

Asia Leadership Fellow Program

2018 PROGRAM REPORT

Imagining Plural Asias: How Can We Enrich Interrelationships across Borders?

Imagining Plural Asias: How Can We Enrich Interrelationships across Borders?

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Contents

ALFP 2018 Fellows ----- 4

ALFP 2018 Schedule ----- 8

ALFP 2018 Program Overview ----- 10

ALFP 2018 Fellows

Samrat Choudhury (India)

Author / Journalist (Independent)



Mr. Choudhury is an author and journalist. After serving as an editor at mainstream newspapers in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, he has been engaged in writing a book on the Brahmaputra River, which flows through Tibet in China, northeast India and Bangladesh. He is interested in such topics as the politics, history and culture of this complex and diverse region where India, Bangladesh and China meet, as well as of India as a whole. His publications include short stories, essays and a graphic novella, some of which have been translated into German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. His novel *The Urban Jungle* (Penguin Books, 2011) was nominated for the Man Asian Literary Prize. Having studied electrical engineering before, he is also interested in technology and its impact on society. He divides his time between Shillong and Kolkata.

Aziz Ali Dad (Pakistan)

Knowledge Management and Communication Specialist, Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP)



Mr. Ali Dad is Knowledge Management and Communications Specialist at the nongovernmental Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), engaged in research on the impact of socio-economic development on politically marginalized regions such as Gilgit-Baltistan (where he is from) and its neighboring areas and how globalization affects local culture, traditions, governance structure and people's identities. He is also a leading writer in the region and a regular columnist at the major English daily *The News*. By writing extensively on philosophical, cultural, political and social issues and presenting research papers at national and international conferences, he hopes to represent the region of Gilgit-Baltistan. Mr. Ali Dad received an MSc in Philosophy of Social Sciences from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Recently, he completed the study "Horizons of CPEC in Gilgit-Baltistan" for AKRSP, which examines the opportunities and challenges the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) may bring to Gilgit-Baltistan.

Asmin Fransiska (Indonesia)

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia



Dr. Fransiska is the director of the Institute of Research and Community Services and a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Law at Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia. She has conducted research on human rights and drug policy focusing on drug law and human rights, health and children, democracy and past abuses. She obtained a master's degree from Northwestern University, USA, and a Ph.D. from Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Germany. Besides publishing articles in international academic books and journals, Dr. Fransiska frequently writes essays for national and international media regarding human rights, the anti-death penalty movement, the rule of law and drug law. She serves as a coordinator of the Indonesian Coalition for Drug Policy Reform while seeking solutions to drug dependence and advocating health rights. She hopes to learn from other Asian countries' efforts on human rights issues.

Lydia Lubon (Malaysia)

Documentary Filmmaker and Producer (Independent)



Ms. Lubon is a documentary filmmaker whose 14-year career has seen her engaged in international documentary production across Asia. She currently holds the position of Secretary for the Malaysian Documentary Association and has received multiple film awards, including Best Documentary for her first film in 2004 and also for her Discovery Channel film *Making the Cut* in 2009. Most recently, she was Executive Producer for *Operation Sumatran Rhino*, which was the first Malaysian wildlife documentary to receive a global telecast on National Geographic Wild. Ms. Lubon works with international TV networks such as Discovery Channel, History Channel, Bio Channel, National Geographic, National Geographic Wild, Fox Sports and Al Jazeera English. Ms. Lubon is of mixed parentage, half-American and half-Iban (Malaysia's largest indigenous tribe). She was born and raised in Malaysia, spending many months each year on the island of Borneo. She is passionate about wildlife and environmental conservation, and uses her films as a platform for raising awareness about social responsibility.

Alongkot Maiduang (Thailand)

Academic Officer, IPST Thailand / Art & Culture Journalist, *Judprakai* Newspaper



Dr. Maiduang is an academic officer at the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST). His works cover all aspects of mathematics education in Thailand, ranging from developing national curricula, policies and textbooks, and training teachers to conducting national as well as international assessments. Dr. Maiduang also works as a film critic and writes commentaries on world cinema, especially Asian films and multi-national productions under the pen name "kalapapruek" for various media and has won several film criticism awards. He has visited most major film festivals, such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Rotterdam, London, Hong Kong and Singapore, while serving as a permanent jury member of the International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC) Thailand to judge awards for outstanding stage performances in Thailand. Apart from film, he writes reviews on literature, art exhibitions, classical music and stage performances.

