



# The Asian Public Intellectuals

The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals

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## CONTENTS

Non-violent political movement in Thailand: A work in progress 1-2

Why does Thailand need friends beyond borders? 3

Fellows Year 2006-2007 4-5

Follow-Up Grantees Year 2006-2007 6

Fellows in Focus 7-8

Updates from Fellows Notices 9-10

The Editor The Foundation 11

API Information 12

## NON-VIOLENT POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN THAILAND: A WORK IN PROGRESS

The latest mass demonstrations against Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra are nothing easy to understand for outside observers of Thai politics. The fact that hundreds of thousands of people managed to take turn gathering on the streets days and nights and sustained for months, without a single clash with authorities, has raised questions on how and why it happened.

The dynamism of Thai politics since early this year has given a series of surprises. Aside from its complicated background, one can say that it was triggered by the 73 billion baht (\$ 1.85 billion) acquisition of Shin Corp, the premier's family business, by Singapore investment arm Temasek. Mr.Thaksin was accused of avoiding a large amount of tax payment through a complicated business arrangement, which he explained as "legal."

A series of mass demonstrations had begun since. Like never before, the mass movement was led by different forces, which could have had contradictions in some other issues. They were students, NGO networks, supporters of a Buddhist sect, a media owner and unions. A large number of academics, professionals and the middle class joined in; and made it the first non-violent massive political demonstration Thailand ever had.

Public pressure led to the dissolution of parliament and a snap election. But the most surprising of all for those who believe that general election would satisfy people's thirst for democracy was that it also forced the powerful premier to declare his "political break" right after. Although that was not the end of the story, pro-democracy groups said they wanted to wait and see, then return to take part in the coming political reform process which they view as the answer for genuine development of democracy.

One person who finds little time to break is Phibhop Dhongchai, API Senior Fellow for 2000-2001, who is one of the five key leaders in the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). During the months of heated political struggle, Phibhop and other four leaders appeared on stage in front of tens of thousands of demonstrators every night and stayed with them until the next morning. He also led hundreds of thousands of demonstrators around the city from time to time as a part of the campaign.

After Prime Minister Thaksin declared that he would take a break from politics, demonstrators returned home to relax, but not Phibhop. He and other key leaders are still busy going in and out of police stations as government politicians filed police reports against them for leading the demonstrations. Surprisingly, there was no trace of fatigue in him despite the long and intense campaign. Asked if he could look back and explain how suddenly such a massive demonstration could happen, Phibhop answered without hesitation, "Because Thai people cannot accept such level of ethical and moral degradation in their leaders." For him, moral issue is most important in politics.

Phibhop admitted that there was a time that he had doubts about society's moral standards with regard its leaders. But he was happy that it was a wrong doubt. "There were many problems created by politicians that made me question the moral judgment of the Thai society. I asked myself whether I could still have hope about it. I realized that despite seeming relax attitude of



### Appeal for Earthquake Victims

API Fellow Sri Nuryanti is involved in the relief efforts for the earthquake victims in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Donations in cash and kind are most welcome. Please coordinate with your country PIs or email: nuryanti@hotmail.com for contributions.

the Thai about other political problems, what happened in the Temasek deal had crossed the line of their moral standards. People said no, we can't take it anymore. That's how it happened."

Phibhop belongs to the generation that has gone through every political uprising in Thailand's modern history. He witnessed the tragic October 1973 and 1976 student uprisings where many were killed by police and military. He was also there when another bloodshed demonstration happened in May 1992. In his view, the recent mass demonstration was much different from the first three. "The October 1993 and 1997 demonstrations, which were led by students, aimed at going against military dictatorship. In May 1992, people also rejected a military regime that wanted to continue. But this democracy movement was a democratic power



that demands for ethical and moral accountability from civilian politicians. This was the difference," he pointed out.

An obvious difference that was a step forward for Thailand's democracy movement was the practice of non-violence. Unlike in the past uprisings where a number of demonstrators lost their lives, leaders of the latest mass movement managed to convince people to move on without a single clash. For Phibhop, it was because of the lesson learned from the past. "Non-violence was used as a (political) tool, not as a genuine ideology. Anyhow it worked. Thai people had learned a lot from the previous uprisings, and knew its impact had gone deep on every institution in society that the question on who should be responsible to it is still hidden within our politics. This had made every side be very careful in this struggle. The leaders themselves realized that if they won with violence, they would have to answer a lot of questions later. Also, the middle class who joined the demonstration did not wish to see violence either," he said. Non-violence was initiated by the five key leaders of the movement.

Asked how difficult it was to calm down hundreds of thousands of angry demonstrators who spent every day for two months waiting for political change, Phibhop admitted it was not easy.

"Practicing non-violence demands a high degree of patience," he said. "It was true that some people were ready to use force. But the leaders and the majority in the movement really worked hard to prevent it." Practicing non-violence does not only mean talking about. Phibhop said detailed planning was important to prevent clashes. Experienced moderators were chosen to control the stage every night. A number of security guards were put in different spots during the demonstrations. When moving the demonstrators from one place to another, the leaders always made sure that outside interference is prevented. The key leaders also had frequent and straight-forward communication and cooperation with the police force. "It took us two months to prove that non-violence worked. And its success was that it made other groups to come out and join us - we saw groups like doctors or university lecturers marching out from their workplace. These groups had political opinions but had not openly showed it until then," he said.

What about conflicts of opinions among the key leaders given the fact that they represented different backgrounds and beliefs? Phibhop said it was not much a problem as everybody shared the same ultimate goal in the struggle. "It was clear, we wanted Thaksin out," he said. "We consulted each other before making decisions and that made us work together without conflicts." Phibhop said he understood why not everybody, especially the poor, agreed with the demand for the premier to step down. He believed that more people would understand if they had better access to information. "The poor had been ignored for a long time. Thaksin may have committed many wrongdoings but he paid attention to them. I believe Thailand will be able to pass this point of political misunderstanding. If grassroot people have more access to the media that provides both sides of the truth, I believe that the ethical standards in society will help them make better judgment." He did not predict what is next in politics. He said he wanted to see the result of people's politics in the next one year, which would be the period of political reform. The democracy movement would gain tremendously in the long run.

