ACTING ASIAN

Contradictions in a Globalizing World

ASIA LEADERSHIP FELLOW PROGRAM
2004

International House of Japan
and
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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The 2004 Fellowship may be just another round of the Asia Leadership Fellow Program of the International House of Japan and Japan Foundation, not any different or special. Once more, another group of so-called public intellectuals from Asia explores "Identity, Security and Democracy," such a broad and complex theme that two months of intense probing and exchange hardly scratched its surface. But the fellows from seven countries: Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines, felt privileged to have been selected to take part in a program given to countless rich and varied opportunities for really significant cultural and intellectual exchange.

Here in this book that tries to, but only almost, document what transpired, formally and informally, the fellows share their papers, clustered into sections. "New Paradigms" has what we consider important papers because they speak of shifts in mindsets and introduce new development paradigms. Journalist Kinley Dorji's account of their King's use of Gross National Happiness instead of Gross National Product as a framework for Bhutan's national development as they shift from a monarchy to a democracy is a fascinating story of a small country located between the giants, India and China, determining the direction of its own growth, carefully making sure they faithfully preserve their identity, culture and physical resources as they modernize into a state. Takayoshi Kusago, an economist by training, similarly questions the appropriateness and accuracy of existing economic measures and indicators of progress adopted by the United Nations Development Program when they dismally fail to tell the state of the mind, heart and soul of people in these countries, particularly in his own Japan.

In the section, "Contradictions," three papers show how old tensions generated by colonialism and anti-colonialism resurrect and morph into scarier forms because of globalization and resistance to it. As a publisher automatically involved in cultural education, I discuss how terribly confused the issue of English has now become in the Philippines—from the time the American Thomasite teachers struggled to introduce it in public schools to how now the young desperately learn to speak it with an American accent to be able to get into high-paying jobs in call centers outsourced by US firms. Jamhari,

anthropologist at National Islam University, focuses on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia and how historically it always clashed with democratic values but notes and remains hopeful that Islam and democracy have a symbiotic relationship in Indonesia: the successful 2004 presidential election illustrates how "Islam helps Indonesian Moslems participate in the political process and support democracy." Nguyen Van Chinh , senior lecturer at the Vietnam National University, examines the severe exploitation of child labor at the site of the economic tension triggered by Vietnam's fast growing-wood carving industry that services globalization.

In "Defining Asia," Faye Chungfang Fei, artist-scholar, reexamines "the evolving and changing identities of women as characters, performers, playwrights, directors, and producers in the history of Chinese theater" and how on and offstage, "women were excluded from public life…deprived of political identity and economic security." My paper on crafting a Philippine culture index that should spin off into a culture curriculum for basic education argues for its urgency so as to decolonize education and instill in the young a sense of pride and nation in our own heritage and history. Sepali Kottegoda, feminist, explores how "in our quest to preserve our 'Asian cultures' [we] also defend those oppressive patriarchal structures which, for example, result in girl children being discriminated against in terms of access to food or education…" and why "women continue to be seen as the 'signifier' of cultural identity."

In "Personal Takes," Kinley, Faye and I share our informal impressions of the Japanese culture and the value of the program. Mayuko Sasanuma, the able program staff of International House, competently summarized all the activities the Fellows went through, whether these were sessions with Japanese scholars, NGO workers, government officials, or artists, or these were trips or visits to other parts of Japan. While we have been vastly enriched by our stay in Japan, we are likewise honored in this book by the contributions of two respected Japanese scholars: Takehiko Kariya who questions the new education reform in Japan and Yasushi Watanabe who analyzes Japan's love-hate relationship with the United States.

Finally, a word on the title of this Report. *Acting Asian: Contradictions in a Globalizing World* was the title of our public symposium that traditionally culminates every fellowship, allowing fellows to engage the Japanese public in some form of conversation. The group decided that while this title sufficiently addressed the issue of identity, it also explored economic and political tensions wrought by globalization. We deemed it a most suitable name for this record of our fellowship.

Karina Africa Bolasco

New Paradigms

GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS
Kinley Dorji

Gross National Happiness (GNH) is not about the concept of happiness. It is a guiding principle for change; it sets the quality of aspirations for development or progress as conceived deep in the folds of the Himalayas, in a kingdom that has been shrouded in mystery for centuries. As mystical as this might sound, however, GNH is a reasoned and pragmatic attempt to find a wholesome and stable course for change in today's increasingly turbulent world. For the people of Bhutan, it is a Buddhist-inspired path to a nation's growth by ensuring individual and collective happiness.

On November 11, 2005, at Waseda University in Tokyo, I presented a review of GNH, a concept increasingly gaining popularity among politicians, development workers, and economists, and seeing growing discourse within the intellectual community. One Japanese member of the audience pointed out that, today, if you asked a Japanese youth what was the most important thing in life he would say "money." With such values he asked if I thought the Japanese people could ever be happy. While my ten-week visit to Japan through the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) gave me an insight into Japanese society, enough for me to learn that a growing number of Japanese people are agonizing over, and some grappling with, social, economic, and political problems, I do not know enough to come up with a substantive answer. But the question was a stark reminder to me that GNH, a notion that was, in fact, conceived as a response to just such a trend, is well worth serious thought.

The premise

For readers not familiar with Bhutan, I present here a brief background and the perspective from which I write this paper.

After centuries of self-imposed isolation, Bhutan opened up to the world in 1961. What we saw frightened us. Humanity had gone through much but for this paper I shall look at two immediate issues that confronted us: the survival of the human identity as nation-states and the development process. The Bhutanese view of the world over the past four decades has shown us that survival will continue to be a priority, particularly for small countries, and that human progress must lead to GNH.

In the past Bhutan chose to keep the world out, fearful it would readily

be swallowed up, an oft-perceived threat small countries suffered from. With our immediate neighbours being China in the north and India in the south, both with at least one billion people each, and then South Asia with one-fifth of mankind, a nation of about 700,000 people felt extremely vulnerable. There were examples, everywhere in the world, of population groups once of distinct identities quickly losing them, many of them reduced to subjects of academic studies. So Bhutan's immediate reaction and concern was its survival as a nation-state and this, on pure instinct, has become the underlying tone of Bhutan's relationship with the world, and of the manner it grapples with the inevitable process of change.

In the uneven search for progress, the world was already sharply divided into rich and poor nations, the north and the south. In fact, the "development process" had been a response to help underdeveloped countries, including Bhutan, known as the "third world." As Professor Nishikawa Jun of Waseda University points out, the meaning of the term *development* has significantly metamorphosed, from "capital accumulation" to the "unfolding of civil society." In presenting a case for happiness as the goal of development, he reviews past theories that claim it a natural tendency for human beings to pursue self-interest and that the pursuit of private profit will lead to public profit.[1]

It was clear to Bhutan that, in the pursuit of material comfort, too many countries had lost their cultural identity, their spirituality, and had upset the ecological balance through environmental degradation. From a Buddhist viewpoint, material wealth had resulted in widespread spiritual poverty.

Bhutanese society was nowhere near perfect but the experience of both developing and developed countries taught it one resounding lesson: this small kingdom had much to preserve. The Bhutanese had lived a sustainable, if not luxurious, life in harmony with a pristine environment. Families and traditional social systems were still strong, the subsistence farming economy supported a relatively comfortable standard of living, a centuries-old theocracy that evolved into a hereditary monarchy provided political stability, and a rich religious and cultural heritage was the source of the nation's values as well as the essence of its identity.

Change, as Bhutan saw it happen in the rest of the world, could threaten all these and, therefore, the survival of the country. As Michael Rowbotham, an economics lecturer, pointed out at a GNH seminar in Thimphu in February 2004, the danger was very real that Bhutan could be drawn into the excessive materialism of the West or the poverty of other developing nations, or indeed a blend of both. "Bhutan's isolation, which has served the country so well, means that it is now faced with a flood of advance representing changes that Western citizens found difficulty in adjusting to over a far longer period. This leaves the Bhutanese leaders with "the vital but immensely complex task of monitoring and regulating the nature and pace of

change—a momentously challenging responsibility."[2]

How credible then is Bhutan's proposed response: Gross National Happiness?

GNH is born

The term *Gross National Happiness* was coined by the Bhutanese monarch, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. While traveling through India in 1979, he was asked by a journalist what Bhutan's Gross National Product (GNP) was. The king said: "We are not concerned about Gross National Product, we care about Gross National Happiness."

The words of a king, according to ancient Bhutanese wisdom, is "heavier than the mountains, more precious than gold." The term was picked up within the government circle and by scholars. As one Buddhist scholar, Karma Gayleg, a lecturer at the Royal Bhutan Institute of Technology, described it, it was like the oral teachings of the Buddha that grew into an enormous wealth of scriptures containing philosophies, policies, and laws, as well as tenets of governance.[3]

Thus GNH was born.

As a concept, GNH is not new. It is the expression of a system of values describing a strong and viable existence that has evolved over the centuries. In presenting it as an inspiration for modernization, Jigme Singye Wangchuck offers a refreshing alternative to a global development paradigm fast becoming irrelevant.

An Indian journalist, Rajni Bakshi, points out that the basic premise of exploration (into GNH) is that we live in a time when many positive trends are widening the space for the value of GNH—both as a literal measure of national well-being in Bhutan and as a metaphor for values that would take humanity closer to the ideal of right livelihood. "In a world driven by market fundamentalism not everything is for sale but this (GNH) is seen as being natural and the only path to greater prosperity and progess."[4]

In 1999, United Nations development worker Stephan Priesner noted that Bhutan's strong sense of identity had served as the primary reason for the survival of GNH. Despite the onslaught of mainstream development concepts delivered and advocated by scores of foreign professionals, experts, and pundits, development in Bhutan is still distinctly Bhutanese. But the biggest challenge has been to sufficiently attend to preserving Bhutan's unique culture and by the same token, redefining dynamically the concept so as to attract the young generation and serve nation building.[5]

GNH does not discard economic development—in fact, economic vision is critical—but happiness takes precedence over economic prosperity as a national aspiration. GNH is not against change but propounds control of change at a manageable pace and with the right priorities. It insists on a

judicious balance of tradition and modernity, materialism and spiritualism, all within a pristine environment. It is an expression of the deep-rooted value systems on which the Bhutanese socioeconomic and political systems were built. Rowbotham sums up the broad flexibility that GNH offers decision makers: "The concept of GNH would seem to represent an ideal that is far superior to any intellectual system or single programme. A government that embraces GNH is free to adopt and adapt policies at will from a multitude of sources, old and new. . . ."[6]

In the early discourse, as Bhutanese thinkers attempted to translate this palatable inspiration into a coherent guideline for progress, it had been described as a policy, a philosophy, a national development goal, an ideology, and, according to international scholars, a potential alternative to the global approach to development today. It differs importantly from the known policies and strategies adopted by developing countries because it has evolved on the basic premise that what we have is good and should be preserved throughout change. Many developing countries have erroneously based their policies on the cultural cringe that "what is foreign is better." Bhutan also takes pains to emphasize, albeit with the wisdom of hindsight, that modernization is not westernization.

GNH takes off

It has to be clarified though that GNH does not promise to be an instant fix to the world's problems. But it has gained a momentum of its own both at home and within some international circles. There are a number of intended as well as somewhat inadvertent reasons for this, reasons remarkably significant by implication. In the often unhappy world of public intellectuals, the concept of happiness has been debated over the centuries and not much headway has been made. But here is a concrete—and more wholesome—approach to change; a country has actually made happiness the basis, and reason, for change.

Rowbotham offers his view of why GNH is so attractive. "The substitute of a single word, 'happiness,' for 'product' injects humanity, in all its rich complexity, into economics. Many tenets of economic orthodoxy are challenged, most obviously the assumption that increasing material wealth automatically equates with increasing levels of human happiness."[7]

Indeed GNH seems to have hit the right chord—other societies are welcoming it with a sense of nostalgia. The theory that societies had lost their cultural bearings in the quest for economic development seems well-founded. There is general agreement that today's world is a little lost morally, culturally, politically. This is true for both poor and rich countries. GNH provides an opportunity for reflection: Could the missing element be happiness?

GNH is perceived as a response to globalization. According to Ross

McDonald of the University of Auckland's business school, "The underlying development philosophy of globalization seeks to maximize happiness through the cultivation of a narrow materialist self-interest and competitiveness both at the level of the individual and at the level of the nation-state. We find ourselves then at a critically important juncture in human history, a point at which a profound rethinking of our priorities is required and required urgently."[8] Thus the timing was critical.

"Fortunately," says Bangkok-based scholar Hans Van Willensward, "there is a country like Bhutan that seems to be able to situate itself out of reach of this pessimistic global paradigm." He then poses a critical question: "Can Bhutan promote the concept of GNH with its underlying philosophy cum praxis to the world community and offer itself as an acupuncture point for healing mother earth and her world civilization?"[9]

The challenges

At an individual level and among a limited circle of intellectuals the concept of GNH is appreciated and is becoming better understood. But we face the complex task of translating it into specific public policies and then into activities that both reflect and instill GNH values. This is critical if the concept is to withstand opposing forces.

The fundamental tenets of GNH are threatened by what are seen as the offshoots of development and progress. If Bhutan was confronted by the dangers of geopolitics in the past it now risks being overwhelmed by the forces of globalization, an overpowering threat. The power of the commercial-driven media is forcing a traditional society wide open. According to Rowbotham this influence can be balanced only if the mirage of Western consumerism is recognized as such and people are kept in contact with their own culture. "With the influx of televised images the nation as a whole has to be able to deal with and appreciate the ludicrous methodology behind Western 'civilization.' This involves the education of all, not just the young."[10]

Bhutan hopes to balance globalization by localizing its decisions and extracting what is beneficial and relevant from what the world has to offer. In 1998 Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley, prime minister of Bhutan, said: "While we accept the reality of globalization and cultural change, we can always endeavour to select the most beneficial aspects of it. To make the correct choice is our greatest present and future task and we believe, very profoundly, that every country must take up and confront the challenge of increasing human happiness boldly and creatively."[11]

This, Bhutan accepts, will not be easy. In a joint paper presented in Bhutan in February 2004, Helena Noberg-Hodge and Steven Gorelick point out that "globalization has not brought a better world into being, including the underdeveloped world . . . but in reality a single culture and economic

system has relentlessly expanded. . . ."[12] Financial consultant Frank Dixon adds that development, which implies improvement, can be misleading, particularly since it usually involves exposure to Western ideas and practices that can in fact leave a country in worse condition than before.[13]

The social and cultural costs of globalization can be devastating for Bhutan. Although GNH is a value long embedded in Bhutanese society, it might not withstand the destabilizing effects of globalization on cultural, political, religious, and socioeconomic traditions. Therefore, as Peter Hershock of the East West Centre in Hawaii points out, given the current accelerating rate of change in economic, political, and social paradigms, any strategy for integration into global development processes must be creative in nature if it is to succeed.[14] Bhutan seeks this creativity from its own past and the wisdom of Buddhism. As Ross McDonald writes: "I believe the realization of such positive outcomes including GNH begins with the cultural empowerment of the central tenets of traditional wisdom. . . . The profound insights in Buddhist culture must be retained to balance a healthy economy, just society, and sustainable environment."[15]

According to Priesner the most subtle challenge is to avoid the erosion or degeneration of GNH to a merely rhetorical level. The concept has been a reflection of a particular cultural consciousness rather than an academic construct. This was its strength in the past, when all policy makers were products of the traditional Bhutanese system and had a strong consciousness of this identity as well as an intuitive link to their indigenous values. It may, however, rapidly weaken under a new set of civil servants educated in the West and therefore out of touch with their country's traditional values. As the Bhutanese cultural consciousness comes under increasing pressure, its "reflection" is doomed to fade as well.[16]

Today, GDP and GNP are generally accepted as inadequate measures of a nation's or people's wealth, but GNH cannot be a viable alternative until it can be accurately measured. Development workers, social scientists, economists, and public intellectuals are demanding and seeking tools that can measure GNH and provide statistical proof of happiness. Those who oppose this argue that values like compassion, wisdom, and happiness cannot be measured. In 1998 the Bhutanese prime minister said: "We do not need scientific proofs to assess happiness meaningfully. We can, and in my opinion we must, raise policy and ethical questions about happiness. It is a universal proposition and value. It is a goal all humanity shares in common."[17]

Another question is whether Bhutan, a small country currently at the bottom rung of the development ladder, could lead the shift to what could be an ambitious new paradigm for development. McDonald says that, against a background of a changing climate, environmental decline, the polarization of the world into super rich and poor, and the globalizing economic ideology, GNH represents a new alternative approach to development.[18] Western

visitors, like Simon Lang of *The Economist* (see December 16, 2004 issue), see in Bhutan the absence of comforts that Western society is used to and, therefore, a level of poverty in which people could not be happy. But GNH does not deny the need for human comforts and Bhutan does not claim to have achieved what every society is striving for. It is a reminder of forgotten priorities in the process of development.

The most immediate challenge is for the government to successfully "operationalize" GNH and prove that it is not just a buzzword riding on good timing. This is crucial because key decision makers in the Bhutanese government itself remain unconvinced, in fact largely ignorant, of the value of GNH.

These are all important challenges. Until they are addressed GNH will continue to provide more questions than answers.

Operationalizing GNH

Mcdonald notes: "The specific criteria that will be aimed for within the realms of economic, social and cultural outcomes can only be determined by the people of Bhutan themselves and only in reference to their distinct cultural priorities. I firmly believe in Bhutan's desire to forge its own path in the modern world and not to succumb to a mindless adoption of alien priorities and I believe that a greater happiness is possible through such a strategy."[19]

GNH implies a serious responsibility. Buddhism demands that leaders, particularly, must acquire wisdom to exercise responsibility. It provides many insights and methods that can contribute significantly to responsible leadership. Buddhist theories on happiness show a close relationship between happiness and wisdom.

In trying to translate GNH from a tradition-inspired concept into reality, and into the overall guiding principle for the development of Bhutanese society, GNH is being used as a theme for important documents of the Bhutanese government and is being prioritized in all national plans. In his report to the National Assembly in July 2004, the prime minister of Bhutan weighed the achievements of the government against its own GNH goals. He structured the report according to the four pillars of Gross National Happiness, which he first introduced at the UNDP millennium conference in Seoul. Let us take a brief look at the four pillars:

1. Sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development

This requires the improvement of the physical, intellectual, social, and economic well-being of the people through social and economic services. These services include health, education, trade and commerce, industries,

roads and bridges, urban development and housing, ICT, and employment.

The prioritization of development activities has always been based on direct consultations with the people. Before devolving executive authority to an elected government in 1998, the king of Bhutan personally chaired public meetings in each of the twenty districts to discuss the details of each five-year plan. These were attended by representatives of nearly every family in every village. Today this decentralized system of decision making has been absorbed into a democratized political system in which independent local government bodies are established through legislation.

Bhutan's economic vision is clear, the main tool being hydro-power projects. The government has harnessed powerful snow-fed rapids to produce hydro power, mostly for export. The export of power already earns nearly 50 percent of the domestic revenue and, in 2006, with the completion of a major project in southern Bhutan, hydro power will earn 95 percent of the national revenue, currently received as grants and assisted projects, mostly from the Indian government. This unique attainment of economic self-reliance will be an achievement not seen in developing countries, which usually remain dependent on donors.

2. Conservation of the environment

Bhutan's understanding of the environment and of ecological balance had been established long before the current global awareness of the deterioration of the ecosystem. The emphasis on sustainability comes from the Buddhist precept that all life forms are sentient beings existing in a state of harmonious interdependence. Humans, arguably the most intelligent, must assume responsibility for maintaining this balance. We must generate compassion, love, and a sense of responsibility for all other beings. We must conserve the environment for our own well-being as well as for future generations. Bhutan's environmental policy document, called "The Middle Path" (again a Buddhist principle), is based on these teachings. It emphasizes the symbiotic coexistence of humans and nature.

Today, activities potentially harmful to the environment, including tourism, energy production, and wood-based industries, are curbed. Seventy-two percent of Bhutan is forest and, by National Assembly resolution, 60 percent shall be maintained permanently as forest cover. More than 26 percent of the land area is already being managed as protected national parks.[20] This policy is being maintained despite its cost in terms of economic development. Bhutan believes that it is contributing to the global ecological balance by preserving its environment in its most pristine form.

3. Preservation and promotion of culture

As a policy, the government has defined the components of "culture" as religion, language and literature, art and architecture, the performing arts, national dress, *driglam namzha* (traditional etiquette), and sports and recreation.[21] The emphasis on religion is particularly strong, especially since Bhutan believes that, as the last bastion of Vajrayana Buddhism, it has a responsibility to preserve this school of Buddhism.

The tantric roots of GNH gives the concept its depth as well as its unique character. GNH is, therefore, closely linked with the Bhutanese identity because culture and religion are inextricably linked in Bhutan. This "culturist model of development," as the Bhutanese prime minister described it,[22] is also related to the Bhutanese's sense of vulnerability. The emphasis on preserving and strengthening the cultural heritage—the essence of what is seen today as the national identity—is viewed by the Bhutanese as a crucial strategy to preserve the nation's sovereignty. Their distinct national identity safeguards them from being swallowed up by larger ethnic groups. The strength of this perception is expressed in the statement of a Bhutanese official that "the Bhutanese are an endangered species."

Today the harshest criticism Bhutan faces is that the culturist approach to identity tends to isolate certain sections of Bhutanese society. This is based on the government's stance regarding 100,000 refugees living in UNHCR-run camps in eastern Nepal, claiming to be Bhutanese citizens. While the citizenship of the refugees and the circumstances that led to the creation of the camps in Nepal are too complex to discuss in this paper, Bhutan views the problem as one of illegal immigration rather than of ethnicity. However, it does reflect the concern over demographic assimilation of the much larger Nepali population that has overrun many small communities across the Himalayan foothills because the immigrant population in this region is Nepali. GNH has no direct bearing on the problem but can only help by providing clarity in terms of future policies.

4. Good governance

The governance of Bhutan is a fascinating story, having evolved through uniquely dynamic eras. Currently Jigme Singye Wangchuck is pushing for the democratization of the present structure, crafting a Bhutanese political system for the future. In line with this he has initiated and is personally overseeing the drafting of the country's first written constitution.

Although history, which has seen the establishment of a number of democracies through revolution and activism, teaches us that this is a wonderful way of diffusing such pressures, the king's initiative has met with some resistance. To the majority of the Bhutanese people it is a possible threat to

the country's stability, which had been guaranteed in the past by the throne. They have seen too many democracies that do not work. In recent months the crisis in Nepal, which has been condemned as a failed state after a fourteen-year experiment with democracy, has left Bhutan more contemplative than ever about the benefits of shifting to a democratic system.

Educated Bhutanese believe that freedom of choice is important but, without the ability to make informed choices based on literary and political maturity, an anarchic democracy could be a threat to national stability. Bhutan has seen, as Dixon points out, that changing the political and economic systems forces even well-intentioned leaders to do wrong to the people, environment, and society.[23]

But for Bhutan at this point there is no turning back. The country is already going through a critical transition. The three arms of government have been separated and the rule of law has been strengthened, with dozens of important laws being enacted. The constitution will dramatically change the political landscape of the country.

As Bhutan carefully adapts to changing circumstances, however, it is critical that it preserve the sanctity of the Bhutanese monarchy and the essence of the traditional relationship between the king and the people. This is widely recognized as the strength of the Bhutanese system, with the king personifying the unity and stability of the country. Commitment to this relationship is vital because a king/emperor figure provides the political and psychological unification required to keep a small society intact.

The four pillars as development policy

The four pillars of GNH are not new priorities but are drawn from the existing value system and presented as a structured national development policy. Supporters of the policy praise the broad relevance of the priorities that it reflects while its critics point out the absence of the uniqueness that GNH promises. First published in the Bhutanese weekly *Kuensel* in 1998, it drew a voluminous response culminating in an international seminar in February 2004, where more than eighty papers were presented on operationalizing GNH.

Some critics point out that, apart from the term *GNH*, the policy is no different from conventional development approaches. The four pillars are broad and do not deal with specific areas, like education for example. Kinley D. Dorji, a Bhutanese civil servant, argues that almost all visible progress was brought about by policies and programs that are no different from those of other countries and little, if any, can be attributed to programs flowing directly from the concept of GNH. "The point is that if GNH is being targeted seriously, there has to be something that we are doing that is different and distinct," he says. "If measuring national development in terms of GNH

is to be truly distinctive, happiness must factor significantly—and not merely incidentally or consequentially—into the development equation."[24]

Skeptics, even some Bhutanese officials, write off GNH as a romantic and, perhaps, well-meaning catch phrase with no real connection to the development process. It is true that, while the concept is very palatable the discourse is limited to a small circle of intellectual optimists. Even within the higher levels of the Bhutanese government there are few who have a grasp of the concept and it is not discussed by other sectors of Bhutanese society.

An interesting feature of GNH is that it seems to possess an almost exaggerated profundity that has not been fully articulated. At a time when the world is bemoaning spiritual and cultural poverty brought about by an "onslaught" of development, GNH is, without doubt, a refreshing alternative. It provides no shortcuts to happiness but can serve as a constant reminder to policy makers that happiness is the real purpose of development.

Justifying GNH as a distinctive approach to change, the prime minister said: "It would have been easier for us to become economically self-reliant had we not been so deeply devoted to the promotion of our culture and environment. Cultural and environmental objectives can be restraining factors in the pursuit of blind economic interests. The rich character of the society in Bhutan would have become diminished, even impoverished, if we had allowed a flood of cultural influences and environmental degradation to set in."[25]

Meanwhile, as GNH is subjected to intellectual discourse, scholars are giving the concept new depth and dimensions, some of them proposing new elements of the four pillars like social justice and human security. GNH has also received strong encouragement from this sector. A Thailand-based scholar on Buddhism, Joseph Johnson, commends Bhutan for its courage to pursue a difficult goal. "While others wander towards a well-lit glitz promising immediate pleasure the kingdom of Bhutan fumbles alone in the dark to find lasting happiness. The Bhutanese leadership remains resolute in their commitment to maximize happiness despite the difficulties and dangers involved in such a project."[26]

Mark Mancall, a professor of history at Stanford University, proposes in an essay on "Operationalizing GNH" that the government, as the key instrument of GNH, must establish an institutional framework to make sure GNH "does not remain a slogan and a hope but will become reality." He proposes a GNH directorate to ensure the integration of economic planning and other activities into a GNH plan.[27]

A key task, thus, is to ensure that present and future Bhutanese leaders understand and are committed to GNH. Jean Karel Hylkema, managing director of the Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation in the Netherlands, emphasizes that it is important for leaders to be "enlightened" and, as Buddhism teaches, for them to understand the nature of reality so they can steer Bhutan in the right direction.[28]

The Buddhist perspective

I believe it is important to take at least a cursory look at the influence of Buddhism on GNH to understand its "true nature."

Buddhist scholars have described GNH as being, essentially, a summarization of the basic tenets of Buddhism, which promote harmony and compassion. But it should also be noted that GNH draws on Buddhism as a spiritual guideline and not as a religion, as familiar as the visible precepts might be. GNH, therefore, can be considered globally relevant if we believe that all religions share the same basic interpretations of good and bad.

Buddhism teaches that happiness lies within, and not outside, the self; there is no way that sustained happiness can come from an external origin. Since it is described as a study of the mind, according to its precepts happiness is achieved by conquering or understanding the mind.

During the National Assembly session in July 2004, the representative of the official monastic body reminded Bhutanese parliamentarians to focus more on their own understanding of values than on official definitions. If key decision makers understand the true nature of GNH, the policies and programs would naturally follow. GNH, like Buddhism, proposes that it is only by looking inward that lasting happiness can be found at all levels: the individual, the family, the community, the region, the nation, and the world. This is the essence of the concept. In the national context the purpose of GNH is to create an environment that will enable people to achieve happiness, or enlightenment, and therefore a better quality of life.[29] Such an environment will also help diminish greed, the obstruction to happiness, by encouraging people to need less.

Conclusion

GNH is not a sudden or accidental hypothesis. It stems from a system of values that has held a society together and evolved over centuries of isolation. It articulates the need for such a tradition, nurtured through history, to be preserved through change. For present-day Bhutan it is a vehicle of historical transition.

The Bhutanese prime minister describes GNH as "the distinct perception of the main purpose of development, rooted in philosophical and political thought."[30] We should add to that the lessons we could draw from the experiences of other developing countries.

GNH also conveys the essence of the Bhutanese identity, so vital for the country's survival. In that sense it is also a response to external threats including the negative side effects of progress and the destructive pressures of globalization. As a means to preserve an ancient culture, it acts as a safeguard against the wave of materialism that, according to Buddhism, comes

from the basic human weakness: greed.

GNH, therefore, must be considered a legacy that should be passed on to future generations. At the same time it can help facilitate the transmission of traditional values to the youth. In Bhutan today, younger people find it difficult to identify with the more austere aspects of tradition that Bhutanese parliamentarians, for example, portray. GNH, crystalized through intellectual discourse, can better convey Bhutan's rich traditions to the younger generations.

While expectations are high for GNH, we are, at present, at the beginning, not the end, of the process of applying the new paradigm to our present-day realities. Meanwhile, the concept is being subjected to healthy discourse. Buddhadasa Hewavitharana, a specialist in economic development planning, points out that the operationalization of the Buddhist concept of GNH also requires a revolution—not an armed revolution, but an intellectual revolution.[31] It is this kind of revolution—a radical alteration of thought—that needs to spread across the nations of the world.

If viewed as an alternative to present global development paradigms, GNH is an ambitious project. But Bhutan is not offering it to the world as a packaged deal. Bhutan is an example of the balanced development a growing number of people are seeking. It is up to the international community to draw from the Bhutanese experience and, in the process, refine Bhutan's own thinking process.

While GNH stems from the wealth of profound Buddhist teachings, I argue that this concept is not exclusively relevant to Buddhism. Again, GNH draws on Buddhism not as a religion but as a spiritual practice. It is a middle path that can be cultivated as a philosophy of development based on the sound concept of spiritualism. It is, therefore, relevant to the international community.

GNH is forcing Bhutan to a new level of intellectual activity as a growing number of decision makers and scholars reflect on the country's priorities and approach to change. Internal brainstorming in Bhutan and international public discourse is giving more depth and clarity to the concept. It is a reminder to Bhutan that policies must not be built on intuition but on discourse.

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EVALUATING GROWTH IN JAPAN
Takayoshi Kusago

Introduction

Economic development has a long history. Spanning two centuries, it has been the core objective of theory and policy in the field. Different economic systems (capitalistic and central planning) have been tried and economic policies, such as import-substitution or export-oriented industrialization, collective production, and international trade promotion through exchange rate management, have been designed and implemented. Through the long process of economic theorizing and the application of those theories, certain indicators have been selected and used extensively to show the degree of progress in a country's economy. Among those, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has become popular among economic policy designers and decision makers of national economic development. This star indicator plays a crucial role when a government writes a national development plan or prepares an annual budget plan. Academic thinking, particularly the neoclassical school of thought, has backed GDP as the most important indicator of economic growth under the assumption that the latter should exceed population growth if people are to see gains in economic well-being. This also makes GDP the best tool for assessing the economic well-being of any nation, partly because people tend to consider economic stability and prosperity the most significant prerequisites to their overall well-being. Thus GDP becomes the universal norm for measuring a country's economic might.

However, it has been pointed out over the last two decades that GDP does not take into consideration noneconomic problems, which include growing environmental deterioration, social instability, regional conflicts, youth unemployment, child labor, and human trafficking. These issues have repeatedly come to the fore. The pursuit of growth that puts blind faith in GDP has been questioned by activists and academics, and alternative ideas—most of them in line with the sustainable development concept first proposed by the Club of Rome[1]—have received serious attention. Even so, GDP continues to be regarded as the most reliable indicator of a nation's level of economic growth.

Of course, this would not be a serious problem if GDP growth always brought higher net social benefits and satisfaction. To examine whether this is the case, it is important for us to investigate whether people are satis–

fied or happy with their economic and social life. Can GDP be a solid basis for satisfaction? Are we happy with higher, growing GDP? When GDP grows, does our economic well-being always grow with it? With higher GDP, do our skills and knowledge improve? Does a high level of GDP ensure a stable and happy family life for all?

In fact, we all perceive our own well-being subjectively, but people's subjective views are not incorporated into the planning of economic and social policy. When a government designs new policies, it tends to identify needs and problems based on quantitative surveys and even to base policy targets on numerical measurements such as GDP, the unemployment rate, school enrollment rates, and the like. One must recognize the importance and usefulness of numerical targets in improving people's well-being; however, one cannot tell whether and to what extent such policies increase personal satisfaction or happiness. This paper explores why people's subjective views on what contributes to their happiness should be considered important factors in the measurement of their nation's level of deveopment.

The paper starts by looking at Japan's rapid economic growth over the last four decades in GDP terms. Second, it examines GDP's failure to adequately capture noneconomic aspects of well-being, such as social stability and family relationships, and ongoing efforts to design an alternative to GDP, such as the Genuine Progress Index (GPI). Third, the paper introduces the Human Development Index (HDI) as an alternative to GDP that takes a broader view of societal development. Fourth, it shows how in Japan, prefecture-based GDP index ranking and prefecture-based HDI index ranking differ in terms of how they evaluate well-being. Fifth, it discusses the importance of people's "subjective perception" of their personal satisfaction and happiness. In conclusion, it notes that qualitative aspects of growth are as important as quantifiable aspects (size and speed) and suggests a shift from the present GDP-centered development to a more holistic development orientation based on subjective happiness.

Japan as a highly developed Asian nation

Japan is a highly industrialized nation with advanced manufacturing technology (specifically, automotive, consumer electronics, and information technology). Unlike the people in many developing countries in Asia, the Japanese can easily afford to buy clothes with their choice of design and fabric. More than half of them have vacationed overseas and have disposable income to spend on recreation.

The country's extraordinary national economic growth since 1945—orchestrated by the government and achieved through the hard work of Japanese companies and their employees—has enabled Japan to reach one of the world's highest levels of economic attainment.

In the 1970s, Europeans warning the world about Japanese economic power described Japanese workers as "economic animals" living in "rabbit hutches." In fact, that description is not far from the mark. The majority of Japanese workers at that time—mostly rural folk who migrated to urban areas to obtain a job in the fast-growing manufacturing sector—worked long hours, and as a result improved their economic well-being with the rapid economic growth of the 1960s and 1970s. Wages increased, and people were able to build homes and send their children to secondary schools and even universities, which in the prewar period were accessible only to the elite. The majority more or less benefited from this national economic growth. In fact, from the 1960s to the early 1980s, Japanese workers enjoyed an annual average wage increase and consequently, increased purchasing power. One could say that the Japanese came to perceive economic growth as an extra benefit of improved economic security and prosperity.

If we look at Japan based on its economic performance (GDP) as shown in Figure 1, we see that it achieved very high economic growth after World War II. Some academics and policy makers in the West describe this phenomenon as a miracle. It enabled the Japanese to build houses (albeit smaller than those in other developed countries), send their children to school (see Figure 2), and enjoy universal health care (see Figure 3), which relied heavily on tax revenues from high economic growth performance. The Japanese were able to accomplish all these by maximizing their social and economic well-being during an era of high economic growth.

Figure 1. Japan's economic growth: GDP per capita and GDP growth rate
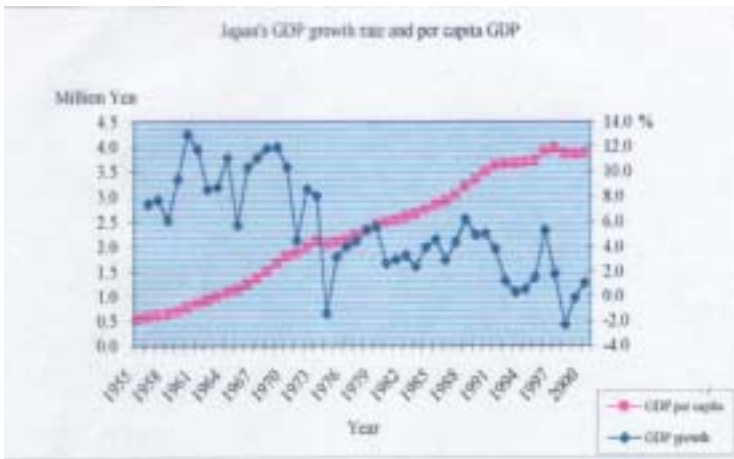
(Source: *National Accounts*, Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office)

Figure 2. School enrollment rates in Japan
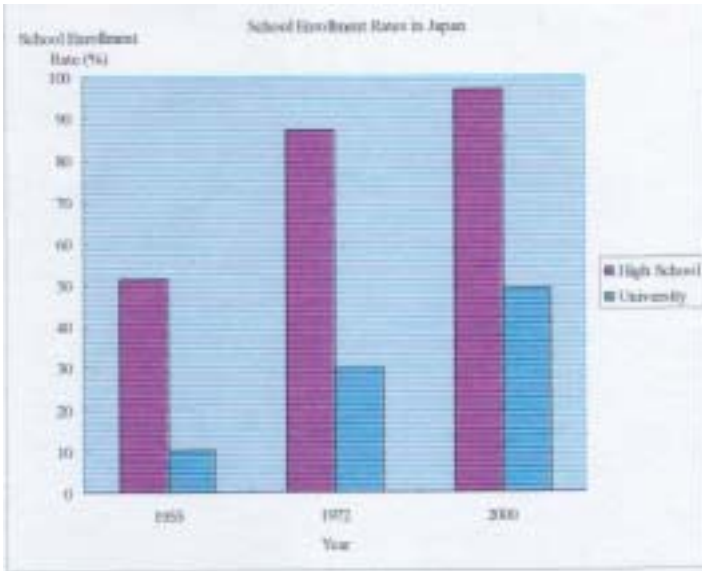
(Source: *Basic Surveys on Schools*, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

Figure 3. Life expectancy at birth in Japan by gender
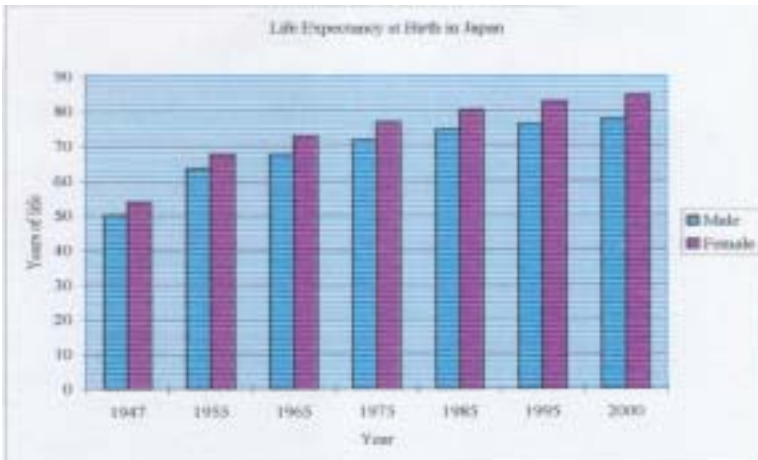
(Source: *Life Table*, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

Japanese happiness vis-à-vis high economic growth

A question: Are the Japanese happy as long as their economic growth continues? My answer is negative, and I would like to discuss some reasons for taking this position. For a quick but shallow look at unhappiness in Japan, read Japanese newspapers every morning and study the social trends. You will see a surge in youth unemployment, increased flexibility of labor, more and more part-time instead of full-time workers, a sharp increase in the number of NEETs (persons Not in Education, Employment, or Training, whose numbers exceed half a million in Japan) and suicides (more than 34,000 in 2003; see Figure 4), fatal child abuse and domestic violence reported all over the country, a high incidence of family breakups, and rising crime rates. It is important to point out that some of these issues are not new. This leads us to ponder why a nation with such high economic growth and development is faced with various social problems, and how the Japanese people's perceptions of life have changed over the last three decades as a result of prosperity.

Figure 4. Suicide cases in Japan
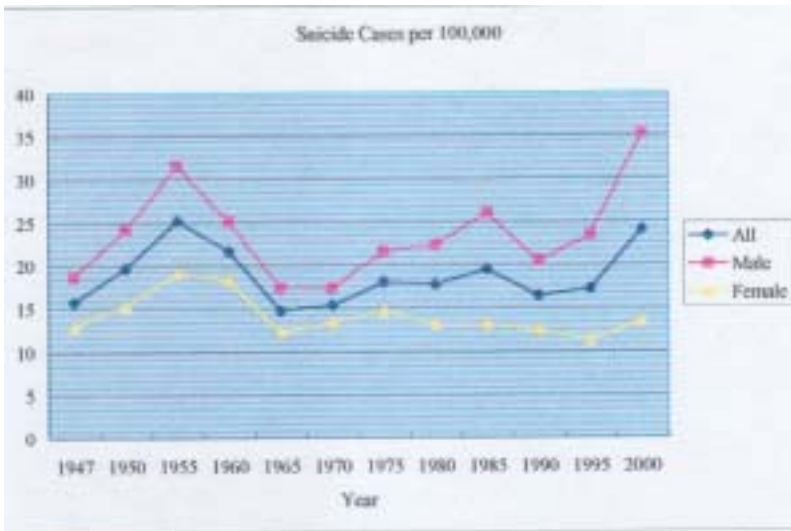
(Source: *Vital Statistics of Population*, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

Examining Japanese growth: A multidimensional reality check of Japanese well-being

As we have seen, Japan's per capita GDP has grown. What does this mean in terms of happiness and satisfaction? GDP tells us the size of the economy, which consists of private production and consumption, and government spending. However, it does not tell us what goods and services are produced and consumed, or how each individual values his or her increase in purchasing power. Thus, high per capita GDP rates do not necessarily translate to increased happiness for the people. One reason for this discrepancy is, large multinational companies in a globalized market economy seek to maximize their profits and minimize their costs—as Economics 101 teaches. They easily exploit developing countries whose people have fewer opportunities to express their opinions, and are not protected by labor laws. These corporations tend to prioritize short-term profits without regard for the long-term impacts, including those on the environment. Such facts are not considered in the computation of GDP.

Recently, some groups of intellectuals have offered alternative approaches to evaluating economic and social development. The next section examines the discrepancies between these approaches in describing satisfaction with life.

