positioned in society. This representation of Metro Manila in popular cinema establishes the city as a site that is homogenous and parochial and, hence, void of plural identities. Once again, difference is discouraged, and any manifestation of divergence from the norms stipulated by a polarization outside being rich and poor are undermined, suggesting the presence of numerous gaps in the social relations unfolding in an urban setting.

The question of gender positions in the city suffers from this need to subsume urban identities between the rich and the poor. Philippine cinema is still patriarchal, relying heavily on feudal stereotypes of positioning women in spaces and confines that speak of their subjugation under male dominance. In Jeffrey Jeturian’s Bridal Shower (2004), a female lead who accepts the traditional feudal order is immediately confined within safe and affluent places where order is present. On the other hand, the representation of women who enact behaviors and lifestyles outside these restrictive norms of femininity are located in spaces that signify deplorable forms of living. While they may seem to avoid traditional norms of identity formation and evade such repressive spaces, their economic and social options relegate them to a life of poverty. Chito Roño’s Curacha, Ang Babaeng Walang Pahinga (Curacha: A Woman Without Rest) is a testament to such a construction. Curacha, a female prostitute, finds herself during one of the coup attempts against President Aquino in 1987, the metro’s already treacherous roads are endangered further by the uprising. In an attempt to earn a living, Curacha negotiates between difficult paths, troubled friends and the masses that consume the political turmoil as some form of revelry. Curacha freely roams the city, both detached from her possible hand in the revolt (a high-ranking general decided to join the coup after Curacha successfully gave him an erection) and the consequences of taking part in the uncanny life in its underbelly. What she probes, however, are spaces completely different from the ones that the state tries to uphold. The city is crumbling. Its political order is threatened, and the streets and its people are in disarray. As the government snuffs out the coup attempt the following day, order is restored and all the experiences Curacha witnessed the night before suddenly became a distant nightmare.

It is not only the woman who is comprehensively excluded from the city’s design in Curacha, Philippine cinema is unable to project spaces that legitimize the presence of genders and orientations outside the privileged non-heterosexual male. If the positioning of female identities suffers from their relegation into class positions, the same could be said with the fate of queer identities. These lifestyles are consigned to marginal spaces, and their plight here is often understood in relation to poverty. Films such as Lino Brocka’s Macho Dancer (1988), Mel Chionglo’s Sibak Midnight Dancers (1994) and Burlesk King (1999) confine non-heterosexual male lifestyles to dark gay bars occupying the city’s crevices. All three films confront homosexuality through the lives of male entertainers who, out of poverty and desperation, find themselves working in gay bars. The public persona of the gay man is still masked and restricted to dark dilapidated structures illuminated faintly by show lights. The emergence of genders outside the male-centered heterosexual is often exposed as a problem of poverty. Like the prostitute Curacha and the gay men in Macho Dancer, Sibak and Burlesk King, their coming to terms with frowned-upon means of living are often blamed for their position at the bottom of society, undermining the dynamics and sexual issues that are also significant in defining their social positions in the city and in society.

Aiding the construction of Metro Manila as a feudal site between the rich and the poor are the visualizations of race and other constructs within the urban setting. Rigid racial and ethnic profiling diminishes the possibility of envisioning different people with different lifestyles and backgrounds to share the same space. Featuring a trio of women paid to cry at the wake of a rich Chinese businessman, Mark Meily’s Crying Ladies (2003) ritualizes the need to observe coded behavior between Filipinos and Chinese-Filipinos. When the three women proceed to the wake for the first time, a number of spatial symbols ritualize their entry not only into another place but also into another arena where the signification of power and the assertion of identity takes on a different syntax. Whether conscious or not, the crying ladies actualize this difference through their behavior. Class becomes a central construct in defining identity of the Chinese-Filipinos from the unhyphenated Filipino. The Chinese are understandably rich, while the three non-Chinese characters’ ill-perceived behaviors are seen as a consequence of being poor.

Even racial and ethnic representations in local cinema reinforce the further segregation of Metro Manila as a place for the privileged few. The Chinese-Filipinos in particular enjoy a prosperous and affluent image since most of their business enterprises in recent years played a crucial role in the socio-economic transformation of the country. It is only recently when the cultural and social
impact of the Chinese-Filipinos has been examined. A number of films have surfaced to address this ethnic and racial phenomenon, most notable are the commercially successful Mano Po series of Regal Films. Although the attempts of films such as Crying Ladies and the Mano Po series to incorporate Chinese-Filipino experiences into the collective identity of the nation, their racial and ethnic identities remain to be narrated in relation only to their success in recent shifts indicating the rise of the country’s new capitalist enterprise. Despite the presence of a large percentage of Chinese-Filipinos in the country who do not fit the mold of the wealthy businessman, their affluent and money-wielding stereotype prevails, ignoring a number of historical and social determinants responsible for shaping their experience (Pinches 1999: 284).

Non-Chinese Filipinos become the foil opposing and complementing the ideal subjects represented by the Chinese-Filipinos. They are also geographically displaced from this new landscape. Most Non-Chinese and Non-Tagalogs in local cinema work as unskilled laborers, live in the slums, find pleasure in the most deplorable places, and are surrounded by ill-defined social relations. The security guard Mando, one of the featured characters in the web of stories comprising Gilbert Perez’s Jolo’s (2002), exemplifies this stereotype well. Played by Diether Ocampo, his difference from the other characters is immediately manifested by a thick accent signaling his lack of initiation into the city’s preferred ways of life. His life is worse off as expected: aside from earning low wages, he lives in the slums and is conned by his girlfriend to take care of her child from another man so that she may work in Japan. Filipinos speaking with different accents become the symbols of who the city-dwelling subject should not be. These representations become a means to marginalize the uneducated non-Manileño (even non-Chinese-Filipino), and becomes itself a device for defining what it means to live in the metropolis. As such, the validation of marginal identities become possible only through the borrowing of cultural constructs detached from what they are accustomed to, and from the issues and concerns that define them. Consequently, the city in these films becomes an arena for the reconfiguration and reconstitution of racial and ethnic minorities becoming the very space validating oppression.

Jakarta in Recent Indonesian Cinema

The 1998 film Kuldesak—a collaborative effort between Riri Riza, Mira Lesmana, and Nan T. Achnas, now Indonesia’s most prominent filmmakers—ushered in what many local critics believe to be the second wave of Indonesian cinema. Recognized mainly for its bravery in departing from the censorious practices of Suharto’s New Order, the film has spawned the possibility for a lot of younger filmmakers to produce their films independently. It takes a look at the alienated lives of Jakarta’s middle class youth as they cope with drugs, homosexuality and the abandonment of being situated in a city painfully altered by the signifying presences of modernity and globalization. The plot is an episodic mixture of different experiences that seem unrelated to one another but find commonality under the same setting. The film’s texture and setting departs from the quaint appeal of the typical locations and sets that characterized much of Indonesian cinema before it. The main characters are situated in streamlined apartments with walls harshly painted in vibrant hues, and containing do-it-yourself fixtures that seem to have been taken out of an Ikea catalogue. They move in a maze of vibrant neon lights, movie theaters, nightclubs, bars, half-empty streets, parking lots and 24-hour convenience stores reminiscent of images of an American suburb. Jakarta is suddenly transformed into a haven for middle class desires and frustrations.

It is this affinity to a somewhat different cultural enterprise that marks the new cinematic landscape in which Kuldesak and the other films following it visualize Jakarta. Even as the capital braces itself for upheavals directly affecting the nation’s political and collective character, the individuals moving within it are pressured just the same by the accumulation of information and products that will strengthen their status not only in the city where they are but also within an agglomeration of worldwide networks and relations signifying the movement of power and capital from within the nation’s control to new forces beyond it. Jakarta is at once a city struggling to consolidate global change: it is a city succumbing to the pressures of international economic practice and a city trying its best to organize these new changes within the acceptable parameters of a guarded religious nation. Indonesian cinema demonstrates that the real centers of power now lie outside and beyond the control of the nation state and its government, and instead rest in the economic authority across fading national boundaries of transnational enterprise. True enough, Indonesian cinema since 1998 has been replete with films that problematize the new patterns of consumption brought about by globalization.

The most notable among these films is Nia DiNata’s Arisan. (Social Gathering 2004) Here, the lives of three friends—two women and a gay man—are examined in the hopes of finding meaning and substance in a life made dull by upper class Jakarta’s endless socializing.
and partying. The film opens with a montage of the city where these characters roam, and immediately one notices the erection of a seemingly orderly and organized city totally incongruent from the Jakarta teeming with warungs, traffic and inconsolable poverty. The social events depicted in the film are no less indifferent. Characters are beleaguered by the need to reinforce their social standing—setting up different occasions to gather and throw lavish parties where they try to outdo one another in namedropping luxury items to congeal their wealth. The Jakarta portrayed in Arisan is prosperous. It gives space to the ability to accumulate wealth and endless consumption. The venues for these social gatherings become interesting sites for observing Jakarta’s commercial function as they are shot in actual high-end establishments such as restaurants, boutiques and shops not only covetous of the opportunity to be advertised cinematically, but also demanding that their products be identified with the affluent characters of the film.

Kuldesak, Arisan, and much of Indonesian cinema since 1998 works to deploy new subjects within the city’s center while reducing many of its not-so-powerful populace, including the government itself, towards the periphery, both real and imagined. Film has provided the means of locating social positions within its visual reconstruction of the city. Such a role has to be understood in relation to numerous forces at play in Indonesia’s filmmaking practices. First and most crucial among these are Indonesian cinema’s target audience. According to feature film director and scriptwriter Joko Anwar and Jakarta Post film critic Paul Agusta, the conceptualization and development of many Indonesian films cater primarily to the tastes of audiences in the cities who have the money to spend and the time to go watch movies. Hence, much of the material inspiring the scenes of many films is culled from the day-to-day experiences of the target film watcher who is expected to see and enjoy these films.

Also, the practice of manufacturing films as an independent art form takes a back seat to commercial concerns. Many of these feature films have been developed independently by a younger group of filmmakers who have risked personal savings and property to finance their productions. Inspired by the success of Kuldesak, many of these films have been produced outside the pressures of studio politics. Dennis Adhiswara, whose first film Kwaliteit 2 was financed by his father, admits that even independent films have to take on a commercial character despite ridding themselves of production company concerns. Hence, even if productions are labeled as independent, they still look and share the sensibilities of commercial film if only to attract people accustomed to the gloss and texture of Hollywood imports.

What Indonesian cinema has managed to do with regards to the image of the city since 1998 is to facilitate the movement of capital. Focusing on the narratives that valorize the position of the middle class, it has helped foreground the massive transformation, modernization and development of the city while indirectly reconfiguring the social and geographical positions of the people occupying it. Those who are unable to compete and manage this very system like the traders in Tanah Abang or warung vendors such as Fadly are forced to dislocate themselves from the city, and possibly from the concerns of the collective represented by the city as well. Riri Riza’s Eliana Eliana (2002) tells a similar story. Eliana is a young woman brought up by her single mother in West Sumatra. Her mother, Bunda, had severed all contact after she fled to Jakarta to run away from an arranged marriage. Five years later, she is struggling with her job and evading her landlord in the slums when her widowed mother arrives with plane tickets to take Eliana home. The meeting leads to an all-night taxi ride as Eliana looks for her housemate who had suddenly disappeared. The ride is also a journey filled with disclosures about the strained relationship between Eliana and her mother. In the background is the dark and repulsive Jakarta filled with dark corners and the frustrations of people much like Eliana whose dreams turned into nightmares in the city’s underbelly. What is apparent in Eliana Eliana and the experiences of Fadly and the Tanah Abang traders is the establishment of immigration—the city’s ability to import human resources from outside to phase-out unskilled laborers—and mobility as important consequences that reward and/or punish identities under Jakarta’s developing urban life. Those who are able to position themselves using skills that value the very agglomeration of capital activities marking the progress of the city are placed at Jakarta’s center, physically and symbolically; while those unable to do so are placed at the periphery.

Bangkok in Recent Thai Cinema

The year 1997 was a crucial moment in Thai cinema. It only had 17 films that year and with the looming financial crisis, everyone was convinced that Thai cinema was dead. Fortunately, that year saw Nonzee Nimibutr’s Dang Bireley and the Young Gangsters explode into the box office earning more than 75 million baht in box office sales. Set in 1960s Bangkok at a period of rising criminality and hooliganism among
the youth, it tells the story of how the criminal Dang Bireley rose to notoriety. Aside from the fairly popular subject matter, the film’s success can be attributed to its attempt to depart from traditional Thai form. As film critic Chalida Uabumrungjit explains it, the film’s technique “has been developed closer to the kind of film which Thai audiences adore, Hollywood film.” Making use of well-photographed scenes and well-constructed production design, both of which were effective in recreating the texture and environment of 1960’s Bangkok, Dang Bireley was a breath of fresh air for local audiences who until this time were skeptical if their own local productions could compete with the gloss and technical superiority of Hollywood cinema.

But more important than showing technical expertise, Dang Bireley was also a promising foray into Bangkok and Thai society’s underbelly as it looked at problems affecting the transformation of Thai society. The vagrant youth were rock-‘n-rolling to Elvis Presley’s music signifying their liberation from the manacles of traditional Thai life and entering this sensibility of competing for space and foregrounding individual identities in a newly developing city. The film also takes a nostalgic reflection on the possibility that was and could have been Bangkok. With most institutional systems only beginning to take shape at that time, the city was up for grabs and the possibility of finding one’s place in all the chaos and disorder present at that time was depicted emphatically in the film. Dang Bireley and his friends’ entry into a life of crime and violence was presented as a struggle to secure their positions in the establishing social and physical networks of the city.

That same year also saw the emergence of director Pen-Ek Ratanaruang, whose directorial debut Fun Bar Karaoke was screened at Berlin Film Festival. Though not as successful locally as Dang Bireley, Ratanaruang’s film was avid in examining the tugs of modern life and traditional beliefs in contemporary Bangkok. Mixing a number of genres together, Fun Bar Karaoke, tells the complicated story of Pu who is orphaned from her mother and has to deal with her drunken father. She falls in love with Noi, who is earnestly saving money to go to America under the employment of a mob whose chief boss’s girlfriend Pu’s father falls for. Pu is obsessed with her mother’s death, has recurring dreams about her, and is convinced by traditional fortune telling customs that her father will die soon. It is this complicated plot that allows Ratanaruang to veer away from the conventional formulations of urban life contained by the narratives of films sticking to traditional genres. By mixing action, crime, drama, romance, thriller and the supernatural, Fun Bar Karaoke is able to look beyond the moral standards that would normally inhibit the movement of these characters and allow them to explore the limits of what it means to live in a city teeming with 7-11’s, karaoke bars and fortuneteller stands. Like these different spaces where the lives of these different individuals converge, the film becomes expressive of the city as a site for negotiations between the melancholy experienced by many of these characters alienated by the pace and complexity of their environment and the situations it breeds life to.

In its more commercially palatable filmic output, Bangkok appears to have an inward-looking identity that most people from the outside are unable to penetrate, and more importantly, to grasp. The most distinct logic of locating this image of the city is often portrayed through comparisons with Thailand’s rural localities. If the rest of Thailand upholds virtue and is populated by the devout and the peace loving, Bangkok is automatically perceived as the negative foil to the dominant national image. For most films, it is seen as a city of excessive vices. Crime is often associated with the city’s seedy nightlife and resentment is cultivated towards some of the city’s dissident characters. The 2003 film O’ Lucky Man demonstrates how the urban identity is shaped and represented. In the film, sex becomes an avaricious habit that seems to be the central preoccupation of life in the city. All the characters introduced have a fetish to fulfill and the act of finding a sexual conquest is quite common in Em’s workplace. It is so common that even the company itself is devoted to seeing Em’s program work, suggesting the city’s craving for setting up systems and strategies that facilitate the enactment of sex. The characters—especially women—that engage premartial sex openly are also typified by other pronounced deviances, strengthening the peculiarity of the urban image from the rest of the nation.

The 2006 film Noohin is a comedy affirming distaste towards the city. Noohin is a naïve and self-righteous country lass who seeks employment as a housemaid in Bangkok. She stumble upon work with a family whose two beautiful daughters Noohin has entered in a model search. The film draws a number of stereotypes between Noohin and the two girls. Noohin is ugly, uneducated, rude and unable to comprehend the ways of the city. On the other hand, the two girls are pretty, educated, more sophisticated and more polished compared to Noohin. Their life together turns to be an acute commentary on the cupidity of the city, parodying how trivial life can get for Bangkok’s inhabitants. Noohin may never comprehend the lifestyle of the city but when she and the daughters get into trouble, it is Noohin who rises up
to the occasion to find the means of saving herself and her employers. In the end she proves that even though she may not have all the opportunities and advantages of the two girls who were raised in the city, she has more than enough in that her simplicity and traditional ways have managed to give her a bigger heart.

In popular cinema, Bangkok crystallizes into a city distinct from the travails and concerns of the rest of the nation. Films often project the city as a repository of activities and identities whose preoccupations are far detached from the nostalgia the rest of the country places on its past and tries to uphold. Bangkok is examined with much uncertainty. Cinema seems to suggest that many of the changes introduced through and emanating from the city are the undesirable consequences of arresting power and control. Even the urban lower class, which could conveniently be portrayed as a foil to upper class arrogance and rule, fall prey to disdain. Thai cinema is replete with characters coming from the urban lower class whose threatened position in the city results in unconventional choices and behaviors unacceptable to many Thai audiences. Ekachai Uekrongtham’s 2004 biographical film Beautiful Boxer tackles the transformation of Nong Toom from a cross-dressing kickboxer into a woman. While the actual life of Nong Toom was highly documented in a number of televised fights and news features broadcasted and published throughout the nation and internationally, what remains of interest is how the film dramatizes how her life turned out after retiring from the sport. A foreign journalist interviews her in a seedy pub. After the interview, the journalist is attacked by a mob of petty thieves and Nong Toom defends him. Recovering from the attack and wanting earnestly to thank Nong Toom for saving him, the journalist sees her disappearing into the dark streets of Bangkok. Reports claim that Nong Toom is now a singer in one of the bars of Bangkok. Despite conquering adversity as a transvestite kickboxer, Nong Toom graduates into Bangkok’s underground economy, earning her living in a profession and industry often associated with prostitution and crime.

Conclusion

What is consistent in all these seemingly divergent images of the Southeast Asian city is a need to reconceptualize urban space according to the socio-cultural contexts in which they are being established, and to shed light on them from perspectives that are sympathetic to and that are grounded in how the region receives globalization. The modern and civil ideals that once characterized the city as many films suggest is only but a changing and constantly modifiable concept, as many modern institutions—including the city itself—are undergoing massive transformations and upheavals in the manner they envision order and progress for both the city and for the nation it represents. Manila’s polarization between the rich and the poor, Jakarta’s social and physical restructuring of access to the center according to capital, and Bangkok’s omission from the national identity are all indicative of the layers of marginalization created by both the experience of urbanization and globalization. As these countries try to catch up with the more potent economies of the United States, Europe, Japan and China, a cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary analysis of Southeast Asian cinema codifies the need to reexamine consolidating social, political and economic reform and its impact on different cultural and religious terrains in the region. Much has been said regarding how one singular approach to globalization is not possible, it is in this spirit that Southeast Asian cinema finds itself responding to the projection of urban space.

This response is apparent in the dichotomies presented by the collective cinematic images of each nation studied. Rather than uphold a unified collective identity for its capital, many of these films explore and even test the limits of polarizing the city in the hopes of dismantling dominant concepts regarding space and, possibly, replace it with concepts that permit the multiplication of its functions. This would allow for the inclusion of certain groups neglected by public policies pertaining to the management and control of space. For Manila the polarization is between the rich and the poor, for Jakarta the included and the excluded, for Bangkok the urban and the rural. What these dichotomies suggest is the apparent disconnectedness of a number of groups and individuals from the dominant and acceptable formulation of urban space.

References


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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MOSLEM MINDANAO (ARMM) IN COPING WITH SEPARATISM AND THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (NRC) IN PEACE BUILDING

Cahyo Pamungkas

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines government set up the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) following on its constitutional mandate and in compliance with the 1976 Peace Agreement. The Philippines Congress passed Republic Act 6734 (1989) and conducted a plebiscite on 19 November 1989 to determine the autonomous areas. Only four of the thirteen provinces envisioned in the 1976 Peace Agreement voted to be included in the ARMM. To accommodate the provisions in the 1996 Final Peace Agreement, RA 6734 was amended into RA 9054 as a new Organic Act on 13 March 2001. Only five provinces and one city voted to constitute the ARMM in a plebiscite on 14 August 2002. Meanwhile, the idea of establishing the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) was initiated by 144 lecturers from 20 universities who sent an open letter to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on 14 November 2004. The letter called for a public apology to the victims of the Tak Bai incident and a review of the policy on the Southern Border Provinces, including setting up an NRC. The Prime Minister appointed the NRC on 25 March 2005.

This study has the following objectives: (1) to find out how the government policies of the ARMM and the NRC came about; (2) to explain the implementation of the ARMM and the NRC; and (3) to describe the effectiveness of the ARMM in resolving separatism in Bangsamoro in the Southern Philippines and the NRC contribution to peace building in Southern Thailand. This research has three significant parts, as follows: (1) It identifies the roles of the ARMM and the NRC as peace institutions in peace building and development programs; (2) It emphasizes the importance of having the central and local governments evaluate the effectiveness of the ARMM and the NRC; and (3) It proposes alternative policies in coping with the political violence problem both in the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand. This study is conducted using qualitative methods. The data collection methods were a study of the literature and in-depth interviews with stakeholders that are involved in the conflict in the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand. The informants who were interviewed included government officials, NGOs, local leaders, and the liberation front. The research sites were Manila, Cotabato City, Marawi City, Davao, and Iligan City in the Philippines, and Bangkok, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Nakhon Sri Thammarat in Thailand.

Research Findings

1. Roots of the Conflict and Government Approaches

The roots of separatism in Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines are almost similar. These roots have three levels, structural, cultural, and historical. The historical level is the most significant since the reported mainstream opinion of the local communities (Bangsamoro and Malay-Muslim) is that they do not demand their independence but request their governments to acknowledge their past independence. The structural problems occur in the absence of politics of differentiation to accommodate minority people. Meanwhile, the cultural level is dominated by ethno-political conflict based on ethnic and religion differences. Referring to Byman’s perspective (2002), this is defined as an identity conflict between two different status groups because of the fear of being dominated materially and culturally by the other group. However, it must be noted that radicalization mainly in Thailand is not caused by Islamic schools since it only effect resulted from the politics of assimilation which contain the violence of culture. Using Fanon’s (1963) point of view, the radicalization of Muslim communities both in Southern Thailand and the Philippines is rooted in the violence and radicalization being implemented by the government in the context of colonization. The conflict cannot be transformed into dialogue if the state is still dominated by the colonizing approach through the politics of violence. Detailed descriptions of the roots of the conflict can be seen in the following table.
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Table 1: Roots of Separatism in the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Southern Philippines</th>
<th>Southern Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Structural | • Political centralization of government  
• High poverty level in Bangsamoro homeland  
• Secular education system in Bangsamoro homeland  
• Migration and economic development, decreasing the proportion of Bangsamoro people in Mindanao | • Injustices from administrative system: centralization  
• Poverty in Three Southern Border provinces  
• Thai education system does not acknowledge Islamic education system |
| Cultural | Conflict based on ethnicity/religion (Bangsamoro Muslim vs Filipino Christian) | Conflict based on ethnicity/religion (Malay Muslim vs Thai Buddhist) |
| History of political integration | The Paris Agreement 1898. Spain sold the Philippines to the USA including Mindanao | Conquering of Kingdom of Pattani by Kingdom of Siam in 1785 |

Sources: NRC Executive Summary, June 2006, and data processed by writer.

In relation with the actors of violence in Southern Thailand, it is not shame with the political violence in the 1960s period. During that time, the region was overtaken and controlled by the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO). However, according to Rahimmula (2003), the violence in the period from 1989-2003 was related to problems with criminal elements in the Southern border provinces of Thailand and conflicts among local elites in these areas. Meanwhile, the violence in the period of 2004-2006 is not related with organization without symbols. The actors are more complex, covering the military, police, mafia groups, the armed militia, and the separatists. It is a complex situation and related to the power struggle among national elites in Bangkok besides the separatist conflict resulting from the identity conflict. However, it is important to note that there is a difference in civilian roles in the peace process between the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand conflicts. Some of the civilian elites in the Southern Philippines, both Muslim and Christian, have realized that the dialogue approach can reduce tensions between the separatists and the government. However, this cannot be found in the Southern Thailand conflict because both Buddhist and Muslim civilians tend to keep a distance from and distrust each other.

Nevertheless, the Philippines government approach to resolving separatism is different from that of Thailand’s government. The Philippines government uses a negotiation approach with the MNLF and MILF. Meanwhile, the Thailand government, mainly during Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, focused on a military approach although PM Thaksin tried to seek reconciliation through the NRC. These differences are described in the following table:

Table 2: Government Approaches to Resolving the Separatism in the Southern Philippines (1976-2005) and Southern Thailand (2005-2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>The Philippines</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Negotiation (F. Marcos, Cory Aquino, Fidel Ramos, GMA)</td>
<td>• Military (Thaksin Shinawatra)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Military (F. Marcos and Joseph Estrada)</td>
<td>• Seeking reconciliation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>The Philippines</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy for Muslim Mindanao</td>
<td>• Security problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seeking multiculturalism in Thailand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>The Philippines</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) (since 1989)</td>
<td>• Martial law 2004 and Emergency Decree 2005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Reconciliation Commission (NRC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data processed.

2. Problems of the ARMM

a. Budgeting process

The performance of the ARMM can be evaluated by how the institution expends its budget or its expenditure policies. The expenditures of the ARMM are shown in the following table:

Table 3: Government Expenditures in the ARMM Regional Government (PHP Million).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Salaries</th>
<th>Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses</th>
<th>Capital Outlays</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>National Budget Appropriation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2,848.60</td>
<td>540.60</td>
<td>1,551.30</td>
<td>4,940.50</td>
<td>4,083.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3,072.40</td>
<td>752.10</td>
<td>545.80</td>
<td>4,370.30</td>
<td>5,250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3,434.80</td>
<td>554.60</td>
<td>678.40</td>
<td>4,667.80</td>
<td>5,632.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3,894.30</td>
<td>572.30</td>
<td>514.00</td>
<td>4,980.60</td>
<td>5,612.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3,997.60</td>
<td>708.40</td>
<td>696.50</td>
<td>5,402.50</td>
<td>5,402.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4,115.80</td>
<td>1,001.70</td>
<td>467.90</td>
<td>5,585.40</td>
<td>5,585.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: HD for Peace and Prosperity in ARMM, 2003: 27.

The main problem of the ARMM is that it lacks fiscal autonomy. This makes the ARMM always dependent on the national government and lacking power in the implementation of its development programs. Although the development programs of the ARMM have been approved by the RLA (Regional Legislative Assembly), the programs and their budgets
require approval from the Department of Budget and Management (HDPP in ARMM 2003: 28-29). In fact, 95.2% of the regional government expenditures are financed by the national government.

b. Local Government Units (LGU) in the ARMM
LGUs regard the ARMM as an extended agency of the national government. Since the ARMM has no power in either finances or politics, LGUs tend to relate directly to national government departments and agencies rather than the ARMM. LGUs within the ARMM enjoy substantially more financial autonomy and independence than the ARMM. Under the Local Government Code (LG Code), LGUs have been assured of the timely release of predictable levels of national government funds through the IRA (Internal Revenue Allotment), equivalent to Total National Revenues. Besides that, LGUs in the ARMM receive 35% of the National Internal Revenues collected in their provinces/cities. The LG Code also provides a devolution policy to the LGUs, mainly the authority for LGUs to levy local taxes.

c. The Problem of Structure
The problem of structure can be explained as follows: (1) When the budget functions are still subject to national government policies mandating strict control, regional directors are prevented from implementing certain projects legalized by the RLA; (2) On the side of the legislative branch, there is a provision in RA 9054 that any regional law that is found to be inconsistent with national laws will not be approved; and (3) The ARMM becomes more of an obstacle than a facilitator of development.

3. The NRC Recommendations
The NRC submitted its report to the Government in June 2006. It contains reconciliatory political measures, intermediate measures, and sustainable measures.

a. Political recommendations
For its political recommendations, the NRC proposed passing a Peaceful Reconciliation in the Southern Border Provinces Bill to solve the problem of violence, and to build lasting peace and reconciliation in the Southern Border Provinces. To resolve the conflict and violence successfully, the NRC stated that part of the solution would come from a mechanism that would allow for unified state strategies in the region and another part would be a mechanism that strengthened the civil society sector. As a consequence, the NRC suggested that the government pass the Peaceful Reconciliation in the Southern Border Provinces Bill as a tool to resolve the problems of conflict and violence in the Deep South. This bill will establish three agencies to serve as instruments to cope with the violence in the three Southern Border Provinces. These institutions are the Peaceful Strategic Administrative Center for the Southern Border Provinces (PSAC), the Southern Border Provinces Area Development Council, and the Fund for Healing and Reconciliation.

b. Immediate and sustainable recommendations
Immediate reconciliation measures consisted of three recommendations addressed to the government related to ending physical violence. The NRC proposed the following: (1) that the Thai Military establish a peace force (santisena) unit, a special unarmed force comprised of civilians, military, and police in the discharge of its specific duties to keep the existing conflict from spiraling into greater violence; (2) that the state clearly demonstrate that it chooses to engage in dialogue with the militants, and ensures the coherence of its security policy on this matter; and (3) that the government deal resolutely with state officials against whom abuse of power complaints have been substantiated. There are also 12 NRC recommendations for Sustainable Reconciliation Measures.

4. The Acceptance of the ARMM

a. National Government
The government consistently states that the 1996 Final Peace Agreement, including the ARMM, has been fully implemented. The government has said that the ARMM’s failure to use the material resources poured into the region is due to a lack of human resources. However, the ARMM leadership has mismanaged the administration of the ARMM, which has resulted in corruption and nepotism. The leadership of the ARMM often reflects the domination of one ethnic group over other Bangsamoro ethnic groups and tends to prioritize development programs in provinces where the leader comes from.

b. The MNLF
Meanwhile, the MNLF leadership claims that the ARMM and the 1996 Final Peace Agreement has not been fully implemented by the Philippines government. Former Governor Parouk S. Hussin (2001-2005) said that the ARMM is not truly autonomous but has only administrative autonomy. A large portion of the funds from the national budget (86%), as many as 5.2 billion pesos, was used to pay the salaries of 30,000 officials.
Every election of the ARMM regional governor is always controlled by the national government. The Former Secretary General of the MNLF, Mayor Muslimin Semma of Cotabato,17 said that the 1996 Final Peace Agreement has answered the Bangsamoro problem but the implementation process is a big problem because the government created RA 9054, which is not in line with the 1996 Final Peace Agreement. The Chairman of the MNLF Committee of Fifteen, Hatimil Hasan, stated that RA 9054 was designed to be a failure and to downgrade the meaning of autonomy.

Responding to the issues of corruption in the ARMM during the term of Governor Misuari, the MNLF stated that this is only a stigma to destroy the credibility of the MNLF. It is written under the paragraph 15 of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement that the national government is obliged to recommend to Congress a supplemental budget over and above the regular budget for the autonomous region intended to fund the intensive reconstruction and rehabilitation of all the communities ravaged by war in the 1970s. This was never complied to by the Philippines government. The Philippine Congress did not pass a supplemental budget for this purpose.

c. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front
Chairman Salamat Hasyim mentioned that the creation of the ARMM is part of the counter insurgency program.11 The conception behind its formation was not to solve the problems of the Bangsamoro Muslims but to appease and pacify them. One of the founders of MILF, Alim Muhammad Oemar Pasigan, said that a small part of the Bangsamoro people were included and felt happy in the ARMM, but the majority were not happy with the ARMM.12 Datu Michael O. Mastura, one of former MILF panel advisors, said that the ARMM only resolves the MNLF problem, not the Bangsamoro problem. The 1996 Final Peace Agreement only talked about power sharing and political structures without talking about how to resolve the main roots of the conflict.

d. Civil Society Perspective
By setting up the ARMM, the national government showed to the world that these Muslims are not capable of managing their own government.13 The ARMM is an extension of the national government in the area of the Bangsamoro homeland.14 The national government set up the ARMM as an alternative for Bangsamoro but it has failed because it is still part of the Philippines political mainstream. Accusations of corruption and bad governance in the ARMM are partly correct, but the national government also shares the blame for tolerating it.15 There is insincerity on the part of both the MNLF and the Philippines Government in implementing the 1996 FPA and the ARMM.16 The MNLF accepted autonomy but they want to have political autonomy not just administrative autonomy.17 They insist on having more power but the government ignores them, since the government knows it is beyond the ability of the national government to extend political autonomy to any regional government.

