

Asia Leadership Fellow Program

2010 PROGRAM REPORT

Rethinking Global Challenges Asian Intellectuals in Dialogue

International House of Japan
Japan Foundation

Rethinking Global Challenges: Asian Intellectuals in Dialogue

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Preface

In 1996, the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation jointly created the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP). The ALFP provides selected public intellectuals in the Asian region with the opportunity to reside for two months in Tokyo and to engage in collaborative exchange activities on common subjects pertinent to the region. Through such intellectual dialogue, the program seeks to create a close, personal, and professional network of public intellectuals in Asia who are deeply rooted in and have a strong sense of commitment to civil society that extends beyond their own cultural, disciplinary, and geopolitical backgrounds.

Since its inception in 1996, the program has had nearly ninety fellows, who have come from diverse professional backgrounds, including academia, journalism, publishing, law, education, the arts, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs).

The general theme for the 2010 program was “Asia in Dialogue: Visions and Actions for a Humane Society.” From September 13 through November 12, 2010, the six fellows resided mainly at the International House of Japan in Roppongi, Tokyo, and participated in workshops, resource seminars, a field trip, and a retreat workshop with scholars, journalists, and NGO/NPO leaders based in Japan. At the end of the two-month program, on November 8, a public symposium entitled “Rethinking Global Challenges: Asian Intellectuals in Dialogue” was held to report on the outcome of the collaborative interaction as well as on the professional interests of each fellow. This program report includes the reports submitted by the fellows after the program was completed, as well as a summary of the resource seminars and other activities in which the fellows participated.

The ALFP organizers firmly believe that the critical voices of its fellows, which challenge the status quo, as well as their proposals for alternative solutions, will lead to the development of new norms and value orientations in the region.

The International House of Japan
The Japan Foundation

ALFP 2010 Fellows

Ahn Byungok (Korea)

Head, Institute of Climate Change Action (ICCA)



Dr. Ahn is the head of the Institute of Climate Change Action (ICCA), a non-governmental organization providing research, analysis and commentary covering climate change and energy issues. He works with governmental agencies, communities and civil society groups. He joined the Korean Institute for Pollution Problems (KIPP) in 1985 as a graduate student, when the environmental movement was just getting started in Korea. As a German Ökumenisches Studienwerk scholar, he has spent time in Germany and researched ecology at the University of Essen-Duisburg. After earning a Doctoral degree in Germany, he returned to Korea to join the Korea Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), the biggest environmental NGO in Asia with about 40,000 members. In 2007, Dr. Ahn was selected as the Secretary General of KFEM and was involved in various environmental and societal issues in the country. He provides theoretical and practical foundations for climate change mitigation and adaptation and lectures in diverse fora: universities, public policy workshops and training of civil society groups.

Guo Zhiyuan (China)

Attorney/Chief Arbitrator/Professor and Director, Center for Law Application, Anhui University

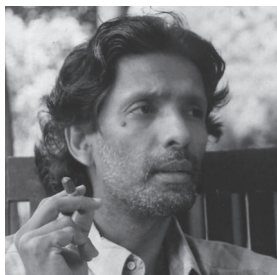


Dr. Guo obtained a B.A. (International Economic Law) and an M.A. (Procedural Law) at the Anhui University Law School, and received a Ph.D. (Procedural Law) at China University of Political Science and Law. Dr. Guo's main interest is in conducting comparative law research on the theory and practice of alternative dispute resolution, civil procedure, evidence, and human rights law. He has authored more than twenty publications in China on research in these fields. He was selected by the American Fulbright Committee as a 2009–2010 Humphrey Fellow to take pre-academic training at the University of Arizona, study at the University of Minnesota Law School, and form a professional affiliation at Dorsey & Whitney LLP.

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Sasanka Perera (Sri Lanka)

Professor of Anthropology and Head, Department of Sociology, University of Colombo



After graduating with a B.A. degree in Sociology, Political Science and English language and Literature from the University of Colombo (1984), Dr. Perera continued his studies at the University of California, receiving his M.A. and Ph.D. in Social Anthropology. He conducted postdoctoral research at Princeton University (1992) and obtained a Diploma in Conflict Resolution from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University (1998). Currently, he is the Chairman of the Colombo Institute for the Advanced Study of Society and Culture, which he initiated with a group of other academics in 2005 to address issues of knowledge production and political intervention which are not addressed by present-day Sri Lankan universities. He is also Chief Editor of the Sinhala-language journal *Patitha* and the *South Asia Journal for Culture*. His research interests include politics of education in multiethnic societies, ethnic conflict, political violence and nationalism, rhetoric of “development,” politicization of religion, and politics of space with an emphasis on urban space. He also serves on the editorial board of the Tamil-language journal, *Panuwal*.

Kong Rithdee (Thailand)

Film Critic/Columnist, *Bangkok Post*



Mr. Rithdee is a film critic and columnist on cultural affairs at the *Bangkok Post*, Thailand's leading English-language newspaper. His pursuits are born out of the belief that film criticism (and art criticism in general) can be a form of literature, and that writing on movies and art can help interpret the state of the world we are living in by way of creating a constructive dialogue among artists and viewers. In the past five years, he has co-directed three documentary features that touch on the subject of the Muslim minority in Thailand. His second film, *The Convert*, about a Buddhist woman who converts to Islam to marry a Muslim man, was screened at film festivals in Vancouver, Bangkok, Taiwan, Singapore, Jakarta, and Yamagata in Japan. He is interested in the politics of moving images at a time when the world is saturated with visual information, and he is particularly eager to explore new possibilities since he straddles the role of a print journalist at a time when newspapers are believed to be on the way out, and a filmmaker who believes in the power of moving images.

Fouzia Saeed (Pakistan)

Director, Mehergarh



Dr. Saeed is well known in activist circles of Pakistan's social movement, having worked for decades on women's issues, especially those linked to violence against women, prostitution, women in the entertainment business, women's mobility and sexual harassment. She founded the first women's crisis center in Pakistan in 1991. During her career she has headed the UN Gender Program in Pakistan, served as Pakistan Country Director for Action Aid and currently is an international consultant in the field of Gender and Development. In addition to her current activist work as the Director of Mehergarh, an institute committed to transforming the youth of Pakistan, an urgency to work on anti-Talibanization has moved her to be a part of a nationwide movement against this vicious process. She has a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and is the author of *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area*, based on eight years of field research among prostitutes in Pakistan. Her earlier work with the Folk and Traditional Heritage Institute (Lok Virsa) led to the book *Women in Folk Theater*.

Seki Kaoruko (Japan)

Humanitarian Policy Officer, United Nations



Ms. Seki works with the United Nations covering issues related to humanitarian affairs, peacekeeping and peace building. In various countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, she has worked on coordinating the international humanitarian response to assist the victims of complex emergencies and natural disasters. She also served with four UN Peacekeeping Operations—in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), Liberia (UNOMIL), Kosovo (UNMIK), and most recently in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) where she supported rebuilding of the national police, as a part of the overall security sector reform aimed toward the consolidation of peace. She was also engaged in developing UN civil-military policy and guidelines in support of humanitarian operations, and is the managing editor of “Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies,” available in six languages. She has lectured at institutions worldwide, including Afghanistan, Britain, Chile, Denmark, Guatemala, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Thailand and the United States. She holds three master’s degrees from universities in Japan, the Netherlands and the United States.

*Affiliation and titles are those at the time of participation in the program.

ALFP 2010 Schedule

Sep 13	Orientation/Welcoming Reception
Sep 14	Introduction Session
	Country Reports 1 (Kong Rithdee & Seki Kaoruko)
Sep 15	Country Reports 2 (Fouzia Saeed, Guo Zhiyuan, & Sasanka Perera)
Sep 16	Country Report 3 (Ahn Byungok)
Sep 17	Retreat Day 1 (Miura Kaigan, Kanagawa)
Sep 18	Retreat Day 2 (Miura Kaigan, Kanagawa)
Sep 19	Retreat Day 3 (Miura Kaigan, Kanagawa)
Sep 21	Workshop on the Public Symposium
Sep 22	Sasanka Perera Workshop
Sep 24	Luncheon meeting with Akashi Yasushi, Chairman, International House of Japan
Sep 25	Discussion with Nitobe Kokusai Juku participants
Sep 27	Seminar “Noh Theater and Peace” by Shimizu Kanji, Noh Performer
Sep 28	Seminar “Documentaries and Visual Media Literacy” by Mori Tatsuya, Film Director
Sep 30	Seminar “Refugee Issues and the Japanese Government” by Kumaoka Michiya, Board Member, Japan International Volunteer Center
	Visit to JVC’s headquarters in Tokyo
Oct 1	Seminar “A Down-to-Earth Look at Tokyo: Another Side of the Global City” by Machimura Takashi, Professor, Hitotsubashi University
Oct 4	Seminar “Gender and Ethnicity in the Neo-Liberalist Reforms in Japan in 1990-2010” by Ueno Chizuko, Professor, University of Tokyo
Oct 5	Fouzia Saeed Workshop
	DVD Screening of Kong Rithdee’s documentary film, <i>The Convert</i>
Oct 6	Seminar “Nationalism and International Politics: Sino-Japanese Relations in Context” by Fujiwara Kiichi, Professor, University of Tokyo
Oct 8	Seminar “Heterotopias in Japanese Cinema” by Yomota Inuhiko, Professor, Meiji Gakuin University
Oct 10–Oct 14	Field Trip to Nagasaki and Fukuoka
Oct 15–Oct 28	Individual Activities Period
Oct 29	Workshop on the Public Symposium
	Reports on Individual Activities
Nov 5	Seki Kaoruko Workshop
Nov 8	Public Symposium “Rethinking Global Challenges: Asian Intellectuals in Dialogue”
Nov 11	Visit to Ogawa Town, Saitama
Nov 12	Evaluation Session

PAPERS OF THE FELLOWS

The Construction of Masculinity and Bravery in War: The Case of Sri Lanka

SASANKA PERERA

In the context of political violence and the expansion of war over last 30 years or so, this paper will focus on the emergence of a powerful military machine in Sri Lanka since the 1980s and its consequences in terms of popular constructions and explorations of masculinities and ideas of “bravery.” My specific focus will be to understand how notions of masculinity are articulated and projected as part of the public persona of combat units of the state. The military’s articulation of what it is to be masculine is not necessarily always conflated with other notions of masculinity articulated through popular media, particularly with regard to iconic figures of the local pop world. I will attempt to demonstrate that the military’s own articulation of masculinity is not merely a gender ideal but a “national” preoccupation that is closely conflated with the state’s ideas of power and invincibility in the context of war as well as how these notions are understood from a selective reading of experiences of the mythologized ancient past.

At the level of global academic discourse, the issue of masculinities is no longer a marginal intellectual concern. However, as Radhika Chopra and Caroline and Filippo Osella observe quite correctly, many of the key concepts and theoretical works associated with masculinities have been developed via empirical material specifically located in and linked to developed Anglophone countries. On the other hand, what emerged as gender studies in the South Asia region were often more specifically “women’s studies” that were concerned with issues of female sexuality and related concerns. In this scenario, there was an almost total absence of theorizing the male and masculine on the one hand, and serious fieldwork that explored local constructions of masculinities and their global interrelations on the other.

Michael Kimmel observes that at a point in history when the gains of the women’s movement and the gay movement had spurred on scientific research on gender for two decades, masculinity, the thus far unproblematic object of inquiry, received new interdisciplinary attention that drew on the research of social sciences, behavioral sciences, humanities, natural sciences, and biological sciences during these times (1987). Responding to the shifting social and intellectual contexts of the study of gender, “men’s studies . . . attempts to treat masculinity not as the normative referent against which standards are assessed, but as a problematic gender construct” (Kimmel 1987: 10–11). According to Roger Horrocks, culture’s “myths for men” and “myths about men” both politically and psychologically tend to be “various masculinities” formed as “part of the structure of patriarchy, as ideological constructions that create and consolidate male power over women” (Horrocks 1995: 2, 4).

Michael Messner has attempted to show the ways in which “athletic competition expresses a set of behaviors associated with masculinity” (Kimmel 1987: 16). This is not very different from the manner in which military practices and idealized behavior also constructs notions of ideal masculinity that often conflate with ideas, such as bravery, heroism, ability to withstand pain, and endurance in general. Citing Mark Gerzon, Messner also points to the fact that traditional archetypes of masculinity that include the soldier are archaic artifacts, even though the images remain (Kimmel 1987: 46). Not only do the images remain, but their power and ideals also permeate as the information from Sri Lanka would indicate.

Some studies and ideas related to the specific dynamics of war, violence, and constructions of masculinities provide substance more closely linked to the discussion of this paper. For instance, Horrocks states that the so-called good characters in “the traditional western [films] posited an ethical violence, that was necessary in building civilization, along the lines of the ‘just war’ argument” (Horrocks 1995: 77). In a way, this is not very different from the way in which violence unleashed in the context of war in Sri Lanka is justified in a situation where it contradicts significant Buddhist ethical positions. Most soldiers in the Sri Lanka Army come from a Buddhist religious background on the basis of which any kind of killing would have been clearly articulated as taboo in terms of childhood socialization. Nevertheless, that contradiction needs to be resolved in the context

of the recently concluded war. One way in which it is done is to justify the war as a necessity to safeguard the “nation,” the country, and the faith. In the specific context to which Horrocks refers, “this ethical violence can also be seen as justifying American imperialism, which has frequently used violence against other peoples, usually cloaked in a veneer of righteousness, just as the British empire did in its heyday” (Horrocks 1995: 77). The image of the highly masculine and brave war hero constructed by the military that also has popular acceptance in southern Sri Lanka is not too dissimilar from “the western hero [who] cultivates a massive stoicism in the face of death and other misfortunes ...” (Horrocks 1995: 75). In fact, the masculine and heroic attributes of soldiers as heroes is mostly constructed on the basis of these attributes, either real or fictional.

THE LOCAL CODES OF CONSTRUCTING MASCULINITIES

When it comes to the study of masculinities, the Sri Lankan intellectual terrain is quite visibly unexplored. At the moment, as far as material readily available in the public domain are concerned, only Jani De Silva’s recent book, *Globalization, Terror and the Shaming of the Nation: Constructing Local Masculinities in a Sri Lankan Village* (2006), makes a serious attempt to explore the processes and dynamics of constructing local masculinities as a central issue. This means that any attempt of studying masculinities in the local context has to be undertaken in the context of a relatively unimaginative Sri Lankan sociology that seem to be weary of charting new intellectual territories. Naturally, this absence will be a backdrop for any study on masculinities in Sri Lanka undertaken at present.

Discussing the way in which the British colonizing mission transformed local practices of masculinity, De Silva (2002) cites Ashis Nandy regarding how “the British clearly admired the martial outlook and audacious courage of the tall, well-built *Kshatriya* princes and Muslim frontier tribesmen whose codes of overt combative violence separated them from other groups” (2002: 8). De Silva states that this form of masculinity “acquired a kind of universal endorsement across South Asia, even as the non-martial castes grew to be seen as effete” (2003: 8).

De Silva contrasts the situation in Sri Lanka where so-called warrior castes such as the *Kshatriyas* are not present, and “social status (*tatvaya*) largely hinged on access to land” (2002: 8). In this context, Sinhala hegemonic masculinity presented nuanced responses in situations when deference and accommodation were expected from perceived inferiors (2002: 8). She states that a withdrawal of deference “implies a—silent—challenge to one’s status (*tatvaya*). It suggests insolence, or in a politically turbulent climate, even political subversiveness. Thus personal assertiveness and any kind of individualistic behavior are seen as ‘selfish’ or ‘self-oriented’” (De Silva 2002: 8).

De Silva further argues that missionary activities, the dynamics of the public school, commercial activities, and the influence of the Buddhist revivalist Anagarika Dharmapala are among the dynamics that played a pronounced role in the shaping of contemporary Sinhala notions of masculinity where “embodiment became the most problematic aspect,” and states that “while the Sinhala middle-classes could assume the sartorial trappings of gentlemanliness, it was demeanor which escaped them” where “the Sinhala male frequently lacked height by English standards, and was often slightly built,” and therefore only “few Sinhala men could boast of the impressive physique which in British eyes ‘made’ the gentleman” (De Silva 2002: 17-18). Naturally, making the gentleman in this sense was also about acquiring public recognition with regard to attributes of masculinity.

As interesting as it may be, certain aspects of De Silva’s formulations become unhinged when better situated in the context of local social and cultural history. For instance, the superficial comparison of Sri Lankan conditions governing masculinity and related martial or warrior codes of conduct over time and space with that of the “the martial outlook and audacious courage of the tall, well-built *Kshatriya* princes and Muslim frontier tribesmen” (2002: 8) admired by the British and the mere absence of so-called warrior castes and groups, such as the *Kshatriyas*, *Rajputs*, or *Sikhs*, in the Sri Lankan context could lead to somewhat simplistic and reductionist conclusions about the absence of a military tradition in Sri Lanka that give rise to notions of masculinity, bravery, and risking the body. Clearly, Sri Lanka did not have the kind of warrior traditions admired by the British and emphasized by De Silva, partly because there were no comparable conditions for such traditions to emerge. On the other hand, the Buddhist ideals governing violence and the significant emphasis on agriculture did not allow for such traditions to emerge. Nevertheless, Sri Lanka did have a military and warrior tradition that evolved under local conditions, which has become part of the collective memory and popular lore of the Sinhalese. To a large extent, this was a voluntary martial tradition rather than one that depended on

the maintenance of regular and large armies and associated codes of combat. The following popular Sinhala proverb emanating from at least the Kandyn period, places this kind of tradition in context: “is the purpose of the sword that cannot be used in war to cut jack fruit?” In the following section, I will briefly outline some of these ancient traditions and practices and the manner in which they have been rediscovered and used in the process of constructing the military’s collective self image and that of the ideal soldier linked to articulations of idealized notions of masculinity informed by attributes such as physical strength, decisiveness, lack of fear, and selfless sacrifice.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITIES IN THE SRI LANKAN MILITARY

Up to the early 1980s, the Sri Lankan military was merely a ceremonial outfit while the only significant internal violence it had to deal with up to that time was the 1971 insurrection staged by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna. On the other hand, the police was merely a law and order apparatus with no experience or expectations of combating internal disturbances such as insurrections. Up to 1971, the image typified by the “gentlemen officers” was deemed adequate for the country’s security purposes, in the context of which the military budgets since independence had consistently been the lowest in the region. As such, the Sri Lankan military and police machinery remained small, basic, inefficient, and under-supplied. On the other hand, given this less than significant but “respectable” status of the military and police in the country, a corps of powerful officers did not evolve in Sri Lanka as it did in other parts of South Asia, specifically, as in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In this context, officers were supposed to be disciplined, well-groomed, and courteous gentlemen, while ordinary soldiers or policemen were supposed to be disciplined men willing to carry out orders. These were obviously not the material that captured the imagination of the people as heroes; at best, they were “good people.” Even so, at this stage also there was a preoccupation with ideals of masculinity that mostly manifested in the context of disciplining bodies. However, this preoccupation was merely a leftover from colonial times and was not located in any kind of local political or sociocultural milieu. Nevertheless, soon after independence, a notion of heroism or bravery was injected into the military, particularly the army, not on the basis of contemporary experience, as the armed forces had no local combat experience at the time. Only a handful of officers had served in World War II, which in any case was someone else’s war. These ideals of heroism and bravery also linked to articulations of masculinity were based on the active rereading of ancient Sinhala history and myth, particularly as they are narrated in the *Mahawamasa*, the 5th century Pali historical chronicle of the Sinhala, and incorporating aspects and characters of that history within the post-independence reorganization of the army in particular and to a lesser extent the navy.

As such, many of the army regiments raised in the post independent period were named after warrior kings whose military exploits both in myth and fact are part of the collective memory of the Sinhala that are narrated through popular plays, school textbooks, history lessons, popular stories, television serials, public discussions, popular novels, regular newspaper essays, and pseudo-historical writings. In effect, the military was not inventing something new but, more specifically, merely providing space for the articulation of a cultural object with potent political overtones within its own structure that was already becoming a collective preoccupation of the state as well as the Sinhala population in general. However, in these articulations, ethno-religious minorities such as Tamils and Muslims were either absent (as in the case of Muslims) or represented as “former enemies” (as in the case of Tamils). In this manner, the following regiments were named after ancient Sinhala kings who are well known for their military exploits in general and for having brought the control of the entire country under their own rule after expelling South Indian invaders such as the Cholas or Pandyan: Gajabha Regiment, Vijayabha Regiment, and the Gemunu Watch. The Sinha Regiment, on the other hand, evoked the sense of heroism, virility, and lack of fear conventionally associated with the lion, which, in this case, also happened to be the politico-cultural symbol of the Sinhala that also occupies the most prominent place in the national flag. The mascot of the Gemunu Regiment, an elephant, has always been known as Kandula, the legendary battle elephant of King Gemunu upon whom the king rode off to battle his foe, Elara, as narrated by the *Mahawamsa*. One of the early frigates of the navy was also known as Kandula; it has now been decommissioned. But many other vessels of the navy have been named not with the names of ancient war heroes but with Sinhala or Sanskrit words that denote meanings linked to ideas of bravery, such as Soora, Abheetha, Daksha, and Weera. It is not by mistake that the large mural on the front wall of the Officers Mess of the Sri Lanka Military Academy

at Diyatalawa depicts the epic battle between King Dutugemunu and King Elara as narrated in the *Mahawamsa*. It is a reminder to generations of officers that they are as much part of that ancient tradition—as they are a part of the experiences of the combat of the present moment that created its own tradition of heroism and bravery informed by idealized notions of masculinity.

