

# **Asia Leadership Fellow Program**

**2000 Program Report**

## **Action and Reflection: Experiences of Globalization in Asia**

**International House of Japan  
Japan Foundation Asia Center**

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**Action and Reflection:  
Experiences of Globalization in Asia**

Edited by The International House of Japan

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*Korean and Japanese names are written in the native manner—surnames followed by given names.*

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**PROGRAM REPORTS AND PAPERS  
OF THE FELLOWS**

# A Parenthetical Time in a Busy Life

Urvashi Butalia

Founder, Kali for Women

At the end of my two-month stay in Japan, I had one question uppermost in my mind. Why had I ever considered not accepting the fellowship? When it was initially offered as a possibility, my first reaction was to say no: no to spending two months away from home, no to absenting myself from work, from all the responsibilities that we heap on our heads. How will I leave my office, I thought, and more, how will I leave my parents? Some gentle arm-twisting on the part of friends and relatives and the arrival albeit late, of some modicum of good sense (particularly of the realization that no one is indispensable), made me accept, and I have never been more glad in my life. Looking back on those two months now, I think that was one of the best decisions I have made in the last several years. I count myself lucky to have been able to spend that time in Japan: how often is it that we are given the chance to learn about a different culture, a different country? Admittedly, that was not the purpose of the fellowship, but once we were in Japan, it was difficult not to allow free rein to our natural curiosity. And what better place than the International House with its grace, dignity and charm?

In the first two weeks, the sense of release from one's usual responsibilities was akin to some wonderful discovery: was it possible to have *whole* days in which you could simply sit and read and write and think — without even worrying about making your own bed? I remember thinking, wow; I could get used to this! I found myself reading books I had read as a child — Gandhi's autobiography, Nehru's *Discovery of India*; or reading for pure pleasure and entertainment — detective novels for example. And then, spurred on by questions that came up in many of the lectures we listened to from Japanese scholars, I began to read about Japan, to look around myself, to notice more, to start learning. Here again, I was aware all the time of the privilege of being able to do this — listen, read, absorb, think and, inevitably, what you observe and learn finds its way into your own work.

Putting together four or six people from different regions over a two-month period is a difficult thing to do. The organizers are never sure if the participants — in this case the fellows — will be able to build up rapport, and whether friendships will find their way through the more official interactions. But the interesting thing is that even if people may not

immediately hit it off with each other, four or six is a small enough number for some kind of closeness to develop; and for people to begin thinking about, and becoming involved in, the lives and concerns of others. I was struck by how differently each one of us went through what was essentially a similar process of relaxation, discovery, excitement, learning and sharing. Park Won-Soon was excited at all the cases he was reading about, the piles of books he was collecting on every and any aspect of law and human rights in Japan. He would often invite us to his room at night to show off his books — and I was surprised to find that despite his seeming formality, of all of us it was Park who had turned his room into a home, with posters and maps on the walls, books in the shelves, and the wonderful clutter of lived rooms all around. Saree was focused on her particular world, that of the consumer, and to me, coming from a society which is increasingly consumerising (to twist a word) but that has no sense at all of consumer rights, it was fascinating to see how a closeness could be developed between what we see as human rights, and the rights of the consumer. Here, in India, we have been concerned at the slide of people — because of the way our polity is going, and because of globalization — from being rights-bearing individuals to being mere consumers. Yet, in Saree's work in Thailand, and in the work of the people I met through her in Japan, I began to learn about the power of the consumer as a rights-bearing individual, something which made me reformulate many of my own theories. Kumaoka-san, our Japanese colleague, was less in evidence than the others (and did not join us for our frequent ramen — 'no more than 1,000 yen' was Park's directive — dinners) because it is difficult to be a local and stay away from work for eight or so weeks. But whenever we managed to meet and talk, we had the privilege of getting an 'insider's view' of Japanese society, and particularly the NGO sector in Japan. His deceptive straight face — something the Japanese carry well — and the sense of humour lurking beneath, was a surprise and a delight. Through him, we began to understand the different nature of the Japanese concept of NGOs — much more work outside the country than in it, but also to see the difficult battle NGOs had to wage merely to survive. In countries like mine, NGOs have become somewhat complacent — when they need money, they can turn to international donor agencies for funds. But Japan, being a First World country, has no such privilege, and most NGOs have to raise their own funds through membership. Once again, to me this was a revelation: privilege, and its opposite, too, have strange faces. Sometimes being in the Third World can bring the kind of privilege First World countries don't have.

And Faruk — what shall I say about Faruk? Being conscientious, Faruk had actually responded to one of my papers even before we had met,

and reading his response, I thought, this person and I are going to have strong differences. And indeed, we did, to begin with. But the process of getting to know someone like Faruk, who wore his seeming cynicism like an armour, and beneath which lay a maelstrom of emotions and turbulence, was for me a real education. At the end of our stay, I wished I had understood what I now knew about Faruk at the beginning, for then there was so much more we could have talked about. It was also at the end of his stay — when of all of us Faruk was the most upset to be leaving Japan — that I understood that his love affair with Japan, which had given us many amusing moments, was actually a displacement of his love affair with Indonesia, and his deep sorrow at the tearing apart of the fabric of his country. When he wept to leave Japan, he was actually weeping for Indonesia, a country with the potential to do so much of what Japan had done, but one that had bargained it all away. I think in one way e-mail is a wonderful thing, for Faruk and I have kept in touch this way, and are able to talk of many things that concern us.

My colleagues, and the friends we made at I-House, as well as those at the Japan Foundation, were only one part of what made the Japanese sojourn memorable. Among the others were our visits to the different places we were taken to, and those we chose to go to. It was a privilege to be able to listen to Shigeru Kayano, to visit Minamata and meet activists and others there, to see how natural disasters are dealt with, to learn how a traditional Japanese meal is eaten and enjoyed. For me, the time in Japan also provided the opportunity to renew old friendships and contacts, particularly people and organizations I knew and have worked with through ARENA, a Hong Kong-based organization. Similarly, I had the privilege of giving a few lectures in different universities mainly in Tokyo and the suburbs, which gave me an opportunity to talk about my own work (and to learn to speak slowly for the translators) but also to share ideas with Japanese students and learn about their concerns. In many ways the experience of giving lectures at universities, particularly to undergraduate students, was also unique because I have never before faced a class (largely female, in one case only female!) of 200-250 students. I was amused to note that many students painted their nails through the class, others slept (but did not snore), but all were unfailingly polite and no matter that they had slept through my lecture right under my nose, they came up and thanked me afterwards for a 'very excellent lecture' — this, I assumed, was the famed Japanese formality. A thesis that I developed, and which was confirmed during my stay by a number of such incidents, was that the Japanese sleep a lot: they sleep in classrooms, on trains, they sleep sitting and standing up, and they sleep on station benches, on platforms... BUT they sleep quietly. They don't snore, and don't disturb others sitting around them by falling all



over them. Polite even in sleep!

Much of my own work has been on nationalism, nation making, and questions of memory and violence. For years I have worked at collecting oral histories of people who lived through the violence of the Partition of India, created by the British as they were leaving, into two countries, India and Pakistan. My two-month stint in Japan allowed me to explore and expand this interest in unexpected ways. The lectures we listened to, and more especially the two-day retreat with academics and others from Japan, brought home to me the importance of war and memory in Japan, and the difficulty of dealing with the so-called 'unreliability' of memory, as well as its gendered nature. These are questions that I am now beginning to explore and pursue in depth, and although they are directly related to my work, I think it is a fair guess that I may not have arrived at them, particularly in quite the same way, if I had not been alerted to the debates and discussions in Japan. And I should mention that while in Japan, I finished work on a long paper on the subject which I had been struggling with for some time.

We were also lucky, as fellows, to get to meet some of the earlier fellows who were in Tokyo for a meeting for the ALFP reunion to be held later this year (2001). They gave us good advice about eating-places and particularly about persuading the Head of the Japan Foundation to send us to the Takarazuka. This we did, and it was a wonderful, heady, colourful, enjoyable experience which, at the time, I wanted to repeat every evening of the evenings that were left, but apart from the fact that there would have been no tickets, better sense eventually prevailed, and we used the remaining days to eat yakitori and sushi and drink hot sake to keep the cold away! This too was a memorable Japanese experience — when I had arrived in Japan, the thought of sushi was not very appealing, but by the end of my stay I had begun to seek out sushi bars! And then, there was another unexpected treat — an Asian theatre festival in which a play by one of the ex-fellows, Kuo Pao Kun, was being performed by an Indian troupe, in Hindi! A number of us went, the play was wonderful, and meeting the author a rare privilege. You meet someone like that and you know instantly that there is a lot to talk about.

It is true that for many of us in Asia, because of our past histories, and because the West is so all-powerful, the reference points in our lives have always been Western. It is to the West that most Asian scholars turn for validation, it is Western theories that often inform our work, it is to the West that we travel in search of this and that. Yet, at first imperceptibly, and recently more clearly, this has begun to change. As we learn more about each other's cultures, we realise what a lot there is we can gain from interactions between our cultures. Because of my work on Partition, for

example, I have often thought of putting together a book which looks at different partitions, and tries to collect people's memories of these. But whenever I thought of such a book, the histories I thought of exploring were those of Palestine, Ireland, and Bosnia. The time I spent in Japan suddenly brought home to me the fact that I should be thinking, not in terms of those countries so much as in terms of China, Korea, the subcontinent, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia. Instead of turning elsewhere, I should be looking at our own history, the history of the region, the history of Asia. Of course, 'Asia' and 'Asians' are not unproblematic concepts, as we know, but it is time we turned our attention to them, and addressed the contradictions and complexities their histories and current realities carry. In this sense, the ALFP programme by putting together scholars/activists/writers/thinkers and public intellectuals from different countries in our region shows a rare measure of enlightenment. Whatever problems there may have been in those two months — and for me I can truly say that these were minimal — it is for this perspective that I am more than grateful, and I can only thank my lucky stars that the Japan Foundation and the International House decided to include India in their programme this time!

# Memory in an Age of Globalization: Some Reflections from India\*

**Urvashi Butalia**

Founder, Kali for Women

In many ways it is fitting that this paper should come at the beginning. India is a late entrant to the Asia Leadership Fellow Programme. It is also a late entrant to globalization. And those who are late should learn to be early! In my presentation today I will not go into the details of what is meant by globalization, except to say what we all know: that while its main thrust is economic and relates to markets and finance, its effects are also felt in many other arenas of our lives, and it is experienced differently by different people and different countries. I will here limit myself to the subjects of culture and gender in the context of globalization.

My interest in these subjects comes from my involvement, both as an activist and a researcher, in the women's movement in India. India is a country about which there are many stereotypes. One of these is that its women are very oppressed and silent. Like all stereotypes, this one has a certain amount of truth in it. What is not known, however, is that India also has a strong, vibrant and dynamic women's movement within which activists have been fighting for change for many years. In recent years, politics in India has become very focused on the question of religious identities. In addition, the universalizing processes of globalization have led to the growth of different kinds of dangerous, often anti-women majoritarian, cultural nationalism in India. These have provided a challenge to the many certainties and beliefs that once held us together as activists within the women's movement, and we are now beginning the slow and painful process of unlearning many of the things (such as the myth of women's solidarity, regardless of their class, religion, ethnicity) we cherished, and starting to learn new, and not always pleasant lessons.

Against this background, I would like to look at questions that have been of concern to me in India and within Indian history. I believe these questions have acquired a newness and urgency in the context of India today, and I believe, too, that they have much resonance in Asian countries, and especially in Japan. My questions have to do with the nature of

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\* This paper was presented at a symposium, "Action and Reflection: Experiences of Globalization in Asia," held at the International House on October 26, 2000.

memory. I want to ask: how does a nation come to terms with its memories of nation making, particularly when those memories have to do with terrible violence and violation? More specifically, how do people who make up that nation come to terms with these memories and, importantly, how do they act upon them? Further, how can nations ensure that such memories are not abused, that they are in fact deployed with responsibility? In other words, how does our past direct us to our future, and how must we deal with the use and abuse of the past in order to make the future that we want?

During my two months in Japan I have been struck by the fact that the question of memory seems to occupy a prominent place in Japanese discourse: the memories of that moment when this country turned from empire to nation-making, a moment that carried with it a certain defeat and humiliation. In many ways, this moment in Japan's history is the mirror image of one in India's history: the moment when India turned from a colony to an independent nation, a moment of a certain euphoria and pride. In both cases, which we can crudely call defeat and victory, unpleasant memories were suppressed in the service of the nation. Many of these had to do with women, and particularly with the sexuality of women. In Japan, these are memories of sexual slaves or comfort women, in India these were memories of women raped and abducted during Partition. Do these memories really have no place in today's world?

Let me give you a brief background of Partition. As you know, India became independent in 1947. Independence, however, came simultaneously with a division of the country into two, India and Pakistan, a division which was meant to create a separate homeland for Muslims, i.e. Pakistan. This decision gave rise to both mass violence as Hindus and Muslims turned on each other, and led to the greatest human migration known to history: roughly 14 million people are said to have moved between the two countries in the space of three months. One million were killed. More than 100,000 women were said to have been raped and abducted by men of other religions, and often by men of their own religion. Several of these were sold into prostitution and slavery. In many families, men who feared that their women might be abducted and raped by men of the other religion took the extreme step of killing their own women in order to 'save' them from rape and dishonour. In India's history, the fact of the rape of this large number of women is a shameful one, for it shows that the nation, its men who are after all the people who make up its citizens, failed to protect its weaker people, those they had sworn to protect.

Within families, communities, within history, we hear little about these women who were, in a sense, violated and lost in the moment of nation making. When the Indian and Pakistani governments realized the

scale of the problem of raped and abducted women, they agreed to set up search parties made up of women social workers and police, to go into each other's countries and find these women and bring them back to their countries. However, in several instances, by the time the search party arrived, the woman might have settled down to an existence with her rapist, she might have children by him, and therefore many women refused to come back. This refusal, the apparent willingness of some women to stay on with their rapists, was not something the State could sanction. It represented sexual chaos, and therefore its history had to be suppressed. I need hardly point out the similarities with some of the discourse around comfort women: that they were willing prostitutes, that they were women who consented to have sex with soldiers, as if by doing so, they cease to be the responsibility of the nation-in-the-making.

In India, as in Japan here, these histories have long been suppressed, for the kinds of reasons I have mentioned above. But such histories do not stay suppressed. And in recent years in India they have begun to surface — due to the passage of time, the current political realities, the fact that women who are aging are now more willing to speak out, and the fact that there are people who are beginning to listen.

The danger here is that the surfacing of such memories and stories is taking place at a time when India is going through a resurgence of nationalism, and there are ways in which such memories are being drawn into the service of this nationalism. Just as India's freedom from British colonialism represented one moment of nation making, so also its entry into the global economy represents another such moment, when the nation is being remade on two levels: on the one hand there is the pull of the global, borderless world, while on the other there is the development of identity politics and movements based on assertions of ethnicity, religion, etc. My friend Faruk calls these two simultaneous and contradictory processes cosmopolitanism and localism. In India, then, since the early nineties, there have been two parallel processes at work which are often complementary — these are the processes of globalization and the rise of Hindu nationalism.

Right wing politics in India are increasingly sectarian, creating and encouraging divisions on the basis of religion, and attempting to ensure that minorities have to live by the rules of the majority. For the right wing, the forces of globalization, the threat represented by it, the spread of globalized media; present the perfect argument to speak about the threat to the 'nation'. The threat comes in the form of a cultural invasion, in the kinds of 'Western' images and ideas (such as ideas of freedom, equality, choice, etc) that predominate in the media. In the face of such a cultural invasion, it becomes necessary to assert your 'national' identity. In this so-called

national identity, minorities are required not to be different, but to fit into the norm that is set by the majority. The majority in this case is Hindu, and therefore the ideal Indian citizen is posited as a Hindu male — in doing this the diverse, multiple, plural nature of Hinduism is itself homogenized. If minorities persist in asserting their difference or demanding their rights of a State, which in fact has promised them these rights, the Hindu right wing takes upon itself the responsibility of teaching them a lesson.

Such lessons are almost always taught violently — through attacks on minorities, and increasingly, through attacks on their women. The main people to be targeted are Muslims, because they form the largest minority, but also because they are seen, in some ways, to have betrayed the nation by having demanded Pakistan. It does not matter that the Muslims who are being attacked are living in India, they are Indians — but the fact of their religion condemns them to the status of the enemy. Women become very important in this process: one way of attacking and insulting minorities is by targeting their women. Memories — selectively used — of Partition violence are very useful in this regard, and in recent years the right wing has very powerfully used the argument that “because the Muslims raped our women at Partition, we can now rape theirs to pay them back.” To those who do not know the nature of Partition violence, this can prove a very convincing argument. In actual fact, what happened was that both communities raped each other’s women — neither one was better than the other. But because, as a nation, we have been unable to confront and deal with this painful realization — that it was not only ‘their’ men but also ‘ours’ who were guilty — we have in many ways left the ground open to the right wing to abuse this memory, to present only one part of it as truth, and to target minorities and their women.

The assertion of ‘Hindu’ identity therefore takes place in the face of the onslaught of globalization and the perceived erosion of such identities from within by the assertion of ‘other’ identities, such as minority identity, or caste identity or even your identity as women. The Hindu religion, plural and diverse as it is, is itself homogenized in this process. In India, the media have proved a powerful ally of globalization and of the Hindu right wing in this enterprise. In his presentation on Indonesia, my colleague Faruk talks about the absence of what he calls a ‘written’ culture in Indonesia — something that makes it difficult for people living in largely oral cultures to negotiate effectively with the messages of globalization. We have no such problem in India: television is an all-powerful medium, reaching out to more than 750 million people, and television in India today is marked by the absence of the poor, the marginal, of minorities and even, to some extent, of women.

In the time that I have spent in Japan, I have noticed several common

points with the Japanese and Indian experiences. There is a stereotype about Japanese society that it is a homogenous society. Yet, like all stereotypes, this one has a grain of truth in it for there has been an attempt here to build a consciously homogenous identity. The Japanese society is as much a globalizing society as it is globalized; ours is a society preparing to take its first steps into the global economy. Together, we will soon find ourselves worshipping the same gods: money and markets.

In India, Partition and Partition stories play an important role in attempts at constructing a homogenous Hindu identity: because Muslims are seen as demanding Pakistan, therefore their nationalism is in question and all Muslims who stayed on in India as its citizens, now become suspect as people who are secretly anti-national. What is conveniently forgotten is that the decision to divide the country was as much one that Indian politicians agreed to as it was one that Pakistani politicians wanted. In Japan, the war and war stories play an important part in constructing a homogenous Japanese identity. In both cases much of the selectiveness of memory focuses on women: the Hindu right wing perpetrates the myth of the Muslim rapist, in Japan there is the reluctance to recognize the terrible fact of sexual slavery during the war for what it was.

I do not think this is something that applies only to men. Truths such as mass rape or sexual slavery are as uncomfortable for women to accept as they are for men. After all, women recognize that somewhere in the numbers who perpetrated these crimes, there must have been men they knew or were related to. They recognize, too, that they have colluded in keeping silent on these issues, and often in distorting what we might call their truth — that is, the fact that, in India at least, such violence took place on both sides. It is this, the women's complicity or collusion, that makes it possible for the Right to draw women into its numbers — as has been happening in India — and to enable them to act against other women. This creates particular problems for women activists who have always believed that there is an underlying solidarity among women, regardless of their caste, class, race, or religion. In this atmosphere, it becomes difficult also to speak of questions of equality and rights, which are dismissed by the right wing as 'Western' notions. In this, again, the agenda of the Hindu nationalists is supported by that of global corporations who are not interested in rights, but in markets, not in citizens but in consumers.

As an activist, these issues have been of concern to me for many years. I do not have any answers about how they can be addressed. And I think any answers we may offer are complicated by the fact that in India, at least, all these changes and manipulations are taking place within a context of democracy — which makes it even more difficult to decide how to

address them. But I do feel that as people concerned for the future or our countries and indeed for our world, we need to work hard at doing away with our selective amnesia about the past, to come face to face with our memories, and to begin from there the process of learning how to deal with the future. Let me put it this way: if Indians of my generation had known, from the beginning, the different and plural truths of what happened when our country was partitioned, if we had not been fed on only one side of the story, we might have grown up to be better, more tolerant, more confident and indeed better human beings – which is, after all, what we are all striving for.

I'd like to end with a short story. A Japanese friend spoke of a survey of some sort that was carried out among young people in Tokyo's Shibuya district. The subject of the survey was the war, and many of them did not know that Japan had been in a war with America. You may ask how it would help these young men and women with golden hair and in platform heels, to know this. But perhaps, once the golden hair and platform heels are behind them, these young people may encounter some discrimination at the hands of Americans, or they might one day read about the campaign against bases in Okinawa. It is then that the knowledge of the past will be useful and important.

I have concentrated, in this paper, on only one aspect of the relationship between globalization, nationalism and memory. There are, of course, many other aspects that I have not touched upon. My colleagues will address their attempts to counter globalization in their different countries, and will raise a variety of issues such as the encounter between global and local cultures, the issues of ethics and fair trade, questions of accountability, transparency, and the necessity of solidarity.



