The Asian Face of Globalisation:
Reconstructing Identities, Institutions, and Resources
The Papers of the 2001 API Fellows

Edited by Ricardo G. Abad
Contents

About API v
Acknowledgements vi
Notes on contributors vii

FOREWORD
API Fellowships: Background and Evolution ix
TATSUYA TANAMI

MESSAGES
Regaining Lost Asian-ness: Our Common Destiny xiv
CORAZON COJUANGCO AQUINO

Making a Significant Difference xix
YOSHEI SASAKAWA

Part I: OVERVIEW OF THE PAPERS
Globalisation and Reflexivity among Asian Intellectuals 1
RICARDO G. ABAD

Part II: GLOBALISATION IN ASIA: CONTEXT
Southeast Asian Development after the Crisis 16
JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM

The Dynamics of Religion in the Age of Globalisation:
Lessons from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Japan 25
PHRA PAISAL VISALO

Part III: OUTCOMES OF GLOBALISATION

Human Resources
Towards The Formation of a Community: Thai Migrants in Japan 36
PATAYA RUENKAEW

The HIV Vulnerability of Female Asian Migrant Workers:
Examples from the Philippines, Thailand And Malaysia 48
PANDE K. TRIMAYUNI

Natural Resources
Moral Conflict and the Contest of Forest Resources
in Thailand and Indonesia 56
HENRY CHAN

The Changing of the Traditional System of Marine
Resources Management of Malay and Pattani Society 65
SURMIATI ALI
Institutions
Literature and Critical Literacy: English Language Writing from Malaysia and the Philippines
WONG SOAK KOOK

Lessons from the Celluloid Forest: Cinema and the Changing Identities of Asia
NICK DEOCAMPO

East Asia and Manga Culture: Examining Manga Comic Culture in East Asia
FUSANOSUKE NATSUME

The Development of the Modern Police Institution in Thailand from the 1930s to the 1950s
YASUHIRO MIZUTANI

Identity
The Politics of Identity Construction: The Case of the Mandailing People
ABDUR-RAZZAQ LUBIS

The Landscape of Intellectuals’ Thoughts: Pattani Identity and the Emergence of a Resistance Movement
SRI NURYANTI

Identity Crisis and Indonesia's Prospects for National Unity: The Case of Aceh
PRANGTIP DAORUENG

Identity and Everyday Life among Indigenous Peoples in the Cordillera of Northern Luzon, The Philippines
HERRY YOGASWARA

Compromising Indigenous Leadership: Losing Roots in Tribal Communities
COLIN NICHOLAS

From Marginal Traders to Capitalists: Chinese-Filipinos Join the Mainstream
BENNY SUBIANTO
The Formation of Ethnic and National Identity:
A Case Study of the Lahu in Thailand
TATSUKI KATAOKA

Imagining Nations and Communities through Museums:
The Politics and Aesthetics of Identity Construction
in Japan and the Philippines
CECILIA S. DE LA PAZ

Part IV: POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE
Advocacy and Education in Heritage Conservation
REÑÈ B. JAVELLANA, S.J.

Main Trends in Development Alternatives to Globalisation
PIBHOP DHONGCHAI

The Roles of NGO Printed Media on Environmental Protection
SUKRAN ROJANAPAIWONG

The Power Terrain of Federalizing in a Developing Society:
Can the Philippines Learn from Malaysia’s
Experiences with Federalism?
CRISTINA JAYME MONTIEL

APPENDIXES
Appendix 1: Framework for API 2001 Workshop
Appendix 2: Workshop Schedule
Appendix 3: List of Participants
Appendix 4: Abstracts of Papers

Index

Contact Details
As Asia enters the 21st century, it faces political, economic, and social challenges that transcend 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 has launched the Asian Public Intellectual (API) Fellowships. The Fellowships’ primary aims are to promote mutual learning among Asian public intellectuals and contribute to the growth of the wider public spaces in which effective responses to regional needs can be generated.