The point I want to make at this juncture is quite simply this: the discourse of heroism, bravery, and selfless sacrifice that the military has tried to articulate and present since independence (which is most clearly manifest with regard to the army) is not a domain of innocence. It has been a conscious effort to link the military to a much longer martial history and warrior tradition preceding the European colonial period that was underemphasized during colonial rule. This was deemed particularly important at a time when in the immediate postcolonial period the combined military and police machinery did not have an independent combat history or experience de-linked from the colonial experience from which they could draw inspiration and a sense of identity. While these rediscovered histories and mythic traditions are very clearly articulated within an idiom of heroism and selfless sacrifice, one could argue that there is no visible reference to or preoccupation with notions of masculinity. However, the ancient traditions that were being rediscovered and reinvigorated as part of reformulating the sense of identity and public persona of the military were, to a large extent, informed by a particular kind of masculinity based on virtues such as decisiveness, clarity of what is good and what is not, and superhuman strength nurtured since childhood. The *Mahawamsa's* account of King Dutugemunu's generals clearly articulates the preoccupation with these attributes. The ten warriors are fundamentally defined in terms of their brute strength. Four are specifically stated as having the strength of ten elephants (each). One is supposedly as strong as ten or twelve men. Mahasena, Gothaimbara, and Theraputhabhaya are capable of violently uprooting trees, including palms. One extension of this logic is quite clear. It reflects what these warriors are capable of doing to the enemy in the battlefield.

Consider the characterization of Bharana and Khanjadeva. Bharana routinely kicks hares, antelopes, and wild boar to death, while Khanjadeva kills buffaloes by grabbing them by their feet and smashing them on rocks. These two warriors are characterized and idealized primarily in terms of their ability to violently and routinely extinguish the lives of wild animals. Latter descriptions of the war itself clearly and without reservation portray the human destruction caused by these warriors endowed with great strength.

Even though these narratives have been formulated in the specific context of the battle between King Dutugemunu and Elara, the representation of strength and manliness with regard to other warrior kings such as Gajabha is also articulated in a similar fashion. What is clear is that physical strength as the key attribute of “manliness” has been a continuous preoccupation with regard to leaders like kings, generals, princes, and others cast in the warrior model. In any event, it is to these images represented in the preexisting precolonial martial and warrior traditions that the military initially turned to in order to create its own self-identity and public personality. This self-conscious association between contemporary military structures and real and mythic military adventures in the ancient past is quite evident in the following description from the Sri Lanka Army's website dealing with its history:

Repeated incursions into Sri Lankan territory by South Indians, particularly the Cholas, led to the engagement of rival forces in battle. King Dutugemunu (200 B.C.) is reported to have raised an army of eleven thousand inhabitants in his battle against King Elara, a Chola. King Dutugemunu's organizational skills, bravery and chivalry are famous and his battles have gone down in history as outstanding offensive operations against a foreign enemy. Rulers such as King Gajabahu (113 A.D.) who sailed to India to bring back his captured soldiers stand out. King Dhatusena (433 A.D.) is credited with having repulsed Indian invasions and particularly for organizing a naval build-up to deter seaborne attacks. He also had the foresight to cover these defenses with artillery. Vijayabahu (1001 A.D.) was another warrior king who dislodged invaders. Parakrama Bahu the Great (1153 A.D.) as his title implies was outstanding in the Polonnaruwa period of Sri Lanka's history and his accomplishments as a military leader and a great administrator are noteworthy. His reign included a military expedition to Burma (Myanmar) in retaliation for certain indignities inflicted on his envoys and interference in the elephant trade. It is also reported that Parakrama Bahu's fame was such, that this assistance was sought by South Indian rulers who were involved in internecine struggles. Another strong ruler in the precolonial era was Parakrama Bahu VI, who ruled the entire Island from Sri Jayawardhanapura, Kotte. Although the known epigraphical records do not indicate that our rulers had a full-time Standing Army, at their disposal, there is evidence supported by legend, designation, name, place and tradition that prove, that there were 'stand by' equestrian, elephant and Infantry cadres to ensure the Royal Authority at all times. Militias were raised as necessity arose, and the soldiers returned to their pursuits mainly for farming after their spell of military duty (Sri Lanka Army Website, Visited on March 25, 2007).

It is also to this cluster of images that the ideal of “rana viru” or war hero was later inducted after the 1980s when the Sri Lankan military expanded in size, material and experience as combat with Tamil guerrillas expanded. Accordingly, it is from the 1980s onwards that the Sri Lankan military started to articulate ideas of heroism and masculine attributes in the ideal figure of the soldier on the basis of its own local experiences of the present, through intermingling these with the ancient traditions and mythic memories already rediscovered since the late 1940s described above.

MASCULINITY AND WAR HERO IN THE SRI LANKAN MILITARY

Contemporary articulations of masculinities and their linkages to ideas of heroism in the present context have to be located and understood in the larger historical context outlined above. An advertisement placed on television by the Special Forces Regiment in the 1990s captured most of these attributes that one could also see in other military recruitment advertisements on television and newspapers. Young and well-built men in battle fatigues undergoing grueling military maneuvers as part of their practice, playing volleyball in the evening, being attractive to young women passing by, and, finally, playing the guitar by a fire and dancing away with the young women who were attracted to them were the images utilized. The caption in Sinhala invited young men seeing the advertisement to “come and join the paradise of lion cubs.” De Silva, referring to a similar visual representation, notes that “army recruitment commercials flashed seductive images of Sri Lankan commandos in confrontational postures, unconsciously mimicking the stylized stances of celluloid icons” (De Silva 2007: 222). Typified by the blurring of identities between the depiction of Commando Diyasena as a local hero and Rambo as an American hero, “the Rambo icon seemed to imbue the Sinhala soldier with a new validity” (De Silva 2007: 222). As De Silva notes with regard to the evolving Sri Lankan situation, “the heavily armed figure of the “warrior hero” (*veera sebala*), dressed in smart combat fatigues, manning checkpoints and roadblocks secured by sandbags and barrels, continued to receive great adulation” (De Silva 2007: 222). It is also in this same complex where global and local icons are easily interchangeable in situations of war that the words “when the going gets tough the tough get going” made famous by Henry Kissinger appeared on the walls of a number of Sri Lankan military and police camps in combat areas and on the T-shirts of some frontline units.

These visual representations and their corresponding public adulation were not so much an appeal to or an admiration of the “gentlemanly” qualities articulated by the military of the previous era. These were appeals to a life of valor, patriotic service, bodily endurance, youthful excitement, and ecstasy. These were appeals to join a particular kind of paradise inhabited by a select group of individuals as symbolized by the words “lion cubs.” The attributes of great strength, control, and respect linked to the lion in the popular discourse as well as the animal’s close link to the Sinhala’s own myth of origin constitutes part of the very effective and literal visual and cultural language that has been employed in this context. It combines both appeals to masculine attributes and notions of heroism nurtured by the army in general and the Special Forces Regiment in particular. Taken in this sense, notions of the kind of masculinity and bravery articulated here are essential components of the military’s self-identity and public persona that have to be understood as a combination. Part of that combination of course is also the ancient traditions that have by now been part of the country’s military lore.

The rank and file of the Sri Lankan military and police, including the Special Task Force (STF), are drawn mostly from rural economically depressed backgrounds, while officers are drawn from both rural and urban middle classes. In the context of fierce combat, these services also constitute being in a high-risk job. The economic and financial incentives for joining the military are significant and sometimes come out very clearly in the narratives of service personnel. But what becomes more prominent in the narratives are images of heroism, bravery, and masculinity that are projected by the armed forces themselves and also readily consumed by the youth.

Prasanna Amarajith¹ was 27 years and was a member of the Commando Regiment when I met him in his home in Medvachchiya during leave in August 2001. At the time, he had just completed his “parachute course” and a photo of the batch of trainees that underwent this training was recently added to the numerous photographs of him and his battlefield colleagues already on the walls. In Amarajith’s case, too, the family status had increased in recent times not simply because he joined the army, but because he was a Commando. He had the

1 All personal names in this paper have been changed.

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photos to prove what he had been up to. Narratives yearning to emulate ancient kings did not emerge in his narrative:

All my life when I was attending school I wanted to do something useful and be of service to my community and to the country. My family also had to flee the Trincomalee district abandoning all our land, houses and other property because of LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] attacks. I was determined to do something to get these back. That is why I wanted to join the army. I could have joined any unit. But I wanted to join the Commandos because one of my friends was already in it, and also because I realized that as a man that was the best I could do. Commandos do not do simple things; we are involved in serious combat. What others can't do, we do. What others can't capture, we capture. Besides if you are man, you might as well live your life to the fullest, and be useful too ...

Interestingly, many of the soldiers and STF personnel I have talked to referred to the recruitment videos they had seen prior to, and after joining their respective units as “good descriptions” of life in combat. Moreover, many of them who did not speak English were also ardent fans of combat movies like *Platoon*, *First Blood*, *Delta Force*, and *Cobra*, where the role of the lead heroes was always devoid of contradictions. Even if unfairly treated, the hero (always male) remained constantly focussed, always performing “good,” resolute in accomplishing his mission, lacking in fear, and showing great strength and resilience. It almost seems that these kinds of movies that overemphasize populist notions of masculinity have worked as inspirational sources as much as the recruitment videos of the military itself, instructional induction programs, and aspects of general political and ideological socialization. De Silva also refers to the narratives of two ex-servicemen whose memories of watching such movies and seeing soldiers in combat fatigues in real life in their respective village settings (De Silva 2007: 222) seemed to have awakened their masculine fantasies of heroism in combat and actually motivated them to join the military.

What the military thus offered was not a simple avenue of upward mobility in social terms within the village settings where many of the recruits come from. More significantly and in addition, it offered an avenue for fulfilling youthful fantasies of masculine vigor situated in a domain where memories of ancient warrior kings, patriotic yearnings, and heroism in the cotemporary battlefield were combined to provide a highly performative and evocative experience.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

What I attempted to do above, as a preliminary effort, was to map out how the Sri Lankan military constructs ideals of masculinity informed by notions such as heroism and bravery as part of its self identity and public personality. This particular construct, as I suggested at the beginning, has also become a national preoccupation as an image and ideal in the Sinhala decimated southern Sri Lanka, going by the approval it has received in public and popular domains. For instance, one of the most popular icons emulated by little children at fancy dress parades in school is that of the soldier carrying guns and wearing camouflage fatigues. On the other hand, photos of soldiers in battle fatigues, carrying guns and lotuses and riding upon battle tanks have also become popular iconic figures on New Year and Vesak (the ceremony celebrating the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha) greeting cards. Nevertheless, this specific focus does not mean that this is the only way in which masculinity is articulated and mediated in Sri Lanka. At present, the dominant image of masculinity in the local pop world is not articulated in the manner of the military. In that world, notions of masculinity are mostly articulated through images of clean-shaven, slim, straight-haired men with supposedly “beautiful” (not husky) voices. On the other hand, the LTTE's own constructions of masculinity are quite similar to the military's construction of the same attributes. As I noted at the beginning, the exploration of masculinities in Sri Lanka at the moment is not a dynamic intellectual activity. As such, many of these different and similar constructions of masculinities, how they are articulated, who consumes them, and in what fashion they are consumed, still needs to be explored and understood.

However, the romance with the more visible and dominant form of this masculine and performative heroic image represented by the military has not come without contradictions. This was particularly so, when the invincibility of masculine strength and heroic resolve depicted in these images were shattered with the deaths of thousands of soldiers whose names ended up on numerous military sponsored monuments around the country.

The Construction of Masculinity and Bravery in War: The Case of Sri Lanka

White banners and coconut leaf decorations swayed in the wind in the southern countryside announcing the deaths of soldiers at regular intervals. Bus stands were erected as subaltern monuments in memory of these dead combatants by their kin in their respective villages that dotted the landscape. They became a genre of new structures that were very visible. Not surprisingly, the desertion rates of the military increased considerably. However, while the death and destruction that war entails has become part and parcel of the Sri Lankan reality of the present moment, a significant number of young people are still joining the military, as they are lured by both a stable income on the one hand (that continues as a pension even after death) and the glamor of masculine strength and performative violence on the other.

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Moving Image, Myth, and the Politics of Truth

KONG RITHDEE

When I set out to write a discussion paper titled “Moving Images and The Politics of Truth,” I was aware that the topic could come across as naive. Truth? What is truth? Who owns truth? Is there only one truth? Can we attain truth? Can we handle truth? The point is not to get bogged down by this philosophical rhetoric; the more important task for academics, journalists, and artists in places mired by conflict and misunderstanding, I believe, is to keep struggling to get closer to truth and to arm the public with visual literacy that will allow them to question the dominance of myth and foster real understanding among people.

During my fellowship in Tokyo, I gathered from my fellows and visiting lecturers that myth is a necessary component in history and politics. The situations in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan—and even in Korea, China, and Japan—seem different on the surface but actually share several details and structural framework. On the one side, we see myth-reinforcing tools such as propaganda films and media censorship. On the other hand, we see counter-myth attempts by artists, filmmakers, and anonymous clip-makers who challenge the official version of truth. The dynamics between the two sides is significant and necessary in our effort to bring the public closer to truth.

While something like Wikileaks is throwing a bomb in the face of censorship and proposes, quite radically, that we are living in a world where information is uncensorable, the more subtle form of state control, information concealment, and seeping propagandistic brainwashing through images and content is still at work, perhaps even more intensely. To challenge that, I still believe that moving image and documentary filmmaking have incredible influence in whipping up activism and they convince people to reassess their outlook on issues, from history to politics to culture. Even Wikileaks use short films and video as part of their attack against powerful governments. In Thailand, when I came back to Bangkok in November, a new Thai film was banned by the committee under the new Film Act. The reason is that the film, which shows a cross-dressing father and scenes of prostitution, is “against public morals.” Meanwhile, the government continues to impose the official definition of “culture” and discourage filmmakers and artists who try to push their content beyond the usual limit. At a time when Thai politics is confusing and full of animosity, filmmakers who wish to make movies commenting on the situation have to do it secretly underground, watching their backs all the time for fear of censorship, or worse, possible lawsuits.

MYTH/COUNTERMYTH

I am a journalist, but in the past five years, I have also made documentary films on the subject of Islam in Thailand. We are living in an interesting period in the history of mass communications because, as we all know (or at least the people at my newspaper know), the newspaper business is going through a hard time, not only because everything can be read for free on the Internet, but also because visual communication has become more influential to audiences all around the world. In my position, I am straddling the two aspects of modern mass communication—the written text in my job as a newspaper person and the visual media in my role as a documentary filmmaker. Given this, my thoughts have been revolving around thoughts on these topics—media, myth, truth, documentary films, and censorship.

I believe in the sanctity and nobility of written words, however, my interest has lately been in the influence of visual media—namely, television and documentary. My interest is also in the role of images and media in shaping the political/social consciousness of the people. For example, on the global stage, the TV footage of the 9/11 terrorist attack sent an impact that is perhaps greater than the attack itself, considering the far-reaching consequences that image had on political and emotional responses of so many people outside New York City. Meanwhile, documentary filmmakers like Michael Moore really believed that he could bring down a

government through a documentary film criticizing the Bush administration. In Thailand, the role of television media has been in the spotlight owing to the reporting of the violence in the southern part of the country, and especially after the anti-government riot in May in which nearly 100 people were killed.

Briefly, let me define myth: it is something that people collectively believe as truth and sometimes becomes the unassailable “Truth” itself. Thus, myth is relevant to the discussion of history, memory, legitimacy, and the way people perceive history, and visual media is the quickest and most efficient way to foster and reinforce myth.

In the case of Thailand, the myth favored by a number of media is that the recent clash between the Thai government and the protestors is a “class war” between the rich and the poor, or between city people and the rural population. The myth is that the violence in the south of Thailand is a religious conflict between Muslim insurgents and the Buddhist civilians or central government. Or, there is an attempt to create a myth to bring Thailand forward; everybody should forget the recent conflicts and join hands towards a “reconciliation.” The myth is that culture is made up of elephants, tom yum goong, temples—and not contemporary culture or, say, homosexual culture. The myth is that Thailand is a harmonized country with smiling people who are happy and have no conflicts.

Myth-making means a simplification of the problems and ignoring the complexity of history, ideology, vested interests, diversity and the definition of democracy, equality, and culture that Thailand still struggles to achieve.

Myth is useful to the people in power because it gives a sense of clear narrative. It gives a sense of who are the bad guys and who are the good guys, from the 9/11 case to the situation in Thailand. It simplifies and gives reassurance. I believe that the role of the media and journalism, more than ever, should be about providing countermyth and creating a dynamic of questions. When I first came to Japan, a Japanese human rights activist asked me, “why is there no report on CNN or BBC about the violence in the south of Thailand even though people get killed there every day?” Exactly. Why? Perhaps because the conflict in the south of Thailand has no clear narrative, there are no clear “characters,” so after the initial reporting, the case has lost the dramatic quality to the news agencies, and when there is no drama, it disappears from the airwaves. Likewise, because the official myth about Thailand is that we have a beautiful, traditional culture and smiling people, films that seriously push that stereotype tend to have problems with the censors, as the new film about a cross-dressing father that I mentioned earlier did. The fact that the authority still uses “public morals” to judge the merit of a work of art is a dangerous approach that is undermining the cultural perception of Thai people.

This is where I would like to discuss the role of documentary filmmaking. Because TV news works under strict commercial conditions or worse, as mouthpieces of certain interests, it has sometimes failed to give perspective to events. To put it more bluntly, its journalistic role has been compromised. Personally, I believe that documentary films have the potential to fill in the gap and play a journalistic role. For example, the best account of Burma perhaps came from a documentary film called *Burma VJ*, which was nominated for an Oscar but lost to *The Cove*. The documentary details the working of underground journalists in Myanmar during the street protests of 2006. It is something that we had never seen before in the news. Another example from Thailand: the event in the South, the one report that presents a human face of the tragedy in the south of Thailand is a 4-hour-long documentary called *Citizen Juling*, based on a gruesome incident where a non-Muslim teacher was tortured and killed by unknown assailants in a Muslim village, but actually, the documentary is about the plight of southern citizens, both Muslim and Buddhist (see more below). The documentary was intended to be shown on TV, but the station later changed its mind, presumably because of the sensitive subjects. Yet the film miraculously passed the censor board and was released in one screen. The film is a good case of countermyth and how thoughtful filmmaking could look into the complexity of the factors involved in any conflict. I would love the film to be seen by more people, but that is the way it goes with documentary films, since people still have this mindset that documentaries are boring, straightforward, and strictly educational.

I said the film miraculously passed the censors because the censorship law in Thailand can be arbitrary and there is a case of another documentary containing footage of the violence in the South, which was banned. Censorship is a tool to sustain myth by preventing the opposing view or the demand for clarity. The vague rule of film censorship has the problematic clause that says that a film can be banned if it disrupts the “national security” and undermines the pillars of “nation, religion and monarchy.” This prevents filmmakers from taking the risk of making films showing opposite views, not just political content, but even films that deal with monks or history of the dictatorship risk being censored. It is interesting to note that the three biggest grossing films—three films that earned the most money in the history of Thai cinema—are epic historical films about the war between Thailand and Burma in the 16th century, and this is part of the myth that we have to sustain.

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But it is not just about film censorship. There are cases of the recent arrest of the editor of a popular news website in Thailand that often criticizes the government, and the shutting down of local TV and radio stations that offered different viewpoints. And recently, the government is said to try to block YouTube from showing a series of clips involving a backdoor meeting between politicians and staff from a court. Of course, this is not a unique problem and similar problems have been reported from various Asian countries; if you have someone from Myanmar speaking, I am sure his story is much worse. But still, the fact that the Thai press now ranks 147th in the free press ranking should sound an alarm.

Recently in the Philippines, a famous filmmaker was asked to make a short movie about the general election that took place earlier this year. But his film was banned when the authorities saw that it showed a negative image of Manila slums and a message mocking politicians. In Indonesia, conservative religious groups often mounted big protests against any film that has sexual content, and sometimes the authorities gave in to them.