5. The Response to the NRC Recommendations

The following section is a description of the acceptance of the NRC as an institution and the acceptance of its recommendations.

a. Trust building
There are a number of critical questions that should be asked of the NRC concerning its political solutions:19 (1) Who will be involved in the government establishment of the peaceful strategic administrative center or who will participate in its establishment?; (2) Who will be appointed to engage community participation if the government sets up the Area Development Council for the Southern Border Provinces and what is the extent of their authority and function?; and (3) Where does the Fund comes from, to what extent the local people will have the authority over the funds, and what will be the mechanism to receive and expend funds? For the first, a political solution is very important to resolve the violence in the Deep South, but the most important issue is how to deal with the problem of distrust between Malay-Muslims and the government. The second is related to power relations between the government and the Malay-Muslim. If the central government still has control over these institutions, they will become only symbolic. The third is related to people. If the authorities from Bangkok take over the power in these institutions, Malay-Muslims will not trust these institutions since they will regard them as new tools of pacification.

b. The NRC recommendations have no power
Malay-Muslims welcomed the NRC. However, they were displeased since they did not believe that the NRC could achieve their rights and aspirations for them.21 The NRC only researched the problem of the violence in three Southern Border Provinces and then made recommendations to the government on how to deal with those problems. It was far from addressing the violence and establishing peace because the NRC lacked enough power and authority to implement these policies. Although the Commission did not succeed in stopping the violence in the three Southern provinces,
the NRC succeeded in opening a public discourse and reviving the dialogue between the Thai government and Malay-Muslims.

c. Using the Malay language as a working language is impossible

Another informant, Amporn Mardent, from Walailak University (WU), said that the NRC recommendation of using the Malay language as an additional official language cannot possibly be implemented by the government. The Thai government cannot accept any other language as the official language except the Thai Language from the perspective of Thai nationality.23 This opinion was proven when the President of Privy Council rejected the NRC proposal that Malay be used as a second working language.24 He was followed by Prime Minister Thaksin, who said that the only official language is Thai although the use of other languages would be promoted.25

d. The NRC does not talk about autonomy

According to one NRC commissioner, a lost NRC recommendation was to grant regional autonomy to the Malay-Muslims.26 The aspirations of Malay-Muslim people in the present time still follow the thoughts of Hadji Sulong, who demanded autonomy based on their distinctive culture. Nevertheless, the term autonomy is not known in the Thai language, which translates autonomy as independence. According to Assoc. Prof. Surichai Wungaeo, the NRC does not include autonomy because it is outside of Thailand’s constitutional framework.27 Meanwhile, Dr. Prawase Wase stated that the political recommendations of NRC are close to autonomy.28

e. The Government still uses security measures

Prime Minister Thaksin’s decision to give Army Chief General Sonthi Boonyaratglin full authority to deal with the restive Deep South generated a mix of concern and hope among the Southern leaders.29 Dr Worawit Barru said that local Muslim residents do not want to stay close to soldiers, only the Buddhist-Thais who want protection. This policy indicated that the government ignored the NRC’s recommendations.

6. Indicators of Resolving the Separatism and Peace Building

a. Detainment of Former ARMM Governor and MNLF Chairman, Nur Misuari

Chairman Misuari held a Bangsamoro National Peoples Congress in Silangkang, Parang Sulu to invalidate the 26 November 2001 ARMM election. The congress declared the MNLF’s readiness to fight for the self-determination. After that, the MNLF fighters waged a war against the AFP on 19 November 2001. The heavy war forced Chairman Misuari to flee to Sabah on 24 November 2001. Then he was arrested by Malaysian Police while entering Jamperas, a former MNLF foreign base. He was jailed for three weeks on an alleged case of illegal entry. After 45 days in Malaysian detention, he was sent to the Philippines on 7 January 2002. Finally, he was put in jail in Fort Santo Domingo, Santa Rosa Laguna.

b. The War in the ARMM Provinces

The kidnapping incident by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sipadan was used by the President Estrada to weed out the terrorism linked to the MILF and the ASG. President Joseph Estrada declared an all-out war against the MILF on 21 March 2000. The bloody war lasted until 31 May 2000 in the provinces of Lanal del Norte, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Basilan, and Cotabato City.30 Meanwhile, President Arroyo launched a selective all-out war against the MILF, which she justified with the need to fight against terrorist cells that were hiding in MILF territories. On 11 February 2003, the Government declared an all-out war against the MILF, while the Bangsamoro was celebrating the Idul Adha festival.31 While the MILF was still engaged in peace negotiations with the Philippines Government brokered by Malaysia during this crucial period, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) attacked the MNLF in Sulu. This began when a 500-strong MNLF Misuari group under Habier Malik attacked an army post in Panamao, Sulu on 6 February 2005.32 Fresh hostilities between the MNLF and the AFP erupted again on 11 November 2005 when the AFP pursued the ASG elements of Commander Radullan Sahiron.33 The MNLF areas covering Barangays Marang, Talibang, Pansul, Bakud, and Kagay in Indanan Municipality were bombarded by the marines and scout rangers.

c. Poverty in ARMM Provinces

The incidence of people living below the poverty line in the ARMM provinces has increased since being granted autonomy. This proves that the existence of the ARMM does not benefit the Moro people and resolve the Moro problem. According to the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), 72% of ARMM people lived below the poverty threshold in 2005. The literacy rate of about 72% is lower than national literacy rate of 92%. This is attributed to low family income, poor health and nutritional status. Half of national roads are still unpaved, and only half of the total number of households have electricity.34 Furthermore, Sulu, one of the ARMM provinces, is the poorest in the Philippines.
According to the Human Development Report for the ARMM (2003: 18), the ARMM as a whole is much poorer than other areas. Critically, the poorest segments within the Region suffer from extreme poverty, making it more difficult for households and communities to meet their needs for basic services and seriously limiting the region’s capacity to answer to those needs. Data from the NSCB 2000 Family Income and Expenditures Survey show that the poverty incidence increased by seven percentage points in only three years, from 55.6% in 1997 to 62.9% in 2000 (HDR 2003: 18). For the ARMM, the poverty incidence in 2000 was high even in urban areas (51%), although still lower than it was in rural areas (68.2%).

7. The Violence in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand

a. Root Causes and Main Causes of the Conflict
Violence in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand according to the NRC Report (2006) arises from three stratum conditions. The first is in the level of the individual: these are unconstrained abuses of administrative power and the use of violence by militants. The second is the structural level. Meanwhile, the third level consists of cultural conditions that include the specific religious and ethnic traits particular to the region, i.e. Islamic religion, Malay culture, and the history of Pattani. All of the three social conditions are regarded as the roots of the conflict since Malay Muslims regard the Thai government as a colonial government. The history of Pattani under Thailand is marked with rebellion since they want to keep their boundaries separate from the Thai majority (Pitsuwan 1985: 279, Janchitfah 2004: 45). Muslim separatism by both Malay Muslims and the Bangsamoro is inspired and legitimized in religious terms rather than economic terms (Che Man 1990: 14).

The majority (82%) of the violence from 1993 to 2005 occurred since 2004 or during the administration of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The incidents of violence increased greatly in 2004 and 2005, with 1,843 and 1,703 incidences taking place in those years, respectively. However, one of NRC commissioners stated that there had been more than 2,000 murders by civilians in three Southern Border Provinces. The power struggle between Prime Minister Thaksin and the monarchy’s political network is regarded as a cause of the conflict. This is because Prime Minister Thaksin disbanded the Administrative Center for the Southern Border Provinces dominated by members of the monarchy’s network, such as General Sophon Suphaphon and General Surayud Chulanond.

b. The NRC and protracted violence
The establishment of the NRC did not mean that the violence ended; it even increased because the government declared the Emergency Decree on 19 July 2005. The main violence after establishing the NRC can be summarized as follows: (1) 14 July 2005—an estimated 60 insurgents carried out coordinated attacks on Yala city, detonating five bombs in close succession, including one at a power station that blacked out the city for over an hour; (2) 29 August 2005—Satopa Yusoh, the Imam of Lahan, Sungai Padi, Narathiwat, was gunned down in front of his home. Before dying, the Imam said to villagers that soldiers killed him and refused to be brought to the hospital. Officials argued that separatist militants killed the Imam to turn villagers against the government. Citing distrust of the authorities, almost 100 women and children created a human barricade to prevent officials from entering the village; (3) 30 August 2005—At least 131 Thai Muslim villagers in Rusoh and Joh I Rong, Narathiwat, fled their homes for northern Malaysia. The government and military said that the asylum seekers are separatists and their supporters who are trying to discredit the authorities. Some who fled admitted that they were sought by authorities but feared unfair treatment; (4) 21 September 2005—two marines were taken hostage by villagers in Tanyonglimo, Narathiwat, immediately after assailants attacked the village teashop killing two persons. The government stated that suspected insurgents entered the village and killed the two marines. The villagers arrested two marines since they believed that these soldiers were attacking the villagers. They held the two marines hostage while waiting to be interviewed by the Malaysian press. However, during the negotiation process, someone entered the hostage room and brutally killed these two people; (5) 16 November 2005—authorities waited 11 hours before entering a crime scene where the Sudin Awang Besar family was brutally gunned down in Kampong Katong Mukim Buanga, Legih, Narathiwat. The government said that members of the separatist group were the perpetrators. Meanwhile, an

| Table 4: Population and Poverty Incidence in ARMM. |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
|             |                   | 1997      | 2000      |
| The Philippines | 76,498,735      | 25.1      | 27.5      |
| NCR         | 9,932,260        | 3.5       | 5.6       |
| Lanao del Sur  | 669,072         | 40.8      | 48.1      |
| Maguindanao  | 801,102          | 24.0      | 36.2      |
| Sulu         | 619,668          | 87.5      | 92        |
| Tawi-Tawi    | 322,317          | 52.1      | 75.3      |
| Basilan      | 332,828          | 30.2      | 63.0      |

Source: Bacani 2004: 77.
eyewitness stated to the Malay press that this incident was basically masterminded by the soldiers, and (6) 15 June 2006—one day after the celebration of 60 years since His Majesty, King Bhumipol’s accession to the throne and coinciding with one week after the NRC presented its report to the government, fifty bombs exploded in 29 places covering Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala, killing three people. The government said that the perpetrators were members of the separatist group under Runda Kumpulan Kecil, which has an estimated 3,000 members in 500 villages.

Implications

The effectiveness of the ARMM as a peace institution in coping with separatism is measured by the extent to which the ARMM has contributed to peace building and economic development. However, the autonomy of the ARMM is unworkable and impractical since it has only administrative autonomy. Autonomy has not sufficiently addressed the root causes of the Moro rebellion, such as ancestral domain, poverty, discrimination, human rights, and marginalization. Some of the provisions in RA 9054 as the legal bases of the ARMM are not in line with the 1996 Final Peace Agreement. The detainment of MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari, all-out wars against MILF/MNLF, and the high rate of poverty in the ARMM provinces have downgraded the ARMM.

Gurr explained the implementation of regional autonomy and opening access for all groups in a plural society (1998: 290-313). Theoretically, autonomy is a method of compromise between the state’s interests in maintaining national integration and minority interests in fighting for independence. The separatist groups are granted the rights to use and develop their local language and carry out their religion, control natural resources exploitation, use their natural resources and develop according to their aspirations, obtain larger fund allocations, manage internal security, and be involved in political process concerning their future. However, in reality autonomy often becomes symbolic, rather than true autonomy. Often, a certain level of decentralization and autonomy regulations do not contribute to the settlement of conflicts but only create new problems and confrontations among minorities or between the majority and the minority. This is the dilemma: the national government wishes to prevent the autonomous region from acquiring its sovereignty because of fears of secession, and on the other side, the autonomous region becomes interested in getting as many elements of sovereignty as possible instead of its full independence.

In Thailand, the NRC cannot be called a peace institution because it was simply an independent commission that had no power to resolve the day-to-day violence. The success of the Commission is measured by its recommendations to put an end to violence in the Deep South. The reconciliatory, intermediate, and sustainable measures recommended by the NRC are necessary conditions for reconciliation. Nevertheless, they are insufficient for building permanent reconciliation in the long term since the Commission does not include power sharing between Malay-Muslims and the Thai majority. Besides that, it seems that the recommendations lack enough support from the Thai majority and the government. The NRC fills a gap in the relationship between the Malay-Muslim minority and Thai majority. This Commission is regarded by Thai majority as siding with the Malay-Muslims, while the Malay-Muslims regard the NRC as a new tool of pacification. Furthermore, the government seems to have ignored the recommendations.

The political violence in Southern Thailand has a root in structural changes in the power relations among political elites and also power relations between Malay-Muslims and the government. Political violence can be caused by structural changes and repression by the state apparatus (Tilly 2003: 75). Structural changes, mainly to the political structure, will encourage changes in group organization for both the state and civil society. It will bring about group mobilizations among the organizations involved in the conflict. This, then, will lead to collective action that relates to the power struggle. The collective action leads directly to collective violence because the conflict is not being transformed into political institutions. On the other side, state repression as a reaction to collective violence will deteriorate the situation and directly instigate the collective violence. Therefore, the violence becomes greater and more complex.

To make the ARMM become practically autonomous, the following suggestions are made to the Philippines government: (1) use peace negotiations with the MILF as momentum to remake the 1996 Final Peace Agreement; (2) revise RA 9054 according to the 1996 Final Peace Agreement; (3) grant fiscal autonomy and more revenue sharing in strategic minerals to the ARMM; (4) give more authority to and support the ARMM in the implementation of Cultural Community values such as Islamic Laws, the Islamic Education System, and Islamic Courts; (5) establish a Regional Commission on Human Rights to oversee all cases of human rights violations in the ARMM provinces; (6) establish a Regional Commission of Truth and
Reconciliation and give it authority to realign and rewrite the history of Bangsamoro as part of the Philippines history; and (7) do not interfere in the election of the ARMM governor. Any solution that does not reflect the aspirations of Bangsamoro will fail (Jubair 1999: 262).

Meanwhile, the following suggestions are made to the Thai government: (1) implement the NRC recommendations; (2) withdraw the military and police from the Southern Border Provinces; (3) give more space for writing the history of Pattani as part of the history of Thailand; and (4) respond to the aspirations of Malay-Muslims related to power sharing between Malay-Muslims and the Thai government as Haji Sulong demanded. These demands are as follows: the governors in the southern border provinces should be Muslims and from the Malay-Muslim ethnic group, the Malay language should be taught in schools, all taxes from the Deep South Pattani should be used for the welfare of the Pattani people, the majority (80%) of local government officials should be Muslim, Malay should be allowed as an official language along with Thai, Islamic law should be implemented in the southern border provinces, and the Majelis Ugama Islam given full authority for laws and regulations regarding all Muslim problems and Malay culture (Syukri 2005: 94). Besides this structural approach, the most important factor in resolving the separatism of minorities is the acknowledgement by the majority of the historical claims minority people have on autonomy. This is a part of trust building between the majority and the minority as a pre-condition for reconciliation.

Using Fanon’s perspective (1963) concerning violence and decolonization, it can be concluded that the ethno-political conflicts in Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines are a logical consequences of colonization, mainly modern colonization or internal colonialism. The Muslim minorities in the two countries raise violent resistance because they have learned from the politics of violence implemented by the state. The Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand can be categorized as colonial worlds that consist of two groups, the settlers and the natives, where the settlers exploit the natives in the context of modern colonization. Any approach in these areas will fail if there is no transformation of the politics of violence and the colonial mentality of the majority people.

ENDNOTES

1 Interview with Atty. Ismail Mastura, Regional Secretary of Trade and Industry of the ARMM in Cotabato City on 28 September 2005.

2 Interview with Dr. Ate Macabangkit in Marawi City on 9 November 2005.

3 Executive Summary of the NRC’s Report, p. 6.

4 These can be described as follows: (1) Reform should be undertaken of the systems to manage land and resources as well as related property rights; particularly in public areas, the community should have communal rights to land, public areas, and local natural resources; (2) Solve unemployment in the Southern border provinces through concerted public and private sector efforts; solutions should be diverse and consistent with the needs of the people in those areas; (3) Enhance the efficiency of the judicial process based on truth, rule of law, and accountability, and strengthen society by allowing the public to participate in the upholding of justice; (4) Improve the Islamic legal system in the Southern Border Provinces by considering the partial use of shariah law in the region. Other recommendations are as follows; (5) Amend the administration of Islamic Bodies Act E 2540 (1997) to ensure consistency, transparency and clarity on the issues of management and religious donations; (6) Maintain diversity in the education system, enhance the efficiency of secular education and give importance to overseas Thai students; (7) Non-violence as the main approach of state policies in dealing with violence in the Southern Border Provinces; (8) Promote cultural diversity throughout all regions in Thailand; (9) Promote non-violent means of solving conflicts throughout the country as part of the Thai people’s way of life; (10) Declare Pattani-Malay as an additional working language in the Southern Border Provinces to facilitate communications between the people and State authorities; (11) Organize dialogues for reconciliation; and (12) Build cultural immunity against violence by increasing forbearance by arranging for people in the minority and majority to meet in official or semi-official settings conducive to a genuine exchange of views, including learning to listen to differing views points and finding common solutions together.

5 Based on the official report from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) in 2005, the indicators mentioned are as follows: (1) a plebiscite was conducted on 14 August 2001 which ratified RA 9054; (2) the National government has devolved 14 authorities to the ARMM; (3) in the establishment of a partnership in security between the ARMM government and the national government, Special Regional Security Force (SRSF) became operational on 4 May 2002;
IDENTITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

(4) **Madrasah** education is being institutionalized by the Department of Education in coordination with the regional government; (5) **Shariah** courts were created twenty-four years before the establishment of the ARMM governments through Presidential Decree 1083 or the Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines; and (6) total funding from the national government to the ARMM from 2000 to 2002 was 1.133 billion Pesos. Meanwhile, the infusion of socio economic development funding to the region coming from the national government and Official Development Agencies was in the total amount of 67.875 billion Pesos.

6 Interview with Director Kimpo on 10 September 2005.
7 Interview with Undersecretary Dimasangkay Pundato in Metro-Manila on 17 November 2005.
8 Interview with Dr. Parouk S. Hussin in Manila on 25 August 2005.
9 Interview with Mayor Muslimin Semma in Cotabato City on 27 September 2005.

Atty. Randolph Parcasio and the MNLF identified the following provisions in the 1996 Final Peace Agreement that were absent and diluted in the amendment of RA 6334 into RA 9054: (1) the formation of the **Shariah** legal system is only directory and based on Organic Law while it is mandatory in the peace agreement; (2) the appointment of at least one cabinet secretary from the autonomous region in the national government is made only when practicable and in consultation with the concerned sector; (3) the Organic Law dilutes the fiscal autonomy of the ARMM, which was strengthened by the peace agreement; (4) the Organic Law identifies what are to be considered strategic minerals that fall under the control of national government whereas the GRP and the MNLF agreed during the negotiations that such identification should be made only after consultations with the MNLF with OIC participation; (5) the Organic Law allows the deployment outside the autonomous region of MNLF members who have been integrated into the regional Police Force; and (6) the Organic Law compels the ARMM to sell its property located outside the area of autonomy. The above points are why the current ARMM is not the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. They are why the MNLF calling for a boycott of the August 8, 2005 election.

10 Interview with Usman Masong, former chairman of the Pattani Student Union (PSU), Pattani, on 12 June 2006.
11 Interview with Ajarn Abdul Razak Panamalae in WU on April 2006.
12 Interview with Ajarn Amporn Mardent, Walailak University, April 2006.

13 Interview with one student of UP Diliman (N) on 23 July 2006 in UP Diliman.
14 Interview with Romel A. Romato in UP Diliman on August 2005.
15 Interview with Dr. Ate Macabangkit on 9 November 2005 in Marawi City.
16 Interview with Dr. Camar umpa, on 9 November 2005 in Iligan City.
17 Interview with Prof. Zulkipi Wadi on 20 July 2005 in UP Diliman.
18 Interview with Prof. Zulkipi Wadi on 20 July 2005 in UP Diliman.
19 Interview with Dr. Uthay Dulyakasem, Dean of Institute of Liberal Arts, Walailak University on 1 May 2006 in Bangkok.
20 Interview with Dr. Uthay Dulyakasem, Dean of Institute of Liberal Arts, Walailak University on 1 May 2006 in Bangkok.
21 Interview with Usman Masong, former chairman of the Pattani Student Union (PSU), Pattani, on 12 June 2006.
22 Interview with Ajarn Abdul Razak Panamalae in WU on April 2006.
23 Interview with Ajarn Amporn Mardent, Walailak University, April 2006.

24 **Bangkok Post**, 26 June 2006, p. 3.

26 Interview with an NRC Commissioner in Bangkok on June 2006.
27 Interview with Dr. Surichai Wungaeo by telephone on June 2006.
28 Interview with Dr. Prawase Wase in Bangkok on May 2006.
30 AFP Casualties in the Three-Month Old AFP Offensives Against the MILF (as of 31 May 2000), by James S. Canatoy, Colonel (GSC) PA Group Commander, Press Briefing, 2 June 2000. Source: www.yonip.org

31 See Camerade Oris, the National Democratic Front Journal, www.butlat.com, opened on 12 December 2005. During the war, the AFP spent P25-P30 million each day for its all-out war. A large portion of this fund was suspected by the NDF to go into the pockets of many military officials in the AFP and the Department of National Defence. Also, of the millions that the reactionary government allotted for internal refugees, only a very small portion actually reached the victims.
An independent fact finding mission conducted by the human rights group Kalonaw Mindanao with the MCPA, Suara Bangsamoro, concerned citizens of Sulu, and Karapatan said that the real cause of the fresh AFP-MNLF hostilities was not triggered by an MNLF attack as the AFP claimed, but by a military-led murder of three members of the Padiwan family in Kapuk Punggul, Sitio Banuice, Maimbong, Sulu on 1 February 2005. After that, the Armed Forces of the Philippines ordered the bombing of an alleged Abu Sayyaf base in Sulu, claiming that MNLF troops had tied up with some 400 ASG.

Mindanao in the Grip of Terror; the Bangsamoro Human Rights Situation, position paper of the MCPA presented on 9 December in Bulwagang Rizal, UP-Diliman, Metro Manila.

Human Development for Peace and Prosperity in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, November 2003, the World Bank Human Development Sector Unit East Asia and Pacific Region.


They can be described as follows: (1) injustices arising from the existing judicial process and administrative system; (2) economic weaknesses where the number of poor people is high, as pressures on natural resources drive villagers towards poverty with no alternatives; (3) an education system which is not able to empower the majority of the people to overcome a variety of social challenges; and (4) the majority of the people are Thai-Muslims of Malay descent while the Thai Buddhist population is declining steadily.

Executive Summary of the NRC’s Report, p. 5.

Interview with Dr. Sisimphob Jatisimontri in Patani on April 2005.

Interview with Dr. Worawit Barru in PSU.

Interview with an activist in Pattani and Nakhon Si Thammarat in April and May 2006.

ICG No. 105. There were reportedly more than twenty bullet holes in the stairs of the imam’s house. “Yuean muban Lahan thi sueng mai tongkan ammat rat” [“Visiting Lahan village where state authorities are not welcome”], Isara News Centre, republished in Matichon, 7 September 2005, p. 2.


The Malaysian government permitted the United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Office in Kuala Lumpur to meet and interview them amidst demands from the Thai government to return some of them. The Malaysian government stated that they would not release the refugees without receiving a guarantee that they would not be subjected to human rights violations after their return.

Interview with a PSU student N in Pattani in April 2006.

www.jendelamas.com


Gurr 1998, 290-313.

Interview with Thaha M. Al-Hamid on 17 June 2005 in Jayapura.

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REGIONALISM AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: THE CASE OF THE ACEHNENE IN INDONESIA

Alisa Hasamoh

Introduction

Aceh or Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province has a population of 4,031,589, of which 2,005,763 were males and 2,025,826 females (Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS)-Statistics 2005, 1). It is situated in the northern part of Sumatra Island, part of Indonesia, with coordinates ranging from 2o-6o North Latitude and 95o-98o East Longitude with a total land area of 57,365.57 km (Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS)-Statistics 2005, 1). The province consists of 119 islands, 35 mountain ranges, and 73 rivers. There are people of many different religions in Aceh, including Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Kong Hu Chu followers and others (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of people adhering to various religions in Aceh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion/Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>1,972,541</td>
<td>1,946,363</td>
<td>3,918,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestantism</td>
<td>19,825</td>
<td>19,524</td>
<td>39,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholicism</td>
<td>2,331</td>
<td>2,327</td>
<td>4,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>3,276</td>
<td>3,407</td>
<td>6,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kong Hu Chu</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,998,623</td>
<td>1,972,230</td>
<td>3,970,853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Acehnese are widely known for their political struggles, both against mistreatment from the Dutch colonists and fighting for their independence from the Indonesian central government under the Suharto regime. The Achenese identity has been constructed from two related processes, the feeling that they are part of a particular ethnic group, and the feeling that they are a marginalized group within Indonesia. Historically, after the colonial period, Aceh’s natural resources such as gas and oil have been controlled by the Indonesian central government. Cultural and religious matters were also centralized. Not were only natural resources taken away from the Acehnese, but the Indonesian government also took away their identity and marginalized them. Their reaction has been in the form of conflict between the central government and the GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or Free Aceh Movement), which has struggled for separation.

Aceh is also been known as the place of origin of the undersea earthquake that occurred on 26 December 2004. The earthquake, which measured 9 on the Richter scale, took place at about 8 a.m. in the Indian Ocean 150 kilometers away from Aceh, and resulted in tsunamis that caused catastrophes in the coastal areas of more than twelve countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Africa. More than 150,000 people were killed or went missing in many other countries (Tibballs, 2005) and more than 250,000 people were killed or went missing in Aceh alone (Eye on Aceh, 2005). Anthony Reid, a historian who has studied Aceh society for a long time sarcastically called this calamity the Verandah of Violence because, besides the conflict between the Indonesian central government and the GAM during the past thirty years, Aceh also has had to deal with this natural disaster. The earthquake and tsunami led to the signing of an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for peace between the Indonesian central government and the GAM at Helsinki, Finland on 15 August 2005. The signing of the MOU was a symbol of peace and ended the violence that had been on-going for over thirty years.

The issues concerning Aceh in terms of its politics, society, culture and way of life have become even more complex under the social context in the post colonial period, the cultural context of the globalization age, and the effects of the natural disaster. Regarding their ethnic majority-minority relations, the Acehnese are strangers in Indonesian society. Their identity is perceived as having unique characteristics and being different from the rest of Indonesian society because the Acehnese have integrated Islamic principles into their culture and traditions.
Historical context of Acehnese society

The Acehnese regard themselves as having been an independent nation in the past that maintained good relationships with other European and Asian countries. Aceh was invaded by Portugal in the mid-sixteenth century and had to request help from the Ottoman Empire, which was the largest Islamic Kingdom at that time, and which sent a war ship to fight for the Acehnese on 20 September 1567 (Documentation and Information Center of Aceh 1990, 16). The relationship between Aceh and Turkey remains very good until today. This could be seen in the assistance sent by Turkey to rebuild Aceh such as supporting school and house building after the earthquake and the tsunami.

During the colonial period, Aceh had to deal with Dutch colonization in Sumatra when the Dutch sent the war ship Citadel Van Antwerpen to Aceh on 26 March 1873. The Dutch and the English signed the “Sumatra Treaty” in 1817 (Documentation and Information Center of Aceh 1990, 54) to divide their governing zones. Paul van’t Veer recorded that by 1914, more than 37,000 Dutch and about 70,000 Acehnese had been killed in fighting (Documentation and Information Center of Aceh 1990, 79). The bodies of about 2,200 Dutch soldiers who were killed in the war were buried in a cemetery called “Peucut” in Banda Aceh.

From the colonial period to the post-colonial period, Indonesian society was under the rule of the Dutch for a long time before it was colonized by the Japanese for three years. After being colonized, at least two aspects of the administrative system of Acehnese society changed: the fall of the Sultanate and the integration of Indonesian politics and administration with those of the Dutch.

The last king or sultan of Aceh, Twk Muhammad Daudsyah, surrendered to the Dutch on 20 January 1903, resulting in the collapse of the monarchy. The ruling system in Jakarta then was integrated with the administration system of the Netherlands East-Indies (Isa Sulaiman 2004, 2). As a result, natural resources were harvested to produce raw materials that fed into the national and international economic systems.

There were many Acehnese leaders who fought against the Dutch. Teuku Umar, who was assassinated during the war, was one of them. After that Cut Nya’ Diën, the wife of Tuanku Umar, became the leader and led the Acehnese army to fight against the Dutch until she became crippled and blind. She was later arrested by Dutch soldiers on 4 November 1905 and taken to West Java where she died on 6 November 1908 (Documentation and Information Center of Aceh 1990, 77). Because the Acehnese were brave and ready to sacrifice their lives in battle because they regarded the war with the Dutch as a Holy War, and as they were very skillful in using the weapons called rencong and klewang (Documentation and Information Center of Aceh 1990, 69), the Dutch were forced to learn about the Acehnese’s religious and political bravery and strength.

An in-depth analysis shows that the political conflict within Aceh was comprised of complex and diverse political actors. The analysis of M. Isa Sulaiman (2004), an Acehnese academic, lists the different groups in the Acehnese society that were related to the social and political conflicts during that time. He says that the main problems during the postcolonial period were not caused only by economic and political factors, but the causes were also integrated with the personal aspirations, disappointments, ambitions and interests of groups of leaders in addition to factors resulting from the complexity of the social context. These groups of leaders consisted of elites, intellectuals, businessmen and politicians who had conflicts of interests. Isa Sulaiman indicates the following important issues in understanding the roots of the conflict: (1) the fact that groups of noblemen and elites who lost their power as a result of fighting against the Dutch wanted to regain their power; (2) the ideology of constructing the Aceh State was created in 1976 by Hasan di Tiro, an important person behind the separatist group; (3) the economic system in which the main revenue from natural resources such as oil, gas and timber were not returned to the local economic system; (4) the policy of integrating and upholding Javanese culture, which was seen in the national agenda called Pancasila and was incorporated into the school curriculum, making some Acehnese worry that their identity might be lost; (5) the fact that the elites who wanted independence did not realize that the development process and the bureaucratization implemented by the government in 1957 had resulted in the attachment of middle-class Acehnese, consisting of the well-educated, businessmen and politicians, to the bureaucracy of the local government, which caused them to become supporters of the government; (6) the government’s reaction to the separatists’ movement, which was to use violence and injustice to address the problem through, for example, Kolahops Jaring Merah or the Red Net Operation, which people called the DOM (Daerah Operasi Militer or Military Operation Area), in which the government sent about 6,000 commandos to Aceh, and the 50,000 man special operation group sent to Aceh by the Megawati government from 2002 to
19 May 2003 called Ko-oplikham (Kommando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan); (7) the fact that the elites in Aceh society, including civil servants, businessmen or politicians who had suffered economic and political losses, supported the government to use its power in managing the conflict and violent incidents during the time when the GAM was in power; and, finally (8) that there were many factors that caused Acehnese to join the GAM, particularly those who were affected directly and indirectly by injustice, loss of employment in the towns and loss of employment in rural areas.

Acehnese Identities

It can be said that the co-identities of Acehnese society are the history of war and violence, the history of the economic and political conflicts during the post colonial period between the GAM and the government, the self-formation of being Muslim, and the struggles against adversity.

Special geographical characteristics of Aceh contribute to their physical identities such as their physical appearance and skin color, which are neither important nor fixed. As Aceh is a peninsula, it has been an important spot for traders and travelers from the world over to stop at and trade in. Aceh is also a meeting place for people from around the world. Some Acehnese say that to be an Acehnese, one can come from any race; anyone who lives in Aceh for long enough can be an Acehnese. However, being Acehnese can also be felt at many different levels. The first level for being considered Acehnese is that a person’s religion is Islam. The second level is how long one has lived in the area or if one was born there. The third level is whether one was born to a father and a mother who were Acehnese. The last level is a feeling of being Acehnese, which can cause one to be considered Acehnese as well.