"The emergence of people's politics this time gives hope to many people. It is an encouragement for us to continue trusting the power of the people. We also gained back our confidence because we were able to push for political change the way we had never thought before. Who would imagine that we managed to deal with the most powerful politician in the country?" he said. Having been busy trying to sustain democracy, how does he sustain himself? Phibhop laughed again and said that he only needs six hours of sleep every day. "Then you need to understand that your role in politics is to help pushing the wheel of history to make things progress. What you do is not about winning or losing, you also have to understand what Buddhism says about the law of cause and consequence. If you wish for particular consequences but the causes were lacking, you need to work on the causes. If you want people to understand politics but they do not because they don't have information, you give them information. That's how I sustain myself," he said.

► Prangtip Daorueng

*The author Prangtip Daorueng, API Fellow 2001-2002, is a Thai journalist, and shuttles between Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. She was previously the Director of the Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA). She interviewed Phibhop Dhongchai, API Senior Fellow 2001-2002, who is one of the key leaders of the Peoples Alliance for Democracy (PAD). Photos by Eef Vermeij.*



# WHY DOES THAILAND NEED FRIENDS BEYOND BORDERS?

► Senator Jon Ungphakorn



I will address the issues of foreignness. We are now more distant from our humanity. We often say we are Thai, or Indonesian, or Malaysian, or politicians, or journalists, etc. We tend to take for granted the quality of being human. There are many people without nationality and we tend to treat them as if they are not human beings. We deny them their rights, including rights to health, education, employment, dignity, free mobility, etc. Thailand is one among many countries which hosts a lot of stateless people, though many of them are born here in Thailand; the Thai state fails to recognize them.

The first issue is the necessity to destroy the wall between human beings in two ways. We have to destroy this wall of inequality and build a world with equality where everyone has the same opportunity. And we have to destroy the wall of lack of understanding and lack of communication, which is a root cause for violence in the world.

I think the term "state" has to play lesser role, and "human being" a bigger role. State in the future globalization system will function like local administration bodies and has secondary importance. I envision everyone in this world will be entitled to equal rights i.e. health, education, assurance of employment, and life with dignity.

The second issue is about friendship. One principle that seems to be commonly accepted is necessary intervention with internal affairs of other countries. In certain cases, this interference is noble, particularly, if it concerns human rights. This is comparable to us living in the same family or community. When we spot our neighbors beating and abusing their children, we cannot say this does not concern us. It is about the well-being of humanity. We have the right to interfere; and we tend to accept this.

For example, the oppressive regime in Burma is exploiting its own people. We cannot deny that we have to be involved. The ASEAN countries also take note of the unrest in the three southern provinces in Thailand. Together with Ajahn Kraisak Choonhawan, we say that in Thailand, violations of rights take place among our people in the South. We have to start from acknowledging problems before we can address them. It is not right to pretend that we have no problem or simply say that these are our own problems and we can deal with them alone; and don't interfere with us.

Violations of rights in Thailand take place on various other issues. Media freedom, rights to self-expression among people, rights to participation, as provided by the Constitution, are suppressed. The government encouraged extrajudicial killings during the war on drug, which were illegal. They ignore assassinations of community leaders who fought for community rights, and hold no one responsible. Violations of rights take place on both sides - the terrorists and the Thai state. These are issues that concern us all and our friends abroad. We have to collectively help to address them; these are not exclusive to a particular country.

The third and last thing is that the United Nations placed attention on violations of rights in Thailand. The civil society has the chance to report at the UN forum. PM Thaksin once said "The UN is not our father." I want the UN to act as our father. We are different countries living in one family; and the UN acts like our family leader. It is necessary that we still have the UN to ensure equal rights, freedom, well being, and basic rights of people. Our duty is to exchange and learn from our friends in other countries about our shared problems; including poverty, inequality, and a lack of access to basic welfare. We all need to address these problems. We have to enshrine humanity above other things.

*Thailand Senator Jon Ungphakorn is Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Social Development and Human Security and Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. He is concurrently Board Secretary of AIDS Access Foundation (ACCESS), Board Member of Centre for AIDS Rights (CAR), and Board Secretary of Prachatai (prachatai.com) Internet Newspaper. He has been involved with various civil society groups in the last three decades and was a Lecturer in Physics at the Mahidol University in Bangkok. He was awarded the Knight Grand Cross (First Class) of the Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant and the 2005 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service.*

*This is an abridged version of his speech presented last 2 March 2006 at the API Thailand Award Ceremony and International Seminar at the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. Please refer to <www.api-fellowships.org> for the full text. Thanks to Mr. Pipob Udomittipong for the transcript and translation of the speech.*



Anti-Thaksin street protests. Photo by: Eef Vermeij.



# API FELLOWS FOR YEAR 2006-2007

## INDONESIA

The Award Ceremony was held last 15th March 2006. The API Fellows from Indonesia and their project titles are:

- > **I Ketut Gunawan**  
"Non-State Groups' Action in Southeast Asia: Origins, Driving Forces, and Networks"
- > **Mokhammad Yahya**  
"Exploring Islamic Movements among Muslim Urbanites in the Quiapo Area, Manila"
- > **Heru Susetyo**  
"Natural Disaster Victim Services: How to Cope and Fulfill Natural Disaster Victim's Needs and Rights: Lessons Learned from Tsunami and Earthquake Emergency Responses in Japan and Thailand"
- > **Krisnadi Yuliawan Saptadi**  
"Globalization, Influence and Resistance: Cinematic Representation and Cinematic Experience in Japan and Thailand"



Left to right: Mokhammad Yahya, Setefanus Suprajitno, I Ketut Gunawan, TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami, Dr. John Haba of API Indonesia, Krisnadi Yuliawan, Dr. Yekti Maunati of API Indonesia, and Heru Gunawan.