# Some Indonesian Experiences with Globalization

Faruk

Lecturer, Gadjah Mada University

Indonesian experiences with globalization are actually not a difficult and complicated subject to talk about. This can easily be seen, for example, in the effects of the 1997–1998 monetary crisis on Indonesia and its people. When compared with the effects of the crisis on other Asian countries, Indonesia's experiences indicate some unique tendencies. First, while other Asian countries have already been able to escape from the crisis, Indonesia is still sunk so deeply in a never-ending financial crisis. Second, only in Indonesia did the impact of the crisis reach the deepest fundamentals of the whole social life of the Indonesian people. So much so that the crisis became a multiple crisis, generating political, social and even cultural effects.

There have been efforts conducted by many scholars and public intellectuals to find the answer to those unique tendencies. The high level of dependency of the Indonesian government and big companies on foreign debt is one of those answers. The other one is the growing gap between the rich and the poor. The unclean government with a high degree of corruption within the official government, is another answer. The high concentration of power in the executive institutions is another alternative answer. The final alternative answer is the absence of the politics of culture, which is directed to construct, institutionalize and internalize the imagined national community. Militarism is also considered to be one of them.

It is difficult to determine which one of those possible answers can be considered the correct one. Even, if all of them are considered the right answer, the question about the interrelation between the answers is still left. In this occasion I do not intend to solve this problem. What I intend to offer is only another possible answer that has never been touched upon in the discussion about Indonesian experiences with globalization in general, including the monetary crisis which was previously mentioned. Orality is my main concept in approaching the answer.

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The high dependency of the Indonesian government and big companies on foreign debt is, of course, not a product of a kind of a universal natural law. There are some countries in the world that can escape from this necessity, those that have a strong capacity to become more self-reliable. For these countries the impact of the financial crisis

is not so strong. Therefore, there must be some internal cultural reasons why Indonesia became so dependent on debt. Culturally perceived, Indonesians are a people who do not have a strong enough capacity to become self-reliable. If they pretend to be self-reliant, as during the Sukarno regime, they move to the extreme opposite side by saying "go to hell with your aid" policy and the result was the financial bankruptcy of the country.

This tendency may relate strongly with the cultural background of the people of Indonesia. From the perspective of the theory of orality, people whose culture is based on oral language and oral tradition will be disposed to have a higher level of dependency on any kind of personalised guidance. The mere substance of oral language is sound, which is an evanescent phenomenon that vanishes soon after being articulated. People who only have this kind of technology for storing, managing, processing, and communicating information necessarily pose a problem of indeterminacy. They cannot fix what has just taken place, articulated, listened, and, so on. To determine them they need a kind of personal guidance such as a charismatic and sacred figure that supposedly holds the truth in his/her hands. It is this kind of leader that they rely on.

In this oral condition people pose a mnemonic problem, that is, a problem to retain memory. Because the sound of oral language vanishes quickly, the people cannot fix and accumulate information in a great number and of a varied kind. They then tend to simplify them as, for example, into two opposite sides where there is no room or at least little room in between. Maybe, it is for these reason that two Indonesian regimes, those of Sukarno and Suharto, had extremely opposite tendencies. The first had a "go to hell with your aid" policy while the other sank very deep into foreign debt.

The idea of true or false with the people whose culture is based on orality will never become the idea of an objective true and false. Both of those matters are always perceived as something subjective because their determination depends on the personalized guidance mentioned above. Hence, this kind of people will hardly believe in any kind of writing, including the written law. If they have writing, they treat it only as a kind of decoration or a magic thing that has no relation with their daily life. Writing is one thing, while life is another. The people can have a very beautiful written law about the necessity to have a clean government while, at the same time, having a corrupt behaviour without any guilty feelings. The people can have a slogan beautifully written about nationalism, national solidarity, while, at the same time, having a very strong self-interest and sectarian interest without any guilty feeling as well.

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A nation state and a national community, primarily in the context of a large country like Indonesia, can only be strongly constructed on the basis of writing. Without writing, the nation state cannot count how many people make up the population. They cannot possibly determine even where they live; how old they are; how is their economic, social, and cultural condition; how they interact with each other, personally as well as collectively, or even how is the rules of the game they can use to interact on the level of trans-village and trans-district, and even trans-island relation. It is also only by determining the national border, the district border, and the village border that they can be determined and fixed. The feeling of solidarity, the sense of national brotherhood of people from an isolated island to others from a distant island, can only be constructed by writing as well.

Indonesians, as a people whose culture is mostly based on an oral language, cannot meet this condition. Hence, from the outset the Indonesian nation state has a built-in abnormal condition, with a very thin and weak foundation. From the colonial era until the "Orde Baru" era, the huge geographical area of Indonesia, the heterogeneous people and the culture in it, were united primarily by military force and added by the magical words of a charismatic figure like Sukarno and much money gained from debt like Suharto. Being inspired by the Iranian and Filipino revolutions, people got the idea of 'people power' that gradually reduced the legitimacy of military supremacy. Being hit by the monetary crisis, the power and legitimacy of the state to maintain the unity of people of Indonesia was also lost. Being influenced by the new electronic technology, especially audio-visual electronics such as television, people got a strong desire to act, while growing uneasy with one place, one landscape, one government, and tried to have a new one. Being influenced by some international projects of globalism, locality, heterogeneous culture, and decentralization, people do not have to pray for the idea of unity, including national unity. In my opinion, all of those tendencies mean one thing, that the people's way of life including oral culture is growing strong.

Being tied strongly to orality, Indonesians cannot do anything in a self-reliable way other than move back to a small community. They will not be able to handle a huge country like Indonesia although it is not as simple as it seems. Firstly, the idea of locality in the recent and future context will never be a pure locality as given in the past. It is a kind of globalized locality or localized globality. Hence, it is much more complex than the idea of nationality. In this context, people whose culture is still based on 'orality', can never be able to manage it. They will be misunderstood as a pure locality, constructing the idea of localism, by negating the equal position and the existence of other people coming

from other localities. Secondly, although Indonesia, the country that was built on the base of military power and some irrational foundation, in fact, has already lived for at least 45 years. Many things have already happened throughout our history that cannot be abolished. There have been many migrants who live in more than one generation in other localities, there have been many people from different localities and cultures who are married to each other, generating a dual-ethnicity and culture. All of them will become victimised if the idea of locality is perceived, conceived, and conducted in the framework and on the base of oral culture.

# The Power of the Letter

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## Roland Barthes' Emptiness<sup>1</sup>

Roland Barthes' book entitled *Empire of Signs* is interesting to be discussed in this paper. There are two reasons, at least, that make me interested in the book. First, I feel that I am in a rather similar position with him when writing about the Japanese people and their culture so that by discussing his book I can as well clearly make my position. Second, the ways he interprets Japan really stimulates me to give a response and to say or to write something about it. In his own term, his writing is really writingly, not only readerly.<sup>2</sup>

My impression of the book is that Barthes approaches Japanese things and manners in a very post-structural way. For example, if he talks about sign and meaning, signifier and signified, he refers to the Saussurean structural linguistic theory that divides the sign into two related parts. But when he sees the possibility of the signifier or the sign separating itself from the signified or the meaning, Barthes has already been in the area of post-structural theory.

As implied in the title of the book, Barthes tends to conceive Japanese culture as the empire of the sign. This means that things and manners in the culture are actually subjected to the power of the signifier and become the loyal citizens of the empire of it. In discussing the signifier and the signified, Barthes tends to have in mind a very broad concept covering not only the idea of the relationship between the sign and meaning in a common term, but also the idea about the form and the content; the things and the frame, the body and the mind, the action and the reflection, the movement and the still, the chaos and the order, and so on. In this book Barthes does not formulate all aspects of the concept in a single formulation but mentions them separately in separate discussions on Japanese things and manners. For example, there are essays about

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<sup>1</sup> This part contains a special discussion on Roland Barthes' book entitled *The Empire of Signs* published by Hill and Wang in 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Barthes' concepts on writing, reading, writerly text and readerly text can be found in his book entitled *S/Z*, published for the first time in Great Britain in 1975 by Jonathan Cape.

Japanese foods, Japanese cities, Japanese stations, the Japanese language, Japanese theater, Japanese packages, Japanese politeness, etc.

Although writing on the respective things and manners seem to be isolated from each other in such a way that the book appears to be a collection of separated writings, all of them tend to reverberate the same theme or conclusion, that is, as I have already mentioned, that Japan is essentially the empire of the signifier. According to Barthes, what is important with Japanese food is not the food itself, but the action taken toward it by the Japanese consumer. The Japanese city, Tokyo, has indeed a center, that is, the palace of the emperor. But in fact, the center tends to be always avoided by the people so that the center then becomes an empty center. In Barthes' opinion, the Japanese address is actually not an address because in Japan streets do not have names and the address is only a postal code that make sense only for the postman. Hence, the city can only be known only if the people "orient themselves in it not by book, by address, but by walking, by sight, by habit, and by experience." Japanese packaging prove once again, for Barthes, that the Japanese world consists of only form and postponed content. It is not the content of the package that is important, but the package itself. The content can be very trivial, insignificant, and even laughable. Haiku, for him, "breach of meaning," "exemption from meaning." And the Japanese form of politeness such as bowing, is merely an exchange so that the polite act "literally salute *no one*."

Barthes imagines Japanese culture as a series of signifier without signified, a series of movement without intention, a series of bodily things and actions without mind and thought, and a merely surface thing without something deep behind it. But he does not evaluate all of them in a negative way and even tends to pray and admire those tendencies rather than to humiliate them. He pulls them back to some doctrines of Buddhism and Zen Buddhism, for example, in the concept of *satori* where the emptiness is conceived as the peak of the process in obtaining enlightenment. Barthes even admits that by experiencing the emptiness of Japan, he has been afforded to the situation of writing that is similar with the situation of *satori*. *Satori*, he says,

"is a more or less powerful (...) seism which causes knowledge, or the subject, to vacillate: it *creates an emptiness of language*. And it is also an emptiness of language which constitutes writing; it is from this emptiness that derive the features with which Zen, in the exemption from all meaning, writes gardens, gestures, houses, flower arrangements, faces, violence."

Moreover, Japan in this kind of interpretation, becomes an alternative world for Barthes. The World of Japan, according to him, is

opposed to the Western world. If Japan is the empire of signs, the Western world is the empire of meaning. In the West, people always try to search for something in-depth, the signified behind the signifier. In Japan, the culture is only a series of signifier, differences and a series of surface. It is the context of the contrast that makes Barthes, in this book, not only write about the Japanese culture, but also about Western culture.

I feel that I am in a similar position with Barthes. If in the eye of Barthes the Japanese people and culture seem to be unlimited and decentered space, consisting of only a series of signifier moving continuously; in my eye the striking characteristics of the Japanese are located in their orderly and centered space, and in their continuously framed movement. Barthes, of course, has seen the frame and the center. But in his opinion, the frame is invisible, fragile, and the center is avoided, postponed. When he sees the Japanese room, what he catches is the sliding door that makes the frame fragile and breakable. When he sees the Japanese landscape along his travels, what he catches is the fact that he does not find the horizon. Contradictorily, he also finds a very strong frame in the Japanese packages. In this case, Barthes replaces his idea about the frame with the idea about the form. What is equivalent with the frame is not the form but the content so that both of them have a similar fortune, that is fragile, postponed and unimportant.

It is really the difference in our backgrounds that seems to make Barthes and I have a different sensitivity in perceiving the Japanese culture and people. Barthes supposes his culture as an empire of meaning. In the structuralist point of view, linguistically, anthropologically, sociologically, psychologically, as well as hermeneutically; the meaning or the signified is located behind the surface of the sign or signifier, the structure behind the phenomena, the deep structure behind the surface structure, the unconscious behind the conscious, a center among margins, an invariant among the variants and intention behind expressions. It is the empire in which everything has a frame, intention, and a deep area. In postmodern terms, the culture is exactly the modern culture with modernism. Thus assuming himself from this kind of culture, Barthes sees Japan as the other, precisely like what the colonialists used to do in the previous era. The difference between them is only located in the value they give to the other. The other of Barthes is the positive other, constructed in order to deconstruct the self. The other of the colonialists is the negative other, constructed in order to maintain the self.

I see myself originated from the opposite culture related to Barthes'. My culture is a non-modern culture, a traditional one, for the reason of its oral condition as I have already mentioned. If my people are only and still an isolated small community, I have no problem with the culture. But they

live in a big country with a population from a very heterogeneous cultural background. In this context the non-modern, the traditional, the oral based characteristics of my culture can no longer function to frame the huge and heterogeneous people. Thus, in this term, I can say that I come from a country with no frame and a very chaotic country. In my country the people do not have a certain design for conducting their life, are unable to organize themselves, unable to arrange space, to differentiate space, and finally becomes very chaotic and barbarian in character.

Like Barthes, I construct Japan as the other of myself and my culture and even my people. But if in constructing Japan Barthes intends to deconstruct the self, I construct it in the interest of constructing my culture and country. It is the frame, the meaning, the content, the order, and the unity that I searched for and found in Japan. Hence, in living two months in the country, I was always trying to see what is invisible, fragile, unimportant, and trivial for Barthes. It is not the Haiku, Zen Buddhism, paintings, or written texts, but the everyday life of the people and things.

One striking fact that is really invisible for Barthes in his book is the Japanese home and family. While living in Japan I was always trying to know and to enter this area, but I failed. My friend, who I thought has been so close to me, always avoids the possibility for me to visit her home. But it does not mean that I stop trying and giving my attention to them. One of the Japanese things that gave me a hint about the home and the family is the Japanese address card. Because the Japanese people are very fond of exchanging this card, I could get so many from them. But none of the cards indicated the home address, telephone, fax or e-mail numbers. So in this case, the home and the family are really invisible things in Barthes' term. But is it the empty center or the avoided or the postponed center?

The possible answer to the question is seemingly negative in kind. In my first week of contact with Japanese friends, I found one telling me about his father. The friend said he could not join some meeting because he had to accompany his father who was sick in the hospital. My other friend, one day, could not conduct his duty fully in the office for reasons of accompanying his mother who had an operation in the hospital as well. My Japanese students received phone calls from her mother from Japan almost every week, while another friend said that her parents sometimes took care of her children even though their house is far from hers. She also said that when she studied in Indonesia, her parents came to visit her. Another friend of mine said that she could work in the office until night because her family was still living in her parents' house and it is her parents who take care of her children.

From some of my Japanese friends' responses to my question, I was



informed about the surprising tendency in relating to Barthes' idea of the empty center as mentioned above. One of them said that both domains have an equal value, but people cannot exist without the private one. Three of them said that the home or the family or the private domain is more important than the office or the business or the public domain. The other told me that he doesn't like to work overtime. He wants to put value on having time with family and have a time to educate his daughter at home. All of them said that if they do not write down their home address on the card it is because the card is an office card, for a business affair, and they do not want to mix it with their private lives.<sup>3</sup>

This latter answer is very interesting because it relates to the general tendency of Japanese culture. As I have already mentioned, Japanese people in connection with their writing system and their sensitivity to the visual world have a disposition to always divide and classify things around them and to create and simultaneously maintain the discrete border between different things. Maybe it is in the context that the people's tendency to separate the public space with the private space finds its significance. Furthermore, in relation with the people's habits of travelling everywhere, and their disposition to move, that tendency indicates the capacity of the people to be always in control and in order so that their every movement can be prevented from the possibility of hitting each other.

In turn, the latter possibility may also mean that the Japanese people always try not to be confused about so many different things and different movement that they themselves have divided, created and have done. I think it is in this context that the everyday life of the Japanese people and things can be pulled back to the Zen Buddhism doctrine about *satori*. In a book entitled *How to Practice Zazen*,<sup>4</sup> Mumon Yamada teaches the students to be always conscious and prevent themselves from being confused between their authentic selves and the things and the mind originated from the outer world. To reach this condition, the students are suggested to live and meditate in a quiet place in order to be able to escape from the influence of the outer world. But it does not mean that they must be always in this kind of place. Even for the mature priests, they must be able to live in the crowded world and open their eyes while conducting meditation without being confused and with mind and body always carefully controlled.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Two friends of mine who work in the same office said that they have never visited each other's respective house although they have already worked together for about three years.

<sup>4</sup> This book is published by the Institute for Zen Studies, Kyoto, Japan.

<sup>5</sup> I remember one story of the *Doraemon* serial cartoon film. After seeing a friend praised by the teacher for his good conduct, Nobita decided himself to be a good boy by helping everyone. But every time he helped others, the result was always

Hence, it is really questionable if Barthes interprets the emptiness of the *satori* as a kind of movement with a fragile frame, a kind of form with trivial content, a kind of landscape without horizon and a kind of expression with a postponed intention. In his writing about Japanese food, Barthes perceives the photograph of the food as a kind of frame, a structure. But according to him, the frame and the structure are not the important things in the food. It is the act to the food that is important. For example, the movement taken to eat the food: the Japanese people, in Barthes' opinion, move in a condition of free alternation according to a caprice. I think, in this case, Barthes forgets about other possibilities. First, it is the photograph, the frame and the structure, which invite the move. If the food is not framed or arranged in a way that makes sense for the Japanese people, they may not be moved to eat it.<sup>6</sup> Also, if the food system does not include chopsticks, the Japanese eater may not use them to eat the food; therefore all the cultural functions of chopsticks as interpreted by Barthes would be nonsense. Second, in his book Barthes does not give attention to the place given for the respective kinds of food. Every kind of food has its own place and the place of every food cannot be converted. In the movement of eating, Japanese people will never mix one kind of food with another except with the sauce that is already determined for the food. If the people move according to a caprice, it will be possible for them to take the food from the others' tray.

It is right then that the frame or the center of the Japanese people's

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opposed with his intention. He made trouble for the others he intended to help. Nobita then decided to be a bad boy because he thought that he was born to be one. But every time he inflicted others, he found the opposite result. Nobita then became confused until finally Doraemon suggested him to become his own self. This suggestion seems to be based on a universal truth. But, if it is seen from the perspective of Japanese culture, it will be very similar with what the Zen Buddhism priests teach their students.

<sup>6</sup> Recently I arranged a meeting in Indonesia for two of my Japanese friends who needed to talk with some Indonesian artists. I invited about ten artists to participate in the meeting. About thirty minutes before the time of the meeting, the artists have already arrived in the arranged place. All of them are men. Most of them have long hair, a mustache and some of them have a long beard. The way most of them are clothed is like hippies. The meeting room then became the arena for chatting for the artists before my Japanese friends came. They smoke, they eat, drink, in a seemingly wild way. Ashtrays, plates, glasses spread on the table in a very disorderly manner and the room is filled with cigarette smoke. So when my Japanese friends entered the room, they directly felt shocked seeing the condition of the room and the people. I could understand their feeling because they used to live in a very orderly environment in their country and I could understand as well seeing how their interest to talk disappeared.

life and culture tends to be invisible. But, it does not necessarily mean that the frame and the center is fragile, trivial and empty. Like a Japanese package, the frame is really strong and important. In writing about the Japanese address, Barthes concludes that the address necessitates the people primarily to move and to experience the effort in finding the place. But, in this case, Barthes forgets about the frame, the orientation. The Japanese address generally consists of four elements, which are the town, the district, the block, and the number. The first three elements are multifold frames which can be used by the people to orient themselves as certain as possible. Only the number is the uncertain element, which gives room for and even necessitates the people to act and to have experience. But compared with the other elements, the room is far smaller than the frame so that it is unreasonable to say that the frame is fragile, trivial, and empty.

Thus, if the frame is made invisible or seemed to be avoided by the people, the reason then is not directed to the triviality of the frame or the center. It is the way taken by the people to carefully prevent the frame or the center from the possibility of being broken and destroyed. The Japanese people love very much their family and their private domain, so they tend to hide them from the public domain by making them invisible. The Japanese people love very much their emperor so they did not mind to take over the emperor's guilt in the case of the last world war, by living below the abnormal law determined by America for tens of years.<sup>7</sup> Reciprocally, the love of the Japanese leader(s) to the people is a kind of maternal love. Barthes also feels about it in his writing about the chopstick, about the way taken by the Japanese people in treating food. In my impression, it is this kind of love that make the state serving the movement of the people in their travels by making available so many letters and signs in order to make people avoid hitting each other and from being confused. Doraemon has this kind of role in front of Nobita.<sup>8</sup>

That tendency has also been evident in the way taken by the Japanese people in preserving Kanji. As I have already mentioned, the people tend to treat it as a sacred thing. They preferred to create a new writing system rather than to make Kanji distorted by the dynamic of life and language. When I asked some Japanese friends about the possibility to abolish it, all of them reject it for varied reasons. One of them said that the possibility would only make many demerits for them. The other said that they feel more convenient using Kanji rather than other kinds of writing system. The quotation below is another reason from another friend.

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<sup>7</sup> It is Mikio Kato-san who explained to me about the Japanese Law in one workshop conducted by the ALFP 2000.

<sup>8</sup> I have read a poem about this maternal love as can be found in the supplement.

“Pernah usulan membuang tulisan kanji, lagi pula membuang bahasa Jepang sama sekali. Pada masa zaman Meiji Mendikbud Mori mengusul pergantian bahasa Jepang dengan bahasa Perancis, karena untuk kemajuan dan perkembangan perindustrian dan kebudayaan. Dia pikir bahasa Perancis itu adalah bahasa peradaban, jadi lebih cocok untuk catch up negara-negara Barat. Setelah perang dunia kedua juga banyak usulan untuk mengganti bahasa negara bermunculan (pada period ini memangnya diusulkan bahasa Inggris). Dan pernah ada gerakan mengusul memakai huruf romawi. Tapi usulan-usulan itu bisa disebut gagal total, tidak disambut secara positif.