Measuring the "quality" of growth

New efforts have been made to gather data on social and economic development and to devise alternatives to GDP that monitor social and economic progress. Two alternatives are highlighted here: (1) the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) and (2) the Human Development Index (HDI). The GPI was created by the U.S. research group Redefining Progress[2] to incorporate social costs (pollution, crime, and the like) into growth measurement (GDP). It factors in important destructive costs, and adds social and economic benefits ignored by GDP. It adds the value of time spent on household work and volunteer work, and subtracts expenditures for security systems, hospital bills, and so on.[3] One research group that measured Japan's GPI found a huge discrepancy between GDP and GPI for the last four decades. Although the growth in GDP plots as an upward-sloping curve, the GPI plots as a relatively flat line (Figure 5). This means that a substantial proportion of GDP growth has been made at the expense of environmental degradation, social instability, and increased crime, which raises questions about the importance and effectiveness of economic growth in ensuring true social and economic welfare. Interestingly, unlike GDP, the GPI has not changed much for the last three decades in Japan. This suggests that GDP growth has not incorporated social costs incurred by economic activities that aim for high economic growth performance.

What the GPI reveals

Figure 5. GDP per capita and GPI per capita in Japan
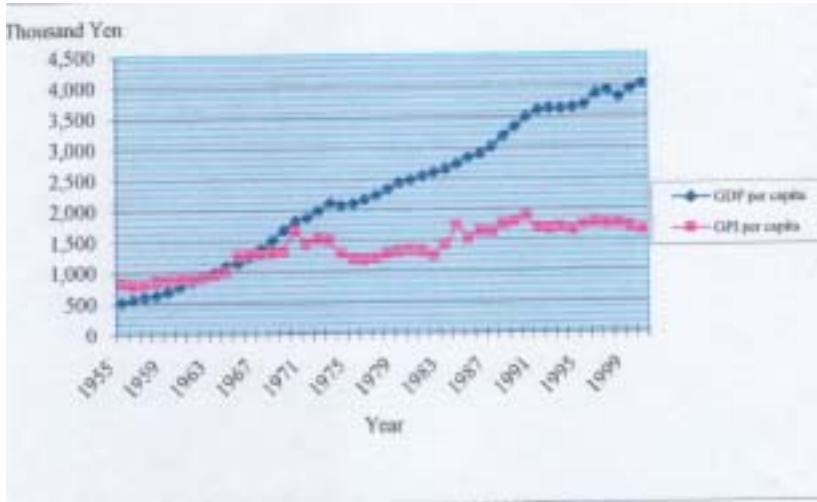
(Source: Ohashi, Nakano, Makino, and Wada 2003)

Japan's Human Development Index (HDI)

The HDI was developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1990, based on Amartya Sen's capability approach.[4] Since then it has become popular among development practitioners and researchers. The HDI has three major components of development indicators: income, education, and health.[5] Using the composite index of human development, it revealed that the Japanese, on average, have access to good public services and a high income base. Japan's HDI ranking put it at ninth in the world in 2003, which is consistent with our general views about Japan: it has a strong economy, a good educational base, and excellent health services. The HDI provides evidence of Japan's high growth performance and good quality of life.

Limitations of conventional indicators: Does subjectivity matter?

The GPI and the HDI have contributed significantly to advances in our thought regarding development and growth. However, these indicators do not adequately capture negative developments in education, health, and income. For instance, the educational indicators of the HDI do not take into

account students who refuse to go to school, variations in the type of schooling, or the number of bullying incidents at school. Health indicators only tell us the average life expectancy at birth and the disease infection rates. Data on health promotion and disease prevention are quite limited. Thus, the national HDI does not reveal systematic differences. Also, the evaluation it offers is not broken down by social group, gender, ethnicity, and so on. We tend to think of homogeneity as a unique feature of Japanese society, and as a good tradition. Another problem with conventional indicators is that they do not use qualitative information (people's subjective perceptions about their lives and their life choices) to evaluate economic and social advancement. I believe that people's subjective well-being (hereinafter: SWB) and self-reported happiness (hereinafter: Happiness) need to be examined based on qualitative information.

As an economist, I should point out that economics "nicely" avoids measuring or considering SWB by defining one's absolute utility level as immeasurable, although Adam Smith, the founding father of classical economics, observed that high income eventually fails to increase people's satisfaction. Rather, neoclassical economics treats utility as "decision utility,"[6] which suggests one's satisfaction after one has made choices for certain combinations of goods and services, rather than satisfaction based on one's own unique choice of combinations of goods and services that may not even be consumed by others. In other words, utility defined by neoclassical economics does not tell us about individual satisfaction with the consumption or production of a good or service. Decision utility cannot tell us whether a certain economic action (behavior) will make one satisfied, without comparison to other economic actions. Unfortunately, this utility notion has been a fundamental assumption underlying many economic theories and models that influence policy design and performance assessment. However, because of growing "unhappiness," new efforts are emerging to capture SWB. Psychology has been particularly active on this subject.[7] Some economists, including Amartya Sen,[8] have advocated an alternative way of looking at people's welfare by interdisciplinary research that combines the knowledge of psychologists, sociologists, medical doctors, and economists. One critical component in this endeavor is being able to fully utilize qualitative information, or "voices," toward evaluating the overall progress of a society and its economy from the viewpoint of an individual. In the next section, we examine how we might combine quantitative and qualitative data toward understanding how people perceive their life, using the case of Japan.

Regional variations and subjective well-being: prefectural HDI and overall happiness

To further explore Japanese development and growth, two issues need to be taken seriously. First, the possibility of regional variation in growth and development needs to be analyzed, and second, evaluations of quality of development and growth in Japan need to incorporate people's perceptions of their life.

Variations in prefectural HDI and GDP in Japan

Table 1 shows Japan's prefectural HDI for 1990, 1995, and 2000, which were calculated by the author using official data on per capita GDP, education, and health.

In 2000, the HDI in Japan ranged from 0.9065 for Aomori Prefecture to 0.9667 for the Tokyo Metropolitan Area. The UNDP Global HDR shows the world's highest HDI to be 0.954 for Norway, which Tokyo surpasses. Israel takes the twenty-second place at 0.907, close to Aomori's ranking. This means that all of the prefectures in Japan are in the high-HDI group. However, people living in Tokyo enjoy higher human development than elsewhere in Japan.

Table 2 shows the Japanese prefectures that rank at the top and the bottom in terms of HDI, GDP, and Happiness.[9] The top five for HDI are Tokyo, Aichi, Shiga, Shizuoka, and Fukui. The top five for GDP are Tokyo, Aichi, Osaka, Shiga, and Shizuoka. The two groups show significant overlap, partly because GDP is one of the three key components of the HDI. A similar tendency is also found among the bottom five by GDP and HDI. However, if we look at the figures closely, we see some differences between prefectural ranking by GDP and by HDI. For prefectures in the Hokkaido, Tohoku, and Kyushu regions, the ranks by GDP are higher than those by HDI. In contrast, for prefectures in the Kansai and Kanto regions, the ranks by HDI are higher than those by GDP. This suggests that educational development and public health development differ from economic growth in the Hokkaido, Tohoku, and Kyushu regions.

Table 1. HDI in Japan by prefecture: 1990, 1995, and 2000

	HDI 1990	HDI 1995	HDI 2000		HDI 1990	HDI 1995	HDI 2000
Hokkaido	0.8863	0.9068	0.9260	Mie	0.8934	0.9123	0.9329
Aomori	0.8698	0.8877	0.9065	Shiga	0.9080	0.9229	0.9426
Iwate	0.8792	0.8998	0.9186	Kyoto	0.8952	0.9123	0.9333
Miyagi	0.8926	0.9071	0.9247	Osaka	0.9003	0.9177	0.9390
Akita	0.8777	0.8951	0.9142	Hyogo	0.8950	0.9086	0.9290
Yamagata	0.8855	0.9014	0.9216	Nara	0.8794	0.8944	0.9169
Fukushima	0.8840	0.9044	0.9241	Wakayama	0.8770	0.8957	0.9155
Ibaraki	0.8928	0.9080	0.9259	Tottori	0.8887	0.9045	0.9239
Tochigi	0.8955	0.9107	0.9294	Shimane	0.8858	0.9021	0.9231
Gunma	0.8957	0.9117	0.9303	Okayama	0.8992	0.9152	0.9316
Saitama	0.8811	0.8956	0.9166	Hiroshima	0.9032	0.9170	0.9361
Chiba	0.8868	0.9019	0.9219	Yamaguchi	0.8924	0.9084	0.9258
Tokyo	0.9296	0.9448	0.9667	Tokushima	0.8831	0.9005	0.9182
Kanagawa	0.8996	0.9119	0.9324	Kagawa	0.8945	0.9122	0.9304
Niigata	0.8921	0.9095	0.9290	Ehime	0.8862	0.9047	0.9221
Toyama	0.9031	0.9205	0.9392	Kochi	0.8781	0.8964	0.9156
Ishikawa	0.8991	0.9163	0.9364	Fukuoka	0.8896	0.9061	0.9228
Fukui	0.9027	0.9204	0.9401	Saga	0.8810	0.9021	0.9189
Yamanashi	0.8944	0.9094	0.9319	Nagasaki	0.8749	0.8949	0.9127
Nagano	0.8980	0.9148	0.9365	Kumamoto	0.8872	0.9045	0.9225
Gifu	0.8921	0.9070	0.9263	Oita	0.8891	0.9076	0.9285
Shizuoka	0.9056	0.9204	0.9402	Miyazaki	0.8780	0.8959	0.9148
Aichi	0.9115	0.9265	0.9460	Kagoshima	0.8762	0.8958	0.9127
				Okinawa	0.8810	0.8940	0.9111

Calculated by the author from (1) school enrollment rates from *Basic Surveys on Schools*, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, (2) life expectancy rates from *Life Table*, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and (3) per capita GDP from *Annual Report on National Economy*, Cabinet Office, using the UNDP's HDI method.[10]

Table 2. Top 5 and Bottom 5 prefectures by GDP, HDI, and Happiness

Ranking	GDP (2000)	HDI (2000)	Happiness (2002)
Top 1	Tokyo	Tokyo	Tottori
Top 2	Aichi	Aichi	Tokushima
Top 3	Osaka	Shiga	Nagano
Top 4	Shiga	Shizuoka	Ishikawa
Top 5	Shizuoka	Fukui	Nagasaki
Bottom 5	Kagoshima	Akita	Hiroshima
Bottom 4	Saitama	Kagoshima	Iwate
Bottom 3	Nagasaki	Nagasaki	Akita
Bottom 2	Nara	Okinawa	Shiga
Bottom 1	Okinawa	Aomori	Kochi

Trends in overall happiness in Japan (1978-2002)

Thus far, we have seen prefectural development in terms of economic growth (GDP) and social and economic development (HDI). These are all calculated quantitatively, which may not reflect how people feel about their lives. It is important to look for any discrepancies between objective and subjective measurements of socioeconomic development.

Happiness in Japan

To what extent do the Japanese subjectively feel satisfied with their lives? Figure 6 shows trends in subjective happiness as surveyed since 1978 by the Cabinet Office of Japan. It clearly shows that the number of people who report feeling "happy with life" or "very happy with life" has declined over time, decreasing from 64.2 percent in 1984 to 41.3 percent in 2002, while those who report feeling "unhappy with life" or "very unhappy with life" increased from 11.1 percent in 1978 to more than 25 percent in 2002. I should note that fewer than one in twenty Japanese report feeling very happy with life, far below the figure for most countries.

Figure 6. Overall happiness in Japan
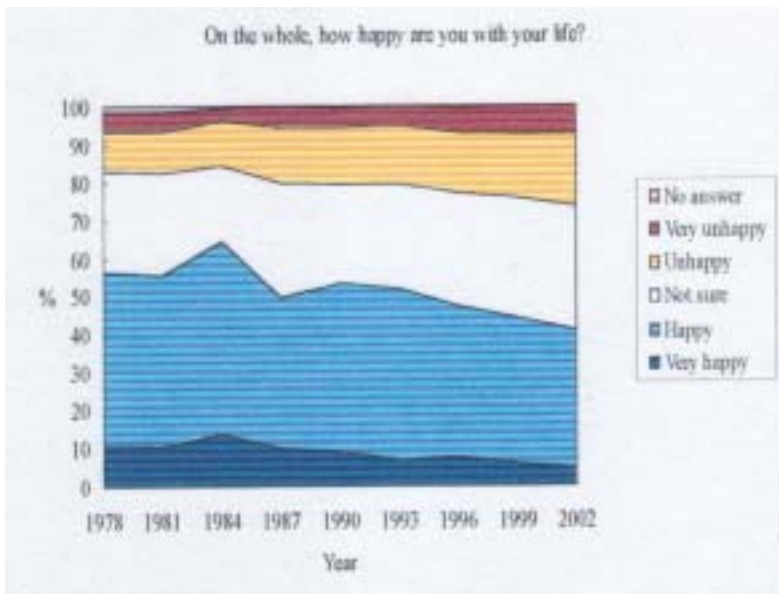
(Source: *Survey of Lifestyles and Needs*, Cabinet Office)

In what prefectures do people report the greatest happiness?

If we assume that people are accurately able to assess their own subjective happiness or satisfaction, we can examine the degree of happiness by counting the number of people who describe themselves as happy or unhappy. The author created a "happiness index" based on the Cabinet Office's *Survey of Lifestyles and Needs*, which is conducted every three years in Japan. There is very little connection between GDP and the Happiness Index ranking of prefectures. More surprisingly, there is very little connection between the HDI and the Happiness Index. For instance, Tottori ranks first on the Happiness Index, but twenty-sixth in GDP. Tokyo ranks first in GDP and the HDI, but sixteenth on the Happiness Index. This means that one's perception about one's life and happiness cannot be judged or measured by a single indicator such as GDP, or even a composite index such as the HDI. However, there seems to be some connection between the HDI and happiness. Table 3 categorizes the forty-seven prefectures of Japan by comparing the HDI and GDP rankings. We see that prefectures where more people report being happy tend to be those in Groups 1 and 2, where HDI rankings exceed GDP rankings. Factors influencing people's happiness may not be limited only to the improvement of their economic situation, educational attainment, and health; rather, there might be other factors that affect their subjective evaluation of happiness. It will require more analysis to identify such factors, which go beyond the scope of this paper.

Who feels the happiest with life?

We have seen that there are wide gaps between the HDI and Happiness. It is important to know who feels happy with his or her life. To determine this, we need to apply statistical methods of identifying the characteristics of those who feel happier than others. Based on the Cabinet Office's data on happiness (Table 4), I have found that women tend to feel happier than men, older people tend to feel happier than other age cohorts, and those who have a high level of education tend to feel happier than those who do not. The data also suggests that higher income could be positively linked to one's overall happiness in Japan.

Table 3. Categorization of Japan's Prefectures by HDI and GDP rankings (2000)

	Group 1 HDI>GDP by more than 5 ranks	*Group 2* HDI>GDP by 0 to 5 ranks	*Group 3* HDI=GDP	*Group 4* HDI<GDP by 0 to 5 ranks	*Group 5* HDI<GDP by more than 5 ranks
Prefectures	Kanagawa, Yamanashi, Gifu, Kyoto, Hyogo, Nara, Kagawa	Saitama, Chiba, Fukui, Nagano, Shizuoka, Shiga, Wakayama, Shimane, Okayama, Tokushima, Ehime, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Okinawa	Tokyo, Toyama, Ishikawa, Aichi, Mie, Hiroshima, Kochi, Nagasaki	Hokkaido, Miyagi, Yamagata, Gunma, Niigata, Osaka, Tottori, Saga, Oita, Miyazaki, Kagoshima	Aomori, Iwate, Akita, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Yamaguchi
Of these prefectures, the number in which at least 45% of the population reported feeling happy or very happy in 2000	4	3	2	3	1
Of these prefectures, the number in which 35% of the population or less reported feeling happy or very happy in 2000	0	3	2	1	3

Table 4. Descriptive characteristics of people who are satisfied with life

	More Satisfied	Less Satisfied
Age	60 and above	50-54; 20-29
Gender	Women	Men
Education	University and above	Primary, Vocational school
Income	High (more than 10 million yen)	Low (less than 4 million yen)

A quest for growth, or a quest for happiness?

We have discussed "quality of development and happiness" by using quantitative data and different indices to see if and to what extent Japanese economic growth since World War II has brought the Japanese people satisfaction in life. The following were found through the paper:

1. At present, social problems are increasing in Japan and people's views and perceptions are not so positive. However, the Japanese are better off economically and have secured basic human necessities, as the national and prefectural HDIs clearly show.

2. GDP and other popular indicators should not be viewed as the best way to understand well-being. Rather, they are sometimes misleading with respect to overall well-being, as evidenced by the discrepancies between the HDI and GDP, and those between Happiness and GDP.

3. GDP cannot incorporate social costs and benefits (environmental damage is not discounted, shadow work is not counted, etc.), which may influence well-being. The GPI may be superior in reflecting social progress.

Interestingly, prefectures with a higher number of people reporting themselves to be happy with their life tend to have a higher HDI than GDP ranking. The happiness survey shows interesting discrepancies between objective indicators and subjective ones. Thus, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data could enhance our understanding of social and economic problems and people's needs. The HDI and other indices need to be linked with subjective information.

This paper has focused on the real meaning of social and economic growth by addressing conventional and alternative growth measurements. We have found discrepancies between GDP, the GPI, and the HDI, and also between qualitative and quantitative measurements of happiness. If our ulti-

mate goal is to enhance the quality of life, we need to make further efforts toward examining determinants of happiness. For this purpose, this paper suggests that we should apply a cross-disciplinary approach toward understanding what makes people feel happy, which might be shaped by culture, social capital, economic system, gender, age, and ethnicity. This would require a time-consuming team effort to gather and analyze data. However, such an endeavor could help us choose a development path that would bring happiness.

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5 The HDI consists of the three dimensions of human development: (1) long and healthy life, (2) knowledge, and (3) decent standard of living. The three dimensions identify the following indicators:

    a. Healthy life: life expectancy at birth (indicator) and life expectancy index

    b. Knowledge: adult literacy rate and gross enrollment ratio (indicators), and education index

    c. Standard of living: GDP per capita (indicator) and GDP index

    The HDI is calculated by putting equal weight on the three indices. According to the *Human Development Report 2004*, Japan's life expectancy at birth is 81.5, its gross enrollment ratio is 84, its GDP is US$26,940, and its HDI is 0.938, making it ninth in the world in terms of development.

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8 Sen, Amartya K., *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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Contradictions

ENGLISH, EDUCATION, AND FILIPINO IDENTITY
Karina Africa Bolasco

> "Little by little, belief became polluted, like the air and water.
> The motive energy, always resistant but manipulable, finally
> begins to run out."
>
> Michel de Certeau
> *The Practice of Everyday Life*

English and the Thomasites

1,074 American teachers came to the Philippines in 1901 from 47 states with degrees from 192 colleges and universities in the United States. The 509 Thomasites. so called because they traveled to the Philippines in the US transport Thomas, which sailed from San Francisco in July, arrived on our shores on August 23. Charles Burke Elliott considered them "a second army of occupation—surely the most remarkable cargo ever carried to an Oriental colony." [*The Philippines*] Awaiting them were 4,000 Filipino children enrolled in 29 schools. By 1904, there were 50,000 children; by 1911, 355,722; and by 1920, 1 million were in 4,404 schools, covering about 37% of the school-aged population. English was to be the medium of instruction, it was unthinkable to many American authorities that any other language be used in schools that flew the American flag. But critics like the eminent linguist Najib Saleeby and even the famous American writer Mark Twain saw America as "forcing the language of the conquerors upon a defenseless people." [Elliott] The argument that there was no one common language all natives could speak and so English could be that did not hold water especially as Saleeby pointed out that the Philippine languages were so closely related to one another that in three months, a Visayan could understand and speak Tagalog. But the real agenda was very clear to Gen. Arthur MacArthur—after quelling the Filipino resistance, English and the public school system was a vital and urgent military operation, "calculated to pacify the people" and capture their minds. "Molding of people's minds is the best means of conquest, and education, therefore, serves as a weapon in wars of colonial conquest." [Constantino, *The Miseducation of the Filipino*, p.2] It was a masterstroke for it lowered the natives' defenses against economic and cultural aggression. Filipinos today are the most consummate users of American products and culture.

The Thomasites were a passionately dedicated lot who did not see themselves only as bringers of basic literacy and numeracy skills to thousands of uneducated Filipino children but more as inculcators of democratic values and ideals in young Filipino minds, "with a view to making the country a model of American-style democracy in the Far East." [Racelis, *Bearers of Benevolence*, p.4] They conscientiously taught whether in makeshift classrooms or in private houses where goats and chickens sat with the children, and parents chewing betel nut squatting at the back, weaving or molding pottery. They endeared themselves to the children and their communities, despite that the parents briefly feared these Americans were converting them to another religion. Their journal entries recorded all their hardships and difficulties in terms of limited resources and backward living conditions, but also were filled with enthusiasm and warmth and fondness not only for the children but for the communities as well who openly and respectfully accepted them. Parents admired them and regarded them as the conduit to their children's bright futures and entry into the modern, bigger, and more prosperous world, especially because those who excelled were sent as pensionados, scholars to American universities. "The school curriculum itself promoted the American way of life as superior. English as the medium of instruction was the path to understanding and incorporating the democratic tradition into the Filipino psyche." [Racelis, p.11] The Thomasites treated all students, rich or poor, equally. They gave incentives such as snacks and prizes to those who did well. Public performances in English, such as debates and declamation or oratorical contests, were often held, open to the proud parents and the public. The most popular pieces were Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" and Longfellow's "Hiawatha". There were plays and pageants and musicals, and parents beamed with pride "as their young Pilgrims, a turkey under one arm and corncobs under the other, welcomed the American Indians to the first Thanksgiving dinner. Whether or not the earnest actor could understand his lines was less important than his being on stage, in public, speaking English. Parents were impressed as were local officials, the parish priest, and the townspeople. The maestro and maestra were welcomed heartily." [Racelis and Ick, p.7]

The other difficulty the Thomasites spoke of was that due to the use of a foreign language, they failed to teach or teach well the other subjects, especially science and mathematics, despite their sincere attempts to encourage creativity and real learning (They condemned sheer memorizing). Worse, on the whole, a dual system seemed to have evolved in the lives of these young students. When in school, they were perfectly willing and able to abide by the values the Thomasites taught them, but once they were back at home in the community, they went back to their prevailing Filipino values. They learned

to adjust and saw no contradiction in going by one set of rules under one set of conditions, and in going by another, totally the opposite, under another set of conditions. Uncannily, it could precisely be years of adroitly negotiating two cultures that have prepared Filipinos for the diaspora, the yearly exodus to overseas of men and mostly women in search of better-paying jobs.

Teaching English: From First Language to English as Second Language

In 1925, the very first critically -acclaimed short story called "Dead Stars" was written by a Filipina, Paz Marquez Benitez who belonged to the University of the Philippines Writers Guild. This is considered and taught as a milestone of English teaching in the Philippine Literature course, as if all of Philippine literature was just that body of works written in English. Saleeby, an expert in Malayo-Polynesian languages, commented in 1924 that " Twenty-five years of intensive English education has produced no radical change." [Constantino, p.14] While it was true that significantly more Filipinos could speak English than there ever were of those who learned to speak Spanish under more than 300 years of Spanish colonial rule, the great majority still spoke their native language. Saleeby went on to mock the American colonial policy of insisting on it as sole medium of instruction and of official discourse. It was, he said, "exalted and ambitious to an extreme degree" and "was attempting to do what ancient Persia, Rome, Alexander the Great and Napoleon failed to accomplish." [p.15]

The approaches to teaching English in the Philippines have shifted back and forth because our educators and policymakers can never let go and make up their mind about it. In the first decades after independence in 1946 was supposed to have been granted by the United States, it was intensive language training for Filipinos as if they were native speakers. The very same American language textbooks used in US schools were imported and in Catholic private schools in key cities, these were rented out to students. The training required intensive grammar drills and diagramming exercises, supplemented by reading and comprehension activities as SRA, phonetics and pronunciation in speech labs and theme or creative writing. This was my training in grade school in the 60s and high school in the 70s. But as we were learning English in this thorough manner, it was already the language of our texts in science, math, social studies and geography. Immediately, we were immersed in English. Of the 8 or 9 (including Religion in private schools) subjects, only the study of our language was in Pilipino. We were forced to speak only English on campus and were penalized whenever caught speaking our own language. This was a traumatic experience for most of us, and

knew in our hearts there was something terribly wrong. My family, like all other families in our city, spoke Tagalog at home and it was natural for us to immediately shift to Tagalog once outside of the classroom. But like the parents who so admired the Thomasites, our parents saw this rule as disciplinary and could not be anything else but for our own good. Proficiency in English continued to be the mark of the truly educated. At home, while we spoke Tagalog, we all read in English, from newspapers and magazines to books. We also wrote letters to friends and relatives in English. Even dedications at the back of photographs were in English. Pilipino remained the spoken language but was never prestigious or official enough for letters or reports. I myself have to read aloud when reading Tagalog as I find it difficult to read it silently.

The late 60s and 70s were given to massive student rallies and demonstrations, onto the Martial law of the Marcos dictatorship. Colonial education was the most criticized as it continued to deepen colonial mentality; English was heavily attacked as an impediment in fact to instruction. A child who has to understand abstract science and math concepts will first and yet have to grapple with a strange language. It has made learning doubly difficult, and turned it into rote, mere memorization of key words, definitions and enumerations. The Thomasites knew this as early as 1905. Those not proficient in English, largely rural-based students, have not been able to share their thoughts or discuss and argue in class; critical and creative minds are rendered mute.in the classroom. So in 1974, as some form of concession, Marcos approved the bilingual policy in education; the intent was to gradually shift to Pilipino as medium of instruction up to the tertiary level by 1984. It finally was the right and sound policy in place but was never implemented and appears to have been discarded. This was not bilingualism as in the United States today. What it did was to require the teaching of social studies, music, arts, and physical education in Pilipino, subjects thought of as minor. But the core subjects like reading, language, science and math were still to be taught in English. At this time, the teaching of English in basic education shifted to communicative competence, or as a second language. In college, it became English for Specific Purposes, meaning one only had to learn enough English as needed by the student's major, whether Law, Medicine, Engineering or Business. After the People Power of 1986, and the ouster of Marcos, the educators vacillated and worried over the deterioration of the training in English especially because the multinational corporations and other business companies complained about the graduates' weak communication skills in English, both oral and written. Instead of a political resolve to expedite working towards an economy that will provide basic services and employment Filipinos deserve, the government instead began to talk about preparing

Filipinos for all types of work in other countries. Proficiency in English has become an asset, whether one is a professional or a domestic helper. In response therefore, the top private schools went back to intensive English language teaching, back to grammar drills and diagramming exercises. Koreans are coming to Manila to learn English and English language schools specifically for Koreans are mushrooming. In 21st century Philippines, the trend is to train to speak English with the American accent or as Americans speak it, to provide manpower to customer service call centers set up in Manila to service the American public. Because the hours are graveyard shifts, these companies pay high relative to Manila salaries for fresh graduates, but really low compared to US minimum rates. Still many graduates of top schools are enticed to join but on short-term bases, like one-or-two-year contracts, only to save up and buy a car. American-accent schools or similar inhouse departments are beginning to be set up to be able to supply the requirements of this outsourcing. To many of the young graduates, speaking English as the Americans do is not absurd because it is just a job, and it is the principle behind learning a second language—when one learns French or Italian, one must eventually speak it as the French or Italians do. Some social scientists say this is an indicator that these young graduates from top schools know who they are, and are comfortable with their identity, and confident they can proceed in the real world.

Miseducation, Nationalism, and Democracy

The late Filipino nationalist historian Renato Constantino considered the question of language as the most vital problem that has plagued Philippine education. For any sovereign country to use another country's language in the education of its young is ridiculous and outrageous, especially after more than half a century has passed since colonial rule. How terribly tragic that up till now, many enlightened Filipinos in responsible positions, former activists and leftists, nationalists all, are still against using Filipino as medium of instruction (The 1987 Constitution changed the name of the national language to Filipino). They are afraid of cutting what to them is the nation's linguistic, and more importantly, economic lifeline. Mastery of English has been the badge of an educated person in the Philippines. After having acquired facility in it through the same educational system, the elite and leaders think it must and can work for others too who persevere. They are convinced that not at this time, especially at this time when the world is globalizing, and all other countries are learning English, should we shift gears and give it up as medium of instruction. So great and deep-rooted is the disorientation and confusion over this issue, caused by years of colonial education, that even after the

experiments at the University of the Philippines Integrated School, where Science and Math were taught in Filipino, using textbooks in Filipino, and where student performances greatly improved, there still is the reluctance to let go of English as medium of instruction. Education experts who know how deleterious are the effects of an education taught in a foreign language are too timid to speak up even as remarkable results of teaching in Filipino can back them up. Even as it is a known fact that today Filipino, the national language, is understood all over the country. It is as if we will return to the dark ages if we give up English as medium of instruction. Years of American-oriented education, that continues to this day to miseducate Filipinos, have instilled in us a national inferiority complex. That education has made us distrust the capabilities of our own language.

Giving up English as medium of instruction does not mean abandoning English altogether. As in other countries like France, Japan, China and Korea, those who will need it in their careers should learn it, and well, as a preferred foreign language. Its indispensability in the world today is not questioned or denied; only the bloated priority it is given at the expense of our very own language.

For the Thomasites, one of the reasons for imposing English was that it was the language of democracy, and through it, Filipinos would embrace the American way of life—equal opportunities for all. No privileged class, no poor. But the way it turned out, English created a new ilustrado class, a small group of men and women who can articulate their thoughts in English. "English became the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past, and later to separate educated Filipinos from the masses of their countrymen." [Constantino, p.6] Benedict Anderson says that the aims of colonial education are to "break the links to the indigenous past" and produce a carefully-calibrated quantum of (English)-speaking and (English)-writing (Filipinos) to serve as a politically reliable, grateful, and acculturated indigenous elite, filling the subordinate echelons of the colony's bureaucracy and larger commercial enterprises." [Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.126] We now have a wider sector who can read and speak in fairly comprehensible English, which is really a hybrid of Tagalog and English, now called Taglish (This involves extensive code-switching). Still, the great masses of Filipinos hardly express themselves in English, and they therefore barely understand the discourse of government and politics which our leaders insist must continue to be in this language. The outcome is a leadership that does not truly comprehend the needs of the people for they can only communicate with them in general and vague terms. Issues are never fully discussed during, moreso outside, of elections. Politicians with the best inflections and are seasoned orators in English win the votes especially when they are covered by television. Democracy,

rather than be a discourse of dialogue and consultation, is at best performance of the few, much like the declamation contests of the Thomasites in the1900s. Extent of absurdity is seen daily in our courts where witnesses' testimonies in Tagalog are translated to English when everyone present can fully understand Tagalog or Filipino.

We have a society where the upper 50%, fairly educated men and women proficient in English have 82.2 % of the total income, the monopolists of power, and the uneducated, lower 50% take home only 17.8% [National Statistics Office website] of that income, they who are easily swayed by the powers that be. The majority of Filipinos half-understand what their leaders say or what the laws say. They love the sounds, but the sense is often lost on them. They have learned to think that it is not their duty to know, or that they have to understand national issues and participate in the discourse for the public good. They are content to leave everything to their leaders. But lately, in the last two presidential elections, perhaps as a manifestation of their extreme frustration and disgust with their leaders, big business and the elite, and hopelessness over their worsening economic situation, they elected and voted for ignorant, non-English speaking, unqualified popular actors (Arroyo is widely believed to have cheated Poe). It is ironic then that English which was supposed to be the language of democracy instead now prevents the development of real democracy in my country.

Conclusion

To our National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin, identity is like the river in philosophy. "You can never step into the same river twice. The river has changed even as you step into it. Nevertheless the Pasig (River) remains the Pasig, though from one moment to the next, it's no longer the same river." [Joaquin, *Culture and History*] Raymond Williams shares this dynamic view of identity. He says, "The history of the idea of culture is a record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life." [Williams, *Culture and Society*] I believe like many others that the Filipino, all that he or she is today is his or her identity as Filipino, not before the Spanish colonizers came, nor before the Amercan public school system was set up. All Filipinos belong to a nation and share a culture forged by colonialism and the resistance to it, by historical conditions, and by its multi-ethnic creative and critical imagining that continues whether or not it is managed or influenced. It is however urgent that the miseducation assembly line be corrected and reversed—that it work towards building in our young a sense of pride in our nation. The knowledge of our shared history and heritage is not available to all. Our foremost historians Agoncillo and

Constantino did right to give us the grand narrative of our struggles against the colonizers, and that narrative has been enriched, fine-tuned, nuanced and refined by many new and in-progress studies and researches especially in pre-history and early nation-state formation. All these, however, have not been inventoried to form and inform our basic education curriculum, not even to generate the kind of history textbooks we have long needed to imagine a nation.

Renowned linguist Noam Chomsky and psychologist Jean Piaget both believe that bilingualism have no bearing on cognitive thought. Chomsky's reason is that language is autonomous from the rest of cognition; Piaget's is that language is not an important causal agent in the development of knowledge. [Hakuta, *Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism*, p.83] This certainly is another view of the bilingual policy— "A youngster whose wider experiences in two cultures have given him advantages which a monolingual does not enjoy. Intellectually his experience with two language systems seems to have left him with a mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, a more diversified set of mental abilities." [Peal and Lambert, p.20] As Anderson says, "It is always a mistake to treat languages in the way that certain nationalist ideologues treat them - - as emblems of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk-dances, and the rest. Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities." [Anderson, p.133]

All forces exert the same dynamics, two-pronged with a strength and a weakness, an upside and downside, a positive and negative. However bilingual, whatever the resulting hybrid language, what is crucial is how these make communities and nations cohere. Just as in 1905, based on the account of one Thomasite, a 12-year old Filipino boy in a class studying about Captain Smith and the first Virginia settlers, made a connection between the English colonizing America and the Americans colonizing the Philippines. They learned from the book that the English, greedy for gold, took advantage of the Indians. The boy raised his hand and said he saw a picture of Captain Smith, holding an Indian by the throat, with a pistol at his head, saying, "Your money or your life." The boy said he thought of the Philippines. [Racelis, pp.9-10]. The stories of colonization and nationalisms are stories of great ideas and collective remembering. And the path of great ideas is like the path of a storm; wherever it passes, it wreaks havoc and ferment.

RADICAL ISLAM AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA[1]

Jamhari

Recently, there has been a lot of discussion about the emergence of a modern religious revival, primarily indicated by an increasing religious dedication among various groups. Among Christians and Catholics, for instance, there has been an increase in church attendance. And more and more Moslems are conforming to fundamental Islamic practices—praying five times a day, fasting, and performing other religious duties.[2] It seems to be occurring worldwide, across all religions. In Indonesia, an increasing number of middle-class citizens and students are following religious practices and attending religious sermons. During Ramadhan, the increasing religious fervor can be noted everywhere—on television programs, in the streets, even in hotels and offices.

What is interesting about the phenomenon is it is occurring at the point when the "rational forces" of science and technology seem to have solved the mysteries of nature and have consequently banished spirituality from the framework of modern society. Religious revivals usually do develop during such junctures in history. They gain momentum when people assume that material fulfillment can make them happy.

One question that should be raised is whether such a phenomenon—religions taking center stage worldwide—can truly be called a "revival" in the context of today's society. Revivalism implies a collective *returning* to religion. But many people nowadays have never been distinctly religious in the first place. Most of them are not *returning to* or *reviving* their old religiosity, but are in fact rediscovering their "lost" religion. It might therefore be more accurate to call what is taking place today not a religious *revival* but a religious *rediscovery.*[3] For the purpose of this paper, however, we shall continue to refer to it as a "revival."

One salient feature of the current religious revival is the strengthening of the so-called fundamentalist movements in almost all religions in many parts of the world. This can be seen in the emergence of "militant" Moslems in Iran and Lebanon, the increasing influence of the Zionist faction in Israel, the deepening conflict between Protestants and Catholics in North Ireland, and the popularity of "televangelists" in America. These indicate that there has been a reorientation of religious values within society, even though it is expressed in different formats.

The religious revival in Indonesia can be explained partly as the result of a modernity crisis, characterized by a tendency to focus on the material

aspects of life, the marginalization of spirituality, and the domination of rational thinking.

The demise of New Order authority and the new political openness have opened the space for new social, political, and religious movements and organizations that express people's aspirations. These are actually *delayed responses* to the authoritarian New Order political system,[4] and are in sharp contrast to the mono-ideological movements of the New Order era. Among the increasing number of newly formed social groups are a number of religious organizations. They have, in fact, been quite visible in various sectors of society. In the political arena, many political parties with religious and social orientations join Indonesian democracy festivals. Many religious-militant groups have also joined the Indonesian reform movement. Because majority of Indonesians are Moslems, most of these groups are Islamic.

The emergence of these new Islamic groups will no doubt influence the future social and political landscape of Indonesia. Some Islamic parties participating in the 1999 general election, for instance, used Islam as their ideology and political base. They campaigned to implement Islamic Shari'ah law, and attempted to have the Jakarta Charter or Piagam Jakarta, particularly the clause "the obligation for Moslems to abide by Islamic Shari'ah," included in the constitution. It cannot be denied that the ideological issues brought up by these Islamic parties has changed Indonesian politics today.

This paper focuses on the emergence of groups which, according to their followers, want to apply Islamic teachings comprehensively (*kaffah*) and wholeheartedly. These groups have been variously called fundamentalists, extremists, radicals, and militants, labels which are generally considered pejorative. It is important to note that the label *fundamentalist* initially used to refer to Christian-Protestant groups actually has a neutral meaning. It simply indicates the groups' attempt to return to their basic religious foundations. Because one of their implicit goals is the rejection of rationality, which bypasses revelation or religion in its pursuit of truth, these groups have also rejected science and technology, both of which employ rational methods. This "irrationality" gave the term *fundamentalist* its negative connotation. However, this no longer applies to modern "fundamentalist" Islamic groups.

It has been argued by many scholars that Islamic radicalism is a serious challenge to the consolidation of democracy in Muslim societies. This paper also attempts to situate Islamic radicalism in the process of consolidation of democracy in Indonesia.

Islamic militant groups in Indonesia: Tracing their socio-historical roots

Militant as well as moderate or middle-line Islamic groups have existed long before the 2002 Bali bombing or the September 11, 2001 attacks

on the U.S., both of which have been attributed to these groups. They have existed before Samuel P. Huntington's "Clashes of Civilization" thesis after the fall of the Soviet Union. This is evidenced by the wealth of research materials on the topic that have been available long before the above events took place, or that discuss the activities of Islamic militants prior to these events. An example is John L. Esposito's *Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality.* The book is basically a response to Huntington's thesis,[5] but it also contains studies on militant Moslems in Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and Algiers. It shows that militant Moslems have been around before the above-mentioned incidents. This proves that not all militant Islamic movements were formed because of conflict with and hatred for the West.

The militant movements in Iran, for example—although they have a strong anti-Western element—can be traced historically to the marginalized Shi'ah group, particularly the descendents of Ali, from the Islamic political mainstream at that time. During the Mu'awiyah Caliphate, the members of Ali's family were hunted down and arrested as enemies of the state. The Shi'ah, as they came to be known, eventually evolved into a clandestine community, whose leaders were strongly trusted and supported by the members. Nowadays, the Shi'ah movement is strongly influenced by the millennial belief in the return of the savior or messiah. It is clear that militant Islam in Iran is not rooted in antipathy toward the West, but in internal conflicts. The anti-American sentiment developed only recently, particularly when Imam Khumaeni led an Islamic revolution to topple Reza Pahlevi, who was supported by the Americans.

In Indonesia, the history of radical Muslim groups can be traced to the Bali bombing and other recent tragedies. One radical Islamic movement that emerged in modern Indonesia was the DI/TII (Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia or Islamic State/Indonesia Islamic Force).[6] The DI/TII movement grew in three areas: West Java, Aceh, and Makassar. It started in West Java, then its supporters in Aceh and Makassar joined the rebellion for different reasons. They were united by the common goal to make Shari'ah law the main foundation of the Indonesian state.

The underground movement was formed by a group led by S. M. Kartosuwiryo, which rejected the Renville agreement between Indonesia and the Dutch government during the Indonesian revolution.[7] Kartosuwiryo and his supporters moved from Central Java to West Java to continue their struggles against Dutch colonial rule. They were able to control three regions there: Ciamis, Garut, and Tasikmalaya, which became their headquarters. In rejecting the position of the Indonesian government to accept the Renville agreement, Kartosuwiryo's group established Islamic Shari'ah as their basic law and started the struggle for an Indonesian Islamic state (Negara Islam Indonesia or NII). The Darul Islam movement ceased operations when all of its leaders were arrested or killed in the early 1960s.

Islamic radical movements appeared again in the early 1970s and 1980s. Groups such as Komando Jihad, Ali Imron, Terror Warman and the like were active during this period. They declared war against Communism in Indonesia. Because of this, it was rumored that these groups were "utilized"—if not formed—by Indonesian intelligence to fight against the Communists. Moreover, the Indonesian New Order government also used these groups to legitimize the banning and repression of the radical Indonesian Islamic movements. This was a government strategy to cut the possible links between these groups and political parties, which employed religious issues in their campaigns. The government strategy seemed to have worked—the Islamic radical movements were stigmatized for sometime.

During the reformation era, Islamic radical movements reappeared in significant numbers, along with many other types of movements that emerged during this period. Among these radical groups were the Islamic Defender Front (Front Pembela Islam), Lasykar Jihad, and Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia. Such movements usually resurface whenever political openness is established, or as a delayed psychological response to an authoritarian regime.

The above discussion shows that Islamic hard-line or middle-line movements have different backgrounds and were formed for different reasons. This could be disappointment with the regime, political marginalization, or other similar reasons. Religion is usually not the main cause, although after the movement is formed, it could become an important factor.