Two people, two Acehnese backgrounds in Acehnese society

In order to illustrate the complex development of Acehnese identity, the biographies of two Acehnese are presented. This helps us to understand how they have grown up in Acehnese society. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with these two main informants.

1. “Our soul has no price and is cheaper than fish”, a biography of Schoot

This was a topic from the conversation between the researcher and an Acehnese nursing student who was in her last year in the university that took place after we finished praying together. Schoot was twenty-one years old. She was the eldest of three children in her family. She was thoughtful and she often wondered about things around her; she had a sense of humor and she always paid attention to the people around her. Before praying we had a meal together; the researcher remembered that while she chose to have fish, Schoot chose chicken, saying that for the Acehnese who live near the sea, fish was abundant and cheap. She compared this with her life during the violence saying that, “Our soul has no price and is cheaper than fish”.

Schoot was born at home in a traditional Acehnese house in Rumoh Aceh, which is many hours from Banda Aceh. There, they had no electricity and the road was simply a path. Schoot was not born to a rich family and had to struggle. She learned that life was not easy. Her parents were not well-educated but they always taught her to share; even though the family was poor and sometimes all they had was a few ears of corn, they shared the corn with people around them. When Schoot was three months old, her father got a job in a school next to their house. Before that he had been a rice farmer and her mother was a housewife. When she was young and not yet old enough to go to school, she often stayed with her grandmother and helped her gather fire wood in the forest for cooking. Schoot also helped take cattle to graze. Schoot never went to a kindergarten but since her house was next to the school, she always wanted to become a student and when she was a student she always got good grades. She also enjoyed Acehnese style dancing. She said, “When I see this style of dancing, I can tell right away that it is myself; it is being an Acehnese. I really like this style of dance and if I have children of my own, I will teach them how to do this dance.”

Knowing the world of violence, the DOM and the GAM

Even though Schoot’s world was just the small village where she grew up, it was an important place because it was the birthplace of many GAM leaders. Her first experience with the DOM and the GAM was when she was in her third year of high school. Schoot remembers that after the first day of school, her aunt took her to see a shelter where people whose houses had burnt down stayed; they also sheltered there from the bomb attacks that took place every night. Later, the villagers used the school as their shelter and they built bunkers there. Schoot said that sometimes at night she had to lie flat down on the floor because there was noise from guns all around from the fighting between government men and the GAM. From this, Schoot could see how ordinary people suffered from the violence. The incident also

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showed her that nothing is certain in life because the situation was impossible to predict; people did not know what they could expect for the future because they might not live until tomorrow. Schoot lost two close friends who were Javanese because they were threatened to make them leave and go back to their hometown in Java. It was difficult for people who were not Acehnese to live in Aceh, and even for Acehnese-born who could not speak Acehnese because when they accidentally met the GAM and could not speak the language, then they might be threatened. Women who did not wear a hijab were arrested because the GAM regarded the Acehnese identity as being Muslim and considered that Muslim women should show their identity by wearing a hijab and clothing that was not too tight. This was to show that the Acehnese are stricter Muslims than others, especially those in Java. Besides this, the Acehnese language is regarded by the GAM as another significant part of Acehnese identity. At that time, Schoot did not like to wear a hijab but circumstances forced her to change the way she dressed and she knew how she should dress to go to school. She felt that in such a confused society without order, anyone could become a victim no matter who they were, government officials like soldiers or policemen or separatists. The important thing was that people who were in the middle of the two parties were forced to suffer by both parties. Another thing that Schoot remembered very well was Rumoh Geudong, a symbol of cruelty during the DOM period. Rumoh Geudong was a house in Aceh where suspects were brought by officials to be tortured and killed; later the house was burnt down by villagers. Being a nursing student, Schoot had a chance to see patients who were mentally ill as a result of losing their family members, such as husbands, fathers, mothers, wives or children, due to the violent situation. Schoot observed that most GAM members were not very well educated and were poor. Schoot also had a bitter experience and often cried when she thought or talked about the burning of schools because, during the unrest period, schools were often burnt and the news always made her worried and unhappy. In addition to good memories about her school when she was young, Schoot also remembered that living in a house next to a school worried her because she thought that a fire burning the school could easily spread and burn her house, too. One evening when she heard the news about the burning of her school, she was shocked. She witnessed it with her own eyes on her school. She saw that the wooden doors of her school had been burnt and she also saw that mosquito repellant sticks and matches had been dropped there. However, the school was not totally burnt because, except for the doors, the structure of the school house was concrete. The news report said that the arsonist lived opposite to her house; he was a GAM member and, furthermore, he was her teacher when she was in high school. Schoot said that most GAM members were opponents of the government. This person was not just an ordinary member, he was the treasurer of the group. Later there were conflicts about the group’s income and money collection and he escaped to the forest. He appeared again when there was a big flood to visit his wife. Schoot saw him with a long beard and in ragged clothes carrying a big gun and a pack of bullets hanging from his shoulder. He even came to her house to say hello to her parents even though they were neighbors and never talked to each other before. After that, Schoot never saw this neighbor again. Schoot’s mother said that he was killed in the forest because of a conflict among group members. His wife later told Schoot’s mother that she was raped by a GAM member.

A nurse who had to do a doctor’s job during the earthquake and tsunami

During her second year of study, in addition to struggling amidst the violence in Aceh, she had to act as a doctor during the tsunami disaster. She said that a lot of people were injured and killed in the disaster. She had to deliver a baby without any medical instruments since they were all swept away by the tsunami. Schoot recounted what she did in the situation, “Imagine that at that time I was a second year nursing student. I had only a little knowledge but the situation forced me to help the injured without any medical instruments as they were all washed away by the tsunami. Just imagine what I would do.”

Soon after the tsunami, volunteers were needed to help people injured in the incident. Schoot volunteered to help even though she knew that her knowledge and experience were limited. However, people turned to her with hope because she was a nursing student; many doctors and nurses were killed in the disaster so it was necessary for Schoot to act like a doctor. People showed her medicines and asked what the medicines were for but Schoot knew only three kinds of medicine: paracetamol, vitamin C, and antibiotics. She felt sorry that she knew so little. When the situation improved, she went back home with a large book about medicines and she read it and memorized all that was written about the medicines in the book. The disaster made Schoot realize the value of being a nurse because during that time everybody, adults, children and even soldiers, asked her for help. In a normal situation, soldiers were usually very proud but during the disaster big men in uniforms came to her for help. This made her feel good and she thought that she could be superior to the big men in uniforms.
Another thing Schoot found was that many Acehnese became mentally ill as a result of the tsunami taking the lives of their beloved family members. In the opposite way, people who had been mentally ill as a result of the political violence became mentally well after the tsunami. Schoot did not know why.

**The process of growing up as a Muslim in Acehnese society**

Schoot said that in Acehnese society, even though most people were Muslims, not all of them were strict. Some of her friends who graduated from the School of Islamic Studies never prayed. For her, belief and faith in Allah did not happen easily. Schoot herself did not grow up in an *Ulamah* family and went to a general school. When she was to begin secondary school, she chose to go to the one that did not require her to wear a veil. However, she had to wear it when the violence in Aceh became worse due to pressure from the GAM. This was only a surface change that did not represent a change in her heart. Her faith in Allah truly deepened when she participated in a special activity during *Ramadan* when she was in high school. It was a program offered to students to study Islam for a week. The program consisted of the philosophy of being a human being, Islamic philosophy, and participation in activities with Islamic youths. This was the time when Schoot realized, “I am a Muslim but I know so little about Islam.” As a result of this activity, she began to learn more about Islam and practiced reading the Quran to enhance the value of her life and to think not only about herself but to share with others around her. As a result, she began to wear a *hijab* because of a change in her heart; she knew herself and learned to be a good Muslim. For Schoot, wearing a *hijab* meant being close to Allah. This feeling made her feel happy and peaceful, gave her a fulfilled life and made her feel more valuable. In addition to this, learning more about Islam made Schoot reject the traditional dance that she used to enjoy. “I don’t agree with having girls do this dance in front of men. If little girls do it, it’s O.K.”, she said. Besides this, Schoot rejected some local Acehnese cultural traditions including beliefs. She no longer followed some things that her family members did, such as the rite during weddings called *peusijuek* and paying respect to Imams’ tombs. During the tsunami disaster, her grandfather prayed and asked an Imams’ tomb to protect Schoot, promising that if Schoot survived, she would come to pay respect to the Imam’s tomb. Schoot refused to do so and insisted that it was not Islamic.

**2. Pak Muhammad’s Childhood**

Pak Muhammad was born in the north of Aceh in 1944, one year before Indonesia became independent. There were five children, all boys, in his family. Pak’s mother was a widow with three sons so Pak was her fourth son but the first son of his father. Pak’s father did many types of jobs; he worked in a mill, opened his own coffee shop, worked in a small oil factory, sold clothes, and worked as a local trader collecting products from villagers such as pepper that he then sold in Medan. On one trip, he was arrested by the Dutch and put in prison for no known reason. It was during this period that Pak was born. Later his father was released, but when Pak was around three or four years old, his father died. Even though Pak was born to a poor family and lived in a house that looked like an old hut, they did not lack food. They had many different kinds of food such as chicken, duck, goat, mutton, rice and fruit. The environment where his house was situated was good because it was the first village where a private Islamic religious school was built. People in the community helped each other; they traded fish and helped each other clean or cook. Pak’s mother was an *Ulamah’s* daughter and all her family members taught religion; one of them was a teacher at a private Islamic religious school. In the compound, there was a *balai*, a raised house with an open space to be used as a classroom for teaching reading of the Quran. When he was nine years old, violence began in Aceh due to a revolution called Darul Isalam on 21 September 1953. Pak was in primary school at that time and the revolution caused the school to close down for one year. Even though he could not go to school, in the evening he learned religion, reading the Quran with about ten other children in the village because his mother’s family was the source of religious teaching. In addition, Pak had a chance to read many books in his uncles’ and aunts’ bookcases. After the return of peace, he went back to school in 1954. Pak’s mother loved and emphasized education and she wanted Pak to be educated. Before her husband died, he told her, “Let him have education; he is intelligent.” Thus, when his aunt, who was a teacher and married to a teacher, moved to Medan in 1956, Pak went with them to go to school. At that time, the school system was not very good. Older students taught younger students. But his background, opportunity to study at home, and love for reading gave him the opportunity to further his studies in many places. For example, he was trained to be a judge in Yogyakarta and he went to a law school in Lombok. During his study, he did many types of work to earn money to support himself because his family was poor. He worked as a construction worker at the same time as acting as an Imam for a mosque in the community. He also worked with different organizations. He won a scholarship from the Asia Foundation to pursue a doctoral degree in the United States of America when he
was forty years old. All these factors were important in molding Pak into who he is. These experiences became the social capital that later gave him an important role in peace negotiations between the government and the GAM.

Conflict and role of an Ulamah

Because of his experience in working with different organizations and his family background as an Ulamah, Pak was chosen to work in the Committee for Security Surveillance that consisted of retired policemen, GAM members and other stakeholders. The committee investigated conflicts and made reports to Geneva. From Pak’s point of view, the conflict, violence, and the emergence of the GAM did not happen instantly; they all took time and gradually formed into what they were. The causes included mistreatment by the government, the lack of official justice, and unjust laws allowing the state to arrest suspects and mistreat them by, for example, torturing them. These contributed to creating more enemies and a bad image for the country at the same time as forcing people to the opposite side. Another cause of the conflict was miscommunication between the government and people. If the government did not communicate with people, there could be no trust and when there was no trust from the people, problems could arise. For example, the village headman had to be a good person even though he was not very well-educated and not rich; the important thing was that he needed to be a good person and could be trusted. People did not need an expert to take care of their community. Furthermore, because Aceh had been at war for over thirty years, some conflicts were related to business matters like weapons and narcotic drug deals. There were also groups that seized the opportunities afforded by the conflict and usually they were behind the fighting. Finally, the conflict was caused by an unfair division of the proceeds of the sale of natural resources.

Peace in Aceh

“The tsunami contributed to peace”, was Pak’s opinion as an Acehnese who had lived there for half a century. The damage and loss caused by the tsunami made many concerned parties realize the necessity of peace. Pak said, “The tsunami contributed to making the GAM leaders who were in the forest recognize loss because they lost family members and loved ones in the disaster. They were shocked because each of the dead represented a father or a friend, and a part of their culture and history that was lost. The disaster urged peace building. The war may have killed more than 100,000 people over the previous thirty years but the tsunami killed more than 100,000 people in only a few hours. The peace process began in 2000 but the catastrophe was different.”

The tsunami was not the only reason for the peace process because it had been in the process long before that. Furthermore, the peace process was very complex with the root of the problem in the unfair division of interests in natural resources, which was a significant cause of the conflict. Thus, in the peace treaty signing, some control over natural resources was ceded to Aceh province. In addition, more political areas were provided that made it possible for the GAM to establish a political party and to have rights in the democratic process, especially in running for seats in the House of Representatives. This was regarded as a new page in the history of this region. This new political role for the GAM was expected to begin in November or December 2006; it would be an important challenge after the peace signing. It could be said that the signing “can be effective immediately; there will be no more fighting even though there may be some crimes.”

For Pak, another question for Acehnese society was, “Can we use this opportunity, and how? Otherwise, the problem will no longer be a problem for the central government; it will become our own problem. This means that we have the natural resources and we have a large share; we also have political opportunities. But how are we going to use these new advantages?”

Being an Acehnese in Pak’s point of view

Geographically, Aceh is a peninsula and therefore it has long been a meeting place for people from all over the world for trading and traveling. In the past when sailing ships were used, traders and travelers stopped in Aceh because most of Aceh is south of the wind. Some of them stayed for over six months to wait for the wind to blow back so that they could travel on to other places. As a result of this geographical attribute causing Aceh to serve as a travel and trading hub, the Acehnese are diverse in their looks; some have blue eyes like the Spanish, some have kinky hair like Africans, and some have brown complexion like the Tamils in India. However, looks are not important and those with a strange appearance are not alienated. Being an Acehnese means that you are a Muslim and have lived there for a long time. Thus, according to Pak, an Acehnese can be of any race as long as s/he has lived in Aceh long enough. However, the level of Acehnese-ness can be indicated through many factors. The first level for being Acehnese as regarded by most Acehnese is being a Muslim. The second level is having lived in Aceh for long enough that it has become your hometown. The
Identities of the Acehnese

The two case studies share the issue of the same identity. Both Schoot and Pak were born to poor families in rural areas and, even though their families were poor, both of them were supported and encouraged by their families to see the value of self-study and that education was an important tool for living and their future. Pak had more social capital than Schoot because his family and maternal relatives were religion teachers and the private religious school had a home schooling system. Pak also had a chance to follow his relatives to further his study in Medan where there were many books in the family for him to read even though his school was forced to close for one year during the crisis as well as when teaching and learning at school was not convenient. Growing up in an atmosphere of formal and informal education contributed to Pak’s profession as dean of a school in a university where he gives importance to education in solving the problems of conflict and in improving quality of life. Schoot was not born to an Ulama family but living next to a school and having support from her family helped her to overcome obstacles to education in her life. Regarding Pak’s identity, he also had another factor which was his good relationship and kinship with his relatives and family and good relations with his tightly knit community where people supported each other. Furthermore, the community was the first to have a private Islamic religious school. Being born and brought up in such a community has probably contributed to Pak’s flexible attitude in trying to understand the system of community relations connected through culture. The researcher did not find this identity in Schoot’s case. It is possible that being born in a nuclear family far from the community that her parents originally belonged to could have made her unable to see the relationships of people in the community that were connected through shared culture. In addition, the Islamic education system at the time that Schoot grew up did not give importance to local culture and this may have made her feel that some parts of Acehnese culture were against Islam.

Both Schoot and Pak felt that they were Acehnese with different indicating factors. Pak emphasized Islam as the religion of the Acehnese because he was born and grew up in a family that was strict religiously; language, dress and looks were not as important as the feeling and the sense of being an Acehnese. Schoot saw the importance of local dancing and could say that it was her identity as an Acehnese as well as other Acehnese people, even though she rejected many Acehnese traditions and rites. Both Pak and Schoot could speak Acehnese very well even though not all Acehnese can because they use the central language which is Bahasa Indonesia. The difference in their age may also make them see the world and society differently. Schoot was born and grew up in the middle of the severe conflict in Acehnese society and had to struggle with a number of uncertainties. This made her strong and gave her leadership when the right time came, and she loved to learn about new things so that she could use them in solving problems.

This study on the identity of the Acehnese in their social and cultural context indicates that their identity is complex, and that the Acehnese are diverse depending upon many different factors, such as their background, gender, age, occupation, education, and social refinement, that lead them to the way they think, their
opinions and their attitudes, which can be different from each other.

The last section presents three important aspects derived from this study as follows:

I. Citizens who did not take any side became ‘victims’ of the violence and were generalized as separatists: For over thirty years, since 1976 when the important leader of GAM group, or Has di Tiro, declared independence for Aceh, the ‘Achenese’ have widely been known as a minority group who have been fighting politically for independence from the Indonesian government. On one hand, the fight of the ‘Achenese’ was generalized to mean that all Achenese were united in supporting the government’s using the armed forces to solve the problem (see the detailed analysis of an Aceh academic, M. Isa Sulaiman, in this research report).

During the past thirty years the Indonesian Government has reacted against the conflict by strongly subduing the separatists with force, like the Kolakop Jaring Merah, or Red Net Operation, and the DOM (Dearah Operasi Militer or military operation area) by sending a commando unit consisting of some 6,000 armed soldiers to Aceh. From 19 May 2002 to 2003, the Megawati government also sent an additional 50,000 armed officials of a special operation group called Ko-oplihkam (Kommando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan) to Aceh without bringing other factors involving the conflict into its consideration, including the cultural and racial problems and complexity, as well as other factors which could be utilized in analyzing the problems. In fact, even within the minority groups there exist differences resulting in the ‘ordinary Aceh’ people who did not take any side becoming the victims of the conflict between the government and the GAM.

The fact that the government is sensitive to national security and unity has led to the government’s using the ‘ready-made’ approach in solving conflicts. The government’s generalization that the ‘Achenese’ are a single, homogenous group led to impartial citizens becoming the victims of the violence and being accused of being separatists. By becoming the tool of certain groups, the government ignored other Aceh minority groups who had no power or influence but represented differences within the larger group.

II. The conflict was not about religion; the underlying issues were much more complex than they seemed: The conflict between Aceh and the Indonesian government started a long time ago. Aceh is situated on the north of Sumatra Island of Indonesia. Indonesia has the fifth largest population in the world (as of 2000) with a population of around 211.6 million and is considered to have the largest number of Muslims in the world (Rahman and Rahman 1997, 119). Although the majority of the Indonesian population, 88%, is Muslim and most of the Aceh population, 98% or 3,918,904 people out of 3,970,853, is also Muslim (Rahman and Rahman 1997, 119) there exists a strong conflict between the government and the Achenese. Besides this, despite the government’s consideration of the importance of differences in religions—with 88% Muslim, 6% Protestant, 3% Catholic, 2% Hindu, and 1% Buddhist and other religions—and the right of belief in any religion, the conflict still exists. Achenese society is more complicated than it appears and there are many more factors involved in the conflict than are expected. Therefore, the violence was not based on religious differences. Rather, it was due to other conditions, including the centralization of government power, the inequality in the allocation of control over natural resources and the government’s distribution of revenue to nourish the national and global economies without a fair distribution of the resources to the local communities. Those who experienced unfairness and became unemployed in urban areas as well as those who lost agricultural land in rural areas became members of the separatist groups. The government’s strong reaction to the conflict using the armed forces to solve the problem became a catalyst in further complicating the problem (see the detailed analysis of an Aceh academic, M. Isa Sulaiman, in this research report).

III. The issues of languages and religions were exploited for political interests: The issues of religious identity and strictness have been used for the sake of politics, the acquisition of natural resources, and boundary issues. Although the majority of population in Indonesia is Muslim, they are divided into different groups regarding the degrees of religion strictness. For example, some of the leaders of the GAM are stricter than people on Java or even most other Achenese. The separatist group, in particular, tended to use its own explanation of Achenese identity for the purpose of building unity, forcing people to comply with them, as well as to exploit the situation for their own political interests. The Achen language is an important aspect of identity as interpreted by the GAM group who claimed that all Achenese people must speak Achenese, rejecting Bahasa Indonesia. If any Achenese people were found not able to speak Achenese, the GAM group would threaten them. Women who did not wear the hijab were arrested because the GAM group considered...
the Acehnese identity as being Muslim. In the GAM’s interpretation, for women, the signs of being a good Muslim are wearing a hijab and not wearing tight and revealing clothes in order to show that the Acehnese are stricter Muslims than other ethnic groups, especially the Javanese. Isa Sulaiman (2004) maintains that a factor that enhanced the building of the Acehnese identity is the national culture, as witnessed in the national slogan Pancasila, which is implemented in the national education syllabus. Some of the Acehnese felt that the adoption of the national culture threatened to destroy their identity.

As a Public Intellectual, I have three proposals:

I. Equality should be granted to all parties, including those who do not take any side. In trying to understand the aspects of the conflict, we carried out this research by interviewing individuals in Aceh communities as well as studying Aceh’s history. It was found that Aceh society, which has been in a state of conflict for a long time, is highly complicated and diverse. All aspects of the conflict must therefore be taken into careful consideration in addressing the problem. Although there exists a dimension of majority and minority, there are differences and complexity within each individual group, including the existence of people who are impartial in each group. It is unfortunate that these people are generalized as terrorists and separatists. It is proposed in this study that, rather than allowing any particular group to have special power or influence in controlling the economy and politics, the government should let every group have equal rights, including those who do not take any side. The government should also grant each group the right to protect its group identity, values and benefits. An example of the unfairness of this issue was the case that language and religion, which are sensitive issues, and basic group identity were used by the leaders to gain influence over the minority groups in order to build a shared identity and unity. Another example was the demand of the leaders that all Acehnese must speak the Acehnese language and be strict religiously. This leads to the question of how the new generation can survive due to the fact that these young people are not able to speak the Acehnese language because Bahasa Indonesia is used by different groups or races, who also have their own languages, for communication, education and all cross-cultural interactions within the country.

II. The government should make policies that focus on diversity. Policies should embrace not only structural differences, such as social class and occupation. The strong conflict in Aceh began due to ignorance of the cultural complexity, which led to government policies becoming the tools of particular groups. Other groups that have less or no power or influence have been ignored. The government should make diversity and complexity its priority considerations in making any policy. The government should not make economic or security issues, the key issues. The government should not make any definite commitments that could lead to tension because diversity is a very sensitive issue. In the real world, there exist delicate issues and moral loopholes that lead to ambiguity. The structure of a policy that involves diversity must embrace all of the aspects of real life that are truly essential and must be implemented in a gradual process. This study found that besides the existence of the majority-minority relationship, within the minority groups themselves there are different cultural aspects, values, backgrounds, and different social natures. The minority groups and individuals in each minority group should have the right to decide on their own futures. Equal opportunities should be opened to all parties.

III. The government should support the study approach. The government should try to solve the conflict by studying people’s real lives, which consist of thick details and complexity. The government should encourage the involvement of different groups of people by providing forums and guarantees of safety for people with different views to express their opinions. People should be free to speak and express opinions. The government should build this delicate experience by not receiving only one side of the information in order to be a society with a diverse set of values, with people who are able to defend[g2] their own identities and minorities and individuals who are understood and approved of by others. Each individual has the right to decide to take any side by leaving any minority group or any other social group with full approval of his status.

Conclusion

A question is posted in this study “How can we construct a new language which is neither a spoken or written language, but a language that lets community members communicate with each other so that they can coexist harmoniously?” The revealing of identity is the reaction to and interaction with the environment. A common identity can help the group members have the same values or become a cause of conflict that can lead to violence or negotiation for political benefits. It is concluded in this study that understanding that a group’s identity is complex and diverse on different levels—from individual to community to global scale—can be an approach to understand a society that has

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been engulfed in a severe conflict for a long period of time. It could be applied as a lesson for Thai society so that the Thai government does not do the same thing in the southern provinces and other places.

References


Firman (interview) and Alex Jones (Collated and edited), *Between Life and Death: Surviving Aceh’s Tsunami*. Eye on Aceh, 2005.


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Notes

1 *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province*, the word ‘Nanggroe’ is an Acehnese word which is ‘Negeri’ in Indonesia and means a ‘country’. *Darussalam* is from the Arabic root ‘Darul’, meaning a ‘country’ or a ‘gate’, and ‘salam’ meaning ‘peace’. Thus, *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam* means Aceh State of Peace. Pattani calls itself *Pattani Darussalam* meaning Pattani State of Peace. For Thai society, in the Islam encyclopedia, *Darussalam* means an Islamic land referring to a country that uses Islamic law in ruling the country and functions under Islamic rules. Some people define it as a city of good, clean and pure people.

2 GAM is a group under the leadership of Hasan di Tiro who tried to establish the National State of Aceh in the year 1976.


4 Formerly, Aceh was named the Verandah of Mecca (*Serambi Mekkah*), meaning the place where one prepares for an Islamic training course leading to a *haji*, a pilgrimage to Mecca.

5 Diën means ‘light’; she had this name because of her beauty.

6 He could read the Quran in Arabic, so many Acehnese believed that he was a good man.

7 M. Isa Sulaiman was one of those who lost his life in the earthquake and tsunami in Aceh on 26 December 2004.

8 ‘Rumoh Geudong’ means a large house; ‘rumoh’ is an Acehnese word that means ‘house’, the same as the Indonesian word ‘rumah’; ‘geudong’ means large and corresponds with ‘gedung’ in Bahasa Indonesia.

9 Indonesia has five national religions: 88% Islam, 6% Protestants, 3% Hindu, 2% Buddhist and others—meaning 88% of Indonesians are Muslims, and 9% are Christians. Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS)—Statistics 2005: 97-99.
CONSTRUCTING NEW STAGES OF EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM CHILDREN: IMPACTS OF THE DISSEMINATION OF THE IQRO’ METHOD TEXTBOOK ON ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

Yuki Nakata

Introduction

As well as formal school education and literacy programs in one’s mother tongue and national language, learning to read and recite (read aloud) the Qur’an is also considered part of a Muslim child’s fundamental education. In Indonesia, Qur’anic learning was carried out by people in the community before the modern school system was introduced.

A recent significant change in Qur’anic learning in Indonesia is the widespread access to methods for easy and rapid learning of reading and reciting the Qur’an. The most widely used textbook is the Iqro’ method textbook, which is now familiar in the pengajian Qur’an (learning activities for reciting the Qur’an and the basics of Islam) for kindergarten and elementary school children. Moreover, the Iqro’ method textbook was introduced to Muslims in Malaysia and other neighboring countries (LPPTKA and BKPRMI 1996, 21).

This development in the method of learning to recite the Qur’an is not simply a matter of educational methodology. In this paper, I examine how the dissemination of the Iqro’ method textbook has played an important role in improving and revitalizing education for Muslims in both Indonesia and Malaysia. I intend to interpret this theme from a non-Muslim point of view.

The Islamic revival or Islamization in Indonesia has been a major topic of academic research. Various studies about madrasah (Islamic schools) and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia have been conducted, however, the more recent pengajian Al-Qur’an have been paid little attention.

Most of the pengajian Al-Qur’an have been set up at each community’s mosque, mostly without joining the formal school system. Muslim children come to the mosque every evening after learning at general pre-schools and elementary schools that have adopted the national curriculum. Although a non-formal school, the pengajian or pengajian Al-Qur’an have an important role in fostering Muslim children. Iqro’ method textbooks have been disseminated through the establishment of Qur’anic schools in mosques for kindergarten and elementary school children by people in the community as replacements for the traditional-style pengajian Al-Qur’an.

In conducting this study in Indonesia, I mainly collected data from both the government and private organizations and interviewed several organizations who managed kindergartens and used the Iqro’ method textbook or alternatives to the Iqro’ method textbook. I collected data mainly in Yogyakarta and other cities for four months and spent a further three months in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In Malaysia, I interviewed several key persons at the Ministry of Education, Islamic organizations, kindergartens and the publishing companies that publish the textbooks for rapid learning in reading and reciting the Qur’an.

What is the Iqro’ book?

The Iqro’ method textbook is one of the most popular textbooks for easy practice in reading and reciting the Qur’an, not only in Indonesia but also in other Southeast Asian countries. A local religious teacher of pengajian Qur’an in Kotagede, Yogyakarta in central Java invented the Iqro’ method textbook around the end of the 1980s and founded Qur’anic kindergartens and Qur’anic schools for pre-school and elementary school children.

Traditionally, the first step in learning how to recite the Qur’an is to learn the names of the Arabic letters and the vowel marks. The second step is to learn how to pronounce the Arabic letters. After that, the learners can practice the methods of pronunciation and the recitation of Arabic phrases where the words already contain the vowel marks and also recite the Qur’an with the teacher. One of the peculiarities of Arabic letters is that the form of each letter changes depending on its position in the word. The Arabic language system is quite complicated for children and they need a few years to master reading and recitation of the Qur’an fluently.

However, the Iqro’ method textbook makes drastic changes to this way of learning. The textbook starts with
the pronunciation of Arabic letters and simple words that already contain the vowel marks so that learners can easily learn the recitation of the Qur’an. The tools in this textbook enable children to learn how to read and recite the Qur’an more easily than they could with previous methods, such as the Bagdadiyah Method. Many children who were around five years old took only about six months to master reading the Qur’an by using the *Iqro* textbook. The dissemination of the *Iqro* method textbook has promoted peoples’ interests and needs in learning to read and recite the Qur’an.

**Impacts of the *Iqro’* method book on education in Indonesia**

**Flourishing development of various alternative methods to the *Iqro’* method textbook**

Muslim students and intellectuals were key players in the dissemination of the *Iqro’* method textbook to almost all parts of Indonesia through non-formal Qur’anic kindergartens and Qur’anic schools, known as TKA/TPA (Taman Kanak-kanak Al-Qur’an/Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur’an).

Around the beginning of the 1990s, concerned about political conditions, the Soeharto regime shifted its stance to become tolerant of the social activities of Muslim intellectuals. Therefore, the dissemination of the *Iqro’* method textbook and the spread non-formal Qur’anic kindergartens and schools was smoothly supported by government personnel.

After the *Iqro’* method textbook was disseminated through the non-formal Qur’anic schools during the 1990s, many Muslims in Indonesia had the opportunity to consider more effective ways of learning to read and recite Qur’an. *Iqro’* method textbooks are sold at bookstores and daily bazaars or markets, so it is easy for Qur’anic teachers to obtain the textbook and analyze both the advantages and disadvantages of the *Iqro’* method. This textbook has been always open to anyone to use and criticize and some teachers invented other textbooks according to their own perspectives and viewpoints on the practice of Qur’an recitation.

Even before the *Iqro’* method, several methods existed. The *Qiraati* method textbook, organized by *guru ngaji* (Qur’anic teachers) in Semarang during the 1960s was invented before the *Iqro’* proliferation. The *Qiraati* method textbook was one of the references for inventing the *Iqro’* method. The inventors of both the *Iqro’* method textbook and the *Qiraati* method textbook operate their own businesses and the *Qiraati* method was introduced to the local religious teacher in Kotagede, Yogyakarta through their business relationship, who afterward became the inventor of the *Iqro’* method textbook. The *Qiraati* method inspired the teacher to invent a more effective method for children’s learning. The *Iqro’* method textbook was introduced to the public through the broad Muslim university students’ networks that extend throughout Indonesia, because the inventor of the *Iqro’* method was involved in Qur’anic education in Yogyakarta communities in cooperation with university students. Most of the students were active in student organizations at their campuses in Yogyakarta.
At first, the *Iqro*’ book began to be used mainly at non-formal kindergarten and elementary schools (TKA/TPA) that had been set up at mosques and other prayer places by university student promoters. On the other hand, the *Qiraat* method and other methods chose not only the mosque but also private kindergartens in which to promote the use of their own textbooks through their family and specific organization networks. Recently several textbooks for methods of learning to recite the Qur’an that are made in Indonesia have been used in Malaysia, Singapore and other countries.