Saya kira gagalnya usulan di atas itu beralasan rasional. Bahasa Jepang punya banyak homonimi (terutama On-Yomi). Misalnya kata KISHA punya arti “kreta api”, “pulang ke kantor”, “perusahaan Anda”, dan “wartawan”. Tetapi huruf kanjinya berlainan. Kami membedakan artinya dengan kanji (kalau ucapan kami membedakan intonasi).”

“There has ever been an idea to throw out the Kanji, even to abolish it at all. In the Meiji Era the Minister for Education Mori offered an idea to replace the Japanese language with French for the reason of the progress and the development of culture and industry. He thought French is a civilized language so that it will be in accordance with the effort to catch up with Western countries. After the Second World War there have emerged many ideas about the possibility to replace the state language (indeed, in this period, it is the English that was offered). And there has ever been a movement to use the Roman letters. But all of them can be called a total failure. There were no responses to it.

I think, it is rational for all of them to fail. The Japanese language has many homonyms (especially On-Yomi). For example, the word KISHA has many meanings: ‘train’, ‘back to office’, ‘your company’, and ‘journalist’. But the Kanji for each of them is different. We differentiate them with Kanji (in speech, we differentiate them by intonation).”

Another answer is as follows.

“All Kanji has a meaning and if I see one Kanji, I can quickly understand its meaning. However, if I see Katakana or Hiragana, I won’t be able to understand the meaning until I finish reading the whole part of the word. Say, if I see ‘katakana’, it takes time to

understand its meaning, because I have to see 'ka' first, then 'ta' and then 'ka' and 'na' and finally I put together those four 'parts' and understand it. So it takes four steps. On the other hand, if I write it in Kanji, like *babababa* I can understand its meaning as soon as I see it. So it takes only one step. I can't imagine Japanese language without Kanji."

But it does not mean that the people then are always hung passively onto the frame. As also implied in the quotation, they open themselves to any kinds of new things. Even according to my observation, they never miss any kinds of new thing that come from outside Japan. The idea of civil society, for example, has encouraged many discussions among the people and has moved them to found thousands of non-government organizations spreading all over the country.<sup>9</sup> I think it is the natural tendency of the people who used to be sensitive to any phenomena ranging and emerging on the space. They always try to take it, to identify it, to give it a place in the given space, though the thing sometimes seems to threaten the frame, like in the case of some ideas on abolishing the Kanji or replacing the Japanese language mentioned above.

Hence, the greatest challenges for the people are: (1) how to move continuously with an increasing number of things and ways of life like the Kanji, Hiragana, Katakana, and Roman, without being confused, without being lost in orientation to the frame; and (2) how to be actively involved in the public sphere without forgetting the home, the family, the private domain, though all of them are always invisible or made invisible in the former sphere. To be confused is seemingly to be something that can make the people ashamed of themselves, something that can make them feel very sad or fall in a very deep and unbearable suffering. It will be like the priest who fails to attain *satori*.

This latter possibility simultaneously indicates that the fear of becoming confused among the people is not only a psychological phenomenon, but even a metaphysical one. It relates to the people's religious and philosophical background. The same significance can also be given to their tendency to be always careful in maintaining and also in opening the border. In relation to the home address on the address card, my Japanese friend said in Indonesian as followed.

"Saya anggap kartu nama adalah alat untuk berkomunikasi sosial (tidak pribadi). Karena itu di kartu nama saya alamat dan nomor telepon rumah saya tidak ditulis.

Saya kira kenalan atau kawan sekerja adalah kawan untuk

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<sup>9</sup> I found the information about them from ALFP 2000 programs, especially the resource person seminar program and the trips program.

melaksanakan suatu tujuan bersama. Bagi saya untuk menyelenggarakan akademi kami secara lancar dan efisien. Saya berakrab dengan mereka untuk tujuan itu. Jadi bisa disebut suatu 'functional relationship' atau 'practical relationship'.

Kalau saya bisa berakrab secara pribadi dengan kawan sekerja (cara pikirannya, cara pandangannya cocok dengan saya misalnya), saya mau meningkatkan atau memadatkan komunikasi dan terus dia dijadikan teman pribadi."

"I conceive the address card as an instrument for public communication (not private). So, in my card, I don't write my home address and my telephone number.

I think, my colleague or my acquaintance is my partner for attaining a collective goal. For me, it means that we must manage together our Academy successfully and efficiently. I relate myself closely to him/her for that goal. So, it is a kind of 'functional relationship' or 'practical relationship'.

I will be personally close to him/her (if, for example, her/his way of thinking, her/his way of seeing something is in accordance with mine). In this case, I willingly can increase the communication with him/her and make it closer so that he/she then will be my close friend."

## **The Japanese Smell**

Maybe only the Indonesians can do it. When I lived for two months in Japan, I was so eager sometimes to know about Japanese smells so I tried to smell things around me. And indeed I hardly found it. For example, I didn't smell anything from the Soba, the Japanese traditional noodle, nor anything from Sushi and Sashimi. Maybe there was a very thin smell from the Sukiyaki, something resembling beef in the process of maturation. When I took the lift, I smell something very strong as if it was just used by people from the West. But I didn't smell anything when the lift was just used by the Japanese people. When I walk on a rather crowded street in Indonesia, I could surely smell the aromas of many kinds of shampoo from people's hair. But I couldn't have the same experience in Japan.

My Japanese student in Indonesia explained to me about smells in Japan. According to her, Japanese people have a strong sensitivity about smells. They know many kinds of smells but they don't like it. Hence, in Japan there are so many technological products used to neutralize many kinds of smells such as that in the toilet or the rest room; in the refrigerator, the cupboards, in shoes and socks, and so on. What people do is not only replace a bad smell with a better smell like perfume, but also to neutralize it.

People are actually not so interested even in perfume. It is for this reason that there is not a smell of perfume in their tissue paper, in the rest room, in the taxi, and so on. My student added that recently there is a popular technological product from America. The product can neutralize the smell of mouths and feces.

One of my Japanese students also acknowledged that in Japan people indeed are not so interested in perfume. According to her, it is because the Japanese people are accustomed to take a bath every day so that they do not need to cover themselves with it. The same student said that Japanese people do not need perfume because they used to eat foods that will not make their bodies have a bad smell. My other friend said that she has perfume, but she doesn't use it for every occasion. But why do Japanese foods, at least according to my sensitivity, tend to have no smell as well? Or, why do they tend to have only a very thin, natural and so simple smells? It is surprising to me because on the visual performance, I saw that the people have a tendency to be cultured and sophisticated. In this case Japan can be called a "colorful country" as, for example, performed in the color differentiation between train lines that are simultaneously useful for the practical interest, especially for people who cannot read Kanji or any other Japanese writing system. The Japanese stickers, posters, and packages spreading all over the country have also proved this tendency. Besides, Japan is highly developed in the arrangement of space as can be seen in the complicated train traffic lines and the underground and the upper ground spaces that are seemingly so overlapped.

Compared with this visual image, this tendency is not only related with the Japanese habit of taking a daily bath and eating a certain kind of food that will not create a bad smell in their bodies, but also connected with their strong disposition to divide and classify things in a strict and almost absolute manner. As I have already mentioned, this disposition can only be applied on the visual and spatial substance. Smell substance cannot be treated in the same way because it is so fluid, can't be divided strictly and tends to always be overlapped, mixed, and make people confused. Hence considering this wider context of Japanese culture and the people's disposition, they unconsciously are not interested in smell or perfume.

Sound actually has a similar characteristic with smell. Both cannot be strictly divided and classified and there will never be a clear border between them. Urvashi Butalia, one of the ALFP fellows, said that she is interested in the way the Japanese people say 'yes', *hai*. I didn't ask her further on what respect of the word she was interested in. In my opinion, the word is quite unique in the context of the whole Japanese language. Most of the last sound of the Japanese words is pronounced in an open way, even if the sound is actually a closed sound in a linguistic term. But the

last sound of *hai* tends to be closely pronounced. Hence, when people say the word it sounds so certain and so absolute. The other reason for the uniqueness of the word is that it is, in my impression, included as one of the most productive words used in everyday verbal communication of the Japanese people. When I was sitting in the I-House lobby and hearing the voice of one of my Front Desk friends while receiving a telephone call, the word was pronounced very frequently.

I think, the ways Japanese people pronounce the word indicate one of their efforts in domesticating sound as a wild substance, fixing it as a moving one. The sound of *hai* seems to be certain, absolute, and strictly closed. In pronouncing the word, people appear to be steady and ready to realize what they say. It seems there is no bargaining anymore after the word is pronounced.

There is a phenomenon in Japan indicating more clearly the tendency of the people to fix the sound, which is the way they treat music. When I entered the Yamaha store in two areas of Tokyo, Akihabara and Ginza, I was so surprised to find how almost all of the world's music records were available. They were not only recorded in the auditory way, but also in a spatial way. I mean, there were so many music books in the store, including the history of many kinds of music, musicians' biographies, many kinds of music journals and magazines, and so many noted songbooks. What surprises me most is the fact that many recent popular songs have already been written in musical notation. So, in the store, the world of sound of the music suddenly became the world of space of the letter; the moving substance became the fixed substance. Furthermore, on television, almost every night I found a classical music performance. And it was very surprising to me when in Hokkaido I found how many teenagers playing music on the street and using the notation as well, as the classical music performers did.

In my opinion, it is after becoming a space that the life of sound flourishes very well in Japan. In itself, sound tends to be something uninteresting. When my Indian friend Urvashi Butalia taught us one of the ways of Yoga meditation, she asked us to listen to all kinds of sound around us. According to her, the success of this meditation will be attained when we are already able to differentiate and separate a certain sound in between the other people. This type of meditation has also been taught in Indonesia by W.S. Rendra, a respected actor of modern theater. But Mumon Yamada, in his book which I have already mentioned, has a different way of meditation. He asks his students to open their eyes while conducting meditation.

"Eyes should remain slightly open so that an area only three feet ahead can be seen. People might suppose that with the eyes closed, one could reach



calmness more easily: however, that is mistaken. Closing your eyes, our mind fills with illusions, and we might easily fall asleep. The Patriarch, taught us to open our eyes as much as possible in *zazen* just as the picture of Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism, shows us. We have never seen a picture of Bodhidharma with his eyes closed. Even though visual distractions occur, you should always be free from them, letting them go as they arise. If you become accustomed to *zazen* with your eyes closed, *zazen* will be ineffective when your eyes are opened, especially in busy places. On the contrary, if you train your *samadhi* power through open-eyed *zazen*, wherever you are, you will not lose your power of meditation.”

In other words, the Japanese world seems to be dominated by the space and by the spatial way of thinking and perceiving. As implied in the latest quotation, the space or the visual image tends to be perceived as more challenging than sound and smell images. If the space is put in the foreground, the sound and image are in the background. Even there is a tendency in the Japanese people and culture to convert the sound and the smell into the visual image. Because the sound and the smell are moving things, the latter tendency can also become analogue with the tendency to convert movement into the stillness or, more precisely, to convert the wild movement into the framed one, the fluid thing into the thing that can be identified, divided, classified.

In one of his essays, Barthes writes about *Sukiyaki*. According to him, it is the process of cooking, processing and transforming the raw substances of foods that are important. I can agree with this opinion about the process, but I cannot agree with his interpretation on the meaning of it. Barthes tends to perceive the process as merely a visual substance directed to nothing other than the movement that is sometimes conducted in unpredictable ways. In my opinion, the process is the way taken by the Japanese people to concretely experience their capability to domesticate the wild, to culturalize nature. The culture itself is not something that has already finished, but something that must be always arranged and rearranged in accordance with the dynamic of life. Conversely, it is also always in the process of being used as a frame to pose life. Seemingly it is this reason that makes people prefer to serve food in the processing stage rather than in the final one. So, when the people eat the food in that way, they do it like the priest who must always be in the conscious and open-eyed condition.

## Some Closing Remarks

The letter, primarily Kanji, has a strong influence in Japanese culture and its people. The use of the letter in the pervasive way tends to make the people more sensitive to spatial things, to see things in their fixed and certain conditions, and to see the things as something objectively there. Moreover, in relation with it, people also tend to have a strong capacity and even disposition to divide and classify things discretely so that there will be always a clear border between the divided and classified ones. This disposition becomes stronger as people use a certain kind of letter, Kanji as an iconic sign system. The character of the letter tends to be more spatial than the alphabetic character.

Historically, as the Japanese people received the Kanji as a given and a finished thing, they were inclined to treat it as a sacred one. Hence, when the people found that their language did not fully able to fit with the letters, they preferred to create a new writing system rather than to distort the previous one. In turn, this choice made them get use to living in two worlds that can be combined but remain separated from each other. This tendency was in accordance with the first disposition of the people, that is, the disposition to divide, classify, and define a clear border between things. The contact with foreign things also made the people find a new thing. The first disposition encouraged people to separate new things and to create a new writing system, that of Katakana. The people then lived in an increasing number of things and a growing complicated world, and the challenge is to not become confused because there must be always a clear border between them.

In Barthes' term, this kind of world can be perceived as the empire of the signifier. The world, in this sense, consists only on the surface of merely differences between so many things. There won't be something deeper that can be posited as the center of the things. But in many cases, this perception is really questionable. One can only clearly perceive the difference if he/she has a sense of the wholeness, which is not in equal position with the part. Thus, the whole can be perceived as higher than the frame of the parts. In the case of the relationship between the Japanese writing systems, this perception is also questionable. Historically speaking, the Kanji is older than the Hiragana and both are older than the Katakana. Empirically speaking, the Kanji and Hiragana tend to be perceived as more authentic and closer writing systems than the Katakana.

The frame or the center in Japan tends to be invisible. But it doesn't mean that it is then empty, trivial, fragile, and easily breakable in posing the moving people and the changing world. In Zen Buddhism, the common religion of Japan, there is a tradition in which the people are trained to be unconfused posing and seeing so many different things.

They are trained to keep in their authentic selves while living in the crowded world, keep in stillness while moving.

The Japanese people and culture then are actually shaped by the strong sensitivity of the people on the spatial dimension of the world, a dimension related tightly to the letter and the Kanji. Maybe it is for this reason that the people tend to neutralize the existence of smell and to domesticate the existence of sound. Indeed, the sound and smell cannot fit the cultural disposition of the people because both substances cannot be divided discretely, cannot be fixed, and cannot be framed.

It is the sound and smell that dominate the life of Indonesian people who used to live in orality. The people have never believed in the authority of the letter or everything written on the spaces outside of the magic one. The people have never believed in the existence of things external to man or the subject and cannot stop moving so that they cannot as well see the whole, or take a reflective way of thinking. In the movement, the people are necessarily always tied to immediate experience, cannot distance themselves from it. The people have no sense of frame, primarily a wider frame like the nation, nationalism, and the collective interests of the national community. The people tend to always mix everything and to be confused about the different spaces and the border between them.

These tendencies are growing strong when they enter national reformation and the era of globalization.<sup>10</sup> When in the regime of Orde Baru there was a military power holding the people together forcefully and violently, and in the reformation era the people cannot find a new frame and even do not believe anymore in any kind of frame. With the background of oral culture, the people tend to be confused about everything coming quickly from outside of the country. They are confused about the complicated idea of locality with ethnocentrism, the idea of civil society with one-sided people power, the magic power of image with the magic power of traditional things, and so on. In an era where everything becomes so complicated and plural in kind, the people's dependence on the traditional and charismatic figures is also growing strong. On the hand of these figures, the people are then led more by words rather than by letters. The Indonesian president is well known as a president whose words cannot be held, because his words change every time. The people lose perspective in seeing the future, sink so deep in the immediate need and conduct their life in a very pragmatic way for the reason of the uncertainty of their future fortune.

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<sup>10</sup> I have written about this topic in my paper presented at the ALFP 2000 program. The title of my paper is "Global Culture and Orality: Indonesian Experiences with Globalization."

In this condition the information about Japanese culture and people discussed previously are very important for Indonesian people and their country. The people need to make the letter as their guidance in managing and conducting their country and their everyday life. As has been proven in Japan, the letter can give them a sense of certainty, objectivity, plurality, border, and collective frame. The letter can also give them a capacity to be unconfused while moving, while living in the so plural and fast world as required by globalism, globalization, and global culture.

It does not mean that I conceive everything related to the oral language, oral culture, and orality as an absolutely bad thing. It doesn't mean that Japanese culture is the best answer in posing globalization. In a short talk with a Japanese woman, who is a wife of the director of The Japan Foundation's branch in India and who is now translating the novel of Ayu Utami, I finally found a similar idea with her. We felt that the Japanese people and culture is in too certain, fixed, and orderly a condition, while the Indonesian people and culture is too uncertain, changing and wild condition. The former then needs to be a little bit uncertain and a wilder way of life, while the latter needs to be touched by the Japanese certainty.

In my own opinion, the oral language makes people and culture be fluid and in a limited range of space, the written language makes them to be so fixed but able to reach an unlimited range of the same thing. It is in the electronic audio-visual "language" that the oral meets the written. And it is this kind of information technology that is perfect in accordance with the rhythm of globalization. But the combination between the first two kinds of technology tends to be so complicated to be understood and perceived by a people with an oral background so that it results in many confused perceptions and conceptions. Hence, as I have said several times in the meetings of the ALFP 2000, the globalization agencies all over the world, for example, multinational corporations and foundations, must not be confused about the cultural differences between countries and people to whom they address their programs.

# NGOs and the Development of Civil Society: A Case from Cambodia

**Kumaoka Michiya**

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Cambodian society since 1979 presents a prime example of how NGOs play a role in peace building and the development of a civil society. In the 1980s, Cambodia experienced a period of a centrally planned economy and society structure based on the Vietnamese socialist model. However, through the peace and reconciliation process that followed the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991, the country has been experiencing an early stage of civil society development as well as a market economy which has hastily introduced. Due to the fierce civil war and international conflicts (Cold War) in the 1980s, negotiations at the United Nations and among the different factions and governments involved took a painfully long time. In the meantime, NGOs, mostly international NGOs before the birth of the local NGOs (1991) contributed greatly in various aspects from emergency relief and community development to the demand for peace and reconciliation. Since 1991, more than 100 local NGOs of varying capacity have been founded by the Cambodians themselves.

Some of them, such as ADHOC (Association for Human Rights and Development in Cambodia), have been engaging in wide-ranged activities from implementation of development programs to human rights and democracy-related projects, under an extremely difficult political environment. For Japanese NGOs deeply concerned about the well-being of Cambodians, their activities are much more than the object of support and cooperation: they command our respect and provide valuable learning.

When the economic crisis hit Asia starting with the fall of currency in Thailand in July 1997, the Cambodian economy was, in the first stage, relatively unaffected. The reasons were: (1) the Cambodian economy was too underdeveloped after the near total devastation brought on by the civil war, (2) it was not fully integrated into the global economic system yet, (3) no stock and bond markets existed, and (4) the economy operates based on US dollars. Rather, the *coup d'état* staged by the Second Prime Minister Hun Sen that took place in the same year had a greater political, economic, and societal impacts.

## **Historical Background**

After King Sihanouk was ousted by a coup in March 1970, the small Southeast Asian nation, Cambodia, fell victim to the Cold War and experienced the most severe form of destruction that no other cases can ever be compared. The Khmer Rouge (Pol Pot) regime, that brought disaster to Cambodia for 4 years from 1975-1979, and was finally ousted from power mainly by the Vietnamese military. In this short period of time, however, the Khmer Rouge government drove more than one million Cambodians to their deaths through purges and massacres. Even after the fall of the KR government, the fighting between the Phnom Penh government backed by Vietnam and the three factions continued. Under this political environment, numerous international NGOs rushed to offer emergency relief and support, mainly to the refugees due to the Cold War structure.

## **The Roles of International NGOs**

The government of Thailand and the Western nations were suspicious of a small number of NGOs that operated within Cambodia. On the other hand, the Vietnamese and Cambodian governments saw the NGOs that provided support for the refugees on the borders as "Enemies." Under this circumstance, NGOs working inside Cambodia put much energy into advocating against the war and in order to unbalance the relief structure, they solicited cooperation and support from their home countries. They also maintained political neutrality under extremely difficult situations and continued to appeal the need for a peace dialogue by communicating the voices of the Cambodian people to the international community and, vice versa, the world news to Cambodia. They published a book entitled "Punishing the Poor" in 10 languages in order to appeal about the reality in Cambodia, which was not known to the world at the time. Through these and other activities, they demanded from the international community, including the United Nations as well as the relevant governments, (1) a balanced relief both inside and outside Cambodia, (2) a lift of economic sanctions and isolation, and (3) a peace talk.

In the process leading to the signing of the Cambodian Peace Accord in October 1991, NGOs at large also played a great role. Partially due to this contribution, the representing NGOs are still well recognized as official partners in many international conferences on the rehabilitation and development of Cambodia.

## The Roles of the Local NGOs

Cambodia went through a drastic change during the late 1980s and the 1990s as a market economy was introduced without proper preparatory stages. In the 1980s, immediately after the end of the Pol Pot era, severe poverty was generally shared by most of society where even the poorest family had land to cultivate, and a system of mutual help was in place. Families were poor, yet the selling of their children was unheard of. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the market economy was introduced without the development of a civil society. As a result, an extreme "survival of the fittest" ("Winner gets all.") mentality was established leaving many farmers landless, forcing them to live in slums and becoming homeless in big towns. The trafficking of children and women became common and the gap between the poor and the rich grew rapidly and sharply.

