

Introduction

Half a decade has passed since the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) was established in 1996 by the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center. The program has successfully enhanced mutual understanding and encouraged constructive discussions among various Asian countries through a close network of distinguished public intellectuals: academics, activists, artists, journalists and many other professionals. For the past five years, five to six outstanding intellectual leaders in the region have been invited to stay in Japan for two months each year not only to conduct their own research but also to interact and share their insights with one another.

The summer of 2001 marked the first ALFP reunion. Twenty-three of the former fellows gathered August 3-7, in Surat Thani and Bangkok, Thailand, under the theme “Conflict Management in the Face of Globalization: Initiatives, Alternatives, and Imagination.” The feat of bringing together at the same time such a group of public intellectuals, each with an extremely busy schedule, was remarkable in itself. The idea of a reunion began more than a year ago. It took both the efforts of the organizers and the earnest commitment of the fellows to further dialogues regarding immediate issues in the region to realize the notion. In the new era of globalization, conflicts arise and spread in various places, forms, and intensity. Although the fellows come from diverse backgrounds and professions, they are all prudently aware of and deeply concerned about how to cope with this dilemma that has swept across Asia.

The participating fellows included **Saree Aongsomwang** (Thailand, 2000), **Ayu Utami** (Indonesia, 1999), **Arnold M. Azurin** (Philippines, 1996), **Urvashi Butalia** (India, 2000), **Cho Hong-Sup** (Korea, 1999), **Janadas Devan** (Singapore, 1998), **Sanitsuda Ekachai** (Thailand, 1999), **Faruk Tripoli** (Indonesia, 2000), **Goenawan Mohamad** (Indonesia, 1997), **Ignas Kleden** (Indonesia, 1996), **Michiya Kumaoka** (Japan, 2000), **Kwok Kian-Woon** (Singapore, 1996), **Liu Xin** (China, 1998), **Ohashi Masaaki** (Japan, 1999), **Ota Yoshinobu** (Japan, 1997), **Park Won-Soon** (Korea, 2000), **Suwanna Sathanand** (Thailand, 1998), **Endo Suanda** (Indonesia, 1998), **Laddawan Tantivitayapitak** (Thailand, 1997), **Kasian Tejapira** (Thailand, 1996), **Teo Soh Lung** (Singapore, 1999), **Wan A. Manan** (Malaysia, 1996), and **Diana Wong** (Malaysia, 1998). Also joining the event were four ALFP Program Committee members **Ishizuka Masahiko** (Foreign Press Center, Japan), **Lee Jong Won** (Rikkyo University), **Takeda Isami** (Dokkyo University), and **Terada Takefumi** (Sophia University), together with two observers, **Mya Than** (Chulalongkorn University) and **Soeya Yoshihide** (Keio University).

The reunion was meant to revive precious memories and reflect future directions. Indeed, the idea of memory was an important subject in many of the papers and discussions as the reunion unfolded. A piece of cherished memory was dedicated to the irreplaceable loss of **Ishak Bin Shari** (Malaysia, 1997), one of the most esteemed economists in the region who passed away earlier this year. In addition, warm regards were sent to **Kuo Pao Kun** (Singapore, 1997), who just went through major surgery recently and could not come to the event. The fellows also received a message from Ambassador Fujii Hiroaki, the president of the Japan Foundation, who could not participate but who highly regards the program and the importance of a network of Asian

intellectuals as the basis for Asian community and as a crucial part of the future of Japan and Asia.

On August 3 the fellows arrived in Surat Thani, where old friends were reunited and new friends from different periods were made. The official activities began on the following day (August 4) with a field trip to local communities together with Suan Mok, one of the most important Buddhist movement centers in Thailand. It was followed by paper presentations, discussions and reflections over the next two days. The reunion concluded on August 7, on which day the fellows returned to Bangkok for a Public Symposium at Chulalongkorn University.

I. Field Trip to the Tapee River and Suan Mok

Surat Thani has been a major hub of commerce and transportation since the ancient time of Srivijaya. It still continues to be one of the largest cities in southern Thailand. In order for the fellows to gain a better understanding of Surat Thani, the reunion included a field trip on August 4, which consisted of two sessions: a river-cruise tour along the Tapee River in the morning and a visit to Suan Mok in the afternoon. Joined by a local community leader, Ms. Vipada Wasin, the fellows first took a boat ride to experience the natural mangrove forest and native river livelihood. The three major aspects the fellows looked at were environmental problems caused by development, the various issues faced by small business and farmers in the age of globalization, and the impact of “ecological tours.” During the visit to a shrimp farm owned by a Thai-Chinese fisherman family, the fellows expressed their interest in problems confronting the individual Thai farmer under the penetration of colossal corporations. As most of the farmlands in the area were still wild forest a few years ago, the fellows were also concerned about how small ventures managed environmental issues, particularly waste-water.

Later in the afternoon, the fellows visited Suan Mok, which literally means the “Garden of Liberation.” It was founded in 1940 by one of the most prolific and renowned Buddhist monks Buddhadasa (1906-1993), whose teachings have been an inspiration for religious, social, and political movements to not merely Thais but also people all over the world. Suan Mok has been offering an alternative to the established Buddhist organization *Sangha* at the national level. Many fellows were impressed by the efforts of Buddhadasa, who had combined the forest monastic tradition of Theravada Buddhism with an open-minded attitude towards various world religions. The very site Suan Mok itself was more than a place for religious practice. It also played an essential role in the student uprisings in the 1970s, in which the democratic element of Buddhadasa’s teaching became a driving force for the movement. The fellows were greeted by the chief abbot Bodhi at the “Spiritual Theatre” that Buddhadasa designed to entertain the souls by works of art instead of materialistic mediums. The fellows then stopped at different spots in the peaceful monastery before returning for the opening discussion that night.

II. Opening Speeches

After a long day of excursion, the reunion conference was commenced by the speeches of three fellows, each representing a different area in Asia: **Goenawan Mohamad** (Indonesia) for Southeast Asia, **Urvashi Butalia** (India) for South Asia, and **Cho Hong-Sup** (Korea) for East Asia.

Beginning on a personal note, **Goenawan** saw the perpetual incompleteness of “politics” after many years of unfulfilled expectations, particularly reflecting the recent violent situation in Indonesia from where he came. What concerned him the most was not the crumbling of the nation-state Indonesia but the danger of stabilized difference—the practice of normalizing difference in the form of ethnicity or religious groups. In authoritarian regimes like Malaysia and Singapore, this system worked successfully as a method of social control and construction where the body politic was transformed into a cohesive entity resembling a living artwork, a “shape with no crack, no leak.” Authoritarian bureaucratic regimes are often the outcome of the mania for perfection, and they build a country that is more like an intensive care unit than a republic.

To Goenawan, this type of regime deprived people of political necessity and ignored the issue of freedom. To realize freedom in the “political,” a subject has to deal with the objective world, out of which one can create forms and other identifiable things. He agreed with Vietnamese novelist Duong Thu Hong’s definition of freedom as a “delirium that rose from a world of mud.” The “political,” hence, was based on nothing final but was a continuation of dialectical engagement with the “mud,” the objective world, with the possibility of hope. In the context of paralyzed ideas and strategies in dealing with such problems as ethnic and religion atrocity that prevails in society, Goenawan said the stake of Indonesia’s future lies less in territorial terms but in the fact that nothing has replaced the political ideology of modernity. Foreseeing the ruin of the idea of universality as a result of a stabilized identity, he sought for an inspiration for the quest of this value and political emancipation from his current hero, Sub-commandant Marcos, the military chief of the Zapatistas, whose guerrillas never spoke in the name of the majority. Goenawan said it is necessary for anyone who commits to further the value of emancipation to have similar wisdom as Marcos, who sees that the way to emancipation “had no closed end but was like a plough that turned the soil so that all this could rise from the ground.”