**Growing competition among Islamic educational services**

Why did the inventors of alternative textbooks to the *Iqro*’ method textbook choose pre-schools to promote their textbooks? This issue is related to the situation of the pre-school education in Indonesia. Around 98% of kindergartens in Indonesia are private schools, and the attendance rate in 2003 was less than 20%. Along with the expansion of the middle class Muslim population, the numbers of expensive, formal pre-schools managed by Islamic foundations have been increasing since the mid-1990s and are expected to provide better quality education to Muslim children.

Even though they are non-formal schools, the Qur’anic kindergartens (TKA/TPA) using the *Iqro*’ method at community mosques also have an important role in providing pre-school education for children from various social classes. Both urban and rural community members have had a chance to reconsider their own pre-school education through the education at the Qur’anic kindergartens and Qur’anic schools. Some of people who used to be teachers at the Qur’anic kindergartens and Qur’anic schools began to look for better quality, formal pre-school education for Muslim children, as well as alternative methods to the *Iqro*’ method.

Inventors of alternatives to the *Iqro*’ method had an opportunity to meet these demands. Some of them began to run their own formal kindergartens and use their own original methods and textbooks for practicing to read and recite the Qur’an as one of the teaching materials.

As well as producing textbooks and other educational materials, Muslims in Indonesia have competitively explored better education for their children in various aspects. Some kindergartens, like the kindergarten at the Istiqral mosque organization in Jakarta, have tried using puzzles and toys concerning basic knowledge of Islam and Arabic characters in order to teach three- to five-year-old children more effectively in their daily schooling. They adopted the teaching model of the Creative Pre-school in Tallahassee, Florida, USA as the reference for developing their educational model.

One Japanese educational model is also popular among Muslims who have engaged in education in kindergartens and elementary schools. The model is the story of *Totto-chan* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. *Totto-chan: A Little Girl at the Window* (in Indonesian, *Totto-chan: Si Gadis Kecil di tepi jendela*) introduces Tomoe-gakuen, a private kindergarten and elementary school in Tokyo that was closed because of the air raid on Tokyo in 1945. This non-fiction story tells about *Totto-chan* (Tetsuko Kuroyanagi)’s experiences at Tomoe-gakuen through the eyes of *Totto-chan* and explains how Mr. Kobayashi, the principal, was always creative in having the children enjoy their school life. The story provided a chance for the Japanese to reconsider their education system in the 1980s. The book was translated into various languages and the Indonesian version was published in 1985. In Indonesia, university students who were engaged in educational activities at mosques and prayer places had a chance to read this book. They were impressed by the story, especially Mr. Kobayashi’s flexible and greathearted attitude to the children’s needs and feelings, and his creativity in daily education. Several principals of pre-schools whom I met in Yogyakarta tried to adopt Mr. Kobayashi’s ideas, such as making a used train car into a class room,7 and inviting farmers to tell the children how to grow rice.8 They are now aiming at developing their own schools as Muslim adaptations of the Tomoe-gakuen model described in *Totto-chan*.

From the above conditions, we can consider that the dissemination of the *Iqro*’ method textbook in Indonesia has had an important role in encouraging the development of alternative methods for the rapid learning of Qur’an recitation. Besides this, the textbook’s dissemination has induced a competitive atmosphere among people who are engaged in education to discuss and explore more actively how to provide better education for Muslim children in the present society.

**Evolution of the *Iqro*’ method textbook movement in Malaysia**

The dissemination of the *Iqro*’ method textbook in Indonesia has affected Muslims in Malaysia through government-to-government communication. In Indonesia, the government considers the *Iqro*’ method textbook as the most recommended method for learning to read and recite the Qur’an; however, whether the schools use it or not depends on the principal’s opinion, in both government and private schools. The Malaysian...
case is different because of the national system there. Generally in Malaysia, religious affairs, including religious education, are dependant on each state’s religious laws. However, recently the federal government is also attempting to control and reinforce Islamic education through the national schools (Rosnani, 226). The government has used the *Iqro* method textbook at national elementary schools (*Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan*) since 1994; moreover, since 2005, the government began the J-QAF program, which provides special Islamic education including the teaching of *Jawi* (writing the Malay language using Arabic letters, with five additional letters to allow for Malay phonemes (Rosnani, 130)), the Qur’an (reading and recitation of the Qur’an), the Arabic language and basic Islamic rules and morals, the purpose of which is to reinforce Islamic education through the national schools. Especially after 9/11, the government has reinforced its control of Islam in the country, which has affected the educational scene. For these conditions, the government uses the *Iqro* method textbook as a tool to reinforce the practice of reciting the Qur’an. Since the J-QAF program began, the government has introduced the *Iqro* method textbook as the free, standard text to be used by all first grade students at national elementary schools.10

As in government schools, private schools also are encouraged to adopt the national curriculum. Even though the Malaysian government exercises stronger control over private schools than in Indonesia, the schools still have chance to freely choose their methods and textbooks for practicing to read and recite the Qur’an. As well as the *Iqro* method textbooks, other methods have also been introduced to Muslims in Malaysia. A notable point is that the most of the popular methods of rapid learning in reading and reciting the Qur’an in Malaysia were invented by Indonesian Qur’anic teachers. For instance, the *Qiraati* method from Semarang, Central Java, was introduced in 1989 by an Indonesian who had finished study in the Middle East in 1988 and moved to Malaysia.11 He introduced the *Qiraati* method textbook to the schools of one of the Islamic organizations, *ABIM* (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia; Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia*). Since then, the *ABIM* kindergarten and elementary schools have adapted the *Qiraati* method textbook for practicing the recitation of the Qur’an. Recently, the *ABIM* schools began to use an alternative method, which was also invented by an Indonesian Muslim in Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra.12

Another famous method from Indonesia is the *Al-Barqy* method; the *Al-Ameen* Publishing Company has been printing a Malaysian version since 2002. The company had a relationship with the inventor of the *Al-Barqy* method, Mr. Muhadjir Surtvon in Surabaya, East Java. The director of *Al-Ameen* came across the method when he looked for some alternatives to *Iqro*.13 The textbooks are used at elementary schools under the *Al-Ameen* group and several private kindergartens. Recently, the company has developed original textbooks of easy and rapid learning of Malay, English and Arabic. These textbooks also successfully sold same as the *Al-Barqy* method textbook and distributed to private schools, including schools for non-Muslims.

This encounter with the *Al-Barqy* method textbook in Indonesia gave the *Al-Ameen* Publishing Company the opportunity to use and sell this textbook in Malaysia, and moreover encouraged the company to develop textbooks for learning other languages and broadened their share of educational services.14

Both the Malaysian *Iqro* method books and other textbooks for learning Qur’an recitation that are originally from Indonesia are published in Malaysia with a different design from that in Indonesia. They are modified to fit the Malaysian style by, for example, using *Jawi* instead of using the Latin alphabet, following the general practice in Islamic studies in Malaysia. Even though the books have a different design from those in Indonesia, the right to publish them in Malaysia is based on a contractual relationship between the publisher and the Indonesian inventors of the textbooks. The Malaysian publishers pay royalties from the sales of the textbooks to the Indonesian organizations and foundations who invented the original method textbook.15 If there is no agreement with the Indonesian side, Malaysian organizations or publishing companies have no official right to publish and sell the textbooks in Malaysia. These business relationships maintain an equal partnership between the Indonesians and Malaysians involved.

There have been problems concerning labor relations between today’s Indonesia and Malaysia; however, as is the case in the method textbooks for reading and reciting the Qur’an, there are also equal relations between the two countries. In other words, Indonesian methods of reading and reciting the Qur’an have recently had a significant role in improving Islamic education in both the government and private sectors in Malaysia.
Conclusion

The dissemination of the *Iqro* method textbook through Qur’anic kindergartens and Qur’anic schools in Indonesia has encouraged the public’s interest in reconsidering teaching methods and the skill of reading and reciting the Qur’an. Moreover, it has provided a chance to reconsider pre-school education for Muslims in Indonesia from the grass-roots level. Actually, the government’s intentions to follow the global trend of promoting pre-school education must also have greatly affected the recent development of private kindergartens for Muslim children in Indonesia. However, the spread of access to non-formal Qur’anic kindergartens that use the *Iqro* method textbook has also played an important role in promoting the grass-roots need for better quality pre-school education.

The process was not closed but opened to various perspectives to improve educational services for Muslims. Besides this, it promoted the building of educational business partnerships beyond the border. In Malaysia, both the elementary schools under the Ministry of Education and private schools are also recommended to use *Iqro*, however, there are several private organizations that have attempted to maintain their originality by using alternatives to *Iqro*, such as *Qiraati* and *Al-Balqy* from Indonesia, and by trying to develop original educational services.

Throughout my research project, it could be seen that the dissemination of the *Iqro* method textbook has revitalized and enriched educational services for Muslims in both Indonesia and Malaysia, by both the government sector and grass-roots efforts across the border.

References


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Notes

1. Interview with Mr. Bunyamin, son of the inventor of the *Qiraati* Method, Mr. Dahran Salim, in Semarang on 12 September 2005.
4. The total number of Qur’anic kindergartens and Qur’anic schools registered with BKPRMI (Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Remaja Masjid Indonesia) in 2000 were 56 and 156, respectively.
5. According to interviews with the school teachers of several kindergartens in Bandung and Yogyakarta from August to December 2005.
6. Interview with the principal of the kindergarten in the Istiqral Mosque (Ms.Nibras), who attended the teacher training program of the Creative Pre-school in Florida on 13 October 2005.
9. In Malaysia, there have been discussions about the lack of effective teaching methods for Qur’an recitation (Rosnani 2004, 195).
10. Interview with Mr. Muhammad Haji Syafie at Kuala Lumpur in February 2006.
11 Interview with Mr. Muhammad Masruh Ahmad at Kajang, Malaysia on 16 February 2006.

12 Interview with Mr. Zainal Abidin B. Abd. Latiff at Serembang, Malaysia on 11 January 2006.

13 Since the 1990s, the Al-Ameen Publishing Company has created cross-national Muslim networks in Southeast Asia and every Aidul Adha/Idul Adha (Islamic Festival of sacrifice) has conducted charity activities for Muslims in Cambodia (interview with Mr. Che Mazlan Saad, director of Al-Ameen Service Holdings Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur, 11 February 2006).

14 Various teacher training courses using original textbooks from Al-Ameen are held there every year (interview with Mr. Che Mazlan Saad, the director of Al-Ameen Service Holdings Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur, 11 February 2006).

15 Interview with Ms. Erweesbee Maimanati, the daughter of Mr. Asad Humam on 15 November 2005 in Yogyakarta. Interview with the inventor of the Al-Barqy method textbook, Mr. Muhadjir Surthorn, on 9 March 2006 in Surabaya.
INTRODUCTION

Art provides spaces that could accommodate the human need for individual expression and recognition. However, there are debates concerning who can do art. Some believe that to be called an artist one has to be a gifted person. Moreover, only sophisticated works can be called art. This misconception excludes ordinary people from expressing themselves through art.

The development of new media technologies has triggered the emergence of new media art. This form of art is the subversive use of everyday technology to express thought or even criticize the impact of the technology itself. Take ‘electroworks’ as an example. In this line of work, photocopying technology is used by artists to produce and reproduce art by combining mass media images and their own works. Electroworks can be altered through participation from audiences where they can add their own image to the existing work. The main goal of this work is the process of interaction between artists and audiences. Indeed electroworks challenge the rigid classification of high art by playing with the ability of technology to reproduce images and changing the relationship between artist and audience (Walker 140-141).

One of today’s new media technologies is the mobile phone, which provides instant connectivity. Mobile phone users experience being accessible anytime and anywhere. They could not leave home without their phones or feel disconnected from the world just because they have not received any text or call for a day. Being indispensable like the television, it has influenced how people perceive not only others but also themselves. For example, the mobile phone has become an indicator of social status; some people feel better when carrying the latest phone model (Thompson 78).

An interesting feature of the mobile phone is the short message service (SMS). One types in a text-based message—limited to a certain amount of characters—using the keypad of the phone. ‘Texting’ or the act of composing and exchanging text messages is a phenomenon people never imagined ten years ago. It not only heightens people’s need to be always in contact with one another, but also provides a ‘safety blanket’ for awkward situations. In his article “Bionic Youth,” Fred Guterl wrote: “…And when it came to approaching the opposite sex, instant messaging was a whole lot less stressful than getting up the nerve to speak to somebody in the school cafeteria” (43). This account shows a new form of social behavior especially among mobile phone users. Indeed texting influences not only the way people communicate but also how they present and represent their identities and intentions.

Given the limited space available for text messaging, users have to resort to word shortcuts or abbreviations. This situation creates a new language with its corresponding grammar. In non-English speaking countries like Indonesia, a message like this sample below (see Figure 1) would not make sense unless the reader knows the rules of abbreviating words for SMS (e.g., reading an Arabic numeral as it is pronounced).

![Text message](image)

Figure 1: A New Language, A New Grammar. (Private collection, 2004)

Texting provides a new way to express oneself and be uniquely recognized. Mobile phone users have explored different ways of creating images based on symbols and letters of the alphabet. For example, Figure 2 shows an image of a toilet bowl.
These creative attempts prove that people could appropriate and exercise control over technology which by its design has the potential to ‘dehumanize’ its users.

Text Art: Not Just Empty Words

Having been part of a community of ‘texters’ and observing what they do, I have taken an interest in texting as a cultural phenomenon. In 2003 I started a project called “Text Art” by collecting samples of text messages and images. The work began in Indonesia and continued in the Philippines in 2005-06 under an Asian Public Intellectual fellowship from the Nippon Foundation. In the early stages of the project, I asked people to send their significant text messages or those that were saved in their mobile phones. I presented these works in animated and printed forms. Through animation I could mimic the movements of the images as they appear on the screen of the mobile phone. Some text messages or images are purposely created to appear in motion as one scrolls down the screen to view the whole message.

The idea of exhibiting text in printed form started from an observation that people saved their favorite text messages. By their very nature, text messages are not only brief but also communicated at an instant. There is the twin possibility of deleting it or saving it for a period of time. To ensure that these messages are properly saved, some people even record their messages in a diary. They re-read these messages to savor memories. Indeed text messages could turn into manuscript form.

I was amazed by the variety of text messages and images that I obtained from the Philippines. Some commented it is a mobile phone service provider’s strategy to increase profit by creating interesting quotations or text images. Nevertheless some text messages represent aspects of Philippine culture, like religion. Take the following image for example:

Combining text and text image to express a religious belief not only shows Filipinos’ creativity but also their deep regard for their faith.

Aside from religion, Filipinos value relationships. They love to show affection to their loved ones by sending quotations and text images. I asked my research respondents why they loved texting. One said that they love to gossip and that they have too much leisure time. Another said that it is because the service provider gives unlimited text promotion. However, I favor the following explanation (see Figure 4):

Animated text messages again indicate Filipino mobile phone users’ creativity. It could be used as a means to express humor, one of the ways Filipinos cope with unusual or problematic situations. For example, at the height of the *Da Vinci Code* movie censorship controversy a scary yet funny text message got passed around. (See Figure 5) This case shows how aspects of Philippine culture are typed into text messages.
The main goal of this project is not the art works per se, but the process of interaction between the researcher and mobile phone users during the collection of text messages. I observed that the dynamics between ‘textmates’ (people who converse continuously via texting) could be an example of an imagined community as defined by Benedict Anderson. Different people feel they have something in common because they share the same imagination. They could have similar memories, histories, roots, and even the same pleasures through the use of this medium.

Is Texting Art?

People often ask me this question. First of all, what is art? Debates about the definition of art have been going on for centuries. SMS art emerged as a response to new media technology, in this case the mobile phone. It can be considered as new media art because SMS art is instantaneous, participative, experimental, and accessible. It is instantaneous because as long as there is a mobile phone in one’s hand, a person can create a text image or poetry. With upscale mobile phones, one can even create movies. It is participative as this line of work opens up room for audiences to join in the project. The artist juggles between being a creator and facilitator. As creators they initiate interactions and (re)interpret texts or text images as works of art. As facilitators they collect and distribute text messages and images.

The process of creating text images is experimental, requiring trial and error. Text images can also be done using a computer; but the outcome is not the same as using a mobile phone. With a computer, the result is a picture with finer details; while images created on a mobile phone screen appear like a mosaic of symbols, numbers and alphabets. This form leaves more room for audience imagination.

Finally SMS art is accessible because anyone who possesses a mobile phone could create one.

The main goal of new media art is the process of creation and the interaction between the creator and audience. Robert Filliou once said: “What ever I say is meaningless if it does not inspire you to follow up my ideas with your own.” His opinion clears the issue on the ‘artistic’ value of SMS art.
CONCLUSION

This project investigated the phenomenon of text messaging or SMS as art in the Philippines. I have argued that the creation of text messages and images suggests the mobile phone as a new art medium where the human need for uniqueness and recognition could find expression. By examining this new media form, I also challenged the traditional meanings of art and artist, and the relationship between artist and audience. The dynamics of SMS art blurs the boundaries between the ‘artist’ and ‘audience’. New media art forms like SMS promote participation and therefore allows us to focus not just on the work of art per se but on the process of its creation.

Text-image animation art samples are available on API website at http://www.api-fellowships.org/body/archives.php

WORKS CITED


NOTE

1 Filliou is an object artist from France whose works (poetry and drama) are neo-Dadaist.
Introduction

Arguably, the production of capitalist space buttressed by regimes of codes, signs, symbols and imagerinaries is most intense in a modern city. In this milieu, subalterns are typically accorded with little choice except to live by their wits. Their principal “tactic”, following Michel de Certeau’s (1984) suggestion, is to avoid the spotlight of the authorities (like the police, religious officials), and to live in the shadows. In this regard, sidewalk vendors are a particular breed of urban subalterns that live not only by their wits but also by sheer hard work and persistence in order to eke out a living in the challenges and opportunities thrown up in city. Curiously, the scope of their economic activities, which often lie outside the mechanisms of a formal economy, is called a “shadow economy” (or its many other permutations, e.g. the “informal economy,” “grey economy,” and so forth) even though there may be significant cross-linkages between them.1 It is within this liminal space that the subaltern attempts to mitigate, if not negate, their “stranger” and “outsider” status amidst the powerful strategies of surveillance, policing, and punitive actions imposed by the other side of this binary opposition. Arguably, it is also the legally hegemonic side of this binary that often vampirizes the energies and imaginations of the subaltern in order to sustain the appetite of late capitalism that, though transgressing nation-state borders at ease, is also anchored in strategic urban centres in nation-states. Put another way, “footloose” or “predatory” capitalism induces new kinds of market and instrumentalist rationality and entrepreneurship on a city landscape, of which sidewalk vendors are one of a chain of social agents who play out this script.

I am not an economist so my project was not set out to answer “economic” questions. Rather, I was more interested in mapping and articulating subaltern knowledge and spatial practices as embodied in the persona of the “street vendor”, and the larger questions of the routinization of everyday capitalism and social (in)equity that these in turn pose to the urban social fabric and governance of a city. By doing this, I follow in part the spirit of the kinds of research trajectories posed by scholars like Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Manuel Castells, among others. Moreover, I chose to adopt a research methodology—a critical visual ethnography (more below)—to frame the relationship between my informants, research assistant and myself. This approach, far from the characteristics of a positivist and objectivist research tool, brings into sharper focus ethical issues of power and representation of everyday realities.

To foreground the video documentary on street vendors that was produced as a result of three months of fieldwork, this paper will unfold in three parts. First, I will suggest that Baguio City’s historically and culturally privileged position is not insignificant to the political and economic contexts in which the street vendor operates. I then turn to a brief discussion of the research methodology and strategy deployed to “capture” the subaltern voices of street vendors before finally looking at the broader significance of some of my research findings in relation to the API research themes.

“The City of Pines” in Transition

Sitting at nearly 5,000 feet, Baguio City (pop. 270,000 in 2006) occupies an iconically prominent position in the social imaginary of the Filipino landscape. The streets, pedestrian walks and parks where vendors sell their wares still continue to bear mute witness to the planning aspirations of early American administrators. Unlike most urban settlements in the lowlands founded by the Spaniards before them, Baguio City was not created in the early part of the twentieth century “to facilitate the Christianization of Filipinos nor as a model provincial capital organized to foster the political, economic and social advancement of mountain peoples in Northern Luzon” (Reed 1999: 3). Rather its original raison d’etre was to be an elitist colonial hill-station conceived to service wealthy Americans, Hispanized mestizos, Spaniards, and other Europeans. Despite attracting early criticisms for the high infrastructural costs incurred to make “the city of pines” accessible from the lowlands, they were gradually overcome, and Baguio became the official “Summer Capital” of the Philippines for more than a decade until the First World War.2 Subsequently, in the following years, the city evolved beyond its elitist
trappings to become a major market town and health and recreational center, as well as a seat of educational and religious activities. Notwithstanding its almost total destruction by American carpet bombing nearing the end of the Second World War, the rebuilt city quickly reprises its iconic status as a popular haven for Filipinos and non-Filipino tourists escaping lowland heat during the “summer” months, and as a gateway to the rugged and exotic culture of the Cordillera Highlands further beyond.

As noted earlier, Baguio City’s inception and design was closely intertwined with utopian dreams of recreating on foreign soil an Americanist spatial aesthetic in the Cordillera Mountains through the combination of urban design, architecture, and landscaping. Further to the north and beyond the administrative capital of Baguio City, American colonial control of the “hill-tribes” of the Cordillera region was to adopt a more direct approach in comparison to the more Hispanised lowlands where “tacit alliances with established Filipino cacique families who had achieved prominence under Spanish rule” were consolidated (Finin 2005: 42).

By drawing a diverse range of hitherto geographically isolated (and sometimes neighboring warring) tribal groups to the city for education and for work, convivial inter-ethnic social relations were fostered in Baguio City’s cosmopolitan space. During President Ferdinand Marcos’ era of intrusive developmentalism in the region—in the form of large-scale mining and hydroelectric dams—these alliances were further transformed by an assortment of organic intellectuals, tribal leaders and social activists into an oppositional pan-Cordilleran or Igorot political consciousness and cultural pride (e.g. Finin 2005). Today, the legacy of the colonial American recreational and military complex—like the Presidential White Mansion, Teacher’s Training Camp, Camp John Hay, and the Philippine Military Academy—stands alongside a vibrant indigenous Cordilleran culture, and the temperate-like climate to facilitate nostalgic and exotic tourist marketing.

Accustomed to its privileged position as a tourist magnet over the decades, city leaders and officials are alert to any signs of numerical decline, especially when a host of local and foreign businesses and residents depend on this industry for a living. A case in point was the creation (in 1996) of the Baguio Flower Festival (or more popularly, “Panagbenga” in the indigenous Kankanae dialect meaning “a season for blossoming”) involving a showcasing of a selective mix of indigenous and lowland cultures to re-invigorate the tourist industry after the devastating effects of the “killer earthquake” of 1990. Since then, Panagbenga has become a recognizable trademark event of the city (albeit not without some local criticisms of the commercialization of indigenous culture) in the national tourist calendar. In early 2006 (during the period of my fieldwork), the unabashed and acrimonious public contestation between two factions (their leaders of which were the City Mayor and former City Mayor-turned-Senator) over ownership of the annual event became the staple of mass media commentary and street-level gossip. More importantly, this episode underscores the extent to which Panagbenga has become not only a highly lucrative and prestigious event for the organizers, but also strategic for advance political advertising and cementing patronage ties. For different reasons and at a much more modest scale, street vendors also looked forward to the month-long celebration as an opportunity to earn windfall incomes despite the preference of the organizers to create privileged spaces for fee-paying tenants throughout the month-long celebrations.

The large floating population of Baguio City is not comprised solely of tourists. Students drawn to one of nearly twenty universities, colleges and international schools based in the city make up the other sizeable component. Indexing its international reputation as a rejuvenated destination for education because of its cheaper comparative cost and cool temperate-like weather, even street vendors whom I spoke to are aware through causal observation of the influx of Korean (and to a lesser extent Japanese) students to the city in recent years to learn the English language. This has been accompanied by the conspicuous sprouting of Korean-owned businesses (e.g. groceries, internet cafes, restaurants and karaoke clubs) and churches within the city precinct. But perhaps the most telling indicator of how lucrative the service industry has become in the city is the recent opening (in 2003) on a historic site of a gigantic shopping complex called “SM Baguio”, owned by a legendary entrepreneurial Chinese-Filipino family. As elsewhere, the expansive chain of SM shopping malls throughout the major cities of the Philippines has not only induced changes in local consumption patterns in Baguio City but also has recalibrated the profit margins of local businesses and affected the everyday workings of city governance in terms of the strict enforcement of anti-street peddling legislation.

Whilst not central to the focus of this particular paper, the themes of social mobility and migration need to be flagged as well. For many decades now, the original mountain inhabitants of the locality appropriated to become Baguio City—the indigenous Ibalois and, to a lesser extent, Kankaneys—have been dwarfed by...
a constant flow of migrants from the “lowlands”—particularly from the neighboring provinces of Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pampanga and Pangasinan. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Baguio City continues to be a refuge of sorts. Its perceived mild climatic condition and comparatively better economic prospects in the wider context of a skewed and “anti-development” nation-state (Bello 2004) have been powerful motivations for Filipinos seeking a better life. In recent years, a significant in-flow of migrants has been Muslims from embattled and impoverished Mindanao situated at the other end of the archipelago. Not able to command a place in the “formal” economy, an overwhelming number has turned to the “informal” economy of street vending to eke out a living. The sale of second-hand cellular telephones, sunglasses, and pirated VCDs/DVDs appear to be closely and negatively identified with this group. Moreover, their public presence rendered particularly visible through their dietary habits and dressing (for women) has perceptibly altered the all-too familiar (and stereotyped) streetscapes of Baguio. Coupled with their comparative minority status nation-wide, I would argue that this particular grouping of street vendors constitute a sub-category of subalterns who have recourse to a different stock of tactics for urban survival.8

Critical Visual and Textual Ethnographies

The basic methodological stance adopted for this project was that of producing a critical visual and textual ethnography (e.g. Stoller 1997). Essentially, it entails an ethical attention to the politics (and positionality) of knowledge-production as well as to the dissemination and consumption of its “findings” to a range of social actors, not least of which are the research subjects themselves.

Because of the specific configuration of power relations involved (foreigner, non-Ilokano-speaking, male, academic), care was taken to make this process as transparent and participatory as possible. In the early stages of the project, my research assistant—a local Baguio resident who has both grassroots community organizing and research experience—was orientated through briefings and provided with background literature to read on the general contours of the methodology. Subsequently, based on a visual mapping survey that I had conducted earlier on the main streets of Baguio, I tasked her with conducting exploratory audio-taped interviews (semi-structured questions) with some twenty street vendors selling different kinds of items in different locations of Baguio. After these interviews were transcribed into English for me to digest, I identified six of them to be further invited to be filmed. In addition to these six, the list later expanded to include some vendor association leaders and government officials.

As these vendors had never experienced being interviewed before, let alone been filmed, particular care was taken to thoroughly explain to them the implications of their participation. Once their confidence and trust was forthcoming, this relationship was formalized through a one-page document outlining the objectives of the research and a package of benefits that they would get in return. Besides promising a small amount of money for their time (2,500 pesos each), I volunteered as well to provide unedited copies of the video-taped interviews as well as the final synthesized video documentary for their memoirs. As there was a time lag between the provision of the first and second set of videos, the duration was also to provide a period of familiarization for the vendors with seeing and hearing themselves on the small screen. Through my research assistant, I was to find out later that this was an important part of the process—their anxiety of being interviewed dissolved when they saw (and heard) their thoughts reflected back to them.

Even after the filming of the vendors, either my research assistant or I would continue to visit their stalls regularly to have short, informal chit-chats with them. Through this process, we were able to go beyond the formal setting of a video-taped interview to get updates and further reflections of their existence as street vendors.

An important part of this kind of methodology involved reporting back to the vendors the “findings” of the research. This was done through a public screening at the University of the Philippines campus in Baguio City nearing to the end of my fieldwork. All the vendors and local leaders who were filmed were invited to be present (together with their friends) in addition to academics, the media, local NGOs and officials of City Hall. An open forum was conducted after the screening. To ensure that the vendors could understand the documentary in toto, subtitling in Tagalog was also done for portions when English were used by the interviewees. Moreover, when the invited city officials did not turn up at the screening, I extended copies of the video documentary to the City Mayor and the Director of the Anti-Peddling Task Force, and invited them to seek further clarification with me about its contents.

In the days following the screening, the event was reported in the local daily, local weekly and national daily newspapers (i.e., Sun Star, Cordillera Today, Philippines Daily Inquirer respectively). For longer shelf life beyond the immediate event, I also featured these articles in a user-friendly blog targeted primarily for
media-savvy “Filipinos” and “non-Filipinos” (http://insearchofbaguio.blogspot.com). Another screening was organized while I was based in the University of the Philippines, Diliman campus, but at this occasion the audience was comprised of mainly academics and students. Interestingly, the questions raised were of a different tenor and reflected their middle class background in comparison to the earlier screening in Baguio City. An immediate outcome of the premier screening in UP Baguio had been to foster an unprecedented meeting between a recognized leader of Muslim street vendors and community organizers of an urban poor NGO in order to discuss ways of working more closely together on areas of common interests. It is still too early to say whether anything substantial or lasting will arise out of this nascent effort in building up a stock of subaltern social capital across ethnic and religious lines but I intend to follow this development in the months and years ahead.

Back in my home country, I hope to continue monitoring and theorizing about the kinds of responses and commentaries to the documentary when screened for different kinds of audiences (e.g. street vendors, urban poor, students, academics, NGOs, etc.) with the bigger aim of writing up an ongoing comparative ethnography of reception to the portable medium of a video documentary.

Research Findings

In this section, I provisionally conclude with some of my research “findings” in relation to broader themes set by API.

Globalization and Capitalist Urban Space

The kind of development in evidence at Baguio City is arguably a symptom of wider economic and political trends in the country. As elsewhere, the openness of national economies to global and regional trends translates itself into changes in the flow of commodities, the aesthetics of the built environment, and the commodification of urban space. More specifically, the gentrification of key thoroughfares of Baguio City (like Session Road) and the underscoring of the spectacle has impacted the levels of humanitarian “tolerance” formerly shown to street vendors even with the existence of an Anti-Peddling Ordinance. Put differently, the entry of non-local big businesses has compromised local knowledge and sensibilities through their attempts to reconfigure the use of urban space according to abstract globalist models, and in the process dis-embedding familiar ties linking commerce and social relations.

Street Vendors and Sidewalk Capitalism

Despite the many constructive suggestions of a study conducted by Sylvia Gurrerro some three decades ago (1975) in addressing the situation of street vendors in Baguio City, there does not appear to be much progress made.9 The contribution of self-help street vendors to the “shadow economy” continues to be socially under-valued and economically misrecognised by the local authorities even though their kinds of activities probably pre-date the arrival of the American colonial administration. Instead, the inability of the current “weak state” to provide gainful employment is side stepped and issues of legality take center stage over human subsistence in the context of a neo-liberal capitalist market economy. To be sure, some street vendors in Baguio do knowingly skirt around the boundaries of “legality” through the kinds of commodities that they purvey on the sidewalks. Moreover, some may even try to imbibe the subjectivities of capitalist discipline in the furtive spaces that they inhabit. However, to paraphrase Hans-Dieter Evers, these subaltern actions can be essentially characterized as an antipode to bureaucratization and abstract economic relations. It is a resilient struggle to survive in the face of constant and unforgiving punitive state actions.

Urban Governance, Violence and Social Justice

This leads me to the role of the state in issues of urban governance and social justice. Without providing economically viable alternatives and through their proxy activities of surveillance and the enforcement of a “street-vendor free” public space, city authorities can be accused of collusion with the colonization of the public streets of Baguio City under the sign of big businesses. Moreover, that the enforcement of these rules against vulnerable women street vendors frequently takes violent turns suggests that there is a gender dimension to this kind of urban governance based on expediency rather than rights to the city. To be sure, entrepreneurial street vendors have not been silent as suggested by the flowering of associations, usually along sectarian and geographical lines, to defend and articulate their interests. However, as the law currently does not recognize their rights and status, their pleas face a constant uphill and ad-hoc battle. In lieu of radical changes in legislation, social and political mobilization like those attempted by multi-sectoral groups such as ORNUS are necessary and praiseworthy counter ballasts to the forces and agents of dehumanization.10

Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community

The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows
NOTES

1 More broadly, as Karl Polanyi argued long ago, culture and social relations are not free-standing social spheres but rather are intrinsic to the spheres of politics and the economy. For more recent anthropological discussions of the nexus between economics and culture, see Gudeman (2001) and Hefner (1998).