## THAILAND

The Award Ceremony and International Seminar was held last 2nd March 2006 at the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University. It was attended by academics, NGOs, representatives of government and diplomatic community. Senator Jon Ungpakorn gave the keynote speech; and Prof. Prawase Wasi presented the awards. The API Fellows from Thailand and their project titles are:

- > **Chaiwat Thirapantu**  
"Cultivation of Transformative Leadership in Civil Society and Co-creation of Energy Field for Social Transformation in Asia"
- > **Supa Yaimuang**  
"The Changing of Agrarian Livelihood and Sustainable Agriculture Movement under Globalization"
- > **Varinthra Kaiyourawong**  
"A Study of Communication Campaign Process for Community Rights on Biodiversity Resources in the Philippines"
- > **Sing Suwannakij**  
"Buddhism as Social Dynamics and as Consumption in the Age of Globalization: A Case Study of Buddhism in Japan and Implications for Thailand"
- > **Chaithawat Tulathon**  
"Globalization and Human Security: A Case Study of the Flexible Employment in Globalization Era and the Transition of Workers' Movements in the Philippines and Japan"
- > **Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad**  
"The Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Study of the Discourse of Islamic State and Islamic Law in Malaysia (1997- 2004)"

## JAPAN

The Orientation for Year 6 Fellows was held last 13th March 2006 at the CSEAS, Kyoto University. Prof. Koji Tanaka opened the meeting and Mr. Tatsuya Tanami gave a speech on The Nippon Foundation and the API Fellowship Program. Fellows Motoko Kawano (Y2), Mariko Akuzawa (Y4), and Ritsuko Sato (Y5) shared their experiences and gave practical advice, which delighted the participants. The API Fellows from Japan and their project titles are:

- > **Yoshiko Shimada**  
"Bones in Tansu--Family Secrets" (interactive art project with audience participation which explores the changing identities through personal memories)
- > **Kaori Fushiki**  
"Local Identity Reformation through Performing Arts and Social Reactions in Otonomi Daerah Era"
- > **Ayame Suzuki**  
"Deliberative Process of Economic Policy Making in Malaysia"
- > **Michi Tomioka**  
"Revaluating Javanese Court Dances (Srimpi and Bedhay) in the Recent Social and Cultural Contexts"
- > **Hozue Hatae**  
"Research Plan on Social Impacts of Japan-Related Private Projects to Local Peoples in the Philippines and Malaysia"
- > **Akiko Morishita**  
"A Comparative Study of Local Politics in Indonesia and Malaysia"



Standing left to right: Kyoto University CSEAS Prof. Koji Tanaka, Ayame Suzuki, Yoshiko Shimada, Akiko Morishita, Motoko Kawano (Y2), Ritsuko Sato (Y5), TNF Project Coordinator David Karashima, and TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami.

Seated left to right: API Japan Program Assistant Satoko Yasuhara, TNF Chief Manager for International Network Team Michiko Taki, Hozue Hatae, Kaori Fushiki, Michi Tomioka, Mariko Akuzawa (Y4), and API Japan Program Coordinator Naoko Maeno.

## MALAYSIA

The Orientation was held on 21st March 2006 at the Shangri-La Putrajaya. About 70 persons attended the ceremony including 'old' API Fellows, local public intellectuals, researchers, academics, NGO activists, diplomatic corps, and members of the press. The 'new' Fellows introduced themselves and discussed their proposed projects. The audience participated actively, shared their research findings, and appreciated the availability of the API Fellowships. Some members of the audience showed interest and may possibly apply for the API Fellowship in the future. The API Fellows from Malaysia and their project titles are:

- > **Iskandar Sharifuddin Bin Mohd. Said**  
"Narrating the Nation: Modern Historical Representations of Identity in Indonesian Films"
- > **Jyothi Kukathas**  
"The Role of the Shaman and the Place of Myth and Ritual in Contemporary Theater Making in Japan and Indonesia"
- > **Jose Mary Fernandez**  
"From Charity to Social Investments: A Study of Philanthropy Institutions in Indonesia and the Philippines"
- > **Ahmad Hezri Bin Adnan**  
"Informing Governance? -- Sustainability Reporting in Indonesia and the Philippines"
- > **George Sharaad Al Chittarajan Kuttan**  
"Academic Lifeworlds, the Social Sciences and Deep Democracy in Thailand and the Philippines"
- > **Mohd. Naguib Razak**  
"Spirituality in Japan's Material Utopia"



Left to right: TNF Chief Manager for International Network Team Michiko Taki, UKM IKMAS Director Ragayah Haji Mat Zin, George Sharaad Al Chittarajan Kuttan, Jyothi Kukathas, Jose Mary Fernandez, UKM Vice Chancellor Dató Dr. Mohd. Salleh Mohd. Yasin, Mohd. Naguib Razak, Iskandar Sharifuddin Bin Mohd. Said, Ahmad Hezri Bin Adnan, and API Malaysia Program Coordinator Dorothy Fernandez-Robert.

## PHILIPPINES

The Orientation Seminar and Awarding Ceremony was held last 27th March 2006 at the Ateneo de Manila University - Quezon City. Three Country Committee members and ISC member Dr. Mary Racelis attended the event. Fellows Cristina Montiel (Y1), Sr. Mary John Mananzan, Arnold Azurin, Francisco Englis, Wilfredo Torres III, and Allan Villarante (Y2), Danilo Reyes (Y3), and Elizabeth Eviota (Y4) shared their experiences and valuable advice. Noel Cabangon sang two of his compositions. Mr. Tanami gave a message; and with Dr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J., awarded the certificates to the new Fellows. A symbolic book launching of the Bali Workshop Proceedings, "Economic Prospects, Cultural Encounters and Political Decisions: Scenes in a Moving Asia (east and Southeast)" was led by Mr. Tanami. Vice-President for the Loyola Schools, Dr. Anna Miren Gonzalez-Intal, received the first copy of the book on behalf of the Ateneo. The API Fellows from the Philippines and their project titles are:

- > **Ramon P. Santos**  
"A Critical Assessment and Study of Modes of Transmission of Asian Musical Traditions in Post-Colonial and Post-Modern Times"
- > **Glecy C. Atienza**  
"Theater Chronicles: Lessons in Theater Documentation from Traditional and Contemporary Theater Practices in Thailand and Indonesia"
- > **Iderlina B. Mateo-Babiano**  
"Redefining the Asian Space: A Comparative View of the Evolving Street Culture and Pedestrian Space Development in Bandung, Bangkok, and Manila"
- > **Djorina Velasco**  
"People's Articulations of Border Issues in Sabah and North Sulawesi"
- > **Myfel Joseph D. Paluga**  
"Cultural Attitudes to Animals in Southeast Asia: Human-Animal Relations as a Dimension in Cultural Identity Formation and Dynamics"
- > **Alwin C. Aguirre**  
"The History of Tomorrow: The Discourse of Science and the Imagination of the Future in Asian Science Fictions"



Standing left to right: Myfel Joseph Paluga, Iderlina Mateo-Babiano, API Philippines Program Coordinator Melissa Jayme-Lao, Alwin Aguirre, and Ramon Santos.