The API Senior Fellowship and the API Fellowship are open to academics, media professionals, artists, NGO, activists, social workers, public servants and others with moral authority who are working to shape public opinion and influence policy in their societies. The Fellowships will give these intellectual leaders the opportunity to learn what their counterparts are doing in different cultural and ethnic contexts, generate theoretical ideas to cope with social and economic change, and build the intellectual networks of the future.

Within broad themes for the intellectual, cultural, and professional projects determined by the API Executive Committee, Fellows are required to:
- Propose and carry out a project of research and/or professional activities in a participating country or countries other than their native country or country of permanent 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;
- Pursue a deeper knowledge of each other, and hence the region.

The Nippon Foundation is an independent, non-profit, grant making organisation that was founded in 1962. It works with other non-profit organisations, non governmental organisations and international organisations, and supports projects both in Japan and overseas. It funds activities in four areas:
1. Social welfare
2. Volunteer support
3. Maritime research and development
4. Overseas cooperative assistance
Acknowledgements

Many persons made this book possible – and to them I am most grateful. Tatsuya Tanami, Ragayah Haji Mat Zin, Jose M. Cruz, S.J., and Diana Wong – as members of the First API Workshop Planning Committee – encouraged the publication of this volume, read earlier versions of the workshop’s framework, reviewed the introductory essay, and trusted my editorial judgment on the book’s contents. Tatsuya Tanami, Director of the Department of International Affairs, Nippon Foundation, also graced this volume with a foreword on the Asian Public Intellectuals program.

While working on the book in the Philippines, I received tremendous support from the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and most especially through Dorothy Fernandez-Robert who served as a liaison between me and the fellows, the Nippon Foundation and the publisher. The Philippine office of the API Program was equally very supportive, and I am grateful to Felice Noelle Rodriguez and Russell Tabisula for keeping me in the program’s embrace while working on this volume.

Several editors eased the load. Working from Kuala Lumpur, Karen Freeman edited the papers for the Cebu workshop, and re-edited them for this volume to meet space and style requirements. In Manila, Michael Mariano, Mary An Gonzalez, Ramon Fernan II gave the trimmed conference papers a second editorial pass; Andrea Jose made clean copies of the edited papers; and Octavio Cesar Eviota combed each edited manuscript for a final check, priming them for submission to IKMAS and the Malaysian publisher. Wong Siew Lyn, based in Kuala Lumpur, then served as the editorial liaison between me and the Malaysian publisher.

But the API fellows deserve the largest thanks of all: first, for writing their papers and allowing their publication; second, for being patient with editorial suggestions and making revisions whenever necessary; and third, for their trust, cooperation, and good cheer since we first met, by e-mail, several months before the Cebu meeting.

I am honoured to play a small part in their quest for reflexivity among Asian public intellectuals.

Ricardo G. Abad
THE CONTRIBUTORS

SURMIATA ALI does research for the Center for Social and Cultural Studies, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, in Jakarta, Indonesia. Her words on the API fellowship: “I really got a lot of valuable experiences that I will always remember.”

CORAZON COJUANGCO AQUINO is the former president of the Republic of the Philippines. She now serves as Chairperson of the Aquino Foundation as well as a member of the Board of Advisers of the Metrobank Foundation. She is also co-president of the Forum of Democratic Leaders together with Kim Dae-Jung of Korea, Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, and Sonja Gandhi of India.

HENRY CHAN is completing doctoral studies at the University of Helsinki in Finland and is a staff member of the Sarawak Forestry Corporation where he is responsible for social and community studies.

PRANGTIP DAORUENG was the former director of the Southeast Asia Press Alliance based in Bangkok, and is presently a writer for the Inter Press Service News Agency. She now resides in Kuala Lumpur.

NICK DEOCAMPO is a Filipino filmmaker affiliated with the Mowelfund Film Institute in Manila. He describes his API fellowship as “life-changing” in directing his interest from filmmaking to scholarly work.

PIBHOP DHONGCHAI has worked for non government organisations since 1971, and is now affiliated with the Foundation for Children in Bangkok. He founded a Children’s Village School in 1979 to teach Thai children the concepts of rights and freedom.