2 Commissioner (and later Governor-General) W. Cameron Forbes is conventionally credited as the “father of Baguio” because of his key role in the early development and promotion of the city. The construction of “the Zig-Zag Road” involved a diverse range of workers from some 50 countries, many of whom later stayed behind and married local women. For historical details of the early Japanese pioneers to the Cordilleran region refer to Afable (2004). See Cheng (1997) for a brief history of Chinese pioneers to the region.

3 In popular discourse, the label “Igorot” signified “backwardness” and “primitivism” until it was re-worked as a badge of indigenous cultural distinction vis-à-vis Hispanicized lowlanders from the 1970s onwards. See Scott WH (1974) for an influential early statement.

4 For a highly readable account of American colonialism in the Philippines, see Karnow (1989). See also Abinales and Amoroso (2005) for a more recent update.

5 In the late 1970s, a short-lived attempt was similarly made through the staging of the Grand Canao (an indigenous celebratory feast) in Baguio City. For a discussion on this event, see Russell (1989). Panagbenga was originally held over 3 days when it first started in 1996. It has now been prolonged to a month in duration. For many, the highlight of the event remains the street parade of floats and street dancers along the arterial Session Road and which is televised live throughout the country.

6 Legions of street vendors from outside Baguio City are also known to make their way to the Panagbenga, posing logistical problems to festival organizers and the local authorities.

7 For an early study of the interplay between local political processes and the city marketplace in Baguio City, see Davis (1973, 101-134).

8 For instance, when I was filming a “demolition” of street vendors by City Hall officials one day, I overheard an Igorot onlooker commenting that these punitive actions should be directed towards “Muslims vendors” rather than “locals”. Although I could not ascertain whether this was a widespread feeling towards Muslim vendors in Baguio City, there were oblique suggestions among those whom I interviewed or had casual conversations with that they were keenly aware of the stereotyping of Muslims after the “September 11 terrorist attack” and were therefore doubly wary of their precarious minority situation.

9 For an excellent study of the life-worlds of street vendors in New York City, see Duneier (1999).

10 For a situationer of urban governance in selected Asian cities from a civil society perspective, see Satterthwaite (2005).

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SESSION VIII

REPRESENTATIONS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN MALAYSIAN NEWSPAPERS

Nina Widyawati

Introduction

Background

The term ‘migrant’ has some similarities with the term ‘black’. ‘Black’ articulates various elements of meaning. The meaning of ‘black’ is a product of colonial discourse that expresses inequality and also domination by ‘white’. In the era of post colonialism, the type of social domination has shifted from race to economy. Uneven development has made people migrate to countries that have a higher economic development. Usually, migrant workers perform menial jobs that the local inhabitants do not want to do, so naturally inhabitants sometimes look down upon the migrant workers.

Malaysia is the biggest employer of migrant workers in South East Asia. There is a paradox that, on the one hand, the coming of migrant workers contributes to the rising economic development but, on the other hand, the migrant workers emerge as a social problem. Communication conflicts arise due to cultural differences and problems of adapting to Malaysian culture. The differences first produce prejudice but later on increase to stereotyping and, accordingly, to a negative discourse.

One of the sources of the negative discourse and stereotyping is the media. The media is a powerful mechanism in the construction of race, gender and class. Media provide materials to depict identity. In this case, the mainstream media constructs and reconstructs marginal representation by ‘other’-ing the migrant workers. Normally, people believe that Indonesian migrant workers should adapt more easily to Malaysian culture than migrant workers from other countries because the two countries have similar cultures. In this case, the representation of Indonesian migrant workers would not be too negative. In fact, Indonesian migrant workers are given the worst representation. This examination of media discourses naturally leads to the question of whether or not there exists a potential method of intervention in the production of a discourse in the media and also in social practice that could be constructed by a powerful person or institution such as a media owner.

Research questions

1. How do the Malaysian media represent migrant workers who have similar cultures (Indonesia) and different cultures (Philippines, Vietnam, Nepal)?
2. How do the media produce and reproduce the discourses of migrant workers?
3. How do migrant workers and local inhabitants consume media text?

Objectives

This research seeks to understand how Malaysian newspapers represent Indonesian migrant workers in comparison with migrant workers from other countries. This study also wants to understand how the ideology of ‘inequality’ works in the media and in social practice.

Social Significance

1. To point out that the media functions as a machine in producing and reproducing the ideology of ‘inequality’. Hopefully by understanding how news is produced, media workers can produce neutral news and media readers can become smart readers.
2. To promote media pedagogy to sensitize journalists and publishers to inequality issues, especially the relationship between migrants and inhabitants.

Methodology

To answer the three research questions, this research employs three methods. First, a textual analysis uses Teun A. Van Dijk’s method of critical discourse analysis. This method describes how the media represent migrant workers. The second method is a critical political economy of media, to uncover how the media produces and reproduces its discourse about migrant workers. The third method is a description of media consumption.

The mainstream media that were purposively chosen for study are three newspapers that represent different owners: the Utusan Malaysia, the Metro Daily and The Star. The Utusan Malaysia is a leading Malaysian language newspaper that is owned by the United Malay National Organization (UMNO), the ruling
party in Malaysia. The Harian Metro is a yellow-type newspaper (a cheap newspaper that prefers to cover human interest stories over political news) owned by a big newspaper company, the New Straits Times group, which is managed by the UMNO. The Star is a leading English language newspaper managed by the leading Chinese party, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), a member of Barisan Nasional. For an opposition newspaper, I chose the Harakah newspaper, run by the Parti Islam seMalaysia (PAS).

The text used for the analysis was taken from the beginning of 2002 to the middle of 2005. The year 2002 is important as this was the year that the Malaysian government persuaded illegal immigrants to return to their home countries. The Malaysian government began arranging operations against illegal immigrants. In this operation, a large number of immigrants were sent home but some of them were legalized under an amnesty program. Raid 2002 was connected to the radical demonstration of about fifty factory workers who fought with the Malaysian police. This incident enraged the Malaysian government. During this fight, Indonesian workers rolled over a Malaysian police car. Such behavior had never happened before in Malaysia. The year 2005 was also important for the analysis because Malaysian government repeated its crackdown policy on immigrant workers.

Interviews were taken from many different elements of society. I interviewed one hundred workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Vietnam who worked in plantations and factories and in the construction, service and domestic sectors. To gain a perspective on the daily interactions between workers and local inhabitants, I interviewed Malaysian citizens. I also interviewed the Malaysian Trade Union Congress, the Malaysian Employers Federation, and the Malaysian Association of Foreign Maid Agencies. Ideally this study should have been completed with interviews with media owners and media workers. Unfortunately, I had problems conducting interviews with them on this sensitive topic.

Findings

Textual Analysis

The thematic structures of the analyzed texts were divided into four themes:

- ‘Personal characteristics of migrant workers: actors or victims of violence?’
- ‘Sociopolitical status: they do not respect the law or laws cannot protect them’
- ‘Socioeconomic status: they contribute to Malaysian economic development or take Malaysian jobs’
- ‘Norms and values of migrant workers’

1. Personal characteristics of migrant workers: actors or victims of violence?

This section on the personal characteristics of migrant workers is divided into two sub-themes. The first is the ‘representation of male workers’. The second is the ‘representation of female workers’.

• Representation of male workers

Male migrant workers are described as a group that is responsible for Malaysian criminality. These facts are obtained through word choice and certain rhetoric used to describe negative images of migrant workers. For example, the titles of news stories are oriented towards actors rather than events, such as, “Indonesian Citizen Luxury Robber Exterminated,” “Indonesian Gets Caught Plundering Professor’s House,” or “Police Incapacitate ‘Indonesian Gang’ of Motorcycle Thieves.”

Unidentified criminals are presumed to be migrants, such as the headline: “Man Indon Caught: Similar in Appearance to Rosli’s Killer.” Sometimes, media suspicions are described in the lead of the text: “Three men with chopping knives and sickles bound a couple and raped their 22-year old grandchild before stealing some money and jewelry. The three of them are presumed to be Indonesian citizens.” (Utusan Malaysia 2 May 2002) Such comments represent the inhabitant’s point of view. Normally, the content of such comments underlines the statements in the text. For example, “Deputy Information Minister Datuk Donald Lim Siang Chai: He said this was because crimes like snatch thefts were also committed by foreign workers.” (Star 20 June 2004)

The total crime index involving foreigners as criminals is 2.05 percent. It is only for ‘murder’ and ‘armed robbery’ involving foreigners that the crime index is high. The armed robbery index is 13.84 and murder is 17.07. The total number of legal migrant workers in Malaysia is 1,240,062, and together with illegal immigrants, the crime rate is quite the same as crimes involving local persons.

Another personal characteristic of male migrant workers is mass quarrels, which are a popular stereotype. A mass quarrel can happen among workers of different
nationalities, for example: “271 Bangladeshis and Vietnamese Quarrel,” “Again Causing a Disturbance, Indonesians and Bangladeshis Throw Stones at Each Other,” and “More than 300 Indonesian and Vietnamese Citizens Quarrel.” The mass quarrels among workers of the same nationality are illustrated like these examples: “Three Dead Indons: Acehnese Attack those of the Flores Clan” and “Indonesians Quarrel Again.”

Indonesian, Bangladeshi and Vietnamese workers are described as groups who are frequently involved in quarrels. For example, “Just to provide information, Vietnamese workers have already been involved in quarrels in this area six times, four times among Vietnamese workers and one time with Nepali workers.” (*Utusan Malaysia* 30 January 2003) Another example is, “The Immigration Office sent home 60 Nepali workers who had been involved in quarrels many times.” Details of the text are complete with their actions, such as “both of the gangs used wood and stones to injure each other” or “they attacked with all kinds of weapons such as wood, iron, stones and bottles.”

The central theme of the stories is migrant workers as actors. The frame of the text begins with a story about actors. The motive of the quarrel is put in at the end of the story. The reasons for the quarrel are usually some misunderstanding, such as a fight for a girlfriend or feeling discriminated against by the employer. The theme of discrimination also exists, for example some employers did not send Bangladeshi workers home, but they did send Vietnamese workers home after a quarrel. (*Utusan Malaysia* 31 July 2003)

*The Star* and *Metro Daily* prefer using the term “Indon” for Indonesian workers and sometimes use ‘illegal’. Migrant workers do not like either of these terms. According to migrant workers, both of the terms have negative connotations. In daily life, Bangladeshis are also called ‘Bangla’ but this term is never used in the newspapers.

**Representation of female workers**

Female workers usually work in the service, domestic, and factory sectors and a few of them work on plantations. Almost all of the news about female migrant workers in Malaysian newspapers is about domestic workers. Newspapers represent domestic workers in one of two themes, maids as victim of violence or actors of violence. In the ‘maids as victim of violence’ theme, the center of the news story is the employers as actors of violence; for example, “Employer Abuses Maids’ Breast,” “Employer Swings Baseball Bat, Maid’s Leg Broken,” and “Employer Abuses Everyday: Victim Abused by Hot Frying Pan, Padlock and Hot Iron.”

On the one hand, the titles of the news stories depict the employers as actors of violence, but on the other hand, the maid is often described as an actor of violence. Stories about maid abuse are supported with statements from the abusers that they are not satisfied with the quality of work. The text also describes in detail the way the maid is abused, such as “Abuse Using High-voltage Electric Shock: Indonesian Maid Forced to Take Object into Vagina;” “Victim Forced to Take Biscuit, Banana, Bottle into Vagina, while Employer’s Wife and her 2 Sisters Took a Picture.” (*Metro Daily* 5 October 2004) Another story tells how an “Indonesian Maid Forced to Drink Toilet Water and Smear Feces.” Previously, “the victim was thrown against the wall, her right eye swollen after being hit by her employer’s wife.”

The maids are represented as foolish and poor people. The words chosen to refer to maids vary, sometimes *orang gaji* is used and sometimes *orang gaji* (someone who gets paid). These terms show the maid’s subordination to her employer. The employer’s reasons for abusing the maid, sometimes with irrational behavior, and the terms used to refer to the maid indicate the employer’s position as the powerful person and maid as the powerless.

Comments about maid abuse come from all levels of society, including acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi. “He directed that the investigations into cases of maid abuse should be sped up. Therefore, maid abuse in any form should be taken seriously. Many Indonesian workers who arrive in Malaysia are honest and hardworking. Sadly, some of them are starved, beaten and stripped of their dignity.” (*The Star* 16 March 2003) This is a sympathy comment but, unfortunately, the comment is completed with a denial sentence: “Sadly, some are starved, beaten and stripped of their dignity.” This statement builds the image that maids are powerless.

The powerless position of the maid comes up in everyday conversation, especially for Indonesian maids, such as the expression, “You cannot eat in your country, you are lucky working here.” Sometimes the employers compare the ‘maids’ based on race or color, such as, “You are poor and come from a poor country; you are different from white men/women, they are rich.” It seems that such treatment rarely happens to Filipino maids. Their English speaking ability and better education gives them a sufficient bargaining position. They also earn twice the salary of Indonesian maids, with limited working hours (approximately eight hours) and holidays one to four times per month. Sometimes they hold their personal documents themselves.
The maids are also represented as actors of crime. This theme is no different from the male workers. The titles describe the thematic structure of the text: “Maid Suspected of Poisoning Employer,” “Employer’s Child Dead, Maid Jailed 12 Years,” “Maid Runs Off with RM 20,000: Syndicate Train Maid Theft,” “Maid Assassinates Employer with Knife,” and “Maid Takes Datin’s Money.”

2. Sociopolitical status of migrant workers: the Nilai riot, they do not respect the law or the law cannot protect them

Starting from the Nilai riot, the issue of migrant workers shifted from a criminal issue to a security issue.

“Last night more than 500 hundred Indonesian workers attacked Malaysian police who took action against drugs in a factory hostel. These migrant workers destroyed a police car and threw stones, chairs, tables, water containers and sharp objects at the police from the fourth level of the building, around 2 o’clock.” (Utusan Malaysia 19 January 2002)

Other stories wrote: “Without regard for where they are now staying, this group of workers raised the Indonesian flag while they stood on top of the destroyed vehicle” (Metro Daily 20 January 2002) and “They not only attacked the police, but also raised the Indonesian flag; this was meant as aggression towards Malaysian authority.”

One day after the event, all of mainstream newspapers blew up this case. There were myriad of comments, from ordinary people to the Prime Minister. All of the sources were Malaysian citizens. The issue changed from a criminality discourse into a political discourse. ‘Attack police’ and ‘raise the Indonesian flag’ meant that this was not only a criminal event, but also a political event. We can also see the changing of the discourse in titles that seem political, such as: ‘foreign worker’, ‘too troublesome’, ‘one troublemaker too many foreigners’. Comments from the government take a macro view; for example, “Abdullah said, ‘Malaysian citizens are not happy with this group’s behavior in taking the law into their own hands’” (Utusan Malaysia 19 January 2002) or the Prime Minister’s statement:

He (Mahathir) said the country could not afford to have this kind of behavior, adding that the Indonesians should respect the laws of the country since they were guest workers here. “We allow the foreigners to stay here to cari makan (earn a living) but if they feel that the country is not longer good for them please nyah (leave) the country.” (The Star 19 January 2002)

After this case, the Malaysian government had a new policy about migrant workers, especially Indonesian workers. The new policy was delivered by the media as: “The government is considering making Indonesians the last choice in the hiring of foreign workers in light of the problems involving many of them” and “The involvement of foreign workers and illegal immigrants in crime has increased to an alarming level. ‘This,’ he adds, ‘could create problems to the internal security of the country if not addressed immediately’.”

The media never bothered to conduct interviews with the actors of the violence, such as asking the reasons for their behavior. From the migrant workers’ perspectives, this tendency is indicative of the long history of the relationship between the Malaysian police and migrant workers. Migrant workers are tired of being objects of exploitation by the Malaysian police. Illegal migrant workers usually pay some money to the Malaysian police for their patronage. The police also ask for money from legal migrant workers. The police are able to do it on the suspicion that migrant workers’ documents are not valid, even if in reality the documents are valid. Such cases sometimes cause migrant workers to be sent to jail.

The opposition newspaper represents the migrant workers in different way. They prefer to cover how the Malaysian government badly treats the migrant workers. Take for example the article, “Migrant Workers Exploited like Slaves…Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim (statement by his lawyer) said, ‘At the beginning of this year, suddenly ‘foreign worker’ is synonymous with illegal immigrant, impetus riot and groups that are always criminal. The head of the state very callously accepted the warning from the Sulawesi governor about corruption in the Malaysian police and immigration.” (Harakah 1-15 October 2002)

3. Socio economic status: they contribute to economic development or they take our jobs

Statements about the contributions of migrant workers usually come from the government or employers. Take for example, the following statements: “Indonesian construction workers have a good work ethic; they are more diligent than other foreign workers and this is a factor in why contractors prefer to employ them” and “In my records, Indonesian workers are the most diligent and perform their responsibilities following the employer’s directions.” Such news also covers complaints from local people, such as, “We are sad
because foreigners are accepted in workplace, while we Malaysians are discriminated against in our own country."

The Director of the Malaysian Employers Federation stated that migrant workers are diligent and they are willing to work over time. However, sometimes the migrant workers, especially the illegal migrant workers, display bad behavior such as ‘gambling’ and ‘drunkenness’. From the local inhabitants’ point of view, migrant workers take away opportunities for locals to find jobs and be traders. Normally, the Malaysian government only gives trading licenses to local people, but local people lend the licenses to migrant workers.\(^\text{13}\)

4. Norms and values of migrant workers

The media also presents workers as human beings who want to do things contrary to their religion. For example, “Four Indonesian Women Workers Do it for Money: Because they lack money, four Indonesian Moslem women are forced to pawn their faith, staining it with minced pork everyday, to process steamed pork buns” (Metro Daily 4 February 2005) and “Many women factory workers buy traditional medicine to recover their virginity. This is the impact of their free lifestyle in which they sometimes have love affairs with local men for a certain purpose, including money.” (Metro Daily 20 June 2005)

**Ideological context of news production**

The discourse of migrant workers in mainstream newspapers is different. Even though the newspapers come from similar political groups, the newspapers have certain ideologies in their news production. *Utusan Malaysia* is the newspaper that shows the most balanced discourse between positive and negative positions. The source of news is also more comprehensive, as it takes information from all sources: the government, comments from experts, and its own sources, such as straight news and editorials. The positive discourse describes the migrant workers as contributing to Malaysian economic development, hard workers, building solidarity amongst themselves, and treated unfairly. The negative discourse shows that they are criminals, they are fight amongst themselves, they do not respect law, and they take our jobs. *The Metro Daily* covers more negative discourses from individual perceptions that deal with micro views. Usually the *Metro Daily* uses straight news and letters from readers; examples of discourses include they are criminals, they do work that is against their religion such as cooking pork, they become sex workers or sex customers, they are permissive, they use false identity documents, and they take our jobs.

*The Star* belongs to the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), a member of Barisan Nasional, a federal coalition made up of a party of bumiputera (indigenous Malays). While MCA is a member of Barisan Nasional, the newspaper obviously is not too supportive towards the government’s policy on migrant workers. Sources of the news come from comprehensive and reliable sources such as the government and expert comments, and also from other media, such as *Tamil Nesan*, letters from readers, and their own sources such as straight news and editorials. Word choices are more negative than positive. The positive discourse describes migrant’s contributions such as their similar language and culture and that they help economic development. *The Star* sometimes uses negative sentences with the meaning that although migrant workers’ contributions are economic, it must not be forgotten that the workers benefit more by working here. The negative discourse usually takes the form of comments about the group and their stereotypes. These negative discourses show the macro view; for example, they do not respect the law, they smuggle themselves into the country, they are members of militant organizations, they are anti-social, and they frighten away investors.

The *Harakah*, which is managed by the opposition party, covers the news from different perspectives, more of which are positive discourses than negative ones. The source of the news is comments from experts who are opposed to government policy. They prefer to cover the background of why migrant workers behave badly, such as they do what Malaysians do not want to do, they are exploited by police and immigration officers, they work unpaid, they are treated badly (eating feces, cockroaches), the law cannot protect them, and they contribute to Malaysian development.

Actually, the large number of Indonesian migrant workers and the fact that many of them have already retained permanent residency and citizenship is still a sensitive issue for Malaysia’s ethnic and religious balance. This issue has its historical background (Liow 2005) in the recent colonial past when British and Malay authorities in the peninsula encouraged the migration of workers from Indonesia. The reason behind this policy was Indonesian’s shared racial and cultural traits with the Malays. The Indonesion immigrants were viewed and used by the Malay aristocracy and royalty in the nineteenth century as a demographic buffer against the British-sanctioned influx of Chinese and Indian labors.
After the independence, migration from Indonesia halted for awhile during the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation. When the Malaysian economy began to develop, Malaysia invited foreign workers again, including foreign workers from Indonesia. In ‘The Politics of Indonesia – Malaysia: One Kin, Two Nations’, Liow (2005) states that later in the 1950s and early 1960s, the Indonesian migration into Malaya was encouraged by Kuala Lumpur for political reasons, as it allowed ‘Malays’ to maintain a numerical superiority over the Chinese and Indian communities. In the long run, the Indonesian immigrants were also regarded as strengthening the Malay electoral power vis-à-vis the non-Malay because it was assumed that they would be assimilated with the local Malays. On the way around, foreign workers such as Indonesian migrants are looked at with suspicion by certain political parties, as shown by the positions of a few members of the Democratic Action Party (DAP). The inflow of Indonesian workers come during the 1970s and early 1980s in response to a plea by the Malay-dominated government to bring in Indonesians in an attempt to increase the ethnic Malay vote over the long term. (Karim 1999)

Today, the Malaysian government tends to take a negative view towards Indonesian migrant workers, because Indonesian migrant workers are blamed as agents of social problems. After the Nilai Riot in 2002, migration has been connected to security issues. In addition, the influx of migrant workers has created many social problems such as criminality, religious issues including militancy and the dissemination of Christianity to indigenous Malays, and economic issues such as the outflow of money.

Media consumption

Many migrant workers read newspapers. They know that the media represents migrant workers badly. These representations make them feel uncomfortable. They want to make statements to the public that they are not criminals as the media commonly represents them. Unfortunately, the media never conducts interviews with them. In the villages, such as in plantation areas, migrant workers have adequate interactions with local people, so they can convince the local inhabitants that they are not criminals. Trust between migrant workers and local inhabitants emerges in daily interactions. The type of interactions they engage in can be as just acquaintances or as friends; they can even become good friends, and even marry. Sometimes, they manage to call each other even when the migrant workers have gone back to their home country.

In the city, the interactions between migrant workers and local inhabitants are very limited, so the local inhabitants are only exposed to the images of migrant workers in the newspapers. Therefore, prejudice causes tension to form between the local inhabitants and the immigrants and, to some extent, increases the discourse of racism. The migrant workers feel that the inhabitants look down upon them. As an illustration, Andy (25) said that, “They look at us like they look at garbage.”

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

All migrant workers are represented badly in Malaysian newspapers, whether they have a similar culture or not. Even though all migrant workers are represented badly, the representation of Indonesian migrant workers is the worst. It seems that cultural proximity or similar ethnic background does not influence the production of the existing discourse.

The discourse about immigrants is related to the ideology of the media. The ideology of the media is, on the other hand, related to the Malaysian political system that follows racial politics. The differentiation of discourses is related to the issue of Malaysian political race composition—Malay, Chinese and Indian—which is a sensitive issue. Most of the migrants who come from Indonesia share racial and cultural traits with the Malay. The existence of poor interactions between migrant workers and local inhabitants increases the prejudicial discourse.

Implications

Social implications: The finding of this research can be used to develop a more objective account of the migrant workers. The media implements a certain ideology, through language, as if news is an objective reality. In this case, the media always defends itself by saying that migrant workers are responsible for Malaysian crime. In reality, the crime rate index for foreigners who are involved in violence is similar to the crime rate index for local people. The total crime rate index involving migrant workers is lower than the index for local people.

Theoretical implications: The bad representations of migrant workers underline that the meaning-making process is influenced by the dominant group, in this case the local inhabitants or Malaysian citizens. In this research, the media superstructure functions to produce a discourse about immigrants. This image-making
is built through an unconscious process, such as the suspicious assumption that unidentified criminals are migrants, or by calling migrants ‘Indon’. ‘Indon’ has negative connotations, as it is used to refer to actors of crime, and to persons who have different norms and values, such as cooking pork. Language use is important for creating a better representation of migrant workers. Media workers are not only working to earn their living, but also to transform the ideology of inequality. In covering the news, the media workers have already absorbed some of the ideology that migrant workers come from a different class background than local people.

Notes

1 Barisan Nasional: a federal coalition made up of bumiputera (indigenous) parties.
2 PAS: an Islamic Party in Peninsular Malaysia which has power in Kelantan and briefly controlled in Trengganu.

Table 1: Malaysian crime index from January – May 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Crime index</th>
<th>Foreigners involved</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery (group)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unarmed robbery (group)</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery (individual)</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unarmed robbery (individual)</td>
<td>5,863</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>1,803</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Violent Crime</td>
<td>9,639</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>6.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary (day)</td>
<td>2,706</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary (night)</td>
<td>7,681</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorry/van theft</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car theft</td>
<td>3,580</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycle theft</td>
<td>21,086</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browse</td>
<td>5,517</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others types of theft</td>
<td>13,451</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Property Crime</td>
<td>56,098</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Crime Index</td>
<td>65,737</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 The Star, 15 June 2004, stated that the number of foreign workers, both legal and illegal, was 2.4 million. The population of Malaysia in 2004 was 26,803,315 and the population aged 16 and above was 63.1% of the total population, or around 16.9 million. It can therefore be assumed that foreigners were involved in 17 murder cases per 1 million migrant workers and local people were involved in 12 murder cases per 1 million people. Foreigners were involved in armed robbery in 1.25 cases per 1 million migrant workers, while there were 1.12 cases of armed robbery per 1 million local people.
6 There were 39 cases of maid abuse in Malaysia in 2002, and 31 cases in 2003. There were 13,857 maids who fled from their employers in 2000, 12,200 in 2001, 14,400 in 2002, and 17,131 in 2003. The total number of foreign maids is around 230,000. According to Dato Raja Zukepley Dahalan, the director of a foreign maid agency, the rate of maid abuse is around 20 percent. Interview, 9 June 2006.
7 Interview with Munawaroh, aged 24, 5 October 2005.
8 Interview with Sulastri, aged 22, 18 January 2006.
9 Interview with Elsy and Gloria, 5 October 2005.
10 Interview with Suparlan, aged 40, 25 January 2006.
11 Interview with Jono, 24 January 2006.
12 Interview with Mr Shamsuddin Bardan, 17 February 2006.
13 Interview with Midah, aged 40, 5 September 2005.

REFERENCES


MOLDING ASIA’S FUTURE LEADERS: PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING FROM THE MILITARY ACADEMIES OF JAPAN, THAILAND, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

Michael C. Morales

Introduction

Since the end of World War II, SE Asia has been a frequent witness to the military’s role in determining a country’s fortunes. In most of the countries included in this study, the military is led by a select group within the officer corps—graduates of the military academy—notwithstanding the fact that they constitute a minority within the officer corps. The vast majority of officers are graduates of civilian universities or enlisted personnel who earn their commission from officer candidate schools. The pre-eminence of academy graduates (a cause of dissatisfaction among non-academy officers) fulfills the vision of the founding fathers of the military academies, which is to train a core of professional officers—an officer class, as King Chulalongkorn envisaged in nineteenth century Siam (Sukunya 1991)—to serve as the nucleus and driving force of the armed forces. Put another way, academy graduates lead the armed forces because they are expected to.

Furthermore, many academy alumni remain active in government or politics after they retire from the military. In the last two decades, military or police academy graduates have attained the highest office of the land: President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra1 of Thailand (not to mention nine others before him), and former President Fidel V. Ramos of the Philippines.

If academy alumni are to lead the armed forces, and possibly the government itself, there is a case to be made for seeking a better understanding of how future leaders are trained with a view towards improving the training process. This study aims to derive different perspectives of training from five military academies: the National Defense Academy of Japan (NDA), the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy of Thailand (CRMA), the Military Academy of Indonesia (AKMIL), the Military Academy of Malaysia (MAM), and the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). Occasional references to academies in the United States and Australia are also made. It is hoped that multiple perspectives of training can improve objectivity and yield “best practices” that may help academies attain their goals more effectively as well as suggest solutions to some common problems, such as bullying.

Purpose of Academy Training

The brochures of the different military academies reveal virtually the same mission: to mold future military leaders through excellence in education, military training, character development, and physical training. Yet, not all academies train their cadets alike. The context and purpose of training vary from one academy to another, and are determined by a host of factors which include whether or not the country is at war, the desirability of admission into the academy, the expectations of various stakeholders, whether the armed forces is preparing for conventional (e.g. Desert Storm) or unconventional warfare (e.g. Indochina), political considerations, the state of the economy, and tradition, to name a few.

Suggested Use of this Research (This is not a beauty contest!)

Given the unique context of each academy, comparing institutions would be like comparing durians and rambutans. It would just be as pointless, however strong the temptation, to make a judgment on which is “the best” academy. As stated earlier, this study aims to provide planners and administrators with different perspectives from which to view their own academy more objectively, as one might use the barber’s mirrors to inspect the back of one’s head.

Methodology

This is a descriptive study. The principal method for data collection was the immersion of the researcher in each academy which, due to different levels of access granted by the hosts, varied in duration from one to three months. The immersion facilitated interviews with officers and cadets, on-site observation, and participation in cadet activities. On a few occasions, the researcher was requested to give a lecture or facilitate an activity for the cadets. Living in the academy and interacting with cadets and staff, formally and informally, gave an unparalleled opportunity to capture the ethos of academy training.

Surveys were conducted in each academy. The survey questionnaires were translated into the national language, except in Malaysia and the Philippines where
English was used. Due to the unavailability of the cadets (due to field training) in some academies affecting the size and randomness of the sample, the survey results are not viewed as authoritative for all academies. Nevertheless, the surveys provided baseline data which were validated through interviews and other means, and suggested areas for exploration during interviews and observations.

Officers and cadets were interviewed in English. To help overcome the language barrier, cadets were interviewed three or four at a time, and the cadets were encouraged to help each other express their responses to interview questions. The language barrier also reduced the amount of available literature that was useful for the research.

A preliminary report was submitted to the host academy for verification at the conclusion of each immersion period. A final report that consolidates the preliminary reports, including findings and analysis, will be provided to all participating institutions upon completion of this study. It is hoped that the final report will give academy administrators fresh insights and help improve education and training in their respective institutions.

A Dual-purpose Tool: Research Checklist and Self-Assessment Matrix

As an aid to research, a checklist was devised consisting of a matrix of institutional goals and training activities, shown in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAINING GOALS</th>
<th>TRAINING ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character &amp; leadership</td>
<td>Military Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development...</td>
<td>Cadet Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military skills...</td>
<td>Cadet Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical fitness...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The matrix had several functions: (a) it served as a prompt, suggesting areas for exploration; (b) it aided in the formulation of interview questions; (c) it increased the visibility of training activities, both formal and informal; (d) it identified the unit(s) responsible, either principally and supportively, for each activity; and (e) it revealed the emphases of training as some intersections were populated with more activities (or more intense activities) than others. As the matrix filled up during the course of the research, a view of how the academy sought to achieve its training objectives began to emerge.

One assumption of this study is that military academies have training goals that can be classified under one of four main categories: character and leadership development, military training, education, and physical fitness training (some academies have more); these filled the first column of the matrix. Each of these training goals would be achieved through activities that were the responsibility of one or more divisions in the academy. Specific training activities, say, marksmanship training, would populate the cell in the matrix at the intersection of the training goal and the responsible division(s). More informal aspects of training, such as cadet traditions and culture, were captured in the fourth column. In some academies, a few training activities were conducted by external organizations such as service schools; these activities were entered in additional columns.

The Change Model

The crux of academy training is about changing the values and behavior of a cadet from those of a civilian recruit to those of a military professional (tough, morally upright, highly-motivated, team player, methodical). Kurt Lewin’s change model for organizational development has been used to describe the psychology of change in U.S. service academies. It was found to be similarly applicable to the academies covered by this research and is presented in Figure 1 below.