Solidarity regarding the fate of Moslems in other parts of the world can be another important factor in the formation of radical movements. The popular example of this is the Palestinian issue. Moslems see the West's weak response toward the Israeli occupation in Palestine as unjust, particularly in comparison to its harsh policy toward Iraq. The Palestine problem is one important example of a cause that can inspire solidarity among radical movements.

The Islamic revolution in Iran is another example of a cause that has inspired Islamic hard-line movements. Its leader, Imam Khumaeni, is seen by Moslems as a symbol of struggle against the oppressor, not only in Iran but in other Islamic countries as well. In Indonesia the influence of Khumaeni and the Iranian revolution on Moslem radicals is evidenced in their behavior, their clothes, and the way they express their aspirations.

In terms of theology, Islamic radical movements are known for their textual or scripturalist approach in understanding Islam, which mainly relies on what is written in the holy book. This approach has been criticized for its negation of social, historical, political, and rational contexts to which religious doctrine applied in the past. In other words, it disregards the raison d'être of religious doctrine. By using this approach, the radicals are able to capture the golden age of Islam as a "text," which should be materialized as it had been in the past without any interpretation.

Profiles of contemporary Islamic militant movements

There are several organizations in Indonesia that are considered Islamic militant groups. Some emerged after the fall of Suharto while others were formed as a reaction to conflicts between Moslems and Christians in some regions.

The Islamic Defender Front (Front Pembela Islam or FPI)

The FPI movement grew after the appointment of B. J. Habibie as the Indonesian president by Parliament, after the fall of Suharto. It aimed to organize big student rallies in protest of the appointment. For students, Habibie was considered a continuation of Suharto's New Order. The protests grew bigger and bigger until Parliament, in its annual session, asked Habibie to step down. Initially the group was called Pam Swakarsa. It was established by the Indonesian military or TNI to ensure that the annual session of the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat; MPR) went smoothly. The members were recruited from different regions such as Banten, Central Java.

The FPI was formed in Jakarta as a *pressure group* aimed at eradicating immorality. It was led by a young religious teacher, Habieb Muhammad Rizieq Syihab (or Habib Rizieq).

Although the FPI rejected the leadership of Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri on the basis of gender, it was not trapped in such a political issue. Instead, it focused on campaigns to close down discotheques and brothels. To facilitate the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah in Indonesia, it mobilized the masses to support the inclusion of Piagam Jakarta in the constitution. Its issues and agendas are what differentiates FPI from other Islamic militant groups. It has its own "areas of concern" which are different from, for example, those of Lasykar Jihad, Ahlu Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaah, Majelis Mujahidin, and other millitant groups.

The FPI was officially established on August 17, 1998, Indonesia's fifty-third anniversary of independence, at the Pesantren al-Umm Ciputat led by K. H. Misbahul Anam, in South Jakarta. The declaration was followed by a sermon to celebrate the anniversary of the Pesantren al-Umm. The idea to form the FPI came from a discussion between Rizieq and Anam. They were both concerned with the increasing cases of immorality within society. They appealed to the other *ulama* (learned men) and *habib* (a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad) such as K. H. Cecep Busthomi (who was later shot to death), K. H. Damanhuri, and Habib Idrus Jamalullail to join.[8]

According to Rizieq, the goals of the FPI, as an Islamic organization based on *ahlussunnah wal jamaah* (people who follow the tradition of the Prophet and the consensus of Ulama) (from *manhaj salafi* [the tradition of

the earliest Islamic generation]), were to ask for goodness and to reject badness. The words "Islamic Defenders" which are used to refer to members of the FPI, according to Rizieq, mean that they not only defend Moslems but also Islamic values, which may be applied also by non-Moslems. The FPI motto is "Live respectably or die as a martyr"' (Hidup mulia atau mati syahid).

Rizieq, who wrote the book *Dialog Piagam Jakarta* (Jakarta Charter Dialogues), and other FPI activists support the inclusion of Piagam Jakarta in the Indonesian constitution.[9] The FPI commitment initially was to push for the implementarion of the Islamic Shari'ah. This goal was socialized through a special body named the Committee for the Implementation of Islamic Shari'ah (Komite Penegakan Syariat Islam), which was able to reach regional areas. Within two years, according to Anam, the FPI was able to recruit 15 million members from eighteen provinces.[10]

The FPI did not intend to replace the foundation and form of the Indonesian state; it acknowledged that the Republic of Indonesia Unity State was final. What it was struggling for was the alignment of existing laws with the Islamic Shari'ah, as written in the Qur'an and Hadith.

The targets of the FPI movement were communities in the outskirts of the city such as Ciputat and Bekasi, and slum areas in the city. The group had a systematic commando line at the village level. That was why it was able to mobilize its masses quickly whenever they were required to stage protests and actions against "immorality." This was also made possible because of the influence of habib networks among Arab descendents who were highly respected in the Betawi community.

The FPI continued its anti-immorality campaign, closing down and destroying bars and discotheques, until the Indonesian police imposed a series of harsh measures against the group. Some FPI leaders were arrested, including Rizieq. At this point the organization underwent a temporary freeze.

The Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah Communication Forum
(Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah)

In discussing Lasykar Jihad Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah, we should discuss the Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah Communication Forum (Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah; FKAWJ). Similarly in discussing the FKAWJ, we should discuss an important founder and leader of the organization, Ja'far Umar Thalib. The FKAWJ was formed by Thalib, M. Umar As Sewed, Ayib Syafruddin, and Ma'ruf Bahrun on February 14, 1999, during a big sermon in Yogyakarta. The organization is closely related to Jamaah al-Turats al-Islami in Yogyakarta, a movement founded by Thalib and Abu Nida (Chamsaha Sofwan). The latter was a "semi-clandestine" movement and was thus commonly associated with groups such as Ikhwanul Muslimin and DI/TII.[11] The Pesantren Ihya'u as-Sunnah led by Thalib in Yogyakarta be-

came the basis for the FKAWJ, whose main goal was to facilitate the return of Moslem "honor," which was neglected during the authoritarian New Order regime.[12]

The formation of the FKAWJ was motivated by the economic, political, and socio-historical crises in Indonesia during the reformation era. At the beginning it joined other Islamic groups in support of Habibie. Together with its military wing, Lasykar Jihad, it participated in the Moslem Forum or Forum Umat Islam, where it argued that the student and mass protests against Habibie were actually a form of protest against Moslem leadership.

Lasykar Jihad also took center stage in early 2000 when it called for jihad in Ambon to help the Moslems there in their fight against the Christians in Maluku. It said this was necessary because the separatist group RMS (Republik Maluku Selatan; South Mollucan Republic) was actually behind the ethno-religious conflicts in Ambon. The RMS group wanted to separate from Indonesia. Lasykar Jihad wanted to intervene in order to defend the Indonesian flag.

However, the presence of Lasykar Jihad in Ambon only worsened the religious conflicts. Because it clearly represented the Islamic faction, similar Christian and Catholic groups, such as Lasykar Kristus, also joined in the fray. It cannot be denied that after the involvement of Lasykar Jihad the conflicts became religious.

Another Lasykar Jihad goal was to implement the Islamic Shari'ah in Indonesia. While it was engaged in the holy war in Ambon, one of its members committed *zina*, or illegal sexual intercourse (one that takes place outside of a formal marriage), which, according to the Shari'ah, is punishable by death through stoning. The decision of Lasykar Jihad to carry out such a punishment was met with strong protests and criticisms. Although struggling for the implementation of Shari'ah, Lasykar Jihad claimed that it was not trying to build an Islamic state in Indonesia, as was being done by other radical Islamic groups. It claimed to focus only on improving the quality of life of every Moslem.

In addition to waging holy war, Lasykar Jihad also set up a *pesantren* or religious boarding school, which, according to Lasykar Jihad leaders, was initially built to house and care for orphans from Ambon. A pesantren at Mungkid Village in Magelang, for example, was built to take in pupils from Ambon. The pesantren functioned also as a place where university students could conduct religious studies, and where children refugees from Ambon could learn how to read and write.

Soon after the Bali bombing, Lasykar Jihad was dissolved, as per the order or *fatwa* of its imam in Madinah. This invited a lot of speculation regarding the group's involvement in the bombing. But according to Thalib, the FKAWJ's military arm was liquidated not because of the bombing but because it was being misused by its members, and also because its imam

determined that it had already accomplished its mission—to wage jihad in Ambon.

Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI)

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) was founded on August 2000 in Yogyakarta, during an event attended by thousands from many areas in Indonesia as well as from overseas. The head or *amir* of MMI is Amirul Mujahidin Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, one of the founders of the Ngruki pesantren in Surakarta. He was linked with Komando Jihad together with Abdullah Sungkar, also a founder of the Ngruki pesantren. Ba'asyir escaped to Malaysia during the New Order regime, and was only able to return to Indonesia after the overthrow of Suharto.

The main agenda of MMI is to implement Islamic Shari'ah,[13] which is closely related to the Moslem aspiration to set up an Islamic state (Daulah Islamiyah). The group claims that it means to continue the struggle of DI/TII to set up such a state.[14] The majority of factions that joined MMI formerly belonged to the Darul Islam movement, which was attempting to recover its dispersed power.

In contrast to other militant Moslem groups such as the FPI and Lasykar Jihad, which relied mainly on force, MMI chose the political and academic approaches. For example, its members launched an information campaign on how to implement Islamic Shari'ah in Indonesia, conducted mainly through open debates, public discourses, Internet websites, and books. They also lobbied for the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter (Piagam Jakarta) in the constitution at parliamentary meetings. To socialize their main goal of implementing the Shari'ah in Indonesia, they also conducted seminars in university campuses and mosques.

Initially, MMI wanted to form a coalition or alliance with other organizations also working toward the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah in Indonesia. In fact the first MMI Congress in Yogyakarta in 2000 was attended by representatives of various Moslem militant groups. It was expected that MMI could become a meeting point for the different Moslem ethnic groups and militant organizations working toward the same goal. MMI formulated three basic principles: unity in the mission to implement Islamic Shari'ah (*tansiqul fardi*); unity in the program of Islamic Shari'ah implementation (*tansiqul 'amali*); and unity in one institution for the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah (*tansiqun nidhami*).[15]

The supporters of MMI are aware of the fact that the goal of implementing Islamic Shari'ah in Indonesia requires the help and participation of various groups. Therefore MMI, as a coalition, aims to unite all Moslems in the struggle for the comprehensive implementation of the Shari'ah (*tathbiq al-syari'at*) in all aspects of life, particularly in government, nationally and internationally.[16]

Recently Ba'asyir was arrested for his alleged involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate Megawati Sukarnoputri, the Indonesian president, and for his involvement in the bombing of several religious places, malls, and government offices. MMI was often accused of having links with Jama'ah Islamiyah, which aims to destroy Western-owned facilities, particularly those belonging to the U.S. in Southeast Asia.

There are many other Islamic militant movements in Indonesia such as Hizbut Tahrir, Tarbiyah Islamiyah, and Ikhwanul Muslimin. Like the three we have discussed above though, these organizations, although they often share a common goal (for instance, the implementation of the Shari'ah in Indonesia), differ in terms of how they want to achieve their goal. Even though they may have the same political interests, they nevertheless follow different agendas. This is the main reason why it would be difficult to unite them under one network.

Contemporary Islamic militant movements: The rise of Islamic politics?

While the FPI was busy destroying shops, bars, and other "immoral" establishments that peddle alcohol and sex, other Islamic militant groups in Indonesia were preaching in the streets, giving unsolicited religious or spiritual advice to anyone who would listen.

In the political arena, the militant Islamic groups were also very vocal. During the 2002 MPR annual session, these groups conducted street protests in front of the House of People's Representatives (Derwan Perwakilan Rakyat; DPR) and MPR buildings. They demanded the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter, containing the obligation of Moslems to obey the Islamic Shari'ah, in the state constitution. They argued that since the majority of its citizens were Moslems, it was natural for the state to listen to the Moslem aspiration to implement Islamic Shari'ah in Indonesia. But although they had mobilized the masses in an effort to force the DPR and MPR to include the charter, their efforts were rejected by parliament.

In Surakarta, a group named FPIS (Front Pembela Islam Surakarta; Surakarta Islamic Defender Front) drove out all foreigners, particularly Americans, from the area, as a protest to the U.S. (Western) attacks on Afghanistan. The U.S. and its allies accused Afghanistan of protecting the Al-Qaeda, who were accused of orchestrating the attacks on the World Trade Center twin towers and the Pentagon in September 11, 2001. The U.S. attacks on the Taliban government in Afghanistan were deemed by the FPIS as unnecessary.

The FPIS' actions were meant to draw support from Indonesian Moslems in general. However, they drew varied responses—some offered support while others rejected and labeled the FPIS as a terrorist group.

In terms of numbers, groups such as the FPI or FPIS are relatively

small. However, their militancy is very strong and they actively participate in public debates on religious doctrines. It should be noted that these groups have access to advanced technology. Their ability to use the Internet and other information technology to spread their ideas show that these are solid organizations supported by members who are competent and up-to-date in terms of both education and work experience.

Most of these movements prioritize action programs that attack immorality, which they consider a threat to their religion. They feel so strongly about this issue that they do not hesitate to use force to achieve their goals.

The use of force is in fact considered necessary because the police often refuse to take action, particularly against immoral places protected by certain security officers.

A study on radical mass movements that use force to implement their ideas shows that such groups are more successful in delivering their messages than those employing peaceful means. After all, violence attracts media attention, and through media exposure they could more easily influence public opinion and have more chances of getting a direct response from the authorities.[17]

Many contemporary Indonesian Islamic movements are considered radical and militant; they are called "hard-line groups." The term *militant* is applied to them because of their strong fundamentalist attitudes toward the implementation of religion in society, and their aggressive actions against immoral practices such as prostitution and gambling.

The strong commitment of these groups to their cause—the comprehensive implementation of the Shari'ah in Indonesia—is evident in their application of Shari'ah law to their own lives. They follow it meticulously, down to the clothes they wear, the food they eat, and their unquestioning obedience to their leaders.

The difficulty is in finding the right definition for "radical Islam." The word *radical*, particularly when applied to Islamic movements, is often considered pejorative. Especially after the September 2001 tragedy, the word *radical* has been identified with terrorism.

Often the definitions employed were derived from Christian tradition and experience, and are thus largely inaccurate and misleading when applied to Islam. The best method for arriving at an accurate definition is by identifying the most salient characteristics of the movements that fall under "radical Islam."

However, it should be noted that these characteristics should be treated as a point of departure in the search for a deeper meaning and not as a final conclusion. As such, they will always be open to discussion. According to John O. Voll, religious fundamentalism is "an affirmation of religious fundamental values and efforts to redevelop a society in line with the fundamental values."[18] As such, Islamic fundamentalist movements "demand for Moslems to return to Islamic teachings" and for "an appearance of Moslem

spirits," and represent "an appeal to rely only on Islamic fundamental principles to fulfill the needs and challenges of contemporary life."[19]

Probably what people have in mind when they refer to radical movements are groups called by the West "anti-Western terrorist groups." Such groups were specifically attached to Islamic movements, which were against Western policy. The Hisbullah group in Palestine, for example, is considered by Israel and the West as the group responsible for the radicalism in that area. Al-Qaeda and its networks are other examples of radical Islamic movements that are considered "anti-Western."

According to studies on terrorism, radicalism is not confined to a particular religion in a certain place. Radical religious movements also exist among Hindus in India, and Catholics and Christians in Ireland. Even in a secular state like the USA, radical religious movements also develop. This shows that religious radicalism is a universal phenomenon, which can take place in all religious traditions.

When we talk about radical movements, terms such as *extremism*, *fundamentalism*, and *militant* are often used.

In classic social disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and politics, radical social movements, whether religious or not, are seen as deviant movements.[20] This is because their attitudes, views, and social behaviors differ from those of mainstream society. According to the influential structural-functional approach, a social system should be seen as a unity. Its elements support and strengthen each other to maintain the system. Radical movements, according to this theory, represent a defiance of the unity of a social system.

In the above approach, radical movements appear as a reaction to *structural strain,* which causes a *disruptive psychological state.* The structural weaknesses in a society lead to disturbances in the human psychological condition. When these psychological disturbances are raised to their highest level, mass movements appear. This is the classical theory of mass movements.

Although the classical theory of radical movements has some degree of relevance to our modern society there are now other theories which consider radicalism syndrome as normal. In the modern politics approach, radical movements are not seen as deviant movements, but as normal movements with certain political goals. As political groups which utilize social capital to attract support, radical movements attempt to use their social capital (religion, society, and economy) for political interests. In other words, radical movements are political movements similar to other political groups.

There are interesting findings from anthropological studies on radical movements. First, the emergence of radical religious movements is often followed by the emergence of "Ratu Adil," or *millenarian movements.* These are motivated by cultural and religious factors and are a response to external power—colonialism or the introduction of foreign culture. Second, radical

movements use cultural and religious symbols that deviate from the norm and signify their opposition to mainstream society. These symbols can take the form of a special costume or religious ritual. From an anthropological point of view, therefore, radical movements are a form of *revivalism,* indicating an attempt to reemerge from cultural backwardness. These movements also signify a struggle against and rejection of foreign culture and power.

How then can radical Islamic movements be explained using the above perspectives? Are they normal organizations within a democracy demanding participation and openness, or political movements aimed at gaining political and economic benefits? Are the radical movements in Indonesia *cultural movements* that signify a rejection of and opposition to modernity? Or are they only *puppet movements* used to discredit certain groups?

Radicalism as political movements

In the changing political map of the transition phase from the old regime to a new one, when there is political uncertainty, many expect to enter the power circle. This can be seen from the number of people who set up political parties they use as vehicles for entering the government circle. In the 1999 general election, there were more than 150 registered political parties, but only forty-eight were qualified for the election. Ideologies and programs propagated by the parties varied from religious issues to poverty and rank-and-file issues.

This type of political euphoria is not specific to Indonesia. Such a scenario also took place in Poland and Mali, which also experienced a *political breakdown.* In the pluralistic Indonesian culture and society, such a chaotic situation provides enough opportunity for various local political systems to emerge at the center of the political arena. This is why there were many alternative political systems offered during the 1999 general election.

The fact that the majority of Indonesians are Moslems has made Islam an important factor in Indonesian social and political life. According to a survey conducted by the PPIM (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat), Indonesian Moslems consider religion an important guiding force in their lives. Ninety-two percent said that religion had given direction to their lives. Seventy percent said they consider religion an important factor in making decisions regarding social and political issues. Because of this strong connection of Indonesian Moslems with their religion, religion is naturally considered an important *social capital* used by political parties to gain political support.

The adoption by radical Moslem movements of religious issues, such as the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah and the eradication of immorality, can be interpreted as a strategy to gain mass support. The use of religious issues is a rational choice in a religious society such as Indonesia. In contrast to the conventional theory that radical movements are a *social deviation*, politi-

cal theory sees these groups as interest groups doing political bargaining using religious issues.[21]

From the perspective of civil society, the religious radical movements are part of the *public sphere* as social groups voicing religious issues.[22] Seen in this context, their militant stance is in fact part of the social negotiation processes necessary in formulating a new social order.

Furthermore, during the New Order regime, there was only one party allowed to represent the Islamic community. The real Islamic political aspirations were severely repressed by the government. When government control was lifted, many Islamic groups attempting to channel real Moslem aspirations emerged.[23]

In this theoretical scheme, the life and death of a radical movement depend upon two things. First, they depend on how far the religious issues raised are in line with people's needs. Second, they depend strongly on how much support the movement could get from the people. If the people do not subscribe to its religious agendas, eventually the group will have to be dissolved.

Radicalism as cultural movements

A KPPSI (Komite Persiapan Penerapan Syari'at Islam or the Committee for the Preparation of Islamic Syariat Implementation) political activist in Makassar said: "We are satisfied now that the discourse of Islamic Shari'ah has been discussed openly, by its supporters or its opponents." For KPPSI members, the struggle to apply Islamic Shari'ah in Makassar was motivated by several factors. First, they were disappointed with the government's failure to address the national crisis. Such disappointment reminds them of better days, such as when Kahar Muzakar, whom they consider a hero, controlled Makassar, and life was peaceful and prosperous. For the people, it was because of Kahar's effort that the Islamic Shari'ah was applied in Makassar, particularly in areas dominated by Kahar's armed forces. Although Kahar was not a religious leader or *ulama*, he was well respected. With the help of some ulama such as K. H. Munawar Kholil and K. H. Ambo Dale, Kahar and his community were able to apply Shari'ah.

The second factor that influenced the Makassarese's struggle to implement Islamic Shari'ah was their disappointment with the stepping down of Habibie from his office as president. As a Makassarese and Celebes, Habibie was a symbol of progress and self-confidence in this region.

The third factor was the successful implementation of the Shari'ah in Aceh as part of its autonomy program. This inspired the Makassarese to continue their struggle, and other regions to follow suit. The KPPSI as a coalition of several Moslem organizations in Makassar copied Aceh's strategy of implementing the Shari'ah by first working toward autonomy.

Unlike other groups that wanted to apply the Shari'ah on a national level, the KPPSI in Makassar concentrated their struggle in regional parliament. This way they got significant support from both the legislative body and the masses.

The close link between regional autonomy and the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah indicates that there is a cultural identity aspect to the struggle. For the Makassarese, the implementation of the Shari'ah could help bridge the differences among existing ethnic groups, such as the Bugis, the Makassarese, the Mandar, and other ethnic groups in Celebes. Islam has proven to be an effective glue that could unite various ethnic groups.

Religious movements

Most Islamic radical movements were influenced by Salafi theology. The hard-line Islamic movements in Indonesia, for instance, claim to be followers of "*minhaju al-Salafi*" (the Path of Past People). Salafi theology was influenced by, first of all, the traditionalist philosophy of Ibn Taimiyah, which calls for a return to the sources of Islam and a rejection of cultural and religious infiltration. Salafi theology was also influenced by the reformist Wahabi movement in Saudi Arabia, which calls for the purification of Islamic teachings through the elimination of cultural influences and non-Islamic practices. Technological advancements were also initially rejected by the Wahabi movement.

In Indonesia, reformist Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Islamic Unity or Persis (Persatuan Islam), inspired by the Wahabi movement, are working toward the purification of Islamic practices. Muhammadiyah has launched a campaign to eliminate a "disease" called TBC (Tahayul [belief in mystical spirits], Bid'ah [heresy], and Churafat [unlawful rituals]) from Islamic practices in Indonesia.

Salafi theology lives on today in contemporary hard-line Islamic movements. The FKAWJ, for example, uses the books of Ibn Taymiya as the main textbooks in their pesantren. Even their manner of dress—the wearing of the *jubah* and scarf and the maintenance of a beard—are in keeping with the Salafi traditionalist approach.

The most fundamental characteristic of radical Islamic movements is that they value the literal meaning or *mazhab al-dhohiri* of texts, which rely more on the text itself than on contextual and textual interpretations. They believe that the implementation of this rule is an obligation for Moslems.

This textual or scripturalist approach applies also to their understanding of history and civilization. The Islamic golden ages, the era of the prophets, is considered the ideal prototype for the Islamic state.

The scripturalist approach is once again gaining support because people tend to turn to religion when they are in crisis.[24] In the case of Indonesia, the

economic, political, and social crises triggered by the change of regime has prompted many Moslems to look to religion for solutions. For such people, the scripturalist approach is the most ideal because it suits their simplistic desire for an escape from the harsh realities of existence through religious redemption. A literal understanding of scripture is, for them, the fastest and easiest way to this redemption.

Southeast Asia: The future model for Islam?

It has been noted by a number of observers that Islam in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, could become the *new picture* of Islam. So far, Islam has been identified with violence and terrorism. This is mainly due to the conflict and violence in the Middle East. Islam in Southeast Asia has a different face, one that is more tolerant. This type of Islam emerged from the pluralistic societies of Malaysia and Indonesia, where people of different cultures, religions, and beliefs coexist.

The place of women in Indonesia, for instance, is different from that in other Moslem states. Here more women than men visit mosques to pray and attend sermons. Probably the most obvious indicator of the more tolerant gender situation in Indonesia though, is the fact that a woman—Megawati Sukanoputri—has been elected president of this Islamic state.

Another facet of the "new Islam" that is evident in Indonesia is its apparent compatibility with democracy. After the fall of the militaristic and authoritarian New Order regime, there has been a clamor among the mostly Moslem citizenry for the establishment of democracy in the country. In fact a 2001 PPIM survey shows that 70 percent of Moslems in Indonesia prefer a democratic state.

However, this friendly, plural, and tolerant picture of Islam in Southeast Asia is often eclipsed by the activities of militant Moslem movements in the area. In fact because of these groups, Indonesia is often labeled a "nest of terrorism." The question is whether radicalism in Indonesia is a pervasive phenomenon or just confined to a small wave of Moslems. The fact is although they are few in number, the radicals are able to cause a large amount of damage, as evidenced by the bombing in Bali.

Islamic radical movements have also influenced the Indonesian political map. The fact that certain Islamic political parties are aligned with radical movements is certainly troubling. This means that the causes of the militant groups, such as the implementation of the Shari'ah, will continue to be part of public discourses among Indonesian Moslems, and militant behavior and activities will remain rampant in the country.

However, as long as the two big Islamic organizations in Indonesia—the Moslem theologian's party, Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah—are not disturbed, the radical movements can be contained. With their sub-

stantive mass base and cultural approach—NU with its ulama networks and pesantren, and Muhammadiyah with its education and social activities—these two organizations will continue to play an important role in Islamic development in Indonesia.

Islamic radicalism and democracy:
Concluding remark

When speaking about democracy in the context of the Moslem community, Islamic political culture, as Islamic radical groups believe, is considered by experts an important factor that cannot be ignored. This is because Islamic political culture is seen as an obstacle to the development of a democratic political culture, and this in turn obstructs the consolidation of democracy. However, there are other academics who believe that Islamic political orientation does not have a significant negative impact on democratic values. It is true that Islamic political culture is an important issue in the Moslem community, but it may differ from one Moslem community to the other.

Islamic radical groups are convinced that Islam and democracy are two different "creatures," which occur independently of one another. As a result, according to these groups, Islam will never exist side by side with democracy. They believe that the higher the level of Islamization in a community, the less likely patterns of democracy will be found in that community. Because of this conflict between democratic and Islamic attitudes, democracy is not generally a characteristic of Moslem communities. Even if attempts are made to apply democracy in these communities, it will never flourish.

Islam is a multidimensional religion. Some understand that it constitutes a set of beliefs and membership in a community. According to this understanding, Islam includes a belief in God, acknowledgment of Muhammad as the final Prophet, and the adoption of particular rituals, Islamic social activities, and an Islamic political orientation, included in a set of political attitudes that—using a general term—we call in this paper Islamic radicalism. There is an Islamic social bond that embraces a variety of activities such as being a member of an organization, or an Islamic community organization, both at the national and the local levels. This kind of membership is known as a network of Islamic civic engagement.

Interpersonal trust is an important element that is required if Islamic radicalism and democracy are to be compatible. It is believed to be a determining variable in the stability of democracy. This means that democratic instability in the Moslem community may be caused by a low level of interpersonal trust. Among members of Islamic radical groups in Indonesia it seems that there is quite a strong Christian and Jewish phobia.

In the context of Islamic radicalism, trust is obviously defined as trust

toward non-Moslem groups rather than trust toward other people in general. A large number of members of Islamic radical groups are in fact more sensitive toward the issue of interpersonal trust.

Tolerance is another component of a democratic culture, and is a defining factor in the creation of democratic consolidation. As already mentioned elsewhere in the study, some scholars argue that Islam and Christianity are basically intolerant religions. Conflict between the two has become natural law. If an intolerant attitude is strongly linked with Islamic radicalism, then it is almost certain that the religiosity of a Moslem radical will develop an intolerant attitude toward Christians.

The low level of tolerance among Islamic radical groups in Indonesia can be seen also from their struggle to formalize Shari'ah law (Islamic laws) in the country. These groups insist that Moslems should practice only Islamic laws, especially capital laws, ignoring other faiths.

This paper comes to the conclusion that Islamic radicalism has a significant and negative correlation with a tolerant attitude toward democracy. To what extent does the emergence of Islamic radicalism influence the stability of democracy? Intolerance, fanaticism, absolutism, and Islamism can encourage people who firmly uphold their principles to carry out actions that threaten democratic stability. The extent to which intolerant Islamic radical groups do this strongly influences the consolidation of democracy. The idea that Islam has a negative correlation with democracy and with democratic consolidation can be evaluated from this angle.

It is important to note that in the case of Indonesian Moslems, Islamic radicalism is not identical to Islam. On the whole, Indonesian Moslems have a neutral attitude toward the issue of Islam versus democracy. Moreover, radicalism is not identical to the Islam depicted by Indonesian Moslems. What we found in Indonesia is a different picture; a large number of Moslems have positive ideas regarding democratic values. Islam helps Indonesian Moslems participate in the political process and support democracy. Islam helps create harmony between Moslem citizens and the democratic system as a whole, a defining factor in the consolidation of democracy. This can be seen in the success of the first ever direct presidential election in 2004. Indonesian Moslems have proven that Islam is compatible with democracy in practice. Moreover, they also provide a confident picture that Islamic radicalism is not the mainstream of Islam in Indonesia.

Endnotes

2 According to a PPIM survey, Indonesia is going through a massive santrinization process. This is indicated by the survey results, which shows that 82 percent of Moslems in the country are dutifully praying five times daily, and 90 percent fast during Ramadhan. From "Makin Salah Makin Curiga," *Tempo*, December 29, 2001.

3 Wuthnow, Robert, *Rediscovering the Sacred: Perspective on Religion in Contemporary Society*, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1992, pp. 1-5.

4 Marty, Martin E. and R. Scott Appleby, editors, *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 9.

5 Esposito, John L., *Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*

6 For a complete discussion of DI/TII, see C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981.

7 Ibid.

8 PBB and Pemda DKI Jakarta government, "Radikalisme Agama dan Perubahan Sosial di DKI Jakarta," Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya, UIN Jakarta, h. 22. This explanation was based on interviews with K. H. Misbahul Anam, former secretary and founder of the FPI.

9 Riziq Syihab, Habib, *Dialog Piagam Jakarta: Kumpulan Jawaban Seputar Keraguan Penegakan Syariat Islam di Indonesia*, Jakarta: PIS, 2000.

10 PBB and Pemda DKI Jakarta, h. 23.

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LEARNING A TRADE FOR LIFE? COMMERCIALIZED CRAFT AND CHILD LABOR IN A NORTHERN VIETNAMESE VILLAGE[1]
Nguyen Van Chinh

Introduction

Much has been said about the sad fact that children in the developing world are often made to work in small "sweatshops" where they are offered cheap wages or are taken in as apprentices. Their work is usually considered "supplementary" and is sometimes unpaid, and whatever meager wages they receive often go directly to their parents or relatives. Little attention, however, has been given to changes in the organization of production in small-scale industries, the dynamic interrelation between the labor market, socio-economic changes and local responses to such changes, and how they affect children's work. This is perhaps partly due to the lack of academic interest in the linkage between historical analyses and empirical observations on the economic role of children.

The recent changes of agrarian regime in rural Vietnam offer a unique opportunity to look at rural children's work under the conditions of a changing economic system. These changes have freed peasant households from collective constraints and enabled them to manage their allotted land, while a free labor market has emerged with the undesirable effects of rural unemployment. Meanwhile rural industries have fast developed, with products not only for domestic consumption but also for lucrative export markets.

This paper aims to examine children's involvement in the wood trade, particularly wood carving, a traditional craft in Giao Village in Hai Duong province, northern Vietnam. It suggests that the nature of children's work has changed since the wood trade became more commercialized with the emergence of entrepreneurs and the contracting-out system. The examination will concentrate on production organization, the position of child workers, and their working conditions and earnings. The paper will try to provide an understanding of different aspects of children's role in small rural industries, viewed from a three-way relationship between child woodworkers and their parents and employers.

On becoming a commercialized craft

The wood trade before the economic reforms of 1986

Although wood carving has a long history in Giao Village, dating back several hundreds years, its production methods did not change much until recently.

In the past, wood carvers usually worked far from home. They were organized into different work teams, known as *phuong* or *hiep tho* (guild or association) including a foreman (*tho ca*), craftsmen (*tho ban*), and a few trainee assistants, called *pho nho* (little workers). The foreman was responsible for all the activities of his group: finding jobs, organizing the production, and dealing with all the problems related to the workplace. Generally, such an organization was suitable for mobile work in which the wood carvers only sold their skilled labor and rarely produced works for sale.

While at work, workers were under the foreman's supervision. Each group of woodworkers normally consisted of carvers (*tho cham*) and carpenters (*tho long*) whose duty was to assemble carved objects into finished products. Assistants were young trainees, often the sons of the foreman or fellow workers who did odd jobs such as shopping and cooking and sometime took part in simple tasks. Because these "odd jobs" were relatively heavy, the assistants were mostly older children from fourteen years upwards. They were not paid for their work, but were given daily meals and sometimes a little bonus.

In the past, the craftsmen of Giao Village usually came home on harvests and special occasions such as the Tet spring holiday.[2] They were normally paid on a daily basis or for pieces of work, depending on the verbal agreement between the foreman and the employer. Earnings from woodwork were mainly used to support the family. There were no women involved in this work.

Life histories show that the wood trade stagnated somewhat during the two wars against the Japanese and the French (1943 to 54), and started to decline afterward. The period of stagnation from 1956 to 1980 was caused by various factors. As reported, there was almost no demand for wooden carved products in this period. The land reform launched in the village during 1955 to 56 and later, in 1958, the process of collectivization, brought about great changes in people's lives. Public constructions were called off, rich families were wiped out, and religious activities were curtailed or prohibited. Public works of a religious character concerning communal houses, pagodas, and temples were negligible.

While the wood carving products lost their market, the woodworkers themselves were regarded as subjects that needed to be reeducated. According to the socialist reformers, since artisans generally had liberal attitudes and

were inclined toward private ownership, they should be put under the overall administration of the cooperatives and the commune committee.[3] Under the Communist Party's guideline, the artisans were advised to join the collective production teams where they worked as non-farm workers in the framework of agricultural cooperatives, producing construction materials, building public works, and sharing the co-op's crops.

Economic reforms and the revival of the wood trade

The revival of the wood trade in Giao Village was brought about by socioeconomic changes in northern Vietnam, starting with the severe crisis of the collective economy, which led to the initial reforms in agriculture (1979 to 1985). Economic difficulties also led to a relaxation of labor management; peasants were allowed to work outside the co-op, particularly in non-farm sectors. In addition, low returns from collective farming induced former woodworkers to return to their own craft in order to supplement their meager incomes.[4] Moreover, the demand for wooden furniture was also rising as a result of the expansion of the domestic market after the liberation of the South in 1975.

The restoration of the wood trade in Giao Village can be divided into two stages: the period of recovery (1979 to 1989) and the period of consolidation (1990 to the present).

In the early 1980s, some of the villagers made use of their free time to produce and sell such household furniture as beds, cupboards, tables, and chairs. The bestseller at the time was a traditional-style cupboard decorated with sophisticated carvings—a status symbol in previous times. For only a couple of years, households producing and selling wooden furniture became wealthy quite quickly. Despite the persistent policies against family crafts, wood workshops continued to expand and many parents sent their children to them for apprenticeship, hoping that they would help improve the household income.

As of 1995, data obtained from my village survey reveals that 341 of 376 households had one or more members involved in the wood trade. There were 524 workers earning regular wages in woodwork, of whom 17 percent were children under sixteen years and 10 percent were female workers.[5] Fifty-four percent of the wood workforce worked far from home. My survey shows that about 78 percent of migrants from Giao Village worked in Ho Chi Minh City and in other southern provinces, some 1,700 kilometers from home. The rest of the migrants worked in Hanoi and in the northern provinces.

The organization of production in the wood trade of Giao Village can be categorized into three major patterns, as follows:

1. Independent artisans who worked on their own, as mobile workers or at home, producing goods on direct order from local clients
2. Household-based workshops, which mainly used the family labor force, subcontracting and/or producing goods for sale
3. Enterprises, which mainly used hired laborers, producing goods for domestic and export markets

In the first two types of production, the artisans were still basically farmers who did woodwork to supplement their household incomes. They bought materials, used their own labor force, and marketed their own products. At peak demands, they might hire extra hands or subcontract elsewhere, but this rarely occurred. Production was usually small-scale. Labor demand was limited, and so was capital. Lacking capital, independent artisans preferred direct orders from their clients who were willing to pay a certain amount in advance; the rest of the payment would be given to them after the contract was finished.

The third form of production emerged in the early 1990s, with the appearance of the "merchant-entrepreneurs" who introduced the woodcraft of Giao Village to a larger market. It was apparent that mobility had been an important factor in the woodcraft industry since the country's economy was shifted to a market mechanism. Due to the relaxation of state control over the private economic sector in rural areas, some craftsmen took the chance to expand their production, aimed at manufacturing high-quality products to meet the increasing needs of the newly rich, tourists, and exporters, and soon became entrepreneurs themselves.[6] They often set up their workshops in the village and hired local carvers. Because their products were mainly sold in the urban areas, they usually established extra facilities there and brought in workers from the village. This created a new situation in the labor market regarding wood products. By setting up a "putting out" system in the village, an entrepreneur could mobilize a large number of workers at short notice and at wages lower than those offered in the urban areas. Recently, some foreign investors and state enterprises started to cooperate with village entrepreneurs in producing and exporting carved wooden products. In this process, entrepreneurs have become the intermediaries between investors/exporters and village workers. Wood workshops established in the big cities (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City) with foreign capital investment attracted an increasing number of young carvers from Giao Village because of the high wages they paid.[7] Entrepreneurs from the village recruited carvers (adults and children) to work for their urban workshops. Obviously, the emergence of entrepreneurs in the wood trade changed the production patterns of carved wooden furniture in Giao Village, increasing the need for the woodworkers' seasonal migration and children's involvement in the trade.

Most entrepreneurs involved in the wood carving industry of Giao

Village were former foremen although most were still relatively young, just between twenty-five and thirty-five. An influential foreman usually started his business by establishing his own workshop, hiring workers, recruiting trainees, and subcontracting. After some time, he would work directly for the investors/exporters and build up his agents' network in the cities. Since they had to manage workshops both in the city and in the village, they hired foremen who took on the role of employer/entrepreneur.

As of 1995, there were eight entrepreneurs who had established good connections between the wood workshops in Giao Village and those in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Many independent artisans and household-based workshops in the village received subcontracts from these eight enterprises and their products were transported to the cities for sale and export. A good number of village woodworkers were also recruited by these entrepreneurs to work for their shops in the cities.

The commercialization of the wood trade brought about significant changes in production relationships.

First, instead of sticking to the old-fashioned production methods involving independent workers, the wood carving manufacturers began seeking higher commercial profit by establishing close links between the village and the cities, between the wood workshops owned by peasant households and the dynamic market at the national and international levels. In a sense the family craft came under the influence of various market forces such as capital, materials, investors, and exporters.

Second, the artisans became part of the cycle of commercialized production. The mobile groups of woodworkers headed by the foremen were now no longer active. The foremen themselves became employees working for entrepreneurs. They were either hired to work directly in the entrepreneur's workshops or were subcontracted and hired their own workers, usually freelance and female workers, and particularly young trainees at cheap wages.

Third, the production system of the wood trade became more fragmented with the introduction of various types of manufacturing methods and labor relations. The trade gained greater dynamism due to the expansion of family enterprises and export/import activities. Attractive wages in the wood trade and its contract putting-out system provided farming individuals and their children opportunities to enter the employment market. And one could assume that children's exploitation in these types of work might be less flagrant than in household-based productions.

Although the entrepreneurship system assumed increasing importance in the wood sector, the running of businesses was mainly based on family ties. This was particularly true in the management system of small industries in rural areas where relatives were widely employed in the entrepreneurs' business. For instance, woodworkers and brokers working for an enterprise came mainly from the ranks of paternal or maternal relatives closely related

to the employer while the supervisor at the workshop normally was the employer's own brother or sister. In many cases, entrepreneurs ran their business through the kinship network. Trusted relatives were normally authorized to manage the production at the village workshops on behalf of the employer who was living in Ho Chi Minh City; they took on certain tasks such as subcontracting, collecting and transporting goods, and paying workers. Many parents wanted to send their children to work under the supervision of the foreman belonging to the same lineage, who according to them, were more reliable.

Such kinship-oriented relations were not only based on mutual trust but also had an economic motive. Workers owed their jobs to their entrepreneurial relatives, who were their employers. These, in turn, made use of this kinship relation for their business advantage. During my field study at Giao, I often observed how workers who were relatives of the employer were not paid their wages on time. As a rule, employers usually paid a certain amount in advance and paid the rest after the goods had been sold out. This practice brought obvious advantages to the employers. Instead of borrowing money from the bank, they could take advantage of pending workers' wages for intensive investment. And since these workers were more or less closely tied with their employers, they hardly complained. In fact the woodworkers of Giao Village mentioned two kinds of wages: *tien tuoi* (fresh/quick money) and *tien heo* (withering/slow money). Those workers who were prepared to wait until the products were sold would receive full payment, and those who wanted to be paid quickly would get only part of the amount. It is interesting to add that most of the other traders who sold or offered basic necessities and services also depended heavily on wages from the wood trade. Villagers bought things on credit and paid their debts after receiving wages from the employers.

Wages were influenced by the agricultural cycle as well. Between harvests the pay was normally lower, particularly for unskilled workers, because the labor supply was higher than the demand.

Woodworkers' wages were often paid on a daily basis or per job, depending on the agreement between employer and worker. However, wage rates were based on the worker's skill level and the jobs done. Carvers capable of creating good designs and working on complicated objects such as statues and pictures got the highest wages. Those who worked as refiners and varnishers got lower pay, but a little higher than those assembling the carved objects into the final products. In general, wage rates in urban workshops were higher, ranging from 15,000 to 75,000 dong per day, depending on the nature of the job. Cash was preferred but wages were also paid in kind, often consumer goods such as TV sets, cassette players, bicycles, motorbikes, wood materials, etc.