RENE B. JAVELLANA, S.J., a Jesuit priest, teaches at the Department of Communication and the Fine Arts Program of the Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, where he is also Program Director. He also works for Jesuit Communications.

TATSUKI KATAOKA is a lecturer at the Tokyo Keizai University, Japan. He received his Ph.D. at the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies at Kyushu University in Fukuoka. He has also taught at Kyushu as well as Fukuoka, Tokyo Gakugei, Tokyo Keizai, and Mejiro.

WONG SOAK KOON has ‘retired’ from the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang, but remains a Senior Fellow with the Women and Human Resources Development Unit of the university.

ABDUR-RAZZAQ LUBIS, an independent scholar and activist, is the Malaysian representative of Badan Warisan Sumatra. He has written works on political economy, environment, history and cultural heritage.

YASUHIRO MIZUTANI is affiliated with the Graduate School of Asian and African Studies, Kyoto University, Japan.

CRISTINA JAYME MONTIEL teaches at the Department of Psychology, Ateneo de Manila University. An activist during the martial law years in the Philippines, she is presently campaigning for the adoption of a federal structure in the Philippines.
FUSANOSUKE NATSUME is a manga artist and critic who also writes a regular column for magazines and newspapers in Japan. He has been awarded the Osamu Tezuka Cultural Prize Special Award for his contributions to manga criticism.

COLIN NICHOLAS is the Coordinator of the Center for Orang Asli Concerns and works with indigenous peoples in their uphill battle to regain their birthright. He is also an avid photographer.

SRI NURYANTI is a researcher at the Research Center for Politics, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, in Jakarta, Indonesia. Her research interests deal with political parties and parliamentary affairs.

CECILIA DE LA PAZ teaches at the Department of Art Studies, University of the Philippines. She is also a community worker, a cultural worker, and a collector of traditional toys.

SUKRAN ROJANAPAIWONG worked for several years with the mainstream media in Bangkok before she realised the drawbacks of business-oriented media in obtaining environmental and socio-cultural justice. She has since devoted herself to full-time work with alternative media, among them the bimonthly Green World Magazine and the biannual State of Thai Environment.

PATAYA RUENKAEW is a Thai living and working in Bielefeld, Germany where she is affiliated with the organisation THARA, or Thais Articulate their Rights Abroad, an organisation working to support Thai migrant women.

YOHEI SASAKAWA is the President of the Nippon Foundation.

BENNY SUBIANTO, a historian, does research at the Center for Chinese Studies in Jakarta, Indonesia.

JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM teaches economics at the Applied Economics Department, University of Malaya, and has been involved in organising a network of critical development economists called IDEAS.

TATSUYA TANAMI is the Director, Department of International Affairs, Nippon Foundation.

PANDE K. TRIMAYUNI is a Special Project officer of the Task Force on Migrant Workers of the Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women, or Komnas Perempuan, a national commission set up by a presidential decree.

PHRA PAISAL VISALO, a Buddhist monk, is the abbot of Wat Pasukato in Chaiyaphum, northeastern Thailand.

HERRY YOGASWARA is an Indonesian anthropologist who studied in the Philippines, and is presently connected with the Center for Population Studies, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, in Jakarta, Indonesia.

RICARDO G. ABAD, editor, teaches at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Fine Arts Program, Ateneo de Manila University, and is Senior Fellow and Board Member of the Social Weather Stations, a survey organisation.
Intellectuals and Asia

Asia has experienced tremendous change in the half century since the Second World War. Within that half century, most Asian countries rode a mighty course from de-colonisation to independence and nation building. For some countries, the nation building process encompassed a history of autocracy, with particular emphasis on economic development at the cost of democracy and human rights. In general, however, each Asian country followed its own path to development, and made decisions that entailed considerable sacrifices.