Seated left to right: Djorina Velasco, ADMU School of Social Sciences Dean Dr. Jose Cruz, S.J., TNF Executive Director Tatsuya Tanami, and Glecy Atienza.

# FOLLOW-UP GRANTEEES 2006-2007

The API Follow-Up Grants are open for Fellows who have completed their projects, attended API Workshop and wish to pursue further research. Applicants are encouraged to pursue collaborative projects for greater impact and to strengthen the API Community.

*“Networking of Social Forestry Practitioners in Borneo and Kalimantan: Towards a Regional Forum”*

The workshops will bring together forestry professionals and practitioners working on community issues in the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah and Indonesian provinces in Kalimantan leading to a regional network and collaboration.

✦ **Principal Investigator:**

◆ **Wataru Fujita**, API Fellow 2003-2004, Lecturer at Konan Women's University, Japan

✦ **Co-investigators:**

◆ **Henry Chan**, API Fellow 2001-2002, Assistant Research Manager of Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Malaysia

◆ **Dave Lumenta**, API Fellow 2002-2003, Ph.D. Candidate at Kyoto University

*“Reuniting the Fringes: A Documented Cross Border Reunion of Kenyah Artists”*

The project intends to facilitate and initiate a renewed networking between Malaysian and Indonesian Kenyah Leppo' Tau community by organizing and documenting the visit of one prominent Kenyah artist from Long Mekaba, Sarawak, Malaysia to Long Nawang, Kalimantan, Indonesia.

✦ **Principal Investigator:**

◆ **Dave Lumenta**, API Fellow 2002-2003, Ph.D. Candidate at Kyoto University

✦ **Co-investigators:**

◆ **Adeline Ooi Yah-Chine**, API Fellow 2002-2003, independent writer and curator, Malaysia

◆ **Rhino Ariefiansyah**, visual anthropologist and filmmaker, Solidaritas Perempuan, Indonesia

◆ **Erang Lahang**, Kenyah artist from Malaysia

*“Video Project: Child of the Forest - Bah Ami of the Semai Tribe”*

The project will produce a professional quality digital video documentary featuring a young Orang Asli (indigenous) boy and an accompanying color-picture book to be used to influence public opinion on the wider issues facing the Orang Asli, especially for those in a position to effect change for the Orang Asli.

✦ **Principal Investigator:**

◆ **Colin Nicholas**, API Senior Fellow 2001-2002, Coordinator of Center for Orang Asli Concerns, Malaysia

✦ **Co-investigator:**

◆ **Sam Hui Seng Kin**, API Fellow 2003-2004, Project Manager of Southeast Asia Center for e-Media, Malaysia

*“Empowering Rural Communities through Community Organizations and Traditional Medical Plant Development”*

The project will address poverty and forest degradation issues in Lombok Island through modified participatory action research that will facilitate learning and collective actions. Community organizations and medicinal plants could contribute to economic and environmental changes.

✦ **Principal Investigator:**

◆ **Muktasam**, API Senior Fellow 2003-2004, Lecturer at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Mataram

✦ **Co-investigator:**

◆ **Mangustuti Agil**, API Senior Fellow 2003-2004, Head of Laboratory of Pharmacognosy, Faculty of Pharmacy, Airlangga University, Indonesia

*“Long Term Health and Socioeconomic Effects of Acute Infectious Disease Outbreak on Victims / Survivors, Family Members and their Community: Nipah Virus Outbreak in Bukit Pelanduk, Malaysia”*

The study will look at both health and socio-economic effects from a long-term perspective and will consider the impact on family members and the larger community rather than just on victims/survivors alone; using the Nipah virus outbreak in Bukit Pelanduk, Malaysia as a case study. The knowledge derived from this study will be useful in improving public programs to help victims/survivors, family members and affected communities to better cope with the aftermath of emerging new diseases in the region i.e. Nipah virus, SARS, avian influenza, etc.

✦ **Principal Investigator:**

◆ **Phua Kai Lit**, API Senior Fellow 2003-2004, Senior Lecturer of Community Medicine Section, International Medical University, Malaysia

✦ **Co-investigators:**

◆ **Carlo Irwin Panelo**, API Fellow 2003-2004, Associate Professor of Department of Clinical Epidemiology, University of the Philippines College of Medicine

◆ **Kew Siang Tong**, Professor of Clinical Sciences Section, International Medical University, Malaysia

*“Indigenous Peoples Rights Movement and Inter-ethnic Relation in Indonesia: Case Studies from Papua and Kalimantan”*

The project focuses on the role of civil society organizations in promoting indigenous peoples' rights and building understanding on inter-ethnic relationships in two provinces of Kalimantan and Papua, especially in the areas where ethnic violence has occurred.

✦ **Primary Investigator:**

◆ **Herry Yogaswara**, API Fellow 2001-2002



# FELLOWS IN FOCUS



**N**ick Deocampo is the Director of the MOWELFUND Film Institute. He gave Anna Liza Magno and some friends a special tour of the Philippine Film Museum and a quick but interesting exchange between his many engagements in January. For more information, please visit: <www.mfi.com.ph>.



One of the dioramas depicting a scene from a movie.

“I wish for more time to write, do research, and make films.” Nick Deocampo is a passionate film maker, writer, and teacher. He did 20 films in the last 20 years, wrote the History of Philippine Cinema, taught and trained young film makers and launched the Pambansang Museo ng Pelikula (Philippine Film Museum) in August 2005.