Hardwoods such as *po-mu* (*forkieniahodginisii*), *trac* (*Delbergia cochinchinemsis*),

mun (ebony wood), and *lim* (*Erithlophreum fordiio*), were the main material used for wood carving. The exploitation and distribution of these kinds of wood were under strict control of the state and therefore, they were expensive and scarce. Most of the wood enterprises in Giao Village used wood from unofficial sources in the Northern Uplands, the Central Highland, Laos, and Cambodia. It was difficult to estimate the quantity of wood consumed by wood workshops in Giao Village. Estimates based on the wood consumption of ten village workshops suggest that each shop used on average 20 cubic meters of hardwood and 60 cubic meters of normal wood per year.

As mentioned previously, the main wood carving products in the past were items of worship (couplets, boards inscribed with Chinese characters, frescoes, statues) and household furniture (sideboards, wardrobes, carved beds, etc.). At present, besides these traditional types, woodcutting pictures, fine art statues, house decorations, and gifts are also being produced en masse. Most carved objects made in the village are transported to shops in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, where they are shipped to places such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore.

While the market for wooden fine arts articles has expanded rather rapidly, carving techniques remain almost unchanged. Only a few modern instruments have added to the old craft such as frame saws, polishing and varnishing machines, and glues.

A drastic change in the wood trade concerns its labor force. In the past, only male members from a small number of village households were engaged in woodwork. Nowadays, about 90 percent of all households are involved in the wood trade, making up two-thirds of the total village labor force, among them many females and children.

In brief, wood carving in Giao Village has evolved in a haphazard manner over the past five decades. It almost disappeared under the collective regime (1958 to 1979), gradually recovered in the pre-economic reform period (1980 to 1985), and has developed strongly ever since. Changes in the wood trade could be seen in such aspects as the manufacturing scale, production organization, and the nature of labor relations. At present the woodcraft industry is strongly dependent on the emerging class of entrepreneurs who seek to capture larger markets both here and abroad. And while village workshops have started to subcontract with urban enterprises, many peasants still regard these activities as second only in importance to farming.

The revival and development of woodcraft were positive responses of the peasants to the policy of decollectivization, in coping with the scarcity of productive resources, low returns from farming, and underemployment. One can assume that woodcraft has created more employment opportunities, allowing farming households to shift to non-farm work for additional sources of income and consequently allowing the household labor force to maximize its cash earnings.

It should, however, be noted that the case of Giao Village is not unique. While Giao villagers are proud of their long-standing woodcraft tradition, wooden furniture manufacturing is also popular in many surrounding villages, which together with Giao form an important center of the wooden furniture industry in the Red River Delta. With so many players in the woodcraft game, pressure is bound to rise; the competition has become fiercer, challenged further by the whims of market mechanisms. In this context a study of child labor in Giao Village should not be separated from the larger context of the Red River Delta.

Child employment in the wood trade

In terms of quantity

As discussed previously, the production of carved wooden furniture was carried out in various ways, by independent artisans, households, and enterprises. In reality, these types of production were fraught with uncertainties. Some family enterprises could have, at their peak, twenty or more workers but these could suddenly decide to leave, in which case the workshop would have to be closed. The vagaries of the wood trade largely depended on hardwood supplies, wooden furniture export markets, and tax policies rather than the labor supply. Because of this, most households involved in woodwork kept their rice fields and continued to regard woodwork as of secondary importance to farming. Uncertainty in the manufacturing organization and the mobility of woodworkers made the survey of working children in this trade more difficult. In order to understand the extent and nature of children's economic activities in the wood trade, I conventionally grouped the children doing woodwork into two main categories for observation: group one included those children who worked within the household, under the direct supervision of their family members; and group two was made up of children working in enterprises and workshops owned by employers/entrepreneurs.

Child workers in household-based workshops

After having obtained general information from the household survey, a group of thirty-six households doing woodwork independently or taking subcontracts from their entrepreneurs was selected for an intensive examination of their children's involvement in woodwork. Seventy-three children ages eight to fifteen living and working in these households were interviewed. The findings indicate that only forty-two children (57 percent) out of the seventy-three interviewed were involved regularly in their households' woodwork. Of these, 12 percent were female. About 48 percent of

child workers in these household-based shops worked part-time outside school hours and 52 percent worked full-time. Only a small number (2 percent) of children who started their working life from the ages of eight to ten began with simple tasks for a few hours per day. Almost all children began to take part in the wood trade as trainees at the age of eleven or twelve while spending half a day in school. It is worth noting that 72 percent of children ages thirteen and fourteen started as full-time workers while 28 percent were still spending half a day at school.

The findings show a considerable variation between girls and boys in the extent of their involvement in woodwork. Only a small number of girls were working regularly in workshops while none of them were full-time workers at home. Girls started to learn the trade at the ages of thirteen and fourteen while boys began earlier, most often between ten and twelve. When they reached fifteen, all boys were committed to take part, part-time or full-time, in woodwork.

Child woodworkers in entrepreneur-owned workshops

The extent and nature of children's work at workshops owned by entrepreneurs differed from that at household-based workshops. In the evelen workshops surveyed, we found eighty-one children under sixteen years of age who were regular workers, making up 60 percent of the entire workforce of the shops. Most were officially registered as "trainees." Over 60 percent of those aged between eight and fifteen worked full-time, and 64 percent of these were unpaid workers. About 36 percent of child workers who had been working in these manufacturing units for more than two years were paid, mostly in the form of allowances or bonuses. Of the total number of working children, 23 percent were girls. The children who came from outside the village made up 42 percent.

The above figures give a general view of the situation of working children, which may help elucidate the nature of their work in the wood sector. At the village level, my own survey of 376 households in 1995 indicates that a total of 524 persons were working in the wood trade and earning regular wages; 17 percent of these were children under sixteen years of age and 10 percent were female workers. Only those who had held a stable job in the wood trade for six months or longer in 1995 were included in the survey; children working in unpaid or underpaid jobs and those working within their households were not included. My own estimate based on the household survey is that about 300 children under sixteen were working as apprentices in the village. One-third of these came from outside the village. If we take all these children into account, working children under sixteen made up 40 percent of the workforce in the wood sector of the entire village.

In terms of education, findings in both groups reveal that half of the working children between ages eight and fifteen were no longer attending school. However, it should be noted that a majority of children working at their household-based shops were still attending school while 60 percent of working children in entrepreneur-owned shops did not go to school. At the age of fifteen, 82 percent of working children in both sectors had left school for good.

In addition to this, the survey findings further indicate that while 100 percent of working children had attended primary school, none of them finished the secondary level. Those who finished the primary level tended to continue in the wood trade rather than enter the higher levels of secondary school.

By categorizing child labor in the wood trade into two specific groups: (1) children working under parental supervision in household-based workshops and (2) children working under their employers' supervision in private enterprises, we could conduct a closer examination of such issues as job motivation, social relations at work, working hours, and wages. This is vital in understanding the nature of children's work.

In terms of working hours, my observation shows that those children who worked under their family's supervision did not perform as well as those who worked in an entrepreneur-owned workshop. Children working at home often took breaks at will and were often distracted by their domestic surroundings. Many parents complained that the children working at home made little progress in the development of skills. In their opinion, to become a good carver, an apprentice should work under the supervision of a serious foreman or employer who can enforce discipline. At the eleven workshops surveyed, the average work time was about ten hours per day. A work day lasted from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m. but children normally started a bit earlier and worked later because they had to prepare the work site in the morning and tidy up after work. Lunch break was between 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. At work, children were not allowed to take breaks without permission. Some of them told me they had to learn how to control their bladders for several hours while working so that their supervisors would not scold them for taking too many trips to the toilet.

At household work sites, work time was no less than ten hours on average. Children were also made to work at night, more often in this type of production than in private enterprises, where children were only asked to take the night shift during peak periods.

The night shift normally lasted from 7 p.m. until 11 p.m., sometimes longer. During my stay in the village, I observed that at peak periods, some children worked till 2 a.m. Some tasks regarded as light work, such as polishing, were often done at night. It was common to see children falling asleep during working hours.

Children between the ages of eight and ten, however, were rarely placed on the night shift. At this age, they still spent half a day at school. They were, however, encouraged to do woodwork because, as their parents put it: "At least they will have something to do instead of playing under the sun without supervision." Contrary to their parents' view, children at this age could not care less. Sometimes they would just leave their work to play games and most of them got punished for their misbehavior.

Girl workers were not highly valued. They were usually assigned tasks that were regarded as "extras." Most of them reported they had to fight with their parents so they will be allowed to learn the trade. The girls were in fact often interrupted from their woodwork and asked to do household chores or to help on the farm while the boys were left alone. One possible reason the girls were made to spend less time on woodwork than the boys was the parents expected more earnings from the sons rather than the daughters. Also, most parents believed in the local proverb, "A daughter is someone else's child," meaning eventually her training would benefit her husband's family, not her own. They thus refused to invest in their daughters' apprenticeship. Furthermore, a daughter's place, for most villagers, was at her mother's side, helping with household chores. Girls who left home to work gained a bad reputation.

A close examination of the working hours of child workers based on periodic visits and twenty-four-hour recalls reveals more details of their working conditions.[8] There was no significant difference in work time among children of various ages, although younger children between eight and twelve worked a little less than the older children. Full-time child workers worked an average of 67.2 hours per week for boys and 53 hours per week for girls. For those who worked part-time, their average work time was 25.5 hours for boys and 23 hours for girls per week.

Child workers had no periodic holidays. They only took days off when they were sick, or on important family occasions and feasts such as the Tet holiday.[9] However, working days were sometimes cancelled for lack of materials or because of slow sales. On these days, child workers were allowed to "relax." During harvest time in June (summer crop) and October (winter crop), part-time workers and girls were released from woodwork to help in the field.

Child woodworkers, particularly boys, preferred to spend their free time on karaoke, billiards, electronic games, gambling, and happy hours in "village bars." Actually, such forms of entertainment as the karaoke, electronic games, and billiards were introduced only recently, after the wood trade had brought a degree of prosperity to the village. These were mainly aimed at village youths who worked in the city and spent their holidays at home.

Work relations

Earlier in this paper, I discussed the hierarchical relations in the wood trade, according to which woodworkers were divided into three categories: foremen, workers, and trainee assistants. I also pointed out that the emergence of entrepreneurs has changed the labor relations in wooden furniture manufacturing. In the past, wood carvers worked on direct orders from their customers and basically treated each other as colleagues. Today, standing between workers and customers are the brokers who actually control the whole business. From this starting point, I will further delve into the position of child workers in the wood trade.

At the outset, we should make clear that there are two kinds of woodworkers doing different jobs. Tho cham create the carved objects and tho long assemble these to make a complete product. Generally speaking, about 20 percent of woodworkers work as assemblers. However, all children working in the wood sector were found to be carvers. Carpentry was not attractive for them because the work was heavier and wages were lower.

The main process of wood carving consists of wood selecting, designing, refining, polishing, and varnishing. At the time of my survey, most child workers were only involved in refining and polishing. Normally, the foreman would design the products first and the child workers would then refine them. Only a small number of child workers, mainly boys at the ages of thirteen to fifteen, were able to carve such complicated objects as statues and woodcut pictures. As a rule, those who could make designs independently were highly regarded by their fellow workers and got regular pay. Refiners and polishers, regardless of their age, were considered assistant workers and had lower pay. Similarly, the foreman's qualification depended entirely on his skills, so that a highly skilled worker at the age of sixteen or seventeen could become a well-paid foreman. A striking feature of wood carving was that a foreman needed a number of assistants to do such tasks as refining and polishing because these took a lot of time and patience. This explains why there were so many trainee assistants at wood carving workshops.

The woodworkers' wage allocation based on degree of skill has important implications regarding labor relations in the wood trade. In many household shops, the head of the household formally ran the wood business but because he or she was not a wood carver, he/she in fact only worked as an assistant for his/her "little" son or daughter who knew how to carve. In case the child left the household and went to work for others, the household shop would have to shut down. Generally, children who worked for their households contributed directly to household incomes but were not paid. In order to keep the children working at home, parents often provided them with incentives such as pocket money, bonuses, and new clothes. Unfortu-

nately, teenage workers usually chose to work away from home where they could get paid properly and enjoy more freedom.

Although one may see a fusion of friendship and kinship ties at work, the relationship between the child worker and the employer often went beyond these. One can say it was one between labor and capital, as found elsewhere in Asia.[10]

Generally speaking, child workers employed in workshops were under the direct supervision of a foreman/master. As assistant workers, they were assigned to do certain tasks, from simple chores to more complicated work. In the early stages of their apprenticeship, they performed those tasks usually done by unskilled laborers. For example, after carving an object, the foreman needed someone to refine and polish it with care, and a child assistant did this. As an employee himself, the master did not control assistants on his own. He was however authorized to use assistant workers for a particular job. In terms of labor management, both master and employer controlled the children. These two persons were entitled to punish trainees if they made mistakes or misbehaved. Working children told me that when they did something wrong, they would leave the work site quietly and come back later with a sponsor who would apologize or indemnify the employer for any material loss or damage.

The recruitment of trainee assistants was done through family relations or other acquaintances. There were no official working regulations. Agreements on the working conditions of children were often made between employers/masters and the parents. Such relations were built on trust and moral rules rather than legal regulations, and they were considered sufficient guarantee for children to work. Employers would not accept children without sponsors because they had to make sure trainees who came from afar were reliable enough to be allowed to stay in their house for long periods.

Working children from outside the village were rather vulnerable; living away from home, they became totally dependent on their employers. I often observed that these children tried their best to please their master and employer. They worked hard, hoping that after a few years of training, they would become carvers and earn a living for themselves. In confidential talks with employers, I was often told that they taught children not only carving skills but also "the ways of real men." This, however, could easily lead to abuse because "turning children into real men" might mean forcing them to do all kinds of tasks outside woodwork, such as running household chores, taking care of their bosses' young children, and farming.

In brief, labor relations in the wood trade were not based on work alone. Other factors, such as kinship and acquaintance, and relationships between master and learner, employer and employee, played an important role, and sometimes led to abuse. Additionally, child workers, regardless of their

skills, were always treated as premature kids. They were called *pho nho* (little workers), the lowest rank in the hierarchy of the wood trade. This implies that child workers could not expect to receive the same treatment as their adult workmates.

Working for wages

Apart from those children who worked in their households as unpaid workers, the percentage of child workers actually paid by their employers in the eleven workshops surveyed was relatively low, only about 36 percent of the total number of working children. The majority of these children worked as unpaid trainees.

For those children who worked for wages, their earning rates varied considerably, depending on their skill levels and the quality of the products they made. In principle, wages could be paid on a daily basis or per piece of work but generally employers preferred to pay on a daily basis because, in their opinion, this was a way of ensuring the good quality of the work done. The child workers had no choice but to accept the employer's terms.

A child woodworker of fourteen to fifteen years of age who worked as designer/refiner could earn an average wage of 20,000 dong per work-day, which was about two thirds of the wage of an adult doing the same job. Trainees with experience of two or more years in woodwork earned about 10,000 dong per day, while female workers who did polishing jobs earned about 7,000 dong per day. Because wage rates did not depend on age but on skill, adult workers who did simple tasks might get lower wages than skilled child workers.

As usual, trainee assistants were unpaid workers, but they were also offered small amounts of cash as bonuses on special occasions, especially when sales were good.

The children had no power at all to negotiate about their position as employees. Such issues as wage rates, forms of payment, and working conditions were often discussed by their parents/sponsors and prospective employers. In order to avoid a bad reputation as a child exploiter, employers did not directly negotiate with the working children. Both parents and employers preferred that wages be paid directly to the former. Apart from some advance payment, employers normally retained the rest of the children's wages for their business until the end of the year. Meanwhile parents exerted direct control over their children's wages.

The fact remains that most working children wanted to get paid directly. Some of them reported they sometimes had to use their own "weapons" to get part of their wage. One key informant told me that normally he dared not ask his parents for money, but once he was sent to work away from home under the conditions agreed upon by his parents and employer,

he would ask the latter for some advances. If this demand was not met, he would leave the workshop or refuse to get up from bed. Though this ruse often gained him little success, it reflected well the position of working children and their labor relationships in the woodwork sector.

During my stay in the village, I heard stories of apprentices who sought a freelance night job elsewhere to earn some pocket money. This was, however, not a common occurrence. Most child workers worked hard for their masters in the hope of becoming a real carver after three or four years of training. It was obvious that obtaining professional skills to earn a living was the most important thing for the children (and their parents) because they could not expect to learn these skills at school or on the farm. For many families in the village, the wood trade represented a way to achieve prosperity. This aspiration was reflected in the children's ideas on how to spend their earnings. Based on my detailed notes from confidential talks with working children, 83 percent of children working in the eleven surveyed wood workshops said they would keep part of their earnings for themselves, and only 3 percent said they would keep it all. Fifty-nine percent said they wanted to contribute money to their parents' plans to build a new house or to improve home comforts (such things as a television set, cassette player, or motorbike); 26 percent (42 percent of girls) wanted to spend money on new clothes, shoes, and good food; 5 percent (only boys) wished to spend their earnings on snacks, travel, and their friends. Most boys were relatively ambitious, wanting to spend their earnings on "big things" like a house and expensive consumer goods, while girls were less ambitious, saying they just wanted to keep the money for themselves.

Children's ideas on how to spend their earnings offer interesting insights into their motivation in seeking work. They thought little about "earning a bowl of rice" but more about improving their living conditions. For some of them, earning money to cover the cost of their daily meals was of primary concern. There is ample evidence that children's earnings played a central role in changing the economic situation of individual households. Villagers often mentioned children's employment in the wood trade as a source of envy. Competition among villagers to improve their living standards and the attraction of a new lifestyle encouraged both parents and their children to seek employment in the market economy, in this case in wood workshops.

Although children rarely mentioned how they spent their money, my observations indicate that boys spent their money on gambling, smoking, drinking, snacks, and other forms of entertainment (karaoke, cinema, etc.) Girls preferred to spend money on new shoes, clothes, and school expenses. Some of them bought livestock but many girls complained that their parents just took their chickens, ducks, geese, and pigs and never paid them back in cash.[11]

Job mobility

I previously discussed the seasonal migration of male craftsmen in Giao Village. It was the foreman/entrepreneur who played an important role in linking the rural craftsmen with the labor market in urban settings. This was also true for child workers engaged in the woodcraft industry. However, while adult workers were attracted to the urban workshops because these offered higher wages, the mobility of child workers was more complex. As far as geographical mobility was concerned, we could distinguish two different flows of children's migration: the first involved children who moved into the village for apprenticeship; and the second those who moved out of the village to urban wood workshops. Viewed from the perspective of job mobility, we could see an upward direction among working children. They generally moved from the status of apprentices to that of wageworkers, and after a training period in the village, they could be employed away from home.

Regarding the flow of in-migration, my survey of the village wood workshops indicates that 42 percent of apprentices were from outside the village. Most of them came from the surrounding districts of Hai Hung province, but also from neighboring provinces such as Ha Bac, Hai Phong, and the northern mountainous provinces of Lang Son and Lai Chau. Surprisingly, some children from remote southern provinces such as Gia Lai and Lam Dong were also sent to the village to learn the trade.

Most working children who moved into the village for apprenticeship were from peasant families. They were sent directly to the village workshops through the network of acquaintances and relatives. Some trainees were picked out by fine-art wood galleries to work for them after training. There were no children who came to the village in search of jobs on their own. Only a few girls came from outside the village for training. Most of these girls were between twelve and sixteen and all of them had stopped going to school.

While child migrants moved into the village for apprenticeship, others moved out of the village to work for wages. My village survey in 1995 indicates that about 17 percent of woodworkers who seasonally migrated to work elsewhere were children under sixteen years of age. In 1996 to 1997, I visited urban wood workshops set up by the entrepreneurs from Giao Village in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to get more insight into the life and work of child workers there.

There were less children below the age of fifteen who were moving out of the village to work for urban workshops than those who were moving into the village for apprenticeship. Most children recruited to work in urban workshops had to spend some years as trainees in the village workshops before they could become qualified to work for wages. Only a few girl workers were working in urban workshops. One reason for this was the

parents' desire to keep their daughters at home to enhance the prospects of their marriage. Many foremen told me that since living costs in the city were quite high, they had to limit the number of child workers in their workshops. But there were still child workers under sixteen working in the city. There were two types of working children who migrated from the village to urban shops. The first group consisted of paid child workers who were recruited through verbal contracts between the foremen/employers and the parents. The second group included unpaid child workers still working as trainees. They were brought to the city by their masters who took care of their living expenses but did not pay them wages.

Like in their home village, the "little workers" in these urban shops were mainly assigned such tasks as refining and polishing carved objects. They ate and slept right at the work site, usually in temporary shacks rented from the local owners. Employers'/masters' wives often cooked for the entire group. Food costs were normally deducted from the workers' wages.

The employers I talked to often complained about child workers under their responsibility. They said it took a lot of effort to manage them, and there were always professional risks such as sickness, which could be costly. On the other hand, the children did not seem to worry much about the "money first" principle. Rather it was exciting for them to work in the city, far from parental control. They were proud of their ruses to press their employers for advance payments so they could enjoy themselves, threatening to go away or work elsewhere if their demands were not met. This was in line with their parents' complaints that children often neglected to send money home and sometimes even returned home with nothing but debts. There was no doubt a large number of child workers moving between jobs. C. Nardinelli's study assumes that children migrated to those areas where they were offered the highest wages.[12] However, we should add that working in the urban setting was an attraction in itself for many young workers. Besides being attracted by the wage rates, which were normally much higher than those in the village, children also wanted to experience the excitements of the city. It was not uncommon for them not to tell their parents when they left the village to come to the city and find jobs there, just to satisfy their curiosity and enjoy a sense of freedom.

Child woodworkers, employers, and parents

Generally speaking, children's work in skilled trades is linked with the history of apprenticeship. Studies on child labor in nineteenth-century Europe[13] or on working children in contemporary India,[14] Senegal,[15] and Indonesia[16] regard the apprentice system as a potential source of children's exploitation. Nardinelli however adds that certain factors such as custom, law, and the bargaining strength of parents helped to reduce the potential abuse of

apprentices. He also assumes that the exploitation of apprentices in skilled trades was not severe.[17] While this hypothesis is not backed by empirical data, N. Burra's observations of Indian gem polishers suggest the contrary—that apprenticeship training is only a disguise for child exploitation.[18]

Observations on child labor in developing countries generally indicate that children are popularly employed in fine-art crafts and family workshops as apprentices. Unfortunately, there are few comprehensive studies on the issue of children's apprenticeship. The next section provides empirical data that can help us better understand this aspect of child labor. It suggests that it is the shift to a market economy that led to the commercialization of apprenticeship in the wood trade. Entrepreneurs resorted to child labor as a strategy to rake in more profit. We should not forget though that the parents themselves allowed and encouraged this so that their children could learn professional skills, enabling them to cope with an increasingly fragmented labor market.

The issue of apprenticeship: The employers' perspective

Today, hundreds of children from various areas still come to Giao Village for apprenticeship. The foremost question as far as the villagers are concerned is whether this is beneficial to the village and to wood carving as a traditional craft. Practically speaking, what could these apprentices contribute? And why do these children choose to train at Giao village instead of at state schools?

Those who support the open-training policy say that the expansion of the wood workshops to accommodate the trainees has not only contributed to the development of rural industries as set by Communist Party policy but has also helped maintain a traditional craft that is in danger of becoming obsolete and needs new stimulating forces. Furthermore, it has created more jobs and has raised the incomes of many villagers.

Those who oppose the policy argue that the masters/foremen are solely motivated by financial gains; the children are being exploited for profit, not to bring about a wood carving revival. Moreover, teaching the "tricks of the trade" to all interested outsiders would diminish the value of wood carving as a traditional village craft that is unique to Giao; it would only lead to the mass production of objects with little artistic value.

Such a debate on open apprenticeship offers significant insights that can help us understand the socioeconomic aspects of apprenticeship training and the utility of child labor in the wood-carving industry. Based on direct observations and talks with working children and their parents and employers, I will further analyze their views and motivations on utilizing child labor in this commercialized craft.

The argument that apprenticeship training could help revive the tradi-

tion of wood carving in Giao Village was supported by some media reporters who visited the wood workshops.[19] They contended that it would be better to put those children who left school at an early age to work because without proper supervision, they could easily be drawn into social vices such as gambling, drinking, and smoking. Others opined that children should be regarded as a potential labor force to meet the increasing demands of the market economy, while ignoring their long-term development.[20] Master craftsmen and entrepreneurs were praised for admitting children into their workshops so that they could learn a professional skill and earn money.[21] This would ensure the smooth development of social order and public security. Among the village employers I talked to, I found such arguments in favor of apprenticeship training particularly well received.

According to the employers, sending children to train in their wood workshops can have many advantages for the children and their families. If the children did well in their training, they would soon earn money to support their families. And even if they remain as unpaid trainees, working was still the best way to keep them from becoming involved in vices. Those children attending school for half a day could spend the rest of their time learning new skills and maybe earning some money as well. When they grow up they would be qualified to earn a decent living. The masters also emphasized other beneficial aspects of apprenticeship such as learning discipline, obedience, and good manners.

Masters/employers also considered apprenticeship a moral commitment because of the costs involved. They pointed out it would take at least six months to teach a child how to do simple tasks. Even then the quality of their work remained very low. Children often lacked patience to work on delicate objects. They usually wasted the hardwood, which was very expensive, and therefore increased the manufacturing costs. Also, they sometimes left their work without notice, thus disrupting the production line. Some children were even accused of stealing professional secrets and running off to work for the competition.

However, despite their claims that apprenticeship training was a nonprofit but costly procedure, the masters/employers often failed to explain why they kept on recruiting more child workers and opening more workshops for apprentices. Information I obtained from the child workers, their parents, and the masters themselves helped throw some light on the matter. As it turned out employers often exerted enough control to keep apprentices in their workshops for a considerable period of time.

Generally speaking, access to apprenticeship was not free for everyone. The employer only accepted new trainees based on his knowledge of the applicant's family background through the network of acquaintances or relatives. Such relations were regarded as a guarantee for a trainee to live and work in the employer's house for an extended period of time.

Children from outside the village were preferable because they were expected to pay their monthly fees and food (in cash or kind) equivalent to about 30 kilograms of rice per month. Although this might seem a minor charge, it was in fact a considerable source of income for the employer. If an employer kept a few trainees like this under his roof, their total contributions would be enough to cover the living costs of both the trainees and the host family, even if the child trainees contributed nothing in terms of wood carving production. These fees had to be paid in advance on a quarterly or semi-annual basis and if the trainees dropped out, they did not get their money back. Obviously, by doing this, employers could force the trainees to be closely dependent on them. The children coming from outside the village, especially, became more obedient when they totally depended on their hosts.

The age of the apprentices was also an important qualification for admittance into the workshops. Employers preferred children between twelve and fifteen years of age, purportedly because these were the most receptive to training. Children older than fifteen were supposedly not patient enough to learn a craft; it normally took them several years to grasp the basic techniques particularly since their hands were no longer nimble. But the truth might lie elsewhere. My direct observations tend to dismiss the myth that young children's hands are nimbler. The truth is that children older than sixteen are more independent and would protest against mistreatments, while younger children are more obedient.

Apprentices said they were normally assigned simple tasks even after they had acquired enough skills through a combination of observation and practice. In their view, this was because the master did not want them to learn all the tricks of the trade during the initial years of training to ensure that they would not spill or steal occupational secrets, and because the master needed the children to work as unpaid assistants, not wageworkers.

Employers not only used methods of "push" and "trickle down" to tie down working children; they also used various effective means of exploitation. Nardinelli assumes that "the payment of premiums provides strong evidence that apprentices in skilled trades were not exploited."[22] Actually, premiums were not wages and were not proper compensation for the children's labor. Moreover, premiums were offered only a few times a year, mainly on special occasions. Premiums should thus be considered a strategic tool for encouraging the children to do more for the employers.

Those trainees who worked in the workshops for a couple of years were no longer required to pay monthly contributions. Instead, they were offered daily meals and if they did a good job, they might get small allowances. This suggests that apprentices' labor was significantly productive because in principle, children could get paid only when the value of their work was worth more than what went into their upkeep.

The issue of apprenticeship: The parents' perspective

It is obvious that a number of children sent to the village's wood workshops as trainees or wageworkers were not from poor families, particularly those from outside the village. Poor parents apparently could not afford to make an advance contribution—the equivalent of 300 or more kilograms of rice—for the upkeep of their child for one year. The results of a survey I conducted among working children reveal that a majority of them (68 percent) were sent to wood workshops by their parents while only 32 percent (58 percent of whom were girls) said they made the decision on their own. This reflects the parents' desire to place their children, particularly boys, in waged jobs.

Listening to confidential stories told by the children's parents helped me understand why these parents had chosen woodwork as a worthy career for their children. A veteran who formerly served as chairman of the local cooperative confided to me that if he had just one more son, his family would be much better off. He said his only son, a sixteen-year-old, had been involved in woodwork for the past few years and because of this he felt his family was faring much better than before. Every month, his son earned about 500,000 dong. Thanks to his son's earnings, he could afford such things as a TV set. He believed that woodwork helped improve the villagers' standard of living, and this was why they vied with each other to send their children to work. But he worried that when his son grew older, he would not send money home. In his opinion, young children (under sixteen) were more dutiful than older ones. But he was worried that making children work at an early age might make them ill-educated.

This story, like many others I heard in the village, is indicative of the desire of the native inhabitants to earn more income and improve their standard of living through non-farm activities, such as woodwork. Peasants seemed to take these activities in stride; after weighing the pros and cons of sending their children to work at an early age vis-à-vis giving them a decent education, they usually decide that the family's economic situation should prevail.

Some parents had a high regard for wood carving, an occupation in which "one's face and head are protected from rain and sun" (*mua khong den mat, nang khong den dau*). This local saying reflects the popular belief that carving is a light and "clean" job as compared to farming, where one has to dirty one's hands in the paddy fields. In their reasoning, carving requires dexterity, artistic talent, and patience rather than physical exertion; therefore it is suitable for children. Moreover, it is a craft that could get you a reasonably good income at affordable training costs.

In addition to this type of thinking, some parents simply believed that work was the best way to train their children to live properly because, as they

put it, "Playing around is good for nothing." They often quoted the popular saying, "Idleness is the source of all evils" (*Nhan cu vi bat thien*) in their decision to send children to work.

However, most parents voiced their concern about the negative aspects of making children work at an early age, fearing that lack of proper education might affect the children's future development. Such worries, however, seemed to be softened by the prospects of employment and earnings that would help to improve the family's standard of living. Somehow they felt that if the family's economic situation was good, so would be the children's lot.

Although earning money is a desirable occupation, many parents obviously worried that money might spoil their children, particularly those working away from home. These were often reminded of their filial duties, together with stern warnings against smoking, drinking, and gambling. In actual fact these children were only allowed to work away from home under the condition that their wages would be paid directly to the parents and they would be under the supervision of the adult relatives or fellow villagers.

It should be mentioned that most professional woodworkers recognized the health hazards of their craft, which may have long-term effects on the mental and physical development of children. The parents' general attitude in this regard was rather neutral, if not downright neglectful. Some parents expressed concerns about their children, but felt powerless to stop them from working, especially given the family's economic situation. In the context of a fast-changing society, many parents became undecided about their children's future. They struggled between the desire to give their children a good future and the reality of survival. In the end, they usually left the young ones "at the mercy of their fate." [23]

Child workers: Dutiful children?

How did the children judge their work and assess their relationship with employers? What were their motivations, thoughts, and aspirations? These questions were uppermost in my mind while I did my fieldwork in the village. Previously, I analyzed to some extent the children's motives in working for wages and their ideas on how to spend their money. Based on information gathered from many conversations I had with working children in the village, I shall now try to elucidate the child workers' moods, aspirations, and feelings.

I often heard parents say that they sent their children to the wood workshops mainly to keep them from playing in the sun, which may harm their health. This simplistic explanation, however, seemed at odds with the realities of the working children who often reported that if they did not work properly they would be punished. Work for them was decidedly not play.

Interviews with working children reveal that they did suffer—they brought up again and again not abuse directly but work-related hardships and particularly their employers' contempt toward them. Also, for them, work was somewhat boring and tiring, and they were always under threat of punishments, particularly scolding and beating. Their stories reveal that apparently the relationship between the employer/master and the child workers was a paternalistic one—meaning the employer acted like a father who could mete out punishments for mistakes or misdeeds. As a result, the children suffered from abuse at work quite often. Nevertheless, they normally did not tell their parents about this mistreatment. Some said they were too frightened of their master's power to report these incidents. They were after all dependent on their employers, and felt they were in no position to bargain.

The child workers' stories reveal some patterns with regard to their motivations for entering the labor market. As we have discussed, the most popular reason was to earn money to meet their personal needs such as clothes, shoes, or simply some entertainment. In rural areas where rice culture was the only source of cash, which often fell short of household and individual needs, the wood trade represented a welcome opportunity for earning extra income.

My empirical observations also reveal that from an early age, rural children already start thinking about sharing family responsibilities and helping their parents. While still quite young, they express the wish to prove their worth to their peers later in life. In their stories, they talked about how they would one day be able to improve the family's living standards, purchase expensive things, even build a new house for their parents. Such thinking suggests the long tradition of children's filial duty imposed by Confucianism, which still runs strong in current Vietnamese society. Therefore in all fairness it should be stressed that the money motive should not be considered the overriding factor. The whole process also has a moral dimension, which places emphasis on children's duty toward their parents.

The children had one more strong motivation for joining the wood trade: to escape the monotonous world of farming, which requires hard work but promises low returns. There were, however, differences between girls' and boys' motivation with regard to work. While boys were prepared to take on the future by learning a trade, girls tended to take woodwork as a temporary measure. Boys dreamed of high salaries and adventures far away from home while girls wished to escape their domestic environment and dependent status, particularly the ethical codes imposed on women. Such "push and pull" factors that constantly impacted children's work should not be ignored.

Conclusion

Agricultural decollectivization in northern rural Vietnam has opened a new opportunity for the revival of traditional crafts, including fine-art wood-craft. The wood trade today has in fact undergone large-scale development together with the expanded export market of wooden furniture, mainly in Asia. Consequently, work organization and labor relationships have likewise changed. In previous times, hierarchical and collegial social relations were at the core of the wood sector. Nowadays, with the emergence of new forces including investors, exporters, and entrepreneurs, social relations between employers and employees in the wood sector are mainly controlled by capital-related factors.

My research findings indicate that as of 1995, working children—most of them trainee assistants—made up about 40 percent of the total labor force in the wood trade. Village children started learning woodwork at a rather early age—a small number started at the age of eight while the majority started between eleven and twelve. Normally, it took a child a minimum of three years to grasp some basic wood-carving skills. A comparative analysis between children working at home, under the supervision of their parents/relatives, and those employed in private workshops yielded some remarkable statistics. In both sectors, the majority of children (52 to 60 percent) worked full-time. Most working children, about 60 percent, no longer attended school, and more than 80 percent of them had left school for good at the age of fifteen. Generally speaking, the proportion of waged child workers was low. In the household sector, working children were generally not paid while in the larger enterprises, only about 36 percent were paid, in full or on an installment basis. Girl woodworkers made up only about 12 percent of working children in household shops, and 23 percent in the manufacturing sector. About 42 percent of children working in enterprises came from outside the village. It is interesting to note that both children and their parents preferred the large workshops rather than a master's home, despite the harsh discipline and long hours. In the parents' view, their children would make faster progress in enterprises where they had to work harder and were placed under more discipline, and where they had opportunities to learn new models.

As pointed out earlier, employers preferred to employ children as apprentices rather than wageworkers. Friends and family were often involved in coercing the children into working for their masters/employers for a couple of years as unpaid workers. It was these unpaid working children who helped employers reduce their production costs, making their goods more competitive, and thereby increasing their profits. On the other hand, the close links between foremen/masters and apprentices facilitated job mobility in the wood trade. The development of wooden furniture manufacturing in

the village enhanced the exchange of commodities between urban and village workshops, helping generate more employment for rural dwellers. Furthermore, the urban-rural relationship in the wood trade intensified the geographical mobility of woodworkers. Children were absorbed in the mobile woodworkers' network as well. From elsewhere, they moved to the village of Giao for apprenticeship while others migrated out of the village, heading for urban workshops in search of higher wages. The labor mobility in the wood sector reflects the impact of the ongoing stratification of the labor market, which impels rural children to flock to the non-farm waged sector.[24] The mobility of woodworkers also reflects a potential labor surplus in the agricultural sector where peasants work on their small plots of rice land with low returns. This helps explain why despite the evident hardships of trainee assistants in the wood sector, both parents and children still greatly desired to learn the trade in order to make a living.

Children's motivations for entering into waged employment also suggests the changing attitudes of rural youngsters vis-à-vis traditional ethics. The fact that they prefer to work away from home and to satisfy their own needs is a testimony to the general desire of the younger generation to be free from old norms, social constraints, and family obligations.

Contradictions inherent in children's work, their earnings and social roles, all reflect the socioeconomic changes that have taken place in the rural landscape since the market mechanism was introduced, and children's employment is only part of that process.

Endnotes

1 This paper is based on my earlier research on child labor in rural Vietnam. I deeply appreciate the discussions and suggestions on my findings at the 2004 ALFP workshop and retreat, as well as at the workshop on poverty in Asia held at Waseda University and Toyo University during my stay in Japan. The feedbacks from participants in these workshops contributed greatly to my knowledge on the issue of child labor. Some suggested that I present more detailed history of child labor in the woodwork sector. This would indeed be very useful, but unfortunately I could not include it here as it would make the paper too long. I hope I get another chance to present such relevant data in the future.

2 Phan Gia Ben (1957) classified artisans in the colonial Northern Delta into five categories: a) mobile artisans, b) artisans producing goods as hired workers, c) artisans producing goods on direct orders from clients, d) artisans producing goods on subcontracts, and e) artisans producing and selling goods on their own. According to this classification, most wood-workers of Giao Village belonged to groups a and b, those who seasonally migrated to search for work away from home as hired workers.

3 Ban Cog Tac Nong Thon (Committee for Rural Affairs), *De an tam thoi ve cong tac quan ly tho a nong thon* (A temporary plan for managing handicraft workers in rural areas), Hanoi: Nxb Nong Thon, 1962.

4 A similar situation was found among peasants of the Philippines who had little income from agricultural production and became artisans working on crafts (see R. Rutten 1993).

5 Those who had held a stable job in the wood trade for six months in 1995 were grouped in this category. Children working basically within their households while attending school and receiving occasional earnings were not included in this group.

6 The term *entrepreneur* used in this study refers to those who are called in the local dialect "*cai thau.*" These mainly organize, manage, and assume the risks of the wood business they had set up, but sometime also directly take part in the work.

7 These investments were mainly from Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore.

8 "Twenty-four hour recall" is one of the techniques developed by Pamela Reynolds (1991) to collect data on children's work. This method involves the strict recording of all activities done by the interviewees during the twenty-four hours prior to the interview.

9 The Tet (spring festival) is the main holiday for woodworkers. It often lasts from the last week of December to the third week of January in the lunar calendar. During these four weeks, woodworkers spend their time visiting relatives and friends or simply enjoying themselves through various forms of entertainment.

10 Lai Ah-Eng, "The Little Workers: A Study of Child Labour in the Small-scale Industries of Penang," *Development and Change*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1982, 565-86.

11 It is a popular custom in many rural areas of the Red River Delta for girls to be allowed to earn some money of their own, called "*von rieng*" (own money). When married, they can bring their wealth to the husband's home as dowry.

12 Nardinelli, C., *Child Labour and the Industrial Revolution*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

13 Ibid.; Weissbach, Lee S., *Child Labour Reform in Nineteenth-century France*, Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989.

14 Burra, N., *Born to Work: Child Labour in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.

15 Morice, A., "Underpaid Child Labour and Social Reproduction: Apprenticeship in Kaolack, Senegal," *Development and Change*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1982, 525-26.

16 White, B. and Indra Tjandraningsih, "Rural Children in the Industrialization Process: Child and Youth Labour in 'Traditional' and 'Modern' Industries in West Java," unpublished paper, The Hague.

17 Nardinelli 87.

18 Burra 90.

19 Do Quang Dan, "Nguoi thuc day long moc dong Giao (The man who revived the wood trade of Dong Giao Village)," *Tien Phong* (The Pioneer), 22 November 1994; Thanh Sang, "Soi dong nghe moc Cam Dien (Wood trade is booming in Cam Dien)," *Hai Hung*, 6 December 1994; Xuan Ha, "Tran tro cua nhung nguoi tho lang nghe cham khac go Dong Giao (Concerns of woodworkers of Dong Giao Village)," *Hai Hung*, 18 July 1992.

20 Le Ngoc Hung, "Lam dung tree m: Van de xa hoi throng qua trinh phat trien (The abuses of children: A social problem in the development process)," *Hoa Hoc Ve Phu Nu* (Women Studies Review), No. 1, 1998, 34-40.

21 Huu Duc, "Thuc trang cac doanh nghiep nho o Ha Tay (The situation of small-scale enterprises in Ha Tay)," *Lao Dong va Xa Hoi* (Labour and Social Affairs Review), No. 8, 1992, 7-8.

22 Nardinelli 87.

23 A closer look at the parents' confidence on their children's work reveals the belief that "as family incomes rise, child labor declines" (see Nardinelli 102), which sounds too rational.

24 Nardinelli 86.

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Defining Asia

THEATER HERSTORY:
CHANGING ROLES OF CHINESE WOMEN ON AND OFFSTAGE
Faye Chunfang Fei

The theme for the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) 2004 is once again "Identity, Security, and Democracy," signifying its continuing relevance and pressing importance. In the age of globalization, in the wake of "September 11" and the ongoing war against terror, one's initial response to the theme is naturally geopolitical. Being no statesperson or policy maker, I often find my personal thoughts along purely geopolitical lines, while filled with moral fervor and philosophical angst, quite ineffectual. I have also noticed that the participants from ALFP 2003 as well as this year have opted to relate to the all-encompassing theme from his or her professional expertise and current research project. For me the field of inquiry is theater.