It was within this historical context that first-generation, post-war Asian intellectuals undertook the task of public advocacy, challenging governments and authorities, and literally risking their lives for the public good, while simultaneously espousing social reforms. Although these intellectuals developed and harnessed their knowledge for the public good, their public advocacy was often at odds with the nation-state (or the colonial nation-state) in the political sense. Over the years, however, they managed to build a network of like-minded individuals in the Asian region which, while limited in scale, played the all-important role of an alternative force. Sadly, the network failed to shake the foundations of established ways and effect a significant change in the direction of nations.

New challenges after the cold war

The end of the Cold War provided an opportunity to shift the path of Asian development. Ideological antagonisms gave way to globalisation. The concept of the nation-state began to be questioned, and a transition took place from de-colonisation to de-nationalisation. New developments in the global arena posed great challenges (both positive and negative) to Asian countries. The attainment of a certain level of economic development was sometimes distorted by the need to sacrifice many basic values. Over the years, while a new future was opening up for the region, various problems suppressed up until the end of the Cold War slowly emerged. Economic woes sparked by the 1997 currency crisis highlighted the fragile foundation on which the swift development of Asian economies was built.

Political leaders, bureaucrats, and intellectuals found it difficult to effectively meet the challenges imposed by such rapid changes. It became virtually impossible for regional collective political systems like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to play an effective role. The network of various think tanks (Track-2, etc.), consisting of government officials, scholars and intellectuals, similarly failed to initiate effective alternative policies.

Still, certain positive changes were experienced. For instance, a new community of non governmental organisations (NGOs), which constitutes part of a new global movement, has developed broadly within Asia. This emergence of a civil society as a new alternative force has been accepted by Asians who have high expectations of its capability to deal with pressing social issues. They also hope that this new alternative force will enhance the power of Asian people to implement social actions that neither governments nor the dormant network of intellectuals (some of whom have become too close to the state bureaucracy) have been able to handle well.

The search for a new intellectual mechanism

But where have all the ‘traditional’ intellectuals gone? Where are those vanguards of modernisation who legitimised a new social, political and economic order? Is it possible that second and third-generation intellectuals, unlike those of the first generation, are now
fulfilling the role of technocrats rather than espousing public advocacy, i.e. indicating policy alternatives to the authorities in power? Has the number of independent thinkers in Asia gone smaller, while the population of government-patronised intellectuals continue to grow and multiply? Or are the issues in the real world such that ‘traditional’ intellectuals are no longer needed?

In Asia, a diversity of social institutions, economic systems, cultures, religions, and ethnic groups have learned to coexist. While this rich diversity confers on the region considerable potential, we cannot possibly overlook the various problems it presents, among them being economic disparities, environmental deterioration, and conflicts and strife based on ethnicity, religion, and other cultural attributes. Because of these problems, a fundamental restructuring of the present system must be done. Politics alone cannot address this need for restructuring. Rather, it is the exchange of wisdom through transnational intellectual interactions that holds the promise of initiating basic changes in the system.

Mere exchanges between the best and the brightest of Asia do not, however, necessarily lead to action. The community of post-war Asian intellectuals worked well to create a breeding ground for ideas, but failed to translate those ideas to policies. While new ideas were born, few practical changes followed, possibly because the formulation and implementation of new policies were entrusted entirely to the state, many of which were controlled by leaders who perceived progress as simply economic development and nothing more.

Who, then, can resolve the various problems that currently face us? Can a civil society take over the responsibility for public welfare when the state fails to do so? Who will issue new ideas, and who can implement them? What mechanism is necessary to resolve transnational problems?

In response to these questions, we at The Nippon Foundation believe it is vital to create a new community, or a new intellectual mechanism, to solve regional problems.

The birth of a new fellowship

Since its establishment, The Nippon Foundation has favoured practical approaches to formulating specific solutions to immediate problems. We have promoted projects in partnership with international organisations, governments, and NGOs, focusing on basic human needs and giving the highest priority to problems that need urgent intervention. Believing that one action is better than a hundred discussions, we have especially targeted problems afflicting developing countries, such as starvation, refugee populations, diseases, and basic education. Yet we also realise the importance of addressing the underlying causes of problems and offering fundamental solutions.