Myth is not challenged enough in Thailand. I have been here in Japan for two months, and although I am no expert on Japan, I would like to raise a couple of examples that perhaps my country can share with yours. I met Mori Tatsuya, the director of the documentaries *A* and *A2*, which tell a straight story of the Aum Shinrikyo cult. The prospect that the documentaries, which simply follow the lives of Aum members and show that they are normal human beings, threatened to shatter the myth favored by a lot of people meant the films were not well received, even by their own producers, according to the director. They go against the popular perception of the cult, and that meant not everybody is prepared to take that view.

Two years ago, there was also a documentary called *Yasukuni* made by Chinese director who has lived in Japan. The film's release met with heavy protests by the Nationalist group, but it went on to be released and drew over 100,000 admissions, according to my friend in the industry. The film is ambivalent about its attitude on the importance of the Yasukuni shrine, but the fact that such a film was funded, shot, and finally released in Japan was a kind of dynamic I wish I could see more of in my country. And recently, there is *The Cove*, an American documentary about dolphin hunting in the Japanese village of Taiji. Personally, I am not a fan of the film's crusading and high-minded approach and the way it dramatizes its own process of uncovering the secret of that town, and in fact, the documentary almost creates its own sort of myth. But at least it shows that documentary has a journalistic role in presenting stories that are otherwise neglected or taken for granted by the traditional news media. I am not going to overestimate the impact of some documentary films in the way we see the world. I only want to point out the role of image and visual media in helping us understand the increasingly complex world we are living in. And the fact that both *The Cove* and *Yasukuni* were released in Japan despite the protests from certain groups shows that society sometimes need to take in difficult messages in order to be able to reflect and overcome prejudices. Myth needs to be challenged.

On the subject of myth and media and the possibility of truth, I will end this section with the latest development in the Senkaku incident, the high-profile spat between Japan and China, which I believe has been heavily discussed for weeks. I am no expert and I am not going to go into the details of international politics. But this week, there was news about a video clip that records the encounter between a Chinese fishing boat and the Japanese Coast Guard. According to a Japanese report, the clip has been proved authentic. What has struck me is a comment from a Chinese official who said this after seeing the clip. He said, "The video cannot change the truth."

This is priceless, because we would suppose that what we see is the truth. What is recorded in the video is the truth, because it is there for us to see. But no, the video will not change the truth, which exists somewhere else. The business of truth and myth will continue to haunt us, in Thailand, Japan, Myanmar, and everywhere, and even though it may be impossible to find truth, it is the job of journalists and filmmakers and academics to keep looking in the hope that even though we cannot find it, at least one day, we will come close.

THE INUNDATION OF MOVING IMAGES

It was just a short ride, but we were hypnotized like mental prisoners. In a small elevator of a Bangkok shopping mall, a 3D television screen beamed holographic images at you. The moving pictures jumped out of the screen, in an awkward fashion resembling a cheap pop-up storybook, as a presenter announced the benefit of a product that I can no longer remember, or maybe there were a few products mashed together into a fudge in my head. The sci-fi voice was loud enough—this was an elevator—to vibrate your eardrums. We all looked at the screen,

but we did not seem to register anything. We were transfixed by the image, and we became temporary zombies waiting for the door to open and release us back into reality.

During the April–May street protests in Bangkok, viewers at home, like a fellow tribe of zombies, stared fixedly at the television screen watching the city burn. Amid the gasp of horror, we let the images work their ways into our consciousness, or sub-consciousness. Then we switched on the computer and found a dozen chain emails with attached video clips that claim to “record” the “truth” of the incident. Who shot at whom first, the soldiers or the rioters? Who broke the promise of non-violence? Who burnt the shopping mall? Who are those mysterious snipers? Terrorists? Military assassins? Faceless instigators? Phantoms? All of the above? These images had been “captured” and “made real” by mobile phones and small video cameras, and we chose to see what we wanted to see, to believe what we want to believe. The flood of information enriches as well as impoverishes us, stimulates as well as deflates our sense of perception. It changes and unchanges the way we see the world in a mirror-house of truth. And we do not really mind because when it is all over, when normalcy is resumed, we know we would go back to hypnotizing ourselves with the latest soap series and *Iron Man 2*.

As a film journalist and part-time documentary filmmaker, I am perplexed, terrified, and fascinated by the exponential multiplication of moving images and our willingness (or addiction) to take them all in. At a time when newspapers are dying like disgraced swans, it is scary to learn that there are 75 billion videos on YouTube (and scarier when you are forced to watch a short film while riding an elevator). It is a global phenomenon—though Japan, with a long and strong cinema industry and giant projector screens at the world’s busiest traffic intersections, might have found this banal. In my view, moving images have been exploited by various people and organizations for a great variety of purposes: Hollywood for profit and cultural domination; the government for propaganda; anti-government groups for propaganda; advertisers for creating false demand; teenagers for daily distraction; and journalists for the service of truth. How the overabundance of moving images—especially the movies—can shape the national, cultural, and political consciousness of people is the question I would like to pursue. I also want to further the discussion on if and how movies and popular culture hold a staggering influence over our perception of the modern world—how contemporary pop art has a legitimate relation to the social and political circumstances of our troubled times. This is because to discuss movies and art is to discuss politics—of aesthetics, of national identity, of peace and violence, of human dialogue, of East versus West, and of Asia and elsewhere.

In this paper, I will try to tap into my experience as a film/cultural journalist for the past 13 years in order to present broad scenarios, as well as my thoughts and questions about art/movies and their potential to create dialogue within and between nations. It will also include cultural and political cases derived from my stint as a newspaperman at a time when newspapers are on their deathbed and as a documentary filmmaker at a time when images speak louder than anything.

What is recorded on film (or video camera) happens. And what is not recorded on film does not happen. That is the doctrine adhered to by those who think seeing means believing. But the relativity of truth cannot be better scrutinized than in the nature of visual records. We are living in a time when anybody can instantaneously capture a moment that could turn out to be an important chapter in history with a tiny mobile phone. This compels us to believe that truth is no longer elusive, that it can be attained at will, since cameras cannot lie and since everyone now carries a camera around in his pocket.

It turns out that the concept of truth has gotten more complex than ever now that everybody lays claim to it with the possessiveness of a jealous wife (or yes, husband). Once, we allowed news media—in most cases, the television—to report what is purported as truth to us, because we believe that if we see something on the screen, it happens, and it happens just the way we see it. Over the years, this notion has been seriously challenged by the proliferation of alternative media, the Internet, and to me, by the practice of some documentary filmmakers. In Thailand, the politics of truth and moving images has become increasingly complicated as the struggle for humanity and democracy has grown intense over the last decade, and this can be exemplified in two major occurrences that still ruffle the psyche of the entire nation: first, the outbreak of violence in the Muslim-dominated South in 2004, and second, the Red Shirt riot that left 88 people dead and set the capital on fire in May 2010.

The mainstream news media have constantly come under fire from media critics and its superficial reporting of the southern unrest, particularly the lack of an in-depth analysis of the various dimensions of the problem. Most importantly, the faces—and voices—of small people in the troubled area, including the insurgents, are drowned out by that of Bangkok-centric authorities; it would be a stretch to conclude that this is a deliberate

manipulation of the state to suppress counter-information, but it is the inefficiency, and maybe preconceptions, of those who can control broadcast images that has resulted in this largely one-sided journalism.

In Japan, for instance, filmmakers are often inspired by political and social upheavals, and use their chosen medium to try to fill the gap of truth left by incomplete news reporting. Japanese documentary filmmakers like Wakamatsu Koji (*United Red Army* and the recent *The Caterpillar*) and the late Sato Makoto (*Living on River Agano*) are among those who tell compelling stories through images and dig up what is left unexplored about obscure chapters in history and social events. For them, truth is multi-faceted, and their movies are like a prism that reflects the complexity and dimensions of truth.

It is perplexing that while criticism of the mainstream media grew, there were hardly any Thai filmmakers who felt the urge to travel down South to complete the truth with their cameras. Since 2006, the government has sponsored a series of “Reconciliation Short Films” by supporting students and filmmakers to make films about the peaceful South. The result, however, is more like a cover-up of the problem rather than a frank confrontation of it, as most films feature preconceived, sentimental stories of easy harmony and Buddhist-Muslim reconciliation without taking into account the genuine cracks that divide the region. However, the only exceptional film about Thailand’s restive South is a non-government project called *Citizen Juling*, by documentary filmmakers Ing Kanjanawanich and Manit Sriwanichpoom. The four-hour documentary effectively uses a combination of street-level, on-location images and an investigative passion to retell the story of a gruesome murder of a young teacher in a southern village, as well as other complementary stories of military violence, terrorism, and the psychological divide that is widening in the South.

Surprisingly, *Citizen Juling* passed the notorious Thai censorship board without a single cut, despite its criticism of state policies of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The documentary went on to be released in one screen and was nominated for Best Picture at Thailand’s top film industry award. It was not seen by as many people as I wish it would have been, but it represents the spirit of independent filmmakers who believe in the power of realistic cinema as an instrument in political activism and journalistic practice. The film’s key sequence—when the filmmakers visited the village where the murder took place and interviewed the villagers who were traumatized and yet did not tell the whole story out of paranoia—proves both the revealing power of documentary and its limitations in achieving absolute truth (if such a thing exists). It also shows that filmmakers can use images to raise awareness and inspire emotions—if not political action.

In 2006, when the situation in the South grew intense, I co-directed a 40-minute documentary with two friends. It is called *In Between* and featured the lives of four Muslim men in Bangkok. Instead of tackling the issue of Muslim minority head-on, we decided to tell a simple human story and leave the implication to the audience. In 2008, we co-directed another documentary called *The Convert*, about a Buddhist woman who married a Muslim man and briefly moved to live in the South. Again, we hope to tell the small story of human reconciliation—a marriage is nothing if not a lifelong commitment to compromise—to reflect the possibility of political and social reconciliation. The making of the two documentaries has given me a valuable perspective on the quest to find truth through the lens of a camera: what I found is that there is no single, stand-alone truth, but only different versions of truth, filtered through emotion, agenda, and political and personal ideals. (At the moment, I am finishing my third documentary, called *Baby Arabia*, about a Thai-Muslim band playing Arab/Malay music.)

This idea reached its giddy peak with the recent “Video Clip War,” following the bloody crackdown of the April-May rally in Bangkok. Never before in the history of Thailand that moving images had been exploited as political tools to back up the claims of different sides in the conflict. After the smoke cleared, dozens of video clips, many shot by unknown sources, surfaced and spread like malicious viruses on the Internet, each of them claiming to be the proof of how the military used excessive force against the protesters or of the protesters using violence against the military and innocent bystanders. These clips, mostly from mobile phones, were replayed and analyzed—as if in a film school—in a heated parliamentary debate in which PM Abhisit Vejjajiva faced a censure motion from the Opposition parties. Moving images were held up to the spotlight as the ultimate evidence of what actually happened, as verification not only of political ideology but also of morality itself. But again, these clips only compounded the confusion as people ended up seeing only what they wanted to see and interpreted the images according to their preconception. In a time when people believe that the availability of visual information will strengthen democratic values, the opposite might have happened: the fragmentation of truth into a dozen pieces and, in effect, the complication of the attempt to restore humanity after the tragedy.

Yet, if we are less dogmatic and do not set Truth as the final goal, I still subscribe to the belief that moving images have the power to foster dialogue between people first, and perhaps between nations. There are obstacles,

of course, especially because of the fact that people have been trained to watch images in order to confirm their prejudices rather than correct them. Then there is the issue of the predominant mindset that moving images are mainly entertainment and advertising, groomed from the overabundance of “made-up” visuals with capitalistic purposes and the marginalization of documentary. This problem is more visible in countries with weak visual culture—those dominated by the mighty Hollywood as the visual staple—worsened by the lack of state support for alternative means of visual expression that could strengthen the audience’s plain of perception.

VISUAL DIALOGUE, OR A LACK THEREOF, IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The dominance of Hollywood movies and American-style storytelling are the easy culprit. But they *are* a culprit, if not totally then more than significantly. Cultural observers, especially Asians, have long bemoaned the pop culture hegemony bred by the American movie industry, whose main purpose is to stimulate and satisfy the demand for mass consumption of moving images. In harsher terms, the irresistible popularity of Hollywood’s complex machination of modern entertainment has escalated into the global colonization of taste and the way people understand culture through images.

In Thailand—this is also true in most countries—movies that choose to depart from the norm set by the audience’s familiarity with Hollywood face the risk of being rejected: documentaries and anything political, for example. In countries with a stronger film industry, like Japan and Korea, homemade cinema can withstand the onslaught of Hollywood through a combination of audience loyalty and government policy. But in countries with a weaker film-going and media-consuming population, movie studios wholesomely adopt the principle that cinema is a profit-making bonanza, and other possible functions of the movies, for example as a form of cultural dialogue, automatically receive a low priority. In Thailand, whose moviemaking industry is stronger than other Southeast Asian nations, the government has been trying to chase the dream, as Korea and Japan have successfully dreamt, of using commercial cinema to boost the country’s GDP; but the government’s policy to use art and movies as a means to strengthen cultural identity is confused at best and non-existent at worst.

While the history and recognition of movies from Japan and Korea are well known as the de facto representatives of “Asian cinema” to the world, the rising cinema movements of Southeast Asian countries have been less discussed, even though they are instrumental in fostering what I would like to call “visual literacy” among the people of the region. This visual literacy refers roughly to the ability of the audience to form their own judgment when exposed to visual communication of every kind, from TV commercials to political documentaries, and to be able to interpret, analyze, and argue against the content and messages through their cultural and social platforms. Southeast Asia captures my interest because of, obviously, many similarities—cultural, political, and developmental—between Thailand and its neighbors, but also because of our differences in races, religions, and ethnic composition. Most importantly, the enthusiasm in the independent moviemaking sector in most Southeast Asian nations, from the Philippines to Thailand and Indonesia, represents a kind of fruitful, below-the-radar dialogue of which governments are still unaware.

Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, for example, share a more or less similar path of political struggle with my country, Thailand. And while we bemoan the fact that the mainstream film industry ignores the potential of moving images as political or social reflection, the horde of young, independent filmmakers in the region—including the people who made *Citizen Juling* as mentioned in the previous section—are actively contemplating history, religion, social issues, as well as political hopes and tragedies through their movies. Filmmakers in Southeast Asia, among whom I count myself as brethren, are covertly plotting a resistance (not with physical violence, however) against the domination of Hollywood and its brand of cinema that hypnotizes people in their wakeful dreams. Documentary filmmakers and directors of “human” films are at the forefront of this resistance, which in turn is a movement that exploits the moving images to seek the deeper truth and, in effect, enhances visual literacy of the audience, if not suddenly, then at least slowly and subconsciously.

Hollywood, as stated above, is the convenient culprit—but it is certainly not the only one. We cannot assign the entire blame on the mindless blockbusters like *Iron Man 2* or *Sex and the City 2* if we have not investigated what cultural tools and infrastructure our government has provided to counter the global trafficking of moving images and improve visual literacy of the people. The governments of Southeast Asia remain ambivalent at best and clueless at worst about how to harness the proliferation of moving images and the strong appeal of cinema for cultural causes. In countries where loyalty of local cinema is high, like Japan, India, and Korea,

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the governments merely shape the policy to ensure such viewership, and focus on generating income from exporting the movies. But Southeast Asian governments hardly have clear cultural policies while state support for prominent artists—including world-renowned filmmakers—are limited, half-hearted, and non-sustainable.

And they clearly do not have the vision. Despite Southeast Asian directors having scored some of the biggest breaks in the history of modern cinema—like Brillante Mendoza’s and Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s triumphs at the Cannes Film Festival in 2009 and 2010 respectively, in addition to the steady invasion of young Southeast Asian filmmakers at respected film festivals everywhere in the world—the ASEAN, the regional cooperative body, still fails to capitalize on these successes and include culture as part of the regional dialogue. The network of independent filmmakers in Southeast Asia, however, exists—and we all know each other and follow new works of our friends—but only below the official radar, and without state support that would have strengthened the foundation of a dialogue. An Indonesian or Filipino film, for example, will never get a regular release in Bangkok since its commercial viability is non-existent. But with government support, especially in providing necessary facilities like art centers or independent movie screens, the simplest form of visual dialogue among neighboring countries, and throughout Asia in general, is a real possibility.

As a filmmaker and a journalist, I believe that one way to build a bridge across Asia is for us to shape our cultural identity by building a strong visual literacy. This means not only encouraging the spread of meaningful visuals—cinema, documentary, and respectable broadcast journalism—but more importantly, we must strengthen the audience’s power of judgment, training them to be able to sift through piles of junk and wade through the inundation of moving images, information, video clips, and elevator movies. The key is to not let the onslaught of moving images hypnotize us into believing what they want just because they show us the image. The key is to see, not look, and to draw our own conclusions and find our own glimmer of truth.

Addressing Sexual Harassment: A Success Story of Civil Society and Government Partnership from Pakistan and Some Learnings from Japan

FOUZIA SAEED

Sexual harassment has been a challenge faced by mostly women all over Asia. Some of our countries have already ventured into finding a solution and some are still in denial. It is important that we share our experiences of working with the governments and bringing about a change in the society. We need to share our struggles and lessons so that we can learn from each other and build solidarity to take Asia forward.

A CASE FROM PAKISTAN

It is said that Pakistan is in a transition to become truly democratized. It is also said that many developing countries remain in this transitional stage because their democratic systems do not get enough support to mature. In Pakistan, our checkered history of dictatorships and democratic regimes has not only left the democratic system in this limbo state but also confused the citizens about how to relate to their governments. It is only recently that we see some signs in our system of true democratic actions with citizens becoming more confident in approaching the Government with possible solutions to their problems. This is quite different from the past where citizens only complained and bashed the Government, a role in which they grew quite comfortable.

The recently passed anti sexual harassment legislation is the first truly progressive legislation passed for women since the 1960s. This has set a new precedent for citizens' relationship with the Government and has moved the democratic process one step forward.

The draft legislation was suggested by an alliance of civil society organizations in 2002, but it was not taken up by the Government until after the democratic election of 2008. After that, it took two years of hard work for the citizens of this forum, various government representatives, and parliamentarians to get the legislation passed and signed. The legislation was passed by the Parliament in early 2010 with jubilation throughout the country. Many bills get through our Parliament, mostly unnoticed by the people, but this legislation was unique because of its process and outcome. It rebuilt faith between the civil society and the Government and it created hope among women that it is possible to work together with the Government as a team to achieve positive outcomes. In this paper, I make an attempt to document the process of getting this legislation passed.

In 2001, I talked to some like-minded organizations in Pakistan to form an alliance called AASHA (An Alliance Against Sexual Harassment). Informal discussions were held to reinforce the thinking that the issue was too big for any of us to handle on our own. The solution could not be conceived in pockets; it had to be addressed at the national level. At the time, six organizations came together to form the Alliance and the number of members kept varying over the next nine years.

I was adamant that the work of AASHA should be focused on sexual harassment at the workplace first before attempting to address the issue in our society generally. This is because each workplace has a structured environment with a management and a set of rules and regulations that can be used to hold people accountable. It was these elements that we agreed would help institutionalize some basic changes in the work culture. Sexual harassment on the streets and in markets, homes, and informal workplaces, we thought, was more challenging

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and could be dealt with later, once the trends of reducing sexual harassment in a formal work environment are in place. Thus, the Alliance first decided to deal with formal workplaces by engaging company managements, making the employees aware of the issue and its consequences, and involving the Government and other stake holders in developing an anti sexual harassment policy.

A few years prior to that, because of a major sexual harassment case in the country, December 22 had been declared the day to address sexual harassment in Pakistan. Every year, some activities related to this issue would be organized around that date. In 2001, AASHA organized a big Working Women's Assembly, inviting women working in all sorts of labor, agriculture, factory, and office set ups. This was so successful in becoming the impetus for its movement that it became a tradition every year in December.

The Minister for Women's Development at the time, Attiya Inyatullah, was invited to the 2001 Assembly. She was personally moved by the sincerity of the women at the Assembly and, through her efforts, a strong bond was created with the Government. We agreed with her that we will draft an anti sexual harassment policy and have consultations at the provincial level to make the text acceptable to all stakeholders. The stakeholders included academicians, government officials, civil society representatives, intellectuals, labor representatives, and company managements.

I drafted the initial document of the Code and remained the writer of the group throughout. We incorporated feedback from all quarters and went through rigorous negotiations among all stakeholders. AASHA members remained the main organizers, keeping the Government in front and ensuring their ownership. At the end of this yearlong process, we had a consensus document. Owing to the expressed sensitivity with the word "sexual" the document was not called an "anti sexual harassment policy" but the "Code of Conduct for Gender Justice." The final version was signed off by both the Minister of Women and the Minister of Labor, Government of Pakistan.

While the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Labor showed ownership and remained committed, they were not able to mobilize sufficient support within the Cabinet. The proposal was not even put on the agenda to be formalized as a policy for the Government organizations. Faced with this resistance within the Government leadership, AASHA went to its back up strategy. It sought permission from the Government to mobilize the private sector to adopt the Code of Conduct voluntarily, while the Government could continue thinking about how they wanted to pursue it from a regulatory perspective. This kept the Government in the loop but the work continued without them in the other sectors of the society.