With this backdrop, Cambodian NGOs have been involved in a wide range of activities such as the work towards the completion of the fighting, support for the underprivileged, rural development projects, human rights protection, election observation, democratization and civil society building. As the Cambodian NGOs started to grow more in number in the 1990s, the international NGOs started to support the local NGOs by shifting their focus towards (1) human rights and democracy issues, (2) the prevention of the exploitation of natural resources and damaging land use, and (3) the elimination of land mines.

Even at the present time, issues relating to human rights, democracy, forestry resources, and land use would bring potential conflicts with the political and military leaders of the country. It is common that activists, journalists, and members of the opposition party are the targets of harassment and violence without the suspects ever being arrested ("impunity"). In cooperation with international NGOs, the United Nations and CG meetings, Cambodian NGOs are exerting their influence. In addition, faced with the ever enlarging wealth disparity and the spread of AIDS, the civil organizations have to work with the government and society not only by providing social/health services and community development, but also by extending advocacy works.

In Cambodia where many human and other resources were exhausted due to the condition of a prolonged war, civil society is far from being developed and NGOs are still suffering from the lack of resources and the difficulty of having a good working relationship with the government. When supporting Cambodia and Cambodian NGOs, Japanese NGOs are painfully reflecting and noticing the shortcoming of Japan's civil society

despite the vast differences in the developmental stages of the two countries.



# NGO Development in Korea

Park Won-Soon

Secretary General, PSPD<sup>11</sup>

## 1. Introduction – The Era of NGOs

“Indeed, Korea has been more successful than many of its democratizing predecessors and contemporaries in transforming its authoritarian political institutions and culture. The country has also become the first new democracy in Asia that peacefully transferred power to an opposition party. Therefore, in the Western media and scholarly community today, Korea is mentioned increasingly as a possible model of democratization for the emerging post-authoritarian countries in the world.<sup>12</sup>”

Within the last 10 years<sup>13</sup> since 1987, Koreans have witnessed a dramatic change in their society. It has been so deep and broad that no stone was left untouched in every corner. Direct election of the president by the people in 1987 was only the first step for democratic change. Political parties and politics have been under pressure of criticism on the issue of corruption, and reform for more transparency and accountability. The IMF crisis also impacted on a number of issues including the social infrastructure and restructuring of the business community.

Of course, I do not agree totally with the so splendid applause on Koreans’ performance in the democratizing process. It should be attributed to those civic movements and their activists who dedicated themselves, in some cases sacrificed their lives, for the common good and public interest. The burgeoning and growth of NGOs is most tremendous and recognizable. Those who once showed strong resistance against the authoritarian government were being transformed into civic groups to show stronger activism and more diverse participation in the public sphere and

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<sup>11</sup> Abbreviation of People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (*Chamyoyundae*). Contact with PSPD can be made through the Internet. [www.peoplepower21.org](http://www.peoplepower21.org) is its website address.

<sup>12</sup> Doh C. Shin, *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea*, Cambridge University Press, in Preface xxiii

<sup>13</sup> So called ‘June the Great Struggle’ in 1987 succeeded in toppling the military government and began to change the legacy of the authoritarian rule.

everyday life of ordinary citizens.<sup>14</sup> The NGO community began to grow and exercise strong influence on public opinion and the mass media, and ultimately the policy decision process of the government<sup>15</sup>. The black-listing movement against politicians during the last general election (April 2000) was so powerful enough to assemble more than 900 civic groups across the country and so successful enough to make 70% of those blacklisted not to be elected.

Despite these unparalleled developments, however, Korean civic movements are still facing fundamental problems and new challenges to overcome. A century-long authoritarian rule, originated from Confucian rule, Japanese Imperial rule, military dictatorship justified under division of the country and anti-communism, leaves still a dark legacy on its society. The long history of control and watch by the secret police made people afraid of participation in any kind of social organization. Most NGOs suffer from a shortage of membership, which usually led to financial difficulties and eventually dependence on funds from the government or business community. Those civic groups, who were accustomed to simply resistance to government in the past, need to have a more sophisticated strategy and to be well armed with specialized techniques in their campaigns.

There are many institutional reforms that need to be introduced in the near future to keep NGOs alive as a driving force for reforms, including tax-exemption, public access to the mass-media, and post rate discounts for NGOs and so on. In addition, NGOs themselves have tasks to reform and renew themselves to be more prepared to challenge any new agenda. The 21st Century must be a time of experiment and challenge for Korean NGOs and other Asian NGOs as well.

## **2. Before 1987 – Under Dictatorial Government**

### **(i) Dictatorship and No Freedom of Association**

#### **Chance Lost in 1981 – New Iron Fist**

Koreans had suffered from long periods of colonial rule and dictatorship. Even after liberation in 1945, there was only division, war, and dictators. In 1981, Koreans had unfortunately missed the chance to have real

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<sup>14</sup> As of 1999, the numbers of NGOs have grown amounting to around 20,000. It's doubled since 1997. Active NGOs are, however, only thousands.

<sup>15</sup> The current Kim Dae Jung government, which is more familiar with NGOs than the other former governments, is more sensitive to hear the voice of civic groups.

democracy when General Chun Doo Whan seized power. After a 17-year long dictatorial rule by Park and his assassination by a faithful follower, everyone expected that delayed democracy would become a reality at last. No one knew of Chun's conspiracy to bring about a *coup d'etat*. It caused an uprising in Kwangju just after his coup and hundreds of civilians were killed. Inheriting Park's military dictatorship, his regime reinforced its iron fist not to allow such trivial aspects of freedom and opposition.

### **Denial of the Right to Association**

Before the democratization of 1987, therefore, the civic movement was regarded as either illegal or subversive. The authorities understood that it was highly possible to undermine the authority of the state. Deprived of the freedom to assemble and to demonstrate, there was no basic ground to see normal civic activities, except those of the youth, consumer, and environmental movements<sup>16</sup>.

The gatherings of only a few youngsters should be reported and deserved to be interrogated<sup>17</sup>, even though the constitution said the people had the right to association, assembly and demonstration. It left no ground for the civic groups to survive at all.

Of course, the Constitution was clearly guaranteeing the right to assembly and demonstration. However, law is one thing, practice is another. Only organizations such as traditional consumer's movements, religious groups, social welfare entities, the YMCA and YWCA, Boy Scouts, or pro-governmental organizations could survive<sup>18</sup>. The government thought that these organizations could not be challenging and act as a menace to the dictatorship. The following description explains the situation in those times.

"Under the hardened authoritarian regime, there existed only compliant organizations in the lawful political and movement arenas. Under the authoritarian regimes, many organizations in society existed in

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<sup>16</sup> According to the retrospection by Mr. Choi Yeoul, who is the most famous environmental activist in Korea, even environmental movement had been regarded as anti-capitalistic activities for a long time, and, as a result, it became the target of suppression.

<sup>17</sup> In fact, there is a case in which a chief of one district had reported a gathering of a few college students who were a catholic reading group. They were, of course, indicted on the suspicion that they studied socialist books prohibited for the interest of North Korea.

<sup>18</sup> Most famous and big pro-governmental organizations are such as the Saemaul Movement and Union for Anti-Communism which has intensively been subsidized and assisted by the government.

legal status in return for showing compliance to the regime, whether in positive support or negative silence. As a result, social organizations polarized into legal pro-government organizations and illegal opposition movement organizations. The government politically and financially supported government-patronized organizations. The National Alliance for Freedom and the National Council of the New Village Movement were examples. Typical mass organizations such as the Federation of Korean Trade Union (FKTU) and the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF), which represented farmers' co-operatives nationwide, were strongly held by the government and functioned as an auxiliary government administrative apparatus to control laborers or farmers. In this situation, the initiative of the opposition fell to the militant people's movement."<sup>19</sup>

## **(ii) Persistent Opposition Movement**

### **Growing Democratization Movement**

Despite harsh dictatorship under President Park (1961-1979) and Chun (1980-1986), the opposition movement was gaining more power; especially students from all of universities were the main forces in this movement<sup>20</sup>. Intellectuals such as professors, novelists, and even painters were getting involved in the wave. It became prolific enough to include labour, artists and farmers' movements.

It became clear that replacing the regime was the only way to bring about a humane society, to recover freedom, and restore democracy. All groups from every field were getting together, targeting to challenge the authoritarian government. Under the same understanding and strategic mind, those groups from different fields could form a national democratic alliance through networking.

### **The Role of Intellectuals**

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<sup>19</sup> Cho, Hee-Yeon, "Democratic Transition and Social movement Change in South Korea", A Paper presented at the Conference on 'Democracy and Social Contentions in South Korea', Center for Korean Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, December, 15-16, 1997, p.9

<sup>20</sup> They used to say about 'sacred summons of 1 million youth student' for the students' movement. The role of students may be universal. In Taiwan, it was also pivotal to make their country democratized. (Teresa Wright, "Student Mobilization in Taiwan — Civil Society and Its Discontents", *Asian Survey*, Vol.XXXIX, No.6, November. December, 1999)

In the process thousands of students, laborers, intellectuals and citizens were arrested owing to their participation in the democratization movement. A broad and persistent 'crackdown,' however, resulted in a more organized resistance against the regime. Students' expulsion from the school campus, labourers' dismissal from the workplace, and intellectual's imprisonment provided a chance to train and mass-produce opponents. It was said that prison was not only a period of rest for activists, but also a school for re-education and discipline. No one was afraid of being arrested and no imprisonment experience in a student's life used to be regarded as shameful thing. In this way, Koreans could oust the dictator Chun and welcome the democratic government in 1987 after a century-long struggle.

The engine of the movement was the students and laborers. The wheels can safely be said to be the intellectuals. It should also be noted that the success of the movement owes to the intellectuals' contribution. The people usually have respected lawyers, doctors, professors, and artists. Lawyers were defending many political prisoners in support of the movement and professors used to mobilize themselves to announce a series of statement against the government. The regime could take retaliatory action on some occasions, however, when it became a trend it could not arrest all of them. When intellectuals participated in the movement and sometimes were arrested, the people became conscious and supportive. In this way, the role of intellectuals was justifying the movement on one hand and mobilizing the people on the other hand.

### **Tradition of Resistance**

Koreans have a long tradition of resistance against a feudal dynasty in 18th century, the Japanese colonial rule in 19th and 20th century, and dictators in 20th century. Since the opening of the Chosun dynasty in 13th century, a bureaucratic system was developed to control the sovereignty of the king. It is really interesting for the kingdom to have a special department within the royal court only doing business to criticize the king and deliver the voice of the public. There was also a system of recording every saying and behaviour of the king and his subjects, and after the king's death, the records were arranged as an official history and kept for the next generation. These advanced civilized intuitions became possible under the sacrifice and martyrdom of brave intellectuals who did not fear death.

Other examples of resistance include 1). Farmers who revolted in local provinces and shook the root of the exterminated 'Chosun' dynasty in

the 18th century<sup>21</sup>; 2). The movement against the Japanese Imperial Government with continuing demonstrations, revolts, and terror to get independence. In the nation-wide demonstration calling for independence in 1919, hundreds of thousands of citizens participated in it across the country, and 3). The first president of independent Korea, Lee Sung Man, also resigned as a result of the nation-wide demonstration of students and the participation of citizens in 1960. It is needless to say that this tradition of courage and justice has played a key role in the democratization process.

### **3. After 1987 – Transitional Period**

#### **(i) 1987 – Turning Point**

Success came after a series of horrible torture cases committed by anti-Communist police and the furious response and participation of the middle class who had remained as spectators. It culminated in 1987. The people's uprising and the surrender (used to be called the 29th June Declaration) by those in power<sup>22</sup>; brought direct election of the president, expansion of freedom, and the beginning of the civic society. These events could not be achieved by a one-day incident but by a long struggle, and by the participation of ordinary citizens.

It was victory due to the consistent opposition movement and that of the people. It was like a lake where previous movements flowed in and afterwards every movement would drain out. In that sense, it can be said as a turning point in modern Korean history that moved from pre-modern society to a more civilized country.

#### **(ii) Progress in the Stage of Setbacks 1988-1992**

##### **Separation of the two 'Kims'**

There were several critical steps and stages in the transformation of the

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<sup>21</sup> Even before, Korean intellectuals had defended their right to petition to the King for the people and had obtained the right to keep historical records without the King's interference since the 14th century. It is unique, compared to China and Japan, for the subjects to have such a strong power to check the King's prerogative.

<sup>22</sup> Roh Tae Woo, as the candidate for the presidential election, promised to have direct vote by all the people, lifting prohibition of political activities on Kim Dae Jung, and other shocking measures, in his so called '6.29 declaration' which accepted almost of the peoples' demand and therefore were welcomed by the people in general.

society. First, the two 'Kims', Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, the most important political leaders in democratization, were separated, and, as a result, defeated by the semi-military leader Roh Tae Woo. This allowed reactionary power to be rearranged and become aggressive against the democratic movement.

The people who showed support for the democratization movement were also divided, and they were disappointed with the two Kim's behaviour and the movement in general. It was the main reason why they had lost the initiative and began to be defensive again. The far-right and conservative ruling class who had lost power was now exercising influence and power against the democratization movement.

### **Mixture of the Reactionary and the Progressive**

Under the Roh's regime, there was mixture or repletion between reactionary and progressive actions in terms of democracy<sup>23</sup>. For example, sometimes there were crack-downs on the social movement by the remaining laws and institutions, the eruption of discontent from the military, the existing invisible control over mass media and judiciary by the government etc. The National Security Law (NSL), which is so symbolic in terms of human rights, was still active enough to bring hundreds of the activists to prison under the law. This describes Roh's regime as an 'electoral military authoritarian government' or 'soft dictatorship'.

However, the trend and demand for freedom and diversity was inescapable. Slowly but surely the foundation of democracy had been consolidated in this period. It was clear that Korean society could not return to an authoritative society. The circumstances under which NGOs could grow were getting better. The repressive state apparatus was loosened and the law requesting the registration of social organizations was abolished. There was a brave whistle-blower who revealed the secret inspection system against civilian leaders by the military secret police during this period. The social movement, which could enjoy relative freedom and autonomy, began to exist and expand.

Fortunately, the Roh government failed to secure a majority of seats in the Parliament<sup>24</sup>. This meant the opposition parties such as Kim Dae

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<sup>23</sup> There is an accurate explanation describing the stage of Korean democracy in those times as follows. "In many ways it (Korea) is a democratic society, and it yearns for international recognition as an open and advanced country. Yet the democratic filaments are intertwined with autocratic ones to make a social fabric that is sometimes baffling to outsiders" (Nicholas Kristof, "At Crossroads of Democracy, South Korean Hesitates.", New York Times, July 10th, 1996)

<sup>24</sup> In the election April 1988, the ruling party received only 34% of the vote.

Jung, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Jong Pil had obtained the initiative on social reform and bringing justice on the misconduct of the previous regime could be done in a limited form. However, the presidency is so powerful that there must be some compromise. Thus the Roh regime can be symbolized as a compromising and confusing era.

### **Four Directions of Movement**

As the lawful space was enlarged, the social movement was also expanded. We witnessed the development of the movement not only in numbers but also in characteristics. It may also be summarized into three groups.

First, the appearance of professional organizations. As mentioned before, it was unique that so many professionals participated in the democratization movement. After the collapse of the dictatorship, they began to organize themselves into small groups or networks to contact each other. Their professional organizations were openly organized and were friendly with the class based mass movement. Such organizations include the Association of Physicians for Humanism, Pharmacists' Association of for Health Society, Dentists' Association for Healthy Society, National Association of Professors for Democracy, National Alliance of Artists, and Lawyers for a Democratic Society.

Second the empowerment of labor unions. In 1987, there was a great upsurge in the labor struggle, which was a prelude to the active labor movement. Loosening state repression was galvanizing labor unions where the numbers had grown from 2,658 to 7,883 in 1989. These new independent unions were finally incorporated into the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) in 1995 and were legalized. At the same time, there was a boom of new organizations such as the Teachers' Union in 1989, the National Federation of Peasants' Movement in 1989, and Korea Women's United in 1987 and so on.

Third, the birth of new civic groups resulted from the expansion of freedoms and a developed Korean economy. The newly born civic groups began dealing with diverse issues such as the environment, consumer, traffic, monitoring the government, gender issues, etc. These issues are part of the civic movement, which is different from other movements such as the traditional democratization movement or the mass people's movement.

Fourth, the weakening of the people's movement. As a result of the development in other areas mentioned above, the traditional



democratization movement became weakened; especially with the clear reduction in the students' movement. The people's movement changed its name to the 'National Alliance for National Democratic Movement' in 1989 and again to 'National Coalition for Democracy and Reunification' in 1991. It is composed of regional and sectoral organizations such as the student, labor, and women's movements. However, the labor and women's movements accomplished their own development and gradually became independent from the Coalition. Since then, more weight was given to the labor movement itself.

### **(iii) Opening of the Civic Movement**

#### **The Birth of the CCEJ**

Under these circumstances, the CCEJ (Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice, *Kyungsilryon*) was founded in 1989, then hoisting the flag of the new civic movement. It emphasized social reforms through legal and moderate forms, and aimed at economic justice at a time when the price of housing, land and rent soared upwards. The issues of economic justice included the removal of land speculation and housing difficulties. Contrasting with the traditional opposition groups which had been wholly indulging in the anti-regime movement, CCEJ began to gain popularity and was followed by many similar civic groups.

CCEJ's strategy and principle can be categorized in a few ways. First of all, it gave up all violent and illegal ways of campaigning and struggle. On one hand, people were bored with the fighting between the democratization movement and government. Once the hostile dictatorship collapsed, they returned their support for the democratization movement. Above all, the mass media, which was still influential and represented the conservative class, was praising such a moderate line. However, this caused unnecessary tension and conflict with the traditional opposition movement.

CCEJ was successful in mobilizing the liberal intellectuals who were reluctant to be active in the democratization movement. Even though there were some utmost progressive intellectuals who dedicated themselves to the democratization movement during the dictatorship, they were only a few. Under the circumstances which the intellectuals felt safe and moderate, they could easily join the CCEJ and the civic movement. In this way, democratization was losing manpower. The possibility of mobilizing intellectuals gave CCEJ the advantage of producing alternative policies. Through the space of seminars, pamphlets and recommendations, its policies were penetrating into government. The most typical example of CCEJ's victory was the adoption of the real naming policy on savings

accounts.

This approach was also good for ordinary citizens to have access to the movement. Before then, the democratization movement had been regarded as extremist, and therefore, they could not participate. CCEJ's approach could abolish such feelings of fear and thus it enjoyed popularity among the people.

### **Civic Movement vs. Mass Movement**

The following is the comparison between 'mass-movement' (traditional opposition movement, or democratization movement) and civic movement, made by Suh Kyung Suk who was the real founder of CCEJ.<sup>25</sup>

<b>Opposition Mass Movement</b>	<b>Civic Movement</b>
Illegal, anti-regime activities	Legal, solution formulating activities
Centered on blue-collar workers, farmers, and the poor urban dwellers	Centered on the middle-class and professionals
Targeted the class struggle	Promoted social justice, rather than targeting a specific class
Aimed a socialist revolution	
Structured on the struggle between capitalists and workers	Structured on the struggle between producers and the unemployed
Pursued institutional reform	Placed equal emphasis on institutional reform and public awareness
Placed importance on mobilizing mass gatherings	Placed importance on ethics and professionalism in recovering public confidence

This comparison however, is too simplified the differences. Opposition mass movement was not always illegal and not aiming essentially at socialist revolution. It's true under the dictatorship that many young activists tried to find their hope in the socialistic idea. But the

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<sup>25</sup> Soh Kyung Suk, "Development of Democracy and the Role of Civic Organizations in Korea", *Democracy Forum*, July 13-14, 1999, Seoul, Korea, The Sejong Institute & National Endowment for Democracy, p.112

opposition movement was no more than an outcry from the suppressed classes, a demand to recover their justifiable rights, and a voice of those who had no voice for a long time.

Furthermore, the opposition group was also showing the tendency to be transformed into institutionalized organization or civic groups since 1990s. Labor unions and farmers associations were finally legalized and became partial partners with the government. Some of the opposition leaders were gradually recruited into political parties and politics<sup>26</sup>.

Many groups and activists who had worked in the democratization movement were inevitably compelled to be reorganized as civic groups. Activists of civic organizations usually have experience in the democratization movement and that is why many civic groups are still familiar with it. The familiarity with the mass-movement and the partnership with the government usually depends on what extent the civic groups are recruiting from the traditional movement. However it cannot be denied that civic groups are changing and losing the scent of the traditional movement.

## **4. Consolidation Process, 1993-1997**

### **(i) Kim Young Sam's Government**

#### **First Civilian Government & Reformative Policy**

Even though he was a candidate of the then ruling party, Kim Young Sam was originally a civilian and an opposition leader. Therefore, his government was called the first 'Civilian Government'.

In his policies, Kim Young Sam tried to prove that his government was a civilian one, by first removing highly politicized military leaders from their positions. With this act, it seemed that the possibility of a *coup d'etat* was again coming. At the same time, he also took measures to clean the government, strengthening the law of registration of properties and the income of high ranking officials, and made everything clear to the public.

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<sup>26</sup> Among the 299 members of the National Assembly, around 30 are opposition activists.

The most impressive measure he took was arresting the two former presidents, Chun Doo-whan and Roh Tae-woo, on the suspicion of bribery, a *coup d'état* and mass killings in the Kwaju Incident in 1980. Despite its clear limit, the prosecution and trial were symbolic enough to shake the roots of militarism and the connection between politicians and conglomerates.