Urvashi, likewise, also spoke about her personal reflections. She thought it was a most difficult task to talk about oneself, especially to “represent” a certain kind of identity. However, she chose to begin with her “wider” sense as a political person from which she thought her sense of being an Indian and a South Asian grows. She became more aware of herself as a political person in her college years during the late 1960s and early 1970s when protests were almost a daily activity in Indian universities, as elsewhere. Urvashi shared her excitement for what was then thought to be the first revolution movement only to realize later its extreme violent nature and its marginalization of women. Yet, her sense of despair was never so strong, for she was not much engaged in such activity. Her “real” involvement in the women’s movement came in the late 1970s, joining the demonstrations against issues such as rape and the dowry custom. At a time when then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a State of Emergency and clamped down on

several political groups, women's groups became very active and were, for some reason, spared from such repression and were able to continue their work.

As it has become clear to her now that their activities were then directed at state institutions, Urvashi faces a dilemma of how to deal with the state. Although she remembers vividly the days when she and other activists picked up drums and scarves, protesting, singing, marching, and demonstrating, Urvashi said several things happened, particularly the change in the nature of the electoral political game, where violence in the form of a civil war in some regions sets in. Times have changed. The arena of movements for women's groups, urban groups in particular, seemed to move in the early 1980s from the street to the office. It was then when Urvashi set up Kali, a women's publishing house, in order to reflect a large number of women's issues and made it her mission and future. However, she felt a sneaking sense of "betrayal" towards street-level protest, which she had left behind. Moreover, she was also torn by the thought of having to compromise with authority against her own beliefs and principles to sustain Kali. It was where she pondered on the dilemma of herself as well as other "public intellectuals" across regions, politics and cultures. She questioned how to keep one's ideology "pure" in a world of uncertainties without being "dishonest." She wondered why it had become so difficult for people like her to do what they used to do so easily twenty years ago. Perhaps it was because they have grown older and more used to a comfortable, middle-class life. Or they might have been convinced that street-level protest was not the right way to address a problem.

Urvashi also expressed great concern over the "rightwards" movement among women activists in the presence of the rise of the Hindu right wing, which has twisted Hinduism into a doctrine of hate and violence. She watched in horror at how this group has drawn in women, and how women are now out on the streets in large numbers espousing violence and intolerance as well as supporting patriarchy. Urvashi said another dilemma facing women activists is how to realize that this kind of liberation is not most wanted. Although there is no concrete answer, Urvashi believed that public intellectuals must be critical of themselves as activists to cope with civil societies, which at times are increasingly touched by the taint of corruption.

Finally, **Cho Hong-Sup's** speech also took on an issue that was keen to his heart the environmental aggravation caused by industrialization in Asia. Relating his speech to the Tapee river cruise, Hong-Sup tried to paint a picture in the fellows' mind of what a typical Korean construction authority would do with the river making a big dam and turning the land into shrimp farms while not forgetting to reserve some space for jet skiing and yachting. Indeed, Hong-Sup's narrative was meant as a ploy to lead to the situation in his home country. He pointed to an emerging social conflict now facing Japan and Korea and that would make its presence felt soon in China, that is, the destruction of the environment by massive governmental construction projects. Although the government has developed so-called environmental sustainable policies, these policies end up as lip service in most cases. For Hong-Sup, it is rather sad to see Western-trained technocrats go back to the old development mind-set.

He stressed that environmental problems concern the contamination and destruction of not only nature but also the traditional way of life, which is often

overlooked by many Western scholars, for its values could not be expressed in monetary terms. His idea was further illustrated through a case study of the Saemangum project in South Korea. The project called for a 33km sea-wall, the longest in length in the world, to seal off the mouths of two rivers and provide land for farming and large fresh-water lakes for irrigation in the southwestern coast of the Korean peninsula. Civil groups strongly voiced their opposition, since the construction would destroy the ecological system. In 1999, President Kim Dae Jung ordered the suspension of the project. However, after two years of noisy debates and revision without any consensus, this government finally gave its nod to the project in May 2001, citing its benefit for rice production and its lack of immediate dangers. The decision was perhaps more politically driven, Hong-Sup said, as the government feared the political backlash from the project supporters in the region, which is also its major political stronghold. Civil groups which opposed the project were concerned about its effects on the ecological system and the loss of vast areas of wetlands on the west coast of the Korean peninsula, which is a perfect site of marine ecology and a valuable source of income for many small fishermen families in the area. The potential harm on the ecology aside, other civil groups and intellectuals also felt betrayed by the Kim Dae Jung government, which has made some progress in the area of human rights but failed in the protection of the environment. They then announced a boycott by not participating in any governmental committees.

Hong-Sup raised concern over the social division of the supporters and opponents of this project, which reminded him of a similar situation in the confrontation between the anti- and pro- democracy movement in the 1970s. Of no less importance is the government's "unfair" review of the project, which ignored ecological value, traditional wisdom and the rights of future generations. In his conclusions on the lessons learned, Hong-Sup revealed some of the many novel and traditional strategies used by environment activists in pursuing their course. He noted that democratic procedures did not always guarantee democratic decisions, notably in cases where the political interests of the government were evident. Besides, a successful movement needed the base of grass-roots participation in the long term. Although development in developing countries was always coated with fancy words such as "sustainable" or "environmental friendly," the reality might be a different story.

III. Paper Presentations and Discussion

The reunion conference proceeded into the next day (August 5) with three sections of paper presentations and discussions. The morning session began with **Kasian Tejapira** and **Ignas Kleden**, followed by **Liu Xin** and **Faruk Tripoli**. The afternoon session included readings from two plays by **Kuo Pao Kun** and paper presentations by **Janadas Devan** and **Arnold M. Azurin**.

(1) **Kasian Tejapira** was puzzled by the fact that the meeting chose to begin with his paper which had the "inauspicious" title of "Haunting," as it suggested death and the uncomfortable reunion between the living and the dead. To him, haunting is connected with a certain past that refuses to go away and keeps coming back to us. As a former member of a now defunct Communist militant group, Kasian had fled into the jungle along with friends and others, some of whom died later during the Thai government's

repression of the Communist insurgency. Based on his personal experience, Kasian suggested there existed a kind of community between the dead and the living. He called this “a moral bond” that poses a haunting question of how a living public individual could address the real living meaning of the death of their comrades, who died for what they believed in and the yet to be completed “public projects.” Just as their unresolved death becomes a perennial problem, the dead also serve as a kind of moral pole of reference, a moral ground for the work of the public intellectual whose socio-culture locus was much wider than academic institutions. Kasian said some parts of the dead still live in those who survive, in the form of “identity constitutive memory.” This kind of memory is important to guard against the loss of certain “past-derived identity,” since it functions as a type of chain bringing one to certain values, inhibitions and certain “do’s and don’ts.” Hence, Kasian disregarded haunting as a psychological illness or symptom to be cured and left behind. Rather, he believed it is a “necessary and even healthy condition from which one can develop a political ethic or a moral bond between the dead and the survivors.”