Over the next two years, AASHA focused on the private sector. We realized that the way we worked, our approach, our strategies, and even our language needed to be revisited. Now we were dealing with a sector that used a very different conceptual framework. The initial breakthrough was very difficult, but we finally got some help from a forum of private sector managements and employees called the Workers Employers Bilateral Council of Pakistan (WEBCOP). Once we got accustomed to interacting with managements of private sector companies, we spread ourselves to every province.

During this time, AASHA organized scores of training programs for the private sector and other stakeholders to make people aware of what the Code of Conduct could do for workplaces. Our focus was on human resource managers, as they were pivotal in this process. We developed specific modules for them with materials and short films to use in training their staff.

At the same time, AASHA tried to reach out to the Government again. This time we attempted to foster an amendment in the civil services regulations. I drafted an amendment under the section of Misconduct in the 1973 Disciplinary Rules for Civil Service. The only thing we had asked for was to add the definition of sexual harassment under Misconduct. We had the support of the Ministry of Women, but to pass this amendment, other senior bureaucrats also needed to be involved and they resisted all of our efforts throughout. Nearly four years of persistent follow up got us nowhere, and the seasoned bureaucrats, instead of saying no or yes, simply threw the ball in the court of the Parliament. They said they would prefer a change in the law for disciplinary actions in the civil service, which was the Parliament's arena, rather than the rules, which they had the power to amend.

Within the private sector, our movement gained momentum and many well-known companies adopted the Code of Conduct. They started highlighting AASHA's Code in their recruitment advertisements and noticed that more women candidates applied for jobs.

Media played a tremendous role in this movement. From day one, our engagement with them was positive. Media professionals understood what we were talking about and this increased awareness was incorporated into their stories. In the first few years, the focus was on reporting the existence of the problem of sexual harassment,

which had rarely appeared in the newspapers earlier. Gradually, it shifted to identifying solutions and a detailed discussion of the Code.

Every year, we did two media campaigns, each about a month long. We fully mobilized print and electronic media. It was planned well with the cooperation of the allies we had developed in different newspapers and television channels. It included newspaper features, columns, news stories, television talk shows, news packages, and animated public service messages. These campaigns really developed a broadened base for this movement.

The biggest problem we faced was dealing with the general social attitude of our people that always blamed women for the occurrence of sexual harassment. They felt that if women were dressed properly or if they were chaste enough or were not alone in a situation, the harassment would not have happened. They believed that good women do not get harassed and it happens only because women allow it to happen. Our campaign also targeted these old myths that had infected the society so deeply. We explained to people that by putting all this emphasis on women only helps the perpetrator to get away with it. In our effort to move the lime light from the victims of harassment to the perpetrators, we came up with an innovative strategy. We developed a series of cartoons that we called the Taxonomy of Sexual harassment (www.fouziasaed.com). We developed types of harassers according to their behavior and developed a full profile of such people. The objective was that people should now begin to talk about the harassers and stop gossiping about the victim.

These cartoons, conceived by me and drawn by a famous cartoonist, were launched in a desk calendar. The 12 characters became a super hit with reviews of this calendar in the newspapers and television shows. Two more annual calendars followed and made these cartoon titles a common part of the language among young women. These women had fun identifying these characters at their universities and workplaces and somehow felt more confident.

AASHA continued to organize an annual assembly every year on December 22, to keep the spirits of the working women high while our campaign slowly moved ahead. Each year, there were parallel discussion sessions on the specific issues faced by women nurses, domestic workers, office workers, women in sales, farm women, etc. Although, at the time, AASHA was only pursuing a solution for the formal sector, our movement kept the women in the informal sector fully engaged. In addition, we continuously talked about harassment on the streets and at homes through the awareness campaigns. We hoped that once a solution to the formal sector would catch root, we would then shift to other solutions for the informal sector and public places.

Interestingly, the large, development-oriented civil society organizations were painfully slow to join, but gradually started adopting the Code as a policy. They were also slow to join in AASHA's forums on the issue; perhaps, they did not acknowledge the issue of sexual harassment fully. There could be issues of perceived rivalry or the theme of sexual harassment was not yet on the donor agenda. AASHA was primarily an issue-centered and volunteer-based movement, with all its core members working voluntarily throughout the struggle. Our costs were low, and our commitment to the issue paramount. The main impetus to this movement did not come from heavily-funded elitist NGOs but from the civil society that was volunteer based, like labor unions, associations of working women, chambers of commerce, and many individual citizens who believed in the cause and joined in.

It was not until 2008, when Pakistan returned to its democratic path through a national election that we decided to again approach the Government. We had done our ground work and had decided that this was the best time to pursue a legislative package to back up the implementation of the Code of Conduct for all organizations and, additionally, to make sexual harassment a crime for the whole country.

Throughout this process, AASHA remained at the center of all discussions, working hard to keep our supporters and partners on board. We used focused group meetings with the Trade Unions, Chambers of Commerce, media, and others to encourage them to endorse our proposed legislative package. Thus, although the draft legislation was revised to the satisfaction of all the stakeholders, we ensured that the integrity of the draft was maintained.

AASHA wanted the legislation to be proposed by the Government, and therefore, some senior political leaders were approached to discuss the idea. Ms. Shehnaz Wazir Ali, a prominent politician and a women's rights activist, was our door opener. She fully supported the idea and took it to the Government. Mr. Farooq Naek, the Law Minister at the time, was also very supportive and worked with us closely, going through the drafts and modifying them to meet the Government's needs. Ms. Sherry Rehman, who was the first Minister of Women, helped us push this legislation forward and was successful in finally getting this legislative package approved by the Cabinet—seven years after we had made the first attempt. Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, one of the most

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respected politicians in our country and a senior Senator, provided steady and crucial support throughout the entire process.

Our aim was to get the legislation passed through the Parliament with the support of all parties. We thought that it would help us in the implementation stage later if we could keep the ownership broad-based. We also believed that, as citizens, we should approach all parties and build a strong relationship with all politicians within these parties who personally had a pro-women agenda. We organized several meetings with individual party members. We initially got strong support from the Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Awami National Party (ANP). Among the other big parties, we worked very hard to lobby with some of the members who later became staunch supporters of this movement.

The legislation was approved by the Cabinet in November 2008. The Prime Minister mentioned the legislation in his International Women's Day speech in March 2009 and, likewise, the President, listed this as an example of the progressive reform movements of his government in his speech to the joint sitting of the Parliament later that same month.

Although we were gaining support from the political leadership, the civil bureaucracy continued to resist the measure. The process over the year that followed was difficult, but AASHA team was persistent and prepared for each step well. Our allies within the Government and other political parties supported us in the process and took the process forward.

Even though the legislation was very much in line with the principles of Islam, any remote possibility of women getting their rights usually stirs up serious resistance. The main hurdles came from the religious conservatives. In the past, this class of politicians was more direct in their approach and did their politics from the platform of the religious political parties. But these days, many of them have joined other mainstream parties and pursue their reactionary agenda quietly from the inside. This was a big challenge for us to overcome.

The following are the two pieces of legislation that the Government worked on in close collaboration with AASHA:

1) Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010

This bill made it mandatory for all institutions, may these be government, private, or community organizations, to adopt a Code of Conduct and form a Committee to deal with all complaints of sexual harassment within their organizations. The powers of the Committee and the procedure of the inquiry were stipulated in this Bill. The management was supposed to form the Committee and notify the employers of the Code of Conduct within six months of the passage of the Bill.

In case the perpetrator was too senior or was the owner of the business himself and the victim was not sure if the internal Committee could do justice with the complaint, she or he could go to an Ombudsperson, which was to be established only for this purpose. Any party who was not satisfied with the decision of its Committee and the final verdict of the management could also go to the Ombudsperson for appeal.

Any management that failed to get the Code of Conduct instituted within their organization or to establish a three-member Committee could be taken to court and could be fined up to Rs. 100,000/-.

2) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2009

This was an amendment in the Pakistan Penal Code 1860, in clause 509. This clause was the closest to cover sexual harassment, but it was too vague. The amendment added a clear definition of sexual harassment and articulated that this behavior, may it happen at the workplace, markets, streets, or home, was a crime and was punishable by law. This covered all women in the country, including those who were domestic workers, agricultural laborers, or home-based workers; the non-formal sector; as well as women in all public and private places. The punishment was specified as up to 3 years imprisonment and/or up to a Rs. 500,000/- fine.

The National Assembly passed the amendment in Pakistan Penal Code unanimously. Unfortunately, the excitement in the media and by the civil society caught the attention of a few conservatives sitting in critical positions. Even though AASHA had been trying its best to have both the bills presented in the National Assembly for passage together, our efforts were blocked. After the first blush of success, the effort turned into a rigorous struggle that lasted for over two months and finally required support from the Prime Minister and the President to get it unblocked. Interestingly enough, both the bills were passed by the National Assembly unanimously, but faced serious resistance in the Senate.

After being passed by both the houses, the bills were signed into law by the President. He invited AASHA members and more than 50 other women to witness the signing ceremony.

LEARNINGS FROM JAPAN

During the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP), I found out that just like Pakistan's movement around sexual harassment got initiated with a major case in 1997–99 (which provided impetus to the whole movement initiated in 2001 and culminated in 2008 in the form of new laws), Japan also had a landmark case in 1989. The case was about a woman who was sexually harassed by her editor and was eventually fired by the senior management because she did not stop complaining about it. Two feminist lawyers took the case up and the support from the civil society brought the case into the lime light. Winning that case became a turning point for the struggle against sexual harassment.

The word *sekuhara* was coined in 1989 and became quite common, as the experience of sexual harassment was quite common among working women already. This word, however, became more vague gathering any kind of inappropriate behavior in its net.

It was after a decade, in 1999, that the Government officially recognized it as a problem and included it as an amendment in the Law of Equal Employment Opportunity in article 21. It required employers to prevent sexual harassment and establish company policy to address it. The Equal Employment Opportunity local offices in each Prefecture opened counseling desks and they received between 7000 to 9000 claims annually.

The issue of sexual harassment goes much beyond the workplace. Though the public place of the main cities is safer than the typical urban areas of developed and developing countries, Japanese women still experience harassment on streets and in trains. The issue of sexual harassment in trains, locally referred to as *chikan*, gained more attention. The Government has designated one car of the trains only for women, so that those who are more concerned can sit there for their safety. Interestingly enough, in most countries, sexual harassment is experienced in public transport in the rush hours more, but according to my information collected through informal interviews and readings, women fear sexual harassment in the hours when the passengers are few. Similarly, more serious sexual harassment, assault, and rape most commonly occur between people who know each other rather than attacks on strangers in a public space.

Looking at Japanese culture, it can be inferred that drinking as a part of culture becomes a space where behavior standards are relaxed usually. While in official and sober times there is immense social pressure on both men and women to be polite, respectful, and not express the individual emotions openly, the evening social drinking sittings can give relaxation to those social norms. According to some reports, it is in such gatherings that men can cross the limits that they would not cross at other times.

There is another cultural concept called *wa*, which means maintaining social harmony. Especially at the workplace or where people are working in teams, social parties, field trips, jokes, etc., are seen as essential to maintain social harmony within the group. Thus, it is assumed that colored jokes, advances, and, at times, more advanced forms of sexual harassment would be taken in the spirit of keeping the social harmony and in a light spirit. When women find it uncomfortable, they fear that their complain would be seen as going against *wa*. When they do complain, they get the expected response most of the time, thus making the complains against sexual harassment be seen more as a problem than the sexual harassment itself.

During my two months of stay in Japan, I went to several universities to give talks on gender issues. In addition, some well-known Japanese activists also came to give talks to us. In this process, I got to meet many senior academicians working in gender studies. I found out that in the universities, sexual harassment had existed. However, it was only after the Government considered it an issue and asked all employers to take it seriously that the situation changed. They did mention that in the academia, the situation is still not too good. However, the change is taking its course.

In the private sector and corporate world, harassment has multiple dimensions. As far as the lower paid staff and temporary or contractual workers are concerned, they are more vulnerable to it. With the senior women in managerial roles, their lives are affected by sexual harassment in a different manner. In the higher-level corporate culture, many deals are made during drinking parties. Men connect with clients and outside parties for business, and meeting at sexually charged places, drinking, and making sexual jokes is quite common. Women knowing this culture know well that they would feel uncomfortable in such a situation. Thus, if they miss such

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official events, they lose out. Many a time, they do not opt for senior positions in the corporate ladder to avoid such circumstances. That, in a way, is an indirect consequence of sexual harassment and overemphasis of sexuality in corporate deals.

The best example linked to sexual harassment in Japan that I think can be shared in Asia is how well this country has managed its public space. The problems are more in the workplace and domestic place, but the gender problems in the public space have been managed very well.

The streets, roads, buses, trains, markets, shopping plazas, and parks are safe for women. Any woman can walk these places any time of the day and would not feel intimidated. Such a level of feeling safe, especially in mega cities like Tokyo, is an incredible achievement that should be shared with other countries of Asia. Almost all the countries are having serious problems with their mega and metropolitan cities.

More examples where civil society works closely with the Government and the Parliament strengthens our democratic process, or where the Government makes an effort to make our streets and markets safe for its citizens should be highlighted. Sharing of such experiences within other Asian countries could generate a positive collective spirit. We tend to focus only on sharing problems. We should share solutions and positive examples as hopes and dreams of possibilities are what carry nations forward.

ALFP ACTIVITIES 2010

Country Reports by the Fellows

Johanna O. Zulueta, Rapporteur, ALFP 2010

Identity Controversies in the Modern Society of South Korea

AHN BYUNGOK

In his report, Ahn Byungok gave a brief background of the geography and modern history of Korea before looking at four identity controversies in South Korea. The Korean Peninsula is bordered by China in the north and is divided into North and South Korea. South Korea (hereafter referred to as Korea) is a country with approximately 49 million people and has nine provinces and seven metropolitan cities.

After the liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, Korea was divided into two—the Republic of Korea established by President Lee Seung-man and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea with Kim Il-sung as premier. In the early 1950s, the Korean War occurred and killed hundreds of thousands of Koreans on both sides of the border. Ahn then discussed the government of Lee and the events that led to the collapse of his regime in 1960. In 1980, the Gwangju massacre occurred and more than 2,000 people were killed by a special trained military group. Seven years later, in June 1987, the so-called June Democracy Movement—which caused massive demonstrations—brought democracy to Korea, and Roh Tae-woo was elected the 13th president of the Republic of Korea in the following year. In 1997, Korea was hit by the Asian financial crisis. At that time, the country was under the rule of Kim Young-sam who had spent 30 years as Korea’s leader of the opposition party but unexpectedly merged his Peaceful Democracy Party with Roh’s ruling Democratic Justice Party in 1990.

Ahn said that Korea had no experience of a power change among political parties until Kim Dae-jung was elected the 15th president in 1997. After the regime of Kim Dae-jung and then Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2008), Lee Myung-bak was elected to the presidency in 2008. While Lee’s government makes economic development a priority, there are growing concerns that it has reversed some of the democratic progress that Korean society has made. These issues continue to be controversial in present-day Korea, said Ahn.

From 1960 to 2000, Korea experienced rapid economic growth. Ahn called it “compressed modernization” because Korea attained economic development in a span of only 40 years as compared to other developed countries that have longer histories of industrialization and democratization. This compressed modernization has, however, posed identity controversies as follows:

DEVELOPED OR DEVELOPING? _____

Most Koreans are confused whether Korea is a developing country or not. Ahn said that this confusion can be seen as one of the main identity controversies in Korea and is mainly due to the dual policy pushed by the government. The government is occasionally trying to send a message that Korea is a developed country and that it can play a powerful role in the world economy and political arena. In 1996, Korea became the second Asian country after Japan to be a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and before the global financial crisis, Korea retained its status as the world’s 10th largest economy. Ahn, however, mentioned that the government is reluctant to bear the responsibility of solving global problems (such as climate change and poverty reduction) by arguing that Korea is still a developing country and ought to be given more space to develop.

NEW-NATIONALISM OR MULTICULTURALISM? _____

Korea has a long history of maintaining national identity in the face of foreign influences. From the 1990s onwards, the so-called “New Nationalism” has developed in the national ethos. Ahn argued that two ideologies

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drive the new nationalism: the old logic of anti-imperialism on the one hand, and a state-worshipping ideology introduced by Park Jung-hee (a controversial figure in South Korea as a dictator) on the other. A survey conducted around 2006 showed that 68.2% of the respondents considered “blood” the most important criterion in defining the Korean nation. Ahn, however, said that this does not coincide with the realities in Korean society nowadays. According to figures from the Statistics Agency in 2007, the total number of marriages involving a foreign partner in Korea was 38,491—approximately 11% of all the marriages that took place during that year. Among them, 29,140 Korean men married foreign women and 9,351 Korean women married foreign men. Regarding those foreign women, 14,526 of them came from China, 6,611 from Vietnam, 1,665 from Japan, and 1,531 from the Philippines.

Ahn noted that the number of women who immigrated from other Asian countries has increased rapidly since 2000. However, immigrant women have to confront many problems, such as malicious marriage brokers similar to human traffickers, conflicts with their husbands and families, violation of their husbands, and communication difficulties. NGOs have raised various issues to the government to protect the human rights of immigrant women and to promote Korea’s transition to a multicultural society. Ahn, however, pointed out one issue: the Korean government’s definition of a multicultural society excludes immigrant laborers and refugees, and overseas Chinese. Moreover, the government does not recognize the diverse needs of individual immigrant women with various backgrounds. Ahn also said that he opposes the idea that international marriage is a countermeasure only to tackle Korea’s aging society with fewer birthrates.

ONE OR TWO?

In terms of the relationship between North and South Korea, Ahn said that the tension between the two had been slightly weakened due to the sunshine policy implemented by former President Kim Dae-jung. The main aim of the policy was to soften North Korea’s attitudes towards the South by encouraging interaction and economic assistance. However, relations between the two Koreas have become increasingly strained since February 2008 when President Lee Myung-bak took office, pledging to get tough with Pyongyang over its nuclear weapons program. Since the March 2010 sinking of a South Korean warship Cheon-an in the Yellow Sea, the tension between North and South has continued to escalate.

Ahn argued that the problem is not the division of Korea, but the division of identities in two extremes. He said that according to a recent survey, nearly 75% of South Koreans believe that all Koreans are brothers and sisters regardless of residence and ideology. Ahn, however, said that this survey result does not coincide with many people’s view that South Korea must stop the humanitarian aids to North Korea in order to prevent continuing provocation coming from the North.

NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL?

Lastly, Ahn talked about the Four Major Rivers Project, which is an 18-billion-dollar plan to further develop Korea’s four major river systems—the Han, Nakdong, Geum, and Yeongsan—with the stated goals of preventing water shortages, improving water quality and flood control, and creating spaces for recreation and sports. This project would require the construction of 16 new dams on those rivers, the rebuilding of 87 old dams, the reinforcement of riverbanks and so forth.

Ahn is, however, skeptical if this project could prevent floods, as floods in Korea are usually caused by overflow of ditches and sewages, blocking water flows, mal-management of pumps and banks, all of which have little to do with the lack of dams. Although Korea has recently been building numerous dams—so that the density of large dams of Korea would be the highest in the world—flood damages have increased hundredfold since the 1970s. Furthermore, while supporters claim that they are beautifying the rivers through the project, Ahn argued that it is impossible to find any beauty in man-made water channels confined within super banks with asphalt roads on top of them. He said that the project is based on the confidence that nature can be newly created by engineering works and that gardening of nature can make nature more attractive than its natural conditions.

The People's Republic of China: From Tradition to Modern Times

GUO ZHIYUAN

In his report, Guo Zhiyuan gave an overview of China, briefly covering its history, politics, and economy.

The People's Republic of China was founded by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. The country was named so because the party had the idea of building a country for the people. Currently, China has a population of around 1.34 billion. It has 23 provinces, including Taiwan (which is considered the 23rd province), 5 autonomous regions, and 2 special districts (Hong Kong and Macau). Around 90% of the population is Han Chinese.

In 1912, a democratic revolution took place and created a new country called the Republic of China. At this time, the Republic of China had a good relationship with the United States while the communist party kept on good terms with the Soviet Union, said Guo. This also meant that the communist party was not in agreement with the party that was leading the Republic of China. After the latter party fled to what is now known as Taiwan, the communist party built the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Guo said that one of the events that people may be more familiar with in Chinese history is the Cultural Revolution that Chairman Mao Zedong launched. This revolution continued from the 1960s to the 1970s, and during the 10 years, not only did it destroy a lot of cultural places, but it also victimized a number of intellectuals. When Deng Xiaoping succeeded Mao in 1976, Deng believed that economic development should be a priority in China and carried out an economic reform. Hu Jintao is the current president of China.

According to Guo, China is a big market where developed countries could sell their products. For instance, the Japanese company Toshiba has a lot of stores and factories in China. There are also Japanese convenience stores and restaurant chains in China. Given such a consumption environment, Guo believes that it is hard to ignore China.