### **Still Confusing Period – Shortcomings of Kim’s Government**

Despite its reformative policies, assistance was not given by, not only by the people but also the bureaucrats and the party members themselves. They lacked the mentality to accept such reforms at all. In addition, it was only instinctive and sporadic measures, which did not take the form of institutions especially since it could not succeed in mobilizing the people’s support and participation. They said that it was a ‘one man show’ by the President himself.

The latter part of his term was beginning to be tainted with corruption scandals, which resulted in his son’s involvement and imprisonment on corruption. He became surrounded with more conservative circles and as a result, civic groups turned their backs on his government.

## **(ii) The Tide of NGOs**

### **Boom of NGOs**

Many different civic groups were born in this period. They varied from environmental, traffic, urban development, and social welfare organizations to women’s, religious, administrative monitoring groups. According to the survey delivered by the Citizen’s Newspaper in 1996, it shows diverse groups growing and expanding in each field.

<b>Category I</b>	<b>Category II</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Politics	Unification, Politics	107	124	4.3%
	Law/Administration	17		
Social I	Civic	212	617	21.2%
	Labor	129		
	Farmer & Fisher	40		
	Urban Poor	25		
	Women	136		
	Youth	75		
Social II	Health & Medicare	104	697	23.9%

	Social Welfare	316		
	Volunteer	44		
	Consumer	58		
	Human Rights	52		
	Environment	123		
Education & Culture	Education	83	533	18.3%
	Mass-media & Publishing	63		
	Culture & Arts	305		
	Sports & Leisure	82		
Religion	Religion	313	313	10.7%
Learning	Learning	47	47	1.6%
Economy	Economy	499	499	17.1%
International Relations		50	50	1.7%
Etc.	Hobby Group etc.	34	34	1.2%
<b>Total</b>			2,914	100.0%

A few universities began to provide a Masters course for NGO activists or establish research institutes for more advanced study in this newly emerging sector. Their activities became focused and intensively covered by the mass media, and some allot a special page once a week in the publications. These actions prove that the influence of the civic movement was rapidly growing in this period.

### Experiment of Civic Politics

It is interesting to find that a few intellectuals whose backgrounds had been the civic movement played key role in those reformative and progressive policies. Usually they are appointed as senior advisers to the President and quite often there are ministers recruited from the civic movement communities.

Under the Kim government, there was a wave of moving to politics from the civic movement. The CCEJ was 'the lake from where such a stream was flowing.' Many civic group leaders were running for the election for Parliament. However, they could not succeed due to the shortage of money, lack of organization, and growing apathy of the voters. Of course, there was criticism that with the civic movement politicized, the public began to regard civic leaders as a reserve army for politicians.

## **5. Kim Dae Jung's Government & Civic Movement – From 1998 to the Future**

### **(i) NGOs under Kim's Government**

#### **New Environment for NGOs**

Kim Dae Jung's government, which was inaugurated in 1998, is different from previous governments. It could capture power as an opposition party. This meant that Kim's government could be free from the conservative ruling party, which had ruled this country for a long time. There was, however, a burden to form a coalition government, which originated from the collaborative strategy with another conservative opposition party (*Jaminnyon*) during the presidential election.

President Kim Dae Jung emphasized the participatory politics and administration even before his inauguration. This suggested that he would have constructive and cooperative relations with NGOs to bring reforms. There had already been a partnership between the opposition party led by Kim Dae Jung and the NGOs in opposition to the authoritative government.

#### **Legislation for NGOs and Financial Subsidies**

The Kim government began to provide financial subsidies for NGOs, which had previously been provided only for pro-governmental organizations. Fifteen million US Dollars were annually distributed to the civic groups according to application, scale, and their performances. It was a real change of policy by the government because NGOs had been only the target of oppression by the authorities concerned.

The government also legislated a law, promulgated in January 2000, enabling NGOs to get tax-exemption status and discounts in postal services. It should be noted that concrete measures to guarantee the status of tax-exemption are still not taken. However, it's still meaningful to have the basic ground works to legitimize NGOs. In addition, the Law on Broadcasting also provides public access to the national Korean Broadcasting Station, 60minutes a month for NGOs program.

### **(ii) Dissatisfaction from NGOs Perspective**

#### **Misguided Policy of NGOs**

The policy by the administration can be said as being misguided. The essential nature of NGOs is independence from government. By providing

intensive and direct subsidies, it is possible to hurt independence. Of course, we cannot oversimplify the diversity of the NGOs. It may be no problem for the social services to provide or volunteer groups. On the other hand, advocacy groups can be weakened in their mandate of monitoring the government. It also can be argued that those groups which are subsidized then inevitably are dependent on the governments for their financial sources.

In reality, the Kim government invited all civic groups to be a member of the 'Second Nation-Building Committee' (*Cheikeunkukeuiwonhoe*) which was initiated by the government from the beginning of its administration. However, most of the leading NGOs rejected the suggestion on the reason that the idea was originated to dominate the civil society. In this way, the perspective of this government is also not far from its predecessor.

### **Betrayal of Promise**

Civic groups began to be disappointed by the betrayal of the promises which had been made by the regime during its campaign or in its opposition period. The public promises included introduction of the independent counsel, anti-corruption law, class action, national human rights institute, and confirmation process by the parliament for high-ranking officials.

As promised, it was successful to overcome economic crisis within two years. If we consider that it was a really good opportunity to change the fundamental social system and concept under which the dictatorship and rapid development underwent, President Kim Dae Jung was neglecting to bring a series of reforms and institutional change.

### **(iii) Back to the Future**

#### **– Institutional Change for NGOs**

To take one step forward for the Korean NGOs, institutional reforms should be introduced. In the past, the measures which the government took were to obstruct, oppress and control. But now it's high time to assist, help and promote civic groups. Through our experiences, we notice that the government and parliament should take the following actions.

First, expansion of participation by the citizens and civic groups to the process of decision-making in the government, the parliament, and the

judiciary on national and local base as well<sup>27</sup>. It may be necessary to have a strategic mind to accomplish reforms and strengthen effectiveness. Under the Kim Young Sam and even the Kim Dae Jung governments, they say that the reformative drive was no more than a 'one man show', indicating that the Presidents were only doing their jobs. Guaranteeing the mandate to defend their interest is the most natural short cut to protect the common interest and social reforms. PL by consumers, the False Claim Act by the taxpayers, summons of disqualified representatives by the voters may be illustrated as the example of self-executing institution for reforms and development.

In advance, it may include strengthening the freedom of information act to facilitate transparency<sup>28</sup>. The right to a hearing before action for the person concerned, residents' rights to vote on hot-issues, and a voter's right to recall corrupted officials are items to be included. Ordinary citizens and the interested parties had been isolated from the decision making process. During the process of legislation<sup>29</sup>, investigation<sup>30</sup>, and the trial, there is a demand of participation by the people. Furthermore, citizens and civic group should be allowed to have the standing for the public interest litigation, which is a crucial mechanism to bring reforms to society<sup>31</sup>.

Second, exclusive measures of protection or assistance for the sustainable civic movement. Among other things, the Government should provide the status of tax-deductions for membership-fees or donations to civic groups<sup>32</sup>. The government this year distributed around \$16 million to civic groups for their application across the country. However, direct

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<sup>27</sup> President Kim announced his principle and policy on participatory democracy on the occasion of press conference just after his victory. However, there was no measure taken since his inauguration on this issue.

<sup>28</sup> Freedom of Information Act began to be effective since January 1998. But it includes articles, which allow broad range of non-disclosure, remaining the room for amendment.

<sup>29</sup> The Petition Act is protecting the right to petition for the citizens. But the petitions have no legally binding effect and have usually been neglected without serious concern from the National Assembly members.

<sup>30</sup> The Criminal Procedure Act provides no access to the interrogation process by the attorney. It used to be the main reason for torture and maltreatment by the policemen and prosecutors.

<sup>31</sup> According to traditional Civil Litigation Procedure Act, only the interested party can bring the lawsuit, excluding the possibility of public interest litigation.

<sup>32</sup> Korean government has already promulgated the Law on Assistance to Non-profitable Civilian Association (*Biyongri Minkandanche Chiwonekwanhan Bupyu*) which included tax-exemption article for those entities early this year. However, it has not taken more concrete action to make it effective, such as adding tax-exemption clause in the existing Income Tax Law and the Corporation Tax Law.



financial assistance is liable to distort and subject NGO's activities to the Government's influence. Indirect assistance, therefore, through tax-deduction is a more efficient and correct way to help NGOs than direct assistance<sup>33</sup>. Tax-deduction for the civic groups would bring revolutionary benefits to improve their financial conditions<sup>34</sup>.

Third, elimination of all kinds of restriction and regulation on NGO activities. The Government highly tends to impose some burdens or obstacles on NGOs. These civic groups, especially advocacy groups, are appropriate targets to be cracked down. These fears and anxieties should be removed<sup>35</sup>. Recently the Government abolished even the system of reporting the time of its establishment. However, the new Law on the Assistance to Non-profitable Civilian Association needs to be enlisted in order to be qualified for the government assistance. It still remains a danger to such organizations that it can be arbitrarily applied.

In the march for a new civil society, NGOs cannot escape their destiny, to take the initiative to be one of the pillars to sustain democracy and quality of life. Korean NGOs could be catalysts to strengthen transparency and increase accountability in the public field, taking advantage of current social influence as leverage. It may also be a very effective way to introduce a package of reformative institution on central governmental basis. Even though there have been reforms in Korea, it's still under expectation and demands to be equivalent with an advanced society. In transforming one society to another, institutionalization is most important to consolidate change.

## **6. PSPD Movement**

### **(i) Comparison with CCEJ**

Following the CCEJ example, PSPD was born in 1994. Since then, these two groups became the most important NGOs in Korea. CCEJ and PSPD are said to be typically general civic groups but they also attracted criticism, because they were dealing with so many issues and monopolizing them<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> The government and ruling party is now trying to introduce 'NGO Assistance Law' which included such article as tax-deduction, post-rate deduction etc.

<sup>34</sup> Currently most of the Korean NGOs are suffering financial deficit. The condition is really difficult not to have enough to give salary for the full-time staff.

<sup>35</sup> Of course, it should be noted that many obstacles and restriction for NGOs have been removed since 1987.

<sup>36</sup> They are being criticized as 'department store' dealing with many different items. In fact, CCEJ dealt with the issues of economic justice, environment, urban

Above all, Korea has not succeeded in introducing and consolidating social institutions. Numerous demands poured into civic groups and CCEJ and PSPD became front-runners to face such challenges.

Even though these two organizations share common things, the basic ideological background and style of the movement are different in many ways, originating from their own historic and realistic reasons. PSPD has a somewhat different position and tendency, compared to CCEJ. The comparison of the two groups may be helpful to understand the general atmosphere of the Korean civic movement.

First, PSPD tried to have a strong solidarity with labor unions; class based traditional opposition mass movement, and grass-roots organizations. In other words, it had sympathy with opposition groups, believing that the growth of labor unions and other grass roots, class-based organizations were indispensable to democratic development<sup>37</sup>. Civic groups in Korea used to be advantageous to attract the middle class as members and an audience. However, the mass movement includes hundreds of thousands of laborers, farmers, and students to be mobilized for their interest and social change as well. It may be not too overemphasizing to say that the two trends, civic groups and opposition mass movements, are the two pillars sustaining civil society.

Second, it emphasized the importance of non-partisan attitude and political independence. Politics in Korea has been regarded as the most corrupted field. Having relations with politics could also be interpreted as a symptom of corruption and a greedy desire for power. Keeping away from politics and neutrality is indispensable for civic groups to maintain their independence and popularity<sup>38</sup>.

Third, it used to resort to legal means, utilizing the concept of the rule of law. Even though this is not enough, Korean society slowly came to be ruled by law. The judiciary became independent. Under these circumstances, PSPD led the minority shareholders' rights targeting conglomerate reform and numerous public interest litigations. Public Interest Litigation Center, PSPD's umbrella organization, mainly consisted of

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restructuring, health care, judiciary justice and many others. Afterwards it gave up some of the issues such as environment. PSPD was also including many different issues, but it's targeting very specific areas with specialized means, such as conglomerates reform through minority share holder's rights, legislation movement through anti-corruption law, and congress watch through documentation and so on.

<sup>37</sup> This policy is based on the criticism against CCEJ's policy which was not friendly to the opposition groups.

<sup>38</sup> Some of CCEJ's leaders attempted to run for a seat at the National Assembly. This attempt gave the impression to the citizens that civic groups were utilizing their activist career as leverage for becoming politicians.

lawyers and law professors who show a strong interest in this area.

Fourth, it tried to find financial resources solely from individual membership fees and their donations, not on funding from the government or corporations. After accepting money, it is not easy for the civic groups to evade pressure and seduction. It is needless to say that in Korea lobbying power by the business groups have been so notorious that there could be no exception to be lobbied. With this notion, it could succeed to have a self-financed budget system after 5 years.<sup>39</sup> Maintenance of independence and self-finance have made the PSPD able to speak out without any kind of pressure or interest. It is noteworthy for the PSPD to move on a new donation movement in Korean society, by establishing the Beautiful Foundation<sup>40</sup> modeled after the community foundation in America. The goal of this Foundation is to provide mainly for the civic groups and activists who suffered from financial deficits.

The general atmosphere surrounding civic groups has so rapidly changed that the time gap between 1989 and 1994 could make a big difference in the activities of CCEJ and PSPD. The most conspicuous change is the extent of democracy, the depth of rule of law, and the growth of NGOs. PSPD can safely say that it could be active in more favorable conditions than CCEJ in that sense.

## **(ii) Some Experiences and Activities — PSPD's perspective**

### **Human Rights Issue**

Respect for human rights is the most important symbol of a democratic society. A society in a transitional period has such tasks, in terms of human rights, such as the abolition of bad laws, the reorientation of judicial institutions, punishment of perpetrators, compensation for victims, revelation of truths and so on.

With pressure from civic groups, the government was compelled to imprison some policemen for their wrongdoing such as torture. It was the most dramatic scene to witness two former presidents being arrested for their initiation of the *coup d'etat* and massacre in 1980. It must have been a shock for other dictators in Asia who might be afraid that this could happen

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<sup>39</sup> The membership fees per month from 10,000 members is amounting around 50 million Won (roughly US\$40,000), as of August 2000. All expenses in total every month is 60 million Won. The deficit is being covered by the profits from managing cafe, insurance agency, concert, and special donations. Recently there was special donations amounting half million dollars from a businessman.

<sup>40</sup> It is also accessible through the Internet website whose name is Beautifulfund.org.

in their own countries.

With ratification of ICCPR, Korean NGOs for human rights could take advantage of international organizations as a platform for reforms. For example, the National Security Law was under fire by members of UN Human Rights Committee, through process of consideration for the initial and periodical country report. NGOs were taking advantage of the occasion by submitting counter-reports and monitoring the Committee.

However, the Korean civic groups for human rights are still struggling to enhance the level of human rights in Korea. The NSL is still left unchanged, leaving hundreds of victims behind bars. The prosecution, police, and the judiciary cannot be said to be fully democratized and independent. Even though high-ranking officials pledge to admit the universality of human rights, no one can say it is being carried out in reality.

The way PSPD carries out its activities has been unique in a sense that it concentrated on monitoring the Judiciary and the Prosecution. It maintains 2,800 files of judges and public prosecutor in its archive, keeping every judgement and decision made. It became very useful and effective on the occasion of the confirmation process against the appointees for Supreme Court Justice and Constitutional Court Justice in Parliament, releasing comments on their performances in terms of human rights and affecting the questionnaire of the parliamentarians. It must be influential for the judges and public prosecutors to reconsider how civic groups and the people would evaluate their judgements. The PSPD also targeted at strengthening the social welfare system and eventually the protection of social and economic rights, succeeding with legislation entitled "Protection Law of Minimum Life" in late 1999.

### **Anti-Corruption Campaigns**

Corruption has been a common phenomenon in Korea so much so that it used to be called: ROTC (Republic of Total Corruption). It was also a kind of heritage from remaining dictatorship. Civic groups were also very active in combating corruption.

PSPD's campaign for Clean Society was established in 1996. It made a draft of an anti-corruption law, which was submitted to parliament and was so influential as to become national and common agendas for all civic groups.

The anti-corruption law also includes a package of legal weapons such as whistle-blowers protection, prohibition of money laundering,

strengthening penalty and ethics of conduct, and independent council<sup>41</sup>. Now it is on the brink of being legislated, because the ruling party and opposition party have already submitted a similar Anti-Corruption Law.

Another of PSPD's project in the field of anti-corruption was the protection of whistle-blowers, with the unique Center for 'a few good men'. In the belief that the protection is a most effective way to eradicate corruption, it continued to issue pamphlets, organize conferences, defend whistle blowers, and of course proceed the legislation.

### **Minority Share Holder's Rights Campaign**

Korea's rapid economic development had once been regarded as the most successful model for scholars and policy makers alike. However, the country experienced a serious economic crisis since 1997. Although there have been heated disputes on what was the reason of the sudden economic decline, no one denies that the structure of corporate management was one of the reasons, as many scholars argue as follows:

"In conclusion, because of the long tradition of active government involvement, by the time of the 1997 financial crisis the South Korean economy had not developed the regulatory and legal institution that are consistent with a self-correcting, self-promoting, and well-functioning market economy. Market discipline was weak as corporate governance was centralized, with all responsibility in many Korea's chabol falling to primary owners who held a minority of the corporation's stock. Low profit rates and high debt-to-equity ratios that would not acceptable in a more advanced market economy."<sup>42</sup>

The job of minority shareholders' right campaign became popularized with the beginning of the movement as the economic crisis began. The first target was the First Bank (Cheil Bank) which was nearly bankrupted, because of heavy ill debts from the bankrupted Hanbo Steel. The litigation against top management was brought to the courts, and PSPD won the case in which the court ordered the management to make compensation in the amount of 400 million Won to the Bank. The next

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<sup>41</sup> In the process of preparing the draft, other examples such as the Ethics in Government of 1976 of USA, Hong Kong and Taiwanese legal systems were taken into consideration.

<sup>42</sup> Uk Heo and Sunwoong Kim, "Financial Crisis in South Korea — Failure of the Government-led Development Paradigm", *Asian Survey*, Vol.XL. No.3, May-June, 2000, p.507

battleground was the Samsung Electronics. The PSPD's delegate consisted of specialized lawyers, professors and accountants participating in the annual gathering of the stockholders, and raised issues of mismanagement in the perspective of minority share holders. It lasted 16 hours and received the spotlight from both Korean and foreign mass media as well. Notwithstanding some limitations, it was also an effective means to change the management style of conglomerates and arouse people's consciousness.

### **Political Reform Crusade**

Corrupted politics has been one of the main reasons of non-competition and social underdevelopment. Distrust and dissatisfaction against politicians were mounting. Modernized political party and a well-organized parliament could be leverages for social stability and national prosperity.

The Korean civic groups including PSPD were writing a new history by intensive intervention in the political process. During the last general election in April 2000, they made a blacklist of candidates who should not be elected. The category of the blacklist was made according to such criteria as career of punishment of corruption, conspicuous negligence of their activity as parliamentarian, and misconduct. The campaign became so popular and influential that it resulted in an overwhelming victory where 70% of the targeted candidates were not elected. In the Seoul Metropolitan area, 95% of the candidates could not be parliamentarians again.

This has paved the way for the citizens' participation in the process of politics. Confidence was being rooted in their minds to change the climate of politics. Civic groups have already started a new attempt to have a network to monitor and inspect parliamentarian activities against the government on a daily basis <sup>43</sup>. After the campaign, discussions to establish a nation-wide network of civic groups is still undergoing, and at the same time it created a new route of participation through the Internet. During the campaign, the web-site was hit by millions of netizens for 3 months, hence,

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<sup>43</sup> However, the process of inspection towards every departments of government by the Parliament happens annually from September to December.

the Internet has been a new playground for the civic movement<sup>44</sup>.

## 7. Common Ground to Share – Solidarity for Reforms and Change in Asia

Asian countries were suffering most seriously from the recent economic crisis. Even though there were some external reasons, we Asians may inevitably try to find our own faults and weak-points within our society, as not to repeat the same tragedy. This momentum can be utilized to clear away all clouds which might shed on our destiny and remain after our rapid economic development.

Most Asian countries share common experiences in the rapid development and authoritarian rule. Except for a few countries such as China, Burma<sup>45</sup> and North Korea<sup>46</sup>, other Asian countries are stepping into a more diversified and capitalistic stage of development, getting out of one-party rule, authoritative suppression of human rights, and inefficient government-led economy, which dominated this region for decades. There must be a different stage of democratization in those countries. For example, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, Korea, and Thailand can be classified as relatively advanced in terms of democracy. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia<sup>47</sup>, Singapore<sup>48</sup> are also on the way to democracy and civil society.

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<sup>44</sup> PSPD's website receives 45,000 a month and it's increasing. (Michael Vatikiotis & Shim Jae Hoon, "People's Advocate", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 23, 2000, p.28)

<sup>45</sup> Despite the crushing opposition by the junta and no hope of democratization of power in Burma, the junta is not stable and safe. The so-called '9-9-99 Movement' (September 9, 1999) was not successful to ignite a wave of democratization movement, 1,000 demonstrated in the town of Meiktila at that time. With troubled economy and dirty image outside, we cannot sure the junta survive. (See Donald M. Seeking, "Burman in 1999; A Slim Hope", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XL. No. 1, January-February 2000) At the same time, expert on Burma says power struggle looms in the junta's leadership. (Bertil Lintner, "Troubled Junta", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 29, 2000)

<sup>46</sup> Recently Kim Jong Il, North Korean leader, made splendid debut on international arena by having a summit with its partner Kim Dae Jung, South Korean president. This unexpected event deserves prospect for the North Korea to open its gate widely and begin the same road which China had strid.