He first joined the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation Film Institute (MFI) as Assistant Director for Administrative Planning and Implementation in 1985; and is currently its Director.

With little budget, he manages the MFI with much zest that finding our way through the darkly lit corridors and the mess of construction work filled me with excitement - it is an idea in progress, a history in the making. “When an idea comes, you have to get up.” He has been scouring the world with fellow film archivists and enthusiasts for materials. They found old copies of Philippine films in The USA (while doing a research for a book) and Thailand (while doing his API Fellowship).

He begged from the defunct National Film Institute for the rusty film reels to salvage. He approached film studios and individual actors for contributions to the museum - from promotional posters to costumes, photographs, and paraphernalia, etc. He continuously advocates for the preservation of film history with the hope of getting support for proper facilities and equipment.

The Philippine Film Museum is a groundbreaking initiative for a country with over a hundred years of film history. The first film shown in the Philippines was during the Spanish period in 1896; and the first movie house established at the turn of the century.



**J**ose Mary (Josie) Fernandez is a member of the Integrity Institute of Malaysia, an Executive Committee Member of Transparency International (Malaysia) and consultant to the Federation of Consumers' Associations of Malaysia (Fomca). Below is a shorter edited version of “The call of social activism” by Sharon Kam of *The Sun* (Malaysia) published on 15th March 2006. Please refer to <http://www.sun2surf.com/article.cfm?id=13378> for the full text.

The industry flourished over the years and managed to survive periods of economic and political crises; with its golden periods in the 1950s and 1980s.

Being one of the earlier countries in Asia to develop a film industry, movie-going has become one of the cheapest and most accessible form of education and recreation in the Philippines. It is apt to have a film museum to record history and to educate more people on the value of films in Filipino culture.



Nick gives a guided tour of the museum.

Nick teaches film at the University of the Philippines and conducts trainings at the MFI. He noted that though the Philippines is experiencing a dry spell for full-length films (with some random good films), it is again trailblazing in digital films and shorts. Many of the young digital filmmakers are graduates of the MFI courses; with some getting awards and recognition in the international scene.

He finds pleasure in giving museum tours to children - averaging to 1,000 students per month. He is always amazed with the kind of questions - from naïve to wise - these children ask. He enjoys his time with them and shared memorable incidents.

One of his goals is to promote a national film literacy movement. “The real revolution for the film industry will not come from the filmmakers but from the audience. We need to create a new film culture.” With a better informed audience, the demand for quality films would hopefully drive the message across to the producers of commercial films to deliver better quality films.

He finds himself bridging the film history into the 21st century. He hopes to break (more) new grounds and introduce a new film language. “We do not have to reinvent. We should build from the past. The future is in our hands.”

Asked for his future plans, Nick eagerly responded; “to do more creative, knowledge-based projects such as conducting research, writing books, curating film festivals, directing the museum, and doing more audio-visual memory projects of the country”. A long list, but not for a person who have a lot of energy and enthusiasm to spare.



Sharon (S): Why do you need a philanthropy support center?  
 Josie (J): For research and donor education. Are donors giving for the right causes? Are they supporting causes that require financial support? How effective is their support and how is it measured? It is not just issues of accountability and transparency but it is also how effective their philanthropic contribution is in transforming society.

S: Why do we need the shift from charity to philanthropy?  
 J: Our patterns of giving are very much in the charity mode. If we look back historically at traditional societies and communities,

we looked after our needs through philanthropic giving. It was not just food and shelter but also schools, community rights, community resources. Philanthropists contributed to sustainable culture and practices within their own community. We are still far from the progressive forms of philanthropy give to such causes as environment, women's rights, and human rights.

The other thing is the growth in corporate social responsibility. Banks are now beginning to give for human rights, environment and conservation. Companies now show in their company reports how they have contributed to the society in which they operate. Foreign investors are also looking for countries that are seen as practitioners of accountability and integrity.

The world also does not tolerate violations of human rights. We are looking for a world that offers peace, and peace can only come when you have respect for fellow human beings, when you respect women, children and the environment. Resources need to be put into such causes. This is where I feel the need for donor education.

The UN said that governments cannot achieve the Millennium Development Goals alone. They need the support from corporations, foundations and individual philanthropists as an important source for development aid. In Malaysia, philanthropy can be a very strategic social intervention. The government is now saying that it cannot go on providing all the social goods that it traditionally did, which means resources have to come from somewhere. Philanthropy is actually an area that even the government should take an interest in because of these various individuals and foundations, the new wealthy, who may be contributing to the development of the nation.

8

S: What do you think is stopping the donors from supporting those more progressive causes?

J: The fear of giving to some of these causes like human rights is more political. The fear is that the donor and the foundation would be watched by the government. The government must not create such fear.

S: When the government says it wants to fight corruption, people come forward.

J: The government seems to be the impetus for where the donor wants to give. If the government thinks it is alright for the year 2005 to give for corruption, then it is fine. If in 2008, the government says we no longer need to fight corruption, then we give somewhere else.

Is it an imagined fear? For instance, with the government-sanctioned project, the Kampung Broga incinerator, the donors would not publicly want to contribute towards the residents' campaign against the incinerator. Big corporations would not want to be seen as supporting campaigns against government-sanctioned projects. It also shows the level of maturity in



**T**hai lawyer and human rights activist Sarawut Pratoomraj wrote this article "Political Disappearance: A never ending story in Reformasi Regime" after attending the Indonesian Association of Families of Disappearance (IKOHI) 2nd Congress last 7-10 March 2006 at LEC Athirah, Makassar in South Sulawesi where he met victims of human rights violations during the Soeharto regime

from 1965 to 1998. The Thai version is available at <[www://prachatai.com](http://www.prachatai.com)>.

"I was shocked when I heard that my son was arrested in 1998, eight years ago. I searched for him everywhere but there was no information. I feel a little hope that he is still alive somewhere". - Pak Dionysius Utomo, 60, father of Bimo Petrus.

our society. If the government is wrong and it is going to have a devastating environmental impact on communities and on Malaysia, donors must be brave to give towards the campaign.