Kwok Kian Woon, as the discussant of the paper, said many details in Kasian’s paper spoke to all the generation of the 1960s, the children of those who experienced the war, who themselves were a part of the post-colonial transformation and the creation of the nation-state. Positing this rather personal note in the larger context of the relationship between memory and modernity, Kian Woon considered Kasian’s narrative a sharp reflection of the 20th century of war, violence, ideological rivalry, the big grand narratives of the Cold War and its aftermath. What he had further learnt was the different visions and versions of modernity which had never reached their logical conclusion. To him, the paper went beyond a personal struggle to the collective and societal level of Thailand as a society and Asia as a region. From East Asia to Southeast Asia and Europe, there are still many issues that have been left unresolved within each society and the region – the stories of violence of and against memory. The tension reflected in Kasian’s paper about the violence against memory and the struggle to remember violence is also true in other experiences of the world. Kian Woon then suggested that memory arose in the “mud of modernity.” It did not arise in some kind of very pure or purist version of the past, hence the question of truth. He said there is indeed a “gray zone,” a zone of uncertainty about the vision of the future and the version of the past. Given the kind of complexity behind all truth and all memories of the past, Kian Woon pled for a degree of self-criticism in the reunion with the ghost of the past. For the dead, what we owe to them is to work to know what they stood for and to do justice to them.

In the open discussion, **Laddawan Tantivitayapitak** shared her belief that “one belongs to nature, and nature is one.” In such a belief, she thought Kasian’s fallen comrade still exists. Meanwhile, Kasian acknowledged the importance of self-criticism even in the moment or in the middle of the process of allowing oneself to be morally bounded or driven by an obligation to the dead. This he called a kind of brake against an unspeakable act. **Janadas Devan** mentioned the type of memory that would explode the past into the present in order to sustain revolutionary spirit or to recover a possibility that has been erased. It is just as important to submit the memory of those who still live among us. **Urvashi** agreed, as she considered this as a vital factor that kept playing and replaying in different ways of how society turns into existence. She, however, commented

on Kian Woon's limited concept of the region as he left out the Indian Sub-continent in his listing of countries' experiences.

On a different note, **Goenawan** stressed the importance of forgetting. A nation, he said, was born partly out of forgetting some parts of its memory in order to be able to get together and be united. He posed a question about the tragic incident that keeps haunting people and asked whether social daily life can sustain the "nostalgia for tragedy," which would demand unusual, extraordinary events, a kind of true event which may not have worth in the ever negotiating democratic political process. **Kasian** responded that during such negotiation, people should welcome the haunting of the dead. Regardless of any forces, be they market, impersonal, or state, people should be reminded that these routine processes be directed at the human ends and should serve human beings. He agreed with Janadas that the yet unresolved deaths of his fallen comrades be revived and used as a lodestar in the process of remembering while not forgetting to maintain a critical distance. Kasian ended the discussion by referring to a question about the possibility of truth and reconciliation posed by **Lee Jong Won**, a Program Committee member. Only when there is a change in the power relationship, Kasian opined, to be more equal between the oppressor and the oppressed, is truth and forgiveness possible.

Ignas Kleden's paper topic was "The Question of Democratic Tension: Facts and Norms in Jakarta." Recognized as one of the most creative social thinkers in Indonesia, Ignas began by analyzing the discourse of German philosopher Juergen Habermas, by whom his paper was inspired. Ignas cited the recent political changeover in Jakarta on July 23, 2001, that led to the removal from office of then President Abdurrahman Wahid, to exemplify the difficulty in applying Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy that believed in rational citizen's participation in democratic process to *Realpolitik* (real politics). He then narrated the political situation that led to the Special Session to oust Wahid, which was triggered by his dismissal of the National Police Chief without the approval of the House of Representatives as required by a decree of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the most supreme political institution. The situation then developed into a tug of war among Wahid, the legislature, and the opposition parties. Stirred by a "politically incorrect" remark by MPR chairman Amien Rais, who supported Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri as the president, Wahid reacted strongly by declaring a Presidential Decree. The President stipulated the dissolution of both the House and the MPR, freezing the ruling Golkar as a political party, and the carrying out of a general election in one year. However, the Supreme Court ruled against Wahid's Decree. Before long, the Assembly convened the Special Session in which all parties, except two, impeached Wahid and made Megawati his successor.

Ignas stated that the situation resonated the split between "system integration," which worked according to functional relations within the system, and "social integration," which was based on values and norms. He referred to the system theory of one of the most influential living German sociologists, Niklas Luhmann, in which every system is operationally closed. For democracy to be established through institutions, Ignas said, it would tend to become a closed system. As far as this system is concerned, he felt the operational systems and institutional structures originated in Soeharto's regime seem to be still existing and maintaining themselves. At this point, the fundamental

attitude difference towards political reform between the initiators of this impeachment incident and those who have been part of the New Order's bureaucracy became apparent. Ignas submitted an example: a political practice of the Golkar in which its politicians often emphasize the importance of constitutionalism as a system of procedures but hardly mention anything about justice or the correction of past mistakes of corruption, collusion, nepotism, political violence and human right violations in which Golkar was supposedly involved.

The impeachment has given rise to tension between a legalistic approach to the constitution and the substantive of the law approach, with both having their own flaws. In the case of the tug of war between Wahid and the legislatures, while the former President was convinced of his own struggle for democracy, justice, and freedom, the legislatures stressed the importance of procedures, with which to terminate Wahid's office. Nonetheless, both sides believed in their "righteousness" and spoke for and on behalf of "constitutionalism." For the time being, Ignas suggested, the political and legal struggle in Indonesia needed to find a middle-way, as the future of Indonesian politics depended on an optimal equilibrium between the rationality and process of law and the commitment to justice and discourse on the norms and values of democracy.

Furthermore, Ignas remarked that the democratic ideals of "justice" and "good life" required differentiation. Good life belongs to the private domain in which people were allowed to have as much freedom as possible in their pursuit of happiness. Justice was a norm that gave as much obligation as possible to everyone to abide by its principle. Whereas a "good life" that only holds good for a certain group of people must not be generalized, norms are principles which could and should be universalized. The regime of Soeharto during the New Order in its last four decades had shown clearly that it was a "big mistake" pushing cultural values as political norms. "National identity" and "the Eastern way" as political norms eclipsed normative principles like human rights and individual freedom, which were often downplayed as merely Western cultural values. Ignas believed the tension between fact and norms would continue for years to come. Yet it did not imply that the democratic struggle was condemned to be in vain. Instead, he said that it showed democracy was a constant political way to realize human "perfectability" by overcoming human "fallibility."

Wan A. Manan, the discussant of the paper, stated that the birth of the *reformasi* (reformation) in Indonesia is a guiding light for Malaysia that shows a dictator could succumb to a call for freedom and democracy. Yet, this *reformasi* has frequently been underscored by the Malaysian government and the media as "chaotic" and "violence," thus building an impression among many that the Malaysians should feel "lucky" with their government's political stability. Nonetheless, referring to Noam Chomsky's book on the resistance of control, he felt something is wrong in Malaysia where even the thought of rebellion is "haunting."

Though commending Ignas the "philosopher" for his "informative" and "down-to-earth" paper, Manan said he found difficulty in reconciling Habermas's fact and norms with the crisis in Indonesia. However, he was positive that this country would not be the same again despite an attempt to install the second new order. This is because the "gate of freedom and democracy" was unlocked, hence making it difficult for anyone to return against the civil liberty. For democracy to function, Manan believed, there should be

proper checks and balances, accountability and transparency. In addition, he noted that people participation was a major element in democracy.