With regard to the political, economic, cultural, and legal transformations that took place along with China's development, Guo said that the question to ask is "what kind of role should China play in the international community?" He added that even the Chinese themselves are thinking of what role they should play in the world stage in the future. Guo said that until today, China has focused largely on its relationship with the United States, and likewise, the United States has regarded its relationship with China as important. Moreover, from a political point of view, China continues to face the Taiwan situation, as China sees Taiwan as part of the People's Republic. The communist party wants Taiwan to return to China like Hong Kong and Macau. Yet, while Taiwan is seen as part of China, Taiwan's relations with the United States remains a controversial issue, said Guo.

China is a communist party-led state where the communist party controls everything in the country. The constitution was drafted on December 4, 1982. Yet, Guo claimed that before the creation of the constitution, China had some constitutional documents written to be negotiated between the communist party and other parties. China has three branches of government: the executive (made up of the president, vice president, State Council, and premier), the legislative (National People's Congress), and the judicial (Supreme People's Court). Guo said that the president has the right to nominate the chief judge to the Supreme People's Court, as well as the prime minister.

Guo also talked about the country's population policy. He said that the world has had the misconception about China's one-child policy that the policy applies to all Chinese. Guo clarified that while the policy applies to couples in urban areas, ethnic minorities are entitled to have more than one child. Recently, however, many Chinese couples are deciding not to have more children because of economic concerns, and this has led to the slowdown in the country's birthrate.

Guo then talked about China's open-door policies and mentioned the difference between the country's open-door policy in the 19th century and the policy in modern times. He said that while the policy of opening

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up the country was met with negativity in the past, the current open-door policy of China is seen in a positive light. Back in the 1970s, when former President Deng Xiaoping carried out an economic reform, he wanted China to become rich and thus implemented an open-door policy. Guo believes that having the country closed would have made China isolated and left it at a loss. Guo also added that during the economic reform in 1978, the country switched from a planned economy to a socialist market economy.

With the assumption that a country like Sri Lanka often has two images (the one that is projected to the world by the regime and the other that reflects the actual conditions of the country), Sasanka Perera divided his report into three parts. First, he gave an overview of Sri Lanka with the basic information that everyone can find on the Internet. He then gave the country's two different profiles: the "tourist profile" (which is the beautiful image of the country presented by the government and also has some basis in reality) and the "social and political profile" (which consists of the information not always accessible through the media).

According to Perera, the national flag of Sri Lanka offers a sense of the contradictions in the country: the majority—the Sinhalas—has greater and more emphatic representation in the flag as opposed to other ethnic groups in the country. The national anthem written in the 1940s, however, is rather secular and expresses all Sri Lankans as one family. Perera nevertheless said that despite the message in the national anthem, the social divisions that are signified in the national flag continue to be recreated in contemporary politics.

In terms of the population, approximately 70% of the Sri Lankans are Sinhalas; about 7%, Muslims (which is both an ethnic and a religious group); and over 20%, Tamils. Tamils are divided into two groups: Indian Tamils (who have origins in the 19th century when their ancestors were brought to work in the tea and coffee plantations owned by the British and some of whom still do not have citizenship rights) and Sri Lankan Tamils who have a much longer history in the country. In terms of religion, the majority religion is Buddhism, and other religious groups present in the country are Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. Perera said that Sri Lanka has enjoyed a high literacy rate since the 1960s, and with the current literate population being 90.7%, the national literacy is the highest in South Asia. Gender equality is "reasonably acceptable," and as an illustration, Perera said that at the University of Colombo, approximately 60% of students are women and only 40% are men. He added that this pattern is usually reflected in other universities, as women seem to do better in school. Perera, however, noted that despite this dominant representation of women in higher education, relatively few females are represented in national politics and top positions in both the government and private sector companies. In addition, he emphasized that the "tourist profile" tends to portray Sri Lanka as a beautiful ("postcard-perfect") and peaceful place and tends to disregard the less enviable social realities and conditions that exist in Sri Lanka. Further, Perera said that Sri Lanka is beset with problems, such as violence (including political violence), criminality, corruption, postwar conditions, debt issues, and refugees, all of which create a totally different image of Sri Lanka from what is often projected to the world.

Perera then talked about ethnicity and ethnic conflict, which he believes is an issue of identity politics in Sri Lanka. Ethnic conflict is one significant problem that hounds Sri Lanka. Perera believes that misunderstandings between the majority (i.e., Sinhalas) and the majority within the minorities (i.e., Tamils), competition of economic resources and ethnic politics led to the violence that was transformed into a civil war that lasted from the late 1970s to 2009. He added that some people find the inter-ethnic conflict between the Sinhalas and the Tamils is of recent origin, while others believe that it has long historical roots. Perera, however, claimed that this conflict lacks historical depth, as it only began in the 1950s when the Tamils and the Sinhalas started competing for scarce resources, including education and jobs. It was then in the late 1970s that the conflict became militarized.

According to Perera, language also plays a significant part in the social divisions and the current conflicts that exist in the country. While the official language of Sri Lanka is Sinhala, English and Tamil are considered national languages. However, according to language service audits of state agencies, such as the Official Languages Commission and general experience, often national and local services are not provided in the Tamil language

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though it is required by law. The language issue is also seen in education where schools are divided into Tamil and Sinhala-speaking schools. Some schools are even further divided into Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist schools thereby entrenching a system of segregation.

Perera next talked about the dismantling of democratic institutions that has been occurring in Sri Lanka since the late 1970s. He mentioned that the government recently made a change to the constitution and made the presidency an “extremely powerful” position which an incumbent could indefinitely contest and occupy. Since the introduction of the presidential system and the orientation of general politics in the late 1970s, many aspects of the governance have become politicized; examples of this include the appointment of ex-military officers as government agents for various districts without having them pass the conventional exams for civil service, appointment of secretaries to ministries based on family and political considerations bypassing the formal civil service, increase of political appointments to the foreign service, the presidential appointment of university vice chancellors and so on. Furthermore, Perera noted that up until early 20th century, Sri Lanka’s multicultural society was not a contested political issue and difference was tolerated and even encouraged. In the process of recent political changes, however, people have forgotten the larger parameters of their heritage. Perera emphasized that in the midst of the present politics, the Sri Lankans have dismantled two things: (1) the democratic practices and institutions and (2) the memory of how Sri Lanka managed difference in the past.

Perera ended his presentation by talking about reconciliation, which he said has become a simplistic buzzword in many segments of Sri Lankan society nowadays. He, however, sees no possibility for real reconciliation at present in so far as the state’s actions are concerned. He also noted that civil society is neither strong enough—owing to its own agendas—nor adequately legitimized or rooted among the people. Meanwhile, academics have become “non-entities,” as many have become interested in the government and public positions rather than intellectual activity or constructively advising regimes. Perera also said that there is no serious and informed opposition to recent political trends coming from academics and that universities have been politicized. Likewise, he sees a realignment of economic and military ties globally and regionally under the current regime and believes that China’s role is an important one in the context of which many traditional international linkages have been redefined.

Thailand Report

KONG RITHDEE

In his report, Kong Rithdee focused on the political concerns of Thailand. He stated that in the past five years, politics is in every Thai person's consciousness. This is because the political events that have occurred in Thailand for the past five years are strange and divisive. Since 2004, there has been an outbreak of violence in the southern part of Thailand—where a majority of the people living there are Thai-Muslims, with the Thai Buddhists being the minority—and the situation has become intense ever since. Rithdee said that bombings in this region are almost on a daily basis. However, while people see this situation as a religious conflict, Rithdee believes that the situation is not as simple as a conflict between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims; it is a complex issue.

Broadly speaking, Thailand is currently divided into two main groups or the so-called movements: the Yellow Shirts (a Royalist group that dislikes Thaksin Shinawatra, the former Prime Minister of Thailand who had served from February 2001 to September 2006) and the Red Shirts (a group that supports Thaksin). Rithdee said that it all began with a coup d'état on September 19, 2006, when a military group ousted Thaksin, who was then Prime Minister, and took over the country by installing a military government. Rithdee said that this was the starting point of the divisions that continue to exist in present-day Thailand. During Thaksin's reign, many people from the middle class disagreed with how the Prime Minister was governing the country, especially when it was believed that he was challenging the power of the established institution—an idea that does not sit well with a country where people love the King and believe that the King is a key that holds the country together. Rithdee said that the Prime Minister Thaksin was popular among the poor and adopted a populist method when he was campaigning.

During the general election that took place after the coup, Thaksin's supporters were voted back into the parliament mainly owing to the support coming from the poor regions of the country. In response to this, the Yellow Shirts who were against Thaksin staged a big protest to oust the government led by the party backed by Thaksin. In December 2008, Abhisit Vejjajiva came into power partly with the help of the Yellow Shirts. In April 2009, however, the Red Shirts protested and staged a big riot in Bangkok where they stormed the venue of the ASEAN meeting, forced the cancellation of the summit, and managed to paralyze parts of Bangkok through blockades and massive protests. Most of the Red Shirts were poor people from the countryside, though Rithdee pointed out that there were a lot of rich people supporting the Red Shirts. The poor supported Thaksin because he was perceived as pro-poor compared to his predecessors. Rithdee added that during this time, there was a strong sense of injustice; when the Yellow Shirts staged a protest, nothing was done to stop them, but when the Red Shirts protested, the military came in to disperse them. The protests that started in March 2010 and lasted for two months were relatively peaceful but the situation got worse in May 2010 when the government threatened a crackdown against these protesters. Rithdee mentioned that regarding the May 2010 conflict, the government claimed no responsibility and rather blamed the protesters. Given that both sides have their own version of the story they tell to the people, Rithdee added that truth seems to be elusive.

Rithdee said that the events in Bangkok are commonly seen as a result of class conflict; some foreign media even simply refer to this conflict as a "class war." Rithdee, however, believes that the conflict that currently exists in Thailand is more complex, as it has many dimensions to it. He also mentioned the issue of the pro- and anti-monarchy groups, which is another factor in the current conflict. For instance, some sub-groups in the Red Shirts subscribe to the leftist ideology and view the monarchy as one of the main issues that needs to be discussed in order to move the country forward. While reconciliation is currently a buzzword in Thailand, Rithdee is doubtful about the possibility of restoring the *normal* situation since the poor in Thailand continue to occupy a marginalized position.

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Lastly, Rithdee talked about the relation of popular culture to politics. As an illustration, he mentioned how the film of Palme d'Or awardee Apichatpong Weerasethakul—which depicts the poor people in the northeast part of Thailand—was not in any way a political one, but could be interpreted politically. Apichatpong's films had suffered some censorship, but upon his receipt of the prestigious award, he was welcomed and recognized as a filmmaker, said Rithdee. In this regard, he said that if one thinks that art and culture can play a part in solving the current conflict, one of the obstacles that one could face is censorship. Rithdee further stated that in Thailand, there is an uneasy relationship between the artist and the state and that modern culture also has a political dimension, which can be said to be part of the political climate of Thailand at the moment.

Pakistan

FOUZIA SAEED

Fouzia Saeed began her report with a basic background of Pakistan. Pakistan is officially called the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and while it was created as a secular country in 1947, it gradually became an Islamic country. Males outnumber females in Pakistan's population, and there exists discrimination that women face in the country. Moreover, Pakistan is predominantly Muslim and has a small number of religious minorities. Urdu is the national language.

In terms of Pakistan's government structure, Saeed said that the country has a parliamentary system of governance with the prime minister as the head of the government and the president as the head of state. It has two houses, and since the country is a federation, each province has its own assembly. Over the years, Pakistan has gone through a lot of regime changes from democracy to dictatorship, and Saeed mentioned that it is rare that a democratically elected government in Pakistan would complete its five-year term. She added that one interesting thing about Pakistanis is that, while they are a political people, they feel that mainstream politics is "not their thing" and that people should not just join political parties, as they think mainstream politics is reserved for politicians and that getting into mainstream politics would make one tainted. Saeed, however, believes that people should engage in politics and encourages the youth to get into it so that they could "turn it around."

Going into Pakistan's social issues, Saeed said that social disparities are vivid with a big gap between the rich and the poor. Poverty is a concern in the country, and according to Saeed, there are many reasons why poverty exists. The gap between the rich and the poor, however, is due to the division of power rather than that of resources. She said that Pakistan is not a poor country and should be capable of providing basic needs and services to its citizens, but it does not, mostly because of the power imbalance in the country. Saeed added that there has been little land reform in the country and that feudalism still exists. Pakistani society continues to maintain a loyalty-based system and personal loyalties are important.

Saeed then talked about security issues. For the past several decades, Pakistan and its geographical location and access to the sea have been considered to be strategically important—in terms of the U.S.-Soviet relations and their conflicts that directly began to involve Pakistan in the 1960s. Since 1947, India was a staunch ally of the Soviet Union, and hence the United States sought Pakistan as a possible ally in the region. In this context, the United States propagated the idea that religion would be the tool to fight the Soviet Union's philosophy—communism, which accordingly meant "no religion"—and, therefore, inculcated such an idea into some Islamic organizations and gave funds to them. Given that Pakistan was the only country in the region that had developed close ties with the United States instead of the Soviet Union, and that Afghanistan had always been close to the Soviet Union, the war with Afghanistan, as well as the civil war in Pakistan, started. Saeed said that with this civil disorder, the Taliban (which means "students" and was in fact formed by university students) emerged and brought order to the country. However, the group has evolved into what is known today, and Pakistan is criticized for not being harsh on the group. This is expected, said Saeed, since the country gave birth to the Taliban.

Saeed also talked about how Islam has changed and how the current Islam propagated by Saudi Arabia is negatively affecting Pakistan and its people. Moreover, Saeed mentioned how Saudi Arabia funds Islamic organizations in Pakistan to propagate an extremely conservative (i.e., strict, no music, women should be covered) kind of Islam in the country and lamented the fact that it is the young people who accept this kind of Islam. She, however, said that a majority of the Islam practiced in the country is still folk Islam.

Saeed ended her presentation with a short video clip on Pakistani music from the Manganhar community.

In her report, Seki Kaoruko focused on three questions. First, she touched on the commonly held view that, ever since the religious wars of the 6th century, Japanese society had not engaged in “armed” conflict amongst each other over religious or extreme beliefs, as there had been a tenet of coexistence of religions in the country. While somewhat questioning this view, she suggested a measured approach to history and what it projected for the future. The second question she raised was about the current world ranking of the Japanese economy measured in terms of GNP, which slid from second to third, with China occupying second place. Does this signal the beginning of the demise of Japan’s economic strength? As to the third question, she made a connection with her second point and asked if Japan had taken sufficient advantage of its economic position that it enjoyed in the past decades.

Seki then gave a brief history of Japan, including its origins, the existence of a female ruler, Himiko, and that of mini-states before their consolidation into the nation-state (now known as Japan), as well as the arrival of Buddhism in the country. In this context, Seki talked about how people came to accept the coexistence of different religions, while overcoming sporadic violent skirmishes, especially up to the 16th century. She then mentioned the period of national isolation when Japan closed itself to foreign influence and opened itself only to trade with the Netherlands and China. She added that in the early 19th century, Japan was politically and militarily strong, but economically weak in comparison. Japan’s attempt to expand into Asian countries to make up for this weakness by waging war was a serious mistake, not least as it involved atrocities amounting to war crimes. World War II was decisively brought to an end after two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These events continue to be debated by historians, politicians, lawyers, and others.

In the postwar era, Japan’s economy saw tremendous growth and became the only non-Western country to join the G7 group. Seki then explained Japan’s economic growth from the 1970s up to the present and briefly mentioned the so-called bubble economy and its collapse in the 1990s that Japan experienced. She added that if one were to look at the continuities and changes in Japan during this period, one would find the standards expected of Japan held remarkably high. To further illustrate the continuities and changes that occurred in Japanese society, Seki showed some video clips about Japanese culture, while explaining certain cultural aspects of the Japanese and how these have persisted or endured amidst the changing political and economic tides. She then underscored the importance of looking into such non-quantitative aspects in order to understand where society might be headed to.

With regard to her third query about whether Japan had acquired what might be seen as “mileage” from its status as the second-largest economy in the past years, Seki said that a number of expectations were focused on Japanese economic contribution. The world focused its eyes on Japan as being the second-largest economy (before China overtook it in the middle of 2010). However, Seki feared that there existed a gap between Japan’s idea of its own role in global society and the reality. She gave some examples and said that despite the fact that Japan was the second-largest economy in the world, its contribution to humanitarian aid was not necessarily seen as being proportionate to its status as the second-largest economy. As of September 2010, for instance, Japan contributed merely 1/60th of the amount the United Kingdom—the largest donor—contributed to the United Nations Central Emergency Revolving Fund to support humanitarian assistance. Seki also cited Japan’s shrinking ODA contributions. If the status quo were to continue, she said that it may become difficult to see Japan as an international “political” heavyweight in the future. Moreover, she feared that Japanese people have become more and more introverted in recent years. At the same time, however, Japan’s own sustenance has been increasingly dependent on coexistence and trade with the international community. The question then is how to sustain that while Japan’s image of itself differs from what is expected by the outside world.

Concluding her presentation with the third point she discussed above, Seki said that it is difficult to see in which direction Japan is willing to go at the moment, at least from an outside perspective. At the same time, she said that she would like to look back on the continuity in Japanese society, not necessarily in economic terms, but also from the aspects of the culture, tradition, and philosophies of Japan, underscoring their resilience and ability to adapt to the future.

Seminars by Resource Persons/Workshops

Johanna O. Zulueta, Rapporteur, ALFP 2010

Rights and Reinventing Culture

SASANKA PERERA

ALFP 2010 Fellow

Sasanka Perera showed a film about an indigenous community—or the only tribe in Sri Lanka as they identify themselves. This film is a part of the project that was set up to make three documentary films based on young people in three different locations in the country. Given that there are myths about the living of indigenous people that have been created and believed by many others, Perera showed the film to address the issue of indigenous and human rights, as well as how the culture of the tribe in the film has been constructed by a more dominant culture outside. He also talked about the fact that this particular tribe has been documented since 1909 when the first British anthropologist set foot on the island of Sri Lanka. Since then, the politics of creating and recreating this tribal culture has been going on. Moreover, Perera pointed out that the people in this tribe are trying to live according to a certain image, which is not necessarily their own image but rather an image constructed for them by travelers (such as Sinhala and people from other parts of the world), in order to sustain a tourist economy. Thus, the film does not portray how the tribe actually lives but shows the constructed image by the intention of both parties—the tribal people and the outsider. Perera said that the whole idea of tradition is a trap in which all these people are caught.

Perera's comments on the film were then followed by a discussion among the fellows. Fouzia Saeed shared her experience of being involved in cultural movements in Pakistan. She particularly focused on the maintenance of folk traditions and talked about one community. She said that on the basis of initial research, it was found that people in this community did not claim that they belonged to this particular community as they were ashamed of their culture and thought of themselves as inferior compared to the urbanites. In this context, a movement took place not only to restore the group's dignity and help them go back to their tradition but also to bring their tradition into the limelight and get the urbanites to appreciate them, said Saeed.

In response, Perera claimed that he has witnessed similar cases in Sri Lanka where people are ashamed of where they come from. For instance, some of those identified as “people from the jungle” may be embarrassed of their culture, though at the same time, they take pride at some levels for being different from the rest of the Sinhala. However, Perera pointed out that people, especially parents who are more interested in their children's education are more likely to let go of their identity. This is because they do not want their children to be known to be coming from that particular community, since the children may be segregated (i.e., be asked to sit at the back of the classroom). Perera emphasized that this division between “people from the jungle” and those from “civilization” continues to exist and concern some people in the country.

Perera further talked about those who are interested in maintaining their culture as well as links with a more dominant culture. He added that there are certain things in tradition and culture that blend easily while there are other things that do not. In addition, he said that there are villages in the community portrayed in the film that are no different from some Sinhala villages. These villages have adopted farming, and some of their members have become government officials. Thus, they have no reason to maintain vestiges of their identity.

Other fellows also shared their views on the contradictions between modernity and tradition, as well as on the effects of globalization on these traditional cultures. Seki Kaoruko asked to what extent it is ethical to modernize a society. While there are some cases of assimilation of the so-called jungle people in Sri Lanka, Perera mentioned that assimilation is not forced; it happens because of convenience. Likewise, Ahn Byungok stated that what is more important for people in realizing a sense of satisfaction in life is to have the right to decide what to do about their lives by themselves and not have decisions imposed on them from the outside.

Discussion with Nitobe Kokusai Juku Participants

The ALFP fellows were joined by the Nitobe Kokusai Juku participants of the International House of Japan for a seminar, which was divided into three sessions and carried out on the basis of three issues: environment, gender, and conflict and education.