In Asia particularly, where social difficulties have increased, we see the need to create a network of people who can understand the essentials of the problem, reflect on them, propose possible solutions, and even take action. Instead of having traditional technocrats or apolitical intellectuals, this network needs intellectual leaders with the commitment and capability to engage in work for the public good. Finding these public intellectuals, and then motivating and organising them in viable networks, has become a key goal, and the fellowship programme we have designed has been the mechanism that best serves this goal.

It has dawned on us that Asian countries have but limited knowledge of their neighbours: to wit, Asia was discovered, studied, and understood by Westerners. As such, information about Asia has come mainly from the West. In the past, declarations that “many Asian intellectuals who received their training in the West share a deep feeling of isolation from the societies they belong(ed) to” were rife. Now we are aware that Asian intellectuals ought to know each other in greater depth and detail and must avoid becoming isolated from their own societies.

To this end, it is necessary that intellectuals be motivated to operate within the region, learning and exchanging on site. It is an idea that has turned out to be a major motivating factor in our decision to create a new project that we came to call the Asian Public Intellectuals or API Fellowship Programme.

The introductory account above may appear overly detailed, but is done for a reason: I wish to stress the fact that these were the thoughts that drove us to start this new project in the summer of 1999. Two words, namely, ‘Asia’ and ‘public’, were the bases of our discussions. We saw the pressing need for Asians to develop human resources that could contribute to the public good of
Asia. To develop our concept, we at The Nippon Foundation invited some thirty intellectual leaders from Asian countries to a meeting in September 1999. They included scholars, researchers, critics, artists, foundation officers and NGO activists, all notable for achievements in their respective fields.

All took part in extensive discussions lasting more than two days in order to create the basic concept for The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals (API Fellowship). Their discussions centred on such subjects as the intellectual mechanisms and networks required for Asia, the identification of public intellectuals participating in such mechanisms and networks, and the range of issues or themes for research or action.

Some of the intellectual leaders who participated in the brainstorming sessions later played key roles in managing the API Fellowship, among them the late Ishak bin Shari of Malaysia (who regrettably died suddenly in June 2002), Takashi Shiraishi of Japan, and Surichai Wun’Gaeo of Thailand. All participants shared a common awareness of the requirements concerning the following issues:

- An intellectual network made in Asia rather than in the West;
- Programmes embracing broad groups of public intellectuals;
- Programmes broadly targeting not only the people in the centre, but also those at the periphery;
- Flexibility in overcoming language barriers; and
- Programmes prioritising projects beneficial to social reform.

As its ultimate objective, the project sought to create in the region a new pool of public intellectuals who will significantly influence political systems and policies on matters affecting regional and national governance. The project envisioned this pool of intellectuals would influence and guide regional civil societies in tackling important issues faced by each society, and formulating alternative solutions to these problems.

**The API Fellowship**

Based on the results of the brainstorming sessions, the idea and the framework of the API Fellowship were formed. The first five countries chosen to participate were Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Japan. This arrangement holds for the first several years of the Fellowship’s existence, with a view to increasing the number of participating countries in the future.

Whereas the first four countries have strong potential and a need to identify and nurture public intellectuals, their resources are limited. Meanwhile, Japan has a strong need for partnership with public intellectuals of the four countries.

The Fellowship’s composition is divided into two categories: a senior category for talented individuals who have attained a certain level of achievement and are expected to expand their success in the future, and a junior category for young people with promising futures as candidates likely to become public intellectuals. Both groups are expected to learn from each other through various occasions, thereby producing a synergistic effect.

Public intellectuals are defined as “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 through the application of their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience.” We decided that a broad criteria for recruitment be adopted, without limiting participation to specific occupations, professions, or the applicant’s level of awareness of particular problems.

In order for participating fellows to have a common basis for challenges and exchanges, in addition to guiding the selection of talented individuals for research and exchange activities, some common themes were raised. It was decided that these themes be subjected to timely updates to meet the changing needs of the times. For the first three years of the Fellowship’s existence, three main themes were identified:

- 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 globalisation and possible alternatives.