Later, the open discussion began. **Goenawan** gave his observation about the concern among Indonesians over the building of institutions. He claimed this concern explained why people are not at all positive in looking at former president Wahid's lack of respect to institution building. Other questions from other participants were centered around the competing issues of political stability, democratization and globalization. Responding to the institution building front touched upon by Goenawan, **Ignas** said this process during the Soeharto regime lacked accountability based on political norms. Similarly, this was also true in the impeachment of Wahid. While acknowledging the importance of institution building, Ignas opined that this process has to be justified and controlled by public discourse based on political norms. As to the question of what comes first, political stability or democracy, Ignas found his answer in Amartaya Zen's noted remark about hunger as a result of the lack of democracy, and not of food. On the query about the role of the international financial institutions, Ignas argued that the global trust in the Indonesian economy depends much on its economic performance, which needs more cooperation among the authorities involved.

Ignas's greatest concern, however, was about regional conflicts. Regardless of triviality, regional conflicts needed to be handled carefully, given the present psychological deterioration among the people. The answer, he said, probably lies not in national or territorial integrity but in the country's capability to come to terms with differences in society. While many fellows voiced their "concern" about the new president Megawati Sukarnoputri's future as well as Indonesia's stability, which was crucial to the whole region, Ignas concluded that economic development solely would not overcome the problems unless a balance between political norms and institutional systems was made.

(2) The second part of the paper presentations began with **Liu Xin's** "Public Individuals." He said the idea stemmed from his curiosity to find the meaning of the so-called "public intellectual" in the context of global capitalism, which has introduced something new in the life of everyone. Liu believed that the definition of "public intellectuals" lied closely to the concept of "organic intellectuals." Their mission was not only to describe social life according to scientific rules from outside but also to express the real experiences and feelings of the masses, who otherwise could not do so by themselves, through the language of culture. With advanced information technology, many public figures could appear as intellectuals on various issues and topics. Under "global capitalist penetration," public intellectuals thus faced the increasing risk of becoming "publicity" intellectuals who dwelled on the surface of discourse without a deep understanding of what and whom they were supposed to speak.

Liu compared this phenomenon with the migrant workers known as *Mingong* in large Chinese urban cities. *Mingong* are a sign of change and dislocation in modernizing China. The moral ground they stood on did not fit in any existing matrix of convention and structure. According to Liu, both public intellectuals and the *Mingong* were public individuals. They were "inside outsiders" who experienced the "transvaluation of values." He felt that it was almost impossible to figure out what people thought and what their

values were at present. Indifference seemed to prevail as a result. Liu urged public intellectuals to perform not only on top of the waves but also get deep down in the water. One must be able to understand, rather than simply know, real experiences and feelings.

As the discussant of the paper, **Diana Wong** highlighted the idea of “public” in the term “public intellectuals,” both in the sense of the public which they were meant to represent and the public space they were supposed to occupy. She shared Liu’s argument of public intellectuals being increasingly associated with publicity. As she understood it, Liu had suggested the reconsideration of their role in the public vertically that emphasized and expressed the depth of the civil society instead of just the surface. However, she still believed that there are public intellectuals at work who are not just “publicity” intellectuals. While **Ignas** saw the “public intellectual” differently as not just an institution but a role that could be played by anyone outside institutional authority, **Endo Suanda** stated that the term “public” was “muddy” because there were so many facets of “public.” His question was whether “public” has any special boundary.

Suwanna Satha-anand was interested in the relation between the image of public intellectual as a “surfer” and the structure of indifference among the migrant workers, to which Liu replied that it might have something to do with concepts like “moral earthquake” and “unpredictability.” **Janadas** traced the origin of the term “intellectual” back to 18th-century Europe as those who knew “all” the existing knowledge written in the encyclopedia. He said no one could claim to know all the knowledge that was known nowadays, and the role of intellectual is concerned as much about knowledge as ethical responsibility. **Kasian** stated that development and globalization have come too quickly, and the mutual caring for each other has been replaced by mutual indifference. People became strangers. Yet, human capability allowed people to not only identify the difference but also understand and care about it. **Arnold M. Azurin**, on the other hand, felt comfortable with the looseness of the term “public intellectual.” As the *Mingong* workers lived in the shadows of the building they built and were mute in expressing their feelings, he soundly believed that public intellectuals should articulate and act for those suffering people.

Inspired by the current political movements in Indonesia, **Faruk Tripoli** presented a paper entitled “Following the Body: A Problem of Conflict Management and Solution.” He was particularly struck by the student participants who were dramatically different from the previous generations in 1945 and 1966. Faruk saw little heroic elements in the contemporary movements compared with the past reformations. The young students’ demonstrations were filled with singing, dancing, and even love-making. The speaker noted that it was interesting to see young people involved in many regional conflicts, and no one could have predicted it was they who could overthrow the long tenure of Soeharto. There must have been a new logic that moved and empowered these young students. To Faruk, the logic was “follow the body.”

His concept of body included both the biological aspects of a human being and the mental aspects such as sense, feelings and thoughts. While the modernist celebrated knowledge and reflection, the postmodernist celebrates body, technology, and action. Faruk felt that globalization, by which he meant the increasing diversity of things, ideas, and people and the increasing speed of the flow of things, caused the world to be a

“runaway” world. It made people constantly on the move, and, therefore, to follow their bodies. He said that most people today were inclined to have “the will to act” rather than “the will to truth.” In the world of globalization, people were driven to feel “hysteria” and motivated to realize it through action. Because people were not used to reflection anymore, they could be easily absorbed by the globalization process. He thought this kind of drive was everywhere in Indonesia these days. Instead of managing conflicts, people seemed to be managed by them. Faruk maintained that this tendency seemed to be one concrete manifestation of the postmodern idea on the subject. Finally, he called for a distance from this unreflective way of following the body.

The discussant **Ota Yoshinobu** looked at the issue through his work with the indigenous Guatemalan people in their reconstruction of the war-torn political body. He suspected “postmodernism” might have meant something different to him. Concurring with Faruk that the consciousness of the body was a mark of modernism, Ota asserted that the neo-liberal right groups seemed to have transformed postmodernism into their “political slogan,” equating it with social and economic restructuring. However, he said he failed to see the logical connection between globalization and the “body.” Although he fully acknowledged the unfortunate consequences of postmodernism, Ota found it difficult to imagine how to engage critically in contemporary issues without it. **Laddawan** stated that globalization had changed the way people think, act and value things. Conflicts became an avoidable outcome. She then cited an example of the efforts of the Assembly of the Poor in Thailand in fighting for the poor against the tide of globalization which has affected their community. **Liu** said he found Faruk’s interchangeable and “too freely” use of words like “globalization” and “postmodernism” rather problematic. Nevertheless, he shared the feeling that the changes in today’s society demanded a modification of the conceptual schemes that public intellectuals used. **Goenawan** opined that since the body was designed for action, it inevitably leaned closer to “the will to act.” The critique lied more in the “memory” of the body; the question that should be asked is how one could define memory and transcend the body. In conclusion, **Faruk** stated that the body was inseparable from its memory and mind. Yet, every culture had its own way to feel the world. How to follow the body, Faruk said, depended on the context and condition of that particular culture.