<sup>47</sup> Even though Mahathir still grips his country strictly, some elements for the change is visible. He is struggling with the issue of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim The people themselves, especially youngsters, want democracy. "Everywhere there's a cry for grater accountability and limitation of powers of

There has been a debate that “Asia is a different place from the West and therefore must construct political regimes that suit the unique conditions of its cultures. While it makes sense to nurture market economies by the government and the business sector, politics must reflect the group oriented or communitarian concerns of Asia’s Confucian cultures. This means that certain liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly, and competition for political office are sharply limited.....”<sup>49</sup> Also, unique tradition and characteristics which can be found in Asian countries can be inevitably incorporated into the political, economic and social systems. However, this cannot justify the authoritarian rule or government immunity in the name of Asian tradition or cultural diversity.

Under the ideology of development, concepts such as human rights, equality and quality of life used to be neglected and dismissed. Authoritarian rule was also likely to lead to corruption, inefficiency and vulnerability. Many reasons can be found to explain these social evils. However, the insufficiency and destruction of ‘checks and balances’ may be the most important factor. A strong civil society can be a bank to protect the flood of power abuse, and a power plant to build common sense. Civic groups are thus essentially the most important element of the civil society.

However, many civic groups in this region suffer from ignorance, inexperience and the lack of resources. If we learn from the experience of civic groups in other countries, we can easily overcome our difficulties. In fact, the problems are very similar and share many things in common. For example, education for citizens, financial difficulty, skills for public campaigns and strategy for the movement are problems commonly found among most NGOs.

In addition, there have been rare exchanges among Asian countries. Various reasons include language barriers, non-existence of funding and the utmost diversity in this region. NGOs in America and Europe no longer show concern for those countries where the democratization process once began. However, societies in transitional period are most needy for technical advice and experienced assistance. This is the reason why we can

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persons in authority.” (Interview with Sulaiman Abdullah, Malaysia’s Bar Council chairperson, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 2000, p.31)

<sup>48</sup> Interestingly it provided recently, so called speaker’s corner, a public forum for the public such as Hyde Park’s corner in United Kingdom. It has clear limit in the sense that he or she should get permission and stay within of the law. (See Ben Dolven, “Soapbox ‘Asia’s Nanny state gives citizens a public forum”, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 6, 2000). However, it symbolizes that Singapore is also under the pressure to open and to appear, at least, to be democratic.

<sup>49</sup> Steven J. Hood, “The Myth of Asian-Style Democracy”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVIII, No.9, September 1998, p.853



say it's high time to build a bridge for mutual exchange of our experiences.

# Patients' Rights of Access to Drugs in the Globalization Era: The Case of Thailand

**Saree Aongsomwang**

Foundation for Consumers (FFC)

Center for Consumer Interests

## Globalization and Public Health

The concluding meeting of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) conceived the infamous World Trade Organization (WTO) which eventually replaced the GATT. The signing and ratification of WTO is pressuring, forcing and intensifying the implementation of the free trade economic system of all countries on a global scale<sup>50</sup> which has been called "globalization." Trade agreements have been shaped and took decision-making process from the national governments and handed them down to the dominant actors in the international market and the transnational corporations (TNCs).<sup>51</sup> Trade agreements with clauses largely detrimental to the developing countries have far-reaching implications and impact to development and health in particular and eventually to the poor, who are already marginalized.

Trade liberalization has already started swinging around in all of the Asian countries in the 90's, where we saw the opening of the markets of the Indochina countries, and the biggest target markets of all, India and China. We have also witnessed the unregulated and free flowing of investment; privatization of state enterprises; no choice signing of international treaties; and amendments to national laws, to name a few, all to comply and bind with the WTO agreements. This pre-globalization period has an earlier impact on Asian countries, which witnessed the fragility and collapse of the Asian economic tigers. This eventually have big effects on the health and quality of life in most Asian countries, where in the south, southeast and middle east areas, unemployment and inflation rate soars, and there's a lack

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<sup>50</sup> Correa, Carlos. *The Uruguay Round and Drugs*, Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 1997.

<sup>51</sup> Dr. K. Balasubramaniam. *Heads – TNCs Win: Tails – South Loses or The GATT/WTO/TRIPs Agreement*, Penang, Malaysia: Consumers International (CI), April 1998.

of access to essential and life-saving drugs. Availability is not the question and this is a cause for concern and for raising human rights issues.<sup>52</sup>

The UNDP Report bares a negative impact to developing countries of the trade agreements. Even the World Health Organization (WHO) agreed that trade liberalization has a great impact on people's health in the developing countries with particular stress given to the lack of accessibility to essential drugs. The UNCTAD Report, on the other hand, points out that the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreements are authored and led mainly by TNCs and the United States Trade Representative (USTR). Their business interest is put first before human interest, where developing countries are forced to draft or make amendments to their national laws to comply with patent laws where all new goods, inventions, and technologies particularly medicines are covered by TRIPs.

According to the Consumer Internationals<sup>53</sup>, more patented essential drugs are coming out of the market and patent rights make drug prices higher which is a barrier to accessibility. Not all of these drugs considered essential are in the WHO's "Essential Drug List." New patent legislation will prevent the transfer of technology where developing countries will have their own research and development schemes. Also,

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<sup>52</sup> Pecoul, Bernard. "Access to Essential Drugs in Poor Countries," *The Journal of the American Association*, Volume 281, January 27, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> t'Hoen, Ellen. Statement of Consumers International on Agenda Item 13 of the 52<sup>nd</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA), Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization (WHO); May 24, 1999.

patent protection gives 20 years of protection, which will increase the gap in the access to drugs between developing and developed countries. Developing countries would thus have to wait for 20 years before they can access innovations.

### ***TRIPs: International Rules on Health***

In January 1995 in compliance with the WTO agreements, all countries are enforced to implement drafting and amendments to their national trade laws including TRIPs. There are seven major forms of intellectual property rights, such as patent rights, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, plant breeders, etc. These are forcibly amended to comply within five years. Before the creation of WTO, many developing countries had patent protection used for processing pharmaceuticals, permitting easy entry of foreign drugs, production of generic drug equivalents and lower drug prices.

Under the TRIPs Agreement, all WTO Member States have to make patent protection available for at least 20 years for any invention and processing of pharmaceutical products. This fulfils the criteria of novelty, inventiveness and usefulness. TRIPs Agreement also request member states to treat pharmaceuticals like any other technological products. But drugs are not ordinary consumer products, drugs are life-saving products, which are supposed to be non-profit products. Moreover, it is often the prescriber rather than the consumer who decides which pharmaceuticals should be used

and purchased, with no choice given to the consumer and limited competition for the producers.

Article 30 of the TRIPs Agreement allows Member States to include in their patent law some limited exception to the exclusive rights of patent holders. **Parallel imports**<sup>54</sup>, permissible under the principle of exhaustion of rights, may also be listed in patent law as an exception to exclusive rights.

**Compulsory licensing**<sup>55</sup>, article 31 of the TRIPs Agreement allows “other use without authorization of the rights holder”. This refers to the use by government or third parties authorized by the government.

### ***TRIPs Plus: Pressure from the United States***

In Thailand, pharmaceutical products were not protected by patent before 1992, where only the manufacturing process of a pharmaceutical product could be patented. As a result, the original manufacturers did not possess exclusive rights to their

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<sup>54</sup> Parallel importing consists of purchasing proprietary drugs from a third party in another country, rather than directly from the manufacturer and taking advantage of the fact that pharmaceutical companies sometimes charge significantly lower prices in one country than in another. This is commonly and widely practiced in the developed countries.

<sup>55</sup> Compulsory licensing is using of a legal intervention to restrict the monopoly rights of existing patent holder and make generic drugs more available and affordable. In certain instances, such as public health emergencies or unfair pricing practices, compulsory licensing is used where production of drugs by companies other than the patent holder is allowed. This is also widely practiced in the developed countries.

drugs and thus it was possible to produce and market these drugs, provided if a different manufacturing process was used.

Under pressure, the government accepted an interim measure to give the exclusive rights to pharmaceutical products, by the administration system of the Food and Drug Administration of Public Health Ministry, which is called "Safety Monitoring Program (SMP)". In Thailand, FDA through the SMP must assess the safety, efficacy and quality of any new drugs before it is put on the market. A new drug must stay in the SMP for at least two years before it can obtain registration. During this period, the drug is only available in public or private hospitals where possible adverse drug reactions are is monitored. No generic equivalent can be registered.

The Patent Law of 1979 was again amended in 1992 to include pharmaceutical products-patent. Under pressure (and sanctioned) from the US government, the Thai Government forcibly revised its Pharmaceutical Patent Act. Parallel importing of drugs was stopped and patenting<sup>56</sup> for products that have been invented anywhere in the world after 1992 was introduced and accepted, paving the way to complete control and monopoly by patent holders.

Again two years ago, the Thai government was pressed bilaterally by the US government to cut and limit some important provisions on its authority on compulsory licensing of drugs and to cancel its Pharmaceutical Patent Review Board.<sup>57</sup> (Table 1) What this means for the Thai consumers is that multinational drug companies will maintain their monopoly on production and marketing of drugs and therefore the price of drugs remains high and hardly accessible. Even worst, the current economic problems faced by Thailand made unemployment and inflation soared and has affected most members of the Thai Society. But those hit the hardest are those least able to defend themselves, such as the sick, the poor, and the other underprivileged.

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<sup>56</sup> Product patenting is the exclusive rights given to the manufacturer of the product

<sup>57</sup> Role & Responsibility of Pharmaceutical Patent Review Board

- 1) monitor of and price controlling and comparing of patented and off-patents drugs
- 2) report information to Price Control Committee of the Ministry of Commerce to use compulsory licensing
- 3) give recommendations to Ministerial Committee about pharmaceutical patent policy and measure for pharmaceutical research and development
- 4) looking for funding and budgeting committee's finance to support pharmaceutical research and development

The Bilateral Agreement of Trade between Thailand and the United States has Thailand enjoying trade preference through the General System of Preference (GSP) which other developing countries are also enjoying. This GSP was suspended and Thailand was threatened with trade sanctions through the United State Trade Representatives National Trade Estimate (USTR-NTE). For example, from 1985 to 1992<sup>58</sup>, Special 301 & Priority Foreign Country (PFC) have been used. Since the United States is the destination of 25 % of Thai exports, the sanctions can limit the import of textile, wood products, jewelry and others from Thailand<sup>59</sup>.

**Table 1** Facts and Figures of Pharmaceutical Patent Law in Thailand and several amendments made in 1979, 1992, and 1998 following the international agreement and the pressure from the United States.

<b>Patent Protection:</b>		
1979	1992	1998
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 years protection</li> <li>• Reciprocity</li> <li>• 6 months retroactive of invention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 years protection</li> <li>• Reciprocity</li> <li>• 12 months retroactive of invention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 years protection</li> <li>• National Treatment, Utility Model &amp; Right of Priority</li> <li>• Extension to 18 months retroactive of invention</li> </ul>
<b>Pharmaceutical Patent Protection:</b>		
Patent protection on process (different process was allowed)	Product patent Introduced (different process was not allowed)	Product patent (different process is not allowed, following WTO's TRIPs Agreement Article 27) <sup>60</sup>
<b>Consumer Protection Measures:</b>		
1) <u>Canceling of patent rights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if no production</li> </ul>	None	None

<sup>58</sup> Increased import taxes 100 % (Special 301) and pressure by bilateral agreements such as Priority Foreign Country (PFC) and Priority Watch List Country (PWLC).

<sup>59</sup> Textile is under the agreement of Multi-fiber Arrangement and Monitor by Textile Surveillance Body (TSB); Thailand can report and log complaints to TSB.

<sup>60</sup> TRIPs Agreement, Article 27: "Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 2 and 3, patent shall be available for any inventions, whether products or process, in all fields of technology, provided that they are new, involve an inventive step and are capable of industrial application. Subject to paragraph 4 of Article 65, paragraph 8 of Article 70 and paragraph 3 of this article, patents shall be available and patent rights enjoyable without discrimination as to place of invention, the field of technology and whether products are imported or locally produced."

in 6 years in the country		
2) <u>Parallel importing</u> • Allowed	Not allowed	Allowed
3) <u>Compulsory licensing</u>  Very strong: after granting a license for 3 years, compulsory licensing can be used if there are no production or selling of drugs in the country.	Strong: after granting a license, 3 or 4 years after applying, any of them will be the last to use compulsory licensing if no production or selling of drugs <u>but has to contact the patentee for a certain period to be granted.</u> The Pharmaceutical Patent Review Board can directly use Compulsory Licensing (report information to Price Control Committee of the Ministry of Commerce to use compulsory licensing)	Very weak: after granting a license, 3 to 4 years after applying can use compulsory licensing, in case the patentee <u>has behaved to avoid production or selling of drugs</u> but it has to contact the patentee for a certain period of time to be granted.
4) <u>Pharmaceutical Patent Review Board</u> • None	• Yes	Cancelled

### ***Problems of Accessibility to HIV/AIDS Drugs in Thailand***

While people living with HIV infections may live longer before their infections lead to secondary diseases and eventually AIDS, survival is complicated with symptoms and medical conditions. Many of these symptoms and conditions are manageable with drugs, however, access to these drugs is difficult due to economic reasons where in Thailand a majority of the infected persons are living below the poverty line. Treatment is not just for once a day or just for one drug but it usually is multiple or a combination of one or two drug everyday for the rest of one's infected life.

Drug prices are eventually soaring high for consumers in a country of 62 million people where the average daily wage is only Baht 120/day or US\$3.00. The high price also has a large impact on the country's National Health Budget and eventually the disadvantaged. Also the safety nets including insurance scheme have increased due to drug prices which comprise 35% of the total health care budget, approximately 60 billion Baht or US\$15 billion annually.

The average price of effective treatment contains three drugs, which cost in the range of Baht 18,000 to Baht 26,000 per month or between US\$450



to 650. In truth, the price of these drugs should be much lower, where HIV/AIDS drugs such as AZT and DDI are simple compounds, which are easy to produce and formulate. The Thai Government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO) has been supplying the generic equivalent of AZT called “zidovudine” since 1993, the price has decreased by 300%. Thailand is very capable of producing good-quality cheap generic drugs, but local production has been limited and regulated because of the US government’s continued trade pressure.

Furthermore, the following are the present problems of accessibility:

- 1) About one million people infected with HIV in Thailand.
- 2) 30,000 to 55,000 new AIDs and symptomatic patients each year.
- 3) Only two of the HIV related drugs (zidovudine and fluconazole) are available at an affordable price from generic competition.
- 4) Consequently, 5% of PLWA can afford antiretroviral double therapy and only 1% can afford antiretroviral triple therapy.
- 5) Monopoly by one multinational drug company of the HIV/AIDS drugs, mostly the anti-fungal and anti-retroviral medicines are retained in the SMP system, thus making these drugs highly priced and unaffordable to PLWA, a majority of whom are low-income earners.
- 6) The economic crisis caused a big change in Thailand’s AIDs budget. The current budget of \$34 million is 28% less than it was four years ago.
- 7) Continued unethical marketing strategies and profit-oriented concept of pharmaceutical companies.
- 8) Attitude and beliefs of doctors about PLWA and capability of medical team to cope with HIV and AIDS.

### ***Commonly Asked Question***

The increasing use of compulsory licensing and parallel import will be a serious threat to research and development for new drugs.

The manufacture, marketing and sale of pharmaceutical drugs have always been “big profitable businesses” worth billions of US dollars to the huge transnational companies that dominate the world market. These MNCs have always claimed that medicines are expensive because of the painstaking and long years of research and development put into the new inventions but it is not always true according to the real cost structure of these companies obtained between 1983 and 1995, which Table 2 illustrates.

**Table 2** Comparative percentage cost structure of MNCs between 1983 and

1995<sup>61</sup>

<b>Cost structure</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1995</b>
1. Manufacturing	40.5 %	25 %
2. Promotion	17.0 %	24 %
3. Research & Development	9.7 %	13 %
4. Others	12.1 %	10 %
5. Profit	20.7 %	28 %

Parallel imports and compulsory licensing were commonly used by developed countries especially, the United States and the EU. In addition, universal coverage of health insurance in most industrialised countries ensures that the burden of drug costs is rarely substantial for any individual. This is opposite to the situation in most developing countries.

### ***The Thai NGOs Three Strategies on Access to Treatment Group Campaign<sup>62</sup>***

1. Information strategy
  - 1.1. Collection of information about the number of PLWA who can or cannot access treatment to anti-virus drugs for opportunistic infection diseases especially cryptococcal meningitis, HIV infection and AIDS-related cases.
  - 1.2. Information education and dissemination about Patents, WTO and TRIPs Agreements that directly affect consumers.
2. Campaign with government agencies, NGO networks, related NGOs and US embassy.
  - 2.1. Meeting with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
  - 2.2. Successive meeting with AIDS Division of the Ministry of Public Health and the National AIDS Committee.
  - 2.3. Campaign against the USA through its embassy in Thailand via peaceful rally and demonstration in front of its Bangkok embassy and submission of petition letters to the Ambassador, the

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<sup>61</sup> Prof. Dr. Jakrit Kuanpot. Lecturer on local and international law Sukhothai Thammarirat Open University, Nonthaburi, Thailand

<sup>62</sup> The Thai NGOs with coordination and access to treatment groups comprise of Thai NGO Coalition on AIDS (TNCA), ACCESS, The Thai Business Coalition on AIDS (TCBA), People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWA) network, Medicines Sans Frontiers, Belgium, The Co-ordinating Committee for Primary Health care of Thai NGOs (CCPN) and Foundation for Consumers (FFC).

Department of Health Secretary, and the Department of Trade Secretary.

- 2.4. National meeting with NGOs and related NGOs.
3. Exploring the possibilities of manufacturing own HIV/AIDS generic drugs and looking for ways on how more people can access the drugs
  - 3.1. Use of compulsory licensing for the new drugs.
  - 3.2. Cooperation between the Government Pharmaceutical Organization of Thailand (GPO) and AIDS Division to produce some important HIV/AIDS drugs.
  - 3.3. Cooperation with the Community Pharmaceutical Company to forge interest in producing and marketing the HIV/AIDS generic drugs.
  - 3.4. Cooperation with the business sector to forge interest in producing and marketing the HIV/AIDS generic drugs.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Medicinal drugs represent an indispensable contribution to humankind and to the reduction of morbidity and mortality.<sup>63</sup> But in the wake of the recent two decades, there were impressive scientific feats, advances and innovations in drug therapy notably for deadly diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, new infectious diseases and others. Accessibility and affordability are the reasons why people cannot obtain the life-saving drugs, which have become commodities for trade and for profits, where money has also played an important role.

The May 2000 gathering of the World Health Assembly (WHA) had produced resolutions, which were approved unanimously and have a great impact on health particularly the access to drugs. The member states that gathered at the 52nd World Health Assembly (WHA) from 17 to 25 of May 2000 approved and adopted the drafted Resolutions on Revised Drug Strategy (RDS) of the WHO without debates and amendments, which this is a breakthrough. RDS emphasizes

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<sup>63</sup> Consumer Reports on Medicines NEWSLETTER, Netherlands: Health Action International Europe; July 2, 2000.

that “*public health interests are paramount in pharmaceutical and health policies*” and addresses “*the impact of relevant international agreements, including trade agreements, on local, manufacturing capacity and on access to and prices of pharmaceuticals in developing and least developed countries.*”<sup>64</sup> This breakthrough gives WHO, the international body on health, the authority to monitor clearly the consequences and impact of international trade agreements for public health. It also gives WHO a mandate to assist countries in their efforts to safeguard public health while implementing trade agreements where member countries are bound. But the UN/international agency such as the WHO, is at the mercy of big institutions (WB/IMF) and TNCs, where it could not fully implement public health before commercial interest. Citing the case of Thailand where the country’s national legislation on anti-smoking absolutely prevent public selling, advertising in any form, and importing cigarettes. Tobacco TNCs brought Thailand to the the GATT court and Thailand even with WHO’s backing on stressing public health’s interest in the said legislation, lost in the negotiation and Thailand, now allowed to import cigarettes.