**A unique management mechanism**

The management of the programme was entrusted to one...
partner institution per country, as follows: the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in Malaysia; the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in Indonesia; the School of Social Science at the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines; the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University in Thailand; and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CEAS), Kyoto University in Japan. Each API office had personnel responsible for the following activities: publicity, recruitment, the issuance of application receipts, the selection and dispatch of fellows, and the handling of incoming foreign fellows.

Members of selection committees tasked to choose the fellows in their respective countries came from a wide array of notable public intellectuals of the countries concerned. An international selection committee consisting of people representing partner institutions and public intellectuals typical of the region was also set up.

In addition to handling the programme in Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia serves as the overall coordinating organisation for financial administration. Along with the other partner institutions, it plays a major role in administering the programme regionally and nationally, providing detailed responses to requests from the fellows, following up on individual work, and promoting the planning and management of new additional projects related to the API. In short, each partner institution serves as an exchange centre for public intellectuals in its particular country.

Meanwhile, a close relationship exists among the partner institutions of the five countries such that an integrated regional network has been formed. Further, the execution of programmes is expected to strengthen both the human network of individual fellows and the regional network of organisations committed to contribute to the public good through the generation of new ideas.

The launching ceremony and the API declaration
A launching ceremony in Kuala Lumpur on 8 July 2000 officially started the Programme. On that occasion, representatives of the various countries collaboratively articulated the following API Declaration:

We, the representatives from five countries in Asia, are gathered here today to inaugurate a new collaborative endeavour.

As we enter the 21st century, we recommit ourselves to unified action towards a better future for Asia, even as we celebrate our cultural differences.

While we uphold our national borders and traditions, we seek a regional response, aware as we are that the political, economic, and social challenges which our nations face transcend our national boundaries.

Asians unfortunately remain strangers to each other. The lack of familiarity and strong bonds among us prevent us from articulating regional approaches to the difficulties that are upon us.

The challenges we all face are calling for us to come together to fashion a shared, collaborative response. We take on the challenges with confidence because, while we take pride in our differences, we are all unified by a common heritage and spirit that is Asian.

An effective response to regional problems will invariably require the participation of public intellectuals – men and women committed to working in the public sphere and to collaborating beyond traditional boundaries in articulating common concerns, in proposing effective solutions and in fostering a perspective that is regional in scope and universal in value.

We announce herewith the establishment of The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals, a programme designed precisely to help build a community of Asians who can think and work in the public sphere. The Programme will be initiated in the five countries we are representing today, and public intellectuals (to be identified) are to be given opportunities for research and professional activities in other participating countries. By promoting mutual understanding and shared learning among Asian public intellectuals, the API Fellowships aim to contribute to the growth of public arenas where effective responses to regional needs can be generated.

All of us gathered here are determined to work together to realise this goal for ourselves, in the hope that our collective effort will bear fruit for the betterment of humanity.

The first year and beyond
Clearly, the Programme emphasises the commitment of public intellectuals to solving regional problems. Of paramount importance (in addition to individual
research) is collaboration, which entails articulating common concerns beyond traditional boundaries, proposing effective solutions, and fostering regional perspectives that are universal in value. Speaking during a workshop attended by the first batch of API Fellows, former Philippine president Corazon C. Aquino said, “It would be good to learn as Asians, from Asians, with Asians.” In other words, it is desirable that Asians initiate activities leading to the solutions to problems in a spirit of mutual cooperation, just as it is ideal for Asians to learn from each other.

The first batch of API Fellows comprised an outstanding line-up. Their study papers reveal that their fellowship activities tackled many current problems of the region as found in local Asian settings. In Cebu City, the Philippines, the site of the first workshop for API Fellows held in November 2002, the fellows presented their findings, shared common perceptions and concerns, strengthened contacts with each other, and successfully formed networks in the process. When it ended, the workshop consolidated the friendships and common commitments of the first group of public intellectuals.