In the first session on environment, Ms. Kaneko Motoko (a consultant for urban planning) and Ahn Byungok (ALFP 2010 Fellow) gave presentations and talked about environmental issues from their fields of expertise. Ms. Kaneko particularly focused on the problem of CO² emissions and the ways in which Japan could contribute to the reduction of the emissions. One of the approaches she introduced was the development of a compact urban structure that is centered on public transportation. Ms. Kaneko also argued the importance of promoting the effective use of energy and green development and symbiosis with nature. Meanwhile, Ahn focused on the issue of global climate change. He claimed that the current natural disasters in some countries should serve as a warning about global warming. He also talked about the tension between climate protection and development concerns, as well as the tension between developed and developing countries owing to several factors, such as the financial situation of each country and the difficulty of integrating development concerns with efforts against global warming.

In the second session, Ms. Yonamine Ryoko (a researcher at a governmental organization) and Fouzia Saeed (ALFP 2010 Fellow) gave presentations on gender issues existing in their own country. Ms. Yonamine first gave basic demographic information that showed the differences between men and women in terms of employment rate, work conditions, salaries, and average marrying age in Japan. She then touched on the issues surrounding women (e.g., child abuse and domestic violence) as well as other issues that highly concern Japanese society, such as low fertility rate and decreasing population. In order to tackle these issues, as Ms. Yonamine emphasized, we need to strengthen the child-support systems and also change our traditional attitudes toward women and expected gender roles both at home and work. While Ms. Yonamine discussed Japanese women as a group, many of the issues Saeed addressed emphasized the fact that women in Pakistan comprise a diverse group of people and that there are different kinds of issues concerning women of different classes and backgrounds. Saeed also talked about a women's movement in Pakistan that started earlier than the country's independence in 1947. While she acknowledged the presence of women in parliament and their effective performance, Saeed touched on the issue of Talibanization—how its patriarchal ideology has created inequality between men and women in the country.

In the third session, Mr. Kawaguchi Kohei (an officer from the Ministry of Defense) gave a presentation on Japan's defense policy while Sasanka Perera (ALFP 2010 Fellow) talked about the role of education in various aspects. Mr. Kawaguchi particularly focused on the question of U.S. military bases in Okinawa and the problems concerning the Okinawans and the security of both Japan and East Asia. He explained the complexity of the issue and the difficulty of finding a solution that would be beneficial to all involved. Reconciliation is also a key issue for Sri Lanka where segregations exist among the people of different ethnicities and religious backgrounds. Perera specifically pointed out the importance of creating an educational environment in which issues of segregation are not only realized by teachers and students but also eliminated at schools and ultimately in society.

Noh Theater and Peace

SHIMIZU KANJI

Noh Performer

Mr. Shimizu Kanji began his talk with a brief history of Noh. The art of Noh was first formed more than 600 years ago in Japan. If one were to explore the roots of Noh, it would be clear that Japan had received influences from China and Korea in terms of music, poems, and performing art. However, the art form that was heavily influenced by Chinese and Korean poems and songs was eventually Japanese from the original version and the performing art that expresses a great deal of the aesthetics of tea ceremony and flower arrangement from medieval times is the Japanese Noh that continues to be enjoyed today. Mr. Shimizu also briefly mentioned Bugaku (Japanese court dance), which is an art form that was imported from China and Korea more than 1,000 years ago and is still performed in its original form today. Other performing arts, such as Kabuki and Bunraku (puppet theater), came into existence in the Edo period (1603–1868). Even in contemporary times, the genres of these art forms that have been brought into Japan still remain and are maintaining their special features, and that is one of the characteristics of Japanese art, said Mr. Shimizu.

Mr. Shimizu next explained the characteristics of the Noh stage. The square part in the center of the stage is the place where the actors dance. He said that one interesting feature of Noh is that from a void space at the back of the stage, various people (including musicians and performers) enter onto the stage and perform, but at the end, everything disappears and the stage becomes completely empty again. Pointing to each part of the stage, Mr. Shimizu further explained its significance in the overall Noh performance. One distinct characteristic of a Noh stage is its *hashigakari* or the narrow bridge where the actors enter. A curtain also separates the world after death from that of the living, as the space behind the curtain signifies the world after death, and the stage serves as the site of encounter between the underworld and the world of the living. The actors enter from the world behind the curtain to the world of the living and talk about their stories to the audience. Mr. Shimizu said that the curtain is usually placed in the left or western part of the stage to indicate the “West”—the origin of Buddhism (i.e., India)—which is a place of longing for the Japanese. A pine tree serves as a backdrop in all Noh stages. The tree is portrayed as always being green to symbolize life as a continuous process: that life goes on and on. In addition, Mr. Shimizu said that a pine tree is a tree that one can find anywhere in Japan. There are three to four instrumentalists who play the flute, the shoulder-drum (*kotsuzumi*) and the hip drum (*ōtsuzumi*). There is no chord instrument in a Noh play. The harmony is controlled by the flute.

Mr. Shimizu, who usually plays female roles (*onnagata*), then performed part of a Noh play entitled *Eguchi*, which is a story about a prostitute who becomes a deity. He also acted a part in the play *Yashima*, which talks about the victory of a medieval samurai warrior Minamoto Yoshitsune in a battle. After giving the Fellows a taste of Noh performances, Mr. Shimizu showed them some masks and explained each of their uses. He also mentioned that mask-makers have their own special techniques in making masks, which are usually seen in their way of etching and carving. These masks have 700 to 800 years of longevity.

One part of a Noh performance is called *Kyogen*, which is usually played as an interlude. *Kyogen* is a more comical and farcical play and is different from Noh plays that are serious and sad. The lack of laughter in Noh, according to Mr. Shimizu, is related to the sense of death, as well as to the cherishing of the four seasons. He also pointed out the fact that Noh was played on an outdoor stage back in old days. Today, the *Takigi-Noh* (a Noh play performed outdoors with bonfires) still exists, and the audience can hear the sound of the wind and insects while enjoying the play.

Mr. Shimizu said that at present, there are only about 200 classical Noh plays. Noh has also adapted to contemporary times. In the case of the Tessenkai School, with which Mr. Shimizu is affiliated, for instance, the Noh performances that they show include not only those with classical themes but also those with modern variations, such as the war in Okinawa and the bombing of Nagasaki. Mr. Shimizu said that while the classical

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Noh plays are oftentimes played on a Noh stage in a Noh theater, the modern or contemporary Noh plays can be played at different venues (such as a Catholic church, in the case of the play about Nagasaki bombing). Noh had long been an all-male performing art and it was only after World War II that Noh accepted female actors. Recently, there have been several female Noh actors.

Before ending the seminar, Mr. Shimizu showed the Fellows video clips of three Noh performances—one about a Korean laborer forced to work in Japan, another about Okinawa civilian victims of the War, and another one about the victims of the Nagasaki bombing.

Documentaries and Visual Media Literacy

MORI TATSUYA

Film Director

Mr. Mori Tatsuya, a film director, first shared his experience of making two documentary films, *A* and *A2*, for which he has become known in the past decade. These films are about a Japanese religious cult, Aum Shinrikyo, and have been shown at various international film festivals, such as those in Berlin, Beirut, India, Hong Kong, China, and Syria, as well as in universities in Australia, France, and so forth. As he talked about the process in which the films were produced and made into DVDs—and the obstacles that he faced then—Mr. Mori expressed his opinion on the issues concerning the media (its role, effect on society, etc.) as well as on the mechanism in which certain concepts are created by society.

Mr. Mori specifically argued that the Aum incident of March 1995 caused the Japanese people to have a great sense of fear not only toward the Aum Shinrikyo but also toward an intangible, hypothetical enemy that was co-created and expanded by the media and people themselves. This hypothetical enemy was born and spread widely one after another owing to the way in which people began to see things after the Aum incident: people divided everything into good or evil and separated themselves from what they found “evil” while remaining on the “good” side. In such a world of dichotomy, those who were labeled as evil are severely attacked and often completely alienated by the rest of society without question. And the media, for the most part, would help the process by approaching the issue in the way society wants to approach it.

Mr. Mori also pointed out the problem of people’s tendency to organize themselves, especially when they share sentiments (or feelings of hatred) against a particular group of individuals with baseless fear and anxiety that they build up through the influence of mass media. Such organized hostility could even lead to war. In order to avoid this kind of phenomenon, we need to think about what the media present, as well as the role the media play. Mr. Mori particularly emphasized how visual media can help people analyze things from different perspectives. He further stressed that his documentary films show only *his* truth and not someone else’s; if some other person made a documentary film about Aum Shinrikyo, then the film would be different from his. The important thing is to keep in mind the fact that there are uncountable perspectives from which one can understand things. In other words, literacy to see documentaries simply as media is essential in grasping a truth and making individual judgments about it.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- The question of how media should exist and how people should see media.
- Limited space for documentary films to be produced and presented in Japan.
- The question of objectivity—whether there is ever anything that is absolutely objective.
- The difference between entertainment and documentary.
- The role of documentary filmmakers in telling a truth vs. what mass media might present.

Refugee Issues and the Japanese Government

KUMAOKA MICHIIYA

Board Member, Japan International Volunteer Center

The Fellows visited the headquarters of the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) in Tokyo and had two sessions with Mr. Kumaoka Michiya.

In the morning session, Mr. Kumaoka first showed the Fellows a video that mainly covered the activities that JVC carries out in other countries. He then gave an overview of the non-profit organizations (NPOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—including their growth between the 1960s and 1990s and some of the issues concerning their establishments—in Japan. In the afternoon session, Mr. Kumaoka continued to talk about Japanese NPOs and NGOs and particularly touched on the issues concerning their management of funds, as well as their relationship with the government—how NGOs should carry out their activities under the jurisdiction of the government.

Mr. Kumaoka then talked about refugee issues in Japan. He said that there are three dimensions to the issues. The first dimension has to do with the government's support for refugees outside Japan. Mr. Kumaoka said that the Japanese government started its concern and aid for refugees and refugee-applicants overseas in the late 1970s and early 1980s, first through UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF and then through Japanese NGOs after they were established. The second dimension is related to the resettlement of refugees in Japan. The first case of resettlement took place mostly in the 80s and 90s during which 11,000 refugees from Indochina resettled in Japan. The second resettlement project started recently (September 2010) as a 3-year-long experiment, by first bringing approximately 30 Burmese or Myanmar refugees to Japan. The third dimension has to do with the refugee identification system in Japan. Mr. Kumaoka mentioned how the system has been put under the Ministry of Justice and Immigration Bureau and how the governmental policies for immigration and refugees are infamous for being xenophobic or too nationalistic. However, there had been voices from both inside and outside Japan that general immigration and refugee issues should be separated and that part of the refugee identification system should be done by external experts. Thus, from 2004 to 2005, a reform took place, and consequently, two changes came about with regard to the reform: (1) the number of cases identified as refugees slightly increased and (2) the number of refugees who were granted special permission of residence on humanitarian bases also slightly increased. And the latter particularly acknowledged the importance of refugees having legal status to live and work in Japan. Despite some improvements within the system, however, Mr. Kumaoka said that there still remain problems and questions.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- The difficulty of involving young Japanese people in NGOs especially after 9/11.
- Question of to what extent NGOs could or should depend on the government, especially in terms of funding.
- The increasing influence of NGOs in UN organizations' decision-making processes.
- Issues concerning the limited access and capacity of Japanese NGOs.

A Down-to-Earth Look at Tokyo: Another Side of the Global City

MACHIMURA TAKASHI

Professor, Hitotsubashi University

The Fellows went to the Sunamachi Cultural Center in Koto-ku, Tokyo, where they had a seminar with Professor Machimura Takashi of Hitotsubashi University.

As he began his seminar, Professor Machimura noted how Tokyo had a dream of becoming a global financial city and competed particularly against New York and London from the 1980s up to the early 1990s. However, in the 2000s, as a renowned sociologist Saskia Sassen once said, Tokyo “slipped down” as a global city. In this respect, Professor Machimura talked about the three phases of economic crisis in Tokyo since the 1990s. The first one was the post-bubble phase in the 1990s during which there was a decline in economic growth and land prices changed drastically. The second phase was during the neo-liberal drift from the late 1990s to mid-2000s when there was a polarization of annual income distribution within Tokyo. The third phase emerged in the post-Lehman-shock period in the late 2000s. Although the impacts of the 2008 financial crisis did not seem so serious in Tokyo compared to the U.S. and European markets, Professor Machimura expressed that the manufacturing industry was hard-hit as Japan had become more export-oriented since the first bubble.

Professor Machimura asked, how then the local community responds or adapts to the changes—made at the local, national, and global levels—in order to survive within the context that Tokyo is a shrinking global city. According to him, the target of the project is *shōtengai* (shopping streets), which are embedded in the local community and are often organized by a small association. Up until recent years, there was a decline in the number of small shops in these shopping streets. However, there have been attempts to revive these streets recently. Professor Machimura believes that the revival has been led by several factors, including increased media coverage, the emergence of new markets, improving policy initiative of the streets, and the rediscovery of the value and history of the *shōtengai*. Professor Machimura also noted that the revival of the shopping streets contributes to the construction of a new local identity in Tokyo.

Lastly, Professor Machimura gave a comparison of three districts in Tokyo, Azabu-juban, Sunamachi-ginza, and Koenji, from both historical and cultural perspectives along with the challenge that each district faces.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- The meaning of “global city”—what makes a city a “global city”?
- The structure of the city administration and its independence, in terms of to what extent it is affected by the ups and downs of political arena and economy.
- The difficulty of maintaining small local stores while letting globalization take place.

Gender and Ethnicity in the Neo-Liberalist Reforms in Japan in 1990–2010

UENO CHIZUKO

Professor, University of Tokyo

Professor Ueno Chizuko gave a reflexive analysis of the Japanese gender-equal policy and globalization within the context of the neo-liberalist reform from 1990 to 2010.

One thing Professor Ueno highlighted was the year 1991, which was epoch-making for Japanese society for three reasons: (1) it marked the start of the post-Cold War regime; (2) it was the year of the collapse of the bubble economy, followed by a long-lasting recession; and (3) the testimonies of the military comfort women were made for the first time in this year. Professor Ueno added that the year 1991 was the start of the new international regime of East Asia, accompanied by a neo-nationalist backlash in the following two decades.

The Japanese neo-liberalist reform began in the 1990s or the so-called lost decade. Despite the stagnation in the economy, there was an achievement in terms of gender-equal policy after the 1985 ratification of the UN treaty for women, as well as of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) and the Labor Dispatch Law. In 1999, the Basic Law for Gender Equality was passed. This achievement was made by neo-liberalist administrations with the aim of having more women participate in the labor market, as the neo-liberalists had anticipated labor shortage in the near future—owing to the rapid aging of the population and the low fertility rate of Japanese society. At the outset, these policies may have been seen as gender-equal policies, but in effect, these were part of the labor policies that simply encouraged women's participation in the labor market, said Professor Ueno. Furthermore, she pointed out that how, in the long run, one would find ironies in the EEOL, as it contributed little to the improvement of women's work conditions and caused an increase in female irregular workers who would stay outside the law. And while in the early 1990s, most irregular workers consisted of married, middle-aged women who wanted to have extra income, the situation drastically changed in the following decade. Today, irregular workers mostly consist of single, unmarried, young female women. Consequently, not only did the gender gap increase, but the gap among women also widened.

During the two decades from 1990 to 2010, the rise of neo-nationalism and backlash against gender equality was also seen. Although the first oral testimonies of comfort women were brought out in 1991 and the Asian Women's Fund was established by the government in 1995 to address the issue and support the surviving victims, there were efforts within the country to cover up the problem. For instance, in 1996, the Japanese Society for Historical Textbook Reform (a group of revisionist historians) requested to erase the sections of the comfort women issue from the Japanese state-censored history textbooks. Professor Ueno believes that there is a strange alliance between neo-liberalism and neo-nationalism.

Today, women have more options in terms of their lifestyles (e.g., they can stay either married or single, work or not work, etc.). However, Professor Ueno argued that because women, especially young women, have internalized neo-liberalist values, such as the importance of “self-determination” and “self-responsibility,” they have rather become individualists and now have difficulty uniting or organizing activism.

Lastly, Professor Ueno briefly touched on the issue of Japan being exclusionist in terms of its migrant policy and labor market for foreigners. She believes that “gender” serves as a functional equivalent of ethnicity in the migrant countries such as EU and the United States.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- The concept of “gender”—where it comes from and what it means in a given society.
- The complexity of the context in which the comfort women issue has been addressed.
- The relationship between the neo-liberalist reform and women's participation in the labor market, as well as gender-equality related issues.

The Rising Religious Militancy in Asia

FOUZIA SAEED

ALFP 2010 Fellow

Fouzia Saeed talked about the issue of the Talibanization or militancy process in Pakistan and other Asian countries. According to Saeed, the militants in Pakistan are known to have Islamic schools or what are called madrasahs since the 1960s. In the late 1970s, these schools were funded by the United States. Today, they are funded by Saudi Arabia. People usually do not give up their daughters to madrasahs; however, girls at the age of 16 or 17 whose fathers have died in military attacks are often recruited into the militant group. Saeed said that while every madrasah is not necessarily a militant madrasah, every militant came out of a madrasah. She then raised two points: (1) people should be aware of the isolation and the propagation of this discourse and (2) there are so many of these people already crafted or made that the world does not realize.

While the militants do not recognize nations or countries, their goal is to have a pan-Islamic state, said Saeed. Moreover, the militants have given a particular meaning to jihad, which, in truth, has several different concepts. They claimed that jihad technically was to be allowed by a head of state like Khalifah, but because they do not have a head, they are allowed to do jihad until they have a Khalifah and a whole Islamic system in place. In this manner, these militants or the Taliban have carefully-crafted structures and detailed ideologies of their own, Saeed stressed. In addition, not only do they have a steady source of money and receive salaries in dollars, but they also raise money through their links with the timber mafia, drug movements, and other businesses. According to Saeed, what the Islamic militants are propagating is a monolithic form of Islam that is foreign to Pakistan and other countries like Indonesia. Further, this kind of Islam called Deobandi is a ruthless kind of Islam that prohibits music and dancing.

Kong Rithdee (ALFP 2010 Fellow from Thailand) also shared his thoughts on the Muslim minority in Thailand. He said that southern Thailand used to be a separate kingdom unrelated to Siam. From the 15th to the 16th century, people in the south converted to Islam owing to the influence from the Malays. In the early 1900s, however, Siam conquered the southern part and made it part of the kingdom. Rithdee said that people in the south have connected themselves more with the Malays than the central Buddhist government. From the 1950s to the 1960s, Thailand experienced separatist movements in the south. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the government managed to tone things down in the south through economic development and smart policies. However, the situation became worse in 2004 during Thaksin's term, and people blamed him for it, while Rithdee believes that the aggravation was partly encouraged by the rise of global insurgency.

After the discussion, Saeed showed a feature film, *Khuda Kay Liye* (In the Name of God), produced by Shoaib Mansoor and released in Pakistan in July 2007. The film shows the first few steps of militancy—how it gets inculcated into “normal people” who are doing every day work, how they are recruited, and how they start thinking in different paradigm. Given that the cinema culture had almost died in Pakistan, this film also became significant in the sense that it brought cinema back to the people, Saeed emphasized.

Nationalism and International Politics: Sino-Japanese Relations in Context

FUJIWARA KIICHI

Professor, University of Tokyo

Professor Fujiwara Kiichi touched on the Senkaku Boat Collision Incident of September 2010 and discussed several things related to the territorial dispute between mainland China and Japan.

While he emphasized that he had no intention of going into the Senkaku issue itself, Professor Fujiwara spoke on the nationalistic discourse that emerged around the time of the incident. He said that both the Chinese and Japanese governments used languages that take territorial rights as inherent to their sovereignty: the Chinese government repeatedly argued that the territorial integrity is their core interest, whereas on the Japanese side, the word “inherent territory” was expressed to refer to Senkaku Islands again and again in the course of international debates.

Likewise, Professor Fujiwara added that such a nationalistic discourse was in many ways similar to the history debate that concerns Japan’s wartime atrocities; yet, there are also significant differences. There is no question that the nationalistic reading of Japan’s past was related to the history debate that has been going on and off ever since the early 1980s. However, in the history debate, the relationship between the nationalistic outburst and concrete foreign policy was always something. It was clear that the extreme rightists in Japan and the Chinese government or the more nationalistic populace could never agree on the reading of the history. What we did not know was how the history debate would actually relate to the government-to-government relations between China and Japan, said Professor Fujiwara. On the other hand, the Senkaku incident is dramatically different in the sense that it is directly related to the two countries’ government-to-government relations.

Furthermore, Professor Fujiwara said that national boundaries could be shaky when a government has a legacy of once being an empire. He also added that the concept of “national boundaries” is a modern phenomenon and should not be traced back to the modern times when it was accepted and exercised by international law. When one goes back into the history, one would find several different concepts of political boundaries that are different from national boundaries. The liberal way out is to lessen the meaning of national boundaries.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- Roles that international community or law can play in territorial disputes between countries such as Japan and China.
- The importance of acknowledging the context in which a dispute is taken or discussed.
- Issues of colonialism and extension of support or power to uneducated masses.
- Issues of territorial boundaries vs. that of psychological barriers among nations.