We have not reached that level of maturity and that is very much due to the fear factor. The self-interest becomes the priority and unless we have a less selfish society that understands what really development is all about, then many of these causes would continue to be difficult causes for fund-raising.

S: Have you seen any progress in the development of NGOs in Malaysia?

J: We need a much more vibrant civil society. I did some comparative work on NGOs in Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. There is a much more vibrant growth of NGOs in these countries. Maybe because of the kind of development that we in Malaysia have enjoyed that people are satisfied. It is only now when fuel prices are going up, when water is privatized, that coalitions of NGOs are beginning to emerge.

Equally important is the kind of space that has been provided for NGOs' growth. I call it the contested space. Government provides the public goods, corporations provide everything in the marketplace, and then community also takes care of what it needs. The space for NGOs is therefore less. In the case of Bangladesh or Indonesia, the market is not able to provide all the goods and the people do not have the purchasing power, communities are falling apart; thus, the space for NGOs becomes greater. In Bangladesh, NGOs are service providers who have projects that are sometimes even bigger than government.

In Malaysia, there are many laws that limit civil liberties such as the draconian Internal Security Act, the Official Secrets Act (OSA), and the Printing Presses and Publications Act. The vibrancy of a country's NGO sector may indicate the social development and political characteristics of the State. The media and NGOs have little space. Also, many of the NGO institutions are also very much founder-driven and many are still led by their founders. When you have a government that limits you and then you have founder-driven institutions, then the space for vibrant growth of NGOs is less.

S: What is the main social concern right now?

J: People are very concerned with the ethnic and religious divide, about polarization in schools. I feel integration is the greatest challenge that we face in Malaysia today. Many NGOs promote multi-culturalism and integration through their work. I think government, corporations and donors must support organizations that promote integration in Malaysian society because that is the foundation of harmony and peace in Malaysia.



"...a friend of my son came and told me that my son was arrested by the military in Tanjung Priok. I immediately went to the military station to ask for Yani Afri's whereabouts. The officers said that he was released and no longer in their custody, and told me to find his friend. I went to look for his friends but they didn't know. I returned to the military station crying. The officer said the same and showed me my son's released paper". - Ibu Tuti Koto, 68, mother of Yani Afri.

"About 10 people came into my room - two were in military uniform while most were in plainclothes. I was taken somewhere, not the police station. I was psychologically shaken because those who arrested me weren't police. I was afraid that I would be killed. I was tortured and electrocuted. I am a lucky guy - I survived and not dead or disappeared like many friends. Other people still don't know if their relatives are dead or alive." - Mugiyanto, 32, Indonesian Association of Families of the Disappeared (IKOHI) Chairperson.



Survivors and families of the disappeared at the Congress.

These are the testimonies of victims and relatives of victims of human rights violations during the 1997-1998 crackdown of the Soeharto regime.

Mugiyanto or Mugi was one of the student activists in 1998 that campaigned to abolish the five unjust acts of the Soeharto government namely: act on political party, act on general election, act on mass organization, act on the composition of the parliament, and act on referendum. Only three political parties were allowed during the Soeharto regime. The activists demanded the change of the regime as it was against the Dual Function of the Armed Forces that supported Soeharto's authoritarian regime. The government banned his organization by linking it to the Communist Party of Indonesia, an illegal political party alleged of subversive acts. Mugi and many students worked underground. He was arrested by the military and released three months later in 1998, when the then President B.J. Habibie was overturned.

He joined his friend Munir at KontraS, the Commission for Involuntary Disappearance and Victims of Violation, to bring his case to Europe and the United Nations. Mugi resigned from his job as a correspondent with a Dutch television network and joined IKOHI, as his mind was with his friends and other people who were arrested and are still missing.

One of his friends, Bimo Petrus, a student at the Driyakara Jakarta University, disappeared in 31 March 1998. Bimo's father Dionysius, an administrative officer at Malang Central Mental Hospital, immediately searched when he learned about his son's case. He went to the government house and military and police stations but found nothing. "I gave a big hope to the government during the *Reformasi* but was hopeless. The President has never set up any independent body to look into my case - no response in any way. I need to know, I have the right to know. If he is dead, I have to bury him according to the Catholic custom. I need to charge those who were involved in his disappearance. I hope that violations would stop now. I don't want to see it happen again - not to any single family", he said.

Ibu Tuti's son Yani Afri disappeared on 26 July 1997. She asked every government sector but failed. Munir, from KontraS, helped her to search in various military headquarters and government offices and had a personal dialogue with former President Abdurrahman Wahid and Armed Force Chief Wiranto, but still with no results.

"I got assistance from KontraS but I cry every time I went there and saw the street singers. I always remember my son. He was poor but he was an artist. He liked to play guitar and sing for me. While pursuing his studies, he worked as a driver to assist me financially. Now, I don't have any regular source of income ..." (Tuti Koto. *Losing One's Faith in the Law, Healing Wounds, Mending Scars*. Published by AFAD, 2005, page 61)

IKOHI was established in 1998 by Munir and other human rights activists. Its 2nd Congress was attended by 80 victims and families of human rights violations during the Soeharto regime



IKOHI members held a memorial for the disappeared pro-democracy students.

from 1965 to 1998; from the west of Indonesia, Aceh, to the east, Papua. The Congress reviewed the constitution, mandate, activities; and elected committee members (Mugiyanto was elected as Chairperson) to continue the work and to follow-up the disappeared cases.

"... after Soeharto, every Indonesian government can't resolve the issues of the families of the disappeared; there were no compensation, no social welfare, and no solution for the victims of human rights violations. We should do more for our justice. We urge for government commitment and political will for the victims and families", Mugi explained and added; "The public is not interested with the victims of human rights violations now even when we are in the so-called *Reformasi* system. There are so many social crises in our country that human rights is not a priority. Indonesians try to forget what happened during the New Order period, they have short memory."

Thai people also have short memory with what happened on 6 October 1976 or May 1992 where many disappeared, died or wounded; as well as the disappearance of lawyer Somchai Neelaphaijit in 2004 and those who are still missing in southern Thailand. The pains and cries of the families have no meaning.