Where there are people there is theater of some kind, for theater (and its derivative arts of dramatic cinema and television) is the art of people acting out—and giving witness to—their most pressing concerns and inspiring visions. Theater is at once a showcase and a forum, through which a society displays its ideas, aesthetics, lifestyles, and values, and debates its conflicts, dilemmas, contradictions, and struggles.[1] Given its scope and pervasiveness, theater provides a dynamic sphere in which to study and fulfill humanity.

Each one of the concepts covered in this year's theme, "Identity, Security, and Democracy," in and of itself, evokes for me a great deal of connections with theater worthy of exploration. For instance, one aspect of my research project "Theater HerStory" is to reexamine the evolving and changing identities of women as characters, performers, playwrights, directors, and producers in the history of theater. Putting "Identity, Security, and Democracy" together, however, seems to indicate a certain connectedness of these concepts. I am personally interested in exploring their connections. Are they interdependent? Do they form a progression? Is there a causal relationship?

At this stage I can already see, though vaguely, how "Theater HerStory" may well serve me as a historical model for exploring the connectedness of the notions of Identity, Security, and Democracy. More than a few important junctures in world theater history readily present themselves. For instance, when looking at the theater of ancient Greece, arguably the cradle of Western civilization as well as the world's first democracy, it is of paramount significance to highlight the fact that women were excluded from public life on and offstage (there were female characters but no female performers). Was the democracy a true democracy when more than half of the adult population

were noncitizens, deprived of political identity and economic security? Was the exclusion of women the ultimate *hamartia* (tragic flaw) of the glorious ancient democratic vision? I believe that the theater and its practices over the ages and around the world (e.g. Renaissance Europe, Colonial America, seventeenth-century Japan, Victorian England, modern China, and so on) provide abundant material for exploring the theme of "Identity, Security, and Democracy."

In telling "Theater HerStory," female characters (created by men, or women themselves) help us understand a great deal the mores, values, and conflicts in the particular sociopolitical contexts in which they reside. The changing roles of women on and offstage is something of great interest to me. While the bulk of my research for "Theater HerStory" remains Anglo-American, for the purpose of relevancy to this year's ALFP, I will be focusing on Chinese modern theater.

Women and Chinese modern drama

Unlike some of the Chinese classical theater forms, such as Beijing opera and Kunqu opera, Chinese modern theater (known in China as *huaju* or spoken drama, as opposed to the classical sung dramas) is not as widely known beyond its own borders. It is precisely through this form of theater, however, that I will be examining the changing and evolving roles of women in China, from its early days as a Western import to the present time as China faces all the contradictions in a globalizing world. My discussion focuses on four distinctive periods, namely pre-1949, post-1949,[2] post-Mao, and postmodern.

Vision of the "New Woman"

The Western-style drama was introduced to China and began to acclimatize itself there during the first decades of the twentieth century. Even though there were earlier attempts, most Chinese history books date the beginning of modern drama to 1907, when a group of Chinese students who had studied in Japan started a literary and artistic society named Spring Willow (*chunliu she)* and performed a stage adaptation of American writer Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* first in Tokyo then in Shanghai.

At the time, the majority of modern Western plays favored by Chinese intellectuals and artists were in the mode of critical social realism. The plays that challenged the existing religious institutions, questioned outmoded cultural values, and exposed social injustices (for instance, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession,* and Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths*) were warmly embraced and actively promoted by the proponents

of the New Culture Movement,[3] and subsequently the May 4th Movement.[4] Both saw the rise of feminism as part of a social and political movement toward a more just and equitable modern democratic society. "Democracy" and "Science" were seen as the means, and used as the rallying calls, for modernizing China.

From the very start, women were called upon to be actively involved in the development of Chinese modern theater, as writers, performers, organizers, and audience members. A number of talented women had demonstrated their "comparability" with men by pursuing a modern education and publicly participating in nationalist and feminist causes.

Modern spoken drama was seen as the antithesis of traditional Chinese theater both in form and content. The traditional repertoire seemed to perpetuate feudal order, Confucian ethics, and patriarchal values, and featured stories where female characters were judged by their adherence to the "Three Obediences" (father, husband, and son) and the "Four Virtues" (morality, propriety, modesty, diligence).

The difference between traditional theater and modern drama was most noticeable in the latter's determination to realistically portray the lives of Chinese people. Chinese modern drama in that period started to present women of all social classes and their issues, rallying sympathy and support for their struggle for equality and liberty in matters of the heart and the mind. For instance, China's leading modern dramatist, Cao Yu, in plays such as *Thunderstorm* (*Leiyu*), *Sunrise* (*Richu*), and *Family* (*Jia*),[5] introduced characters trapped in loveless arranged marriages, victimized by injustices caused by feudalism, imperialism, and capitalism, and who tried desperately to break free and fight back. It was hoped a type of "New Woman"—educated, independent, competent, free, and able to pursue personal happiness and professional success—would emerge. But continuous wars and harsh realities made it an unattainable dream for most Chinese women, because China as a nation was not free from oppression, exploitation or humiliation. Feminism as a social movement, however, was quickly set aside in favor of the more urgent needs of nationalism.

"Holding up half of the sky"

If the pre-1949 Chinese modern drama was preoccupied with fighting the existing feudal traditions and imperialist powers, after 1949 it, together with other theater forms, mainly served the ruling Communist government as an instrument of political propaganda and socialist mobilization. With the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the rights of women to social, political, and economic equality with men were formally proclaimed, but the implementation of these rights seemed cynically superficial.[6] Mao Zedong, calling upon women to become equals of men for the cause of

socialist revolution and nation building, said that "women can hold up half of the sky" and exalted them for "loving military attires but not red lipsticks." As far as women were concerned, these famous words were held up as expectations and even became coerced realities. National identity was prioritized over personal or gender identities.

Onstage, leading women characters were revolutionaries whose devotion was to the Party and to the socialist state, not to the family; they were presented as asexual beings, divorced from traditional roles as mothers and wives, or at least with no immediate personal/familial ties. As a result, in modern spoken drama as well as so-called modern model operas, we ended up having a lot of women characters who were widowed or childless, or who "conveniently" had their husbands and children out of the way. Leading ladies who became household names such as Qiu Xiang in *Mount Azalea* (*Dujuan shan*), Mrs. A-qing in *Shajia Pond* (*Shajia bang*) and Fang Haizhen in *Harbor* (*Haigang*) are just a few examples. In those days, the complicated interaction between the needs of women and the needs of revolution was never adequately addressed on or offstage. Issues of identity were all simply lumped under nationalism.

Time to reflect and experiment

The next critical stage of Chinese modern drama came in the1980s, the post-Mao era, a time when the entire nation was wheeling back from the ten-year-long national nightmare called the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976). In China, art and literature experienced a period of tremendous thaw and revival as the intellectuals and artists embarked on a soul quest, and as the nation slowly but resolutely lifted the bamboo curtain to the outside world. What followed was a great output of philosophical and experimental works: *Absolute Signal (Juedui xinhao), Wild Men (Yeren), Red Skirts Are Popular (Jieshang liuxing hongqunzi), Old B Hanging on the Wall (Guazai qiangshangde laobi), WM,* and *Magic Cube (Mofang),* to name just a few. Chinese modern drama witnessed the rise of new important directors and writers, many of whom were women. Women characters onstage came from all walks of life: doctors, teachers, educated urban youth sent to the countryside, factory workers, peasants, women in the military, etc.

The plays from this period of incredible creative energy were innovative and experimental in style, and self-critical in tone. They dealt with themes of personal identity, political disillusionment (over the discrepancy between revolutionary ideals and reality), and subsequent reawakening; challenged extreme ideologies and the blind faith in authority; and called for openness and truthfulness. Trials and tribulations in characters' lives—personal losses and tragedies—were shared and examined in the context of the national psyche and political upheavals.

White-collar woes

With the arrival in China of market economy, and of globalization in recent years, modern drama witnessed new and significant changes: reduced government subsidies, rising costs of production, and more importantly, competition from mass media, particularly television and film, for both the audience and creative talents—all of which has posed new challenges. It is in this context we will examine the emergence of the new so-called "white-collar" drama and its accompanying women characters.

Chinese modern drama has always been an urban form. Now in cities like Shanghai and Beijing it is increasingly an arena mostly for young urban professionals, the "white-collars" between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, who are not only in the audience but also onstage and behind the scenes, in a large number of independently produced plays. The urge to participate is strong—to see and be seen on and offstage is what propels some of the recent "white-collar" productions.

"White-collar" refers to both the subject matter of the plays and their producers and audiences. Recent plays such as *Taking the Fat Out of Love (Aiqing shousheng), Singles Apartment (Dansheng gongyu), WWW.com, White Collar Stories (Bailing xinshi), Parties of Emotion (Qinggan paidui), Roses/Cigars/Snorkels (Meigui/xuejia/sinuoke), Perfume (Xiangshui),* feature young urban professionals of multinational companies, consulting firms, and IT businesses, and often have themes of alienation, disillusionment, loneliness, longing, and unsuccessful personal relationships.

Typically, an independently produced "white-collar" drama has a small budget, a small cast, and a smaller theater (e.g. the 200-seat Theater Saloon at the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center). Most participants (of whom many are women), from producers to playwrights, directors and performers, have limited previous theater experience. What they lack in theatrical expertise, they make up for with enthusiasm and resourcefulness.

Invariably these shows mirror the life-styles, attitudes, values, sentiments, and fashions of those who produce the plays and those in the audience. Some of the plays even get nicknamed "petty bourgeoisie" (*xiaozi*), "love bubbles" (*aiqing paopao*) or "little women" (*xiaonvren*). One statement made by Huang Angang, a businessman and occasional independent theater producer, was quite cogent: "It's another night club for the yuppies." It somehow reminds one of the English Restoration period when modish young aristocrats went to the theater to see and be seen, on and offstage, except here the prevailing mood is not of the English satirical comedy of manners but more of television soap operas.

In terms of women characters who are central to the "white-collar" drama, one may say the "New Woman" envisioned by the New Culture activists nearly a century ago has finally arrived. She is educated, financially

independent, free to date or mate, but, ironically, also decidedly unhappy, deeply troubled, anxious, frustrated, and confused as the world around her goes through a sea of change. Nothing is fixed or anchored the way they once were; as an individual, the "New Woman" has to constantly face and make moral and ethical decisions in her professional and personal lives. Security is not assured, values are relative, and identity is in flux. It is true that in this type of play the range of women characters is narrow, both in age and socioeconomic status, but the emotions are universal, and the situations realistic.

Another thing that strikes any casual observer of "white-collar" drama is that it is highly personal and determinedly "apolitical." Critics may say the "white-collar" theater has derailed the political mission of Chinese modern drama, which from its very beginning seems to have always been to present specific visions of history and nationhood. I, however, tend to see merit in Singaporean theater director Ong Keng Sen's statement that "perhaps the political act is in the movement back into a personal freedom of expression," with the young people "embracing the language of globalization, consumerism, appropriation without guilt and with a deliberate naiveté." And "in their ironic refusal to comment is the comment."[7] Personal is political, all in the name of identity, security, and democracy.

For nearly one hundred years, China's modern theater has served its nation and people as a public forum and showcase. Through the women characters it presents, we see the heroic struggles, horrendous sufferings, soul-searching reflections, mind-boggling dilemmas, and lofty aspirations the nation as a whole, and women in particular, have experienced. Nowadays we and the characters we create and see onstage are all involved in negotiating the difficult course of identity, security, and democracy in the global age.

Endnotes

1 Cohen, Robert, *Theatre Brief Version*, Sixth Edition, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2003, p. 4.
2 In 1949, the People's Republic of China was established after the Communists defeated the Nationalists and assumed the power to rule.
3 The movement aimed to introduce Western concepts in China, such as democracy, equality, and liberty; also a new style of writing as well as the latest science and technology of the time.
4 A student-led demonstration on May 4, 1919 marked the beginning of the upsurge of nationalist feeling, with unity of purpose among patriotic Chinese of all classes. The movement grew out of dissatisfaction with the pro-Japan Treaty of Versailles and the effect of the New Culture Movement.
5 A stage adaptation of Ba Jin's novel of the same title.

6 Wolf, Margery and Roxane Witke (editors), *Women in Chinese Society*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975.
7 Cited by Yoshiko Shimada in her presentation "Is the 'Women and Peace' era over?" to the ALFP on Oct. 14, 2004.

CRAFTING A PHILIPPINE CULTURE INDEX
CULTURAL EDUCATION AND IDENTITY BUILDING IN A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY
Karina Africa Bolasco

Introduction

It has been almost 40 years since Filipino historian Renato Constantino first wrote about the miseducation of the Filipino in a weekly magazine in 1966. His wife, Letizia Constantino, in a joint monograph released in 1982 (She was then active in the Education Forum network, developing publications to guide progressive teachers in a Teacher Assistance Program, most popular among which was *Issues Without Tears* series.) analyzed how by funding the purchase of public school textbooks in various developing countries, the World Bank has made sure the "miseducation assembly line"would just go on and on. Constantino said then that miseducation deliberately intended to keep new generations of Filipinos away from ideas of economic and political nationalism and like their elders, continue to believe in the discourse of "foreign investments and political foreign interference in national affairs" and a "national development program…securely founded on private enterprise, characterized by export orientation, dependent industrialization, growth of capitalist agriculture and agri-business, free trade, a free floating currency, hospitality to transnational corporations, and chronic dependence on loans from international financial institutions." She went to further describe this kind of education:

> "The kind of educational system the World Bank wants to shape is therefore one that will meet the manpower needs of transnationals, that will facilitate the development of the rural areas in the direction of greater integration into the world farm producing for the global supermarket, and above all, one that will insure the internalization by the entire student population of values and outlooks supportive of the global capitalist system."

Renato Constantino, in the same monograph that reissued his essay, lamented the fact that "…not one major educational leader has come out for a truly nationalist education…no comprehensive educational program

has been advanced as a corollary to the programs for political and economic anticipation."

It was in this period of the late 70s and early 80s that I began to teach college students, after I graduated with a Literature degree. Like all the other progressive teachers wanting to shake students out of their apathy and complete resignation to the Marcos dictatorship, I taught an alternative history and survey of Philippine literature. It was a history of resistance to colonialism, and the literary pieces we chose were all critical of, and all fought back against, Spanish, American and Japanese and even "Filipino" colonialisms. All schools in the Education Forum therefore shared the same canon and principle that though schools are by nature conservative because they are socializing agents of a society, they can be harnessed for social change if school knowledge (curriculum) and non-school knowledge (students' objective and subjective realities) are fully integrated in the process of transmission at the classroom level. EF was organized on a critical thinking paradigm that questioned givens and debunked myths. The Forum though was a minority; this kind of education that greatly depended on the quality of teachers was not happening in majority of private schools, only in those run by progressive congregations who belonged to the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP). This certainly was not happening in the public school system, which had majority, over 90%, of the students in basic education.

In 1989, a published landmark investigation of national identity formation in Philippine public elementary schools by Dr. Ma.Luisa Doronila (College of Education, University of the Philippines), *The Limits of Educational Change*, revealed "some chilling findings," among which were that if given a choice, 95% of respondents would want to be citizens of another country—first United States, and second, Japan. Philippines ranked third. The simple question it asked, using a creative and rigorous research design, was: Are Philippine schools educating Filipino children to be Filipinos?

It didn't take long after the 1986 People Power that to some extent Constantino the historian was discredited. His works were found too sweeping without benefit of rigid and thorough documentation. The Education Forum, just like all the other organizations and causes whose basis of existence was opposition to the Marcos dictatorship, naturally died. It shouldn't have, as the agenda of a nationalist education was not just a reaction to the dictatorship, but given "that national identity is the most crucial political belief every individual requires," as stressed by Dr. Doronila, and given that this is a prerequisite to "inculcating love of country," which the Philippine Constitution mandates shall basically guide the formulation of Philippine educational policy.

The education agenda, to this date, continually aided by World Bank in textbook purchases and ten-year assessment programs, should finally recognize and address the fact that "there is no universalistic set of orientations that defines national identity" for Filipinos. Still in place is an American colonial education, a vestige of the 1900 Thomasite-run public school system which clearly in 1903 was a military strategy to pacify a colonized people and capture their minds. General Arthur McArthur recommended a large appropriation for this education as, "primarily and exclusively an adjunct to military operations." It is still largely Euro-American- centric. To many, especially the public school teachers themselves who will be the first to vigorously object to any such suggestions, it may not look that way anymore because they conscientiously teach the proper singing of the national anthem and respect for the flag, pledge of allegiance, the national symbols, costume, and historical monuments, all learned by rote and not integrated into their personal experiences.. They teach pride in our rice terraces and other tourist spots, pictures of which hang in school or are in textbooks. They encourage our children to learn and perform well: recite poetry theatrically, paint and draw to win contests, sing well individually or as choirs, or play the rondalla well, and dance our ethnic dances to foreign audiences' delight but never engage children in our own art history or art appreciation to raise audiences for Filipino art. They play up our national traits: religious, hospitable, warm, frugal and hardworking. They teach a de-politicized safe Philippine History, that is often distorted or erroneous, and does not take pride in our long history of fighting back colonizers. What, so far, it has given our young is a national inferiority complex

Despite our resolve then to decolonize education, in the years of the Marcos dictatorship, when our solidarity as a nation was at its strongest, we apparently hardly made a dent. Though we had the best of intentions, and a passionate commitment to it, it was sporadic, erratic, unsystematic, and largely uninformed. Today, those progressive teachers continue to do that kind of work in their respective universities, sometimes as an informal faction, or very often disconnected and isolated. Many of them are tapped by the Department of Education's national teacher-training program to show public school teachers in different regions how to localize education and integrate disciplines into a whole rather than use the usual compartmentalized approach. But again, hardly do such occasional seminars equip and empower enlightened teachers whose enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity after going back to their work bases are quickly crushed by their principals and superintendents.

Again, these efforts do not even scratch the surface, what more stop or even reverse the "miseducation assembly line." The intervention must be official and create an impact on a massive scale, for it to mean anything at all.

Straddling Official and Activist Politics

The revolutionary movement against the Marcos dictatorship recruited the best and the brightest young Filipino men and women, many of whom 15 years later became bitterly disillusioned with grave mistakes of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Trauma from military torture, detention, rape and other abuses, though in itself debilitating, according to them was easier to deal with than torture and killing of comrades by their own comrades. Haunted by their own personal memories, the best and the brightest went back to their researches or creative works and teaching positions and became deans and university officials, even presidents. A good number moved over to non-government organizations they founded, some with substantial funds from Europe, and began to be active in the public sphere (Philippine civil society has been considered the most dynamic in Asia after 1986). Many were coopted into running private companies or big business, or their own family businesses. Many more were coopted into think-tanks of big politicians or themselves into positions of political power, either elected or appointed. The joke in our last national elections in May was that 95% of all campaigns at all levels were run by former activists or members of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

In this new socio-political landscape, it is not uncommon to negotiate between official and activist politics, to work with hardcore businessmen or bureaucrats and at the same time, like-minded activists.. Having shifted from teaching to cultural production, specifically book publishing, I found new ways of carrying out my personal dedication to social transformation. As a book publisher trafficking in ideas, it is always urgent for me to make as wide a range of ideas as accessible as possible to the widest sectors of the general public to allow for more informed and critical reactions to and decisions on issues affecting them. Everyday practice of selecting what and whose ideas to publish first has somehow formed my sense of what is generally right or wrong in the context of the public good, yet balance this with the public's right to know. Even harder to locate is that fine balance between culture and commerce—what needs to be published must sell because as a business that has to stay viable I have stakeholders I'm accountable to. This practice extends to working with foundations and other companies interested in co-funding book projects.

The other arena where negotiation is between state and activist politics is in the Committee on Cultural Education, one of the 22 national committees of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), an agency attached to the Office of the President. It has an endowment that has been left untouched all these years and continues to be funded by a portion of the travel tax.

The agency is composed of people from the different arts and cultural work sectors nominated and invited to serve as volunteers for a period of 3 years, renewable for another 3 years. There is only modest honoraria to cover transport expenses to monthly meetings.

But the power is in being able to disburse funds to worthwhile proposals. NCCA's total budget is allocated according to the different aspects of cultural and artistic work—from preservation, conservation and restoration, to education and artistic scholarships, to performances, and to researches and publications. By the nature of its composition, it was easy for committees to be run entirely by cliques.

At one point, the Historical Research Committee was partial to just one historical association, and it was alleged that any proposals from the rival association never went beyond first screening. This was seriously addressed by retiring many members and ensuring all the new ones represented constituencies such as federations of artists in different regions of the country.

If there was a lions' den, it would be the NCCA, and chairing it would not be an enviable job. It is composed of intellectuals, artists and cultural workers who are very opinionated or ideologically committed, vocal and assertive, yet many with differing vested interests and sometimes entrenched in age-old rivalries. Such a fractious body, it would be highly possible not to even agree on a definition of culture.

Cultural Maps

The first project I conceptualized and raised to the committee was the development, publication, and commercial distribution of what I called, for lack of a better term, cultural maps in 6 areas: Peoples and their Crafts, Food, Festivals, Music, Dance, and Architecture. My idea was to identify a hundred (100) most important things a Filipino child should know in each of these areas. On a large rendering of the Philippine map, approximately 24' X 36', these 100 items shall be plotted out so that, for example in Music, in one sweep the child sees what musical forms, instruments, folksongs, compositions, and composers are from his hometown or city, and which are from his cousins' hometown or city in the Visayas. Or that Mindanao has a wonderful array of musical instruments very much like those of Malaysia and Indonesia. Every map will be accompanied by a teacher's Guide that contains a mini-dictionary which explains or defines all terms shown on the map. The intent is for these maps to hang on classroom walls all year round, and even if they are not formally discussed, they will allow children to subliminally learn the information to heart in much the same way they quickly learn the melody and lyrics of a song they constantly hear on radio or television.

At the Board level, there were reservations over this proposal. What right does the Commission have to canonize and privilege certain artists and their works, and in effect, exclude others? How sure and reliable was the research to ensure the correctness and accuracy of all these 100 items we will impart to every child? We were warned unlearning is a more draining process. We argued that even now that we're not doing it, someone else is, whether wittingly or unwittingly, or someone else would, and do it badly. Really, it's always been a sin of omission. If we remember how our grandparents were made to memorize parts of Longfellow's "Evangeline" and Jefferson's address in the Thomasite public school system, and how we in turn read Irving Washington's "Rip Van Winkle" and recited "O Captain My Captain" by Walt Whitman, must we not ask why we did not read and memorize our very own whether in English or in Filipino? And is it not about time we did this? If we are to err, should we not err on our own side and on our own terms? Needless to say, we made sure we would be thorough and careful and gave the process of research and selecting the 100 items in every area more than enough time.

This crucial work of gathering, researching and finally selecting 100 items in every area was given to an NCCA committee officially in charge of said area or field.: Dance map to the Dance Committee, Music map to the Music Committee, and so on. It must be noted that the Art committees are composed of experts in the field who represent constituent groups: NGOs or artistic groups. Or even individual artists from different regions. This therefore very awkwardly and insufficiently covered the need to consult at the grassroots level assuming that indeed the composition of the committee truly reflected the interests of all the members at large. Since the stakeholders of different linguistic groups and geographical locations carry the closest ties to their very own items in the list, they ideally should have been consulted. Also, since a few committees were perceived as cliques which excluded other schools of thought in their fields, there was a clamor to go to the different regions to validate. But there were budget and time constraints. To address this, and provide some form of validation, a panel of consultants was designated to review all the lists from the committees. The selection tended to favor the most known items, and the objection raised was whether or not we needed in fact to include and privilege the least known. In the end, the consensus reached was that for a first attempt, or for that first layer, it was better to include the most known as the most popular were the most accepted and therefore, the most vested, emotionally. The entire process took two years to complete.

The visual rendering or artistic packaging of the maps, a vital and most delicate aspect that can make or unmake them, was bidded out. Studies

submitted by the winning bidder are now being reviewed and field-tested. Printing shall also be bidded out to the private business to ensure that these maps will be released to the market and shall be made available commercially and continually, as opposed to being done by an NGO or government agency who is likely not to care enough to market them. Money invested in such projects, if from a funding agency or a subsidy, is thought of as not urgently needed to be recouped. Admittedly, such projects don't have to be profit-driven but they necessarily end up so to stay viable as a business. Of course, finding that fine balance between commerce and culture is always very tricky. We seriously do have to look at what propels business without commodifying culture, hopefully, because this is precisely how the Americans are globalizing (Americanizing) Asia and the rest of the world.

Nucleus of Nationhood

In *The Limits of Educational Change*, Dr. Doronila points out that because our civic education is patterned after that of the Americans' where there is a clear collective reality, our children don't acquire an attachment to a political community because historically our political community has evolved differently, and at periods of classroom learning and transmission, students and teachers have different objective situations. Without the congruence, no learning takes place.

She proceeds to say that "… there is no universalistic set of orientations that defines national identity, for its specific content has both cultural and historical dimensions which differ from one society to the next, and within a society, from one epoch to the next. Thus it is possible to speak of Filipino nationalism whose parameters may be similar in some ways to that of other nations but different in others." She quotes from Eugene Kamenka's *Political Nationalism: An Evolution of the Idea*, "What is important is a conscious psychological sense of nationhood. But what could become the nucleus of a feeling of nationhood and what could not, is a matter of detailed historical condition or historical accidents."

She cites Clifford Geertz's discussion of nationalism in nations formerly colonized and newly established states that proposes "… a dichotomous scheme for analyzing the basis of various definitions of national identity" but which in reality are elements always mixed.

Geertz further says "…nationalist idealogizing typically takes two forms: the essentialist and the epochalist." She explains that the essentialist definition is

"focused on the indigenous way of life in which local norms, established social institutions and the unity of common cultural

experience are used as the bases of the definition of the collective identity. Although this has often been simplified in school mateials as the 'basic understanding of Philippine culture, the desirable traditions and virtues of our people as essential requisites in attaining national consciousness and solidarity,' the problem of Filipino scholars is considerably more complex. From the cultural diversity of the different ethnic groups that now comprise the state, they have been and are trying to discover the criteria which these groups can use to define their cultural affinities with one another."

It looks inward into the national community, she further describes it, to be able to select and make clear 'the cultural basis of a nation in an effort to make its political boundaries co-terminous with its ethnic boundaries." On the other hand, the epochalist definition is

"focused on the historical processes by which the country has developed to its present state, with these very processes being used to define the commonalities in the historical experience of the ethnic groups that comprise the national community."

In our case, these processes are precisely part of the colonial experience. This takes an outward view of the national community with the intent of highlighting the unity of all ethnic groups within the nation-state on the basis of their colonial past and the processes of decolonization. She concludes there is no contradiction in these two modes of defining national identity; it is not one or the other but both. So when F. Landa Jocano writes in his book, *Philippine Pre-history*:

"It is primarily the knowledge of the past which will enable us to understand better the roots of our national culture and to appreciate properly the dynamics of our contemporary society. For it is not so much, I believe, that we have borrowed from the West ideas and ways of life which have caused the paradox in our cultural orientation. Rather, it is the continuous neglect of, if not the suppression from, the learning process in schools and at home of what are legitimately our own tradition, which contributes to our tacit acceptance of the idea that we have no cultural roots to speak of. It is therefore in going back to pre-history that we can learn more and understand better the major elements of our social transformation."

and our National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin writes in his now classic book *Culture and History*:

"Identity, I would say, is like the river in philosophy. You remember the saying, 'You can never step into the same river twice.' The river has changed even as you step into it. Nevertheless the Pasig remains the Pasig, though from one moment to the next, it's no longer the same river.

This is the dynamic view of identity.

I'm afraid we have a different view of identity: different because we tend to regard culture and even history as static happenings—and that term is so appropriate though it sounds so self-contradictory . . . .we Filipinos tend to believe that culture is simple addition, history is mere addition. We ourselves are, or were, a fixed original identity to which certain things—alien cultures, alien histories—have been added, layer upon layer. Therefore, if culture is tradition, identity is subtraction. All we have to do is remove all those imposed layers and we shall end up with the true basic Filipino identity."

they are actually both right. Joaquin is critical of the nativists or purists who take only one view, and believe the true Filipino is the pre-colonial (Before the coming of the Spaniards in 1521) native. And that to get there, and reveal that purity, the Filipino today must just be stripped off of layers of Spanish, Chinese and American influences.

But so were Agoncillo and Constantino in their attempts to give us the grand narrative of our struggles against the colonizers, which constitutes the other half of the history equation. And so are the proponents of the view that the Filipino today, with all of his or her past, is the Filipino. No question about it, no discussion. As Raymond Williams says, "The history of the idea of culture is a record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life." After 1986, so many studies and researches have contributed to, refined, fine-tuned, or nuanced and enriched our pre-history and historical processes of colonialism and decolonization. Tragically, however, all these have not been inventoried and put together to form and inform our basic education curriculum, not even to generate the kind of history textbooks we have long needed to build a nation that now seems beyond imagining. I am reminded of Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, when he says, "Little by little, belief became polluted, like the air and water. The motive energy, always resistant but manipulable, finally begins to run out."

So today it is not surprising that we still ask so uncomfortably the same questions. Who is the Filipino? A citizen of the Philippines? One who holds a Philippine passport and is stamped such everytime he or she travels to another country? Are we all naturally Filipinos because we are born of Filipino parents

and are of this time and space, part of this collective life with its own ways of living and mode of interpreting common experience? Without effort, without trying then do we become Filipinos by simply becoming part of this collective life? Are we Filipinos because we are working for the good of the Philippines and Filipinos? What about the 7 million in diaspora to work for other countries but remit back their salaries to help our economy? What about them who are forced to abandon their families because wealth and resources are so inequitably distributed here? Why are we not therefore by reflex pro-Filipino and patronize Philippine-made products instead of American imported goods? Why do we not care about the sovereignty, and state and protection of our country's resources for future generations? Do we know what it means to be really politically and economically independent? Why do we prefer paying to watch foreign artists over our very own or continue to be not alarmed that we don't know even a single Filipino writer, painter or scientist by the time we leave school. Why are we not concerned that we don't get to exercise our rights except perhaps the right to vote every election time? Can our sense of our own rich heritage and history root our pride, and deepen it? Beyond the national anthem and the pledge of allegiance and all the national symbols our civics curricula teach us, what forms and shapes our national consciousness, our sense of nationhood, and our nationalism, to be able to raise the quality of life of every Filipino?

This is not to argue on behalf of all those who push for high culture versus the popular culture of the masses, normally considered gullible, fickle, low-taste, vulgar, or slapstick. Nor for the elitist thinking that we are in such a mess because the masses are poorly educated and ready to elect an unqualified actor into the presidency. This is to argue for the urgency of a culture index that will constitute a shared body of knowledge, a fundamental prerequisite for one's national identity and nationhood just as a shared family line and past, same family values and practices establish an individual's identity.: A person's family name is not just a name but announces everything that comes with that family name. As Filipinos, we too own a shared heritage and history, the knowledge of which is not common to all. We all must have a common knowledge of our defining moments, our triumphant struggles as a nation of many groups, and know by heart the stories of our great men and women who fought back and were consequently branded as bandits by the colonizer or authority—all these to constitute some form of solidarity which is what makes a society cohere.

Raymond Williams in his book *Culture and Society* says:

"Our problem is one of adapting our social training to a widely literate culture. It is clear that the highest standards of literacy in contemporary society depend on a level of instruction and training

far above that which is commonly available.. . . The content of education, as a rule, is the content of our actual social relations, and will only change as part of a wider change."

In my six years as chair of the National Committee for Cultural Education at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), we made it a point to limit our work to formal education, as opposed to all other kinds of cultural work (play, concert, a museum visit, a tour, etc.) which, strictly speaking, could be considered cultural education. This was deliberate, and it clearly guided us in our evaluation of walk-in projects. Our reasons for this focus are:

1.The schools are the most powerful shapers of a collective or national consciousness. They are huge and widespread working with the country's young half of the population.
Every year they produce the country's labor force, professionals, artists, opinion makers and leaders.
2. They're the only other force aside from mass media.
Every Filipino child's day is divided only between time spent in school and time spent watching television.

It certainly was no longer enough to merely continue funding the seminars and workshops conducted by teacher-training NGOs among public and private school teachers. Schools have for so long been underutilized out of ignorance and debilitating bureaucracy, lack of political will, and inability to match the machinery with the right operators, so to speak. Primarily too, and clearly, it was a situation where all the players didn't, and therefore could not work from it, have a shared body of knowledge. It was time, we thought, to do interventions at the Department of Education level and secure official approvals for projects, initiated by the Committee itself, to be carried out within the public school system. These moves will be timely and shall coincide with the introduction of the new Makabayan (Local word for nationalistic) curriculum that integrates music, arts, physical education, home economics, technology and civics and culture and history, and the fact that the Department is now being run by former activists.

The Philippine Culture Index

Again from Williams, and lengthily, I indulge my readers to let me quote, part by part as needed by the discussion:

"A culture, while it is being lived, is always in part unknown, in part unrealized. The making of a community (or a nation, mine) is always an exploration, for consciousness cannot precede creation,

and there is no formula for unknown experience. A good community, a living culture, will, because of this, not only make room for but actively encourage all and any who can contribute to the advance in consciousness which is the common need."

Let this be the context of our proposal for crafting a Philippine Culture Index (PCIP)—that a culture is a total way of life and is lived, and therefore why and how are we to list down indices for it? Every ethno-linguistic group (and there are around 130), every community, all over the Philippines has its own culture, certainly not known to many, or a majority, or all of the Filipinos. Don't we then build a national culture by knowing each other's community culture and recognize the same experiences, the same thoughts and feelings, the same ideas and imagination? The same repressed past yet glorious too? Or even to note and understand the differences, big or small. Is it possible to agree on certain truths or items, not just facts like the size and population of our country or a list of our natural resources, and see them as ties that bind us as a nation? Some opposed the Index not only for what such lists inherently exclude but also because they find them plain elementary and crude, or naïve.

Or as Art historian and critic from the University of the Philippines Patrick Flores, in reaction to a hastily-put-together alternative art canon for Filipinos for a turn-of-the-millennium project, commented that Isagani Cruz, critic, professor and playwright from De La Salle University: "… makes it appear that putting up a canon to dismantle the prevailing Eurocentric one is the only way to gain pride as a race.

Flores proceeds to ask: "For whom and against whom do we invoke achievement and what do we mean by it? A sense of identity, well-being, dignity, grace, and fulfillment?" He, in effect, questions an elitist canon even if Filipino just as the successive independent Philippine governments after 1946 did not work for the people's welfare.

But maybe this is where we are, and this is what we need to do—craft a common body of knowledge and understanding on Philippine culture that includes but is not limited to concepts, values, ideas, events, expressions, persons, places, icons, signs and symbols. It shall not be a mere list of information but shall include for every entry a comprehensive context of its meaning—historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, dialectically engaging our history and its contradictions with its culture and art. It will include debates on various issues or concepts. For example, with the Filipino flag as entry, not only will the historical background be given, nor the small stories around, behind and about the design and symbolism, the women who sewed it, etc. but also the questions and debates, including the Mindanao claim that because they're not represented anywhere in the flag, how then can

they see themselves belonging to this nation (From Nagasura Madale). It will not be a mere static stock knowledge replacement of the Eurocentric content of education but a dynamic engaging index that will show ongoing discussions and recent findings.

What should set this apart from all other state-funded legitimation projects is that this index shall be put together through peoples consultations, after communities have critically reviewed what they know about themselves, and taken stock of gaps, errors, inaccuracies and misinformation, prejudices, and proceed with a resolve to correct these. When people who know they share a common history are empowered as citizens of a nation, will they not actively participate in the affairs of that state? Setting a canon that truly replaces the colonizer's, and is not just a mitigated version of it, is the first grossly overlooked step we should have taken a long time ago. If only to completely discredit history textbooks that extol colonization for its legacies to our people of education, democracy and health and sanitation and fail to expose the torture and massacre of Filipinos in the same colonizers' hands, and ensure the writing of correct ones, then the Index should have served a purpose.

Evidence has shown that a society, if it decides to, can train or shape its members in almost any direction but what is important, according to Williams, "…is not that we are all malleable—any culture and any civilization depend on this—but the nature and origin of the shaping process."

> "Wherever we have started from, we need to listen to others who started from a different position. We need to consider every attachment, every value, with our whole attention; for we do not know the future, we can never be certain of what may enrich it; we can only, now, listen to and consider whatever may be offered and take up what we can." [Williams, Raymond, *Culture and Society* 1780-1950, p.320]

The Index is the natural destination of, or sequel to, the cultural maps. It will be on a grander and more comprehensive scale. Initial lists gathered from existing bodies such as school curricula, textbooks, encyclopedias, museums and archives, lore and histories and stories shall be validated in the different places and by communities themselves. They will then decide which of their own they feel strongly should be known by others and should be contributed to the national list every Filipino must eventually know. This is like putting together an inventory of all our resources as a nation, and such an inventory we need badly either as our defense against globalization or as our position in the global scheme of things. Or as both.

When we threw this idea to a panel of experts across arts and disciplines, and from all throughout the country, it was immediately judged as not doable,

a highly probable "bloody" and emotional exercise and therefore divisive as communities decide which are the most important to them. In that consultation alone of very enlightened cultural workers, two from Mindanao questioned including our designated Natrional Artists in the list of what should bind us as a nation? We cited Fernando Amorsolo, the grand old man of Philippine art, Manila-born but loved painting the romanticized (in the way of the west) provincial or rural scenery – the idyllic farm scene. The Mindanao representatives asked why they have to know him. His paintings do not resonate with their life in Cotabato and argue they cannot even feel for him. Besides, they question also the selection process for these National Artists declared only by Manila. They also raised, and validly, the question: how will those who grew up and decided to stay in the provinces, not caring to be mainstreamed at all (meaning brought to Manila's attention) and yet certainly have an impact on their own local communities of young artists ever hope to become the country's national artists. These were emotion-laden issues.

>"The practical liberty of thought and expression is less a natural right than a common necessity. The growth of understanding is so difficult that none of us can arrogate to himself, or to an institution or a class, the right to determine its channels of advance. Any educational system will reflect the content of a society; any emphasis in exploration will follow from an emphasis of common need. Yet no system, and no emphasis, can be adequate, if they fail to allow for real flexibility, real alternative courses. To deny these practical liberties is to burn the common seed. To tolerate only this or only that, according to some given formula, is to submit to the phantasy of having occupied the future and fenced it into fruitful or unfruitful ground." [Williams, *Culture and Society*]

Diversity has to be recognized especially within an effective community which disposes of majority power. To build solidarity as a nation, diversity has to be sustained, and viably, without creating causes for wanting to separate. This is most tricky, most delicate. Local cultures must be nurtured, and the finest from each must be drawn to enrich the national culture. The building of a nation is not incompatible with keeping our native traditions and distinct languages and cultures. The urgency is to help form a united, strong, sovereign and democratic nation and harness all our resources toward this effort.

>"Solidarity, as a feeling is obviously subject to rigidities, which can be dangerous in a period of change. The command to common action is right, but there is always the danger that the common understanding will be inadequate, and that its enforcement will prevent or delay right action. No community, no culture, can ever be fully conscious of itself, ever fully know itself. The growth

of consciousness is usually uneven, individual and tentative in nature." [Williams, p.319]

This project, through a proper Resolution was approved and allocated a substantial budget in 2003. It helped that the CuItural Center of the Philippines (CCP) president, Nestor Jardin, shepherded the proposal at the Board level, which is composed of the 4 Subcommissioners (Conservation and Restoration, Traditional communities, Arts, and Cultural Dissemination), heads of other cultural agencies like the CCP, the National Museum, the National Historical Institute, Institute of National Language, Department of Tourism, Education Committee Chairs of both Congress and the Senate, and the National Archives. It certainly will not start from nothing; a first group of researchers can immediately work and draw from all that's been written and published. A first list can then be sent out to regional representatives for validation. Island-wide consultations can be organized to enrich a first list. Let me end with another quote from Williams :

"The idea of culture describes our common inquiry, but our conclusions are diverse, as our starting points were diverse. The word culture cannot automatically be pressed into service as any kind of social or personal directive. Its emergence, in its modern meanings, marks the effort at total qualitative assessment, but what it indicates is a process, not a conclusion."

ACTING ASIAN IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE FROM SRI LANKA

Sepali Kottegoda

Introduction

When the topic for this symposium was first discussed among us fellows, the main question that came up was whether there is something called an "Asian" identity. After all, the program that we were all there for in 2004, in Japan, was called the "Asia" Leadership Fellow Program which, in itself, framed us, from seven different countries, as having one identity: Asian. We understood that "being Asian"—as opposed to being from any other part of the world—was the key to our selection. This is an area of inquiry which has become increasingly interesting for me and although I do not claim expertise in the study of identity, I feel I could explore some ramifications of my own location in South Asia.[1] Hence, I venture into this inquiry from the perspective that rather than engage in a discussion about a whole singular Asian identity, it might be more useful to examine the concept as arising from the phenomenon comprising the social, cultural, political, and economic affinities of certain subregions within a particular geographical location.

Geography

The concept of "Asia" is, it can be argued, quite ambiguous in that as, for example, in the case of Africa, it is a result of the colonial powers defining a particular geographical area with a common identity for their own strategic interests. For our purposes, the discussion of Asian identity may be better served if we recognize this as an important denominator in exploring the question of whether we are "acting Asian" or "being Asian."

The question is: What is it that we, fellows, are all supposed to share in the eyes of the world that would bind us together and enable us to strengthen our ties with each other and recognize that there is an Asian-ness that is integral to our identity?

Firstly, we are from a geographical area called "Asia" which stretches from Sri Lanka, Bhutan (South Asia), Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Southeast Asia) to Japan, China (East Asia), and, of course, the West Asian as well as Central Asian countries. The describing of a particular area as "Asia" is a relatively recent historical phenomenon. From the perspective of those of us living in this geographical area or continent, the term *Asia* clearly

derives from a history of colonization by European nations who termed us as "the other"—different in color, culture, language, social identities, and location.[2]

The specific geographical proximity of those countries which share this history of invasions that expanded the political and economic control of the European colonial powers, then, resulted in us being identified as "Asian." This imposed identity, today, has specific characteristics that enable us to recognize certain aspects of commonality, if primarily at the subregional level, which may link us to an Asian identity.