Future activities are designed to maintain this momentum, and to make the new public intellectual community grow as a new force of change and reform in the region. The road ahead is a long and arduous one, but we at The Nippon Foundation have strong hopes that we shall successfully negotiate its twists and turns through clear and stormy weather.
MESSAGE

REGAINING LOST ASIAN-NESS: OUR COMMON DESTINY
CORAZON COJUANGCO AQUINO
Former President, Republic of the Philippines

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For centuries, Asia has been preyed upon by the West, for its spices, its minerals, its precious stones, its cheap labour, and its trade routes, among other things. Centuries of colonisation – all countries in Asia have been colonised, except for Japan and Thailand – have left the continent largely impoverished and ignorant, its peoples and cultures damaged by the impositions of foreigners.

Today, Asian society has a thin layer of very rich people and a broader middle class, but the majority of its people are poor. This continent, which is home to nearly two thirds of the world’s population though it covers only 15 per cent of the earth’s land surface, has the largest concentration of the world’s poor who survive on less than a dollar a day.
Recently, Southeast Asia enjoyed an economic boom, which helped improve living standards and reduce poverty. However, the success was short-lived. During the 1997 financial crisis, much of the gains were lost. And as investors pulled out of the region, poverty began to resurface, with the urban population among the worst affected.

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

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

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

I believe the idea of the fellowship is not for us Asians to isolate ourselves by retreating into our comfortable cultural cocoons, shunning globalisation and everything foreign, but to develop and encourage in the region a healthy outlook that The Nippon Foundation describes as “regional in scope and universal in value.”

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

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

Feudal and royal rulers, foreign conquerors and colonizers, low literacy, racial and gender discrimination, unsustainable development models, poor economic policies, environmental abuse, unchecked population growth, natural disasters – you name it – Asia has had it in mega-doses, resulting in poverty not only of the body but also of the spirit. Given these realities, we need to re-take not only our land, our natural resources and control over our lives, we also have to regain our spirit.

We must re-acquaint ourselves with our indigenous ways and search for native alternatives in economics and politics that will give us back our wealth, our identity and our self-respect. We must also re-learn our age-old values so that we can challenge the dehumanising and alien culture of consumerism that seems to have overtaken our lives.

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

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

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

Asian Spirituality
This brings me to my second concern – spirituality – which, I believe is what has made Asia, poor as we are, endure.

A Jesuit priest defines spirituality as “the basic, practical, existential attitude of human beings which is the consequence and expression of the way in which they understand their existence and the meaning of reality. It is the way they act or react throughout life according to ultimate objectives which flow from their world view.”
For a people who lack so much materially, we Asians are rich – in inner resources, in spirituality. In spite of the enormity of our problems, we seem to be able to endure a lot of pain, to hope in the midst of grim realities, and to dream of a better life.

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

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

Before 21 August 1983, the day Ninoy was killed at the Manila International Airport, most of our people patiently endured the misery of martial law. They were also very afraid of going against the dictator. After the assassination of Ninoy, millions of Filipinos finally shed their fears and realised that it was time for change. But we would deal with that in a way that astounded the world and even ourselves. More on this later.

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

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

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

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

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

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

People Empowerment
My last concern is people empowerment.

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

I like to think that the images carried by international television of defenceless citizens in Manila standing up courageously to the soldiers of the dictator inspired imitation throughout the world: the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the people’s victory in Belgrade. It may have emboldened that solitary Chinese with a briefcase who stood resolutely on the path of a column of tanks on their way to Tiananmen Square in Beijing in the summer of 1989. Since EDSA in 1986, dictatorships on both sides of the Iron Curtain have fallen before demonstrations of peaceful people power – a force as soft as water and unyielding as stone.

Many scholars have studied the Philippine People Power revolution of 1986 in search of answers to the questions: How did it happen? Was it a fluke? Was it really a revolution or merely a change of leaders? Can this kind of collective energy be harnessed for peaceful and sustainable societal change?
More recently, in 2001, when Filipinos again took to the streets to unseat a corrupt and inept but duly elected president in what was dubbed People Power II, another set of questions was asked: Should people power be encouraged as a legitimate form of political participation for the removal of undesirable public officials? More to the point, the Western media asked, wasn’t the overthrow of President Joseph Estrada by people power extra-constitutional and therefore illegal? Some critics in the West said we should have waited. But we believe that time is too precious to waste. Besides, we should not allow any one to mock a constitution by using an impeachment to hide his guilt rather than show his innocence.