Indonesia and Thailand are in the process of political reform and should learn from each other. Political reform in Thailand started in late 1990s with the enforcement of the 1997 Constitution that stated three main reforms: strengthen the political system (Prime Minister and Senator System), people participation in every level of administration, and human rights protection system. The crisis to oust Thaksin is the second stage of reform. There is not much progress since political reform was initiated in Thailand more than 10 years ago.

Indonesians should also question its *Reformasi*. IKOHI should strengthen the families to pressure more politicians to work for justice are good examples for people participation in political reform. It does not only benefit the families but also the progress of democracy and human rights in general. *Reformasi* means people participation in every level of administration, state agencies practice the "Rule of Law", the National Institute undertake its roles efficiently and independently, politicians respect and disseminate the universal standards of human rights, and the government develop the country under the concept of "indivisibility", which means the economic development of the country is parallel with civil and political development.

The IKOHI task is not yet finished. The strength of the people in political reform should be the strength of human rights. A strengthened people will result to the end of political disappearances and violations of human rights.



9



**Yasuhiro Mizutani's** paper on "A Modern Thai State Stumbling: The Expansion of the Police in Thailand from the 1930s to 1940s" was published in the Southeast Asian Studies Journal Volume 43 Number 2 (September 2005) of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) Kyoto University, Japan.



**Jesus Santiago** had a farewell performance entitled "Continuing Journey" at the Sudsan Pub, a favorite watering hole of artists, activists, journalists, and NGOs in Chiang Mai, last 18th March 2006. Sponsored by the Asian Pacific Women on Law and Development (APWLD), other performers include Australian songwriter and

GABFAI community theater group worker Caitlin, activist poet Saengdow, Sudsan co-founder and songwriter Chuat, socially-engaged Sudsan band, folksinger Puak, and Filipino singer-songwriter, band leader, researcher, activist Joseph Puruganan for a performance. Jess also showed a 15-minute video excerpt of his interviews with Thai artists, footages of performances and anti-Thaksin rallies.



**Etsuko Miyata de Rodriguez** is currently working on her Ph.D. dissertation on Asian ceramics exported to Mexico via Manila. She has two forthcoming publications -16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Ceramics - Looking at the Ming Production Activity due to be published late this year or early next; and Trade Ceramics Pacific Route: from Asia

to Latin America by the Galleon Trade due to be published in 2007.



**Wong Soak Koon** wrote the Introduction to the forthcoming collection of Malaysian Short Stories in Malay and English to be published by the Malay Academy of Letters. She also wrote a chapter "Shahnon Ahmad's Depiction of Rural Life in Autobiography" for a book Critical Views on Shahnon Ahmad (Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka).

She was recently elected Executive Committee member of the Malaysian Social Science Association and is currently writing a literary glossary in Malay with a team of prominent Malaysian literary scholars.



**Allan Villarante**, a senior legislative researcher, played a key role in drafting the Juvenile Justice Bill in consultation with legislators and civil society stakeholders. The bill was signed into the Republic Act 9344 by Philippine President Gloria Arroyo on 28th April 2006. It addresses the plight of children in jail with the creation of a welfare council under

the Department of Justice's administrative supervision, headed by an undersecretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.



**Lalita Rochanakorn** published her second book Botanical Painting Technique (in Thai) and visited various schools in Thailand to speak on the topic. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment will support her project, in collaboration with the Queen Sirikit Botanical

Garden, "International Conference on Botanical Illustrator" on 30 July to 3rd August 2006 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. She and colleagues also started the Asian Botanical Artists Guild (ABAG), which will be launched at the conference. For more information, please visit <www.lalita.biz>.



**Yuli Nograho** attended the Regional Seminar "Regionalization and Development: Redefining Local Culture, Space, and Identity in the Mekong Region" held last 21-25th April 2006 in Luang Prabang, Laos. Yuli presented on the session on "Decentralization, Civil Society and Forest Management". It was organized by the Regional

Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD) Faculty of Social Science of Chiang Mai University and supported by Rockefeller Foundation and SEASREP.



**Hui Seng Kin (Sam)** joined the Southeast Asian Centre for e-Media (SEACON) as program consultant. He will also be part of the task force to improve the API website.

## NOTICES

### Applications now open

The API Fellowship Program is now accepting applications for Year 2007-2008. Deadline is on 31 August 2006. The successful applicants will be notified in February 2007; with the proposed projects starting on/or after July 2007.

Any Fellow who has completed his/her Fellowship and who has attended the Workshop is eligible to apply for the Follow-Up Grant (FUG). Collaborative projects amongst the Fellows are encouraged. Deadline for application is on 31 August 2006.

Please visit the website <www.api-fellowships.org> or the Partner Institution in your country for further details.



Prof. Tanaka

### Transitions

Prof. Koji Tanaka is appointed as the Director of the new Center for Integrated Area Studies (CIAS) at Kyoto University that was inaugurated last 1st of April 2006. In collaboration with the CSEAS, the CIAS is expected to coordinate and promote cross-regional, comparative area studies, and to establish a frontier of area studies, i.e. area-informatics by combining informatics technologies with area studies. Prof. Koji Tanaka will continue to act as API Program Director in Japan and member of the API International Selection Committee. Prof. Kosuke Mizuno, an economist, was appointed as the new Director of the CSEAS.



Prof. Mizuno

### Awardee

Dr. Ricardo G. Abad, the Workshop Director for the First API Workshop in Cebu, Philippines in 2002, was cited for the Loyola Schools Outstanding Scholarly Work Award for the Social Sciences held on 8th March 2006

at the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines. He was awarded for his work as editor of The Asian Face of Globalisation: Reconstructing Identities, Institutions, and Resources, the compilation of papers and proceedings of the First API Workshop.

### Errata

Issue 10 was dated April 2006 on the front page and January 2006 on the footer. It should be Issue 10/ April 2006 for proper cataloguing.



## THE EDITOR

Philippines, Thailand and Nepal faced social and political crises early this year. I am enraged with the crises but also hopeful for possibilities of dramatic changes in the future. As a Filipino living in Thailand and with solidarity links in Nepal, I closely followed the events unfold.