Sawanishi Mikiko (Japan)

Deputy Executive Head, United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)



Ms. Sawanishi currently serves as Deputy Executive Head of the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) based in New York. UNDEF was created in 2005 as a United Nations General Trust Fund at the Millennium Summit with the objective of promoting democracy at the grassroots level. Through her work at UNDEF, she has worked with civil society organizations in almost all Asian countries and contributed to the enhancement of civil society in the local community, especially by enabling participation of all citizens including the most marginalized and vulnerable populations in decision-making processes. Prior to UNDEF, she worked for UN agencies, funds and programmes in the fields of development, conflict prevention, combating infectious diseases and peaceful use of nuclear technology. She has also engaged in projects relating to the empowerment of women and the promotion of equal participation of all sexes both in the home and workforce, as well as to educational assistance in developing nations. Before joining the UN, she worked for the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

Sun Dong (China)

Poet / Professor and Deputy Director, Office of International Cooperation and Exchanges,
Nanjing University of Finance and Economics



Dr. Sun currently works as a professor of English literature at Nanjing University of Finance and Economics. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at McMaster University in Canada after earning a Ph.D. in English literature from Nanjing University. Dr. Sun is a literary critic specializing in poetry and theater studies and a prominent poet. She has authored one monograph, two poetry books, numerous academic articles and hundreds of poems in various distinguished journals and newspapers while translating and editing a number of books relating to poetry. Her poems have also been translated into English, Turkish, Hindi, French and Romanian. Through her work at the Office of International Cooperation and Exchanges, Nanjing University of Finance and Economics, as well as at the Confucius Institute for Business, State University of New York as a Chinese director (2013–17), she has developed a passion for promoting cultural exchange and has collaborated with educational and cultural institutions in other countries.

Silot Uon (Cambodia)

Career Advisor, SeeChange International Cambodia



Mr. Uon is a career advisor for SeeChange International Cambodia, a nongovernmental organization focusing on the empowerment of young people through job training and the improvement of their mindset. Its vocational training center in particular helps young individuals get into a more sustainable workplace than they are now by providing the opportunity to study for career advancement and connecting them with partner organizations on an individual basis. Mr. Uon is also a general manager of Cashew Nut Association Kompong Thom (CAT), a commercial association operated with the provincial department of commerce, where he is responsible for training farmers in Kompong Thom as well as for finding new markets to sell their products. In addition, Mr. Uon has worked as a translator cum coordinator for Teachers Across Borders Australia (TAB) since 2006 and helped organize workshops for teachers to improve the quality of teaching and conducted workshops for those in management and leadership positions in public institutions. In his activities, Mr. Uon places great emphasis on the importance of nurturing a mutual respect among people not only in his community but also in neighboring countries.

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

ALFP 2018 Schedule

Sep 10	Orientation/Welcoming Reception
Sep 11	Introduction Session Country Reports 1: Samrat Choudhury and Silot Uon
Sep 12	Country Reports 2: Sun Dong, Asmin Fransiska, and Alongkot Maiduang Country Reports 3: Aziz Ali Dad, Lydia Lubon, and Sawanishi Mikiko
Sep 14	Discussion-Paper Presentations
Sep 18	Core Seminar on South Asia “Structural Transformation in Globalizing India and Asia: An Agenda for Sustainable, Inclusive and Peaceful Development” by Tanabe Akio (Professor, University of Tokyo) Prep Session for the Field Trip (Part I)
Sep 19	Core Seminar on Northeast Asia “Remembrance and Forgetting of Negative Historical Memories” by Ako Tomoko (Associate Professor, University of Tokyo)
Sep 20	Prep Session for the Field Trip (Part II) Core Seminar on Southeast Asia “Challenges to Democracy in Asia: The Rise of Populism and Moral Politics” by Kusaka Wataru (Associate Professor, Nagoya University)
Sep 21	Film screening of <i>Operation Sumatran Rhino</i> followed by Q&A session
Sep 25–29	Field Trip to Tohoku
Oct 2	Seminar “Stable but Disappointing: The ‘3:2:5’ Voting Structure of the Japanese Elections in the 2010s” by Oguma Eiji (Professor, Keio University)
Oct 3	Visit to NHK
Oct 5	Film screening of <i>Remittance</i>
Oct 6–13	Individual Activities Period
Oct 14	ALFP Lecture Series #1 “Journalism in Asia: Searching for the Truth” by Kunda Dixit (Editor and Publisher, <i>Nepali Times</i> / ALFP 2006 Fellow), Saba Naqvi (Independent Journalist / ALFP 2013 Fellow), and Kong Rithdee (Editor, <i>Bangkok Post</i> / ALFP 2010 Fellow) and discussion with fellows from other leadership programs in the Asia-Pacific
Oct 15	Visit to the Tessenkai Noh Theatre and seminar on Japanese traditional performing arts and collaboration with artists from other Asian countries by Shimizu Kanji (Noh Performer)
Oct 16	Visit to Tosetsukai (nursing-care facility) and meeting with Mataki Kyoko (Chairperson, Tosetsukai)