The model consists of three stages:

Unfreezing. This stage captures the recruits’ attention and makes them more malleable, often through physical and mental stress, and continuous on-the-spot correction.
Changing. The desired behavior is introduced to the “unfrozen” recruit through lectures, demonstrations, role modeling by a cadre, and frequent correction.

Refreezing. As the recruit begins to demonstrate the desired behavior, he or she is rewarded through recognition, responsibility, and privileges, making the new behavior persist.

It is important to note that the change model provides the rationale for various training activities at the academy. It can help determine the duration and intensity of training, particularly of the unfreezing stage. Apart from such a framework, unfreezing can easily degenerate into counter-productive and even dangerous rituals.

### FINDINGS

The findings of this study consist of a description of each military academy. It would be impossible to give a full description of an academy, let alone five academies, in this paper (although that will be attempted in the final report). For the purpose of this paper, an overview of each academy is given by means of a matrix of key attributes (see Table 2). The ideal value for an attribute varies from one institution to another and can only be determined by the institution concerned. Hence, as has been alluded to earlier, it is futile to ask “Which academy is ‘the best’ in terms of, say, ‘success rate?’” because of the different context and goals of each institution. A more worthwhile question might be: “What ‘success rate’ should my academy aim for?” or “What could my academy learn from the other academies about achieving our target ‘success rate?’”

### Table 2: Academy attributes matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTRIBUTE</th>
<th>NDA (Japan)</th>
<th>CRMA (Thailand)</th>
<th>AKMIL (Indonesia)</th>
<th>MAM (Malaysia)</th>
<th>PMA (Philippines)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year founded</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service affiliation</td>
<td>Tri-service</td>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Tri-service</td>
<td>Tri-service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of institution</td>
<td>Civilian</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rank)</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. tenure of head</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of training</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract to serve</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>10-13(AF) years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,760</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>1,680</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage female</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success rate</td>
<td>75-85%</td>
<td>4 99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank on graduation</td>
<td>Master Sgt 3</td>
<td>2Lt</td>
<td>2Lt</td>
<td>Cpt/Lt</td>
<td>2Lt/Ens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MILITARY TRAINING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military currently exposed to combat?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army graduates’ first assignment</td>
<td>OCS</td>
<td>Deployment</td>
<td>Deployment</td>
<td>Young Offers’ Course</td>
<td>Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy graduates’ first assignment</td>
<td>OCS</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Shipboard or Schooling</td>
<td>Schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force graduates’ first assignment</td>
<td>OCS</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td>Deployment or Schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army graduate skill level</td>
<td>Infantryman</td>
<td>Platoon leader</td>
<td>Platoon leader</td>
<td>Infantryman</td>
<td>Platoon leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy graduate skill level</td>
<td>Seamanship skills</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Deck/Engine watch officer</td>
<td>Deck watch officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force graduate skill level</td>
<td>Awareness of AF functions</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Junior staff officer</td>
<td>Simulator-trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics: military training ratio</td>
<td>87:13</td>
<td>90:10</td>
<td>32:68</td>
<td>76:24</td>
<td>65:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-university education</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree conferred</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer./Sci. majors</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1^a</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc. Sci./Hum. majors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Are We Up to the Challenge?: Current Crises and the Asian Intellectual Community
The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows*
Bullying

The academy is viewed as a leadership laboratory, where cadets can exercise hands-on leadership over junior cadets. An unwelcome side-effect of hands-on leadership training is bullying, which undermines training by creating a subculture that is often at odds with the values of the organization. Bullying has an adverse effect on academics and has resulted in injury and death. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the responsibility for training and its possible consequences. As cadets take on more training and supervisory roles (moving towards the right on the continuum), opportunities for hands-on leadership training increase but so does the risk of bullying.

The most effective measure against bullying applied by any institution covered by this research is divesting cadets of all authority and responsibilities over other cadets (far left on the responsibility continuum in Figure 2). All training is done by officers and, in some instances, senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Separate dormitories for each batch of cadets hinder unauthorized contact between senior and junior cadets. Although this deprives cadets of the opportunity to develop leadership through hands-on application, they benefit from the more mature leadership style of experienced trainers. The Military Academy of Malaysia and the Australian Defense Force Academy (ADFA) have adopted this approach, eliminating bullying.

Partial segregation has been implemented at the Philippine Military Academy and the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy (Thailand) where first year cadets are segregated for the first several months. The National Defense Academy of Japan is experimenting with all-freshman platoons.

Figure 2: Training Responsibility Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are graduates deployed in field of specialization?</th>
<th>Not necessarily</th>
<th>Not necessarily</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Army – Not necessarily; Navy, AF – Yes; N.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer: cadet ratio</td>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>1:4</td>
<td>1:7</td>
<td>1:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty composition</td>
<td>Mostly civilian</td>
<td>All military</td>
<td>Mostly civilian</td>
<td>Mostly civilian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. qualification of lecturers</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded research activity</td>
<td>In most disciplines</td>
<td>Institutional research</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>In selected disciplines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

| Trainer: cadet ratio | 1:26 | 1:54 | 1:17 | 1:80 | 1:53 |
| Cdts train other cdts? | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Code of honor exists? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Role of cadets in honor system | Education | Education, Enforcement | Education | Education | Education, Enforcement |
| Religion part of curriculum? | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Religious observance | Private matter | Compulsory ceremonies | Compulsory | Compulsory | Compulsory |
| Sports clubs | 37 | 18 | 13 | 20 | 26 |
| Cultural clubs | 28 | 14 | 7 | 15 | 31 |

ROLE OF ALUMNI

| Do alumni lead armed forces? | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Are alumni active in politics? | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |

OTHERS

| Rural development agenda | None | Yes | Yes | None | Some |
Implications

This section describes some policies or initiatives that have been applied in the academies indicated in parentheses and that are believed to have helped those institutions achieve their objectives. Some practices are more widely-implemented than others and some have achieved better results than others. Nevertheless, all are presented as a list of candidate “best practices” for consideration by other institutions. Although this study targets military academies, many of the lessons learned are clearly applicable to education and training in general. Whether or not a policy is indeed “best practice” will have to be validated by other institutions, hence “candidate”.

1. Training objectives and their precedence are clearly understood throughout the organization. Military training and academics are the two domains that compete most for the finite time and energies of the cadets. Placing scholarship and leadership on an equal footing leads to interminable “Athenians versus Spartans” debates and often results in the frustration of both goals. On the other hand, academics that give one goal priority over the other tend to achieve their goals (NDA, MAM).

2. The continuity of policy is safeguarded. The initiatives of an academy head with a short tenure tend to be overthrown by his successor, and those of the successor by his successor, and so on, ad nauseam. An oversight body, such as a Board of Directors, that approves all major changes can help stay the course of the academy (MAM). The appointment of a civilian head who is not subject to the military’s rotation policy can also help provide a consistent trajectory (NDA).

3. High admission standards for cadets are maintained. Cadets effectively undergo four programs—a university degree, military training, physical fitness, and character development—in the same length of time that their counterparts in civilian universities complete a degree. If a cadet is to succeed under these conditions, it is imperative that he or she be highly-motivated, intelligent, resilient, physically fit, and able to work as a member of a team (NDA, MAM).

4. Academics and military training are conducted during separate periods in the training calendar. Most academies have two semesters for academics and a military training period. During the academic period, military training activities are kept to a minimum (two hours a week). Physical training is likewise limited to the regular sports program and the physical fitness test (MAM). During the military training period, cadets may undergo endurance training, including sleep and food deprivation and forced marches. When academics and military training are conducted concurrently, or when cadets engage in excessive physical activities during the academic period, cadets tend to be over-fatigued, to the detriment of academics.

5. Training officers undergo special training. These officers go by the title Guidance Officer (NDA), Battalion Commander (CRMA), Platoon Commander (AKMIL), OC (MAM), or Tactical Officer (PMA). They are responsible for the character development and daily supervision of cadets. They wear many hats: leader, role model, instructor, counselor, mentor, coach, and evaluator, among others. Officers are sometimes assigned to the job without special training because it is assumed that an officer’s experience is sufficient preparation. This can result in cadet training that overly reflects an officer’s personal style, rather than a standard and deliberate training strategy. Formal training for officers ensures that they understand the academy’s training philosophy, equips them with the knowledge and skills needed for the job, and promotes a common approach to training. Some academies conduct short seminars for training officers (PMA, AKMIL, MAM). At the US Military Academy, officers undergo a one-year course leading to a Master of Arts in Organizational Psychology (Leader Development) before they are assigned as Tactical Officers.

6. Training officers are highly visible and take a personal interest in each cadet under their charge. Role modeling is an indispensable part, if not the most important part, of the academy training process. Officers with exemplary qualities are carefully selected to teach as well as model the desired values, attitudes, and behavior of an officer in all aspects of life—professional, academic, social, sports, and spiritual, including family life. Hence, a high training officer: cadet ratio is desirable (NDA, AKMIL).

7. The progress of a cadet in all aspects of training is properly documented. Given that officers are posted in the academy for only two or three years, most cadets outlast their training officers. To ensure that a new officer is able to continue the cadets’ training effectively, it is important that complete records of cadets’ performance, particularly narrative evaluations prepared by the training officer, are...
maintained (NDA, ADFA, U.S. service academies). Narratives provide more meaningful information to training officers when used to supplement numerical or letter grades.

8. Upperclass cadets have limited training responsibilities or authority over underclass cadets. This ensures that cadets are trained by mature and experienced professionals—officers and senior NCOs—and allows cadets to focus on their own academic and military training. Upperclass cadets interact with underclass cadets only for sports and social occasions. This policy has eliminated bullying in some academies (MAM, ADFA).

9. Cadet traditions do not conflict with the institutional agenda. Cadets can be fiercely protective of academy traditions. While some practices are benign, such as annual sports contests with a traditional archival, some traditions oppose institutional goals, particularly those that violate the rights of other cadets or demand participation in unauthorized or unlawful activities. Left unchecked, these traditions can amount to a hidden curriculum that will undermine training. Rogue traditions can be prevented from taking root through the vigilance of training officers and the periodic reshuffling of cadets (NDA).

10. Cadets uphold and propagate a code of ethics. All academies espouse a code of ethics to instill honor, courage, and excellence among the cadets. In almost all academies, the code is propagated by a committee of cadets, whose involvement ranges from running an awareness campaign (NDA, MAM) to convening a quasi-judicial body with investigative and adjudicatory powers (PMA, CRMA, USMA), with the head of institution as the reviewing and final authority.

11. Senior cadets rotate in leadership positions. Cadet officers (rank holders) are outstanding cadets selected from the graduating class to provide leadership to the cadet corps. Depending on the training paradigm of the academy, their role can vary from largely ceremonial to actual supervision of various cadet activities. Thus, being a cadet officer can be a rewarding leadership experience. In order to maximize the training opportunities, some academies appoint two (PMA) to four (USCGA) sets of cadet officers in a year.

12. Participation in team sports and extracurricular activities is required or strongly encouraged. “Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that, upon other fields and other days, will bear the fruits of victory.” These words of General Douglas MacArthur capture the value of team sports and physical challenges as natural agents for developing the leadership, teamwork, determination, and physical fitness that are essential to success in military operations. Likewise, participation in cultural clubs and hobbies develops organizational skills while providing an enriching activity. All academies give importance to sports and extracurricular activities, but the NDA stands out in terms of variety of clubs and intensity of cadet involvement.

13. Various fields of specialization are offered. A wide range of academic disciplines indicates intellectual growth in an institution. It enhances the academic credibility of an academy and attracts bright students as well as highly-qualified lecturers. Multiple majors benefit the military organization because they create a pool of officers who are prepared for the advanced technology the armed forces needs (NDA, CRMA, MAM, US service academies, ADFA).

14. Socio-humanistic subjects are part of the core curriculum. The task of leading men and sorting out problems with personnel, which occupy much of the waking hours of many a young officer, require the “soft” tools of psychology and management, rather than “hard” science. Likewise, the causes of many present-day conflicts—opposing ideologies, ethnic and religious intolerance, injustice, poverty—are more amenable to solutions using the socio-humanistic tools of philosophy, history, political science, and economics, rather than the scientific method. Yet, military academies continue to be a bastion of science and engineering, harking back to the days when they trained military engineers to build bridges and fortifications, and develop weapons and explosives. While these tasks remain important, since the end of World War II the military has found itself engaged more and more in winning “hearts and minds”. Hence, most academies, while maintaining a strong scientific bias, require all cadets to take subjects in the humanities and social sciences (NDA, CRMA, AKMIL, PMA, US service academies).

15. Proficiency in English is encouraged. English is the medium of communication between the armed forces of the world. With more countries participating in UN peacekeeping operations and joint exercises, the need for officers to possess good English skills has become more apparent. Fluency in English is
best achieved through frequent use, in and out of the classroom. In PMA, all subjects are taught in English (except for the subject Filipino), and cadets must address officers and lecturers in English. In MAMIL, math and science are taught in English. AKMIL has increased English instruction to 504 hours (11 per cent of the curriculum). Outside of the classroom, English clubs and interactions with native English speakers have been used to improve the cadets’ fluency (NDA, CRMA).

16. A purposeful national development agenda is integrated in the curriculum. In developing countries, the military plays a key role not only in defense but also in rural development, the seedbed of insurgency. This mission is so crucial to the Thais that a new major has been offered in CRMA: Social Sciences in Development. Thai cadets, under the supervision of officers and in partnership with the business sector, help basket-weavers market their products and educate them about financial management to help them attain self-sufficiency. This project has won national recognition and will be presented at a conference in Paris in September 2006. CRMA is also testing sustainable agriculture methods and biodiesel production. In Indonesia, cadets join with university students each year to work on countryside development projects such as road construction.

17. Academy training includes an international program. Opportunities for foreign travel and interactions with international cadets help broaden a cadet’s world view and promote tolerance, as well as enhance communication skills. As of this writing, NDA has 64 international cadets from eight countries. Each year, it hosts two international conferences attended by representatives from foreign military academies and participates in exchange visits with other countries. All CRMA cadets visit a foreign military academy during their senior year. Other academies also conduct visits to foreign academies but on a more limited basis (AKMIL, MAM, PMA).

18. Metrics are employed to evaluate the academy’s progress vis-à-vis institutional goals. Every academy conducts regular evaluations of the cadets’ performance in academics, military training, physical fitness, and leadership. In addition, a periodic survey of the cadets’ perception and attitudes about training, including their utilization of time, utilization of facilities, satisfaction with various training factors, etc., can yield a more complete picture of the training environment. Survey results can be used to validate the more subjective observations by the staff and vice-versa. Moreover, survey data accumulated over several years can provide a way to measure the impact of certain policies as well as reveal interesting trends (NDA, PMA).

19. Endowments are properly managed. To cope with scarcity of funds, some academies have established a foundation or other mechanism to accept donations from institutions and individuals, especially alumni (NDA, CRMA, AKMIL, PMA, US service academies). A foundation could manage the investment of the fund so that only interest earnings are disbursed (PMA). A list of projects, with cost estimates, can be published on a website from which potential donors may choose a project that fits their budget (US Coast Guard Academy). Projects that have been funded from this source include the procurement of computers, campus beautification, field trips, seminars, scholarships for the faculty, laboratory equipment, sports equipment and facilities, and school buses, to name a few (NDA, CRMA, AKMIL, PMA, US service academies).

20. The institution complies with accepted accreditation and management standards. The accreditation of the curriculum by an external body protects academic standards and enhances the credibility of the institution (NDA, CRMA, MAM, US service academies, ADFA). So does compliance with widely accepted best practices in management, such as ISO certification (MAM, PMA).

**Future Work**

The list of candidate “best practices” presented above is by no means complete. The list needs further validation before it can be viewed as authoritative. The search for and validation of “best practices” in education and training in military academies is expected to provide more challenging areas for exploration in the future.

**Acknowledgments**

The researcher wishes to thank the administration, lecturers, officers, and cadets of the National Defense Academy of Japan, the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy of Thailand, the Military Academy of Indonesia, the Military Academy of Malaysia, and the Philippine Military Academy, for their welcome and support for this research; the defense attaches of Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines for helping him cut through the red tape; and to the Nippon Foundation for funding and providing other assistance to this study.
Notes

1 PM Thaksin Shinawatra graduated from the Thai Police Academy, which is a degree-granting institution. Prior to this, he attended the Pre-Cadet school (senior high school equivalent), a pre-requisite for admission into the Thai military, naval, air force, and police academies.

2 Kurt Lewin’s change model is recognized as landmark work in organizational psychology and is used as the framework for cadet training at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, which the researcher attended as a cadet from 1979 to 1983. It is cited by Edgar H. Schein, Professor of Management Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management (Kurt Lewin’s Change Theory in the Field and in the Classroom: Notes Toward a Model of Managed Learning), Robert H. Kent (Installing Change: an executive guide for implementing and maintaining organizational change), and numerous other authors.

3 Although the NDA president is a civilian, he is accorded the honors and courtesies of a Lieutenant General.

4 These are estimates based on interviews of some senior staff at the NDA.

5 NDA graduates are required to attend Officer Candidate School, after which they are commissioned as 2nd Lieutenants or Ensigns.

6 AKMIL offers a general diploma, and an engineering-oriented diploma for cadets earmarked to join the engineering, signal, or ordnance corps.

7 MAM’s successor, the National Defense University, is envisaged to offer graduate degrees.

8 MAM produced its first graduates in 1999; hence, its alumni are too junior to lead the armed forces as of this writing. Nevertheless, the rationale for the establishment of MAM is to produce the future leaders of the Malaysian Armed Forces.

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MEDITATIONS ON CULTURE, COSMOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN ASIA

Nadarajah Manickam

Concerns

There are many trajectories of development in Asia, many alternative futures, outside the mainstream. However, the mainstream development of metropolises and markets, with all the glittering details that Asia so proudly displays to the whole world, comes to us at a huge cost. There is a slow but steadily growing, chronic, partly visible and partly not visible, crisis that Asia faces. Shaped by a crisis of ecology, a crisis of justice, a crisis of compassion and a crisis of spirituality, Asia today is confronted in short by the crisis of sustainability. These crises are mostly not necessarily spectacular and public. They are built into the routine and humdrum of our everyday life that is integrated into the ‘normality of our experience’.

It is a crisis that all of us need to be mindful of, and reflect and meditate on, so that we may act decisively in our everyday life, and also that we may improve the quality of our public life.

Meditations

1.0

The crisis of sustainability hides behind the everydayness of our social life. There is a need to make sense of this reality and to seek, within the Asian experience, some pathways out of it. My journey to seek some answers took me through several ethnically and religiously diverse and culturally rich regions of Asia. The journey confronted me with some rather serious questions about us as individuals, groups and nations in Asia:

Where are we heading as individuals, families, communities, and nations, as regions and as citizens of a global society? Where are we moving to and from where? Are we self-conscious about our choices and their impacts, not only here and now but also across space and time, that is, across communities and ecologies? Are we sustainable economically, socially, culturally and politically? Must sustainability be a creature of growth and development? Do our indigenous or ethno-cultures offer us sustainable pathways to the future, protecting nature and promoting active creativity sustained by compassion, dialogue, justice and harmony?

2.0

My enquiry began by confronting everyday life. It involved the Buddhist methodology of becoming, and being, ‘mindful and connected’. Importantly, it involved getting away from being a captive resident of the heavily Euro/Americentric intertextual universe, a universe that defines my ‘academic self’, tells me what knowledge is, where to look for it and how to produce it.

I had to reorient my attention to the nuances of everyday life. I had to look but see differently. I had to hear but listen and understand the meaning territories that have been hidden or marginalized. I had to ‘smell’ local cultures and their differences. I had to be sensitive not only to different cultural contexts but also contextual and universal wisdom. Reflection adjusted my thoughts to the nuances of the reality. Through meditation, I sought to explore the deeper layers of connections, contradictions and meanings. I had to be mindful and connected to my context, which connects to others’ contexts which further connects to more contexts, ad infinitum. The whole world captured in a grain of rice! This “perceptual-methodological adjustment” contributed the effort of growing out of the hold of Euro/Americentrism and an ‘academic self’ influenced by that. It was a journey to become an awestricken child again and make sense of the rich diversity, cultures, meanings and wisdom that define Asia.

3.0

Consider our context. We are creatures of urbanism and citizens of metropolises. We have taken for granted our experience of urbanism. How many of us have deeply explored the heart of urbanism? Where has it taken us and away from what? Is it an end in itself or simply a conduit of ‘global’ culture? How does it affect our Being and Culture?

One view from Thailand: Reflecting on the Thai urban experience, Prof. Anucha Thirakanont of Thammasat University in Bangkok noted that people have lost the important silences, the little reflective pauses in their lives in an all-round hurry of urban life. Aggregated, the loss of these little pauses adds to an immense complication of their personal, professional and social lives. Is this not a general Asia-wide experience, a result
of being caught up in the whirlpool of urbanization or, more seriously, in a particular dominant image of the future of Asia? Centuries old delicate and fragile cultures of everyday life that have the potential to promote the spirit of sustainability, lost in a world drunk on Speed and just Hurrying.5

4.0
Where is urban Asia heading? Many of us live in urban centers across Asia and desire to move to an even bigger metropolitan centre soon. Increasingly, it marks a generational shift in the place of residence and occupation. "In 1950, 231 million Asians lived in urban areas and by 2000 they had increased five times to 1.22 billion while their proportions of the total population increased from 17.1 to 34.9 percent. Moreover, in the next two decades Asia will pass the threshold of having more than half their population living in urban areas…By 2015 there will be 21 mega cities worldwide of which 12 will be in Asia, including 7 of the 10 largest. Four will be in excess of 20 million residents."6 Urbanization is like a gushing stream, violently breaking away the banks on the way, with many tenuous everyday cultures, cultures that can contribute to sustainable lifestyle.

5.0
Even as our lives become more and more embedded in urban environments, we are relatively unclear about what we have done to ourselves and how we have affected communities and Mother Earth, in space and time. Consider this: “According to the Earth Council report…a biologically productive area of 1.7 ha is available per capita for basic living. This means that for sustainable living, the people in Tokyo alone need an area of 45,220,000 ha—which is 1.2 times the land area of the whole of Japan. If mountains and other regions are discarded and only habitable land included, then this becomes 3.6 times the land area of Japan.”7 Tokyo simply lives well beyond its ecological means! There is something inherently wrong in all this.

This is not just a problem of Japanese society. It is our problem, the problem of Asia, of humanity: a problem of living without any notion of limits, empirically and symbolically.

6.0
In the mountain communities of the Karen people in the Mae Chaem area, near the peaceful, historical city of Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand, the elders tell me8 their concern: “We are losing our young to two needs that they have, something we have no means of providing and we receive no help from the national government—education and employment. They are contributing to the death of our villages, and our culture.” As good education and employment have moved to the urban centers, the cultural transmission line is broken. Snapped.

Unfortunately, urbanization and modernization are the streams separating the generations, the elders looking on as the young walk away with urbanism, with modernism, with MacDonalds, with Coca Cola, with Hollywood…with the cultural glitter of modern and post-modern urban world. It’s a broken link between the past and the present, between the elders and the young. The old feel anxious about the loss of culture, loss of identity. And the Past helplessly looks on, without a Future!

7.0
I have been confronted here and there by people I have met on the way and acquaintances I made in the libraries and bookshops, with a question I hesitate to answer: Are Asians really Asians? Are Asian societies Asian? Do they want to be Asian? Some are cynical, while others are seriously concerned. While there is little ‘painful’ sarcasm here, there is a keen concern in the heart of these questions. Youki Kudoh, a sensitive young Japanese actress, makes this thoughtful and concerned observation, something which is so widespread in Asia: “It is good to be flexible and open to other cultures; that is a quality young Japanese have that their parents did not. But at the same time we have to hold on to our own culture. We have become polluted by American culture, contaminated by materialism. We don’t love our country, don’t respect it. We are negative about our culture, contaminated by materialism. Many girls dye their hair and tan their skin. The streets and towns of Japan are made to look like France or America. Our cities were destroyed and re-created to resemble a foreign country. Traditional culture is not even accessible to most of us; it is disappearing into oblivion. This makes me very sad.”9

Many Asians sing this sad song. It raises many questions about who we are and about our active, often blind, romance with everything Western, everything American. It raises a concern why so much of Asia is American.

8.0
More issues. In Thailand, I have seen ads promoting American-style spoken English. An advertisement in the Manila Bulletin asks young Filipinos: “Searching for the American Dream?”10 The ad portrays a young
Filipino woman holding on to her travel bags, looking anxiously at her American future, hopefully, in the days to come, to live the American Dream. Another ad entices the young with an opportunity: “Are you dreaming of going to America? Today, you have the opportunity to make it a reality!” Hospitality, care giving and nursing courses are all run in the Philippines enticing the young by assuring them that these courses are the ‘real passports’ to a future in America.

Once, as I was coming from Baguio City, I had the opportunity to have an exchange with a young Filipino student who was going to Manila to attend to her efforts of going to America, sponsored by her uncle who is already in the USA. She comes from the rugged Cordilleras in the Northern Philippines but, in her, I saw a young American lost in Philippines, wanting to return ‘home’! In a way, all of us, our leaders, our governments, our poets, our innovators, our ancestors, have so miserably failed to capture the imagination, aspirations and passion of the young in Asia.

9.0 Though there are some streams coming together, mixing into a tough, durable cultural alloy, there is a consistent and concerted policy of the Americanization of the world as part of post-World War Two efforts. A young American student writes: “Travel almost anywhere in the world today and, whether you suffer from habitual Big Mac cravings or cringe at the thought of missing the newest episode of MTV’s The Real World, your American tastes can be satisfied practically everywhere. This proliferation of American products across the globe is more than mere accident. As a by-product of globalization, it is part of a larger trend in the conscious dissemination of American attitudes and values that is often referred to as cultural imperialism… Corporations don’t harbor qualms about the detrimental effects of ‘Americanization’ on foreign cultures, as most corporations have ostensibly convinced themselves that American culture is superior and therefore its influence is beneficial to other, ‘lesser’ cultures. Unfortunately, this American belief in the superiority of U.S. culture is anything but new; it is as old as the culture itself. This attitude was manifest in the actions of settlers when they first arrived on this continent and massacred or assimilated essentially the entire ‘savage’ Native American population. This attitude also reflects that of the late nineteenth-century age of imperialism, during which the jingoists attempted to fulfill what they believed to be the divinely ordained ‘manifest destiny’ of American expansion. Jingoists strongly believe in the concept of social Darwinism: the stronger, ‘superior’ cultures will overtake the weaker, ‘inferior’ cultures in a ‘survival of the fittest’. It is this arrogant belief in the incomparability of American culture that characterizes many of our economic and political strategies today.”

American cultural imperialism was and is a conscious and consistent aspect and underside of the American Dream.

The soul of many nations in Asia has integrated the American Dream and they live it out in their many high-end, up market sites, sprinkled across urban Asia. Are not urban centers in Asia just more and more shelf spaces and auditoriums for American commodities (including films) and cultural lifestyle?

10.0 Is developed Japan free of Americanism? Did it start after post-World War II period? Hardly “Cultural Americanization did not begin under American military and economic pressure following World War II. Rather, it started long before in the late 1920s…the American lifestyle began to captivate the middle-class inhabitants of large urban environments, such as Tokyo and Osaka.”

Unlike in Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines, in Japan, I found one of the most drastic contradictions. On one hand, you have the Hiroshima memorial, built to remember the victims of the first atomic bomb, dropped on Japanese civilians by the US Army in the context of WW II. On the other hand, you have the Disneyland in the Tokyo suburbs, a ‘cultural bomb’ dropped on Japanese civilians by Corporate America in post-war Japan. Two faces of Americanism in Japan, one articulating the nasty and dangerous while the other displaying fun and frolic. Yet today, the nasty face is hidden and the fun and frolic face is shown over and over again to over 15 million people who visit Tokyo Disneyland annually.

11.0 Imagine now the environmental cost of the Americanization of Asia. It simply is not possible unless we clone the Earth many times over! Some say we need about six or more earths if all of us consume like an average American. Some say that with the consumption average of Americans, we could possibly have only 2 to 3 billion people inhabit Earth.

The figures tell us something about the nature of our development, about equity, about where the global society is heading and about us. They urge us to raise the question about whether all people around the world (amounting to about 6 billion) can follow a similar pattern of consumption. What will such a
consumption level do to Mother Earth? Asia simply cannot afford Americanism and Asians cannot take to living a mindless “private life of mass consumption”. Cultural Americanism, whether in America or in Asia, is simply a long-term silent destructive process. Like modern harm, the effects are not now and spectacular but turn up much later, slowly and passively, when nothing much can be done. One victim of Americanism of this kind is a distant relative, a nephew in relational terms. He is now 27 years old. He was diagnosed as a diabetic at the age of 21. And how did this happen? He loved to consume American fast food and to drink Coca Cola, over 10 cans a day!!! For me, he epitomizes an important section of young urban Asia.

12.0 We are faced with more consequences of urbanizing Asia.

In Japan, this reality is “hollowing out” once lively places, creating ghost village towns or ‘shutter-down’ villages or “shutter” streets. As I passed through some of these rural towns in Ishikawa Prefecture on the east coast, sadness gripped me. Here is a country rich in resources and culture but it has become an ‘aged society’, its people growing old, and dying. The Japan Times of 3 June 2006 reported that the senior population in Japan will reach 26% by 2015. This means that “a ‘super-aged’ society, where one in four people in the country is 65 years old or older, will arrive in less than 10 years... Japan became an ‘aged’ society at an exceptionally rapid pace, with the elderly population topping 7 percent in 1970 and 14 percent in 1994.” What can be more unsustainable for a society?

13.0 Urbanism has also affected a far more serious matter: our relationship with Nature. It has detached us from our experience of forests and jungles. Today, forests and jungles appear to us more and more as domesticated, manicured nature. And ‘tamed nature’ is packaged, and presented to us as modern ‘commodity parks’. There are even artificial beaches in the middle of metropolitan madness. Nature is out-there, dressed-up for us. This destructive detachment is indeed a problem, a nasty gift of the twentieth century, with a history that goes back to industrialization, urbanization and Westernization.

In fact, as Asia urbanized, modeling itself on the West, it also unintentionally consumed not only the urban commodity culture but also the West’s “hegemonic anthropocentrism, a philosophical ecology that separates humans from the natural world in the most extreme ways”. This hyperseparation calls for “re-situating the human” in the contemporary world. Among the many roads we take, it is imperative that we find a path back to the forests. It means a movement to simplicity, sanity and sustainability.

14.0 These paths were established once. They are not new. These figures in one of the conclusions Kamala Tiyavanich makes in her very interesting book, Forest Recollections: “Another thing we learn from the forest monks is that people’s lives connect deeply to nature—to prominent themes in the social, cultural, and environmental history of the community. We hear the forest monks say that wilderness is indispensable to culture... As a monk who helped create a strong local forest preservation movement tells us, ‘Through protecting the forest we are simultaneously protecting the animals and the well-being of communities, the essential basis for morality to grow’... The thudong monks approached wild animals with respect and humility. They realized that it was they who were trespassing in the animals’ territory. They believed that animals are fellow being in samsara and deserve the opportunity to gain kammic merit. This conviction runs counter to the prevailing attitude among people, monks included, who live in urban areas and have little or no connection with nature. Thudong monks, who were at home in the wild, knew of their kinship with nature.

Meditation and the deep exploration of one’s inner self was done in the wilderness. Another cosmology framed this world and established an intimate relationship between human beings and nature. Against this background, urbanism seems more and more like a growing pathological condition. And we are all moving towards it unguardedly as flies are drawn to light; a movement that also eventually kills many of them.

15.0 Far more serious processes have run us over, even as we were colonized first, then gained independence and later proceeded to industrialize, modernize, Westernize and urbanize our national societies. While all these were going on, what has really happened deep within Asian intellectual culture? Consider this imaginary conversation.

Somboon: People “are now dominated by a mechanistic cosmology according to which life can be nothing but a struggle for survival and domination; nature and people, when not viewed as threats, can only be construed as resources to be used efficiently, and the only value to which anyone can aspire is to have more power to satisfy their appetites. With this cosmology people have been
blinded to the natural and social destruction wrought by capitalism and rendered incapable of even imagining that there could be a better form of society.”