Heterotopias in Japanese Cinema

YOMOTA INUHIKO

Professor, Meiji Gakuin University

Professor Yomota Inuhiko first spoke about the importance of seeing all kinds of films, including not only those that are internationally distributed and famous but also the so-called B-class, local films that are without names of the directors. In light of this view, Professor Yomota further noted how significant it is to visit cities outside one's own country and be exposed to the local films that one cannot see otherwise. Professor Yomota believes that not only do films allow one to see a collective memory and unconsciousness (e.g., religions, histories, etc.) of people, but they can also be a good source when doing research on the representation of ideologies of a given society. In other words, films are signifiers of ideologies.

Professor Yomota then talked about the difference between Hollywood films and Asian films in terms of their producing systems—particularly, how monsters and victims, as well as “others” are represented in films and what each representation means. For instance, monsters in Hollywood films are usually masculine and attack America from outside the country. There are never American-born monsters, and in many films, monsters may represent aliens or non-Americans (i.e., “others”) who endanger the peace and security of America. In such scenarios, American justice activates.

As for Asian films, Professor Yomota said that many of them reflect a strong influence from Hollywood. However, the representation of excluded “others” and victims may be different. For instance, ghosts are almost always women in Asian films, as opposed to the masculine monsters in Hollywood films. Furthermore, while Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, and Hong Kong are prolific in making horror movies, mainland China and North Korea do not have such movies for entertainment, and this may reflect the dominant ideologies of these countries. Professor Yomota emphasized that owing to the complexity of the films that have both the Hollywood influence and elements of traditional popular theaters, it is difficult to define Asian films.

After these remarks above, Professor Yomota moved on to talk about the representation of heterotopias¹ in Japanese cinema. Specifically, he talked about *buraku* or villages that are discriminated or persecuted by the rest of society in Japan and showed some clips from Ichikawa Kon's 1962 film version of *Hakai* (The Broken Commandment); the film is about a schoolteacher who struggles to live a normal life while hiding his *burakumin* identity. The *burakumin* are those who occupied the lowest place in the social hierarchy in pre-Meiji Japan when most of them were engaged in work, such as taking care of the bodies and slaughtering, that was considered filthy. These outcasts were also called *eta* (too much filthiness). During the Meiji Restoration that took place in the late 1860s, the abolishment of social hierarchy technically made everyone equal. However, while the word *eta* came to be considered taboo, these *burakumin* still exist today. The problem is that people never talk about the issue of such discriminated people. Professor Yomota emphasized that even Japanese intellectuals deny the continued existence of the *buraku* problem; they claim that it was in the past.

One thing Professor Yomota is interested in is how one makes a distinction between the *burakumin* and ethnic minorities such as the Okinawans, resident Koreans, Ainu, Nivkh, and Uilta. He said that while the ethnic minorities have their own languages and cultures, the *burakumin* are essentially Japanese. Thus, in reality, as Professor Yomota referred to the story of Mr. Nakagami Kenji (a writer and poet of *buraku* ancestry), it is

¹ Professor Yomota explained what heterotopia means as follows: The word heterotopia consists of two words, hetero (= different or alternative) and topos (= place), and it is the opposite of utopia (which literally means “no-exist” or a place that does not exist). While utopia may point to an imaginary place, heterotopias are real places that one can visit. Furthermore, Professor Yomota said that in Michel Foucault's context, heterotopias represent all the other places in society. In other words, a heterotopia is a subversive place or a place of contestation where there is a possibility that one can lose one's official (i.e., social, national, or cultural) identity if one visits. Professor Yomota added that heterotopia can be translated as an anti-place in English.

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impossible to distinguish a *burakumin* from a non-*burakumin* in Japan, since there is no boundary and everything is invisible, unlike the visible Jewish in the western countries. Professor Yomota concluded that all the places are heterotopias; there is no utopia in Japan.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- How we should go about addressing the issue concerning indigenous groups, low-class groups, and occupational groups in society who have been given a certain kind of stigma, and how we could help these groups regain their dignity.
- The relationship between the religious backgrounds of a country and film production.
- The difference between East and West in terms of the representation of ghosts in films.
- The contribution of the *burakumin* to the development of Japanese traditional cultures and arts, such as flower arrangement, Kabuki, and Noh.

Responsibility for War Injuries: Limits and Possibilities of Reparations under International Law— The Case of Japan (1945–2000)

SEKI KAORUKO

ALFP 2010 Fellow

As she began her talk, Seki Kaoruko mentioned the meaning of revisiting the issues concerning Japan's responsibility for war injuries that emerged after World War II. She said that although many people in Japan and overseas are either unaware of what has happened in the past six decades or tired of discussing the same war-related topic over and over again, it is important that we try to have a common history—without undermining the different views and understanding of the past that are present in and among Asian countries. That way, Asia would be able to move forward collectively, Seki emphasized.

Seki then talked about the legal aspects of war reparations under international law. She said that the concept of war reparations reached fruition after World War II. Until the end of World War I, there was no such concept; rather, the concept was more about war indemnities—in which victors had the right to take something from the losers as a war trophy or prize. It was during the Treaty of Versailles when the notion of war guilt was included in the international treaty and specifically required Germany to accept responsibility for the war. Thus, the way in which losers would face the consequences shifted into the “admission of guilt,” which was then associated with the concept of punishment rather than that of compensation, said Seki. In terms of the requirements for war reparations, a nation that has been involved in an internationally wrongful act is first expected to acknowledge the act, then guarantee non-repetition of the act, engage in restitution (focusing on the amelioration of the situation for the victims), and pay full compensation. Punishment is settled in court under international law.

Seki then talked about some of the issues relating to Japan's war responsibility. She said that, since the end of World War II, there has been the common notion that Japan has not faced up to responsibility for the war, nor has it adequately paid war reparations, unlike Germany. Whether or not the notion is true remains controversial. Yet, Seki pointed out that there is a significant difference between the world opinion and the Japanese opinion concerning the payment of these reparations, notably because of the fact that Japan and Germany paid reparations in different ways: Germany paid war reparations on an individual basis, whereas Japan paid on a government-to-government basis. Seki believes that the issue is, in a sense, more on the methodological differences.

Seki added that despite the reparation payments that Japan technically completed in 1977, there has been no satisfaction among the victims. Satisfaction, under international law, “may consist in an acknowledgement of the breach, an expression of regret, a formal apology, or another appropriate modality.”¹ Given that the notion of apology and satisfaction can be different among individuals, Seki believes that a sociological approach is important. She also stressed that, in order to advance for the children and future generations, we need to move beyond the politics that solely focus on the issues of apology and reparations.

¹ Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, adopted by the International Law Commission at its 53rd session (2001): <http://www.ilsa.org/jessup/jessup06/basicmats2/DASR.pdf>

Retreat

Johanna O. Zulueta, Rapporteur, ALFP 2010

Weekend Retreat

September 17–19, 2010

The Fellows had a three-day retreat workshop in Miura Kaigan, Kanagawa Prefecture; there, they shared their current research interests with other participants.

SESSION I: CULTURE AS A TOOL FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE

(Moderator: Kumaoka Michiya, Board Member, Japan International Volunteer Center)_____

On the Issue of Marginalities, Knowledge Production, and Political Intervention

Sasanka Perera (Sri Lanka)

Sasanka Perera talked about the current situation regarding the academy and knowledge production in Sri Lanka. As he had been convinced that the university could not accommodate the interests that are important to society, he, along with his colleagues, set up some alternative structures. One of them was the Colombo Institute for the Advanced Study of Society and Culture, which was founded to make certain kinds of knowledge available to young people through films and publications in Sinhala and Tamil. Moreover, Perera argued that universities are no longer places of knowledge production; rather, they produce politics.

Perera also commented on the ALFP theme, “Asia in Dialogue: Visions and Actions for a Humane Society.” While acknowledging that some institutes and individuals have been conversing across borders, Perera said that Asia has never engaged in dialogue at state, regime, or policy levels because of the institutionalized difficulty or inability to speak in such a framework. Likewise, Perera pointed out the issue concerning Internet-based sites (e.g., blogs), which make some dialogues possible on the one hand, but limit those without Internet access to participate in such dialogues on the other. Perera also briefly touched on the issue of the politicization of religions in Sri Lanka and pointed out how the politics of religion has entered mainstream politics.

Moving Images: The Politics of Truth and the (Im)possibility of Dialogues

Kong Rithdee (Thailand)

Kong Rithdee focused on the issue of an overabundance of moving images—especially the movies—that has been exploited by various people and organizations in the world for a variety of purposes, including political propaganda, cultural domination, and creation of false demands. He argued that such an overabundance of images can shape the national, political, and cultural consciousness of people.

Rithdee also talked about the notion and politics of truth and how the concept of truth has become more complex. Especially, with the recent proliferation of alternative media, the reportage of what is processed as truth through news media (mostly television) has been challenged. Rithdee emphasized that in the modern world, people do not “believe what they see” anymore; rather, they “see what they believe.” In other words, they have preconceived beliefs and they see things according to their beliefs, and this has consequently made it difficult to create a meaningful dialogue, said Rithdee.

In terms of the Thai film industry, Rithdee said that there is a dearth of political films in Thailand, despite the fact that the country has the strongest film industry in Southeast Asia. He added that in Thailand, cinema is historically viewed as entertainment and not as a cultural or political expression. Nevertheless, Rithdee said that through his films, he tries to approach issues in the way that his films help change how people think or see things. While he is aware that it is impossible to achieve absolute truth, he hopes to find “truth” in different angles and put “human” at the center of the issues he addresses in his films.

SESSION II: ASIA THROUGH A HUMAN RIGHTS LENS

(Moderator: Ogawa Tadashi, Director of Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange Department, Japan Foundation)

A Successful Story of Civil Society and Government Partnership

Fouzia Saeed (Pakistan)

Fouzia Saeed first talked about how she started her life as an activist. In 1991, she initiated the first crisis center called Bedari (which means awareness and awakening) in Pakistan. The center became a contribution to the women's movement in the country. With her involvement in the women's movement, Saeed attempted to provide more depth to the analysis of social issues and encouraged the collective action of citizens.

Saeed also worked with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and developed a program concerning women's mobility. Saeed encouraged Pakistani communities to allow the physical mobility of women and particularly helped facilitate access to public transportation for them—who, according to Saeed, do not ride bikes, but had been given limited spaces in public transportation until then. In 2001, Saeed established AASHA (An Alliance Against Sexual Harassment) with an aim to address sexual harassment, the biggest challenge faced by working women. She said that her group had a legislation passed in the Pakistani government and now the government requires anti-harassment policies in the workplace.

Saeed also talked about her research on women who experience physical abuse by their husbands, as well as on those who live impoverished lives. Likewise, she emphasized that women are burdened with morality issues such that women who “cross the line” beyond their expected roles are seen as immoral.

Safe and Fair: Human Face of Asia in Times of Global Climate Change

Ahn Byungok (Korea)

Ahn Byungok stated that climate change is part of everyone's life and poses a serious global risk. Specifically, Ahn pointed out that climate change can reverse the development progress and threaten the subsistence of both current and future generations, and the impacts of climate change have already become visible in recent years. These impacts include the heat wave in Russia that claimed 5,000 lives in 2010 and the flood in Pakistan that brought a third of the country underwater in the same year. Of all the regions affected, however, Ahn believes that Asia is the most vulnerable.

Ahn said that climate change does not affect every country and everyone equally; while it is primarily caused by developed countries, developing countries are often the ones severely affected. Ahn also talked about how climate change is gendered and racialized and how it has a link to poverty as well. He emphasized that the real disaster is not the climate change itself but the high vulnerability of poor people, women, children, the elderly, and the disabled. In light of these views above, Ahn talked of the need to understand the impacts of climate change and share the knowledge of climate change adaptation. He also sees the need for regional cooperation to build up resilience in state institutions and civil society, as well as for improvement of the communication flows to ensure information transmission for citizens and stakeholders.

Humanitarianism as a Casualty of War

Seki Kaoruko (Japan)

Seki Kaoruko talked about the United Nations Police (UNPOL), which is the fastest growing industry, with 16,000 police officers worldwide and has grown tenfold in the past ten years. Seki specifically focused on the case of East Timor, which is the first case where all policing functions were bestowed on the UN upon the request of the state. Among the UNPOL's activities in East Timor are peacekeeping and capacity building. Seki mentioned that the police officers that are present in the newly formed state come from 41 different countries, excluding Japan.

Seki then said that “humanitarianism as a casualty of war” is about the evolving security situation and the challenges that humanitarian officers face in aiding civilians affected by armed conflict and war. She also commented on the current operational environment: while the militarization of relief aid is nothing new, military strength is not enough to win the war, and as it is also necessary to “win the peace,” NGOs are used as field agents of the military. Seki also added that peacekeeping has evolved from the mere protection of borders to a multidimensional type of peacekeeping. Thus, it can be said that there is a juxtaposition of the militarization of relief aid and the civilization of peace operations. In conclusion, Seki said that while civilians are the casualties of war, the ability to operate is a casualty of the situation.

Field Trip

Johanna O. Zulueta, Rapporteur, ALFP 2010

Field Trip to Nagasaki and Fukuoka

October 10–14, 2010

From October 10 to 14, the Fellows went on a five-day field trip to Nagasaki and Fukuoka Prefectures in Kyushu. The purpose of this field trip was to supplement the lectures and seminars that the Fellows attended throughout the two months program and to provide them with an opportunity to learn more about Japan's history and culture by visiting various places and people who have impacted Japan's historical and social changes.

DAY 1: NAGASAKI CITY, NAGASAKI PREFECTURE (OCTOBER 10)

The Fellows arrived at the Nagasaki airport and proceeded to meet Mr. Tasaki Noboru over lunch. Mr. Tasaki is a former employee at the Nagasaki City Hall who now works at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and also teaches and does volunteer work. He is also a committee member of the Nagasaki Peace Declaration Drafting Committee and Secretary General of the organizing committee of the Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Mr. Tasaki himself is an atomic bomb survivor. After he and the Fellows exchanged greetings, they walked over to the Atomic Bomb Museum and the Peace Park.

The Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum was built 10 years after the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. While a uranium bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, it was a plutonium bomb that was dropped on the Urakami District in Nagasaki. This particular district was the site of the largest congregation of the Japanese Catholics with a long history of Christian settlements in Japan. At that time, there was a population of around 240,000 people in the city of Nagasaki, and the deaths were said to number around 73,884 and injured people totaled 74,909. When the bomb was dropped on August 9, 1945, there were 20,000 Catholics in Nagasaki with half of them living in the Urakami District, and approximately 10,000 died.

After visiting the Peace Park and the hypocenter, the Fellows, along with Mr. Tasaki, met Mr. Motoshima Hitoshi, a former mayor of Nagasaki City who is known for having been outspoken about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Showa Emperor's war responsibility. In his opening remarks, Mr. Motoshima spoke to the Fellows about his feelings and the wishes of the citizens of Nagasaki. He said that since the day the atomic bomb of August 9 destroyed Nagasaki City in an instant, the citizens realized how nuclear weapons are capable of completely annihilating humanity and life on this planet. Mr. Motoshima emphasized that he wants Nagasaki to be the last place on earth subjected to the tragedy of the atomic bombing and that he looks forward to the Fellows' assistance in assuring that this tragedy is never repeated again in the world.

Mr. Motoshima then gave a further explanation of the tragic event. There were a lot of casualties from the bombing, particularly in the hypocenter area, which was the area within a two-kilometer radius from where the bomb was dropped on. These victims included young female students who had been mobilized to work as factory workers, students and professors in Nagasaki Medical College and patients in its affiliated hospital, as well as the 134 inmates, convicts, wardens, and staff at the Nagasaki Prison, Urakami Branch. In 1971, Nagasaki City along with civilian organizations gathered to collect information about the hypocenter and the extent of the destruction. To this day, however, there are many unanswered questions and a lot of information has still not been revealed, said Mr. Motoshima.

In conclusion, Mr. Motoshima said that the atomic bomb should be taken *not* as a sole event, but in the context of World War II. It is his personal feeling that the terrible sacrifice made by the citizens of Nagasaki was almost a compensation Japan had to pay for the past events that had occurred in the Asia-Pacific region. Mr. Motoshima also pointed out that Japanese people in general tend to focus on the terrible things that

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happened in Nagasaki and Hiroshima while there is little discussion on *why* these terrible tragedies occurred. He, however, believes that it is important to look back on the time when Japan adopted a new constitution and began the “long march” towards the atomic bombings in the previous century and think about the reasons for the historical process that led up to the situation Japan faced in the end. Mr. Motoshima also emphasized how important it is for Japanese people to apologize to the people of Asia for the terrible pain and grief Japan caused to the Asian countries in its war progression. He further expressed his wishes that the Fellows will understand that in Japanese hearts, there is a feeling of wanting to apologize for these past actions and someday to repay and restore the friendship and confidence between Japan and Asian countries.

Following Mr. Motoshima, Mr. Tasaki talked about the peace movement in Nagasaki. In 1984, under the leadership of Mr. Motoshima, the Nagasaki Foundation for the Promotion of Peace was created in joint collaboration with the citizens and the local government. The citizens also called for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to prohibit the development, manufacturing, possession, and use of nuclear weapons. Likewise, the citizens of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki called for the realization of a nuclear-free world. Mr. Tasaki said that the Japanese should also reflect on the war as well, because without their reflection, the world will not listen to their voices.

The Fellows ended the day with a visit to the Urakami Cathedral, which was the largest church in Asia when it was completed in 1925.

DAY 2: NAGASAKI CITY, NAGASAKI PREFECTURE (OCTOBER 11)

On their second day in Nagasaki, the Fellows visited the Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture and the Twenty Six Martyrs Memorial Park. Christianity was first introduced to Japan in 1549 by Portuguese Jesuit priests led by Saint Francis Xavier in Kyushu. Despite the spread of Christianity upon its early inception, many Christians suffered persecution from the Tokugawa regime and more than 4,000 were believed to have sacrificed their lives for their faith during this time. Nagasaki is known as the center of Christianity in Japan and is home to the Urakami Cathedral. Some Fellows also visited the Oura Cathedral and the Hollander Slope before boarding a ferry to Hashima, which is commonly known as Gunkanjima (meaning Battleship Island).

Gunkanjima is one of the uninhabited islands administered by Nagasaki City.¹ Gunkanjima served as a coal mining facility during Japan’s industrialization and was populated from 1887 to 1974 mainly with recruited laborers. In 1890, Mitsubishi bought the island and started on the project of retrieving coal from undersea mines. It was said that Japan’s first tall concrete building was built on this island. Gunkanjima was also said to have one of the highest population densities in the world with more than 80,000 people per square kilometer. In 1974, Mitsubishi closed the mine and the depopulation of the island began. By 1975, the whole island was uninhabited. However, in 2009, certain parts of the island were reopened to the public.

DAY 3: TAGAWA CITY, FUKUOKA PREFECTURE (OCTOBER 12)

In Tagawa City, the Fellows met two artists, Mr. Bori Kiyonari and Mr. Yamamoto Tsuyoshi, both of whom are native of Tagawa City—which was once a coal-mining town. After lunch, the Fellows were taken on a tour of the city and specifically visited the areas that used to be alive when Tagawa was still a coal-mining town.

Mr. Bori was born and raised in a coal-mining area in the Chikuhō region of Fukuoka Prefecture and started to work on his art in the 1980s. He is known to have created his own artworks using steel. He, however, emphasized that what constitutes his art is not only the whole process of conceptualizing and making artworks but also the help and support he receives from the local community.

Having lived in Kitakyūshū City (the first place in Japan to have a steel industry), Mr. Bori noted that his art has been influenced by his surroundings in the city. He also mentioned that Kitakyūshū City was the first city to establish a garbage sorting system in Kyushū, and there was once a campaign to collect one million cans, with which people created an artwork, which was then melted and made into a sculpture. Further, Mr. Bori talked about some of his activities involving steel art and said that people have realized how there are steel-art-related projects that can be done in the community.

¹ Up until 2005, it was administered by a town named Takashima.

Mr. Bori, however, said that he became more interested in the coal-mining industry rather than the steel industry, and in Tagawa, he started a project on Tagawa's coal-mining industry. His work in Tagawa was prompted by his wife who needed to return to the coal-mining town, as well as by the artist Kawamata Tadashi, whose father was a coal miner and who had consulted with Mr. Bori regarding his idea of doing artwork using coal. What Mr. Bori mainly did was installation, which he would continue to work on in the next ten years.