Philippine President Arroyo declared a State of Emergency in February curtailing the rights to assembly and expression. Street protesters were arrested; the critical press was intimidated; critics were served warrants for "subversive acts" committed 20 years ago; activists were and still are being assassinated. It brought memories of Marcos desperately clinging to power and using military strength over a disgruntled citizenry.

A snap election won by Aquino and the EDSA Revolt in February 1986 ended Marcos' 20 year rule. "Peoples Power" was at its most glorious. EDSA II that impeached Estrada and installed Arroyo (then Vice President) and the EDSA III on-going attempts to oust Arroyo were different stories. Repeating history, after all, is not as good as the first round.

One wonders how the first Asian republic that has a long history of political struggles against its three colonizers and a dictator, just can't make it right this time when democratic institutions are in place and highly politicalized citizenry are engaged.

Thailand, a usually *sabai-sabai* (cozy, easy, comfortable) non-confrontative culture, demanded for then populist Prime Minister Thaksin to resign over a moral issue of tax evasion on the sale of his family's media conglomerate to Temasek, a Singaporean government holding. On the same day that a State of Emergency was declared in the Philippines, Thaksin called for a snap election but was boycotted by the main opposition parties; resulting in a significant 10 million "No" votes and a lone opposition in a Thai Rak Thai Party-dominated parliament in early April.

King Bhumibol summoned the Supreme Court justices to resolve the impasse. He noted that a single party in parliament is not democratic and reiterated that he will not invoke Article 7 (for the King to appoint the parliament) as asked by some sectors, as democratic institutions are in place. The King upheld the principles of constitutional monarchy.

However, the crux of the public debate is limited to Thaksin's moral issue; the process for political reform unclear; the unorganized protesters were dismissed by some as mob rule; and the alliance of interest groups tactical. The military crackdown in 1976 and the political dissent in 1992 do not configure in the recent affairs.

In a direct opposite act, King Gyanendra of Nepal sacked the government and seized power in February 2005. He reasoned the threat of the 10-year-old Maoist insurgency, a weakened political system, and the disenchantment of the public over the bickering of political parties - the parliament changed nine-fold in the last 15 years.

In 1960, the then King Mahendra staged a coup against the then elected government and imposed the panchayat system (appointed posts, one-party system) that forced many of the political parties to go underground. His son King Birendra, brother of Gyanendra, was pressed to reduce the monarchy to a constitutional figurehead after popular protests in 1990 that reinstated multi-party system. In 1994, he dissolved parliament but was reinstated shortly after; pressured by a vibrant political movement and a strong international support.

In April, a general strike was declared by the political parties. The people defied the curfew and took to the streets. Fifteen lives were lost in two weeks when the military opened fire to disperse the crowds. The King stepped aside after 14 months of absolute rule; and the parliament convened. Questions about the future seem to be divided. Institutionalizing constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy, constantly threatened by autocratic rule, is a fragile experiment.

What is the potential of peoples power in these different scenarios? Democratic principles and processes need to be questioned. Forms of critical engagements need to be re-invented. Citizenship and solidarity need to be strengthened. Unless people's sentiments and demands are responded to, genuine political change can not happen.

✦ Anna Liza Magno



## THE FOUNDATION

The Nippon Foundation has been working on the elimination of leprosy and the stigma associated with the disease for decades all over the world. Dr. Jong-Wook Lee, the late WHO Director-General, a comrade in the battle against leprosy, suddenly passed away at the beginning of this year's WHO annual assembly. He devoted his professional life to public health and was involved with leprosy from early in his career in South Korea. In fact, he met his Japanese wife at a leprosy sanitarium.

The Foundation's delegation led by Mr. Yohei Sasakawa arrived in Geneva just one day after his death. The beautiful city with stunning views of Mont Blanc and Lake Geneva was filled with an atmosphere of mourning. In one occasion to remember Dr. Lee, an old friend shared the sorrow with us and dedicated the sayings originally written by an American social activist. "The tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It is not a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal but it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim is sin. Dr. Lee was the person who had high aims."

I question myself how many of us in this region can say with confidence that we have goals to reach, dreams to fulfill, ideals to capture, and stars to reach for various reasons - social, political, and economic. I hope that the API Community is able to be involved in activities that the people around the world will not have to face a calamity, disaster and injustice.

Talking about disaster, we learned of heartbreaking news. On May 27, a major earthquake hit Java, Indonesia claiming many lives and leaving many people homeless. Ms. Sri Nuryanti (known to her friends as "Yanti"), one of the first group of Indonesia API Fellows, was in Yogyakarta when the earthquake hit. Her home was damaged beyond repair; but fortunately her family was safe. Despite her own misfortunes, she dedicated herself to the relief efforts.

In order to support her activities, we have circulated her messages among the API Community and asked for support for the victims. In response, to date, we saw positive reactions including The Nippon Foundation and its chairman Mr. Yohei Sasakawa to Yanti. Ms. Junko Sato, 5th Group of API Fellow from Japan, immediately wrote to us that she would be going to Yogyakarta as she knew many people personally there suffering from the loss of their houses. Her API Fellowship research was on batik workshops in Yogyakarta. She collected donations from API Fellows, through her bank account that she would bring to Indonesia to transfer to Yanti. In response to Junko-san's message, Tai Lee Ming, Chan Chee Khoo, Etsuko Rodriguez, Tatsuki Kataoka, and Kaori Fushiki wrote back to volunteer their donation or their knowledge to facilitate her activities.

It seems that the API Community has started to mobilize even before everyone actually noticed it. I am really hoping that all members of the API Community would find this community as a worthy and rewarding "community" which they cherish and want to develop by themselves with their own insights and dreams.

✦ Michiko Taki



# API FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

**P**ublic intellectuals are those - academics, researchers, media professionals, artists, creative writers, 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. The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals (API Fellowship Program) is designed to stimulate the creation of a new pool of intellectuals in the region. It aims to promote mutual learning among Asian public intellectuals and to contribute to the growth of public spaces in which effective responses to regional needs can be generated.

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12

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