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

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

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

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

For how else can we explain the peaceful nature of our revolt in the light of the brutal abuse of civil rights, the greed and corruption and the economic failure of the hated regime we sought to oust? I submit, it took as much courage to face the armour unleashed by the dictator on the people with statues and rosaries as with guns and grenades. While confronting the dictator's hardware with bullets would have required the mettle of seasoned guerrilla warriors, facing armed military might with prayer and fasting required the audacity and boldness that only faith could make possible.

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

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

I submit that people power was not a fluke. It was, in fact, the culmination of a movement for social change led by non governmental organisations that has been growing in the Philippines since the Seventies. It was also the beginning of a process of involvement of NGOs in governance. A year after EDSA, the Filipino people rewarded the efforts of NGOs in the movement to oust the dictator by approving the new Constitution which provided for people's participation on all levels of governance through NGOs.

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

Today, government and civil society work together, especially to reach grassroots communities and organise them into productive units that are politically and economically empowered. Although the collaboration between government and NGOs is not without its tensions and disagreements, it has become a positive element in the progress of Filipino society.

The same dynamic is becoming a part of the political life in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and other parts of Asia where NGOs have taken root and are fast becoming a positive force in the service of the people. I submit, the complex relationship between people power, poverty alleviation and spirituality is a worthy subject for in-depth study by the API Fellowships.
Conclusion
I don’t know about other Asians, but to most Filipinos, until recently, Asia might as well have been the dark continent, a place we hardly knew, even if we lived in the midst of it. As a consequence of 400 years of colonisation, we naturally looked westward, beyond Asia, for our friends and our development models. Though we look Asian and we lived in Asia, we didn’t feel Asian.

Happily, that has begun to change. Filipinos have become sharply aware of their neighbours, at least in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) where cooperation among member states has been extended beyond the economic, political and technical, but also among our peoples through tourism and cultural exchanges. We now realise that we share more than a region; we have interrelated cultures and histories, common problems and a common destiny.

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

The Nippon Foundation’s Asian Public Intellectuals Fellowship Program should take us further in this direction. But my fervent hope is that through this ever-growing pool of Asian public intellectuals, Asia’s uniqueness and complexity can be preserved, and its many voices magnified and heard around the world, as we join the often confusing and dehumanising tide of globalisation.

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

MAKING A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE
YOHEI SASAKAWA
Nippon Foundation

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

The API Fellowship Program was conceptualised four years ago in Tokyo by a small group of leading intellectuals from around Southeast Asia and Japan. They met to discuss the rapid march of globalisation and the way it has had an enormous impact on the lives of people in Asia.

At the meeting, it was found that various issues of common concern that transcended national boundaries have emerged. These included not only such things as economic and political issues, but extended as well to the environment, migrant workers, and ethnic, religious and cultural conflicts. Further, it was agreed that the most serious of all of the problems was destitution and the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This evening, we are honoured to have with us the distinguished public intellectual and leader of the 1986 revolution who restored democracy to the Philippines: President Corazon C. Aquino.

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

The Philippines has another significance for my own work as well. This morning I visited Eversley Childs Sanatorium in Cebu Island which is the second largest hospital and community for the leprosy patients in this country. This is the place where the cure for leprosy was developed.

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

Leprosy is today a curable disease. With Multi Drug Therapy, or MDT, you can be cured within a year. The Nippon Foundation has provided free MDT all over the world for the past five years. As a result, the disease has been eliminated in 116 countries. In fact, this MDT was developed here at the Eversley Childs Sanatorium between 1981 and 1986 with our foundation’s support. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the researchers there, leprosy has become a curable disease. Cebu Island indeed has made a deeply significant contribution, changing the very history of this centuries-old disease.

I am delighted that the Cebu Island that means a great deal to me was chosen as the place for this historical first API Workshop.

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

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