Del: Yes, that is right…this cosmological re-orientation has created many serious problems. For Asia, the implications are serious. Let me add another dimension to the above observation. “The exclusivity that accompanied the rational and linear frameworks of western knowledge has, in practice, meant that cosmologies that did not fit into that framework were dismissed and ridiculed. The cosmologies of other civilizations were submerged; the knowledge of ‘other’ people, of women, and of all phenomena that could not be measured by the different scientific methods, were all undermined or destroyed. In the vernacular version of this subjugation that came with colonialism and later, with modernization, the Western framework not only determined what was ‘civilized’ but also became the norm by which ‘other’ consciousness is measured.”

Asia found a way to distance itself from its past and suture itself to the past of the West.

Marose: Shame on us…Unforgivable cultural promiscuity! I think much of this has to do with the way we in modernizing Asia have been influenced by the sciences and social sciences. The “reduction of the world and its miniaturization, which began with the linear perspective,” as you suggested, Del, “is consolidated by the laboratory. Both of them are maps of the world and maps on which we manipulate the world. Viewed thus, many of the constructions of science are acts of estrangement, where we distance ourselves from the world in order to see and manipulate it better. The gaze of science becomes the gaze of surveillance, where the world has to be mapped, surveyed, censured and controlled.”

Ming: There was never independence in the real sense of the world. Despite “political emancipation, the intellectual dependence of the former colonies on Western models continued. Although the leading theoretical perspectives originating in Europe and America have not stood the test in an alien milieu, their continuing presence in university syllabi and journal article bibliographies in the non-West are testimony to the process of adaptation to the ‘rules of the dominant caste within the Euro-American social science game’ that world social science has been undergoing.”

We have never been able to source our philosophies to find a base for our sciences, particularly social sciences. Our indigenous philosophies and cultures are objects of study, never sources of concepts and explanatory narratives.

Tani-San: This idea of science is interesting. Let me share with you something I have been reflecting on. Some time ago, I wrote a magazine article “comparing the writing brush with a fountain pen, and in the course of it I remarked that if the device had been invented by the ancient Chinese and Japanese it would surely have had a tufted end like our writing brush. The ink would not have been this bluish but rather black, something like India ink, and it would have been made to seep down from the handle into the brush. And since we would have then found it inconvenient to write on Western paper, something near Japanese paper—even under mass production, if you will—would have been most in demand. Foreign ink and pens would not be as popular as they are; the talk of discarding the system of writing Roman letters would be less noisy; people would still feel affection for the old system. But more than that: our thoughts and our literature might not imitate the West as they do, but might have pushed forward into new regions quite on their own. An insignificant little piece of writing equipment, when one thinks of it, has had a vast, almost boundless, influence on our culture.”

Yazdi: Great reflection. Practical example. We would have saved a culture through science and certainly do not have to hear those critics shouting that we are romanticizing our past! Our past would have developed into our present, not been substituted by it as now, by the West. But let me quickly add here another, related matter: the issue of sources for academic research and studies, particularly in the social sciences. This problem is really serious. It affects the nature and quality of ‘Asian scholarship’ and their intellectual output in understanding and representing Asian social realities. A cursory examination of the bibliography/reference section of our books and journal articles seem to suggest that we are entrapped in Western sources and therefore largely Western modes of thinking, frameworks and modes of being. In a field like ‘culture and sustainability’, which I am working on, this really alters our perception and understanding. We need therefore to re-consider the “inter-textual universe” we are dealing with so that we really understand what produces us scholars. We need to re-construct ‘alternative inter-textual universes’ and as much re-see, re-hear, and re-think our world. Only then can we begin to fathom the gulf that we have created between us and the realities we like to write about, between our present and our past, and contribute to the process of methodological, theoretical and philosophical healing.

Redig: It is so clear that the “ecological unsustainability of human society today stems essentially from the
The notion reflects a “political compromise between growth and environmental sustainability that the pro-growth delegation at the United Nations could accept” and operates within a neo-liberal framework and agenda. It is, therefore, not a coincidence, or it is certainly not surprising, that the 1992 Earth Summit on Sustainable Development at Rio de Janeiro was chaired by a millionaire, the Canadian businessman Maurice Strong. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, there were those who were in the forefront of the practice of sustainability, but they were not there in the leadership. Certainly, this is a reflection of the real social base of the leadership in the world of mainstream sustainable development.

18.0 Sustainable development has today become a contested term and carries many meanings. The notion also figures as part of numerous theoretical frameworks, developed within a Western cultural and intellectual milieu. The mainstream notion figures within an anthropocentric, pro-capitalist market growth model. Thus, being part of the capital centric discourse, the mainstream notion and practice of sustainable development has the following features:

- A human-centered (anthropocentric) world-view.
- An emphasis on a growth-oriented, capitalist market approach to economic development.
- A relative lack of the need for radical change in people’s demands on the earth.
- The perpetuation of the view that Nature is merely a collection of natural resources that can be exploited by human beings.
- A technological faith that all environmental problems can be solved, eventually.

19.0 A critique of the above mainstream approach to sustainable development has developed over time. Critical, radical and postmodernist and religious perspectives have emerged and challenged the pro-growth oriented capitalist wisdom of the so-called “weak sustainability” approach. There have been contributions to the so-called “strong sustainability” approach. The basic idea here is to move from “transform Earth to suit our needs” to “transform our needs to sustain earth and society”. It is a move away from “anthropocentrism” to what some call “biocentric egalitarianism”. Such a shift in perspective is necessary for it removes the aura of human self-importance and the tendency to instrumentalize the universe for human purposes. The agenda to establish a ‘proper’ orientation of the place

Bala: To add to that observation, I think that “if the mechanistic world-view is replaced by a new cosmology according to which the ends of social life can be redefined from maximizing the production and consumption of commodities to the development of the potentialities of each individual to participate as fully as possible in the creative becoming of nature, society and culture.” But my point is that we have to re-appropriate and re-invent our lost cosmologies of life and sustainability. In that way, we can grow our present from our past, as Yazdi suggests. Of course, we also can learn a great deal from the ‘pasts of other cultures’.

16.0 Before Asia could decide on the manner of its development, it was already caught up with thoughts, imagination and choices that were largely imported. These choices have meant a move away from one symbolic universe to another. This is not through a considered process of engaged and critical endogenous development but through a cultural hegemonic processes of domination and replacement, achieved through colonial domination, military intervention, unfair market strategies and, now, through mainstream global and national media. It is a form of enslavement of the mind and imagination but which is presented as liberating.

17.0 While we are still willing victims of unsustainable alien cosmologies, we go ahead and adopt mainstream sustainable development as policy. This has become a mantra chanted by an increasing number of people to engage with unsustainable trends in Asia and to promote an economic development strategy that is environment friendly. It is ‘business as usual’. In fact, it was on this platform of ‘business as usual’ that sustainable development became the darling of businesses, governments and global organizations, including the UN.
of humans in the Universe, i.e., to resituate the human and reframe development to promote sustainability, is made possible.

20.0
In this striving, there is need to re-examine the culture and politics of sustainable development to separate ‘sustainable development’ from ‘sustainability’. As Anwar Fazal pointed out, it is like making a distinction between ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’. This distinction enables one to go beyond sustainable development. The term ‘sustainability’ better describe this. The traditions of the Karen, Balinese, Kankaney, Henanga, and Ainu indigenous peoples of Asia captured the pathways and practice of sustainability well before the twentieth century concern for sustainable development. Sustainability was part of a cultural practice and not born out of an ecological crisis.

21.0
How to come to terms with this shift from sustainable development to sustainability?

In a discussion with Prof. Zialcita of Ateneo de Manila University, Manila, he challenged me by saying that “Sustainability is about developing sustainably. It is about development, economic growth, technology and the use of scarce resources. You can’t escape that.” But he also added that, “People feel free and are wondering what to do with their freedom? And there is a belief in infinite growth, but is that possible?” In a sense, his observation meant that people cannot exercise absolute freedom with regard to the environment since infinite growth is not possible given the fact we are always constrained by finite resources. The deeper meaning of that observation is the notion of ‘limit’. Without putting it in the same fashion, an 89 year old Kankaney elder in Kilong Barangay near Sagada town, Olowan Lumiwes, talked at length about a master organizing elder in Kilong Barangay near Sagada town,33 Olowan putting it in the same fashion, an 89 year old Kankaney . Without limit of that observation is the notion of ‘constrained by finite resources. The deeper meaning growth is not possible given the fact we are always freedom with regard to the environment since infinite observation meant that people cannot exercise absolute freedom with regard to the environment since infinite growth is not possible given the fact we are always constrained by finite resources.

Two ways of explaining the notion and practice of limits: one within the context of development and the other within a defined relationship with Nature and outside the context of development. It is possible to think about sustainability outside the context of development. If the indigenous cultural idea of limits is seen within the context of development, it will certainly be a different notion.34

22.0
This discussion brings us to understand voices that articulate culture within a national and, at times, regional territory. Who is today articulating or championing the voice of local culture? (i) State/government: the voice of nationalism: nationalist culture; (ii) Global/national tourism: the voice of tourist agencies: touristic culture; and (iii) Indigenous/ethno-national communities: the voice of indigenism: indigenous culture. There can be other classifications. Thus, the ‘voices of a people’ are not singular but multiple and contested. While the national government articulates the idea of a national identity by almost always marginalizing sub-regional, minority or indigenous communities’ cultural identities, tourism seeks to present local cultures as exotic to sell these cultures to tourists. Against this background, it is usually in the cultures of indigenous communities that one finds sites of cosmologies of sustainability.

23.0
My journey in search of cosmologies of sustainability took me deep into the regions and cultures of a number of countries in Asia.36 In all these places, as I met the young and old, professors and elders, the professionals and activists, the urban dwellers and villagers, and believers and practitioners of native ‘cosmic religion’, Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Shintoists, it dawned on me that there are answers in Asia to our present predicaments as a result of global and national unsustainable development. And it is simplicity and beauty that characterize these answers; a simple message for a ‘culture of life’ against a ‘culture of death’. The only thing separating this simple message from becoming a basis for a way of life and for society was a will—social and political—to actively nurture it against hegemonic materialistic and hedonistic cosmologies.

The wisdom of our elders reasserts itself: the ‘battle’ for simplicity, sustainability and sanity has to be fought out there in public institutions as much as it has to be fought within each one of us. Deep in our local cultures and our hearts we hold the solutions for a sustainable Asia and the world.38

Features of an Asian ‘Cosmology of Sustainability’

24.0
Asia is rich in spiritual traditions, a source of its immense cultural and symbolic wealth. Unfortunately, it is also the basis for some of its tragic problems, particularly when spirituality is substituted by institutionalized religion. My research endeavor, which turned from a
social science enquiry into a pilgrimage, presented me with great learning about Asia. Asia’s spiritual traditions present sustainability as the other side of spirituality, as two sides of the same coin. Asian indigenous cultural notions and practices of sustainability cannot be defined in any other way. Deep inside Asia, there is no such a reality as sustainability as such, but only ‘spirituality-sustainability’.

**Figure 1**: Spirituality and Sustainability are Two Sides of a Singular Reality.

25.0

Spirituality is not religion and there can be no religion without spirituality. It helps locate the individual in the larger ‘purpose’ of the collective and the natural cosmos and in the communal ‘relational and emotional ecologies’ defined by such values as respect, empathy, service, compassion, love, joy, wisdom, and peace. The UN definition of sustainable development simply does not understand or capture Asian concerns and orientations.

There are non-materialistic, non-development oriented ‘cosmologies of sustainability’ in Asia. These cosmologies nurture all Nature within a non-utopian dynamic of everyday living and harmony. They are articulated deep in Asian ecological and symbolic thought and practice. In them is reflected a ‘meditative interiority’ dialoguing with ‘overwhelming exteriority’, a dialogue that captures the spirituality-sustainability reality. It is an insight that redefined my research field journeys into a pilgrimage—a re-search for the spirit of sustainability.

26.0

In many of Asia’s indigenous communities, the cosmologies of sustainability are nurtured by the ‘eternal triangular relationship of fundamental realities’—the human world (human beings), the natural world (natural objects other than human) and the spiritual world (God and other spiritual beings).

In Bali, for instance, they have a definite name, *Tri Hita Karana*. Both Prof. Wayan Redig of Udayana University and Prof. Made Titib of the Institute of Hindu Dharma, both located in Denpasar, insist that this defines Balinese sustainability. Up in the Cordillera Mountains, the Kankaney people also voice these triangular relationships through their master value, *inayan*. The Karen community also articulates a deep understanding of these triangular relationships. While there are many contextual specifics, these relationships are part of a common orientation across many contexts in Asia. There is really no need for the UN definition in Bali if we flesh out local concerns and the local orientation to sustainability.

27.0

Another notion that is part of the cosmology of sustainability is the conception of personhood: the notion and practice of inter-being. Individual entities are entirely dependent and endlessly interwoven into a ‘no-beginning, no-end web’. In a sense, there is no ‘atomised individual’, as you will see in a Western construction of individuality, but there is a ‘networked individual’. The ‘networked individual’ is part of a continuum, a web of beings. As in the age of the networked computers, this is about active connectivity.

While these ideas emerge from the contributions of the Vietnamese Zen master, Thich Nhat Hanh, they echo in Buddhist-Hindu emotional and intellectual life in Southeast Asia. And they are reflected in the cosmic native religious and cultural values of the many indigenous communities in Asia. In the Philippines, for instance, they have the notion of *kapwa*. Though there is a difference between the Buddhist notion of inter-being and the Filipino notion of *kapwa*, they share in the meaning that is intended to be established: ‘*Kapwa*
is a Tagalog term widely used when addressing another with the intention of establishing a connection. It reflects a viewpoint that beholds the essential humanity recognizable in everyone, therefore linking (including) people rather than separating (excluding) them from each other.” Kapwa, simply meaning ‘shared self’, defines Filipino personhood (not personality), an important element of the Filipino notion of sustainability. It is about interconnectivity again. Such connectivity is also experienced in the symbolic meaning of entering the torii at Shinto shrines. Entering a torii connects all as we are stripped to our essential being and placed within the same sacred space of the Shinto shrine.

In the Wat Pamahavan monastery near Chaiyaphun, Thailand, I engaged with Phra Paisal Visalo on the Buddhist approach to sustainability. The monk led me into the deeper meanings of mindfulness. While it is a central and complex notion in Buddhism, it is also central to a deeper understanding of inter-connectivity: inter-being and inter-connectedness will not work without mindfulness and vice versa. Combining both presents any Asian, any human, a view of relationship and an orientation to choices, decisions and actions that spread both spatially and temporally. It presents a cosmological orientation. Sustainability is, in a sense, a derivative of this notion of personhood.

This notion takes us to the practice of consumption in many indigenous communities in Asia. Modern consumption is perceived as a linear activity that privileges the Present. The past and the future are ‘absent’ in the way we go about our consumption activities. However, consumption among many indigenous peoples is a circular process, not a linear one. The circular process is composed of three stages: pre-consumption, present consumption and post-consumption. In this practice, the present consumption is conscious of the stages before and after consumption. And this is largely tied to the fact that what is being consumed is part of the sacred or is a gift of the sacred (or spiritual beings). This circularity is also one of the consequences of connectivity between different realities (or contexts) and between different times.

Seeking a Sustainable Path in the Many Roads We Take

Asian nations yield to the temptations of GDP-oriented growth, of acquiring symbols of globalize culture and of realizing ambitions to become another developed nation. America is the image of Asia’s future (America in Asian dress!). Our leaders and economists simply don’t get it: Mother Earth cannot sustain our planetary carelessness and irresponsibility. It is a simple truth. But we continue to terrorize Earth and plant seeds on the soil of Time to create ecological catastrophes for future generations. Mainstream development has inserted into our everyday and public life many unsustainable processes that affect our notion and practice of justice, compassion and spirituality.

Thus, we in Asia are now faced with a crisis of sustainability, much more serious than what the West invented sustainable development for.

Look around us for pathways out of the mess we have created. Bhutan, for instance, is institutionalizing the practice of Gross National Happiness. But who looks at Bhutan or cares to follow its example? Our eyes are turned to the glitter of unsustainable American practice of consumption. The Happy Planet Index...
suggests that a place like Vanuatu in the Pacific Ocean is happier than all developed countries. It stands first in the ranking order of the Happy Planet Index. But who will want to take it seriously? Which Asian nation really cares to protect and nurture its indigenous communities and learn from them the way to manage our ecologies or to build the trusteeship of our natural wealth? Which Asian nation has a national educational curriculum that incorporates indigenous systems of knowledge and wisdom as critical for all citizens? We will do it, if the West begins to do it.

31.0
An exploration of Asian realities has taken us beyond the concerns of both economic and sustainable development. As Asia’s soul is being corrupted from the inside, we also see a dynamic Asian-ness resist and struggle, everywhere. Cosmologies of sustainability are aspects of Asia’s history and they contribute to these struggles, which range from street demonstrations to street theatre and to curriculum and institutional changes. The cosmologies go far beyond the mainstream discourse of sustainable development. They have the potential to address our crises and to put us on the path of sustainability and spirituality. There is a life beyond sustainable development and it is our responsibility to seize it for all humanity.

Notes

1. This paper is a shorter version of a forthcoming book (end of 2008) with the same title.
2. Where I encountered, among many others, the Karen, Thai, Balinese, Filipino, Kankaney, Henanga, Japanese, Ainu, and Buddhists, Shintoists, Catholics, Muslims and Hindus.
3. The smell I experienced at rituals of the communities and cultures I encountered had great learning value. Many rituals were a cultural shock and disturbing. So was the smell that surrounded the rituals. It was tempting to come away thinking of these people as savage because of the ‘smell ecology’ but that was what I was resisting. Through this I found myself encountering the nature of ‘difference’.
4. Consider the writings of J. Krishnamurti, the Dalai Lama, Kahlil Gibran, Omar Kayyam, and Marcus Aurelius among others.
5. As I carefully tread through the symbolically rich pathways of Japanese culture in the Kyoto-Nara area, into their spirit-elevating abstract and strolling Gardens, I realise that here is a cultural ‘Hurrying-stopper’. Not only that, the garden recovers the lost silences in you and allows healing.
11. Ibid., p. 17.
16. Akira Kurosawa’s internationally not-so-popular 1991 film Rhapsody in August, subtly captures the nasty side of Americanism, only to be lost in the criticisms of Japan’s own aggressive military expansionism, with cruel consequences in many places in Asia and the Pacific, something that is haunting acutely shame-conscious Japanese society even today. Nasty Americanism gets away. Fun Americanism gets into our lifestyle, gets institutionalised and become constituted as a ‘spatial-discursive system of contemporary global capitalism’. Against this general drift of urbanising Asian societies, deeper layers of meanings embedded in Asian cultures seem to be on the way to being homeless, marginalised or lost.
17 “20% of Japan’s Population over 65.” The Japan Times. 3 June 2006.
18 A report on a related matter recently is even more disturbing, for the simple fact the Japan cannot really afford it. The Japan Times editorial of 23 August 2006 reports: “Child abuse in this nation has reached a crisis level. Child welfare centres across the nation dealt with a record 34,451 cases of child abuse in fiscal 2005, a thousand more than in the previous year and a 31.3-fold increase since fiscal 1990... The police investigated 131 people on suspicion of child abuse, up 12.9 percent from last year. Victims numbered 128, up 18.5 percent from the previous year. Both figures are the highest since 2000. Twenty-eight of the victims died, six more than the year before.” Asia’s story of development? The silent crises are upon us and we need to wake up!
30 Ibid.
31 Anwar Fazal of the Taiping Peace Initiative and the UNDP was a member of the API fellows selection committee. While discussing my research topic, he made this observation to help me answer questions by other selection committee members.
32 Interview with Dr. Fernando N. Zialcita at Ateneo de Manila University, 7 March 2006.
33 In the Sagada municipality, Mountain Province, Cordillera, Philippines. 16 March 2006. My interpreter here was Clint Bangaan of Tebtebba Foundation, a foundation taking up the cause of Indigenous People and based in Baguio City, the organisation I was affiliated with while I was there. A native of a nearby barangay, Antadao, he got around easily and this allowed me into the community quite easily.
34 “Thinking of development as an expanding market economy increasingly dominated by market relations obscures alternatives outside this framework... That elements of place-based practices like gift exchange have so often been missing from the development discourse is a telling indictment of the Eurocentrism of much thinking and planning in development; it is also an indictment of the strength of the capitalocentric discourse of development.”
36 My research journey took me deep into the mountains of Northern Thailand, into the villages of the Karen community. It took me to the monastery managed by Phra Phaisal Visalo—an API awardee belonging to the first batch—and finally a modern ashram, supported by the ideas of engaged Buddhism of Ajarn Sulak Sivakrasa. In Indonesia, my journey took me to Bali and into the homes and terraced rice fields of the Balinese Hindu, where religion is lived daily, individually and communally, through many rituals and performances. In the Philippines, I went into the Cordilleras, staying with families—as I did in Bali—in Antadao, Mountain Province and...
Mayoyao, Ifugao Province. In Japan, I travelled much in the Kyoto-Nara areas in addition to many other areas in the north and south. I visited shrines, temples, memorials, different types of Japanese gardens and rural towns and villages.

37 A term I picked up from Fr. Niphot of the Research and Training Centre for Religio-Cultural Community in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He uses it to actively replace the term ‘animism’, which in many contexts carries the meaning of ‘primitive’ presented with a negative intent.

38 In Northern Thailand, I encountered Buddhism, Catholicism and ‘cosmic (native) religion’ i.e. the religion and spirituality of indigenous peoples (in this case, the Karen people). In Bali, religion is everywhere. And in the Cordillera, the Philippines, my experience with people’s religion and spirituality was the highlight of my own research. It was what took me deeper into the community and its experience. The realities that presented themselves in Thailand and gathered momentum in Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan allowed me to come to a number of insights which persisted throughout this research pilgrimage. These encounters have had a significant bearing on the research I was pursuing and my understanding on the role of religion and spirituality in influencing my understanding of sustainability. It also allowed me finally to come to terms with the separation of ‘sustainability’ from ‘sustainable development’, a separation I was struggling with from the beginning of the study.

39 Though, it is assumed that ‘God’ is essential to the notion of spirituality, this is really not the case. Buddhism specially presents a case against this kind of definition of spirituality as it a religious practice that engages with no compassionate or impersonal distant God. The issue of spirits within the world of the indigenous people I culturally encountered marks a relational ecology mediating the relationship with the natural cosmos. This is sustained by values such as respect, empathy, service, compassion, love, joy, wisdom, and peace. It must be kept in mind that local terms for these values are culturally specific and an English description merely presents a rough idea.

40 Pointed out to me in a sharing session of my research experiences at the Tebtebba Foundation in Baguio City on 12 April 2006. My personal experience of this ‘research time’ qualitatively changed. In a sense, the research journey was also within, trying to come to terms with sustainability and spirituality.

41 February 2006. Prof. Wayan Redig was my main informant and the one who took me into homes to observe the working of the hidden ‘backstage’ in Bali, away from tourist centres and tourist gaze. Prof. Redig, an expert on Hindu Iconography, also introduced me the complex reality of the Balinese Hindu Temple. While discussing the Bersakih Temple, the Mother Temple for the Balinese Hindu, as we walked around it, we ‘discovered’ another Balinese approach to ‘community sustainability’ offered by the way the temple is constructed—commons spaces sustained by clan spaces. Thus while prayers at the common spaces maintained the religious unity of all Balinese, the clan temples allowed individual clans’ specificities to be continued.

42 It is interesting to note here that both Max Weber, who said that we in the modern age are experiencing disenchantment of the world, and later George Ritzer, who gave us macdonaldisation, were seriously flawed in so far as the Karen or the Bali Hindu or the Kankaney or the Henanga people and their societies are concerned. Among the Karen people, as others, all natural things are still ‘owned’ by ‘spirits’. There is a notion of a protective guardian. The use of natural resources can only be done with ‘permission’ through a ritual mediation, which has sustainable ecological and communal implications. Their enchanted world has its own eco-logic and has led in those areas to much better and more sustainable ecological management. On another aspect, friends, academic interviewees, and acquaintances made during seminar presentations have always questioned my tendency to ‘romanticise’ indigenous or local cultures. The criticism is rather broad and multi-pronged: (i) Ordering Principles of Society: Every society has evolved its own ordering principles. Identifying them can go on indefinitely. How does that help understand local form of sustainable development? (ii) World of Spirits: Belief in spirits is really hampering social and economic development. This reality is not seen as productive. (iii) Collectivism: Heavy emphasis on collectivism hampers the development of individualism and the rights of individuals; and (iv) Unsustainable Behaviours: Indigenous societies have had very negative impacts on communities, individuals and ecologies. While these criticisms require another paper to be adequately addressed, local cultures as all cultures are capable of great dynamism. They are capable of change faced with new living realities. However, for now, these changes are not endogenously-driven but result from powerful, hegemonic structures and intentions. Also, there is no careful and deep study of local cultures. In such a context, there is careless
substitution instead of creative development of local intellectual and cultural resources.


44 Katrina De Guia. *Kapwa: The Self in the Other: Worldviews and Lifestyles of Filipino Culture-Bearers*. Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2005, p. 8. The notion was developed by a Filipino psychologist, Virgilio Enriquez, at the University of the Philippines.

45 Interview with Phra Paisal Visalo, 21 December 2005. He is the abbot of Wat Pamahavan and is an API fellow from the first batch.


Introduction

Three years ago, my documentary, “Basal Banar”, about my return to my indigenous roots in Palawan Island and learning the rituals of my tribe, was shown together in Okinawa with Higa Toyomitsu’s film, “Nanamui”, a documentary about customary island rituals of Miyako Island. The Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival programmers were so fascinated with the similarities of our styles that they decided to show our documentaries back to back in their outreach program in Okinawa to illustrate the similarities of island cultures. Palawan is a separate island from the island of Luzon where the capital city of Manila is located, as Okinawa is separate from mainland Japan. Palawan and Okinawa have cultures distinct from the main capitals of their respective countries. Higa Toyomitsu’s work was the main reason why I applied for an Asian Public Intellectual Fellowship, to more deeply explore the similarities of our styles. That is why I submitted the concept to the Nippon Foundation, “A Comparative Documentary on Island Rituals”.

However, on my return in Okinawa, Higa Toyomitsu refused to be interviewed. The writer Nakasato Isao (who also wrote Okinawan master filmmaker Takamine Goh’s latest film, “Tsuru Henry”) tried to arrange for me and Higa to meet once again. Eventually, Nakasato-san explained to me the reason for Higa-san’s refusal. The influx of many foreign filmmakers filming in Okinawa has made Higa-san vigilant about people just coming to Okinawa and then filming something right away. I could definitely relate to Higa-san since this has also happened in my ancestral land of Palawan, where outsiders filmed with the wrong context or exoticized island life. I respect Higa’s decision for I myself took time before I actually filmed in my own tribe. In my first year, I went to Palawan to get to know my relatives and talked with them about our culture; I started by just taking down notes. By my second year, I started taking pictures and learning the rituals from my elders. Only in my third year, with the elders’ blessings, did I start to film. A four month fellowship is not long enough to make a deep and comprehensive documentary, and perhaps this was my greatest mistake. I could not make just a run-of-the-mill documentary. This subject needs time. Perhaps Higa-san was right. But I just wished that Higa-san remembered how similar our films were. Like him, I am an islander from the other side of the sea. I guess that is the nature of documentary and all creative endeavors—sometimes you plan something on a subject, but in the end the subject chooses you.

In my last month in Okinawa, ironically, master Okinawan filmmaker Takamine Goh had an exhibit of his paintings about his films. If Higa Toyomitsu filmed rituals, Takamine Goh’s films are rituals on film themselves. His films explore the Okinawan identity amidst changes in the Okinawan landscape. I had the great opportunity of interviewing Takamine-san who was actually part of the jury when my film, “Basal Banar”, was in the International Competition of the Yamagata Documentary Festival in 2003.

I remember clearly what he told me when I lost in the competition, “I like your film, but their minds are closed” (referring to the other members of the jury). He was fighting for my film against the European and American jurors. It was such a great honor to hear his words of acclaim, for when I saw his films, “Untamagiru” and “Paradise View”, they literally opened my mind to the possibility of a culturally distinct cinema. For me, he was the only person who mattered in the jury.

In a deep conversation in our interview, he taught me the Okinawan concept of mabui. Every person possesses a vital, life sustaining spirit called mabui. In all his films and images, his characters are always involved in losing or searching for their mabui. His main characters always end up with a great poetic image based on Okinawan folklore: in “Paradise View”, the man eats his own guts; in “Untamigiru”, a spear pierces the hero’s head; in “Tsuru Henry”, Henry is on fire. Yet, as he pointed out, all of them are alive. This made me reflect on the Palawan concept of the gimbaran or twin soul. My elders taught me that one is born with a twin soul or gimbaran. Perhaps that is why I am here in Okinawa, to search for my Palawan gimbaran. Perhaps my twin soul is the Okinawan mabui?

With this inspiration from the Okinawan master-filmmaker Takamine Go, I created my new documentary...
entitled, “Okinawa Mabui”.

In the four months of my Asian Public Intellectual fellowship in Okinawa I documented and experienced four kinds of rituals: everyday rituals, personal rituals, modern rituals and artists’ rituals.

The Mabui in Everyday Ritual

In my first month in Okinawa last December, at the peak of winter, my main contact Higa-san was busy filming so I did not have access to interview him about his work on Miyako Island rituals. Then, through my German host Titus Spree of the Maejima Arts Center, I met Yuuri Daiku, the Japanese name of German-Canadian Hendrick, a former cultural tourist guide in Ishigaki. He invited me to Ishigaki where I met his friends, natives of the Yaeyama group of islands.

They invited me to go fishing that Christmas Day, at which time I caught two big fish. At night, we ate the fish that we caught and, at the peak of our drinking, Iriomote-san (named after the island) suddenly got his sanshin and started playing and singing traditional island music. Then suddenly the other man at the table took turns dancing traditional dances.

I got my camera and started documenting their revelry. I observed that the sound of their music was very similar to the traditional Kutyapi music of my elders from Palawan. The men’s dancing was so much like the movements of the Baliyan-Shamans of my native island Palawan. The movements were so soft and gentle, almost feminine, so much like the Taruk dancers of my native Palawan. A Miyako islander even danced their island’s famous bird dance. It was a beautiful night full of laughter and merriment. Even though I did not understand their languages (both the Nihongo [Japanese] and traditional Yaeyama islander languages), it was as if they were welcoming a fellow islander through their dance and music.

By January, I was preparing for my Sundance Film Festival trip, where my first dramatic film, “The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros”, had received the honor of being the first Philippine film invited to the festival. Following this, I received two more invitations to the Rotterdam and Berlin Film Festivals. I had originally not intended to attend the European festivals so that I could properly finish my fellowship, but she advised me that it is rare that a filmmaker gets invited to both festivals, since they are rival festivals. Before, she said, once you were invited to Rotterdam, you could not also be invited to Berlin. Yet I was blessed to be invited to both. She advised me to attend both festivals.

The Personal Ritual, Searching for my Mabui

Before I flew for my three festival trips, the young German filmmaker Florian Baron, my housemate in Titus Spree’s traditional Okinawan hut, mentioned Sufe Uteki and Kudaka Island to me. Sufe Uteki is a sacred spot from which, in a big stone, one can see the legendary island of Kudaka where, according to Okinawan myth, the first gods stepped. I asked him if we could go and if he could document this spiritual journey. He agreed and documented my personal ritual of respect to the ancient gods of Okinawa. It was a profound magical experience so similar to my footage of my voyage to the burial grounds of my ancestors in Palawan. The images of this trip cannot be described, and will be shown in my documentary about Okinawa. In the final stage, I reached a part of Kudaka Island where I asked the gods of Okinawa to guide me in my next voyage around the world.

After my three festival trips, where I won four awards (one in Rotterdam and three in Berlin), I returned to Okinawa for a weekend during which the Maejima Arts Center organized a retrospective of my short films and my documentary, “Basal Banar”. It was painful going through “Basal Banar”. I could not even watch my own film anymore, because most of the elders in the film have died. These were people very dear to me, who taught me the Palawan ways.

After the screening, I had an insightful discussion with local artists on the importance of documenting our ancestors’ ways, for we are in an age where everything seems to be going so fast, and as artists it is our duty to capture these ancient ways through our art for the next generations.
documentary culminated with it being shown as the opening film for the Message Sticks Indigenous Film Festival at the Sydney Opera House in Australia.