(3) The discussion in the afternoon encompassed the works by **Kuo Pao Kun**, **Janadas Devan** and **Arnold Azurin**. The session began with readings from two plays written by **Kuo Pao Kun**. The first play, the “Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral,” was read by **Janadas** and the second, “The Spirits Play,” by **Teo Soh Lung**. The introduction of the first play by **Goenawan** told the story of Zheng He, a man who turned into an eunuch in the time when it was perhaps the only way for poor boys from rural Chinese families to get out of hardship and become a part of the Royal establishment. The story of this exceptional eunuch admiral character also touched on Southeast Asia. He was sent by the Chinese Emperor to “roam” the sea and had been to several parts of Asia. In **Goenawan**’s words, the play was a kind of metaphor about wandering and migration. The second play was the brainchild of Pao Kun while he was in Japan where he visited several war memorials. The play presented the brutality of war through the dialogues and monologues of five characters, who were all dead as a result of the Second World War.

The part which **Janadas** read out was towards the end of the play. It told about a rather modern, sophisticated and less painful method of castration that involved gradually increased pressure in a massage of the boy's testicles until the organ stopped functioning. In the second reading, **Soh Lung**'s powerful narration vividly portrayed the brutality of the war through the recounting of a personal story of one character, the mother, whose husband was killed in the war. Unable to find her husband's corpse, she decided to honor all the dead soldiers she encountered by performing cremations for them. Yet, she was then shot dead not by the enemy but the army of her own country, who feared the fire would alert the foe.

After Pao Kun's play that led the fellows to "cruise" along the eunuch admiral's wandering of the vast region called Asia, **Janadas**'s paper "Does Asia Exist" could not have been presented at a better time. The paper was inspired by the former United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's division of the world into three areas: the revolutionary states, the established world, and Asia, of which he still maintained critical reservations. Janadas said this characterization should be taken seriously in one respect, that is, the equation of Asia's situation to 19th century Europe. Given the environment of fear and distrust among countries in the Asian region, an emerging arms race particularly among those with nuclear potential, and the lack of regional economic, political and security arrangements, he said the situation called for great concern. To him, the role of China as a major regional power and the US-Japan relationship are central to the prospect of peace in the region. Yet, he was discouraged by the short supply of wisdom in the world's capitals to guard against a potential security conflict. The George W. Bush administration's aggressive policy on the missile defense system provides a perfect example. This policy, which underwent heavy criticism even by President Bush's top military adviser, would create among others an arm race that would unfortunately end in less security in the region. Asserting that prevailing economic interconnection is not a guarantee for peace, Janadas concluded that there is an urgent need for more citizen involvement in the national polity and the strengthening of regional supra-national organizations - the positing of the "plural we."

Goenawan elaborated more upon the American perception of the world, citing a writing in 1955 by an Indonesian scholar which he said still holds true today and can be seen as how the US administration perceived Asia in general and China in particular. "The European frequently tried to give us in one permanent position and in that way believed that they will be able to predict how we would react to different things based on their knowledge," Goenawan quoted the writer. To him, by "creating" China as its enemy, Washington has made a structure to deal with the world.

Arnold Azurin's presentation addressed the issue of globalization by the title of his paper: "How can Diverse Asian Civilizations Contribute to World Peace, Security, and Human Development?" His answer was "expanding the role and route of cultural commuters undertaking inter-civilization exchange." He started by stressing that the traditional Philippines, which was a usual stopover by many travelers and migrants in maritime Asia, had favorably borne influences from many other cultures. The popular northern vegetable dish *pinakbet* that combined ingredients originated from China, South America, Africa and Southeast Asia was a good example. However, the colonial period

forced the Philippines to undermine its heritage and linkage from mainland Asia. As memories were invented and reinvented by those who possessed power, such a past was deliberately altered.

Arnold then focused on the role of “cultural commuters” who played a crucial part in peace negotiations in the ongoing practice of inter-village vendetta (tribal wars). Since the warrior-hero was esteemed highly among the villagers, the memory of war-fighting was still very much alive in the young generation. Cultural commuters functioned as intermediaries between warring villages desirous of coming to a truce. Not only did they bring about peace but also the development of trade, technology, art, literacy, and hence, civilization. Arnold observed that the concept of cultural commuters could be relevant in managing conflicts in the world of globalization. Instead of promoting cultural exclusivity and purity, he proposed that governments should recover these memories shared by his ancestors through creating a “Silk Route of Information.” From school textbooks to cyberspace, the concept could be realized by the new commuters, such as cross-cultural researchers, journalists, migrant workers, NGOs, or even tourists who would share knowledge, hope, opportunities and commodities through this network.

Ayu Utami, the discussant of the paper, reflected on the idea of cultural commuters and conflict resolution from the recent plight of Indonesia. She saw the threat to peace came mostly from within the state rather than between states. She pointed to three major events that took place simultaneously within the last two decades: the end of the Cold War, the fragmentation of previously communist countries in Eastern Europe, and the collapse of many authoritarian regimes in Asia. This was followed by an unstable period of transition in the countries concerned. Regional conflicts have replaced the Cold War as a threat to these countries’ political stability. However, these were not “vertical” conflicts between the state apparatus and civilians or separatist movements, but “horizontal” ones between civil groups. Her country Indonesia has examples of both. Whichever type, there always lies there deeply rooted social and economic tensions. To Ayu, the biggest challenge to global peace today seems to be the small regional hostilities that exploit the problem of “identity” by using ethnic, religious and political sentiment. Also of great concern is the oppression of the individual by way of the communal law. Ayu, a novelist and a linguist, concluded by emphasizing the importance of “individual” as a “phoneme” of any civilization.

Although **Hong-Sup** affirmed that cultural exchange could contribute to peace and security, he said “isolation” could produce specific native species from a scientific point of view. **Terada Takefumni**, a committee member of the program, stressed that the role of “cultural commuters” has long been and still is carried out by many Filipino migrants who work and live overseas. However, their history was never written. **Ignas** remarked that mental closeness to the same group was a natural behavior, but it could also obscure the progress to world peace. Hence, he urged the decisive opening of minds. **Arnold** ended the discussion by restating the importance of shared heritage and history. He remembered in school that he learned all about American history but knew nothing about the neighboring countries in Asia. He hoped through the information “silk route” old memories could be reborn and conversations with other cultures could proceed. A more faithful version of history could then finally and formally be incorporated into official textbooks for future generations.

IV. Discussion of Future Projects

The reunion conference that took place on the following day (August 6) aimed to achieve three goals: the synthesis of the previous day's discussions, the initiation of future direction and projects, and the evaluation of the ALFP program.

In short, the whole day's session was dedicated to discussion about the expected role of public intellectuals in the region, and the themes or issues that needed to be worked on. During the course of the debate, some fellows were enthusiastic in proposing a whole range of new issues or exploring different aspects of already existing topics while others still doubted how to proceed with these themes and how to implement the future projects being proposed.

Kasian reprised the meaning of "public intellectuals" as those who were not xenophobic. They could talk with and even talk back to the West in their own terms and times. However, he also voiced the "powerlessness" of individuals. Apart from working in this kind of intellectual setting and at one's own domain, be it the university, news-room, or office, he questioned what more could and should be done. On a different note, **Sanitsuda Ekachai** worried that the academic language and vague terminology used in some conference papers might be too difficult for ordinary people to understand. As a result, many values and ideas that could be shared with others might not receive the appreciation they deserve. She thus suggested the use of simpler and more direct expression. Similarly, **Saree Aongsomwang** felt that some of the discussions might have appeared "far away" and did not touch the "grass-root" level. In addition, she was concerned about the "public" aspect of being a public intellectual. Public was rapidly being privatized, she said. The integrity and even personal safety of the "public intellectual" were also increasingly threatened by politics and business. **Endo** stated that public was a multi-dimensional entity, in which each level spoke its own language and had its limits. He had been working "outside" of the system for many years. He realized communication with the general public could be far more effective if one could go through the system, for instance through the educational structure by producing a textbook.