Ethno-cultural affinity

The continent of Asia has a distinct mix of religions which, it can be argued, contributes to creating a specific identity. This mix is specific in that there are large sections of the population in the Asian continent which adhere to one of the major global religions. The region has followers of Buddhism (Zen/Theravada/Mahayana/Vajrayana), Christianity (Protestantism/Roman Catholicism), Hinduism, Islam, and tribal religions, the various subregional combinations of which distinguish the region from other continents.

For example, Hinduism and Buddhism originated in India and spread across most of the continent through emissaries, traders, and political invasions. Sri Lanka received Buddhism and Hinduism from India; there is a legend that Gautama Buddha himself visited Sri Lanka on three occasions and the places he stayed at are now sacred places of worship. Buddhism is said to have reached Japan via Korea and China. Indonesia has archaeological evidence of an extensive spread of Buddhism and Hinduism in previous periods, while Indo-China continues the practice of Buddhism combined with Hinduism. Islam, the main religion in Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Malaysia, has significant numbers of adherents in most of our countries. Christianity came to this region on a large scale through first the Portuguese and Spanish, then the Dutch and the British at the height of the Western colonization of Asia in the last few centuries. Hence, today, most of the countries of Asia have a distinct combination of forms of religious worship which, given its geographical reach, play an important role in guiding the social, economic, cultural, and political directions of these societies.

If, for the sake of argument, we were to place Sri Lanka in the "South Asian" context, we would note the following: the country has a population of nineteen million which is multiethnic and multireligious; 74 percent are Sinhalese (Theravada Buddhists and Christians), 18 percent Tamil (Hindu and Christian), and 9 percent Moors/Malays (Islamic). While Hinduism and Buddhism arrived from India more than two thousand years ago, the country's more recent history—directly linked to its current identity as an "Asian" nation—bears witness to close to half a millennium of colonization

by Western powers. The coastal areas of the country were colonized first by the Portuguese (sixteenth century) and the Dutch (seventeenth century); the British colonized the whole country from the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

The continuous period of colonization in Sri Lanka left its mark in terms of the introduction of Western religions and forms of attire, and the inclusion of words from the Portuguese, Dutch, and English languages in the local Sinhala and Tamil languages. These cross-cultural exchanges can be seen in several other Asian countries which have been subjected to colonial rule in the past few centuries.

Similarly, we might refer to an example from another subregion of Asia whose identity was derived from a common history of colonization. Benedict Anderson demarcates the identity of Southeast Asia as "a region which offers splendid opportunities for comparative theorizing since it comprises areas formerly colonized by almost all the great imperial powers (England, France, Holland, Portugal, Spain and the United States) as well as uncolonized Siam."[3]

Hence, it can be argued that there are shared histories which link us in an "Asian" identity but which also indicate differences in specific aspects.

Linguistic linkages and affinities emerge as another dimension which creates this relationship at least at subregional levels. The Chinese language, in its written form, is influential in a number of other geographically neighboring languages distinguished by different nationalities, for example, the Japanese and Korean languages. Similarly, the Sanskrit language in the Indian subcontinent had been highly influential in the evolution of the Sinhala, Burman, Malay, Bahasa Indonesian, and Thai languages. The ancient language of Pali is shared in the religious stanzas of Buddhism whether recited in Bhutan, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia or Sri Lanka.

Other sociocultural peculiarities

In this perspective then, South Asia, for example, is a subregion with sociocultural affinities among its nations centered around India. Similarly, it can be argued that East Asia is a subregion centered around the greater Chinese civilization while Southeast Asia is a mix of certain sociocultural elements with Malaysia, Cambodia, and Burma finding closer affinities with the entity of South Asia, and the Philippines and Vietnam closer to that of East Asia.

In her examination of women's subordination, D. Kandiyoti argues for a focus on the nature of patriarchal sociocultural practices in the "Muslim Middle East (Iran), East Asia (China) and South Asia (India)."[4] The argument here is, there is a continuum of certain aspects of patriarchy and the resultant subordination of women across national boundaries—in marriage patterns,

in inheritance, in the hierarchical distribution of power within households, which certain societies share within the geographical area known as "Asia."

Others have narrowed their perspectives to a specific subregion as forming the basis of their "Asian" commonalities. K. Bhasin and N. S. Khan argue that feminist inquiry in the South Asian subregion was a result of

> a transformational process which started in South Asia in the 19th century as an organized and articulated stand against women's subordination. . . . The voices against women's subordination during this period took the form of a demand for the possibility of widow remarriage, for a ban on polygamy, the practices of *sati* and of *purdah*, and demands for the education and legal emancipation of women.[5]

One might well draw on Anderson's conceptualization of nationalism as ". . . an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" for one to come to an understanding of an Asian identity.[6] From this perspective, one could argue that, while there is no single Asian individual representative of the whole of Asia, it is more the case of subregional or subcontinental identities which contribute to a composite larger identity called the "Asian."

Political and economic interactions

In the arena of politics and economic linkages and affinities, several aspects come to mind.

On the one hand there is a long history of political interaction between various societies at the subregional or subcontinental level: either as interstate/polity alliances and friendships or as disputes and confrontations. In some subregions, some polities have waxed and waned as subregional powers, subordinating their neighbors. Geographical proximities have also enabled close economic ties between neighbors and within and sometimes between subregions.

One the other hand, in modern times, one sees the emergence, in the post-Second World War period, of a number of regional institutions and cooperative mechanisms, which draw on area-specific commonalities: for example, economic and political cooperation to strengthen the bargaining powers of its constituent members in relation to other world regions. The United Nations categorizes the entire geographical area of Asia and Australia and the Pacific Islands as coming under the purview of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) forms a grouping of countries at a subregional level on the basis of economic and

political cooperation for the improvement of trade and economic growth in the designated geographical area. Similarly, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) recognizes the specificities of the countries in the region as being different from those of other regions. What is of interest here is that these subregional groupings necessarily require us to recognize that while the notion of "Asian-ness" sets us apart from Americans or Europeans, there is still a strong perception that the *differences* and *specificities* among the countries in Asia necessarily warrant discrete institutional arrangements to engage in exchanges/relations that would be more beneficial and successful for their constituent member countries.

Similar collective mechanisms have emerged in the nongovernmental sector. The Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA) is but one of the organizations at the nongovernmental level which draw on the perception of a common Asian identity as the basis for exploring and encouraging cultural and social interactions among their constituent member countries. Women's organizations with a shared concern on issues of discrimination against women have come together as the Asia Pacific Women Law and Development Organization or the Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW), again drawing on notions of belonging to the territory of "Asia." Likewise, there is LAWASIA that brings the legal profession together region-wide.

However, even within such continent-wide formations, there are subregional specificities factored into the life of these regional institutions. In some of the regional women's organizations, for example, while there is an overarching commitment to work toward gender equality, there is nonetheless a recognition that there are some issues—for example the practice of dowry deaths (South Asia) or the issue of "comfort women" (East Asia)—which are subregion-specific and hence require organizational strategies and policies that conform to analysis and actions arising from historical, political, and economic specificities in the causes and consequences of these phenomena. The recognition of these specificities has also resulted in subregional gatherings such as South Asia Women's Watch (SAWW), which shares information on and analyses of the situation of women in the seven constituent member countries, and channels these analyses into the broader network of APWW in linking up with the wider range of concerns on the empowerment of women at the regional level.

Economic linkages:"Asian-ness" within globalization

Globalization is the modern buzzword whether we are talking about the production and sale of soft drinks, industrial technology, or the manufacture of footwear or clothing. The rapid expansion in the movement of capital, goods and services, and labor across national and regional

boundaries has been unprecedented since the initial explorations from the European continent to the far reaches of the world several centuries ago. Some of the outcomes of this legacy of colonization we have discussed above. As we argued, the very notion of "Asian-ness" is an outcome, partly, of this historical experience.

The focus here is to recognize that what was then colonization is now indisputably packaged as "globalization." What is of interest here is the incorporation of certain perceptions of "Asian" characteristics into the scheme of globalization which has become the backbone of the success of key economic ventures undertaken in the region.

For example, if we look back into our colonial histories, we would see that labor required for agricultural or industrial ventures, for example in the tea plantations set up by the British, rested on the wholesale transportation and relocation of sections of the colonized populations, on the basis of ethnicity or caste, to other areas/countries. Hence, Sri Lanka and Malaysia witnessed the arrival of thousands of Tamils from South India brought over by the British masters to work as indentured labor in the plantation sector. The subjugation of these peoples as the "colonized" and the control exerted over every aspect of their lives ensured that they were a compliant workforce.

The distribution of these workers among the different tasks required in these plantations was based on "gendered" notions of capabilities; hence, for two centuries, women have had the primary task of picking tea leaves, working more than eight hours in the field from the early hours of the morning on a daily basis. The deciding factor here is the notion that women are more skillful with their fingers and are more capable of working in a designated area for long hours in a day. In Sri Lanka, until a decade ago, the wages of women plantation workers were paid to their spouses, apparently on the grounds that women would not have the capacity to handle monies whereas men would.

In the more recent period of "globalization," we can recall that in the 1970s, South Korea and Taiwan were among the first Asian countries to introduce into the region "Export Processing Zones" or "Free Trade Zones" geared toward mass production for international markets on the basis of piecework. There has been a concentration on the production of items such as electronic chips, clothing, and footwear, for example, using female labor between the ages of eighteen and thirty. The rationale for using this section of the workforce is the notion that they embody "Asian" female qualities such as respect for and obedience in the face of hierarchical structures, nonaggressive behavior patterns, and skills relating to domesticity such as sewing.

This so-called "docile" nature of young Asian women and their "nimble fingers" are as highly valued as the commodities they produce in hundreds of garment manufacturing factories and electronic industries in the

East Asian region; the adequate supply of this source of labor makes it easy for employers to dismiss women whose productivity might suffer in the event of marriage or childbirth. In South Asia, Sri Lanka was identified as an ideal location with a relatively well-educated female labor force which, it was noted, still had those "Asian" qualities of women—docile, nonaggressive, hardworking, and employable at low wages.[7]

Migrant workers

The other key area in the economy where women have been targeted for embodying the qualities of the "Asian" woman is in state-level measures which facilitate the export of women as migrant housemaids in West Asian countries. Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines are among Asian countries which send out thousands of women every year to work as housemaids; their remittances now form an important component of the national incomes of these countries. In Sri Lanka, this policy has also brought about changes in perceptions of ethnicity-centered qualities of women. Over the past two decades, women from the Muslim community, generally expected to be less mobile compared with their Sinhala and Tamil counterparts, have migrated out of their villages and the country for employment overseas along with Sinhala and Tamil women.

From the West Asian countries, the demand is usually for married women between the ages of thirty and forty-five to work for periods between two and five years. This category of women are deemed the most suitable since they are perceived to be already socialized in the "Asian" tradition to be good mothers and responsible homemakers who can be safely given the tasks of child care and housekeeping in the employer's home. The fact that the remittances of these migrant workers contribute immensely to the national coffers has meant that it is in the interest of the sending countries to encourage such avenues of employment for women.[8]

Women as the keepers of tradition

The impact of this integration of women into the active labor force can be seen in the increase in the number of women working outside their homes or undertaking subcontracted piecework within their homes. These developments have in turn resulted in changes in living styles, consumption patterns, sexual behaviour, and marriage patterns. The expansion of avenues for skills training, education, and general mobility of women has increased their visibility in the public sphere. There is an emerging fear among some sections that these changes also endanger the "Asian-ness" of the qualities of women and pose challenges to the dominance of the male-headed household.[9]

Strangely, there seems to be little questioning of why it is only women's behaviour, style of dress or mobility which seems to symbolize the "Asianness" of our culture. After all, changes in men's clothing, for example, from traditional to Western seem to have been approved by society very smoothly with not a hint of the social turmoil brought about by changes in women's dress code. It seems, unfortunately, that women continue to be seen as the "signifier" of cultural identity.

Acting/Being Asian

So, I come back to the main theme of this paper. Are we "acting" Asian or are we "being" Asian in this globalizing world? Do we, in our quest to preserve our "Asian" cultures, also defend those oppressive patriarchal structures which, for example, result in girl children being discriminated against in terms of access to food or education, or uphold the notion that a woman is subjugated first to the authority of her father, then her husband, and then her son? Rather we should recognize that in the subregions which comprise the geographical area known as "Asia," it is possible to negotiate and relocate our specific identities within a nondiscriminatory, nonexploitative framework, whether it is in the arena of social cultural practices or economic exchanges.

There is clearly a need to recognize the rising economic powers of several countries in this geographical region called "Asia." Today, India, China, and Japan as major centers of production and trade in the subregions of South Asia and East Asia are the uncontested economic giants in the region. As such, one can argue that these countries are redefining the global economic map.

Endnotes

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Personal Takes

IMPRESSIONS OF A CULTURE
Kinley Dorji

The *on-sen*—hot spring bath, Japanese style—is a great Japanese experience. Apart from being a wonderful bath, it depicts Japanese aestheticism in all its finesse as well as the uncompromising cultural sensitivity of Japanese society. I learned that during my first visit to Japan, the hard way.

As a worthy journalist I had done my research and learned that one thing you do not do is go to the public bath with your clothes on. You bathe stark naked after going through the long-established norms of washing yourself. The etiquette is so important that Japanese society is seriously offended by ill-bred *gaijin* (foreigner) who do not understand this. So I was more than prepared.

I went to my first bath, proud to look like a samurai warrior in my *yukata* (robe). Just to be safe, however, I decided to wear my briefs as far as the locker room. After confirming, discreetly, that the other men had undressed completely and had walked naked to the bath area, I quickly slipped my underwear into the pocket of the yukata, which I left in the locker, and strolled confidently through a bamboo partition into a large room where all the men were preparing for the bath.

I was standing, straight and proud, in the middle of the room when I noticed that every man in that room held a small towel with which he modestly covered his manhood. (I learned later that I should have brought the *tenugui* (towel), an essential article for the bath, from my room.) It was one of the unforgettable moments of my life, standing there, among a crowd of naked men, the only man without a towel.

I returned to Japan five years later, a much wiser self-professed public intellectual. And, thanks to the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP), it was to be a true learning experience.

A seventy-year-old friend, Okada-san, who had worked as a senior volunteer in Bhutan in 2002, picked me up at the airport on August 30, 2004. After we eventually figured out where he had parked his car and delayed traffic at the tollgate because Okada-san had lost his ticket, we missed the highway leading to Tokyo. Tired after a sleepless flight, I told Okada-san to take his time and fell asleep. Some thirty minutes later I woke up to find myself alone in the car, which was rolling down a slope. I managed to pull the hand brake and learned, when Okada-san caught up, that he had forgot-

ten to pull the brake when he went out to ask for directions.

I also learned that Okada-san was leaving the country again on a volunteer mission to Costa Rica. "You mean your wife doesn't mind you leaving again so soon?" I teased. "No," he said, "she's very happy." I thought Okada-san was getting witty. In the following weeks I was to learn why his wife was genuinely pleased to get him out of the country.

It was not just Okada-san. I knew a number of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) senior volunteers in Bhutan and visited them in Kobe and Hokkaido. They were incredibly wonderful hosts who went sightseeing with me all day and, in Hokkaido, drove me long distances so I can look at plant life. I was genuinely apologetic for wasting their time but the answer was consistent: "No problem. We are free. We have nothing to do."

It was not a happy freedom. My friends, postwar babies now retired, were dealing somewhat helplessly with the twilight years of their lives, all alone. Apart from more than 30,000 Japanese who are over 100 years, there are several million unemployed senior citizens. Shibuya-san in Kobe explained to me that many of them had never spent much time at home during their working lives so their wives found their daily presence difficult to deal with. That was why couples were divorcing late in their lives.

Ten weeks in Japan, with the insights provided by our interaction with a number of "progressive liberals," showed us some of the anguish behind the facade of an incredibly successful and wealthy society we see from an Asian perspective. And it was the Asian-ness of this perspective that helped us understand the emotions that lie behind what Western society likes to call the inscrutable face of Japan.

Vivid images of the war in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum evoke in the visitor memories of a difficult, hard-fought war. History came agonizingly alive when we had dinner with an A-bomb survivor who had undergone surgery twenty-seven times. Equally painful are the reminders of the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers in East and Southeast Asia. A senior Japanese scholar could not choke back the tears when he recapped the experience. It was difficult not to get emotional when he personally apologized to the fellows from China and the Philippines for the behaviour of his countrymen.

The mixture of distress and regret as well as the sensitivity of the topic itself was palpable when we met a writer who has literally torn apart the myth of the kamikaze pilots. She too was overwhelmed by emotion as she talked about what she had learned from the diaries of the young pilots who had sacrificed their lives for their country. She appeared to share the suffering of those reluctant heroes during the last nights in their camps and the night-

mares that preceded the solemn oaths they took before their emperor the next day.

We came across a deep discomfort when we discussed nationhood as it was symbolized by the emperor, the national flag, and the national anthem. I picked up the distinct impression that these obvious symbols of the motherland were perceived to be tainted. The postwar generation of Japanese is not comfortable with history. Apart from Singapore, which has pragmatically chosen to bury the past, Japan continues to be confronted by its Asian neighbours for the "war crimes." And I do not think it helps that debate on the issue is generally avoided.

As I tried to meditate in the beautiful surroundings of the International House of Japan (I-House) garden, it was difficult not to feel the weight of Japanese history.

The seven visiting fellows of 2004 decided to "act Asian." We were all sensitive to the nuances that we perceived. We understood that there were some issues we must not confront. Although Japan widely acknowledged the fact that the aging population was a problem we were not supposed to ask women why they did not want children, or husbands in some cases. An interpreter squirmed when I asked her if she had children. A young Ainu artist gave us a lesson in Ainu art and ate dinner with us but it was rude to ask her, even academically, why she seemed to distance herself from other Ainu.

The dynamic head of a major corporation was quick to admit that Japanese corporations took too much of their employees' time and kept them away from their families. But there appears to be nothing being done about it and, as a Japanese journalist worries, young men like his son rarely see their parents because they come home after midnight and leave for work before daybreak.

Even as Japanese thinkers are beginning to question the quality of life in this rich society and the level of happiness of the people, I believe that Japan, as an Asian leader, deserves a better global image. Today Japan's international stature is assured mostly because of the large funds it contributes, but poor communications mar its public face. Although this has been attributed to poor language I believe that culture, which prevents the Japanese from open and forthright discussions, contributes to the impression that the Japanese are "difficult" to deal with. An attitude problem also emerges particularly when Japanese men deal with women.

The I-House and the Japan Foundation (JF) earned my healthy respect by giving us valuable exposure to some of the more unsavory aspects of Japanese society. This included the government's apparent discrimination against the Korean and Buraku minorities in Kyoto. A day visit showed the layers of tension as local Korean communities complaining about discrimi-

nation themselves rejected newer arrivals among them. In Hokkaido the Ainu culture has been reduced to a small museum and an enchanting restaurant where we—the chosen Asian public intellectuals and our I-House and JF friends—sang a Beatles song with a cultural cringe.

Every visitor to Japan knows, today, that Japanese culture seems to hit you as soon as you arrive. This is perhaps why one writer says, "The Japanese are so convinced that they are different from everyone else that it is easy to become convinced." Given the almost insurmountable language problem, it is extremely difficult to dig beneath the surface. So it was fascinating for me to learn how closely linked Japan is to the United States. Every Japanese intellectual we met seemed to personify a "love-hate" relationship with the U.S. We even met Japanese intellectual giants who were literally "sulking" to protest certain American actions.

Of course we all fell in love with Japan. For the 2004 fellows, the colors of October in Hokkaido will remain a permanent memory, now living in nine small saplings that I nursed all the way back home. A drive through Niseko Town, a walk through the woods, a hot bath in the on-sen, and an elaborate traditional Japanese dinner washed down with warm sake and we were all wondering in earnest: "What have I done to deserve this?" I will not even attempt to describe Japanese food. How can you adequately describe the colors of the seasons being molded into a *toraya* cake or the fragrance of fresh fish in a sushi lunch on the edge of the water in Otaru City?

By October, a few weeks into the ALFP program, the Asian fellows and the I-House and JF people were good enough friends to hit the karaoke scene, a serious business. Again the commonly known songs were all English but, microphone in hand, I sensed the thrill that makes a man who has been subdued and quiet all day sing and writhe with great professionalism at night.

My topic for the ALFP was "happiness," an inspiration for development conceived by the king of Bhutan. But when I took a bath in an on-sen on Hachijo-Jima Island, halfway up the Hachijo-Jima-Fuji Volcano, with a delicate pine-and-bamboo mixed forest in the background and the open Pacific in the front, I found a new meaning of happiness. And happiness turned into ecstasy in a traditional *ryokan* (inn), far down the coast of the Izu Peninsula, in a room filled with the aroma of fresh tatami.

But I digress.

Identity, security, democracy . . . the theme for the 2004 ALFP program was profound and broad. For a Bhutanese student of identity, Japan's thinking during the Meiji restoration period was an exciting read. With Bhutan poised on the edge of dramatic political change I could identify with 1868 Japan in a strangely nostalgic way. It was two similar worlds, 150 years apart.

With the advantage of hindsight, Bhutan decided that westernization was not modernization, while Japan opted to westernize, but some similarities are amazing.

In fact this brought up an old question that had been on my mind for years. Thousands of Japanese tourists come to Bhutan every year, their main reason being that Bhutan reminds them of what Japan must have once been like so it is a trip back into time. True, we Bhutanese are cheated by shop-keepers everywhere in Southeast Asia because we look like Japanese and the Japanese, like us, bow in respect. Both Bhutan and Japan are also Buddhist countries with a king and emperor as symbols of unity. But I had never been able to see real connections between two countries that were, otherwise, poles apart.

This time, however, I might have hit upon a clue—not in scholarly research or historical libraries, but in uncanny similarities that I heard in a small noodle house in Azabu Juban when we chatted over cups of hot *shochu* (a type of Japanese liquor). When Japanese men introduce their wives to a friend or business partner they say, "Please meet my *gusai*," meaning my fool-ish or ugly wife. When Bhutanese women say, "My husband is a *tsagay* (idiot)," they say it with the same intended modesty. I don't know of any other cul-ture that does this. I also know now it is common in both cultures to lay out a major feast for a guest and apologize for "such a simple meal." To cap it all I learned that Japanese men used to go "night hunting" for girls not so long ago. Bhutanese men still do it and we also call it "night hunting."

I recall my brief visit to Japan in 1999 when, on a media junket, I tasted good food and saw wonderful sights but received no insight into the real essence of the Japanese value system until I went to a four-hour kabuki play that everyone said would be boring. Set in a village school, the story of a nobleman who sacrificed his son out of his love and loyalty for his king reduced me to tears. As a Bhutanese I could identify with this depth of human relationship and value although, in Bhutan too, such nobility is now largely confined to mythology.

To me it was not only a glimpse at the essence of Japanese culture; it provided an understanding of an issue we wanted to get a grip on: the Asian identity. How else can we understand our identity but by delving deep into our past . . . our origins? For me it was the beginning of a new line of interest, a potential pursuit of an Asian connection.

At the end of the ALFP I asked myself many questions, as others must have. So what was it all about? Was it just a good public relations effort? Was it anything more than a junket? What, in the end, did I get out of the program?

In many ways I am yet to understand the full impact of my Japan

experience. Japan is such a different world with so many complexities that I do not pretend to know it at all. So I left Narita Airport in November with more questions than answers. But I do confess that I left with not only a better understanding but a changed view of Japanese society.

Like the rest of the world I had always viewed Japan and the people of Japan through a Western lens, with the perspective provided by the all-powerful Western media. It is difficult not to enjoy the Japan jokes or the films that become international hits just by stereotyping the Japanese. Therefore being able to look at Japan through an Asian—a Japanese—viewpoint was an eye-opener.

Ultimately, for me, it has become a question of identity. My ALFP experience has triggered a personal research project through which I hope to gain some understanding of this vital issue, be it identity at a personal or national level, or today's fractured and disparate global identity.

RICE ARE US: SOME UNFINISHED MUSINGS ON ASIAN IDENTITY
Faye Chunfang Fei

> *Identity is actually something formed through unconscious processes over time, rather than being innate in consciousness at birth. There is always something "imaginary" or fantasized about its unity. It always remains incomplete, is always "in process," always "being formed."*
> —Stuart Hall[1]

In 1987, after *China Dream* was produced off-off-Broadway in New York, I was interviewed by *Rice*, a California-based monthly magazine. I was intrigued: "Why did you name your magazine *Rice?*" The answer couldn't have been more obvious: "Ours is a premier Asian-American publication. We Asians all eat rice." In the fall of 2004, I read *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time* by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, a Japanese cultural anthropologist based in the U.S. It was the book's title that first caught my attention.

"You are what you eat," goes the common saying. All over Asia and through the centuries rice has not only been a staple food but also a way of life. Rice are us Asians, so to speak. But there is such a great variety of rice eaten in Asia, some more preferred than others in each country or region: brown rice, white rice, red rice; long-grain rice, medium-grain rice, short-grain rice; sticky rice, glutinous rice, peta rice, basmati rice, jasmine rice, miracle rice—the list goes on. Also as Asians, we not only process, prepare, and cook our rice differently, we even eat it in many different ways: some, like the Chinese and Japanese, using chopsticks (our chopsticks are different, but that's another story altogether), some with their bare fingers. Obviously, rice are us, but we are also very different.

A bowl of mixed rice

Then they came together, in the International Year of Rice designated by the United Nations, the seven "rice-eating" public intellectuals of different colors, tastes, shapes, sizes, and types from seven Asian countries. The "Magnificent Seven" congregated in the International House of Japan in Tokyo—a tranquil oasis nestled amidst a graceful traditional Japanese garden, steeped in history, next to the hustle and bustle of Roppongi Hills—

collectively in search again of identity and its close relation to security and democracy.[2]

From behind her big publisher's desk at Anvil Publishing in Manila came Karina Africa Bolasco ("Miss Africa"), determined at "Crafting a Philippines Cultural Index"; down from the sacred Himalayan mountain peaks came Kinley Dorji, the editor in chief of *Kuensel*, the only newspaper in Bhutan, mesmerizing everyone with his mantra of "Gross National Happiness" (GNH) with an accompanying three-minute Buddhist meditation; from Indonesia's National Islam University in Jakarta came Jamhari ("Jam"), an impish small person engaged with a serious big issue—"the Rise of Religious Fundamentalism"; from Colombo came Chandrika Sepali Kottegoda ("Sepali"), an action-oriented scholar always with a twinkle in her eyes, spearheading the civic movement in Sri Lanka to empower women in all spheres of public life; from Hokkaido University came Takayoshi Kusago ("Taka"), a Japanese economist deeply concerned with the balancing act between "Economic Growth" and "Human Development"; from Vietnam National University in Hanoi came Nguyen Van Chinh ("General Chinh"), committed to investigating the "terrible" state of child labor as Vietnam joins forces with the global market. It was in this bowl of mixed rice that I found myself, a theater artist-scholar from Shanghai—at the moment "the most happening city in the world," according to *Time* magazine—attempting to tell "Theater Herstory." And together we embarked on an auspicious journey of discoveries and recognitions, whose dénouement was also a new beginning.

Everyone in this bowl of mixed rice was aged over forty except for young "Jam." Everyone was well established in his or her chosen profession and had attained the mystifying title of Asian "public intellectual." It is also an openly acknowledged fact that at this stage of our lives, both personally and professionally, most of us tend to travel in the same familiar circles, attending the same conventions, and meeting the same crowds. While this may denote security, stability, and structure, it also segregates us and confines us. What we all needed was something analogous to an acting exercise, as noted by Kuo Pao Kun in his 1997 ALFP report, in which one is encouraged to extricate oneself as much as possible from formed reflexes and clichéd responses, to arrive at a state closest to intellectual and emotional "neutral-ness"—if ever that were possible—in order to be most spontaneously receptive to new things.

To be selected to participate in the prestigious ALFP, to visit Japan, to interact with a diverse group of intelligent, conscientious, open-minded, well-informed, and deeply engaged public intellectuals from all over Asia, and to exchange views on important issues of common interest from different perspectives, was certainly an opportunity very much appreciated. Because the

theme for ALFP 2004 was inclusive, provocative, relevant, and poignant all at once, and because the fellows' backgrounds were so different, what ensued was a truly open and jargon-free discussion, which I personally found refreshing and liberating. Some fellows called it "a retreat," some called it "a sabbatical," basically a chance to rejuvenate. I believe when Kinley let it slip during our field trip to Hokkaido: "What have I done to deserve all this good fortune?!" he spoke what was in every fellow's mind. (Of course, Kinley, comfortably decked out in his cotton *yukata* robe after a relaxing soak in the outdoor *on-sen*, was also blissfully gazing into his sake glass, with a full Japanese banquet appetizingly laid out in front of him, when he spilled those heartfelt words.)

I had long thought of myself as a well-traveled internationalist, an enlightened student of the East and the West, and a postmodern citizen of the world. Participating in the ALFP, however, has made me acutely aware of the gaping gap in my knowledge and appreciation of the rest of Asia, Japan included. Being Chinese has deep emotional, cultural, and intellectual relevance for me, but being Asian was mostly a matter of geographical proximity. When I say that the fellowship has been "enriching" it is no cliché, but, in fact, an understatement. It has located my blind spots and turned on the lights.

Japanese rice

Japan has always fascinated me, partly because it is a society that is so modern and so traditional at the same time. The innovative modernity of the West, particularly the United States of America, and the classical splendor of East Asia, particularly China, have exerted powerful formative influences in making Japan what it is today. The stereotype of Japan as an isolated island country and of the Japanese as homogenous chauvinists with closed minds is unfounded because the Japanese identity has been constructed and reconstructed through their interactions with other peoples throughout history. The hybrid character of the Japanese national-cultural identity is undisputable; therein lies its strength as well as its enigma.

The concept of the self or identity, be it individual or collective, is always defined in relation to the other. Apparently, in the discourse of self and the other, rice has served as a powerful metaphor for the Japanese to think about themselves in relation to other people. For instance, toward the end of the Early Modern Period, the discourse on the Japanese collective self vis-à-vis Westerners as the other took the form of rice versus meat; while the discourse on the Japanese vis-à-vis other Asians, most dramatically during World War II, took the form of domestic rice (from divine origin)

versus foreign rice (inferior). The rice from China, from whose culture Japanese rice agriculture was, in fact, derived, was considered particularly inferior.[3] The double process of identification to distinguish themselves both from the West and from other Asians is still in evidence in Japan today.

I find it more than a little curious that the Japanese *kanji* term for "United States of America" is *bei* or *beikoku*, literally "rice country." In Japanese, as in Chinese, there is not only one word for rice, but several: *kome* or *o-kome*, *gohan, ine*, and *momi*, to name but a few. Each of these words stands for rice at a different stage in its life: seedlings, ready for harvesting, uncooked, cooked, that sort of thing. When most people in Japan were farmers, they all knew the differences between the words, but now that most live in cities, nobody knows the difference. So everybody says *raisu* (the Japanese pronunciation for the English word *rice*).[4] Slowly going is not only the grain's proper Japanese name; in fact, Japanese rice, white and highly polished, is consumed less and less year by year, as compared to 150 kilos per person per year before World War II. However, people still use rice as a powerful metaphor in talking about issues of identity. Natsuki Ishigami, a budding young playwright and theater producer introduced to me by Yasushi Watanabe of Keio University, evoked the metaphor again in her play, *Tokyo Rice*, recently staged at Tsukiji Honganji Temple. The cross-cultural model for the interpretation of the self and other proposed in *Rice as Self* certainly still serves as a vehicle for the contemporary deliberation of identity.

Hybrid rice

My Japanese was nonexistent when I arrived at Narita Airport in Tokyo on September 1, 2004. When I left three months later, my Japanese was not much improved. I must say it is not a true reflection either of my linguistic abilities or willingness to learn. I asked Lee Jong Won of the ALFP advisory board whether it would be necessary for me to learn some Japanese when he first interviewed me in Shanghai. Professor Lee kindly assured me that with English and Chinese under my belt I would have no problem getting around in Japan. Still uneasy, I asked several Chinese colleagues of mine in the Japanese Department of my university to teach me the basics. They discouraged me from even trying given the limited time I had, and warned that the Japanese would respect you if you spoke good English but would look down on you if you were a Chinese speaking poor Japanese. Baffled, but also not desiring to confront possible discrimination, I gave up learning Japanese even before I began.

Once in Japan, Chinese and English came in handy for me, with the former assisting me in decoding Japanese words written in kanji. Aside from

some of the usual polite greetings and survival phrases in Japanese, I, like all the other non-Japanese fellows, got by on our common linguistic denominator: English. Semi-seriously, someone said we were under the dictatorship of English. (At the public symposium, Karina delivered an eloquent postcolonial analysis of the role of English in her speech, "English, Education, and Filipino Identity.") But we were also all clearly aware that we would not have been able to communicate with each other or with our Japanese colleagues if it were not for our shared knowledge of English. When asked to sing a song as a group for our new Ainu friends in Sapporo, we, not knowing one common song in any Asian language, sang "Let It Be" by the Beatles. Let it be, so be it. As the final public symposium approached, all the fellows got together to learn to sing in Japanese the Sukiyaki Song. I see it not only as a token of appreciation for our Japanese hosts but also as a valiant gesture to be Asian as a group.

All seven ALFP 2004 fellows have had extensive exposure to and/or immersion in Western education and culture. All five doctorates in the group were minted overseas. The fact is that each grain of Asian rice in our mixed rice bowl is not only different from each other, but also each in itself a hybrid of the East and West. Interestingly, however, it is this very hybrid identity or crossbreeding that has liberated us and united us, at least allowing us to communicate with ease and giving us a sense of community.

According to Yoshikazu Sakamoto in his "Transnational Civil Society in the Age of Globalization," public intellectuals are those people who are characterized by an intellectual hybrid identity, which gives birth to an intellectual perspective antithetical to exclusionary fundamentalism and ethnocentrism. It is those with a hybrid identity who "have absorbed Western scholarship, values of other Asian cultures, as well as what you consider your indigenous traditions" that are able to "foster the capacity and assume the responsibility to play a leading role in creating and strengthening a civil society transnationally, both at the regional and global levels."[5] It is a tall order. Are we the ones to fill it?

Rice in a pressure cooker?

The night before I was to leave Tokyo, I was invited by the Japan Foundation to the opening of *Memories of a Legend*, a multimedia theater collaboration by performing artists from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. It was a medieval epic in contemporary form constructed on twenty-four impressions based on *The Baburnama*, or Memoirs of Babur, the first emperor of the Mogul Empire in India, who was also the descendent of both the Timur court and Genghis Khan in Central Asia. The opening-

night performance was a true sweeping epic, entrancing and impressive, in both form and content. The energy and expressiveness was unadulterated South Asia to any trained or untrained eye. As intended, in this collaborative project, *The Barburnama* served as a unifying focal point in trying to comprehend the contentious nature of the sociopolitical as well as the very human and fantastical "realities" that make up South Asia. It was all about "border crossings, crossbreed identities, dislocations and relocations, and acculturation and acclimatization," said Anuradha Kapur, one of India's foremost theater directors.

For me personally, what the audience did not see in the performance space, the behind-the-scenes collaborative process leading up to the opening night, seemed at least equally thought provoking and emotionally stirring, if not more so. Theater is by nature collaborative, and egos are big and raw most of the time. But bringing in five directors from five countries in South Asia, where cultures are intrinsically mixed, traditions opulently diverse, languages powerfully many, and neighbors not always neighborly, and having them work together on a shared legend which has become a metaphor of contemporary sociopolitical discord in the region is, to put it mildly, a sure recipe for contention and conflict. The dynamics are extremely complex. Yuki Hata of the Japan Foundation's Performing Arts Division admitted in the Producer's Notes: "There were many times when I felt a strong urge to abandon the project entirely, but there were other times when the patience and endurance of the artists involved made me proud to be a fellow Asian. . . . I believe that all of the five, by sustaining wounds and enduring the unendurable, stubbornly acquired something of great value to take home with them." I wonder what they have taken home.

Rice are us, but we are also in a pressure cooker.

Epilogue

Exactly one month after I left Tokyo, on December 26, 2004, a devastating tsunami hit South Asia following a grade 9 earthquake in the Indian Ocean. As soon as the news broke, I e-mailed Sepali in Sri Lanka and Jam in Indonesia, now my emotional connections to their respective countries thanks to the ALFP 2004. I was relieved that both they and their families were spared, but was still deeply concerned about the aftermath of one of the most terrifying natural catastrophes in living memory.

All great natural disasters have the power to transform and transfigure, changing the region and its people forever, both physically and psychologically. This tsunami came out of the blue, taking people completely by

surprise. (Sepali said those in her country had a false sense of security as they were nowhere near any known fault line and nothing like this had ever happened there before.) But what happens when you are constantly reminded that natural disasters can hit at any given moment? What does that do to people and their culture and society? I am thinking about Japan, naturally.

Within one week of my arrival in Japan, I experienced an offshore earthquake and a powerful typhoon and read about a strong volcanic eruption. In the ensuing months, there were more such violent outbursts of nature, culminating in the October Niigata earthquake, which registered at 6.8 on the Richter scale and had hundreds of aftershocks. Overturned cars, crumbled houses, and shattered roads filled television screens. Japan's deadliest earthquake in almost a decade stunned residents used to frequent tremors; nevertheless, after rescue-and-recovery efforts, people simply went on with their lives.

Geography and climate certainly play an important role in the shaping of national identity and character. What we see in Japanese aesthetics, rituals, discipline, organization, order, courtesy, and cleanliness is ultimately the ability to cope with the capriciousness of nature and the transience of life. During our first field trip in September we visited Itsukushima Shrine in Miyajima, right after it was devastated by one of the numerous typhoons of the year. We were told by our guide that the shrine was an official World Heritage Site, partly because it had been destroyed and rebuilt so many times. Similar tales are heard everywhere.

In the Edo-Tokyo Museum, a huge slab of rock from an archeological excavation revealed layer upon layer of debris from fires, earthquakes, and air raids—an eloquent record of Tokyo's past. Immediately after showing us artifacts from U.S. air raids in 1945, our retired-school-teacher-turned-volunteer-museum-guide led us to a breathtaking reproduction of the reconstruction of Tokyo under U.S. occupation. When I asked him how the Japanese reconcile those two seemingly disparate pieces of history, he replied: "We don't think about the bad that happened before, we only look at the good that came after."

But can or should one really forget the past? Will the bad dissipate if one decides not to think about it? If I may quote Langston Hughes, does it "fester like a sore and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat?/Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?" What about those deeply conflicted love-hate feelings about America that we have heard so much about in Japan? Why have the Japanese prime minister's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine aroused such deep concerns among other Asian rice eaters?

One way to deal with the past is to confront it, as they have done in Hiroshima, the ghastly site of nuclear destruction that has now become a

strong base for world peace. Only by acknowledging the scope of devastation and the depth of human suffering can we begin to heal and move on. Great disasters—natural or man-made—can only make us strong if we look them squarely in the eye.

Endnotes

1 Hall, Stuart, "The Meaning of New Times," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 226.
2 The theme for the ALFP 2004 was the same as that of the previous year: "Identity, Security and Democracy," signifying its continuing relevance and pressing importance.
3 Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko, *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time*, Princeton University Press, 1994.
4 Stuart, Paul Meredith, "NIHONSENSE," *Japan Times*, 1987, pp.31-32.
5 "The Role of Public Intellectuals," ALFP 2002 report.

WHEN PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS COME TOGETHER
Karina Africa Bolasco

The Asia Leadership Fellow Program is an intellectual exchange program like no other. It's the only one that allows Asian public intellectuals to live and travel together, discuss and argue together, in dedicated sessions such as the workshops and seminars, or between all that traveling and sightseeing incorporated in the program as fieldtrips. Even as a digital camera is about to be pressed, and the fellows are cozy in a pose, one fellow can make a loaded commentary on the state of things in another fellow's country and start a repartee right there and then. At breakfasts at the International House of Japan, on unguarded moments hanging from the train's handbar on rush hours, or just seated in a cab three fellows might share to a destination, there is so much that goes on between and among fellows, of personal, cultural and intellectual exchanges. Not all would be and could be documented or tracked but they did take place and register in the consciousness of another fellow, or of other fellows. And often that's what counts more than what is put on paper. If I were asked to sum up the program, then it would entirely be this—the generous gift of genuine fellowship it gave us, seven women and men (from Bhutan, China, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam) that let us struggle with our own myths, stereotypes and imagination of Japan and in the process, understood a little more our very own countries and their place in the scheme of things called Asia.

Having been a book publisher for almost 24 years, I came to this program for Asian public intellectuals feeling inadequate and afraid of not being able to participate fully and deliver a respectable paper at the public symposium. True enough, as I looked at the qualifications of the other fellows, I found out I was the least educated, and the only one a hundred percent homegrown (US or UK-based education always makes a difference no matter how people deny it). But what I realized could somehow qualify me is precisely my years of developing a range of titles that has the least informed and enriched public discourse, or influenced the like or dislike for book reading. My work has given me more than ample space and time to be in the center of things. Working with writers, a good number of them intellectuals in varying interest areas and expertise, and helping them conceptualize and shape their books to engage a reading public, has been very good for my

intellectual growth. I have been able to sustain lifelong relationships with these writers, not just always of a professional nature. I have had my periods of high or ecstasy just hanging out with these people, discussing issues of the day, and always, "the challenge of packaging a product." Or how to write for, or speak to, a public and help counter the heavy daily doses of inanity from the country's two most powerful television stations. Their capitalist cutthroat competition has not raised the bars for excellence, or improved the product to the consumers' benefit, but has instead sunk them to the lowest layer of sensationalism and utter disregard for human dignity.

What has fiercely preoccupied us in terms of the tradebook (Books not used in schools either as texts or reference) business is learning the ways of subverting popular forms. And then in the school markets, there are the textbooks going to captive audiences or publics, where the space for molding young minds is just there, but unfortunately the right academic scholars with knowledge and a vision allege they are not familiar with basic education pedagogy and certainly don't wield the right language for grade school and high school readers. A sin of omission; a gap immediately filled up by cut-and-paste writers who happen to be classroom teachers. Through the years, my responsibilities to my public as a publisher have become clearer and clearer, but not at the expense of it being run as a viable business. This tough balancing act is what each time generates and regenerates energy and imagination to contribute to keeping a public informed and in schools, to thoroughly tearing down a national inferiority complex incessantly fed by the vestiges of colonization and a continuing miseducation.