Mr. Bori believes that art is not simply something that is created; it should be considered in terms of the role it plays in society or its significance to a particular community. He also said that there are many problems of contemporary society (e.g., problems of minorities, capitalization, and labor issues) that are seen in the coal-mining industry, and the reexamination of these issues have led him and his colleagues to work on their art project in Tagawa City. In addition, Mr. Bori talked about how art can be used to change or reconstruct the existing image of an area. For instance, the Chikuho region is a less-known place in Japan and in its history as compared to places like Kyoto. However, people in the region who have rather been left discriminated against in the past years felt the need to revitalize the area and restore the pride of the people—that it was where Japan's modern industry started and that it was the birthplace of rice cultivation in the country—and sought to change the old image of Chikuho through art.

Meanwhile, Mr. Yamamoto talked about the iArtRevo project that started in July 2010 and shared the story regarding his decision to return to his hometown, Tagawa, in 2009. As an artist formerly based in Hakata, Fukuoka City, he was involved in a residential project in which the project members worked on the remodeling and designing of an apartment building for various people living in the area. This experience of working with local people and learning from them then encouraged Mr. Yamamoto to share his expertise with the people of Tagawa. Furthermore, while in Hakata, he was told about the contribution of the Chikuho area (where Tagawa is located) to the development of Fukuoka City. After working on the project in Hakata, Mr. Yamamoto returned to Tagawa to start several projects there.

DAY 4: MUNAKATA CITY, FUKUOKA PREFECTURE (OCTOBER 13)

The second day in Fukuoka saw the Fellows visiting Munakata City where a prominent writer and poet, Morisaki Kazue, has been living for the past 32 years (as of October 2010). Over lunch, Professor Ogawa Reiko joined the Fellows and Ms. Morisaki who talked about her work as a writer and poet and shared her life experience.

Ms. Morisaki was born in Korea when the country was under Japanese colonial rule and came back to Japan when she was 17. She said that the colonial experience she had during her childhood affected her self-development and shaped her identity and her work. In turn, many of her works reflect the relationship between Japan and Korea. Ms. Morisaki's works also focus on minorities, such as women coal miners who worked under extremely difficult conditions but who became unsung heroes through their contribution to Japan's modernization. In her *Makkura* (Pitch Dark), Ms. Morisaki wrote about these female coal miners. What is noteworthy about this particular book is that she wrote it in Fukuoka dialect, and in order to learn the dialect, she worked and lived with the coal miners. Professor Ogawa commented that Ms. Morisaki's work is important in terms of language and the formation of the nation-state.

Ms. Morisaki said that when she returned to Japan, not only did she have little understanding of people's dialects, but she was also saddened to realize how little she knew about Japan. This made her eager to know what Japan really was. Particularly, she was interested in the life of *shomin* (the ordinary people of Japan), and consequently spent years exploring the country, from Okinawa in the south to Sakhalin in the north, and interacted with the people in every place she visited. Recalling her experiences of meeting different people and interacting with them in the dialects that she had learned from them, Ms. Morisaki emphasized the importance of respecting others. She also shared the teaching of her father she received while in Korea. Since her father had been called to build a junior high school in Kyongju in Korea where Korean students attended, she grew up having contact with the Koreans, and her father told her to respect them. In addition, she said that she traveled around Japan for many years in order to learn about the country and be born again as Japanese and then express her sincere apology to Korea.

Upon returning to Japan during the war, Ms. Morisaki was also shocked to find out about the existence of the public prostitution system in the country. Moreover, having been unfamiliar with the Japanese social structure at that time, she was surprised to find out about the *Ie* (family) system under which men were given more importance than women, said Ms. Morisaki. Given these contexts, she explained the difficulty of the

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situation women were inevitably in during and after the war and how she came to write about them. She said that originally, she did not have any intention of writing fiction; however, she found the situation of women so outrageous that she wanted to do something about it. Particularly, she recalled the life of those who had no choice but to be prostitutes. In the early 1950s, the Japanese economy began to flourish because of the Korean War, and with the presence of Americans in Japan, the public prostitution system still existed. While she believes that women were, in a way, supporting the war by becoming prostitutes under the legal system, Ms. Morisaki acknowledged how they were in a disadvantaged position on many levels. Such witnessing of issues in person drove her to write her particular literatures.

The Fellows also had the honor of meeting Mr. Sakaguchi Hiroshi who is the editor of Sangensha—the publisher of Ms. Morisaki’s works. He said that Ms. Morisaki’s works are nonfiction; however, with regard to *Makkura* (Pitch Dark), it cannot be considered as a work of nonfiction. Mr. Sakaguchi also expressed his interest in promoting Ms. Morisaki’s work to the world, through various languages. Furthermore, Mr. Sakaguchi mentioned that Ms. Morisaki is a member of the “Circle Mura”—a group composed of writers such as Ms. Morisaki and Ms. Ishimure Michiko who wrote about the Minamata disease and its victims. He said that one of the characteristics of the writers who belong to “Circle Mura” is their use of interviews and actual accounts of people for their novels. Thus, their works can be said to be between reportages and novels.

After the session, the Fellows, along with Ms. Morisaki went around Munakata City by bus and visited the Munakata Grand Shrine and Museum.

DAY 5: FUKUOKA CITY, FUKUOKA PREFECTURE (OCTOBER 14)_____

In Hakata, the Fellows visited the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum where they were given an overview of the museum by the curator, Mr. Kuroda Raiji. This museum, which is strategically located in the heart of Fukuoka, aims to make modern and contemporary Asian arts accessible to the people of Fukuoka. It houses three types of exhibits—a permanent collection, a temporary exhibit, and a special exhibit—and currently houses 2,400 works, including modern and contemporary art and some folk, ethnic, and popular art. The museum also has an art exchange program, which conducts art exchanges with artists in residence through collaborative art making, workshops, exhibitions, and lectures. Also, the program participants engage in research activities with researchers in residence and do research on Asian and Japanese modern and contemporary artworks.

Mr. Kuroda also shared that Fukuoka had a policy to promote the city as a cultural hub. Supposedly, this policy can be traced back to the 1980s when the city government aimed to make Fukuoka a cultural hub in Asia, given the fact that Fukuoka served as a gateway to and from Korea and China.

Public Symposium

Johanna O. Zulueta, Rapporteur, ALFP 2010

Public Symposium

November 8, 2010

The 2010 ALFP Public Symposium provided each Fellow with the opportunity to give a presentation on the issues and the related studies in the area of his or her expertise in front of public audiences and also to reflect on their two-month sojourn in Japan, where they actively engaged in intellectual exchange with academics and resource persons from nongovernmental organizations and civil society groups through seminars, lectures, and field trip. Akashi Yasushi, the chairman of the International House of Japan gave the opening remarks, and Professor Lee Jong Won of Rikkyo University and the ALFP Advisory Committee acted as moderator. With this year's symposium theme, "Rethinking Global Challenges: Asian Intellectuals in Dialogue," the Fellows presentations were divided into two sessions.

SESSION I: HUMAN SECURITY AND NETWORKING

1. "The United Nations Police and Peacebuilding"

– Seki Kaoruko (Japan), *Humanitarian Policy Officer, United Nations*

Seki Kaoruko talked about the role of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) in peacekeeping operations in various parts of the world. She said that an increase in the number of the UNPOL can be expected in the years to come because of the changing operating environment that has created a need for experts to address internal conflicts and criminality in the places where the UN has its peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, the UNPOL's role is not only to maintain peace and stability but also to work as mentors and watchers and become activists in bringing peace to the community and to the people they serve. Seki also talked about the role that Japan can play to become a more active participant in UN policing.

2. "Economy, Ecology, and Equity in a Globalizing World"

– Ahn Byungok (Korea), *Head, Institute of Climate Change Action (ICCA)*

Ahn Byungok argued that there is a need to recognize the interrelationship between equity, ecology, and economy, and that we should not focus solely on one aspect, such as the economy. Given the increasing gap between rich and poor countries as well as the issue of climate change, Ahn gave three principles in order to address these issues. The first principle is "bridging the gap," and in this principle, eco-efficiency plays a part. Eco-efficiency refers to creating more goods and services while using fewer resources and creating less waste and pollution. The second principle, "redefining progress" is about eco-sufficiency or the consumption of the right amount of goods and services that is just necessary. The third principle is "making equity as a key factor"; equity is seen as a necessary condition to reach both efficiency and sufficiency.

3. "Better Links among Asian Countries"

– Guo Zhiyuan (China), *Attorney; Chief Arbitrator; Professor and Director, Center of Law Application, Anhui University*

Focusing on East Asia (i.e., China, Korea, and Japan), Guo Zhiyuan called for the creation of linkages among the countries of East Asia because of the cultural similarities these three countries share. Guo also believes that

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it is natural for East Asian countries to be willing to have better relations with their neighboring countries. Furthermore, he talked about how important stability and cooperation are in Asia and the world and gave some suggestions on how cooperation can be achieved among these countries—by having not only a common perspective of history but also a new perspective on cooperation in the 21st century. Guo also hopes for the establishment of regular mechanism and institutions and international conflict resolution systems to resolve any conflict that occur both domestically and abroad.

Q&A

Question on whether the regular mechanism and institutions that Guo mentioned in his presentation are private, or if they are supported by the government or NGOs

Guo responded that the mechanisms built by the government are very important and that it would be even better if governments could build these mechanisms and institutions that can do research on the creation of cooperation among East Asian countries.

Question on how the creation of a new system between Korea, China, and Japan will address the issue of nationalism in each country in a globalizing world

To this question, Seki said that nationalism and globalism are not mutually exclusive ideas and that there are many overlapping areas in national and global interests. Seki then pointed out how humanity faces common interests in terms of environmental and regional security issues. She believes that it is in everyone's interest to find solutions to these issues and problems. She also added that there is a need to focus on the most important overlap between national and global interests and seek the human interest for all concerned in the (Asian) region.

Meanwhile, Ahn believes that the meaning of nationalism differs among countries, as nationalism defined in the west is different from that in Asian countries. In Korea, for instance, nationalism was the main force behind the independence movement against the Japanese colonial rule. Ahn said that if nationalism is not balanced by other factors, then it can be dangerous, as seen in the case of North Korea. He also believes that an extremist way of thinking is more dangerous than nationalism. Furthermore, he said that if one were to think about the relationship among Asian countries, the role and the influence of the United States should not be ignored. The relationship between Japan and China is not only a relationship between two countries, as the United States has always played a part in establishing their relations.

Guo believes that there are both conflict and harmony between nationalism and globalization. From one point of view, nationalism is seen to present some difficulties to globalization especially when people in a given country think more about their national interest. However, from another perspective, there can be harmony between these two ideas, said Guo. In addition, he said that if good solutions could be found to resolve the conflict between nationalism, we could promote not only development within a country but also cooperation in the global village. In light of this view, Guo believes that one should make a rational choice between nationalism and globalization.

Question on the UN Police as becoming activists

Seki said that the countries where the UN Police (UNPOL) is assigned are fragile in terms of how the peace and order are disrupted and people living there continue to harbor feelings of distrust and insecurity. Under such circumstances, the roles of the UNPOL (such as solving crimes and establishing the peace and order in these societies) cannot be fulfilled solely by the UNPOL itself, and the cooperation from the residents becomes indispensable. And this is how the UNPOL is involved in “community policing,” which according to Seki is an important pillar in the role of the UNPOL. Seki emphasized that community policing as activist is more about winning the peace—that is, building peace together with the people in the community. She added that community policing is more about living with the people and interacting with them in the course of their daily lives while simultaneously reestablishing trust within the community. Through this kind of policing and working together with the community to solve the community problems, the UNPOL takes on an activist role.

Question on the cooperation among nations on environmental issues

Ahn believes in the saying “think globally, act locally.” He also said that while the bilateral cooperation between Japan and China, and Japan and Korea that has been established since 2005 is strong, cooperation among NGOs is relatively weak. However, his organization has just started to network with Chinese and Japanese NGOs, and he believes that if people are more empowered, they can tackle the environmental problems better in the future.

SESSION II: MEDIA AND GENDER

1. *“Media and Myth-Making”*

– Kong Rithdee (Thailand), *Film Critic; Columnist*, Bangkok Post

Kong Rithdee argued that the visual media is the most efficient way to foster and reinforce myths among the people and gave a case of Thailand focusing on the television reportage of the violence that occurred between the protesters and the military in the southern part of the country especially after the antigovernment riots in May 2010. While Rithdee believes that media should provide a counter-myth, he sees documentary films as a form of journalism as well as a counter-myth (as opposed to traditional TV documentaries). Rithdee also talked about the concept of truth in visual media and asked if truth is something (e.g., photos and video footages) that can be seen or something that exists within oneself, as an aspect of one’s thoughts.

2. *“Taboos of Patriarchy”*

– Fouzia Saeed (Pakistan), *Director*, Mehergarh

Fouzia Saeed argued that despite the developments in the economy, technology, and trade that Asian countries have achieved, they have made little progress in solving gender issues. She, however, believes that Asian countries have ancient civilizations and, therefore, are supposed to know how to deepen their thoughts and use old wisdom and insights to guide them in the area of gender issues, instead of following other regions. Saeed further emphasized that in terms of social life, Asian countries should work and develop together. Moreover, she sees that there are many patriarchal challenges in Asia and that we need to rethink the concept of patriarchy, as well as the role of men as head of the household. Saeed also talked about the importance of rethinking the safety and dignity within marriage for both men and women, as she believes that gender is not only about women but also about men, and ultimately, gender is about how a family or a society organizes itself. In light of this view, she stressed the need for the rethinking of women and men as full citizens in society.

3. *“The Construction of Masculinity and Bravery in War: The Case of Sri Lanka”*

– Sasanka Perera (Sri Lanka), *Professor of Anthropology and Head, Department of Sociology*, University of Colombo

In his presentation, Sasanka Perera looked at the construction of masculinity and the ideas of bravery in the context of militarism in Sri Lanka. He said that while Sri Lanka does not have a clearly defined martial tradition in its history, the country has a particular military tradition that is local and the construction of the military in Sri Lanka was, in fact, a remnant of British colonial rule. Perera also said that the reinvention of the military after Sri Lanka’s independence in 1948 had to do with how the Sinhalese saw the past, such as those that appear in myths and historical narratives. Furthermore, Perera mentioned that local traditions that promoted certain kinds of bravery and masculinities had existed before and that ideas of masculinity are not new but are being reinvented.

Q&A

Question on how the concept of myth is used in Rithdee’s talk

Rithdee said that he uses the term myth to mean collective beliefs that people take for granted as truth. He also added that he does not use the term myth to mean an illusion and that the definition or the concept of myth that he has referred to is more contemporary, sociological, and even political and not mythological.

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Question on the management of the media—how to challenge the existing myth and also find a balance among the media, myth, and other ideas and stories

To this question, Rithdee answered that when one counters myth (collective beliefs), one ends up creating one's own myth. When this becomes dominant and the outside is oppressed, people have to be aware of the pitfall. Rithdee believes that this is the dynamic of change when one thing becomes more powerful. In terms of the development of the mass media, he believes that the social network is a big factor and a catalyst towards change. He added that myth goes on in cycles.

Other issues that were brought up during the second Q&A session included

- the virtue of fighting in the 19th century and the shift in perspective in the 21st century that has to do with the virtue of *not* fighting in order to establish peace
- the issue of low birthrate and low marriage rate in Japan and Korea
- the fundamental changes in patriarchy and its concept—whether they are happening in Japan or in the rest of Asia, and if so, how and why the changes have occurred
- domestic violence and gender-related violence
- the role of Asia in the UN policing and the significance of a high percentage of women police officers in Asia
- what it means to have real choice for women, which is not related to a low birthrate, but it is to have a choice of not having to choose between work and family, etc.

Toward the end of the symposium, Sasanka Perera recited two poems he wrote during his two-month stay in Japan.

Both poems reproduced here in translation were originally written in Sinhala. Through the poem “Encounters with a Worldly God,” the poet attempts to address the issue of entrenched consumerism in Japanese society by taking the ubiquitous vending machines as a manifestation of this trend in the context of which he equates these machines to a divine omnipresence. In the poem “To Know You,” the poet articulates his frustration about the difficulties in understanding Japan and its sociocultural terrain as most descriptive texts commonly found in bookstores are in Japanese, a language the poet does not understand.

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 නිති හිතැහෙන බොත්තම,
 දෙනු ඇත ඔබ සැමට කිසිවක් නොතෙපුලාම:
 ගිම්හානයට තෙක සිසිල් පැන්,
 හේමන්තයට තේ කෝපි උණුසුම් කරන්නට ගත
 (හදවත කෙසේ වුවත්)
 දුම්වැටි සැම දිනම
 හෙනගැහුවත් පෙනහළුවලට!
 බෙදා දෙනවා නොමසුරුවම
 අරුමෝසම් අහාර,
 වීදුරු සේ පෙනන හිරවරණ:
 ඉහලාගෙන යන්න වැස්සට අවිචට,
 කොන්ඩෝම් කොපු:
 ඉස්පාසුවක් නැති සන්සර්ගකාමීන්ට
 වගබලාගන්නට
 හදන්නට නොහැකි දරුවන් නොවදන්නට.
 ඉදින්,
 කපා නොකරන කා සමගවත්,
 වෙර නොකරන කාටවත්
 සිටිනා සැම තැන
 (නොහැඟුනද කාහටත්)
 දෙවියන්ද ඔබ
 සර්වචාරාපී
 පරිභෝජනවාදය අරාගත්
 ලැබිය යුතු
 බුහුමන් අපගේ?

නෝකයේ 21 ඔක්තෝබර් 2010

Encounters with a Worldly God

You draw them in thousands
 to your electric embrace:
 Ever lit
 At subway stations,
 Roadsides, and cross roads,
 In little corners of restaurants and meeting places,
 In the village just as in the city.
 A democrat you,
 Upholding equality without fail;
 An idealist you,
 Casting kindness on all and sundry;
 You do not ask those who seek your comfort
 if they are
 citizens, affluent or workers,
 if legal or illegal in status.
 You do not cast
 suspicious looks on anyone;
 If cash in hand and
 forefinger strong
 to press the ever twinkling
 button on your glowing bosom,
 Like a ritual of this world,
 You would dispense; wordless:
 Cooling dinks for the summer,
 Coffee and tea to heat body in autumn
 (regardless of the heart),
 Cigarettes everyday
 (and to hell with the lungs of
 our children and us!)
 Food for manageable hunger,
 Translucent umbrellas
 that shield from sun and rain,
 Condoms for the impatient lovers
 (to bear no children
 they cannot bring up).
 So,
 You who remain wordless with all,
 Yet not hateful towards any,
 Unobtrusive though standing
 at every street corner;
 Are you the omnipresent god of consumerism
 deserving of our worship?

Sinhala original, Sasanka Perera, Tokyo 21st October 2010. Translated into English by Samudrika Sylva, Colombo 01st November 2010.

ඇති පොත්, හැති පොත්

සත් මහල් නොව
 දෙතිස් මහල්
 අඩසිය මහල්
 ප්‍රාසාද
 දිදුළුවමින් ලොවම
 වශීකරමින් දියතම
 දිවගියත් ගගන තලය වෙත
 නුබ ගැබ විවර කරමින්
 විශ්වය සිසාරන්නට මෙන්,
 පිරි ඉතිරි තිබුනත් මේ ප්‍රාසාද
 සෑම තැන
 නෙක පොත්පත් දැනුම් කෝෂ
 ලියැවී ඔබේ බසින්,
 කෙසේද මා දැනගන්නේ
 ඔබ පිළිබඳව,
 ඔබේ අතීතය, වර්තමානය, අනාගතය,
 හයිකු, කබුකි, නෝ, සුශී, සාකේ පිළිබඳව,
 ඔබේ තාරුණ්‍යයේ සිතැති, සාංකා පිළිබඳව,
 ඇතොත් තවමත් ඔබේ ආත්මය, ඒ පිළිබඳව?
 නැත දකින්නට
 එක් ප්‍රාසාදයකවත්
 මටවත්
 ලොවටවත් කියවිය හැකි
 බසකින් ලියැවී වැඩී යමක්.
 විසිරී ගොස් ඇත්ද ඒවා
 විශ්වයේ ඇත ඉමකට
 විසල් ප්‍රාසාදයෝ
 තරණය කළ විට
 නුබ ගැබින් එහා ලෝකය?

තෝක්කේ 20 ඔක්තෝබර් 2010

To Know You

While mighty structures
 reach up and pierce the skies,
 As if to
 voyage beyond this
 celestial womb,
 Glorying in their splendor,
 Giving rise to the
 envies of this world;
 Filled to the brim
 with reams and volumes
 written all
 in your tongue;

I ponder
 on how to know you:
 Your past, your present, your future;
 Haiku, Kabuki, Noh, Sushi or Sake;
 Thoughts and laments of your youth;
 If your soul exists, of it?

How do I,
 Or the world beyond
 grasp the depths of you,
 If what I mostly meet
 are the unfamiliar words!
 Have those written
 in an accessible tongue
 been scattered away
 to a distant universe,
 When these mighty structures
 reached beyond
 the celestial womb?

*Sinhala original, Sasanka Perera, Tokyo, 20th October 2010.
 Translated into English by Samudrika Sylva, Colombo,
 02nd November 2010*