- Oct 17 Seminar “An Anti-Disciplinary Project” by Okahara Kosuke (Photographer)
- Oct 19 Seminar “Imagining Plural Asias: How Can We Enrich Interrelationships across Borders?” by Mario Lopez (Associate Professor, Kyoto University)
- Oct 23–24 Retreat Session in Kiyosato
- Oct 30 Asia Pacific Young Leaders Program (APYLP) Joint Session with Asia Society
- Oct 31 Public Forum
- Nov 2 Evaluation Session

2018 Program Overview

Discussion-Paper Presentations

A one-day session was held at the beginning of the program in Tokyo where the Fellows shared their expertise, areas of interest and regional and global concerns with several intellectuals based in Japan and also engaged in dialogue under this year's ALFP theme "Imagining Plural Asias: How Can We Enrich Interrelationships across Borders?"



Commentators and Moderators:

- Ako Tomoko (Associate Professor, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Tokyo)
- Imata Katsuji (Vice Chairperson, Japan NPO Center / ALFP 2013 Fellow)
- Mizuno Takaaki (Professor, Kanda University of International Studies)
- Ogawa Reiko (Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Politics & Economics, Chiba University)
- Ohashi Masaaki (Professor, University of the Sacred Heart / Trustee, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) / ALFP 1999 Fellow)

Core Seminars

Three core seminars were conducted on Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia, respectively, in the second week of the Program, for the Fellows to look at each region as well as the issues shared within and/or across the region from a broader perspective while sharing visions for the future of Asia.

- Core Seminar on South Asia “Structural Transformation in Globalizing India and Asia: An Agenda for Sustainable, Inclusive and Peaceful Development” by Tanabe Akio (Professor, University of Tokyo) on September 18



- Core Seminar on Northeast Asia “Remembrance and Forgetting of Negative Historical Memories” by Ako Tomoko (Associate Professor, University of Tokyo) on September 19



- Core Seminar on Southeast Asia “Challenges to Democracy in Asia: The Rise of Populism and Moral Politics” by Kusaka Wataru (Associate Professor, Nagoya University) on September 20



Seminars

In addition to core seminars, the Fellows met a number of Japan-based resource persons, including intellectuals and leading figures from academia, NGOs and NPOs, in the formal setting of seminars (listed below in chronological order).

- Seminar “Stable but Disappointing: The ‘3:2:5’ Voting Structure of the Japanese Elections in the 2010s” by Oguma Eiji (Professor, Keio University) on October 2



- ALFP Lecture Series #1 “Journalism in Asia: Searching for the Truth” by Kunda Dixit (Editor and Publisher, *Nepali Times* / ALFP 2006 Fellow), Saba Naqvi (Independent Journalist / ALFP 2013 Fellow), and Kong Rithee (Editor, *Bangkok Post* / ALFP 2010 Fellow) and discussion with fellows from other leadership programs in the Asia-Pacific on October 14



- Visit to the Tessenkai Noh Theatre and seminar on Japanese traditional performing arts and collaboration with artists from other Asian countries by Shimizu Kanji (Noh Performer) on October 15



- Seminar “An Anti-Disciplinary Project” by Okahara Kosuke (Photographer) on October 17



- Seminar “Imagining Plural Asias: How Can We Enrich Interrelationships across Borders?” by Mario Lopez (Associate Professor, Kyoto University) on October 19



Other Visits & Sessions

- Visit to NHK on October 3

The Fellows met with a senior producer of NHK and also took a guided-tour of the facility, including studios.