Ota, on the other hand, stated that things nowadays were often not transparent and apparent. It could be very difficult to elucidate certain points precisely. Although the academic language seemed to immediately draw a line from the people, the language used could well reflect the difficulties where problems came from--their "muddy" nature. Likewise, **Janadas** found difficulties in understanding each other unavoidable. To him, if everyone understood each other perfectly, there would be no need for public intellectuals to exist. **Arnold** noted that the issue of communication with each other and the public was raised as early as the first year in the ALFP discussions. He suggested that the program provide simple summaries of the seminars or workshops, in the form of print, leaflets, or broadcasts, that people could have access to and comment on in return, to which many fellows accorded. In response to Arnold, **Diana** felt she had learned less and less in the "transnational" and "international" conferences in the past five years. Yet, she had found delightful lessons and discoveries by traveling, visiting, talking to and knowing

people. She agreed that their ideas and knowledge should be shared with the public while maintaining an effort not to let themselves become just another “think tank.”

Urvashi agreed that there has always been a fear of academics speaking in the language of distance. Meanwhile, she observed that a lot of Asian intellectual discussions kept a distance from the subject of South Asia. Perhaps it was outside the interest of many East and Southeast Asians, she said, for they did not feel the need to go beyond immediate necessity. Even though known as an “aggressive” person herself, she still endured difficulties in coping with indifference. Nevertheless, since the ALFP decided to reach out to South Asia, the effort should be made no matter how hard it was. Recognizing Urvashi’s disappointment, **Janadas**, however, noticed that the Indian globalization journey during the past 30 years was quite different from other East and Southeast Asian countries in terms of global capital and the communist experiences manifested in the Korean and Vietnam wars. **Hong-Sup** also noted a shortcoming of their discussions. He felt the fellows had neglected half of the world, the world of natural science. As everyday life has become increasingly connected with and reliant on technology, the fellows should make an attempt to measure emerging scientific developments, from genetic engineering to environmental protection, by the critiques of social science and humanity.

Janadas raised the question of the relationship between micro politics and the collapse of the struggle of grand ideological movements, which was touched upon by many of the papers. Impressed by Goenawan’s opening speech, he voiced the opinion that perhaps one of the major differences between the academics and activists within the fellows is the sense of the universal “we.” While the activists belonged to and engaged in the “we,” the academics were more conscious of the critique of that “we.” **Kasian** agreed, adding that we should promote critical reconstruction of the “we.” Instead of differentiating the academics and the activists, **Goenawan** basically divided the group into two types: the activists and the thinkers. Being an activist by default, Goenawan realized there was less time for him to “think” and examine his actions. In order to disregard one’s despair, the activists tended to simplify things and even considered “thinking too much” as dangerous. Besides, he also questioned the validity of the intellectuals imposing themselves as “we” and urged a common ground for that “we” based upon experience and understanding.

Jong Won noted that the dissatisfaction that the fellows had experienced was one of the most important qualities of a public intellectual, the ability for self-criticism. In the process, he argued that personal reflections and mutual reactions built on common ground could be a way to find “new paradigms” for intellectual discourse. **Kian Woon** stated that the title of this conference, and as a matter of fact all the early titles, was just a convenient spring-board for the fellows to discuss the issues in the “mud.” From the presentations and discussions, he saw efforts taken by philosophers to bridge the gap and the academics to reach the grass-roots. However, he said most of them still faced the tension between action and contemplation, especially the danger of reflection when one had to make quick decisions and move on. Kian Woon indicated that a lot of them were doing too many things at the time, and eventually became a “tourist” of even one’s own country and locality, not to mention the region as a whole.

Takeda Isami, a program committee member, voiced his interest in more concrete issues for discussion such as “conflict management” and “Asian values.” In response, **Ignas** proposed that the management of conflict resolution needed better understanding from the international institutions of the urgency and unexpected nature of conflicts so that they could be handled in time. Of equal importance is the securing and maintaining of local and cultural conflict resolution in the institutions. On the issue of “Asian values” he cautioned against repeating the same mistakes by following in the footsteps of some Asian politicians who have abused so-called “Asian values” to keep maintaining their repressive regimes. **Urvashi**, on the other hand, suggested that it was also important to discuss other issues that happened as a result of conflicts, for example, mass rape.

The fellows then agreed that their discussion should be more focused. More than ten potential topics were raised, ranging from conflict management to alternative history to consumerism to Asian family trees. **Suwanna** believed all these themes were of great interest. Nevertheless, they should look at not only the change of values but the conditions and layers in which such values existed, since the moral ground that public intellectual owed to also underwent a “moral earthquake,” a term that Liu referred to.

Regarding the question of how to proceed, **Kasian** opined that even without the ALFP meetings, the fellows would carry on their tasks to fight against inequality, injustice, and for whatever they believed in. Yet, the program provides a great chance for them to learn the languages and experiences from one another. The established “alumni” network, hence, should go on in a more structured communication channel such as in the form of smaller focus groups with concrete proposals in order to further pursue topics that were of keen interest to the fellows and the public. Their work could then serve as alternative proposals to various pressing issues spanning the region. **Won Soon** agreed that the alumni network should be conducted in a more specific fashion and with a more realistic approach. He suggested that the group could invite other outside activists and scholars, together with business people and bureaucrats who shared the same goals in such pursuits. Moreover, an Internet-based center could serve as an economical and efficient channel for this purpose. **Janadas** noted that a certain “destination” should be determined and the “modality” of realizing such ends should be considered before forming these focus groups, whereas **Manan** voiced his concern about funding and organizational support. Both the representatives from the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center similarly expressed their support in this more precise and focused undertaking by the fellows, and they would cooperate with the fellows in the most favorable way.

In conclusion, three areas of topics were decided in the meeting although more were scheduled to come. Each topic would be headed by a fellow with his or her organization as the basis of the “focus group.” Other interested fellows could then participate in the group through various means and further explore and develop the topic. The three major themes for the focus groups are: “Conflict Management” by **Ignas**, “Consumerism” by **Saree**, and “Cultural Issues” by **Arnold**.

V. Public Symposium

The symposium took place on August 7 at Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Arts building, under the title "Conflict Management in the Face of Globalization: Initiatives, Alternatives and Imagination."

Faculty Dean **M.R. Kalaya Tingsabhd** welcomed the fellows and guests to this historic venue where the foundation stones were laid by King Rama VI, who founded and named the university to commemorate his father, the great King Rama V. Kalaya explained that the founding of the university signalled the beginning of the modernization process in many areas of Thai life. As the Asian nations have gone through various phases and uncertainties and faced many forms of conflict in the process of becoming modern, Kalaya said the symposium was timely and crucial for the future of the "friendly coexistence" of the Asian nations.

Kalaya's speech was followed by a brief introduction of the ALFP by **Jun-etsu Komatsu**, Managing Director of the Japan Foundation Asia Center. Before proceeding, **Surichai Wan-kaew**, Director of Chulalongkorn University's Center for Social Development Studies, who served as moderator, reminded the fellows and the participants that they also had the participating spirit of Professor **Ishak Bin Shari**, a 1997 Malaysian fellow who passed away last month. **Surichai** began the discussion by pointing to the "conflict avoiding" nature of the Asian people while dwelling on the word "conflict" as meaning an incompatible interest, goal and activity. Before he introduced the speakers--**Goenawan, Urvashi**, and **Kian Woon**--**Surichai** admitted it was a most challenging task to discuss conflict in the context of globalization.