Against this backdrop, the fellowship was priceless. Even as most of us in Asia continue to be suspicious of Japanese intentions, we take pride in it being an Asian initiative. As such, it respected Asians for valuable work in their own countries, and generously offered us time, a very precious commodity no longer ours, to exchange, reflect on our situations and their impact on Asia, and perhaps even agree to collectively embark on regional small efforts toward improving the quality of living for all and making this world kinder for all. The organizers, the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation, aware of how wisely and adroitly managing physical space can shape and determine the quality of exchange, chose the most appropriate base or quarters for the fellows, and somehow the right cities and towns to visit. The selection of Japanese seminar resource persons was almost impeccable—showcasing the lucidity, wisdom, spirituality and calmness of reason of Japanese scholars and thinkers. The engagement with social and community groups, as raised by one fellow, was deliberately progressive-leaning. He missed having an audience with a member of the Diet or the Minister of Trade, for instance. This probably was due to the fact that they

were so conscious of the need to ensure no one in the end would, or could, say it was merely government propaganda.

There is no more appropriate and captivating way of being introduced to Japan than through its International House (nicknamed I-House), officially opened on June 11, 1955 by two young men who shared a fervent belief in the value of cultural layers of international relations, more than the economic and political. They were John Rockefeller III and Shigeharu Matsumoto who resolutely pursued their dream of a culture center that would "…bring our peoples closer together in their appreciation and understanding of each other and their respective cultures through such interchange and to assist each other in solving mutual problems… ways should be found to allow each other, through a free and voluntary interchange of ideas and information." It took them two and a half decades, the second world war that pitted their two countries against each other, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and postwar cracks on all fronts of Japan's relations to the rest of the world.

Located in posh Roppongi where all the embassies are, the International House's most immediately outstanding feature is its precious, so very precious and haunting garden. In the first and a half months of the fellowship, when it was not yet too cold, it was my sanctuary. I exercised and meditated there; listened to music from home, read books and scribbled lines hopefully for future verses. When the insects started to bother me, I moved to the rooftop, from where the garden was even more enchanting, and the serene sky and moon seemed reachable. Of the four things in Japan which impressed Rockefeller the most as he wrote in his diaries in 1929, second was "the beauty of Japanese gardens." He perhaps made sure this culture center would bask in the glory and spirituality of such a garden, the preservation of which was a prerequisite even in the major renovation project of the I-House facility now underway.

All the fellows' rooms were in one hall that had two shared bathrooms: one for men and the other, for women. So we ran into each other in our pajamas or Japanese robes, and had interesting conversations even in the laundry room. The I-House library was a haven too with its sizeable collection of books on Japan's history and politics, literature and the arts, education and language, and many other aspects of Japanese life and living. Its subscription to the world's best journals, dailies and magazines proves how cosmopolitan Japan is. Every week I read the New York Review of Books there up till 9pm. Its own Japan Times was probably the only paper that eulogized Jacques Derrida in its editorial, and would publish guest editorials from countries celebrating their independence or nationhood.

The program took us to many parts of Japan: Hiroshima, Kyoto, Gotemba, Hakone and almost all of western Hokkaido, flying in into New

Chitose and covering by bus all the way up to another airport, Asahikawa, from Niseko to Sapporo, from Mikasa to Furano. It showed us exemplary local governance, competent town management, eco-tourism and effective waste management, efficient administration of an old yet world-competitive university, distinct Ainu art, music and cuisine, alternative loan system of the Hokkaido NPO Bank, special education for truant children who drop out because of pressure from teachers or bullies. Always and anywhere, there were rich narratives to share, compare and learn from. Always and everywhere, the high level of Japanese aesthetics was visible—nothing was done just to get done. Even the littlest food packaging sought artistic perfection.

The retreat conference in Gotemba, a quiet town at the foot of the amazing and majestic Mt. Fuji turned out to be a useful and fertile exchange between fellows and selected Japanese scholars on topics fellows presented in their papers. Held at the facility of Japan's second largest convenience store chain, Lawson, royally surrounded by centuries-old sturdy trees, the discussion may not have been as focused as of previous years which asked who was the public intellectual, and what was his or her task. This batch's theme, "Identity, Security and Democracy," was broad enough to take in almost any field of interest, from Bhutan's goal of Gross National Happiness to the Philippine Culture Index, from Sri Lanka's migration studies and gender empowerment to child labor and education in Vietnam, from research and policy formulation connecting industrialized Japan to its neighboring developing countries vis-à-vis a new growth index that measures quality of life to Islamic fundamentalisms in Asia, and theater herstory from China. The same interests were more or less presented at two public symposia towards the end of October, although I decided to be more specific than culture and zeroed in on our love-hate relationship with the American-English language. The public symposia served as the high point of the program and marked its completion.

I continued to stay another month, spent interviewing Education Department officers and staff and visiting two public grade and high schools. I also used that time to meet up with Japanese publishers, especially the university press editors and directors. I looked into the possibility of translating Japanese technical and engineering textbooks into English for Filipino students. For without question, Japanese technology has even outperformed American or European technology. Asians would probably learn best from Asians.

In one seminar, a venerated Japanese scholar and media practitioner, in tears, apologized to us fellows, especially to Faye from China and to me, for their atrocities and abuses of his people during World War II. While the history textbooks glossing over such atrocities were never directly discussed, the refusal of some school authorities and teachers to fly their flag and sing

their national anthem was. Yet, despite this, the Japanese youth have been educated to become a disciplined and dedicated workforce that propelled their country to economic superiority. I couldn't help but think of my own country, where at least once a week, we proudly raise our flag, sing our national anthem with hands on our hearts, and recite the pledge of allegiance. Yet we have just continually failed to propel our country to economic advancement, so much so that 7 million Filipinos have left their families to raise other people's children and take care of other people's sick and old. The billions of dollars these overseas Filipinos earn for their families but also at great sacrifice to their families (42 million affected at an average of 6 per family) keep our national economy afloat. At certain points in time within the program, I was so sure we Filipinos are remarkable in that way—in our resilience, flexibility, endurance, our faith and love of family. Perhaps the task of the public intellectual in a time and place where helplessness and cynicism are almost palpable is to find sources of hope.

At the evaluation of the program, I asked how public intellectuals can really work together in the forum or arena that is Asia and for Asia. Right after I said it, I was struck by the fact that so much work still needed to be carried out in my own country. And I was sure the other fellows felt the same way. Why then shift to Asia? The most immediate and practical answers are because globalization forces us to come together as bigger blocs of countries, and because Filipinos are all over Asia, all over the world in fact.

What will it mean for my people if Asia came together? Will their lives be better? Is it even thinkable after centuries of colonization and wars have deeply separated our countries? I must say yes simply because we now own Japanese cars, run in Chinese rubber shoes, drink Sri Lankan tea, wear Indian blouses, eat Malaysian chocolates, sing Taiwanese songs, watch Korean dramas and actually teach them (live Koreans) English.

The Fellowship: ALFP Activities
2004

ON JAPAN'S MINORITIES

The Buraku (Sujin District, Kyoto)

Sujin District is the largest and most densely populated of the nineteen *buraku* communities in Kyoto. The buraku people are outcasts that occupy the lowest rungs of Japanese society. Buraku discrimination originated in the feudal era; it was politically and systematically established by the Tokugawa shogunate government when it labeled those engaging in slaughter or execution as *eta* (extreme filth) or *hinin* (nonhuman) and placed them outside the social status system. The buraku people were legally liberated in 1871 as a result of the promulgation of the "Emancipation Edict" by the newly established Meiji government. Masao Yamauchi, director of NPO Net Karasuma, insists that even after this the discrimination against the buraku persisted; he says that discrimination in the human mind is more persistent and troublesome than a systematic one.

Owing to continuous political campaigns and lobbying by the buraku people, discrimination in terms of education and job opportunities is less visible now, but in marriage it still exists. Yamauchi argues this is partly because the buraku people are generally thought of as slaughterers and executioners. In Buddhism, death is associated with impurity or uncleanness, and hence, the buraku people are regarded as impure; non-buraku people refuse to have buraku blood in their family lines.

After the briefing, the fellows were guided through the Bank of Yanagihara Memorial Museum, where a special exhibit was held on buraku people who were engaged in important public services, such as anatomization, execution, and the leather industry, during the feudal era. The Bank of Yanagihara is the first and only bank founded by the buraku (in 1899), to enable those among them whose loan applications were rejected at regular banks to loan money for education and the local industry.

Koreans in Japan (Higashi Kujo District, Kyoto)

Located next to Sujin District, Higashi Kujo District has a large population comprised of Koreans (*zainichi*) as well as people in the bottom rungs

of society. The district is regarded as a "squatter's area" because many Korean residents have set up temporary houses along the banks of the nationally owned River Kamo. Since 1992, the Japanese central government, together with the Kyoto prefectural and municipal government, has been redeveloping the shantytown and has built three apartment buildings. According to Yutaka Uno, a community organizer working for the improvement of the area's living conditions, what is truly rare about Higashi Kujo is the fact that the national government has "settled" a "racial" issue by means of infrastructure.

In planning for the concept and the design of the apartment buildings, the people of the district made four concrete requests, which were mostly heard. The fellows visited the actual site of the apartments, 80 percent of the residents of which were zainichi Koreans. Uno says that the real challenge came after the completion of the infrastructure. For instance, the residents of the government-funded residence are experiencing discrimination within their own community. Such inner-community prejudice, Uno says, is much harder to handle than that from mainstream society. The trial they face now is how to nurture and improve this community so it will survive through the future generations.

In the evening of the same day, the fellows were invited to a symposium on Japanese minority issues from Asian perspectives, organized by Net Karasuma. After Hisashi Nakamura's keynote speech on such issues as participatory social sciences, the need for "inter-people" studies, economic development in modern Japan, and the participatory development of the buraku people and the zainichi, the fellows made brief comments on minority issues in their own countries. They declared that after spending a full day observing minority issues in Japan, they were convinced that Japan is not at all a homogeneous society, as they had thought before.

The Ainu (Hokkaido)

Tamami Kaizawa, artist, Sikerpe Art

The meeting with Tamami Kaizawa, an Ainu artist, was a unique combination of her stories about herself and her family and a hands-on experience in craft making using Ainu motifs. A native of Nibutani, 100 kilometers southeast of Sapporo, Kaizawa has a personal history of struggle as the daughter of a hard-core Ainu activist and a non-Ainu woman.

Nibutani, over 70 percent of whose population is of Ainu origin, is a hotbed of discrimination among the Ainu. As a small child, Kaizawa instinctively felt that being Ainu was something negative, and thus, she deliberately

avoided thinking about her Ainu descent and spent her years in school as a "normal" Japanese. She did not particularly detest her father and grandfather's activities, including filing lawsuits against the dam construction in Nibutani by the national government, but neither did she support them.

It was when she started her career as an artist in a designer's school in Sapporo that Kaizawa slowly began to revisit her Ainu roots. This was partly because she faced less discrimination in the city, and partly because she realized what she as an artist and an Ainu could accomplish—incorporate Ainu symbols and motifs into art pieces. After quitting her job at an interior decorating firm when it took on a project at what would become a museum of Nibutani Dam, which altered the lives of Ainu in her hometown, and whose construction her grandfather and father had protested, Kaizawa set up her own business, Sikerpe Art, in 1997.

Presently, Kaizawa designs clothes and furniture with Ainu motifs, teaches, and holds exhibits and fashion shows. Even now, she sometimes hesitates when asked to discuss her Ainu origin. Nevertheless, she truly appreciates Ainu culture and continues to study it. She also admits that being an artist and designing with Ainu symbols is one way she can appreciate herself and her heritage more, and overcome her past traumatic experiences. "Being cool" is important in making non-Ainu (*shisam*) appreciate Ainu culture, which they think has no relevance in their daily lives. She also believes that being Ainu should not be considered something special, but rather something that is natural.

Koji Yuki, artist/representative, Ainu Art Project

Koji Yuki was born in an Ainu community in Harutori, Kushiro, the son of Shoji Yuki, a leader of the Ainu Liberation Movement, and a non-Ainu mother. When his grandmother, who raised him after his parents divorced, died, he was forced to leave his hometown to live with an aunt in Kanagawa (near Tokyo). Disheartened and bewildered by the fact that his father would not come to see him, Yuki began to despise his Ainu ethnicity; he could not understand why his father persisted in being Ainu even when it meant having to give up his own family. From then on he lived as a normal Japanese, drifting from one job to another during his twenties.

When his company went bankrupt in 1990, Yuki began to look inward and started reading "self-help" books, but somehow they never satisfied his inner questing. It was when he came across American Indian philosophy, particularly its belief in the value of nature, that the things his grandmother taught him came back to Yuki. He then realized he naturally connected to the philosophy because he was Ainu. Before long, he started devouring his father's

books and joined a study group in Tokyo formed by Ainu who escaped harsh discrimination elsewhere. Gradually he began to feel that his rightful place was with the Ainu.

Yet, Yuki felt uneasy about his dual identity as an office worker and an Ainu; the two were quite incompatible. He thus started seeking a place where he could physically and psychologically be Ainu all the time. At about this time, Yuki started to become disillusioned with some elder Ainu, who seemed to be repeating the harmful practice of discrimination among themselves or against non-Ainu, and who were diminishing the value of Ainu artworks by treating them as mere commercial products.

In 2000, Yuki and several other Ainu established the Ainu Art Project, in the hope of building a community where young Ainu can build their own Ainu identities, particularly by means of art. In the process, the group also aims to abolish "bad" traditions handed to them by older generations, while passing on "good" Ainu traditions and culture to future generations. Based in Sapporo, the Ainu Art Project has grown to a group of twenty-seven members, including some ten children from five families. They also opened a restaurant in Sapporo in 2003, which the fellows had an opportunity to visit. They serve Ainu cuisine and feature traditional and contemporary Ainu musical performances. One of Yuki's hopes is to promote Ainu culture by installing Ainu art in public spaces in Hokkaido, a reminder that it once was Ainu land.

ON EDUCATION

Toward realizing a multicultural society in Japan

Japanese compulsory education (six years in elementary school and three years in junior high school), characterized by its nationwide homogeneity in quality and content and the exceptionally high enrollment rate in high school (over 97 percent in 2003), has been experiencing transitions in the last decade and is confronted with many unresolved problems. Wang Hui Jing, representative of the Center for Multicultural Information and Assistance (CMIA), says that among these issues are chronic truancy, the increase of "NEET" (Not in Education, Employment or Training) youth, and the governmental promotion of national identity, manifested in the obligatory hoisting of the national flag and the singing of the national anthem at school ceremonies.

Another phenomenon witnessed in the current educational field is the rapid increase of non-Japanese students in public schools. Compared to earlier times (until the 1980s), when the majority of people of foreign origin were either Koreans or Chinese, now there is a greater diversity of nationalities among the 1.8 million foreign residents in Japan. There has also been a swift rise in the number of intermarriages, especially between Japanese husbands and non-Japanese wives. Children from intermarried families tend to attend night schools more often than their Japanese counterparts, in part because they cannot turn to their families for help in learning Japanese, and to enter full-time high schools one needs to pass an entrance examination conducted in Japanese. Wang feels that in a sense these foreign students are already falling out of the "homogeneous" Japanese society. However, she says the decreasing birth rate among the Japanese and the continuous increase of foreigners will inevitably lead the Japanese to the question of how they could coexist with people of different cultural backgrounds and languages.

The CMIA is a nonprofit organization supporting foreign residents in Japan, particularly young students. Its fundamental goal is to promote a multicultural society where the basic human rights of both Japanese and non-Japanese are respected, with or without knowledge of Japanese culture and language. It provides educational guidance to non-Japanese students and

their parents in multiple languages, and offers Japanese language classes and other school subjects. Since such formal guidance is not sufficient in resolving all the issues these students will face in the course of their lives in Japan, the CMIA also tries to empower them so that they can be self-supportive. It also collects and analyzes data about foreign students for use in making policy proposals to local municipalities. Most importantly, the organization encourages understanding and respect among people of different cultures, values, and viewpoints, in order for them to achieve a healthy coexistence.

Visit to Sapporo Jiyugaoka Gakuen, Hokkaido

Sapporo Jiyugaoka Gakuen (SJG), established in 1993, is an alternative school for truant students who cannot (or do not) go to regular schools for various reasons, such as emotional trauma from having been bullied or teased, being unable to keep up with the speed of instruction or to adapt to the traditional school system, or being forced to leave school for family matters. The rise in truancy in the 1990s and the consequent increase in demand for alternative schools led to the establishment of institutions such as the SJG.

Currently, forty high school level and thirty junior high school level students are enrolled at SJG. It has six full-time and nearly twenty part-time and volunteer staff members. The school's curriculum does not fully abide by the guidelines of the Ministry of Education; although classes still follow a certain course of study and timetable, more emphasis is placed on artistic and physical expression and actual experiences. Students are also free to study individually. The bottom line is that the classes offered at the SJG are enjoyable, particularly because the students are given the freedom to choose the activities they prefer to do. Kazuyoshi Kamegai, representative of the SJG, says that most students are able to greatly improve their communication skills after spending a certain amount of time at the school.

Although the SJG is not an accredited school, its students could receive certifications of graduation from a regular junior high school. Most of them then go on to senior high schools (mostly correspondence schools). Kamegai says that students or graduates of such alternative schools face less discrimination these days since people now understand truancy better. However, governmental support for such schools remains inadequate.

ON MEDIA AND THE ARTS

The Media in Asia

Monzurul Huq, correspondent of *Prothom Alo* and the *Daily Star*, argues that the Asian media is highly developed and freedom of the press is enjoyed in many Asian countries. The Asian media has traditionally been part of popular movements, taking the side of the people. However, Huq says, authoritarian media also exists in Asia. In totalitarian states, governments often control or manipulate the media directly or indirectly, taking advantage of its financial reliance on governments. Reporters Without Borders, an international organization of correspondents working for press freedom, reports that in the Asia-Pacific region there is more media censorship and there are more journalists killed, abducted or jailed than in any other part of the world.

Huq asserts that Japan has one of the most vibrant media environments in the world in terms of the rich variety and relative neutrality of the media. Freedom of expression has been enjoyed here since the end of World War II, and there is virtually no censorship nor any form of suppression of journalists. With a high per capita income and an almost 100 percent literacy rate, Japan has the world's greatest newspaper readership. A total of seventy million papers, including five national and over 150 regional and local publications, are printed in the country daily.

Most newspapers are nonpartisan and keep a middle-of-the-road position, although some are more conservative or progressive than others. Except for slight differences in opinion as expressed in their editorials, they basically agree on certain issues, such as refraining from criticizing the royal family. Aggressive confrontation between papers and the government is rare. Huq points out that this is mainly due to the so-called Press Club system. In order to collect information and report on governmental issues, reporters must belong to the Press Club, which every government office has within its facility. This system is notorious for developing mutually dependent relationships between politicians and journalists, making it hard for journalists to be objective or critical toward politicians.

Such shortcomings of newspapers and also of the apolitical television

network are compensated by magazines, says Huq. A distinct feature of Japanese magazines is their love of investigative reports. Since magazine journalists are not allowed in the Press Club and thus do not rely on the Club for news sources, they are free to report on the wrongdoings of the government. Huq states that in this sense magazines are serving the Japanese people better.

One of the most recent trends in Asia is the rapid growth of Internet media. Some researchers argue that in the future, these may have more influence on the younger generation, many of whom spend more time browsing the Internet than watching TV or reading newspapers. The new technology of digitalization is creating the so-called digital divide in Asia. However, Huq says that it is a fascinating trend that most newspapers in developing Asian nations have online editions.

Is the "Women and Peace" era over?
War, violence, women and their representation

To Yoshiko Shimada, artist and lecturer at Keio University, the image of women as peace-loving mothers is a troublesome stereotype. Equally disturbing is that women have always been seen as victims of violence committed by male or masculine military forces. Shimada then questions: Is this really true? Weren't they also enthusiastic supporters of nationalism and

Image 1. "White Apron"

imperialism? And even now, aren't there many women in the Self Defense Forces(SDF)? Shimada's conclusion is that (Japanese) women have been both victims and perpetrators. As an artist, Shimada has rendered various images of "Japanese women as perpetrators" in several art pieces and installations.

In the central picture of Image 1, taken in present-day North Korea, a Japanese woman wearing a white apron[1] is learning how to shoot (Koreans). Image 2 shows an installation comprised of white aprons from which red silk strips tied to pistols are hanging. This represents women giving birth to violence. Both of these images show women as perpetrators, embracing violence within themselves.

Based on her study on Japanese womanhood and the emperor system, Shimada argues that compared to Hitler, Hirohito (the Showa emperor) seems effeminate. This is in a sense natural because he was supposed to be a descendant of the Sun Goddess, and the people were the "babies of the Emperor." Hence, Shimada wonders whether the dying soldiers crying out for their mothers were actually crying out for the emperor.

In this installation (Image 3), a white wedding gown with a white apron (symbolizing a Japanese woman) and a traditional Korean women's attire draped with a *yukata*, or a type of Japanese *kimono* (representing a Korean woman) face each other, one on each side of a mirror. But the mirror is not a regular mirror; it is a half-mirror, allowing the Japanese woman to see her own image in the mirror and the Korean woman to see the image of the Japanese woman through the mirror. Here, Shimada tries to visualize the positional difference between the roles played by both women. What is also important is the audience can experience what can be visible and invisible depending on where they stand.

What the Japanese woman does not see on the other side of the mirror represents what postwar Japanese women did not see for nearly half a century, i.e., the comfort women issue. Despite a number of references in writings, the issue of the World War II comfort women was not addressed as a woman's issue either by Japanese feminists or the general public until Kim Hak Sun and other former sex slaves went public in the early 1990s. Shimada finds it problematic that every time Japanese women talk about comfort women, they do not place themselves on the perpetrators' side; they almost always side with the Korean women as victims.

"SDF Girls"

Upon invitation, Shimada interviewed and filmed some young women in the SDF in Kyushu. Female presence in the military has not been discussed much, and Shimada was interested in the relationship between women, war, and violence. While some women joined the SDF to contribute to society, others see it just as a job. Although they go through the same training as men, they are presently not allowed to participate in actual combat, although many of them want to.

Shimada showed the video clip to female university students, organizing an all-women antiwar demonstration in Kyoto. Although they were against all kinds of militaristic activities, some sympathized with the women in the SDF, and some even admired them because these female soldiers were doing things commonly believed only men could do. Shimada hopes to bridge the gap between women with different ideologies by engaging them in dialogues. Finally, Shimada insists that the Japanese feminism movement needs to recognize the actual existence of women in the military and their participation in violent activities.

Endnote

1 A white apron came to be seen as a symbol of Japanese motherhood, although it was originally a nanny's uniform in England; a Japanese government official who visited the UK during the Meiji period introduced it to the Japanese, believing it could help "modernize" Japanese women. Japanese mothers began to be seen as more nationalistic, and were given the task of raising modern and useful citizens of the nation.

ON BUSINESS

Corporate Societal Responsibilities of Japanese enterprises in Asia

Yotaro Kobayashi, chairman of the board of Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd., asserts that the so-called "good corporations" have exercised Corporate Societal Responsibility (CSR) in one way or the other. Fundamentally, a corporation should exist for the needs of society, and they should be true and honest to that society. For a long time, the philosophy and mechanism of corporate governance have centered on maximizing shareholders' stakes. However, those corporations that have been thriving for over a century have succeeded in maintaining and enhancing the original spirit and value of serving their customers, as well as all stakeholders.

Nevertheless, profit making is always important. Profit for corporations is like health for human beings; health (profit) is not a goal, but we (corporations) should think about what we (they) should do with it (profit).

What society wants corporations to do and what it considers the duty of corporations differ from country to country, and thus, each company must determine what it can and should do for its own society.

Preserving tradition through innovation:
Learning from established stores

Haruo Funabashi, chairman of Sirius Institute, published a book in 2003 on forty long-lived Japanese companies, for the purpose of revealing the secrets of their success. Funabashi estimates that countrywide there are seven to eight thousand businesses established prior to the commencement of the Meiji period (1868), among which six companies are more than a thousand years old. With a few exceptions such as Kongo Gumi, a temple restoration firm founded in 578, and Hoshi Ryokan, a spa inn opened in 717, most long-standing companies existent now were established sometime during the Edo era.

Funabashi's analysis shows these companies share some common features: their businesses are closely related to people's everyday lives (e.g. daily necessities like soy sauce and medicine), they have established traditional au-

thorities mostly in one place, and they are often run as a family business (particularly those involving craftsmanship). Funabashi also specifies the following elements as keys to these companies' long-term success: the geographical location of Japan (i.e., the seas surrounding the country works as a natural barrier, shielding it from invasion); the climate (i.e., mild weather and adequate rain ensures good harvests and a continuous food supply and the diverse topography limits the impact of climatic disasters on certain areas); and society and thought (i.e., Japanese society is generally considered peaceful, in part due to the people's belief in the value of coexistence with others of different faiths or beliefs).

To show us an example of a long-lived company, Funabashi organized a visit to Toraya, a Japanese-style confectionery store founded in the early sixteenth century in Kyoto. In its PR video, "*Wagashi*: The Beauty and Spirit of Japanese Confection," *wagashi*, or Japanese confectionery, is depicted as an "inseparable part of Japanese life" which reflects "the change of seasons" and "appeals to (our) five senses." The present style of wagashi was established during the mid-Edo period (seventeenth century), and now Toraya prides itself on being able to offer over three thousand kinds of wagashi, each reflecting the beauty of nature and the four seasons. The fellows also had the precious opportunity to watch a master wagashi maker demonstrate how to make wagashi, and learn about the different ingredients used for making wagashi, such as *azuki* beans, agar-agar, and *wasambon* sugar (refined powdery sugar produced domestically).

ON CIVIL SOCIETY

Transnational civil society in the age of globalization

Yoshikazu Sakamoto, professor emeritus at the University of Tokyo, argues that the post-Cold War world structure is unprecedentedly undemocratic and unequal. Sakamoto starts by discussing issues that characterize and challenge the contemporary world.

The end of the Cold War has given rise to a world military structure headed by a single unrivaled hyperpower built on unilateralism. Whereas a handful of big powers monopolize weapons of the most advanced technology, there is a worldwide diffusion of less-developed, secondhand arms among lower-rank forces that counter the current world order usually by means of terrorism. Sakamoto asserts that the concentration-diffusion dynamics do not increase security on either side. Moreover, they will aggravate global division, fragmentation, and insecurity.

Global disparity also exists in the economic arena. As an inevitable consequence of the global capitalist market economy, the gap between rich and poor has widened enormously both internationally and within nations. While only a few enjoy an unprecedented affluence, half the world population still live on less than two U.S. dollars a day. Sakamoto insists that even more problematic than this enormous and inhumane economic disparity is the absence of a political and moral framework/structure to address this problem. Under the logic of the capitalist market economy, there is no economic necessity to save the starving 10 percent of the world population, who are, under the same logic, structurally dispensable. Thus, Sakamoto argues that not only does the problem concern economic disparity, but it also challenges the global democratic accountability which is exactly the question of our own identity as human beings, which should transcend national boundaries and geographical distances.

Scientific and technological advancement also rests on the logic of market economy, where competition has become almost a good in itself. Science and technology, while bringing about immense benefits, have tremendously degraded the environment and expanded the gap (a.k.a. digital divide) between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. However, Sakamoto

argues, the combination of technological and economic development makes a greater dehumanizing impact on the identity of the people in the so-called developed societies. This trend was accelerated by the development of information technology and life science, which manipulate the human body and mind, or what Sakamoto calls "inner value" or "inner world," for profit making.[1] Sakamoto asserts that herein lies the danger of science and technology that are turning human beings into decomposed and fragmented objects. The fragmentation of human values and human identity consequently raises the question of whether there are values of universal validity which provide the foundation of human identity.

Sakamoto then took up the issues of the universality of human rights and the diversity of cultural values, both of which have a crucial bearing on civil society and democracy. It is believed by non-Western people that the notion of human rights is essentially of Western origin, alien to their indigenous values. However, Sakamoto argues that the assertion of specificity and originality of non-Western values has a pitfall, just as a naïve affirmation of the universality of Western values has served to justify Western colonialism and cultural domination. For instance, the insistence on the specificity of non-Western cultures tended to legitimize the authoritarian oppressive regimes, which infringed upon the human rights of their own people. Sakamoto raises women's status and role as an example. Do women's rights to education, independent job taking, and reproductive health have universal validity, or are they merely the imperialist penetration of Western values under the guise of human rights?

To resolve this dilemma, we agreed to recognize the diversity of cultural values. But the question remains whether this respect for cultural diversity permits the violation of what are widely considered fundamental human rights. Sakamoto asserts that the recognition of cultural diversity is based on cultural relativism, which, in his view, can mean two different, or even opposite things: 1) the denial of the universality of cultural values, including the idea of human rights, which may lead to a state of anarchy in world value systems. With no overarching universal norms transcending the specificities of the individual or local cultural values, there is a danger that what is right will only be determined by the use of might; 2) the notion that culture should not be located in a global hierarchy with Western culture at the top, but should be recognized as a distinct system which possesses equal values (rejection of cultural imperialism). With these opposing definitions, the question arises on what ground different cultures can be considered of equal value. To Sakamoto, the only tenable answer is that every culture should be treated as equal. He says that as long as a certain culture embodies the way of life of human beings who have equal rights as humans, we can accept the diverse

quality of cultures. Therefore, if a culture denies the fundamental equality of human beings, it lays itself open to international criticism.

Sakamoto concludes by looking at civil society as a foundation of democratic process. He says that civil society is based on the mutual recognition of 1) the universality of fundamental equality rights and the homogeneity of human beings and 2) the diversity of values and cultures and also human beings with multiple and hybrid identities. Sakamoto also asserts that civil society is a public space based on the inner world of the individual where a search for spontaneous free choice is constantly undertaken in pursuit of open democratic dialogue in opposition to oppression, manipulation, and surveillance. Sakamoto sees both democracy and civil society as an "unfinished project," which requires the continuous transformation and criticism of our own way of living and thinking, not as objects or commodities, but as active human subjects. Civil society is not some kind of target we achieve, but is the way we live.

In the following discussion with the fellows, Sakamoto further argues that civil society is essentially an interactive movement of ordinary people. Civil society sometimes takes the form of some association or organization, but there is always the danger that the maintenance of such an organization becomes the aim itself. Sakamoto believes that the action/movement dimension and organizing dimension of civil society are compatible, though there is always a tension in between. And to maintain that tension within us is the essence of civil society, Sakamoto says. If you lose it, you will become a bureaucrat. In this sense, civil society is an unfinished and continuous process, and being in a constant process of self-redefinition is the most important element of civil society.

To Sakamoto, democracy is also a process. It certainly has institutional forms, but these are not the targets themselves, but are the means to attain something, and that something is the essence of democracy. We have the right to determine our own way of living and thinking, and that is the essence of democracy. On discussing the relationship between civil society and democracy, Sakamoto states that civil society is the social foundation of democracy. Without civil society, there will be no democracy; democracy is a political manifestation of civil society.

Visit to the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)

Michiya Kumaoka, representative of JVC, explained the development of Japanese NGO activities after World War II. Until the 1970s, Japanese NGOs and international cooperative activities were generally very limited except for a few religious organizations, partly because the Japanese society

itself was still poor. Then, the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 led to the establishment of some NGOs, such as the Help Bangladesh Community or HBC (now known as Shapla Neer).

By the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the interest of the Japanese people had started to shift from American and European issues toward Southeast and South Asian or African problems. Shocked by what they saw in news reports, many young Japanese, including Kumaoka, went to Thailand to help Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese refugees fleeing from Khmer Rouge genocide. However, the activities of such volunteers were not well organized or systematized mainly due to the lack of experienced workers with the proper linguistic skills. It was Masako Hoshino who, with some help from the Japanese Embassy, started what later became the JVC in Thailand in 1980 to integrate these separate volunteer activities.

By the late 1980s, the JVC had extended its activities to other Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, and South Africa. Since the 1990s, after the adoption of the "Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992)," the JVC's activities have expanded to long-term rehabilitation and reforestation in rural areas, in addition to their traditional activities, such as support for the self-sufficiency and livelihood improvement of farmers, humanitarian assistance in conflict areas, and research/advocacy activities in Japan. Representatives from two NGOs closely related to the JVC, namely Oxfam Japan and Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), joined the discussion with the fellows and also shared their visions.

Citizens' movement in Hokkaido—activities of the Hokkaido NPO Bank

As Japanese society moves rapidly toward an ageing society, mutual support among citizens becomes indispensable and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) providing various services for senior citizens play an essential role in today's world. In Hokkaido, where 70 percent of the 212 local municipalities are located in rural and depopulated areas and thus large-scale welfare work is scarce, cooperation between local governments and NPOs within a community is particularly important. Modeled after the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, the Hokkaido NPO Bank is a nonprofit organization loaning money with a low interest rate to small-scale NPOs working mainly in the social welfare sphere, providing services for the elderly and the handicapped.

Naoto Sugioka, professor at the Hokusei Gakuen University and director of the Hokkaido NPO Bank, emphasizes that securing funds is a prerequisite for the healthy operation of NPOs; otherwise they would fall into the vicious cycle of shorthandedness, overwork, drying up of ideas, and

eventually downsizing of the whole activity. Regular banks, however, are often reluctant to loan money to NPOs because their financial foundation is not so stable and they rarely own property to be used as security for loaning. To enable small-scale NPOs to borrow money under such circumstances, the Hokkaido NPO Bank collects funds from private citizens, corporations, and local government units in the form of investments.

To be eligible for a loan, an organization must meet three conditions: 1) it must become a member of the NPO Bank, 2) it has to be recognized as an NPO or a workers' collective, and 3) its activities must be for the benefit of the general society. An NPO can borrow up to two million yen at a time with the fixed interest rate of 2 percent and a one-year repayment period. A screening committee, composed of experts including licensed tax accountants, bank clerks, and scholars, evaluates the applicant organization's mission, the ability of its executive body, its management checking system, implementation plan, financial situation, fund-raising method, and cosignatory. Oftentimes, however, the NPO Bank approaches NPOs and encourages them to apply for a loan. Sugioka says many NPOs are not accustomed to borrowing money to expand their activities, nor are they trained to develop projects based on sound planning. Therefore, one of the purposes of the NPO Bank is to give such NPOs the incentive to strengthen or expand their activities with a little financial support from the bank. As of March 2004, a total of thirty-four NPOs have borrowed money from the NPO Bank, and none of them has failed to pay it back.

Endnote

1 As examples of dehumanizing political implications of information technology, Sakamoto cites two recent cases. The first case is the manipulation of information and the media which is becoming a habitual technique of the political power holders, so that a big lie is circulated and widely accepted. The manipulation of information and the media we see today is mainly practiced under the so-called liberal democracy, which is supposed to be operated on the basis of transparency and accountability. The second case refers to the advanced technology of surveillance, based on an incredibly sophisticated technique of data collection and processing which can easily erode and invade the privacy of individuals, as illustrated by the internationally coordinated strict control on travel, immigration, banking, and communication.

ON NATIONALISM, POLITICS, AND RELIGION

State Shinto and the religious structure of modern Japan

Susumu Shimazono, professor at the University of Tokyo, says the notion that the Japanese are nonreligious people does not mean they are not influenced by religions. There are historical reasons for the Japanese people's difficulty in identifying themselves in religious terms.

In December 1945, the U.S. Occupation Forces issued the "Shinto Directive" to abolish State Shinto and its special linkage with the government, for the U.S. believed what led Japan to a path of aggression was State Shinto as an ideology, used as a militaristic and ultra-nationalistic propaganda. Thus, the U.S. tried to return Shinto to its original status as a private religious institution for the populace.

Shimazono says that in arguing what State Shinto is, there are both narrow and broad definitions. A narrow use of the term denotes that Shinto, symbolized in shrines, was associated with the state. This was the rationale behind the Shinto Directive. Shimazono says that this definition limits the responsibility of Shinto in prewar aggression. On the other hand, a broader sense of the term defines State Shinto as an emperor-centered religious-political institution that dominated and influenced the entire nation from 1867 (the Meiji Restoration) to 1945, utilizing Shinto thought and practice as the pillar of national integration.

In its modern nation-building process, the fundamental ideology of the Meiji government was the unity of *sai* (rites) and *sei* (politics), and *kyo* (indoctrination), in which politics was conducted by the emperor who, as a holy being, performed rites and provided people with moral teachings. However, Shimazono says, the Meiji regime was aware that its policy of connecting religion with politics conflicted with the notion that a modern civilized nation should separate religion and the state and grant the freedom of belief. To resolve this contradiction and to further push the policy of the "unity of rites and politics," the Meiji government established the emperor-centered State Shinto in the public domain, setting aside other religions including Christianity and Buddhism. Education played a central role in propagating the doctrine of State Shinto. At schools, students were made to recite the Impe-

rial Rescript of Education which constituted the core of the Shinto doctrine, emphasizing loyalty and filial piety to the holy emperor.

Consequently, the ultimate goal of the Shinto Directive was a separation of sai and sei. "Rites" and "doctrines" were moved to the domain of religion (private sphere). The singing of emperor-praising songs and the celebration of national holidays (all associated with imperial rituals) in the public domain, especially at schools, were discontinued.

Another reason for the Japanese people's confusion over their religious identity is their failure to determine conclusively whether Shinto is a religion or not. In Japan, the issue of the religiousness of Shinto has been politicized, making it even harder to resolve. Legally, Shinto is a religion and therefore must be separated from the state and politics. However, there are elements of rite (particularly those of Shinto) left in the public domain. Shinto rituals conducted in the Imperial Household and mourning functions for the war dead taking place in a Shinto manner at Yasukuni Shrine are cases in point. Shimazono asserts that the propriety of keeping religious elements in the public/political realm is one of the most debatable issues in contemporary Japanese society.

Concerning state religions, Shimazono argues that most democratized countries, including Japan, have denied them. However, Shimazono believes that as Islamic democracy indicates, democracy can also be achieved by placing a religion in the public sphere (state religion) and also respecting other minority religions. Similarly, there have been cases worldwide where (often exclusively) the state religion played a central role in the process of modernization, such as in Japan, England, and the U.S. Although Shimazono doubts the universality of the idea that every person must have a religious identity, he thinks that it is inevitable that a country in the process of modernization should be closely affiliated with a particular religion. It is not until the country has achieved a certain level of modernization that it can afford to accept other religions and respect individual freedom of belief. Therefore, Shimazono insists, modernized nations should not impose their current system onto less developed countries.

Shimazono then asserts that an extreme separation of the state and religion may leave people in a spiritual void. Without any religious values in school education, it becomes difficult to teach children about important values in life. For these reasons, Shimazono thinks that sooner or later, the religious or spiritual element will have to be returned to the public domain. Japanese society is already inclining toward this direction, he says. Having said that, however, he argues that if the state and a religion become too close and if religion takes too much space in the public domain, there is a danger of restricting individual spiritual freedom. At the same time, if a particular reli-

gion is given too much power in the public realm, such a society will be a difficult place for minority groups to live in.

The militarization of aesthetics:
Nationalism, patriotism, and Japan in comparative perspectives

Cherry blossoms have long been cherished by the Japanese and given a vast range of complex symbolisms ("field of meaning"), representing life, death, rebirth, pathos, reproductive power, and nonreproductive sexuality, among others. Since the end of the nineteenth century, however, the military regime began to manipulate the image of cherry blossoms, giving it a twisted metaphorical meaning—that it was an honor for soldiers to sacrifice their lives for the country just like beautiful falling cherry petals. This notion culminated during the final days of World War II, when the so-called *Tokkotai* (Special Attack Force) pilots attacked U.S. warships by ramming into them.

In her recent book *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History*, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, professor at the University of Wisconsin, attempts to find out how the military government succeeded in ingraining the aesthetics of sacrificing one's life for the country as falling cherry petals; and to what extent individuals swallowed state nationalism (meaning whether or not the Tokkotai pilots really believed they would die like falling cherry petals for the emperor). In this light, Ohnuki differentiates between the "patriotism" of individuals sacrificing their lives and the "state nationalism" propagated by the state.

Ohnuki is convinced that these soldiers did not believe in the emperor-centered military ideology whatsoever, at least in their thoughts. She then investigates their thought processes and how they ended up reproducing the ideology through their actions, by perusing the diaries of seven soldiers made available by the bereaved. Ohnuki mainly focused on the elitist university graduates, comprising one-fourth of the approximately four thousand pilots who died in the Tokkotai operation. This is in part due to the fact that written records were rarely left by younger soldiers who were not so well educated. Ohnuki also picked out book titles from the diaries and tabulated them, showing how highly educated these student soldiers were and also how strongly they were influenced by ideologies of Romanticism, Marxism or Christianity.

In nationalizing the actions of the Tokkotai pilots, Ohnuki adopts the theory of naturalization (the process of presenting altered cultural institutions as long-standing tradition so that people will accept them as "natural") and méconnaissance (a phenomenon in which actors fail to recognize that they are reading different meanings of the same symbol or ritual). The Meiji

militaristic government succeeded in subtly changing the significance and symbolism of cherry blossoms and aestheticizing them as soldiers readily sacrificing lives for the country and for the emperor, as if that was the tradition from time immemorial (naturalization). And méconnaissance blinded the soldiers to the manipulation of the government; they kept seeing their own idealism in cherry blossoms.

Simultaneously, they focused on their responsibility to society ("patriotism") based on their belief, be it Romanticism, Marxism or Christianity. To Marxists, for example, sacrificing their lives meant defeating the U.K., Japan, and the U.S. which are all corrupted by capitalism, so that a new Japan would rise out of old Japan's ashes like a phoenix. They also aestheticized their idealism and nihilism to understand their own deaths in philosophical terms. These soldiers knew from the time they entered high school that they were to die soon, so they tried to understand why they had to die young.