- Visit to Tosetsukai (nursing-care facility) and meeting with Mataka Kyoko (Chairperson, Tosetsukai) on October 16



Field Trip to Tohoku (September 25–29)

The Fellows went as a group on a field trip organized around their suggestions and common interests. The sites visited as well as the topics covered on the trip were:

Efforts for Community Revitalization

- Seminar on local revitalization in an aging community by Ushida Shunsuke (Co-founder, Habataku Inc.) on September 25



- Seminar on agriculture in Japan and the Tohoku area in the era of globalization by Tada Katsuhiko (President, Tada Natural Farm) and networking with local farmers and entrepreneurs on September 27



Environmental Sustainability and Preservation of Culture

- Guided nature walk and discussion on the preservation of traditional culture and wildlife conservation and management with *matagi* (traditional hunters in the Tohoku area) on September 26



- Guided tour of an oyster farm by Hatakeyama Makoto (Executive Director, NPO Mori wa Umi no Koibito / oyster farmer) and seminar on a holistic approach to environmental issues by Yokoyama Katsuhide (Trustee, NPO Mori wa Umi no Koibito) on September 29



Recovery from Natural Disasters

- Briefing on “the phone of the wind” by Sasaki Itaru (Founder, Bell Gardia Kujira-yama) and discussion on loss and memory on September 28



- Visit to a local cultural facility “Oshacchi” and briefing on the importance of passing on memories of disasters on September 28



- Meeting with Hirano Kozo (Mayor, Otsuchi Town) and briefing on the local recovery and reconstruction in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami on September 28



- Discussion on youth empowerment after disaster with Nam Kyeongwon (school social worker, Otsuchi Town) on September 28



- Seminar on the role of local performing arts in the post-disaster community by Tobai Teruo (Representative, Usuzawa Shishiodori “Deer Dance” Conservation Association) followed by a dance performance by local people on September 28



- Visit to Sendai Mediatheque and seminar on grass-roots, participatory film documentation and archiving by a curator on September 29



Retreat Session in Kiyosato (October 23–24)

The Fellows went on a one-day trip to Kiyosato where they exchanged ideas and thoughts they had developed on the ALFP 2018 general theme “Imagining Plural Asias: How Can We Enrich Interrelationships across Borders?” and prepared for the public forum scheduled to be held the following week. During the retreat session, the Fellows had the opportunity to attend a guided nature walk.



Public Forum (October 31)

At the end of the two-month program, a public forum was held at the International House of Japan on October 31. At the forum, the Fellows presented their thoughts on the current situation of their countries and the issues they have been working on, along with what they have learned from their exchanges and dialogues in Japan. Both the first and second sessions of the forum were moderated by Professor Mizuno Takaaki (Professor, Kanda University of International Studies), and each session was followed by a lively Q&A/discussion session with the audience.



The titles of the Fellows' presentations delivered in the first session are as follows (in order of presentation):

- **Silot Uon** (Cambodia)
“Cambodia and the Image of Plural Asias”
- **Asmin Fransiska** (Indonesia)
“Indonesian Challenges in the Natural Disaster Context: Mental Health Protection from a Human Rights Perspective”
- **Lydia Lubon** (Malaysia)
“Making an Impact through Non-Fiction Film”
- **Alongkot Maiduang** (Thailand)
“Moving Images as a Means to Communicate across Borders”
- **Sawanishi Mikiko** (Japan)
“The United Nation’s Grassroots Democracy Promotion in Asia: Global, Local and Regional”
- **Sun Dong** (China)
“Is There a Way Out?—The Possible Reconciliation between Conflicting Ideas”
- **Aziz Ali Dad** (Pakistan)
“The Nation and Marginal Imagination—A Case of Gilgit-Baltistan”
- **Samrat Choudhury** (India)
“From Fluidity to Rigidity: Borders, Identities, and the Perils of Postmodern Angst”