Taking the privilege of addressing the scholars without having to wear a suit, **Goenawan** apologized for not preparing any written material on globalization as he had been engaged in reading Urvashi's book about the tragic 1947 partition in India, in which millions of people were forced to move across the border, slaughtered or died from malnutrition and contagious diseases. The book also recorded widespread sexual slavery, the division of families, and the destruction of villages and crops. To Goenawan, Urvashi tried to recall the incidents to make us remember this tragedy. He thought it was timely to do this because it was a human right to be remembered. Unlike the 1970s where people talked about future shock, Goenawan said people of the 1990s were faced with the shock from the past. To him, remembering has become not only an issue of the time but also of space.

He then read out one part of Urvashi's book about the commemoration of the massacre in March 1947. A ritual is organised every year on March 13 where survivors of the Rawalpindi massacre living in Janbura in New Delhi hold a memorial for the victims. The ritual begins by offering prayers for the dead, followed by the recounting of their stories. However, violence has also often been conducted in the name of martyrdom. Goenawan saw the danger of transforming horror into tragedy as parallel to the need to sanctify the victims--an act of forgetting the victims' possibility of being human. On the other hand, he said there is the potential to consider killing as the right thing if those who were killed were the "other." Goenawan cited an example: the atrocity in 1965 against an estimated three million Indonesians who were suspected of Communist affiliations. Until the fall of Soeharto in 1998 no one spoke about the killing. While the idea of truth and reconciliation had been introduced in Indonesia, he personally did not think it would work, given the lack of consensus among different groups of victims. Unlike South Africa,

Indonesia does not have an institution that can negotiate with the apartheid regime. An effort to have truth takes time and lots of money. Therefore, Goenawan suggested forgiveness as the last resort while insisting that guilt should still be recognized.

Goenawan's introduction, said **Urvashi**, made her talk much easier. She then told a series of disconnected stories and tied them up in the end. For Urvashi, it is important to talk about the past that has stretched its long arms into today's lives. Indeed, the sectarian troubles--the identity conflicts based on religion--in the Indian Sub-continent, particularly part of India today, have a lot to do with that partition moment in 1947. Urvashi recalled the July 2001 meeting between the Indian Prime Minister and the Pakistani president. Despite high expectations for peace, the talks failed to bear fruit. One of the issues on which the meeting failed was the dispute over Kashmir in the northwest of India. Just a day after the meeting of the two leaders, the Indian police broke down the memorial built by the Association of the Parents of the Disappeared, whose members were mostly women. They had lost their husbands, sons or brothers, who simply disappeared after being picked up and questioned by the Indian security forces on suspicion of involvement with the activities of the Kashmir militant group. The destruction of the memorial, said Urvashi, was contrary to the two leaders' claims that the only solution to the Kashmir problem is to listen to the wishes of the Kashmir people. It is essential that the state make a public space open and available for ordinary citizens. Accordingly, people who have lived through that grief and trauma could deal with their experiences in ways they found appropriate. Urvashi also talked about the different levels of violence that took place in the region. She told the story of a Sikh man who had witnessed the killing of his female family members in the name of martyrdom. After almost half a century, the now seasoned man decided to make up with his Muslim rival by going back to his hometown and eating in the same house of his enemy. Urvashi wished that the two leaders could take his wisdom to heart.

Furthermore, Urvashi also told of a touching episode at a feminist conference in which the Pakistani female participants apologized to their Bangladeshi fellows for the atrocity in 1971 when the Pakistani army conducted a mass rape of Bangladeshi women. Although their state did not accept any responsibility, the Pakistani women felt the necessity of an apology because they "wanted to build an imagined future" where people from both countries could actually continue to function together as human beings. Urvashi said the incident showed that even on the level of private citizens there are important things and initiatives that people can work on. Another story told was about the pen-pal friendship between a Hindu man and a Muslim, which transcended their religious differences. To Urvashi, these stories were testimony to the possibility of reconciliation and peace. In her conclusion, Urvashi urged for "globalized resistance" against the hegemonizing discourse of globalization in order to build what **Janadas** called the "plural we." All of us should work together in dealing with the amnesia of our society towards peace and creating a universal future, she said.

Kwok Kian Woon, who read the paper of **Kuo Pao Kun**, introduced Pao Kun as both an important figure in the Singapore art scene and a social critic. Recently, he has created a theatre training programme based on his 53 years of experience with a small performing arts school which started in 1965. Kian Woon noted there are many reasons for someone

like Pao Kun to promote the arts and speak on behalf of them in a place like Singapore, where there is no solid basis in tradition and heritage in the way that many other Asian neighbours have. He said Pao Kun is very fond of saying that Singaporeans are “cultural offensive” and living in a state where the “umbilical tie to ascend to culture has been severely cut off from day one.” Also, in Singapore the arts do not have a strong or central place in the core curriculum. The government only recognizes the economic value of art in relation to the cultural industry and the competition with other exciting cities of the world. Kian Woon said Pao Kun considered art as having everything to do with becoming human, which involves the sense of self, being, autonomy, memory and so on.

Kian Woon remembered Pao Kun always likes to tell of a South African play where the inmates were engaged in an imagined phone conversation. Pao Kun first failed to understand the logic of this rather “child play.” Then he gradually began to understand that the imagined act is actually a life line, an inalienable and noble way for the prisoners to realize who they are and why they are suffering detention. Kian Woon said this play spoke directly to Pao Kun, who had been detained for four years in Singapore. In mentioning this play, Kian Woon said that Pao Kun might not have just Singapore in mind but also Southeast Asia and other countries in similar situations. To Pao Kun, art, especially the performing arts, has become the core element in the struggle of many Asian young people who resist homogenization by the state and monopolistic enterprises. In the context of globalization, where people have been thrown out of their families, communities and nations or have wandered all over the globe, art is significant in preserving their own integrity as an autonomous person. At the end of his paper, Pao Kun emphasized the importance of the ability to understand human complexity, human desire and behaviour in order to face some of the challenges posed by the new economy and information technology.

In his contribution to the Pao Kun paper, Kian Woon narrated the complex relationships between art and economy, politics, religion, market and the civil society. In Singapore, artists, especially theatre practitioners, have been at the forefront of civil society, even more so than their fellows in universities. He also touched on art and its relation to hope, tradition and modernity because in many parts of Asia there exists a concern about preserving one’s unique heritage and art. The concern, he said, was more on the loss of traditional culture forms than on the ability to deal with cultural changes. Human reflection must keep up with the ever growing complexity in economic and technological developments. On art and religion in the contemporary secular world, Kian Woon referred to the saying that art can perhaps offer an alternative channel by which spiritual searching takes place. Paraphrasing a remark by a German theologian, Kian Woon said art is like the concept of God, the energy that brings human beings across all kinds of ocean--borders, ethnicity, language, religion, class. It can also take people across the ocean of loneliness, tragedy, trauma, conflict and hate.

In the second part of the symposium, **Surichai** introduced two discussants of the papers, Professor **Pasuk Phongpaichit** of Chulalongkorn University’s Faculty of Economics and Professor **Chaiwat Satha-anand** of Thammasat University’s Faculty of Political Sciences.