In this perspective, international NGOs, national and local NGOs have to be vigilant not to repeat the same event. There are clauses in the trade agreements that can be used alternatively to put health before profits and these have to be

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<sup>64</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA), Geneva, Switzerland; 17 to 25 of May 2000

explored and maximized. Further, the following are recommended:

- 1) Breaking down of the monopolistic system of manufacturing, marketing, and selling of medicines.
- 2) Changing and modifying international agreements that have negative effects and impact to consumers and their health particularly the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs)
- 3) Modify and update of the Essential Drug List at the national level
- 4) Capacity-building and strengthening of PLWA and their groups
- 5) Review and modify medical academic curriculum

# Asia Leadership Fellow Program 2000

## Resource Persons and Program Staff

### Resource Persons

Aoki Tamotsu	Professor, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)
Hara Hiroko	Professor, University of the Air
Inoue Nobutaka	Professor, Kokugakuin University
Ishida Takeshi	Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo
Kang Sangjung	Professor, University of Tokyo
Mushakoji Kinhide	Professor, Ferris Women's University
Sakai Naoki	Professor, Cornell University
Ui Jun	Professor, Okinawa University

### Ito Retreat Participants

Patricio N. Abinales	Associate Professor, Kyoto University
Fujiwara Kiichi	Professor, University of Tokyo
Furusawa Kiyoko	Lecturer, Keisen University
Ishizuka Masahiko	Managing Director, Foreign Press Center
Kaida Machiko	Director, International Center for the Rights of the Child
Kamiko Naomi	International Department, Association to Preserve the Earth
Nagafuchi Yasuyuki	Associate Professor, Nagoya Institute of Technology
Nagai Hiroshi International	Professor, Kanda University of Studies

Sorpong Peou	Associate Professor, Sophia University
Takeda Isami	Professor, Dokkyo University
Tsuboi Yoshiharu	Professor, Waseda University
Watanabe Akio	Professor, Aoyama Gakuin University
Tamura Yuko (observer)	Intern, Japan International Volunteer Center

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## **Rapporteur**

Sarah Miller	Graduate Student, University of
Washington	

## Foreword

In 2000, both the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center once again joined hands in organizing the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) for the fifth consecutive year. This program aims at encouraging intellectual leaders from Asian countries to share and exchange their views on issues that concern them and to promote mutual understanding and positive professional relations among them. We can take pride in the fact that ALFP 2000 ended with success. Five individuals took part in the program. They came from five different countries: Faruk from Indonesia, Urvashi Butalia from India, Saree Aongsomwang from Thailand, Park Won-Soon from South Korea, and Kumaoka Michiya from Japan. This year we were fortunate to have someone from South Asia participate in the program for the first time. Also noteworthy is the fact that the fellows came from diverse backgrounds in Asian countries, and that they had a wide range of interests to share with others. Their research topics include "Global Culture and Orality: Some Indonesian Experiences with Globalization" (Faruk), "Culture and Identity in an Age of Globalization: A Focus on Gender" (Butalia), "Access to Drugs in the Globalization Era: The Case of Thailand," (Aongsomwang), "Civic Movements in South Korea" (Park), and "NGOs and the Development of Civil Society: A Case from Cambodia" (Kumaoka). These research projects focus their analytical attention on the impact of globalization on different Asian societies and the role of non-state actors.

As shall become evident throughout this publication, the ALFP fellows were also involved in other interesting activities. Besides working on their own individual research topics, presenting their research proposals and reporting on their findings in the various workshops during their two-month stay in Japan, they made several field trips, paid visits to different institutes, and took part in seminars led by resource persons on various issues.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the contributions the five fellows made to our program, for the good insights the resource persons offered during their seminars, and for all the assistance our staff provided. Last but not least, we would like to thank both Sarah Miller for serving as rapporteur and Chola Chek for editing this report.



The International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center trust that this report will provide a solid basis for future work aimed at meeting our objectives.

International House of Japan  
Japan Foundation Asia Center

Tokyo, July 2001

## Profiles of the 2000 ALFP Fellows

### **Urvashi Butalia (India)**

Founder, Kali for Women

Proposed ALFP Research Topic:

***Culture and Identity in an Age of Globalization:  
A Focus on Gender***



Ms. Butalia co-founded Kali for Women, the first feminist publisher in India. She has been active in the women's movement in India and in international citizen's exchange conferences, as well as in researching the modern history of India. Her book, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, an oral history of the tragic separation of India and Pakistan, has been a bestseller in India.

### **Faruk (Indonesia)**

Lecturer, Faculty of Letters,

Gadjah Mada University

Proposed ALFP Research Topic:

***Global Culture and Orality: Some Indonesian  
Experiences with Globalization***



Dr. Faruk is a scholar who is interested in recent international issues around theoretical and practical questions of culture. He is also a renowned literary critic on contemporary Indonesian literature, and has written many articles on literature and culture in general. His work has also been published in journals of culture, the arts and literature.

### **Kumaoka Michiya (Japan)**

President, Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)

Proposed ALFP Research Topic:

***NGOs and the Development of Civil Society:  
A Case from Cambodia***



Mr. Kumaoka is one of the founding members of the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), which was founded in Bangkok in 1980 in order to extend assistance to refugees from Indochina. Through the activities of

JVC, Mr. Kumaoka has worked as a vocational instructor at refugee camps or vocational schools in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, and has been involved in numerous emergency relief activities as well as rural development and environmental protection for the past 20 years.

**Park Won-Soon (Korea)**

Secretary General, People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)

Proposed ALFP Research Topic:

***Civic Movements in South Korea***



Mr. Park came to be known as a human rights lawyer through his involvement in legal support activities for political prisoners. In 1994, he participated in the formation of the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), which advocates social justice through the social participation of the people. During the April 2000 campaign for a fair and just general election in South Korea, he acted as the representative of the “Citizens’ Alliance for the 2000 General Election (CAGE),” which was successful in preventing the election of 70 percent of the candidates listed as unfit.

**Saree Aongsomwang (Thailand)**

Executive Secretary,

Confederation of Consumer Organization, Thailand

Proposed ALFP Research Topic:

***Access to Drugs in the Globalization Era:  
The Case of Thailand***



Ms. Aongsomwang is a pioneer and a respected spokesperson in Thailand’s consumer protection movement. She was instrumental in several successful health campaigns, such as rational drug use in the countryside, the rights of patients, and the rights of consumers. Ms. Saree has established a consumer magazine, which is a widely read “alternative” magazine for consumers. She also established the “Complaints and Legal Assistance Center” for complaints, particularly those of the underprivileged, as another part of the consumer protection program of her foundation.

## Schedule of Activities

- Sept. 1            Introductory Session
- Sept. 2 - 5        Field Trip to Hokkaido
- Sept. 7            Workshop I: Presentations by the Fellows (1)  
                      "Global Culture and Orality: Some Indonesian  
                      Experiences with Globalization," by Faruk  
                      "Culture and Identity in an Age of Globalization: A  
                      Focus on Gender," by Urvashi Butalia
- Sept. 8            Workshop II: Presentations by the Fellows (2)  
                      "Access to Drugs in the Globalization Era:  
                      The Case of Thailand," by Saree Aongsomwang  
                      "PSPD and Civic Movements in Korea," by Park Won-  
                      Soon  
                      "NGOs and the Development of Civil Society:  
                      A Case from Cambodia," by Kumaoka Michiya
- Sept. 12 Workshop III: Discussion on Collaborative Topic
- Sept. 13 Workshop IV: Discussion with Kato Mikio (1)
- Sept. 14 Workshop V: Interim Evaluation and Future Direction
- Sept. 18 Seminar I: "Globalization and the Fast-foodization of  
                      Japanese Society," by Prof. Aoki Tamotsu, National  
                      Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)
- Sept. 19 Seminar II: "You Asians – On the Historical Role of the  
                      West and Asia Binary," by Prof. Sakai Naoki, Cornell  
                      University
- Sept. 20 Visit to the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center
- Sept. 22 Visit to Minamata Forum

- Sept. 23 - 27    Field Trip to Kyushu
- Sept. 29 Visit to the Asian Rural Institute
- Oct. 2            Visit to JANIC/JVC
- Oct. 4            Visit to the HELP Asian Women's Shelter
- Oct. 6            Seminar III: "Postcolonialism and Diasporic Space in Japan," by Prof. Kang Sangjung, University of Tokyo
- Oct. 11          Seminar IV: "Japan in Asia: Memory, Responsibility and the Future," by Emeritus Prof. Ishida Takeshi, University of Tokyo
- Oct. 13 Seminar V: "To Overcome the End-of-Century Crisis in Asia," by Prof. Mushakoji Kinhide, Ferris Women's University
- Oct. 16 Seminar VI: "New Religions in Japan and Asia," by Prof. Inoue Nobutaka, Kokugakuin University
- Oct. 19 Workshop VI: Discussion with Kato Mikio (2)
- Oct. 20 Seminar VII: "Development and Industrial Pollution in Japan," by Prof. Ui Jun, Okinawa University
- Oct. 21 Weekend Retreat in Ito
- Oct. 24 Workshop VII: Preparatory Session for the Symposium
- Seminar VIII: "Women/Gender Studies in Japan," by Prof. Hara Hiroko, University of the Air
- Oct. 26 Public Symposium: "Action and Reflection: Experiences of Globalization in Asia"
- Oct. 30 Workshop VIII: Evaluation Session

# Introduction

The year 2000 witnessed another successful attempt by the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center at bringing to Japan Asian scholars and activists. Their ideas and inputs shared during their two-month stay enriched our understanding of how globalization evolves and what impact it has had, and will have, on our everyday lives and societies.

Globalism and globalization — the process referring to the increase of globalism — have become one of the most important themes in today's intellectual enterprise.<sup>i</sup> Much of what people refer to as globalism is associated with economic issues. Economic globalism is a state of the world that “involves long-distance flows of goods, services, and capital, as well as the information and perceptions that accompany market exchange.” Globalism “also involves the organization of the processes that are linked to these flows, such as the organization of low-wage production in Asia for the US and European markets.”<sup>ii</sup> It is a major source of intellectual excitement and frustration: people from different theoretical traditions have been drawn into the ongoing debate whether globalization is a “curse” or a “cure” for all the social diseases being witnessed in today's world. On the one hand, commercial liberals remain convinced that globalization is a process that promotes peaceful globalism or world society.

The more critical perspective on economic globalism and globalization come from those who take the position that this global condition has been dominated by powerful economic interests that continue to create misery around the world. Globalization is often seen as a process leading to the collapse of modernity. The term captures postmodernists, who were among the first to write an obituary for the Enlightenment claims of rationality and scientific progress. Transnational capitalism purports to stimulate economic growth worldwide but ends up “producing” unemployment and poverty. The gap between rich and poor continues to widen. The state has also come under attack and become less able to safeguard human rights or to defend social and economic justice against the onslaught of markets. The nation-state is now seen by some as being caught between the world economy and individualization, a trend that characterizes society as “losing its collective self-consciousness and therefore its capacity for political action.” In other words, globalization is a process of de-nationalization that gives rise to the anarchistic market utopia of a minimal state. The question then becomes “what is to be done?”<sup>iii</sup>

To this end the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center, under the general theme “Development and

Culture – Globalization and Asian Experiences,” invited the five Asian scholars and activists to reflect on their understandings of the impact of globalization on politics, the economy, culture and society. What is unique about this group of fellows is that they came from the same region – Asia – and had different professional and intellectual backgrounds but appeared to have broad consensus on the various issues related to the process of globalization. The Fellows were **Faruk** (researcher and cultural/literary critic from Indonesia), **Urvashi Butalia** (publisher/activist from India), **Saree Aongsomwang** (consumer NGO activist from Thailand), **Park Won-Soon** (lawyer and founder of a nation-wide NGO in South Korea), and **Kumaoka Michiya** (founder and president of an international volunteer NGO in Japan). They came from Asia’s major democracies: India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand. For the first time we had a fellow from India – the world’s largest democracy – join the Asia Leadership Fellow Program.

It came as no surprise to anyone then that these Fellows took a strong stand on socioeconomic and political issues and tended to focus on the role of civil society and on how its actors should respond to the adverse effects brought about by globalization. Although they saw globalization as having a negative impact on society, they remained ambivalent about the ways people, whose lives have been seriously affected by it, should respond.

This report is divided into six sections: workshops, field trips, seminars given by resource persons, the weekend retreat in Ito, the public symposium, and concluding remarks. The common theme that emerged from these various activities was the impact of globalization on the diverse ways of life in different Asian societies.

## **I. Workshops**

A series of workshops was organized, allowing the Fellows to present their thoughts on issues dear to their hearts. Globalization emerged as the unifying theme.

In his presentation “Global Culture and Orality: Some Indonesian Experiences with Globalization,” **Faruk** perceived that globalization is a complicated process in which the world tends, on the one hand, to be a borderless homogenous world and, on the other hand, a heterogeneous localized world. Since the Indonesian people are mostly still living in and with oral culture, that is, a culture growing from oral language as a very simple information technology, it is difficult for them to experience globalization in its complicated wholeness.

When posed with activities of global agencies operating in Indonesia for encouraging a heterogeneous world, like pluralism and local autonomy programs, they are inclined to interpret them as activities that legitimize the people going back to an ethnocentric way of life. In this case, they forgot or could not catch the other side of globalization, that is, the borderless side of the world implying the necessity, for people, to open themselves and to have a tolerant mind and attitude to others.

From the Indonesian experiences with it, Faruk intended to say that globalization and all conscious programs of it conducted by cosmopolitan agencies must consider various local conditions. Only in this kind of comprehension can globalization create a better and a safer world than before.

Also critical of globalization was the presentation "Culture and Identity in an Age of Globalization: A Focus on Gender" by **Urvashi Butalia**, whose research topic was centered on women in India. In her challenge to the view that globalization equals progress, she contended that the true meaning of the term should mean that all economies are equal participants. But this is not the case. In the 1990s globalization brought to India the global media. It also introduced global capital to India, making pictures of Western men and women accessible to most Indian families, changing the people's dress preferences and buying habits, and compelling them to use savings for their children's education to acquire the latest products they see advertised on TV.

The overall impact of globalization has been negative. The year 1992 marked a significant turning point for both globalization in India and the rise of Hindu fundamentalism. Indian women responded favorably to the courting of the right-wing Hindu party and its promises to help them on many issues by taking violent action: by participating in the destruction of mosques, for instance. This presented a setback for Indian feminists who had been fighting for women's rights and for public space.

Globalization has not merely given rise to Hindu fundamentalism but has left the feminist movement on the sidelines and redefined women's rights: the influx of multinational corporations has neutralized the state's willingness to fight for women's rights, which now appear to be centered on consumption, and nothing more.

The negative impact of globalization on Thailand's development was dealt with in **Saree Aongsomwang's** presentation entitled "Access to Drugs in the Globalization Era: The Case of Thailand." Her focus on pharmaceutical companies and their influence in Thailand was placed within the broad context of globalization, which has forced many countries to change or amend their national laws related to TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Properties) and have reduced the capacity for self-regulation.



The rising power of pharmaceutical companies has raised the cost of medical care and pharmaceuticals, thus limiting people's access to them. In Thailand, only 1 percent of the people affected by HIV and AIDS get triple therapy of the anti-retro virus, and only 5 percent of them get the biformula of the anti-retrovirus. The prices of these medical therapies are too high for people to afford. Meanwhile, the patent system has left local companies unable to produce inexpensive drugs. AIDS activists and consumer groups have protested to the Public Health Ministry and pharmaceutical companies for compulsory licensing, but the government cannot take action because it is afraid of bilateral pressure and trade sanctions.

The workshops also gave attention to the role of civil society. In his presentation "NGOs and the Development of Civil Society: A Case from Cambodia," **Kumaoka Michiya** gave a first-hand account of changes in Cambodia in recent decades. In the late 1980s through the early 90s along with the decline and collapse of the USSR and the reforms in Vietnam, Cambodia began to introduce a market economy. After 1991, local NGOs were allowed to operate — prior to that, only international NGOs were allowed and they provided social services and peace advocacy — and a civil society began to emerge. Unfortunately, the country still faces many problems, including resource exploitation and mismanagement by the state, worsening poverty, lawlessness, human-rights abuses, and the culture of violence and impunity. But NGOs are very active and trying to establish networks with international NGOs. Though still dependent on financial support from international NGOs and ODA, they are starting to set up a system to support themselves.

The role of civil society was touched on by **Park Won-Soon**, whose presentation focused on "PSPD [the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy] and Civic Movements in Korea." He shared his thoughts on how the PSPD got started, having been influenced by NGOs that came in after the government collapsed in 1961 and 1987. PSPD works with labor movements and grassroots organizations and remains non-partisan: none of its members have held a government post. The PSPD relies on individual donations and accepts no financial contributions from the government. Park's research interests led him to look at Japan as a reference point on how a strong tradition in local government for the protection of rights could help promote participatory democracy.

In short, presentations by the five Fellows illustrated the point that globalization has left the poor and needy less and less protected by the state but more and more vulnerable to economic predators in the era of globalization. At the same time, this trend has also encouraged activism on the part of civil-society actors whose role can empower those most

negatively affected by global market forces. International NGOs, like those in Japan, may be weak but still have the potential to assist those in developing countries. On the other hand, local civil-society actors like the PSDP can empower individuals to take part in a movement for participatory democracy, rather than defend the prevailing form of market democracy.

## II. Field Trips & Visits

The five Fellows benefited not only from their individual research projects and the exchange of ideas during the workshops but also from their field trips to different parts of Japan, where they learned about local situations and people's initiatives to restore and protect the environment, to promote health, and to (re)build local communities. During the collaborative interaction period in the months of September and October, they made two trips: to Hokkaido and Kyushu.

### *Field Trip to Hokkaido*

During their field trip to Hokkaido, the Fellows visited several places. During their visit to the area at the foot of **Mt. Usu**, which had erupted on March 31, they toured an area around Lake Toya, which suffered damage during the eruption and subsequent mudslides. They learned from a volunteer coordinator how 5,000 volunteers got together and removed between 800 and 1,000 bags of ash per house, from some 500 houses. The Fellows also had the opportunity to listen to Deputy Mayor Tanemura Jun of Abuta Town in a session where he gave some background information on eruption-prone Mt. Usu, including the most recent eruption. The Fellows further learned about the relief efforts by the municipal government and the assistance provided to the local people at the emergency shelters by 80 volunteers and others. They had the opportunity to discuss volunteer activities, coordination problems, financial difficulties, and issues related to insurance coverage. They also visited one of the temporary houses built for those whose houses were severely damaged or totally destroyed.

The Fellows also visited **Nibutani**, home of the Ainu people. They had a chance to visit the controversial Nibutani Dam. The dam was originally built for four purposes, i.e., flood control, irrigation, water supply for household and industrial use, and electricity generation. Not all went well, however, and the purposes have arbitrarily been changed from time to time. The dam affected the entire eco-system around the river, including the spawning of salmon. It also destroyed the forests in the upstream basin. Due to the high construction costs and the dam's alleged

job-creating role in the community, however, the dam has not been torn down, despite the fact that a district court had declared the dam illegal. It was useful to the Fellows to be given a chance to hear Mr. Kaizawa Koichi, a local Ainu, tell of his personal history of struggle against the construction of the dam. The Fellows also visited the Nibutani Ainu Museum, and met with Mr. Kayano Shigeru, its founder and president. Mr. Kayano, one of the Ainu leaders, talked about his personal history and accomplishments. He has been collecting Ainu artifacts since 1953 and founded the museum in 1972. Also, in 1960 he began recording stories and folktales of older Ainu people, and from these recordings he has published 45 books. He also published a 15,000-word Ainu dictionary in 1996, from his memory.

The trip to Hokkaido was wrapped up in a session at **Hokkaido University**, allowing the Fellows to comment on what they had seen and heard. An exchange of views between the Fellows and two Japanese academics, Professor Nakamura Ken'ichi of Hokkaido University and Professor Kayano Tomoatsu of Hokusei Gakuen University, raised issues of oral and written tradition, origins of Japanese surnames for the Ainu, historical attitudes of the Japanese towards the Ainu, and the unfairness of this people's limited fishing rights. Concern was raised about the wastefulness of the Nibutani Dam and the destruction of nature, which led to questions of responsibility for the Ainu plight and the Japanese academic disinterest in it.

## Field Trip to Kyushu

The Kyushu trip was five days long, visiting Minamata and Oita. During their visit to the city of **Minamata**, the Fellows met with a local activist, Ms. Ito, who took them to see reclaimed land and part of the Chisso plant, the wastewater of which caused the tragic Minamata disease. During the discussion at the Minamata Disease Municipal Museum, one of the concerns raised was related to environmental protection. Although the government was slow in responding to environmental problems, Minamata City has raised awareness about environmental issues and started a recycling program, as well as promoting environmental shops and activities such as giving out an annual prize to groups in Japan and developing countries working to improve the environment. The Fellows also learned about Minamata disease when listening to people involved in community work. Their visit to the Chisso plant helped them to learn that the slow investigation of the disease was mainly due to people's arrogant attitudes toward nature and their top priority given to rapid economic growth. They were also briefed about the efforts that have been made since the disease occurred to ensure environmental protection.

Following Minamata, the Fellows visited **Oita**. They could see and

learn some of the effective strategies for community development. The Fellows' visit to *Tama-no-Yu* in the town of Yufuin was helpful: they learned about the development of spas, the challenges the town faced in building its reputation as a spa town, and about the "One Village One Product" Movement. The town has regulations against tall buildings and encourages cooperation among farmers and traders to promote environmental activities. They learned more about the "One Village One Product" Movement during their visit to the city of Oita and more about environmentally friendly farming and self-reliance. In Oita, the Fellows also visited the newly opened Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.

## Study Visits

In addition to the field trips, the Fellow also paid several visits to such places as the Minamata Forum, the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center, the Asian Rural Institute, JANIC (Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation) and the HELP Asian Women's Shelter.

The Fellows learned more about Minamata disease during their visit to the **Minamata Forum**. A number of changes have been made: most of the unauthorized patients have now been acknowledged; the treatment of sludge containing mercury is almost completed; the national government had to bail out Chisso when near bankruptcy; and local governments and residents no longer see patients as a taboo subject. Problems remain, however, including the government's rejection of claims by most people that they are affected with the disease, and its position that there are no more victims.