**Modern Ritual, Ancient Mabui versus Modern issues**

Upon my return to Okinawa last June, I contacted Nakasato Isao, the writer of Okinawan master filmmaker Takamine Goh’s films. I asked for his help to make connections so that I could possibly document yuta, or Okinawan shamans. I also reconnected with the master chanter and sanshin musician Misako Oshiro. We went to her famous pub where traditional Okinawan music is played. I was allowed to document the chanters in this very modern pub where the audience gets to dance traditional Okinawan dances along with the music.

It was a great honor that night when Misako Oshiro-san agreed to play a song for me. I was able to document her powerful singing. After this, I was able to document her once again when she performed near the US bases at the commemoration of the Japanese-American war of World War II. This was such an honor, since I had seen her perform in 2003 at the Yamagata International Film Festival and also loved her performance in Takamine san’s film, “Tsuru Henry” (written by Nakasato Isao). Her style and chanting reminded me so much of my deceased Aunt, Minan Renita, whose chanting I documented. I also documented city structures and everyday modern life in Okinawa to juxtapose the modern images to ancient chanting.

**Artist’s Ritual**

In my final month, Takamine-san shared his philosophy of filmmaking with me when I interviewed him. He said, “Cinema is cinebah. Cinebah means death.” He stated that creating films is like dying. Something inside you dies so that you can create a good work of art.

He was right, this is what goes on inside me as I create a film. It is as if I am dying. For I devote a part of myself... my soul... my mabui... my gimbaran... to every work of art I create. It is not only work for me or a craft that I make, but cinema is life for me. Every film I make, I share a part of my life essence. It took a master filmmaker like Takamine Goh to verbalize this and understand what a native filmmaker goes through.

He also advised that I should learn to “betray myself”. He says that sometimes people start to expect something from you when you become an established filmmaker. However, he contests that by creating films that are the opposite of what his audience expects of him. As native filmmakers, we should not be trapped by how the West perceives what our cinema should be. We know who we are, we know what our mabui is. We create our own style. For we are not Hollywood nor European art cinema, we are mabui cinema!

For awhile, I struggled to reconcile my former documentary style with my new form as a narrative filmmaker. However, Takamine further states that there is no difference really between documentaries and fiction filmmaking. There should be no conflict between the two forms. Making film is just that, making film. Filmmaking in all its different labels in the end is just filmmaking. This concept has made me brave once again. Somehow, I lost my fearlessness when my films got recognized. I must now betray myself.

With this intense inspiration, I went back to Manila to edit my twenty-five hours of footage into a fifteen minute juxtaposition of poetic images: modern American helicopters silhouetted in Okinawan sunsets as grand chanter Misako Oshiro chants an ancient song; the grand Eisa festival, as very young Okinawans drum in a competitive festival originally used to scare off remaining dead spirits from the Obon-time of the dead; the native Ishigakians drinking, then suddenly, with full Okinawan spirit, playing the sanshin (Okinawan string instrument) and playfully dancing the ancient movements of their ancestors; and me, a native Palawano, paying homage and respect to the island where the first Okinawan gods stepped. All are just images, unexplained… rituals to be felt by the viewer…betraying my former narrative style to a more impressionistic image of Okinawa. These images are just the beginning of a life’s work that will connect ancient peoples of the world.

**Conclusion**

The most important experience in this fellowship is that it has helped me look back on my immersion in the ways of my ancestors, especially now that I am on the verge of a breakthrough as a modern filmmaker. It took me years before I started filming the rituals of my own tribe. These four months might not seem enough yet this brief time has made me look deep into my essence and purpose as a culture-bearing artist.

Mabui is the essence of self; the identity of a people. Thanks to my inspiration from Takamine Go’s exploration of the Okinawan psyche, I now move on and create my dream script on my Palawan identity. I consider this Asian Public Intellectual fellowship to be a ritual—a ritual of looking deep inside myself as I experience the Okinawan soul.
APPENDIX I

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

The Fifth Workshop of Asian Public Intellectuals
Phuket, Thailand, 26-30 November 2006

Day 1, Sunday, 26 November 2006

1730 - 1800 Cocktail
1800 - 1820 Group Photograph
1820 - 1940 Opening Ceremony and Dinner

Welcoming Speeches:
Supang Chantavanich, Director of the Institute of Asian Studies
API Coordinating Institution
Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation
MC: Surichai Wun’ Gaeo, Director of API Coordinating Institution

Keynote Address:
Introduction of Keynote Speaker by Surichai Wun’ Gaeo
Speaker: Surin Pitsuwan, Former Foreign Minister of Thailand

Dinner:
Toast by Soottiporn Chitmitrapab, Vice President, Chulalongkorn University

Day 2, Monday, 27 November 2006

0830 - 1030 INTRODUCTION SESSION
Moderator: Surichai Wun’ Gaeo
Opening Remarks: Uthai Dulyakasem, Workshop Director
1030 - 1240 SESSION I: Human Rights and the Underprivileged
Chair: Mary Racelis
Discussants: Supang Chantavanich, Colin G. Nicholas
1240 - 1340 Lunch
1340 - 1550 SESSION II: Ecological Destruction and Modern Resource Management
Chair: Koji Tanaka
Discussants: Wataru Fujita, Herry Yogaswara
1550 - 1610 Coffee Break
1610 - 1850 SESSION III: Young and Old in the Modern World
Chair: Ragayah Haj. Mat Zin
Discussants: Mary Racelis
1930 - Dinner

Day 3, Tuesday, 28 November 2006

0830 - 1130 SESSION IV: Human Learning in the Contemporary World
Chair: Jose M. Cruz, S.J.
Discussants: Tatsuya Tanami, John Haba
Coffee Break
1130 - 1220 Lunch
1230 - 2000 Excursion
Dinner
Day 4, Wednesday, 29 November 2006

0830 - 1040 SESSION V: Bridging Tradition and Modernity
   Chair: Wataru Fujita
   Discussants: Danilo Francisco M. Reyes, Sumit K. Mandal
1040 - 1100 Coffee Break
1100 - 1310 SESSION VI: Art in a Borderless World
   Chair: Danilo Francisco M. Reyes
   Discussants: Nick A. Deocampo
1310 - 1410 Lunch
1410 - 1620 SESSION VII: Identity and Self-Determination
   Chair: Herry Yogaswara
   Discussants: Colin G. Nicholas, Prangtip Daorueng
1620 - 1650 Coffee Break
1650 - 1900 SESSION VIII: Self-Perception in a Changing Southeast Asia
   Chair: Herry Yogaswara
   Discussants: Sumit K. Mandal, Prangtip Daorueng
1930 -   Dinner

Day 5, Thursday, 30 November 2006

0900 - 1130 SESSION IX: Culture and National Pride
   Chair: Surichai Wun’ Gaeo
   Discussants: Taufik Abdullah, Nick A. Deocampo
   Coffee Break
1130 - 1300 Lunch
1300 - 1700 CONCLUDING SESSION: Synthesizing, Wrapping Up, Evaluation and Future Issues
   Co-Chairs: Tatsuya Tanami, Surichai Wun’ Gaeo
   Wrapping Up: Uthai Dulyakasem
1830 -   Farewell Dinner / Cultural Night
APPENDIX II

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
The Fifth Workshop of Asian Public Intellectuals
Phuket, Thailand, 26-30 November 2006
(Information as of November 2006)

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The Work of the 2005/2006 API Fellows

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APPENDIX III

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS
(in chronological order of presentation)

THE PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS’ RIGHTS: EXPERIENCES IN MALAYSIA AND LEARNING FROM THE PHILIPPINES
Sri Wahyono
This paper describes the lack of protection given to Indonesian Migrant Workers’ rights in almost all economic sectors, both formal and non-formal, in Malaysia. In this study, most of the randomly interviewed respondents were Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI); a few were Filipino, Indian and Vietnamese migrant workers. These workers were employed in various sectors such as domestic work, manufacturing, plantation work, construction, and retail (stores and cafés). Many of the TKIs who stayed and worked in Malaysia did not fully receive their rights as workers and were even denied their basic rights through underpayment, nonpayment of wages, and the withholding of passports. Many of the Indonesian workers received physical and sexual abuse from their employers. Indonesian workers who were employed in the plantation and construction sectors had to live in poor housing while many female workers were victimized as forced prostitutes. Furthermore, TKIs have to deal with the serious problem of protection. Many of them have been the victims of corrupt practices carried out by the Malaysian Royal Police and Immigration Staff. The most common abuses suffered by TKIs are collateral money, the extortion of cash and the confiscation of valuable goods. There are some factors that contribute to why Indonesian Migrant Workers’ rights are very vulnerable to exploitation: a) low achievement in formal education and a lack of relevant training; b) lack of information on how to obtain travel documents, how to apply for jobs and visas, and how much to pay for the fees; c) lack of knowledge and understanding about labor laws and immigration regulations in Malaysia as a receiving country; d) falsifying ID cards, passport data and other travel documents during the recruitment and deployment process by recruitment agents with the collusion of immigration officials.

WORKERS’ CONCEPTIONS OF DECENT WORK: A CASE OF FEMALE WORKERS’ IDENTITIES AND BETTER CONDITIONS OF WORK
Junko Sato
This paper presents a case of workers in the batik industry in Java, Indonesia. Although the need for their social protection has been expressed by those who embrace universal labor standards, such as international organizations, the workers themselves had different notions of good working conditions. They were not passive victims but were active and conscious agents who enjoyed the occupational experience that they acquired and used in their work. They thought that a workplace should be a place of ‘normal’ everyday life in which they formed an autonomous space where they freely slept, chatted, got together, and worked. In this space, they were the masters of the work, the work was not their master. The application of universal standards would make such a working arrangement difficult, since their needs were not only economic. The workers’ valuation of what they produced and their occupational experience needs to be recognized by society, according to the workers’ rationalizations. This paper suggests that the workers would enjoy sharing their views on the value of batik tulis work and products, and that doing so would also carry with it the possibility of improving their social status.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ROLE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sarawut Pratoomraj
The study was undertaken to learn about the functions and impact of the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) in the area of human rights education during the period from 1994 to 2003. The study used two methods, interviews with current Commissioners, former Commissioners, and other stakeholders, and observations of the workings of Komnas HAM. The study found that from 1994 to 1996, Komnas HAM began to organize its office and administration work. In its second phase from 1997 to 2003, Komnas HAM implemented various activities in the area of human rights education, both directly and indirectly. Finally, the study examined the impact that Komnas HAM’s human rights education work has had on Indonesian society and makes recommendations for improving its effectiveness in this area in the future.
DECENTRALIZATION AND DEVOLUTION OF FOREST MANAGEMENT: FOSTERING RELATIONS BETWEEN STATE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES

Yuli Nugroho
In the last decade, national governments of Southeast Asian countries have increasingly decentralized and devolved powers and authority in forest management to the local level. This paper attempts to investigate the experience of the Philippines and Thailand with this decentralization and devolution of forest management. The particular objectives of this paper are to look at how local government—through its actors from district to village levels—perceives, interprets, and understands this new power and authority, and how it implements them at the field level. Social, culture, and political factors that both constrain and facilitate the implementation process will also be presented.

COMPENSATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION CASES: EXPERIENCES FROM THE PHILIPPINES AND JAPAN

Darunee Paisanpanichkul
The big question from patients who are affected by pollution is how fair and efficient is the compensation that they will receive for their health damages due to pollution-related diseases. According to Philippines law, although there is no specific compensation law, health and environmental compensation can be demanded from polluters via the judicial system, by using a tort and damages principle according to the Civil Code. An interesting point of Philippines law concerning environmental litigation is that there are several definitions of damages. The burden of proof, *onus probandi*, on the relationship between symptoms and pollution is still an important issue. For Japanese law, there is a specific compensation law for pollution-related disease. However, its mechanism, patient certification, has created an obstacle to access to compensation.

MANAGEMENT, BEHAVIOR AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF ASIAN WILDLIFE: CASE STUDY OF MALAYAN TAPIRS (*TAPIRUS INDICUS*)

Siti Khadijah binti Abdul Gani
A study was conducted at four selected zoos in Indonesia in order to understand the management, behavior and public perceptions of Asian wildlife. The Malayan tapir (*Tapirus indicus*) was chosen as the study case. Research was conducted from November 2005 to September 2006. Four other proposed study sites either prevented the researcher from conducting the study or the zoo no longer held this species in its enclosure. The zoos’ management staffs were interviewed in order to gain information on the history of keeping tapirs in each zoo. Other information such as diseases of Malayan tapirs and breeding success or failure was also recorded. Every related exhibit was measured and compared to International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Tapir Specialist Group (TSG) standards. The animals’ behaviors were studied using focal animal sampling method and questionnaires were conducted with zoo visitors who visited the tapirs’ enclosures. The management of the different enclosures directly reflects the subjects’ condition in the area through the behavioral patterns showed by each individual. Suggestions are discussed in order to ensure the long-term survival of tapirs in captivity by implementing appropriate conservation interventions among different organizations.

THE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE PHILIPPINES AND MALAYSIA

Oranuch Lerdkulladilok
The main purpose of this study was to examine the main areas and policies concerning the management of the service system for senior citizens as well as ways to develop various models for service management systems for the elderly in the Philippines and Malaysia. This study was conducted in these two specific countries, collecting information through various means for analysis and research use. The research methods used were interviews with senior citizens and staff of organizations working for senior citizens, including government office, as well as participation observation of senior citizens and workers in the government and private sectors concerned with senior citizens. The research results showed that the two countries had different types of services for senior citizens. It was found that policies and the enforcement of existing laws was the most practical and beneficial option for senior citizens, as well as providing senior citizens with a high level of opportunities to participate in the arrangement of services.
GENDER ISSUES IN ELDERLY CARE IN MALAYSIA AND JAPAN
Ekawati S. Wahyuni
The ageing of the population is occurring inevitably in Malaysia and Japan as a consequence of declining fertility and mortality rates. The number of ageing people is increasing while the number of potential caregivers is decreasing. In their old age, women are both the receivers and givers of elderly care, while in their younger age, women are the primary elderly caregivers. As a result of past discrimination towards women, the current characteristics of elderly women are that they are the majority in oldest-old group, require medical assistance, have less income and fewer economic resources, are less likely to be married and have no living spouse to care for them, and have chronic rather than acute illnesses. The current elderly support systems are based on gender neutral policies. Gender is never a consideration for receiving elderly care in institutions; rather the level of disability is used to determine acceptance. Substitute labor and the long-term care insurance system can relieve some of women’s burden as elderly caregivers.

LOOKING AT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH DISABILITIES ACROSS CULTURAL BOUNDARIES AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: A STUDY IN CHIBA CITY AND SELECTED NEUROMUSCULAR CENTERS IN JAPAN
Fe A. delos Reyes
The paper describes the programs and services for persons with disabilities in selected communities in Japan vis-à-vis developmental indicators such as participation, consultation and representation, and the creation of a barrier free society. The findings are compared with the situation found in developing countries such as the Philippines.

PUNISHING DELINQUENTS: INCARCERATION VS. COMMUNITY WORK, A STUDY ON JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS IN MALAYSIA, THAILAND AND JAPAN
Noramalina binti Mustaffa
The purpose of this study is to look at alternatives methods in punishing contemporary juvenile delinquents. Reformation in the juvenile justice system is needed in order to ensure that the welfare of the child is protected and at the same time hold the juvenile delinquents responsible for the crime they have committed. The term punishment is used (though the word is regarded as highly sensitive by some—the word “rehabilitation” was suggested instead; however, the author wished to keep using the word “punishment” throughout her study) since the basic idea in punishment is for the juveniles to be held responsible for their own wrongdoing. Furthermore, the notion of the word punishment does not imply that the juvenile offender should be driven away from the society other than for them to be accountable for their own behavior. Whatever the punishment imposed on the juvenile, it should not pull the juveniles away but rather it should reinstate them back into the society. Though the types of crime committed by juveniles are mostly similar to crime committed by adults, age becomes material as it distinct them from one another. Taken this as a yardstick, it is agreeable by many that alternative punishment should be considered in punishing juvenile delinquents.

LEARNING FROM POLLUTION CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN
Penchom Saetang
This paper reviews some aspects of citizen movements in Japan following the worst industrial pollution disaster in the country—the Minamata disease outbreak—and the continuous support provided to patients until today. The Minamata support campaign was a major catalyst spurring the development of nation-wide citizen organizations and relevant environmental movements in response to pollution problems in the 1960s and 1970s. These include cases of air pollution caused by the iron and steel industries in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, cadmium-caused disease, Itai-Itai, in Toyama, asthma caused by the petrochemical industry in Yokkaichi, and Kanemi Cooking Oil disease, which broke out in Fukuoka. This paper has highlighted these stories in order to give a wider picture of the citizen movement in this contemporary period. It fully recognizes their historic struggles and devotion, which have helped bring social and environmental justice to the sufferers, and which in turn has led to major reforms of the Japan’s environmental-related laws and health compensation system, the effects of which are felt to the present day.
THE INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION INTO SCHOOL CURRICULA IN THE PHILIPPINES, JAPAN AND INDONESIA
Narumol Aphinives
The research examines the integration of environmental education into school curricula at the implementation level and explores the linkages to organizations that collaborate with the schools. Particular emphasis is given to the social and cultural context that influences the scope and process of implementing environmental education in each of the three countries covered by the research. The three case studies presented in this paper highlight the influence of effective environmental education. The first case study examines the integration of solid waste management into the curriculum in the Philippines, Japan and Indonesia. The second case study explores the Period for Integrated Study on the issue of Minamata disease in Japan. The third case study presents the integration of nature conservation and entrepreneurship into the curriculum in Indonesia. The conclusions drawn from the research are presented in four areas, specifically: 1) approach and practice; 2) content in line with the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014; 3) environmentally friendly habits; and 4) the significance of educators.

A VILLAGE IN THE MAKING: A VIDEO REPORT ON “THE SONG AS VENUE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION AND PEOPLE’S ADVOCACY IN OKINAWA, CHIANG MAI AND YOGYAKARTA”
Jesus M. Santiago
The video provides a brief overview of the peoples’ music scene in the three project sites, namely, Okinawa, Japan, Chiang Mai, Thailand, and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It shows the current state and direction of peoples’ music from the point of view of the local musicians themselves. It illustrates how musicians respond to social issues in their respective countries. The video consists of interviews with local artists interspersed with footage of their activities, including musical performances. It touches on the role of musicians in changing societies, and tackles such issues as globalization, the presence of foreign troops on one’s native soil, the assertion of people’s identity through music, the impact of technology on music production, environmental protection, intellectual property rights, artists’ response to a disaster situation, and the need for Asian artists to come together.

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN THAILAND: LESSONS FOR THE PHILIPPINES
Theresita V. Atienza
In developing countries, human resource development is vital, since this not only increases the quality of trained manpower in response to national needs but also improves the quality of life and work for its people. As human resources are developed, mounting potentials stimulate higher education requirements in people. However, opportunities for education at the tertiary level are restricted due to limited resources. Such circumstances necessitate the provision of unconventional directions in higher education. In Southeast Asian countries, a key component of an overall educational reform agenda with the objective to provide greater access to and equity in educational opportunities is open and distance education. The study highlights the best practices of distinguished open universities in Thailand alongside factors that are likely to impede the progress of open and distance education, thus gaining from the experience of others.

KEY PLAYERS IN SUSTAINING THE SURVIVAL AND GROWTH OF TRADITIONAL THEATRE
Said Halim Said Nong
This essay discusses the roles played by key people or organizations that have been directly and indirectly influential in terms of the survival and continuous development of their language and culture through the arts, especially traditional theatre and performing arts. They showed enthusiasm, commitments and a profound desire to see their traditional art forms continue as manifestations of their unique identity and culture. Consciously or not they took up the different roles of local masters and proponents of their chosen art forms, of intellectuals and intelligentsia of local art and culture, of bureaucrats in charge of cultural management, of high profile patrons of art activities, of mass-media as promoters and last but not least of supportive lay people who accept art forms as part and parcel of their socio-cultural life. Although, to some extent, the authorities play a part in formulating policies, strategies and plans in regulating and organizing cultural events, it is the individuals and their societies who have risen above others to champion their cause and art-form that make the difference and in turn leave a lingering impact. Through their relentless efforts, they continue to sustain their art forms and subsequently their regional and national identities while facing challenges in many forms.
MODERN DEVELOPMENT OF THAI CONTEMPORARY ART AND ITS SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE: CHALOOD NIMSAMER AND PRINTMAKING
Toshiya Takahama

The development of modern Thai art was passed from Silpa Bhirasi, the founder of Silpakorn University, to Chalood Nimsamer, one of Silpa Bhirasi’s students, who has achieved a very high level of artwork both domestically and internationally with printmaking techniques at its core. Since the late 1990s, Chalood Nimsamer’s students have changed the trend from printmaking to installation. At the base of their expression, however, unmistakably lies the methodology of printmaking. The reasons for this deep-rooted acceptance of printmaking’s concepts among Thai artists and society include the following possibilities: not only did printmaking match the philosophy behind the introduction of modernism in Thai art, but also the social background of Thailand, such as the blurred border between the original and the duplicate and the Thai people’s common feeling toward space has also played a part. In the meantime, a huge subculture formed by the younger generation, probably influenced by Japan, is penetrating the art world. It is up for question how the methodology of printmaking can deal with this situation.

THE BRIDGING OF CULTURAL DIVIDES IN CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL THEATRE IN JAPAN
Lim How Ngean

As a theatre practitioner, my main concern has always been to examine practices and processes that may help me in my work on the rehearsal floor, and ultimately, on stage. With a background in contemporary theatre and traditional art forms, I wanted to investigate the possibility of producing intelligent and present theatre that is informed in traditional art forms. This paper focuses on the efforts of Nomura Mansai in Setagaya Public Theatre Tokyo in bridging the gap between traditional kyogen theatre with contemporary performance. In reality the research became more than that, with insights into Tokyo’s distinctive urban performance politics, the urban body in performance, unique creative processes, etc.

BUILDING A CONTEMPORARY DANCE NETWORK BETWEEN INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THAILAND AND JAPAN
Ritsuko Mizuno

The research took place in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand over two month for the purpose of exploring the potential and possibility of establishing a network for contemporary dance in Asia. I interviewed a total of about seventy dance personnel for this research project in order to articulate the circumstances and problems surrounding contemporary dance in Asia today. As a consequence, many issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the artistic environment in each country, particularly in dance, became evident. In this paper, I examine these issues and explore the possibility of dance in Asia taking a part in and being influential in society. I also confirm the need for creating a dance network in Asia.

KEEPING THE KILNS BURNING: REVITALIZING THE THAI CERAMICS INDUSTRY
Itsue Ito

Thailand is changing rapidly from a rural agrarian society to an urban industrialized marketplace. A way of life is being lost to mass-produced plastic goods. Except for wealthy Thais and tourists, there has been a declining interest in ceramic crafts. This project aimed at investigating the state of the Thai ceramics industry. First, it examined how ceramics was being used in Thailand. Second, it determined how industrial ceramics could improve itself for both international and domestic sales. And finally, it aimed at bringing stakeholders together (the ceramic arts, government, and the ceramic industry) for a dialogue to promote the area of ceramics and to enhance the cultural awareness of ceramics in Thailand. Data for this paper were gathered through interviews and fieldwork. Observations of people, places, and organizations were also utilized to get a broad picture of the usage of ceramics in Thailand. Results were recorded among four major groupings. Preliminary findings showed a decline in the usage of ceramics among average Thais due to economics and extensive use of plastics. This paper finds that ceramics is an export and tourist-based industry lacking in artistic expression. I discuss how this lack of ceramics may be improved.
PROJECTIONS OF AN/OTHER SPACE: THE CITIES OF THREE CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIAN CINEMAS—THE PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA AND THAILAND

Joseph T. Salazar

The attempt of Third World countries to define their national cinemas demonstrates the unconscious consequences of unifying international practices and the compromises made by different societies and cultures to accommodate the power implied by the infinite networks and systems in which they take place. Film’s reconstruction of urban space as the center of national affairs is one manifestation of the very function of accommodating power defined and determined at a global scale. Even if cinema is often regarded as a low form of mass entertainment in Southeast Asia, its practice as an economic, social and cultural device has always been at the heart of many countries in the region. State censorship and the freedom of expression, the success of a local film abroad, the imminent extinction of local filmmaking because of Hollywood, and other issues affecting filmmaking and its exhibition have all made their mark on the collective life of the region’s nations. Films in Southeast Asia have also codified the very structure of how audiences understand their realities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MOSLEM MINDANAO (ARMM) IN COPING WITH SEPARATISM AND THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (NRC) IN PEACE BUILDING

Cahyo Pamungkas

This research intends to describe the implementation of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) and to determine the effectiveness of the ARMM in responding to the separatism of Bangsamoro in the Southern Philippines and the role of the NRC in peace building in Southern Thailand. Effectiveness in resolving separatism is measured by the extent to which the autonomous region is able to bring about peace and development. Meanwhile, the role of the Commission is seen from the extent to which its recommendations are able to represent the aspirations of the minority. This research also aims not to make comparisons between the ARMM and the NRC, but to analyze the contribution of such institutions in making peace, both in the Southern Philippines and Thailand. The research findings point out that the ARMM has failed to become as a peace institution since it does not have real political autonomy. The war and poverty in the ARMM provinces show that the autonomous region does not contribute to peace and development. Meanwhile, the NRC has succeeded in recommending measures for reconciliation, but they are not sufficient because they do not touch the main root of the conflict, which is power sharing from the majority to the Malay-Muslims. Therefore, it is suggested that the Philippines government make the ARMM politically autonomous in line with the 1996 Final Peace Agreement and make an expanded ARMM through peace negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In addition, it is recommended that the Thai government implement the NRC’s recommendations and give more power to Malay-Muslims in the three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand.

REGIONALISM AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: THE CASE OF THE ACEHNENAE IN INDONESIA

Alisa Hasamoh

This article focuses on the development of the complex identity of the Achenese in Indonesia and the importance of identity in the complicated process of mitigating the long-running conflict there. This study focused on interviewing key informants about their life background from their childhood to adulthood, including their educational and working experiences and their family life. The study focused on the development of the Acehnese identity during the violent period, particularly their points of view and attitudes towards the conflict. In addition, the paper also considers the social and cultural context and economic and political history of the Achenese.
**CONSTRUCTING NEW STAGES OF EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM CHILDREN: IMPACTS OF THE DISSEMINATION OF THE IQRO’ METHOD TEXTBOOK ON ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA**

*Yuki Nakata*

This paper examines and explores the impacts of the dissemination of the *Iqro’* method textbook, a method for reading and reciting (reading aloud) the Qur’an. After the *Iqro’* method textbook was invented by a religious teacher (*guru ngaji*) and expanded both domestically and internationally during the 1990s, there have appeared various changes in education in the recitation of the Qur’an in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries. The changes and developments in methods of practicing to read and recite the Qur’an are not just an issue of Islamic educational methodology. This paper, through examining how people have reacted to these impacts, points out that the dissemination of the *Iqro’* method textbooks has encouraged peoples’ interests in their own education and promoted Islamic education so that the Muslim children can obtain a better education in today’s society. In Indonesia, a competitive atmosphere has existed among various Islamic organizations to provide better educational services to the public. Besides this, various developments in methods to read and recite the Qur’an in Indonesia have attracted Muslims in Malaysia and promoted chances to create business partnerships concerning educational services between Indonesian Muslims and Malaysian Muslims.

**TEXT MESSAGES AND IMAGES: ART AND SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE IN THE PHILIPPINES**

*Nerfita Primadewi*

(no abstract)

**SIDEWALK CAPITALISM: NOTES ON A CRITICAL VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF STREET VENDING IN BAGUIO CITY, THE PHILIPPINES**

*Yeoh Seng Guan*

The mode of presentation will be a combination of textual and visual ethnography. Essentially, I will anchor my presentation around snippets of an ethnographic documentary (duration: 70 mins) that I have completed based on the above theme. Besides discussing the findings of the research project, I will also elaborate on the theoretical and methodological issues deployed and raised in the making of the documentary.

**REPRESENTATIONS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN MALAYSIAN NEWSPAPERS**

*Nina Widyawati*

This study describes the representation of migrant workers by Malaysian newspapers. The portrait of migrant workers in the mainstream newspapers that are managed by *Barisan Nasional* (the group of ruling political parties), the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) are rather negative, but *Utusan Malaysia* (managed by UMNO) is relatively neutral. *Utusan Malaysia* covers not only negative discourses, but also positive discourses, particularly from the government. An opposition newspaper managed by PAS (Parti Islam SeMalaysia or Pan Islamic Party) is also different from the mainstream newspapers. The PAS covers how migrant workers are being treated. The various discourses of migrant workers are connected to the race composition in Malaysia (Malay, Chinese and Indian). Race composition is a sensitive issue for the society at large. The migrant workers, who mostly come from Indonesia, actually share racial and cultural traits with the ethnic Malays, as the many who take Malaysian citizenship are categorized as *bumiputera* alongside indigenous Malays. In general, the media shows the negative perceptions of most middle class Malaysians towards migrant workers. However, those members of society who have daily interactions with migrant workers, mostly the lower classes, have a neutral attitude towards them as they live together as neighbors and even inter-marry.
MOLDING ASIA’S FUTURE LEADERS: PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING FROM THE MILITARY ACADEMIES OF JAPAN, THAILAND, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

Michael C. Morales

This study is motivated by the observation that graduates of military academies, although a minority of the officer corps leads the armed forces of many SE Asian countries. Moreover, a number of contemporary SE Asian leaders have been graduates of military or police academies (Pres. Yudhoyono of Indonesia, PM Thaksin and nine past PMs of Thailand, and former Pres. Ramos of the Philippines). Many other military academy alumni continue to play an active role in government, politics, and the private sector. If academy graduates are to lead the influential military and even government itself, there is benefit to be gained in achieving a better understanding of the education and training in military academies with a view towards improving the molding of future Asian leaders. This paper presents the motivation and methodology of the research, including a matrix checklist which not only served as a guide for the study but also proved useful as a self-evaluation tool by the institutions concerned. An overview of the five academies is presented in the form of (another) matrix of key attributes; it is hoped that the multiple perspectives that this matrix offers will improve the reader’s objectivity and generate fresh insight as he/she considers his/her own institution. Bullying, a problem that bedevils many academies, and a solution that has successfully reduced it in some institutions, is discussed. Finally, policies or practices that have been observed in one or more academies that have helped those institutions achieve their training objectives are offered as a list of candidate “best practices” in academy training. Whether or not a policy is indeed a “best practice” would require validation by other institutions.

MEDITATIONS ON CULTURE, COSMOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN ASIA

Nadarajah Manickam

There are many trajectories of development in Asia, many alternative futures, outside the mainstream. However, the mainstream development of metropolises and markets, with all the glittering details that Asia so proudly displays to the whole world, comes to us at a huge cost. There is a slow but steadily growing, chronic, partly visible and partly not visible, crisis that Asia faces. Shaped by a crisis of ecology, a crisis of justice, a crisis of compassion and a crisis of spirituality, Asia today is confronted in short by the crisis of sustainability. These crises are mostly not necessarily spectacular and public. They are built into the routine and humdrum of our everyday life that is integrated into the ‘normality of our experience’. It is a crisis that all of us need to be mindful of, and reflect and meditate on, so that we may act decisively in our everyday life, and also that we may improve the quality of our public life.

OKINAWA MABUI/ PALAWAN GIMBARAN: A COMPARATIVE DOCUMENTARY-RESEARCH ON PALAWAN AND OKINAWAN RITUALS

Arturo Aristotle C. Solito, Jr.

This documentary in progress attempts to create a personal point of view of a Palawan islander filmmaker as he experiences different types of Okinawan island rituals searching for the right principles of filming indigenous cultures with the grammar of the natives, at the same time as advocating for indigenous peoples. Indigenous filmmakers are searching for a sensitive way to interpret their experiences in the modern world while having ancient roots. We are all going through a ritual of rediscovery and reaffirming our existence and importance in the 21st century. I, myself, am at a point where I am going through a very personal ritual, for as the world appreciates the films that I have made, I must now create this documentary that will fully express my interwoven selves, both as a modern filmmaker and as a culture bearing artist.
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