Pasuk said she was struck by a phrase from Pao Kun's paper that said art has been used as a countermovement by small groups and individuals against the state. She then pointed to social movements as another kind of expression, apart from art, that have recently become a phenomenon in Asia since the 1980s. Unlike the old movements led by workers and farmers in the socialist tradition, these new social movements have emerged among several groups of marginalized people, such as small fishermen, farmers, or slum dwellers, and take the form of street protest and sometime violence. To Pasuk, this kind of protest not only concerns the protesters' particular problems but also their own identity. An economist by training, Pasuk said she became interested in this new type of social movement because she was frustrated by her students' indifference to such expression. She was disappointed by those who went along with the government propaganda without understanding this social expression on the streets of Bangkok. Pasuk decided to do some research and write on the issue to provide her students with various debates and perspective. She felt sympathetic to some of the protesters' demands, for it was their right to participate in the decision making process of policies and programs that would affect their lives and livelihood. Their participation is important, she said, since a society needs to take account of various demands from different groups of people in order to move forward. To her, social movements are not part of the problem but part of a solution to the conflict. It helps to facilitate negotiations with the state and create better understanding among the general public, in the same way that art has been seen as a form of communication and as a way of rallying opinion or influencing opinion in society. Then social movements, just like art, are an essential element in the process that leads to certain kinds of conflict management.

Chaiwat, on the other hand, asked if conflict can and should be managed. To him, managing conflict is rather problematic, as it could end up depoliticizing the problems or not solving them at all. He then suggested "conflict transformation," which emphasizes belief in an alternative to conflict as well as empathy with the victims and the practice of non-violence. To transform conflict "we have to awaken ourselves not to be blinded to the pain of the suffering and not to be deaf to the cries of the oppressed." Chaiwat said there are many more stories to tell apart from those told by Goenawan and Urvashi. There are stories of human courage and friendship. However, even though it is the same story, people may choose to remember it differently. Chaiwat then deconstructed the word "remember" as an act of "re-membering" oneself into a particular group with common memory. Hence, how these stories are told and interpreted becomes important, for people need to reconstitute themselves as a member in the community, reenergize their lives and move on to the road to peace.

Later on in an open discussion, **Kasian**, who teaches at Thammasat University's Faculty of Political Sciences, said he belonged to another kind of community of memory from that described by Chaiwat. Kasian said a current in Thailand and in Asia contradicted Goenawan's suggestion that one should remember enough just to care and forget enough just not to kill. In Thailand, it was still the case that a lot of Thais forget enough to kill again and do not remember enough to care. In regard to "forgiveness," Kasian said some kind of remembering makes forgiveness impossible. "If you are remembering under the moral domination or the moral rule of the victimisers... you begin

to believe what the victimisers tell you, that you are indeed really bad that you deserved to be killed. In that sense, you don't forgive your victimiser; you thanked him for killing you," he said. Forgiveness, he insisted, was conditioned upon remembering, remembering in order to make possible the return to the wholeness of a moral being or the continuation of the violently, abruptly, and prematurely broken moral life. He said only when the "partly living, partly dead" victims are restored to a wholesome moral being and continue with their moral lives again is forgiveness possible. On the contrary, **Ota**, who preferred to talk out of his Japanese nationality position, did not think that remembering was some kind of returning to the whole that existed prior to the shattering (of one's memory). Rather, it was about the construction of something new, or, in **Urvashi's** words, to make up. To him, regional conflicts based on a different memory of particular events need to be discussed in a larger framework of "decolonization." He said Japan has not yet really recognized the process of decolonization, although this process of coming to terms with decolonization is precisely the process of recreating a future that both Japan and other regional countries could share.

Ignas added that as far as Indonesia is concerned, remembering has very much to do with putting separate members back into the original whole. He found the three strategies that had been employed so far rather problematic. First, "not to forget and forgive" was the case during the New Order era. The former government had successfully instilled in people's minds the hatred of communists to maintain public hostility against them while covering up its anti-Communist atrocity. The second option of "forgive and forget," as once proposed by former president **Wahid**, was also improper as it provided no lessons to learn from. Besides, this strategy risks justifying past mistakes by not doing justice to those who were victimized but making them unidentified. The last strategy of "forgive and never to forget," is a difficult task taking into consideration the harsh experience of the children in the conflict areas. It is difficult for them to see this experience as something that belongs to the past because the persistence of this experience has become an integral part of their psychological and political present. To these children, "history is not their dealing with what they choose from the past to understand but their dealing with what they are condemned to bear from the past without being able to get rid of it," said **Ignas**. Traumatic experience, **Liu Xin** said, could probably serve as "a natural starting point for memory." The narrative strategy that is chosen to tell past events always comes from present concerns. To him, it is the only way to tell a story. For that reason, "all memories are the memories of the present."

While acknowledging that a memory spoken or story told at present is inevitably influenced by that particular moment and the people involved, **Urvashi**, however, disagreed that a traumatic moment formed the starting point of memory. To her, a natural felicity, or some kind of felicity, exists before the forming of memory. **Chaiwat** added that memory is not about the present but is an act to connect one with the future, to make up, to make amends in order to avoid being mad or becoming amnesiac. With regards to the question of whether truth and reconciliation could be possible without justice first, he noted that the answer was not simple because justice could have different forms--as retributive justice or in terms of distributive justice. However, **Mr Jose Tadeu Da Costa Sousa Soares**, the Portuguese Ambassador to Thailand, shared his two years of experience in the United Nations Security Council that there surely were some good

experiences about truth and reconciliation in many countries. Conflict, he concluded, can and should be managed, for it is the only way that the world can look forward to the future. **Pasuk** agreed that government and society still have an important role to play in managing conflict, especially ensuring the fair sharing of natural resources.

Janadas, meanwhile, raised some difficulties in using non-UN-structured local ways to solve conflict, which could have the undesirable effect of sustaining or perpetuating such clashes. The obstacle, **Urvashi** said, may lie in social sanctions. She gave as testimony, an attack against women groups which belong to the ethnic tribes in the Northeast of India. Those courageous women were attacked by their own community as they tried to cross the tribal and racial divide and create a structure for resolving conflict. To her, private citizens' initiatives towards reconciliation and friendship are very important. They are steps towards the "plural we" that hopefully would "push the states into taking steps they might not otherwise take." For **Goenawan**, both the "small" step--like that of a new social movement on the streets--and the "big" one--like that taken by the European Community that brought former Yugoslavia president Slobodan Milosevic to trial at the Hague--have limitations. Citing the racially-based conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and the religious fights among Christian and Muslim groups in the Philippines, **Arnold Azurin** said sometimes memory can be weaponry. History at times is distorted to justify future vengeance. The role of public intellectuals, then, is to challenge any attempt at reconstituting memory or history at the expense of those of other people. Equally important, **Kian Woon** added, is to work towards the reduction of "untruth" that calls for the realization of "self-reflexiveness" to ensure the "will to truth" and the "will to act on the truth." More dialogue, concluded **Surichai**, is needed in discussing pertinent issues of the present that have much to do with the distant past in order to work together towards an imaginable future.

VI. Concluding Remarks

Despite the complexity and confusion, the unresolved yet ongoing discussion of conflict management in the era of globalization, and regardless of all the gray zones and difficulties in confronting different memories that arose in the world of mud, public intellectuals--be they surfer or revolutionary types--should get together and act as collective cultural commuters who travel the "information silk route" towards the creation of a future of the universal "plural we."