The visit to the **Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center** gave the Fellows a chance to discuss environmental and social issues. The discussions focused on various women movements, such as those concentrating on the environment, human rights and democracy, Japanese firms' exploitation of women and migrant women in Japan, non-Japanese sex slaves in Japan, and bride markets.

During their visit to **JANIC**, the Fellows learned about its main purposes, its legal status, and the role of Japanese NGOs, which tend to operate, mostly in Asia, in such areas as education, health, and the environment. Japanese NGOs tend to be outward-looking due to a number of factors: Japan is an affluent country, with relatively few domestic problems; young people now have more access to information on international issues and problems. Overall, Japanese NGOs remain weak due to the lack of a national consumer movement, a weak tradition of advocacy, and a culture of non-confrontation with the state. JANIC's relations with the government and the women's movement remain limited, despite the fact that 80-90 percent of the participants in its seminars are

women.

The **Asian Rural Institute** (ARI), in Nishinasuno, Tochigi Prefecture, is a unique organization which invites 20 to 30 rural grassroots leaders from Asian and African developing countries every year, and trains them as rural leaders. On campus, trainees, staff and volunteers live and work together aiming towards self-sufficiency based on organic farming and forming a just and peaceful community. During a one-day visit to ARI, the Fellows informally exchanged views and ideas with the trainees and staff members, and participated in a very informative tour of its campus, which is equipped with various facilities for organic farming. Human resource development, as thoughtfully planned and implemented by ARI, would be one area where Japanese NGOs can contribute.

In short, the Fellows' field trips and several visits gave them a glimpse of what civil-society groups in Japan have accomplished, the problems and challenges they have been facing or struggling with, and an overall impression of their future agenda.

### III. Seminars by Resource Persons

Altogether there were eight seminars led by Japanese academics. The eight academics were **Professors Aoki Tamotsu** of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), **Sakai Naoki** of Cornell University, **Kang Sangjung** of the University of Tokyo, **Ishida Takeshi** of the University of Tokyo (emeritus), **Mushakoji Kinhide** of Ferris Women's University, **Inoue Nobutaka** of Kokugakuin University, **Ui Jun** of Okinawa University, and **Hara Hiroko** of the University of the Air. These seminars are divided into the following sections: environmental issues, cultural and religious issues, and ethnic and national identity, as well as social and political issues, all of which are related to globalization and raised some important questions about counter-strategies.

#### Development and Industrial Pollution in Japan

Globalization has contributed to environmental degradation. In his presentation "Development and the Industrial Revolution in Japan," **Professor Ui** explained the pollution problems Japan still faces, the improvements it has made, and some obstacles to further improvement. One major obstacle lies in the weak opposition parties which regard pollution as a secondary problem. They have made it possible for the Liberal Democratic Party, which has had strong ties with business, to remain in power. Another obstacle can be found in the mainstream scientists: they take money from big business and the government and do

not regard pollution issues as something for them to get involved in. The economic obsession in Japan after World War II has been part of the problem: Japan gave up culture after the war to focus on moneymaking because culture cannot provide food. Still, hope for environmental progress can be found, especially in areas outside Tokyo.

## Globalization and the Fast-foodization of Japanese Society

**Professor Aoki** touched on the globalization of food culture and fashion in Japan, starting with the entry of foreign fast-food restaurants into the country and using McDonald's as the best example of successful marketing practices. Though unhealthy, fast foods have become popular in Japan, which has absorbed cultural values from other societies and thus tends to be more inclusive. The globalization of food culture in Japan was also due to its economic growth, increase of nuclear families, and the movement of women away from housework, all of which have been transformed in the process of 'fast-foodization'.

Questions were raised in response to Professor Aoki's argument that there is a relationship between globalization and the cultural transformation of food. Other Asian countries have not experienced such a transformation to the same degree that Japan has. The Westernization of Korea was less smooth. Korea was opened up to the outside world under Japanese pressure. How globalization should be measured is yet to be further discussed: by the spread of fast-food chains, or the spread of ethnic restaurants, or by clothing?

## New Religions in Japan and Asia

Globalization also has given rise to new religions and religious movements in Japan. In his presentation "New Religions in Japan and Asia," **Professor Inoue** explained how globalization has permitted new ideas to spread around the world, thus making religions more readily acceptable to other peoples, including those in Japan. The recent foreign religions that have entered Japan include Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, the Unification Church, Rajneesh and Raelien, some of whose characteristics make it easy for their members to understand them and whose organizational systems make it easy for them to pass their religions on to others. New religions are rising in popularity: unlike traditional ones, which function as a social custom, they offer practical guidance in times of personal crisis. Some of them have even become more business-oriented.

## You Asians — On the Historical Role of the West and Asia Binary

The issue of national identity was raised during **Professor Sakai's** presentation. A number of questions were raised: "Who are the people who call themselves Asians?" "Where is Asia?" The word "Asia" originated in the West, not in Asia. According to Professor Sakai, we cannot talk about Asia positively, but only as a negative of the West — and the West is also an arbitrary creation. Japan's current national tradition and the unity of its culture are a byproduct of the US Occupation after World War II. Nevertheless, we cannot even define the West, which has no unity except a desire for it. Cultural identities are created by our prejudices. There is also a need to abandon our obsession with cultural identity. Cultural values operate in a variety of ways. The family structure, for instance, remains very strong in various parts of Europe, but the nuclear family in Japan is becoming stronger.

Some Fellows agreed that there is not a single definition of Asia. Korea, for example, is closer to the United States than to India. Korea and India have less in common. The Japanese idea of a Co-Prosperty Sphere did not have any appeal to other Asians.

## Postcolonialism and Diasporic Space in Japan

More of the identity-related issue was discussed by **Professor Kang**, whose presentation entitled "Post-colonialism and Diasporic Space in Japan" sheds light on the faltering ideology of an ethnically homogenous state. The difference between the public and private spheres exists. In Japan, the public sphere is defined by exclusion based on gender and nationality. But there exists a problem of defining one's identity at the group and ethnic levels. Japan's postwar history has been formed by the interaction of nationalistic groups, pro-US or 'soft-peace' groups, and pacifistic or domestic reform groups. Still, none of these groups has a place for Korean residents in Japan. Furthermore, even Koreans themselves have difficulty defining their identity as a single group due to a number of factors: divisions based on North vs. South origins, degree of Korean language ability, and frictions between long-time and new Korean residents.

On political and social issues, a number of seminars gave attention to the role of history in contemporary politics, to the movements launched by women activists and their impact on politics, and to calls for indigenous solutions to local problems.

## Japan in Asia: Memory, Responsibility and the Future

The seminar "Japan in Asia: Memory, Responsibility and Future" by

**Professor Ishida** added more insights into the discussion on national identity. He warned that any insistence on a dichotomy between East and West is dangerous: there is much fusion between the two worlds. We should also give attention to domestic fusion within individual countries. Not very hopeful for the future, his presentation was centered on three issues: Japan's early industrialization and its negative impact on the peripheries in and around Japan; the issue of war responsibility; and some hindrances to change.

Japan attempted to catch up with the West by rapidly industrializing at the sacrifice of its domestic periphery and then, when facing the population's complaints, exported the pollution to other Asian countries. Concerning war responsibility, some Japanese companies were made to pay "sympathy money" to victims of slave labor during World War II, but the latter have received very small compensation and the former did not take responsibility for their suffering. Although many historians in Japan talk about the Imperial Army's disgraceful behavior, those who emphasize Japanese guilt are called traitors. In spite of some improvement in coverage of military actions in textbooks, the trend is now reversing. Thirdly, Japan's inability to change was attributed to a number of factors: passive support of the ruling conservative elements; consumers' growing political apathy created by globalization; populist, nationalistic tendencies also created by globalization. All this has resulted in people becoming apathetic and desiring strong leaders to resolve their problems immediately. The IT revolution may offer hope, if it increases global solidarity among NGOs working to improve human rights.

The discussion on how to deal with Japan's past led to suggestions from some Fellows, who provided examples of how NGOs could play such a role. Korean NGOs are now working to get compensation for victims of Korean actions. Civil society groups might also need to take advantage of globalization, if new technologies like the Internet provide the means for building global solidarity. Professor Ishida stressed that while such means are necessary, face-to-face networking is very important, as well.

### ***Women/Gender Studies in Japan***

Gender issues were raised during the seminar led by **Professor Hara**, whose talk "Women/Gender Studies in Japan" shed light on the state of the women's movement in Japan. Women's studies developed from the war period through the 1970s, when it became an academic discipline. She discussed her approach to training students and her goals for future study. Although things have been changing, Japan has nothing to be proud of compared to other Asian countries like India or Korea. The presence of gender studies has not made a considerable impact on mainstream



academia.

## To Overcome the End-of-Century Crisis in Asia

A more active tone against globalization and a call for more attention to endogenous solutions to the existing problems were made by **Professor Mushakoji** in his talk “To Overcome the End-of-Century Crisis in Asia.” He warned against global hegemonic ideas and against the way human rights are treated as “universal” and are used to justify violence, such as the bombings of Serbia by NATO in 1999. Such humanitarian intervention may be necessary, but this has served as a basic tool of colonialism. Unlike others who seek to promote liberal values in Asia, Professor Mushakoji asserted that “We cannot just transfer in outside ideals like ‘democracy’ or ‘civil society’”. He was thus happy about the current trend against neo-liberalism.

Overall, the seminars gave a very strong impression that the global trends toward a postmodern world seem to be growing stronger. The above environmental, cultural and religious issues, matters related to ethnic and national identity as well as to social and political problems — all these are related one way or another to globalization and raised important questions about counter-strategies. The discussions, though, seemed to put these issues in a more negative light. The participants appeared to converge on how to deal with the harmful effects of globalization on society: they tended to put the emphasis on non-state, civil society-based or local, as well as transnational, activism.

## IV. Weekend Retreat in Ito

The 2000 Asia Leadership Fellow Program’s retreat took place from 21 to 23 October, at the Ryokoh Club, in the city of Ito, in which 25 people participated. They were five Asia Leadership Fellows, 12 participants from academia, journalism and NGOs, three representatives of the Japan Foundation Asia Center, and four from the International House of Japan.

The retreat began with opening remarks by Mr. Kato Mikio of the International House, who introduced this year’s theme of development, culture and globalization and spoke briefly about the pros and cons of globalization before inviting the Fellows to present their findings.

**Faruk** elaborated his idea of globalization and orality with some ideas and impressions he had found in the field trips. Here he saw the “One Village One Product” Movement of Oita community in the perspective of orality and postcoloniality.

In his presentation Faruk said that the movement is indeed a good movement for Oita community. But, it does not necessarily mean that the same movement can achieve the same result in other countries. The success of the movement in Oita cannot be separated from the specific historical and cultural background of the people of the town. It is their strong written tradition and culture that make the people of the town used to strong independent way of life, to be able to manage their movement in a way that is reasonable and makes sense for the global market and people. It is their Japanese colonial and post-colonial history that has given them a wide road to strike back to the center of the Japanese country.

Compared with Oita community, almost all of the small or local communities in Indonesia have a very different cultural and historical background. It is for this reason that one local community in Indonesia which tries to imitate the movement called their movement "Back to Village" Movement. In Faruk's opinion, the name of the movement is very strange since the related Indonesian community has never left its village in the broad sense of meaning.

In her presentation, **Urvashi** explained how a nation comes to terms with its memories of the past. There are similarities, for instance, between Japan and India in their history of repressing memories of negative actions and violations against weaker groups in their societies. The partition of India and Pakistan caused many people to suffer greatly and produced the largest migration in the world. But all this has been ignored. Many women were raped and abducted, but most families did not want to remember them. Nowadays the Hindu right-wing party uses these partition memories as justification for violent acts against Muslims, claiming it is retaliation for the partition-era rape of Hindu women committed by Muslim men. She concluded by asserting that both Japan and India would need to learn how to deal with such unhappy memories.

In his focus on Cambodia, **Kumaoka** compared the 1990s with the 1980s and made some suggestions on how to help the needy. The 1990s witnessed rising social and economic problems: trafficking of children, an increase of landless farmers and slums. He then discussed the changing role of NGOs in Cambodia and wondered if they should provide a safety net for these people. In his view, they should start with resource development before moving slowly toward a market-based economy.

The NGO community in Japan remains small (about 400 organizations, compared with 2000 in Thailand) and weak. The tax system remains unfavorable. He suggested that NGOs, which were originally seen as anti-government, have a working relationship with the government or even the military (especially in areas related to land mines), and also with academia and think tanks.

**Saree** gave her presentation on the limited access to drugs in Thailand. Drug patents make it difficult for developing countries, which do not have good safety nets, to get access to good medicines that have been discovered and developed. She talked about the negative effects on developing countries when joining the WTO requires amendment of national laws and compliance with TRIPS, which demands that all countries involved have the same regulations. This is to protect pharmaceutical companies for 20 years. Due to pressure from the United States by way of TRIPS, monopolies on drug patents are on the increase; compulsory licensing is rarely used. But she insisted that the United States is not the only country to blame; Thailand, too, is a problem: it hesitates to challenge the United States in fear of economic sanctions.

**Park** presented his personal story – his imprisonment after his protest against the Park Chung-Hee government, his becoming a lawyer defending protestors, and his hopes for democracy. He eventually left the lucrative legal profession and started the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy. He observed the difference between Korean and Japanese civic groups: the former have few ideas of their own but a lot of experience in organizing protests; the latter, in contrast, have a lot of ideas but take little action.

The discussions during the retreat focused on the role of civil society. Saree suggested that we move away from the present system of representative democracy and move toward participatory democracy with support from international civil society. Park saw the potential in NGOs in influencing politics, citing examples of the role of Japanese intellectuals during the protests in Korea (Tokyo was the center of distribution for the opposition). Urvashi gave an example of transnational action: the women’s movement is part of the civil-society movement that has made transnational alliances.

The retreat in Ito provided a good opportunity for the Fellows to share their thoughts and experiences with their counterparts in Japan, and for the impending public symposium in search of a discussion theme, which turned out to be “new paradigms for the 21st century.” After an exchange of views, **Professor Patricio Abinales** of Kyoto University summed up some of the new paradigms: the state as our enemy and friend, identity and culture, participatory democracy, and civil society as an important actor.

## V. Public Symposium

The symposium took place on 26 October, under the title “Action and Reflection: Experiences of Globalization in Asia.” Maruyama Isamu of the

International House of Japan introduced the Fellows, followed by a brief speech by **Otsuka Yoshihito**, Managing Director of the Japan Foundation Asia Center, who welcomed the panelists and audience and thanked them for taking part in the symposium. Professor **Takeda Isami** of Dokkyo University, who served as moderator, invited the Fellows to begin their presentations. Most of the discussions were related to what the Fellows had already shared earlier.

**Urvashi** reiterated most of her points on the impact of globalization on many aspects of human lives, the violence committed against women during the partition of India, and the ways the Hindu right wing used the memories of this violence. She also introduced the women's movement, which has made serious attempts to keep traditional crafts alive and use them to preserve memories, but still faces challenges from globalization.

**Faruk** tried to explore other cultural implications of orality by referring especially to the case of multidimensional crisis in Indonesia. According to him, since information stored in oral language will always be vanishing, the people who live in and with it need personal guidance to determine the truth and the falsity of the information. It is this kind of technological necessity that makes Indonesian people used to living in a continuously dependent way of life. In turn, it is this way of life that makes the people unable to overcome the crisis by themselves as other peoples can do.

**Saree** also returned to her theme regarding the unfavorable impact of the WTO and globalization on small and developing countries. Although Thai companies can produce good quality drugs at low prices, pressure by the United States in the form of TRIPS-Plus has resulted in a decrease in the amount of inexpensive drugs available.

In addition to his earlier talk, **Park** asserted that his role was to ensure transparency and accountability. One of his goals was to build civil society in Korea. He believed civic groups should serve as watchdogs and bulldogs: by pointing out problems and not giving up until they were resolved. NGO development took a long time, but the PSDP has had many successes in getting rid of corrupt politicians in its *raksen undong* (blacklisting movement). Globalization has had a positive impact on the development of transnational cooperation. Park said he would like to encourage relationships between civil-society groups in Japan and Korea, and those in Korea and other Asian countries.

**Kumaoka** repeated what he had said earlier about his personal involvement in Cambodia and explained what Japanese NGOs have accomplished in this country — digging of wells, providing health care for pregnant women, education, and farm development. Due to Japan's economic successes since the 1970s, he thought it was time for Japan to start

helping other countries. The large number of Cambodian refugees and the tremendous amount of violence in Cambodia made him want to serve as an advocate for the marginalized.

## VI. Concluding Remarks

The extent to which globalization has improved or impoverished the lives of ordinary people around the globe remains a bone of contention. The Fellows made clear that all is not well: By and large globalization has exacerbated the socioeconomic and political conditions for individuals who are increasingly left to their fates without adequate state protection. To that extent, the call for action to protect human rights – to empower individuals in coping with the growing power of powerful economic interests in the process of globalization – appears to be the next logical step. Globalization, which also allows transnational action to be taken for this purpose, has opened a window of opportunity for building participatory democracy and a global civil society.

### Endnotes

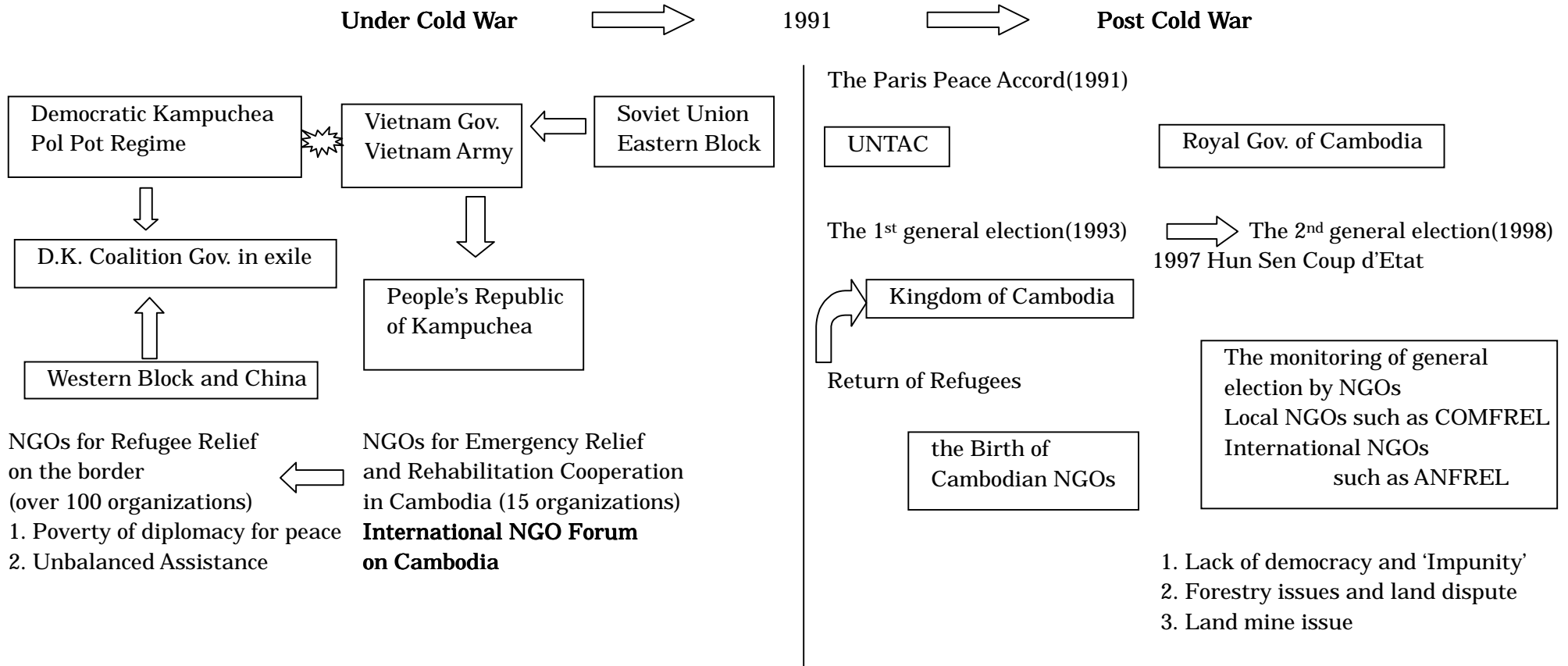
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<sup>i</sup> For more works on globalization, see David Held et al., *Global Transformation: Politics, Economics, and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Philippe Aghion and Jeffrey Williamson (eds.), *Growth, Inequality and Globalization: Theory, History, and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Dani Rodrik, *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?* (Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1997).

<sup>ii</sup> Robert Koehane and Joseph Nye, "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)," *Foreign Policy* (Spring 2000), p.106.

<sup>iii</sup> See, for instance, Ulrich Beck, *What Is Globalization?* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997), p.8.

# Cambodian Problems and NGOs



## Cambodia into part of "Globalization" in economic term in 1980s to 1990s

Poverty was generally shared in 80s for:

- Mutual help system ("Samaki"= solidarity) was maintained.
- Even small scale farmers could farm and live on.
  - \* There were no landless farmers.
  - \* No /few practice of child selling.

A very sharp gap between the rich and the poor was created for:

- Land could be sold and bought. ("Privatization")
- Market economy system was hastily and carelessly introduced.
- Big money suddenly poured into the war torn country.
  - \* More than 16% of farmers became landless. (1998)

	* Practice of child selling. (Child labor and prostitution)
<b>1980s</b>	<b>1990s</b>