Some survivors of Tokkotai say now that had the government blatantly put all their schemes to these soldiers, they would have rebelled more. Ohnuki emphasizes that the purpose of her book is not to excuse the atrocities inflicted by the Japanese armies or the Tokkotai pilots, but to show what precious human lives were sacrificed in the name of war. It is important to understand this if we are to prevent more wars.

Nationalism in postwar Japan

Eiji Oguma, associate professor at Keio University, discusses nationalism in postwar Japan by using the following rough classification: pro-Western progressives,[1] anti-Western progressives, pro-Western conservatives and anti-Western conservatives.

The end of World War II and its immediate aftermath

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the policy of the U.S.-led occupation forces was to weaken and democratize Japan. To this end, radical reforms, including demilitarization, the dismantling of the Interior Department and the thought police, and the reinstatement of communists, and land reform, were carried out. The emperor remained as a symbol of Japan, with limited function and power.

The anti-Western progressive force which called for the "liberation of Asia from Western imperialism" lost its influence. Instead, pro-Western progressivism emerged among intellectuals and leftists, and pro-Western conservativism among conservatives. Oguma asserts that around this time, the United States was seen as a liberator.

Cold War/Korean War (1960)

With the outbreak of the Cold War, however, the U.S. swiftly changed its occupation policy. To mold Japan into its anti-communism ally, it demanded the remilitarization and revision of Japan's pacifist constitution. Simultaneously, it initiated the suppression of communists, and prewar right-wing forces and militarists, who had been purged after the war, were reinstated to major posts on condition that they would cooperate with the U.S. During the Korean War, Japan functioned as a supply base for the U.S. military, and the Korean War procurement needs revived Japan's devastated economy. In the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty,[2] through which Japan regained its independence, the U.S. persuaded many Asian countries, Australia, and the U.K. to waive their reparation claims. U.S. Occupation Forces and bases remained in Japan under the US-Japan Security Treaty which was also signed.

In Japan, pro-American conservative forces established the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1955, and as anti-communism allies of the U.S., they made efforts to rearm Japan, uphold the emperor system, and revise the constitution to return to the prewar state. The Communist Party shifted to anti-Western progressivism, resisting "U.S. imperialism." The so-called "1955 System" was fixated: two-thirds were pro-American conservatives and the remaining one-third were progressives. Non-communist progressives also shifted to anti-Western progressivism, opposing the U.S. anti-communist policy. They advocated "unarmed neutrality" and the protection of the pacifist constitution, as the "only atom-bombed nation." Oguma argues this was a way of expressing nationalism; Article 9 and Hiroshima/Nagasaki became the symbols of national identity. The progressives also got involved in the anti-base movement[3] and organized anti-U.S.-Japan Security Treaty demonstrations.

The 1960s to the late 1980s

The economic development during this period and the increasing U.S. influence on their country caused a change in the mindset of Japanese people. In place of antipathy or blind compliance to the U.S., (unconscious) national pride emerged as an economic power. The people opposed the constitutional revision or remilitarization, but they were indifferent to the peace/anti-base movement. They saw the status quo as convenient for it allowed them to concentrate on economic development while putting the entire militaristic burden on the U.S. Oguma asserts that such nationalism does not belong to any of the aforementioned categories. Politically, the pro-American conser-

vative regime maintained its practice of granting favors to interest groups in rural areas.[4]

The 1990s to the present

The 1990s saw drastic changes both internationally and domestically. The end of the Cold War led to the worldwide deployment of U.S. forces, and the U.S. demanded a more active involvement of Self Defense Forces (SDF). Democratization took place in many Asian countries, and reparation claims reemerged.[5] As a backlash against such claims, historical revisionism rose among anti-Western conservatives, symbolized by the publication of a new history textbook. Oguma argues that these movements may have been the reflection of the people's need for "national pride," since economic recession has made economic nationalism impracticable. However, such new movements had their own limitation because of their internal disagreement over how to deal with the U.S.

Domestically, the 1955 System collapsed. The pro-American conservatives faced a political impasse because the economic stagnation prevented them from granting favors in rural areas. This led to the decline of their vote-gathering ability; now the LDP cannot be in the majority without coalescing with the Komeito Party. With no way out, younger members of the LDP resorted to blusterous actions, such as making hawkish statements against Asian countries, going to the Yasukuni Shrine or advocating constitutional revision. However, such aggressive statements are targeted only at Asian countries; they have no choice but to follow U.S. policy.

With all types of nationalism malfunctioning, be it politically, economically or diplomatically, Oguma cannot tell what the future course of Japanese nationalism will be. But as long as diverse and unstable nationalistic sentiments are channeled into sports events, there would not be much of a problem; otherwise, Oguma suspects the people might resort to violence.

The way we love (to hate) the U.S.:
The loci of "America" in Japan today

Following Yasushi Watanabe's lecture (see page 203), Masao Kunihiro, former professor of Tokyo International University and former Diet member, shared several anecdotes regarding Japan-U.S. relations on a more personal level, and stressed the importance of such personal exchanges and their impact on the political or diplomatic arena.[6]

Kunihiro related how he witnessed a rather heated argument between

Shigeharu Matsumoto, founder of the International House of Japan and personal friend of Kunihiro, and Edwin O. Reischauer, then U.S. ambassador to Japan and close friend of Matsumoto. Matsumoto, who was outspoken and articulate in renouncing Japan's war in China, criticized the American intervention in Vietnam. Matsumoto blatantly asked Reischauer, Kunihiro recalls, why the United States would repeat the same mistake Japan once committed in China. Matsumoto went on to say that he would never visit the U.S. as long as it was engaging in the war in Vietnam. Matsumoto was true to his words and rejected numerous invitations to speak in the U.S.

Watanabe then added that although Kunihiro is presently very critical of the U.S., he is at heart a big supporter of the United States, because he has seen the best part of America. Watanabe argues that herein lies the difficulty of identifying someone as anti-American or pro-American. One's being critical of the U.S. can be a reflection of his or her love of America.

Endnotes

1 From the 1940s to the 1980s, "progressive" meant everything from socialism to communism. But it also includes anti-communism liberalists. Also, in most cases, "Western" means "American" in the context of postwar Japan.

2 This was a partial treaty since some nations of the Allied Forces refused to sign it.

3 As a result, while the number of bases on mainland Japan was reduced by three-fourths, the number of bases in Okinawa, which was under US occupation until 1972, doubled. Currently, 75 percent of all U.S. bases in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa.

4 Such discourse as prioritizing the economy, being lightly armed, and neglecting the Constitution to escape the militaristic burden is generally termed as "mainstream conservatism."

5 The reemergence of reparation claims was caused by not only the democratization or feminism in Asia, but also by the ending of the Cold War; during the Cold War, such claims, which might disintegrate the Western bloc, were discouraged and blocked.

6 Kunihiro also related the historical background of the International House of Japan, the historical significance of the land where the I-House presently stands, and how Shigeharu Matsumoto, the founder of the I-House, asked Shigeru Yoshida, then prime minister and Matsumoto's close friend, to appropriate the land for him so he can build on it an establishment where artists and academics from around the globe could meet and exhange ideas.

ON DEMOCRACY

Niseko Town, Hokkaido

Seiji Ohsaka, mayor of Niseko, explains that Japan is undergoing the third major social and political reform in its modern history in the face of unprecedented changes and challenges, such as an extremely low birth rate, the stagnation of its economic development, and the diversification of its sense of values. The current reform shares none of the common features of the last two: the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the defeat in World War II (1945), respectively; they were triggered by external pressures (*gaiatsu*), had a certain time frame and purpose, and had a particular model to follow. For instance, during the period of economic growth (the 1950s to the 1970s), since everyone shared the objective of achieving economic development, what Ohsaka calls "I-shall-leave-it-to-you Democracy" or "Spectator Democracy," in which only a handful of politicians exercise strong leadership, worked effectively.

To overcome the challenges we face now, however, a true sense of democracy must take root among the Japanese people, Ohsaka insists. The attainment of such a goal is not an easy task, and hence local governance is critical. As James Bryce put it, local governance is "not only the source but the school of democracy." Having issues in one's reach and being directly influenced by the decisions each makes is very important. And to promote autonomy and encourage citizens' active participation, fair sharing of information is indispensable. Information sharing is not just showing pieces of information to the citizens, but a continuous learning process in which people train their ability to utilize information to attain the common goals of the community.

Following Ohsaka's keynote address, Michitaka Kato, a Niseko Town official, outlined the background and contents of the Basic Community Building Ordinance, as well as specific actions and measures taken under the ordinance, whose backbone is the policy of information sharing and citizens' participation. In Niseko, all the information concerning town management is regarded as common assets of the citizens, and thus crucial information such as budgetary data is made available to every household. Also, Niseko towns-

people have diverse channels (e.g. town-planning discussions and seminars) through which they can participate in the town's decision-making process. Kato emphasizes that the ordinance is not so much a regulation as a proclamation of the citizens' rights.

Niseko, which has a population of less than five thousand, has long been known as a ski resort visited by over one and a half million tourists annually, but it now hosts more visitors in summer than in winter. To make maximum use of agriculture— Niseko's other principal industry—as an integral part of tourism, a new division that oversees tourism, agriculture, and commerce as a set was established within the town hall in 2003. Nobuo Matsuda, head of this division, articulates its objective: making Niseko a place where local industries, especially agricultural products, are gathered and consumed both by the locals and the tourists (Local Produce Local Consumption).

Efforts to develop Niseko are not the monopoly of the town; various initiatives are also being taken by the citizens. Two such attempts are the revitalization of the main street, which has been renamed "Kira Avenue" and the organization of the Niseko Flower Festival held along the avenue. Junji Makino, an executive of Niseko Resort Tourism Association (a corporation established by the town) and one of the main organizers of the festival, boasts the active participation of a grand total of five thousand people, mostly volunteers, in decorating the avenue with over ten thousand flowers. The tables and chairs placed along Kira Avenue function as a meeting spot of townspeople and tourists, as Matsuda had envisaged earlier. The lifestyle of Niseko residents per se is becoming an important resource of Niseko tourism, Makino adds.

The fellows also met with Yuko Matsuda, who became a town assemblyperson through her involvement in environmental preservation. Her fundamental mission is to pass on the beautiful natural environment of Niseko to younger generations.

The visit to the Compost Center and the Waste Landfill at the end of the day, guided by Niseko Town officer Kenya Katayama, complemented Matsuda's briefing on Niseko's agricultural industry. At the Compost Center, one can observe the entire process in which collected garbage is processed into compost fit for agricultural use. Another visit was to Asobukku, a public library which also functions as a center where townspeople can access information related to the town.

The state of Asian democracies

The end of the twentieth century witnessed the unprecedented uprisings of ordinary citizens throughout Asia. In South Korea, massive demonstrations against the military regime toppled Chun Doo-Hwan from power in 1987. In 1992, a large number of Bangkok citizens gathered and succeeded in installing a nonmilitary junta government. In 1998, Suharto was losing his grip because the Indonesian people had started to become critical of him. Kiichi Fujiwara, professor at the University of Tokyo, argues that this was a new phenomenon, not anticipated or predicted by political pundits.

The twentieth-century revolutions shared a pattern: led by vanguard parties (usually communists), they usually failed and ended up installing a dictatorship, which soon after taking power brutalizes its own people. Examples are the Russian Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions. In the last years of the twentieth century, however, we saw a different picture emerge. This time there were no vanguard parties. Though the citizens gathered around students' organizations or other leading political groups, these organizations were small and somewhat irrelevant.

But these powerful popular movements for democracy also ended somewhat tragically, Fujiwara says. Within six months, or one year at most, the newly installed democratic institutions lost their appeal to the citizens. Those political masses who had "stood up" and supported the ouster of the dictatorship "sat down" immediately. A sense of apathy and disappointment prevailed—everyone felt that nothing had really changed and the transition to democracy did not mean much. The government fell back into hands of the old political establishments, as in the cases of the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia, among others.

Fujiwara explores the meaning of this new pattern of the "glory and tragicomedy of democracy in transition," where suddenly a huge number of people rise up in the name of democracy and are actually able to topple a dictatorship, but soon lose hope and end up disillusioned. Instead of a vanguard party brutalizing people, nothing really changes.

Fujiwara argues that there are two types of "democracy"—democracy as a political institution (form of government) and democracy as a norm. Democracy as a form of governance opens equal political opportunities to people, but does not assure that the outcome of elections or other democratic processes would actually result in the realization of a people's government. On the other hand, democracy as a norm is responsible to the people, and is a never-ending struggle to make political power accountable to the public. These two things do not really match.

Fujiwara asserts that what we have right now in Asia is a form of political institution that can only be called "democratic," and at the same time is quite dissociated, if not distanced, from the actual society. During the democratic struggles in Asia, people believed in the democratic norms, not in a democratic form of governance. They thought that if the dictator would step down, there will be both democratic institutions and the realization of democratic norms. Things are not that simple, Fujiwara says.

Democratic institutions are a way to accommodate democratic demands in a stable political institution. Accommodation does not mean realization, however. Democracy guarantees institutional participation in the form of elections. At the same time, however, other activities that may assure democratic governance are banned as illegal. In a way, accommodation also means the "taming of democratic demands." Therefore, Fujiwara argues, the distance between the norms of democracy and procedural democracy can actually become wider with the installment of democratic institutions.

Fujiwara has developed the "governmental parties" theory, where the ruling party establishes a merger of government institutions to the effect that opposition parties become essentially pressure groups, and not contenders for political power. Japan is a case in point. Having little chance to win the next administration, the rational choice for the opposition parties is to work as pressure groups to push their demands against the government.

Fujiwara doubts government parties would be able to effectively install themselves in most Asian countries in the coming decade. There have been attempts to install a parliamentary cabinet system in many newborn democracies, for this system gives far more weight to the ruling administrative power. Precisely because of that, however, these moves have met strong opposition, and in many countries, were eventually trashed.

Nor does it mean that these societies will have full-fledged presidential democracies, Fujiwara says. Although there are moves toward a presidential form of government, what we observe in newborn democracies is the demise of political parties. The role of political parties is declining in many new democracies because under the presidential form of government, there is always a constant struggle between the congress and the president. Whenever there is a presidential election, there is kind of a turncoat effect; everybody wants to belong to the president's party.

Democracy means something to the public only when their say counts. It is a sad feature of political life in virtually every society that laymen's voices do not actually count. Nevertheless, Fujiwara insists that democracy has become an unchallengeable concept after the Second World War. It has become universally accepted. What we have in Asia is not a struggle for democracy against autocracies, but an effort to make liberal democratic institutions more accountable to the public.

The Hokkaido development project and its challenges

Hokkaido was first settled by the Japanese people at the end of the nineteenth century, when most inland areas were wild forests. At that time, over a million Ainu had already dwelled in what would later be called Hokkaido. The newly established Meiji government viewed Hokkaido as essential both as a military base against the southward advancement of the Russian empire and as a colony where jobless and landless Japanese farmers and former samurai soldiers could settle and start new lives. To facilitate and enhance the development of Hokkaido, the government established the Hokkaido Colonization Commission (*Kaitakushi*) in 1869. The Commission later invited specialists from the United States and, based on their suggestions, adopted Western-style ways of living and modern agricultural technologies. Kiyoshi Koda, professor at the Hokkai Gakuen University, said that Horace Capron, former U.S. secretary of agriculture, was among the advisers, and was paid better than the prime minister at that time.

In 1886, with the establishment of the Hokkaido Agency within the Ministry of Home Affairs (and the abolishment of the Kaitakushi), the government's Hokkaido development policy shifted from agriculture-oriented colonization to industrialization. In part due to the improvement of the railroad system, many industries emerged, such as pulp and paper manufacturing, coal mining, and iron and steel production. Thanks to the nationwide economic development, both capital and labor moved to Hokkaido in great numbers, and in 1920, manufacturing became the main industry of Hokkaido, followed by agriculture and fishery. However, the importance of the Hokkaido development project gradually decreased as Japan began to seek economic, capital, and agricultural resources overseas.

After World War II, however, Hokkaido was focused on yet again as a food center, a place to accept people returning from overseas, and the front base against the Soviet Union in the midst of the Cold War. To promote the comprehensive development of Hokkaido, the Japanese government established the Hokkaido Development Bureau in 1951, modeling it after the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) system in the U.S. Since then, six terms of the Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan have been implemented by the government. As a result, Koda argues, the infrastructures of Hokkaido have been well established. Koda views the promotion of communications among the northern countries as one of the key objectives for the next decade.

ON PEACE/SECURITY

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and
the testimony of an A-bomb victim

Meeting Michiko Yamaoka, an A-bomb victim (*hibakusha*), and listening to her graphic account of her hellish experience was an opportunity to understand more profoundly the horror of nuclear weapons. Yamaoka began publicly testifying about the terror of the A-bomb after her mother, who single-handedly raised Yamaoka, died a quarter of a century ago; she then realized it was her duty to share her stories with the world while she was alive. The war ended almost sixty years ago, but many people are still suffering the aftereffects and wars are still being waged in many places around the world. The core of Yamaoka's message is simple: the meaninglessness of war and the importance of seeing the value of a peaceful life.

The A-bombing of Hiroshima, a garrison city where many soldiers were stationed, was planned from the initial stage of the Pacific War. The city was deliberately kept free of air raids until the day of the A-bombing. The Hiroshima citizens were not informed of the air attacks in other big cities or the occupation of Okinawa. On August 6, 1945, Yamaoka, then a mobilized ninth-grade student, was 800 meters from the hypocenter. Blown away by the blast, she found herself buried under the rubble, burned and unable to move. It was her mother who came to look for her and rescued her. Yamaoka describes the scene of innumerable people staggering with their skins peeling off and their intestines hanging out and dead bodies piled up or floating in the rivers as "Hell on Earth," an indelible image that she can never forget until the day of her own death.

That was only the beginning of Yamaoka's long struggle against poverty and discrimination (the hibakusha were mostly shunned because they were thought to have a contagious disease). In 1955, as one of the twenty-five "A-bomb Maidens," Yamaoka went to the U.S. and underwent a total of twenty-seven reconstructive surgeries, supported by a Quaker organization. At the beginning, full of anger toward the Americans as well as the Japanese government, she thought it only proper for the Americans to support the victims, but personally communicating with them made her realize

that it was the war that was to blame, not the people. After the operations she regained the movement of her neck and hands and was able to help out her mother, who had fallen ill by then.

Later, Masako Unezaki guided the fellows through the Peace Memorial Park, where they saw the A-bomb Dome and other war-related memorials.

The role of Hiroshima in peace making: A journalist's perspective

The *Chugoku Shimbun* (a Japanese regional newspaper), a forerunner and leader in disseminating the Hiroshima experience throughout the world, has broadly and extensively reported on the effect of atomic bombs, mainly focusing on the plight of A-bomb survivors until the 1980s. In the 1990s, however, it shifted its attention to different kinds of Nuclear Age victims around the world and conducted extended investigations, such as reports on the Atomic Soldiers (soldiers in the U.S. and China exposed to radiation for experimental purposes without any prior warning about the risks involved) and the Downwinders (those living downwind of the nuclear testing sites).

Many of the so-called superpowers have victimized their own people through their pursuit of nuclear armaments, all in the name of "national security." Even now, workers at and nearby residents of uranium reprocessing facilities are being exposed to highly toxic radiation. The latest warheads loaded on missiles are at least seven times as destructive as the one dropped on Hiroshima. Japan currently possesses fifty-two nuclear power plants producing nuclear fuels.

Akira Tashiro, senior staff writer of the *Chugoku Shimbun*, says that only a small number of people are aware of the fact that the entire globe is becoming the target of a nuclear disaster, which may lead to the annihilation of the whole of humanity. To increase the level of awareness about the threat of a nuclear holocaust, for the past fifteen years, Tashiro has worked on connecting the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the current situation by writing a series of articles on nuclear issues, including stories on the lethal effect of the depleted uranium (DU) used in the Gulf War. He has visited a number of countries including the former USSR nations, the U.S., the U.K., and Iraq to disclose the deadly effects of nuclear weapons on human bodies as well as the environment. In January 2004, the *Chugoku Shimbun*, in cooperation with the Hiroshima International Cultural Foundation, initiated a project called the Hiroshima World Peace Mission, dispatching citizen delegates to various parts of the world to spread the message of Hiroshima.

Tashiro argues that only those who understand the true meaning of the Nuclear Age could change the world, and thus, concerned citizens as well as journalists, scholars, and educators have a responsibility to inform the people of various countries of the reality of the nuclear threat. He says the issue of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should concern the whole of humanity, and the abolishment of nuclear weapons and all kinds of warfare is a challenge that has to be faced by everyone on the planet. He hopes that the voice of Hiroshima will be heard and will contribute to the prevention of warfare, the promotion of mutual understanding among people, and ultimately the creation of a nuclear-free world.

ON PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS

Looking back to Japan's past

Shunsuke Tsurumi, one of the most prominent philosophers in post-war Japan, first brought up the life and work of the great writer Soseki Natsume to discuss the productivity of the early Meiji period. When Natsume studied English literature in England, he explored the question of why Chinese and Japanese literatures were so different from English literature. Since Natsume grew up in an environment where the pre-Meiji culture was still prevalent, Chinese literature had had a great impact on him. Haunted by this problem, he studied psychology, sociology, and other social sciences. He even tried to apply the natural science method to literature[1] and to study literature from an anthropological perspective by reading Malinowski and others. During Natsume's time, however, anthropology had not yet been established as a discipline.

Natsume's literary theory was not successful. The problem he formulated was solved only more than thirty years later by I. A. Richards. Nevertheless, Tsurumi says that up to now, almost one hundred years after Natsume's death, no scholar of English literature has yet posed such a significant question as the one the writer put forward; here lies the greatness of early Meiji scholarship.[2] These people belonged to two worlds (Japan and the western world). Tsurumi then asks, "When did the Japanese become scholars of only one world?" He believes the year 1905 (the end of the Russo-Japanese War)—not the end of World War II in 1945—marked a watershed in modern Japanese history.

To elaborate on this point, Tsurumi brought up two central figures in the Russo-Japanese War: Gentaro Kodama and Iwao Oyama. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Kodama, a former low-ranking samurai, was never sent to Europe, but instead learned Western military tactics from a German named Meckel whom the Japanese Army had invited. Kodama thought that a war against Russia was unavoidable and proposed that he be appointed the vice chief of staff, in charge of the appointment of all the officials in the Army.

Iwao Oyama was a cousin of Takamori Saigo, a central figure in the

Meiji Restoration. When he went to study in Switzerland, he had an astute Russion tutor who was being pursued by the Russian government. Oyama told the Swiss official who warned him about his tutor that he himself used to be pursued by the Japanese government, but he became a high-ranking official because his side won, and therefore if his tutor's party turned out victorious he also might end up being a high official.

When several important leaders of the Meiji government had a conference in Kyoto to discuss the war with Russia, Oyama and Kodama, who were about to set out on an expedition to Manchuria as chief and vice chief of the general staff, respectively, told the leaders: "When we say to the Cabinet that it is time to stop (the war), just do so, under whatever terms, without any investigation."

In the Portsmouth Treaty to end the Russo-Japanese War, signed by Jutaro Komura, then Japanese foreign minister, and his Russian adversary, Count Witte, Japan made little profit. A great rally protesting Japan's decision was held in Tokyo. However, Tsurumi asserts that the Japanese leaders knew that if Japan pursued the war, it would inevitably lose, and they thus had no choice but to end it in 1905. To appease the nation, however, they made it appear as if Japan had actually won the war against Russia. But the truth is Japan *did not lose* the war, Tsurumi asserts. Amidst this lie, Japan plunged into the Pacific War.

Even after the war, this false scenario continued to be believed, Tsurumi says. It was very convenient for the government leaders to deceive the nation. It was also a convenient device for the United States to make Japan feel good. The deception went on, and thus fascist Japan was preserved within imperial America. Tsurumi is not sure how long this trend will last. He recalls that in 1945, an American classmate from Harvard told him that the U.S. would become totalitarian, which Tsurumi could not believe then. However, when George Bush came out on television and said, "We are crusaders," Tsurumi knew that what his classmate said in 1945 had come true. Under the veil of deception, Japan is already under the American empire. The Japanese prime minister is blindly following whatever Bush says. Tsurumi asks, "What can I do?"

Dialogue with Amal Jadou, SYLFF Prize recipient

Amal Jadou, a Ph.D. candidate at the Fletcher School, Tufts University, was born and raised in a Palestinian refugee camp near Bethlehem (Aida Camp), one of nineteen such refugee camps on the West Bank and Gaza. Her grandparents were deprived of their land as a result of the Zionism movement in 1948. No sooner had they settled in a camp after evacuating

from an Israeli massacre than Jadou's grandmother was widowed, and had to raise three children on her own.

Jadou compares the "miserable" and "poverty-stricken" camp life to that in a prison. The refugees are denied access to their own lands and properties, and they have little, if any, freedom. Jadou says, "Somebody is always controlling you and telling you when to smile or cry, when to go out of your house or go to school." There are over six hundred checkpoints in Palestine, and every day young Palestinian women are harassed by Israeli soldiers but currently there is no legal protection for Palestinians. In Jadou's words, Palestinians have been reduced to "subhuman" beings. Much as land or nationhood is important to Palestinians, even more critical is the "salvation of their own souls and beings," Jadou says. Although she was born in the camp, it is psychologically a temporary home, and her grandparents' house, which Jadou has never seen, is her real home.

Feeling helpless at the "silence of the international community," Jadou decided to study foreign policy to understand what was happening in her country. She was particularly keen on studying in the United States because she believed that by supporting Israel politically, economically, and diplomatically, the U.S. was in fact a co-occupier of Palestine.[3] In the U.S., Jadou visited churches, schools, and universities to discuss the Palestine-Israel conflict. She says her hope lies in the following: Palestinian youth working to resist the Israeli occupation; Israeli people opposing the occupation; and the enlightened or motivated activists in the world, particularly in the U.S. She believes by working together they can make a difference.

Upon completion of her doctoral studies, Jadou will return to Palestine to teach at Bir Zeit University, her alma mater. Under Israeli censorship, Palestinian schools are not allowed to teach anything about the Holocaust, Zionism or the Palestine-Israel conflict. Jadou's ultimate goal is to run for the Palestinian Legislative Council and work for her country. She envisages a future Palestine as a liberal, democratic, and open-minded country, where the rule of law and human rights are respected, and most importantly, where people can be themselves and flourish as free individuals.

Dialogue with Egla J. Martinez-Salazar, SYLFF Prize recipient

Egla Martinez-Salazar, a Ph.D. candidate at York University, discussed the human rights issues in Guatemala, with a special focus on the Mayan people. Throughout the thirty-four-year-long state-led genocide, more than 200,000 people were killed, of which 83 percent were Mayas, and over 440 Mayan towns were totally destroyed.

Egla's first encounter with the Mayas dates back to her early childhood

when her impoverished mestizo family migrated to eastern Guatemala to work in a cotton plantation. There, Egla witnessed firsthand how the Mayan people were treated as primitives belonging to the bottom rung of Guatemalan society. She realized that "another Guatemala," about which she had never been taught in school, existed, and that the Mayan people were not just primitive "Indios" who had no relevance in the contemporary world. Until then, Egla had believed in the nationally imposed concept of Guatemala having only two populations: Latinos and the indigenous people (not including the Mayas). But the Latino is also a constructed concept because people like Egla who come from different indigenous backgrounds (mestizo) fall under this category as well. Thus, not only did Egla discover the multiethnicity of her country, she also began to ask herself who she was, as a mixed person, as a woman, and as a poor person.

With these fundamental questions in mind, Egla became actively involved in social and political activities. Later when she was finishing her teaching degree, she became part of a students' association and worked with peasants, landless city dwellers, and Mayan people. In 1981, Egla's father, who was helping illiterate peasants with land rights issues as a municipal official, was ambushed in his office and brutally killed. Four years later, her older sister was kidnapped, tortured, and raped by the military, then three years after that, her younger brother, who was also working with the Mayas, was killed when he accidentally stepped on a landmine.

Egla says that her personal and family tragedies have been so overwhelming that sometimes it feels unbearable; she always remembers the lives and deaths of her family and colleagues. Citing Walter Benjamin, she says if we live painful memories through passivity, we are going to become more absorbed in our pain. The best way we can work through this traumatic experience is to get involved and determined, and to contribute to the foundation of different hopes.

Egla says it has been difficult in the academe to connect these personal experiences with theory. At the same time, she feels that too many academics are so detached from realities, which are complex and nuanced. Though these academicians easily theorize on such ideas as equality and suffering in their ivory towers, it is hard for them to engage in real people or see true human contradictions. Egla thus insists on the need to develop a new type of "engaged scholarship." By "engaged scholars," she means those who dare to challenge different systems from privileged perception and ask different questions. Engaged scholars must challenge themselves to look for new concepts to really understand what is happening in the world and their future implications. Egla promises to continue to be such an engaged scholar, and a "little hammer" who will push forward ideas in which she truly believes, as a teacher,

researcher, and community worker.

Endnotes

1 Natsume learned the natural science method through nightly discussions with Kikunae Ikeda, who later founded the Ajinomoto Corporation.

2 Tsurumi's major problem concerned his father. His politician father supported the war against China and the U.S. in the Diet. "How can such a brilliant man support such an immoral war which Japan will certainly lose?" The question fueled Tsurumi's best work. His most significant studies were made to resolve this dilemma.

3 Jadou severely criticizes the U.S. and Israel for controlling the Palestinians and their sovereignty by forcefully changing the discourse. As long as a Palestinian leader is cooperating with the U.S. and Israel, these powers will continue supporting that leadership, but once the same leader becomes uncontrollable, they would demand a change of leadership. Jadou argues that it is not for others, especially the U.S. and Israel, to determine who represents the will of the Palestinian people, and she calls for a fair, democratic political process that will be under international observation.

Perspectives from Japan

WHY NEW COMPETENCE?:
A HIDDEN INEQUALITY IN THE EDUCATION REFORM OF 1992
Takehiko Kariya

History of educational reforms in modern Japan

New competence means kinds of intellectual skills, and I am one of those very doubtful of it. We have had three major education reforms in modern Japan. The first took place in the late nineteenth century when the newly formed Meiji government was in the process of modernization, in which education played a very important part. The government decided to model the educational system after the modern school system of other countries, such as America, France, and Germany. The second reform took place at the end of the Second World War. At that time the U.S. Occupation Forces tried to change the Japanese prewar education system, which seemed to them an elitist system. The third big change that took place in the 1990s is the subject of this paper.

The current education system of Japan

After the war, we imported the idea of the American education system, which naturally reflects the important values of American society: democracy, equality, and freedom. The school system was simplified: six years in elementary school, three years in junior high school, and three more years in senior high school; the first nine years are compulsory. In postwar Japan, the secondary education system was also simplified. In prewar days, we had different types of secondary schools: middle schools for boys and girls, vocation training schools, and so on. Now, however, there is only one type of upper middle school, i.e., senior high school, above which are colleges and universities.

Another feature of the new Japanese education system is egalitarianism. In some other countries, students are divided into classes based on the level of their ability or performance, but in Japan, from elementary through junior high school, it hasn't been like that at least until very recently. However, senior high schools, as well as colleges and universities, have a very selective and hierarchical system. Students have to take entrance examinations to enter senior high schools. In one school district, there are usually five to ten schools,

including vocational high schools, and based on their achievement levels, students decide to which schools they will apply.

Currently, 97 percent of junior high school graduates, meaning almost everyone, go on to senior high school. Half of senior high school graduates go on to colleges or universities, and another 20 percent move on to post-secondary vocational schools. In total, 70 percent of senior high school graduates (or, 65 percent of their cohorts) have post-secondary education for two years or more.

It can be said that these statistics show the high performance and efficiency levels of Japanese education, which seemed to have performed very well, until recently. However, there were also people who found problems with this system, and they tried to fix them. What happened after they tried to fix the problems is crucial to the point I would like to make in this paper.

The nightmare of Japanese education

In every country, people complain about education, and that was also the case in Japan. When I started my graduate studies in the United States in the 1980s, many countries of the world respected the achievements of Japanese education. But that time, the Japanese themselves, especially experts of education research, criticized it and demanded it be changed. So there was a big gap between how the Japanese viewed it and how the outside world viewed it. I found myself in a dilemma as to which side I was to take. Naturally, everything has two sides, but we often forget that these two are so closely linked that when you get rid of one, you also lose the other.

From the 1970s to the 1980s, the Japanese education system came under severe criticism. First of all, there was "Exam Hell" that put great pressure on young people to go to better high schools, colleges, and universities. The many problems of school bullying, school phobia, and homicides by students were found to have resulted from the failure to cope with the pressures of "Exam Hell." The upside of this setup is that everybody had a clear idea of why they must study: the clear goal was to be able to go to a (better) high school and college. The examination process is very simple— you work hard, you get good marks, you pass the exam. If you want to complicate the selection process and try to see the whole person, then a ten-minute interview or ten-page essay would not be enough, and it is going to be costly, too. So it is a kind of tradeoff—simpler and clearer criteria, incentives, and goals versus competition and stress and so on.

Secondly, in the mid-1980s, Japanese education was heavily criticized for not encouraging creativity and individuality among students. Those days, we had fewer Nobel Prize winners than the United States or Europe. We

had no Bill Gates, either. Creativity means different things to different peoples around the world, but in those days, some Japanese people insisted that in the twenty-first century, Japan should "create" creativity; otherwise, it could not compete with other countries. Also, it was said that since the Japanese are a group-oriented people, we should provide more opportunities for individuality. However, again, there are always two sides. Being group-oriented and putting communities before individuals is not always a negative thing, and actually, it was the source of strength and motive energy that propelled Japan's economic development and corporate management.

The third defect the reformers saw in Japanese education was how it pushed students to cram knowledge. Examinations were condemned for just testing what students memorized. I argue however that students need basic knowledge, for example, to be able to calculate, and being drilled is a prerequisite to mastering a skill. The real weakness probably was that teachers did not care about teaching students enough to show them how to link separate pieces of knowledge they learned in different classes into a more organized whole.

Call for education reform

It was in that environment of unpopularity that an ad hoc council on education reform was formed under Nakasone Yosuhiro, then prime minister of Japan. This council's report stated that since Japan had finished catching up with advanced countries, cramming knowledge and learning their technology, and had in fact overtaken others, it was time to become more creative while Japan was at the top. Thus, creativity and individuality emerged as the "new competencies" for the twenty-first century. Innovativeness, the ability to think for oneself, and problem-solving skills were all called "new competencies." They said that knowledge cramming was too old-fashioned, and it was time to shift to "quality education" and produce more creative people. This was how the third round of education reform started.

The first thing the government did was revise the national curricula, according to which private companies published textbooks, so there were no national textbooks, only guidelines.

The revised curriculum required that instruction should be responsive to students' interests. This idea came from the criticism that teachers decided what should be taught. Therefore, the government emphasized that now students should be the center of education, not teachers or textbooks. Teachers were expected to listen to the students, find what their interests were, and motivate them. Based on those interests, teachers should decide what and how to teach. Under this policy, the so-called "*sogo tekina gakushu no jikan,*" an

experience-based, cross-subject, and integrated-style class session, was adopted.

The government also decided to lessen the demands on students since cramming of knowledge was seen as negative. As a result, the curricula content of elementary and junior high schools was reduced by 30 percent. But where did this 30 percent go? It was merely transferred to the senior high school curriculum. There is a certain level of knowledge the society requires everyone to learn by the time they become adult. Anything taken away in elementary or junior high school has to be learned in senior high school. Again, it's either of two things: start slowly and speed up later, or speed up then slow down. In any case, the government would try to leave some "room to grow (*yutori*)" for elementary and junior high school students.

Another change the government tried to introduce was multiple criteria. Before, exam scores were very simple and clear. But now, as the government encourages different kinds of criteria to evaluate students, colleges and universities have changed their admission policies. Now, there are different types of entrance examinations; admission can be based upon an essay, interview, sport ability, or artistic talent. Multiple criteria are likewise used for daily classroom evaluation. Students' school reports are evaluated according to their level of participation, attitude, and even by their eagerness to learn. All these were attempts to create a new competence. This may be a good idea, and we may need that kind of competence, but the real question is how we can really attain it.

What happened in real classrooms?—a survey

There are more important questions to ask. What actually happened and continues to happen in real classrooms? What problems will emerge in the future? It's not just a story of current Japan, but education must also influence the future. And the third question is why we still like these ideals even when we find them problematic. New competence, new learning: Why do educators like these ideals? As a sociologist, I tried to answer these questions through empirical researches.

For this survey, my group chose 921 fifth-grade students in sixteen elementary schools and 1,281 eighth-grade students in eleven junior high schools. This survey we did in 2001 repeated the same tests and questionnaire once used in 1989 by other researchers in the same schools.

Figure 1 compares the scores in basic mathematics tests of both 1989 and 2001. As the table would show in 1989, the biggest percentage of students scored 90 percent or above and the average was about 80, but in 2001, the scores fell and there were more students in the lower strata. The number of students who marked 90 or above dropped drastically. Likewise, the

result of the basic math test we did on eighth-grade students showed a clear decline in scores. What is alarming is not just that the average score declined, but also that the distribution became much wider (Figure 2).

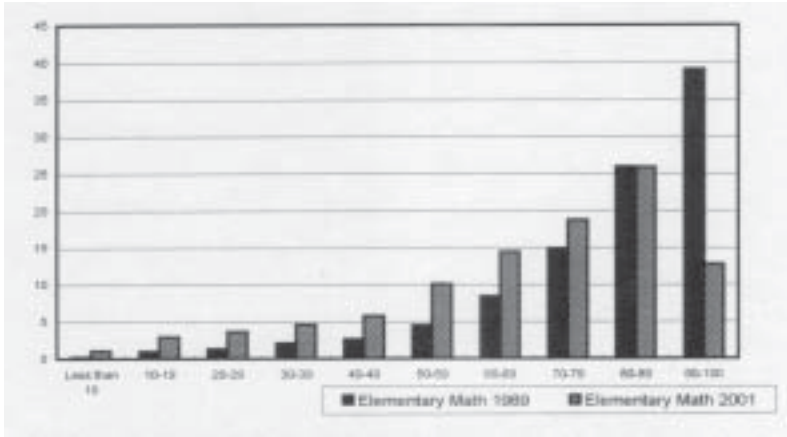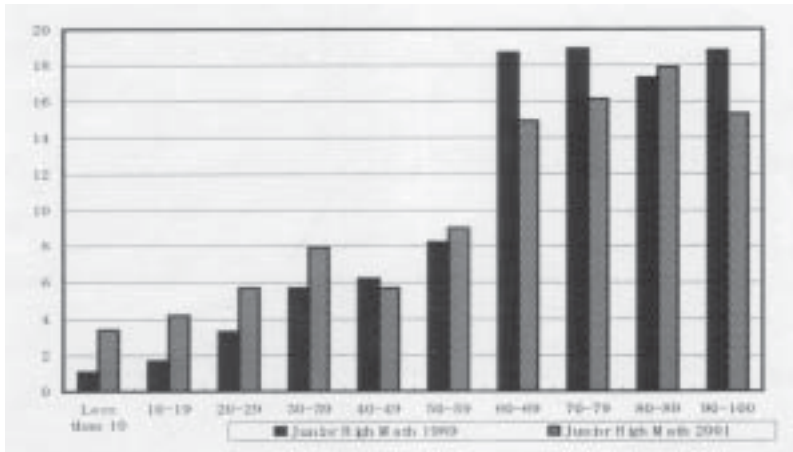*Figure 1.* Math Scores of Fifth Graders in 1989 and in 2001

Figure 2. Math Scores of Eighth Graders in 1989 and in 2001

The scores of students who went to *juku* (a private school students go to after school to complement the school curricula) and those who did not in both years (1989 and 2001) were also compared. Students who went to juku scored higher, but in 2001, the gap between these two groups became much

wider (Figure 3). Also, the students who went to juku in 2001 scored less than those who did not go to juku in 1989. This fact shows two things: one is the defects of public schooling and the other is the inequality among students. Since only those students whose parents are affluent enough can afford to go to juku, this means that those who cannot afford juku will end up with lower scores. This is one example of how family income directly affects children's education.

Similarly, we compared the math scores of eighth graders who did not go to juku and who did not study at all at home; in other words, they relied only on formal schooling or learning in the classroom (Figure 4). In 1989, even those students who did not study at all outside the classroom still got higher scores. In 2001, however, more students who did no out-of-classroom studying had lower scores.

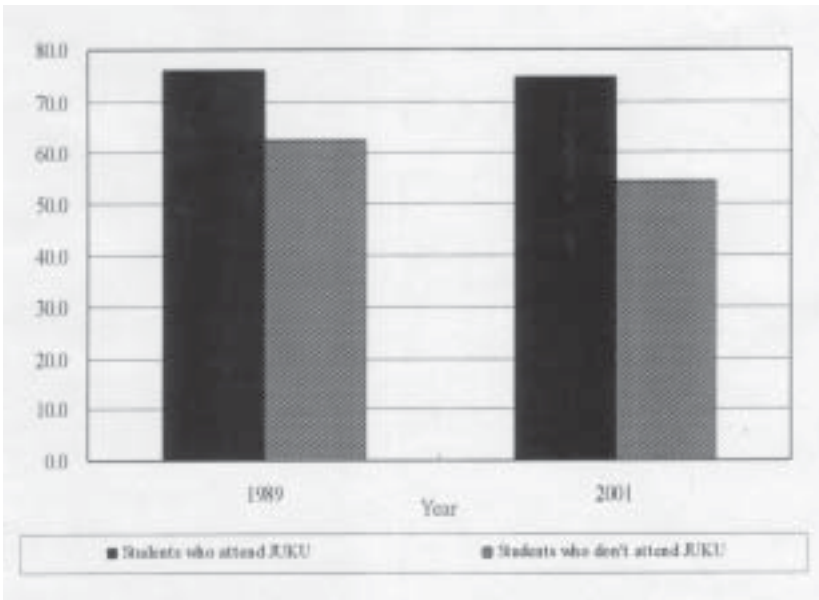*Figure 3.* Math Scores of Junior High School Students with Juku or without Juku (1989 and 2001)

Figure 4. Math Scores of No Study No Juku Students in 1989 and 2001
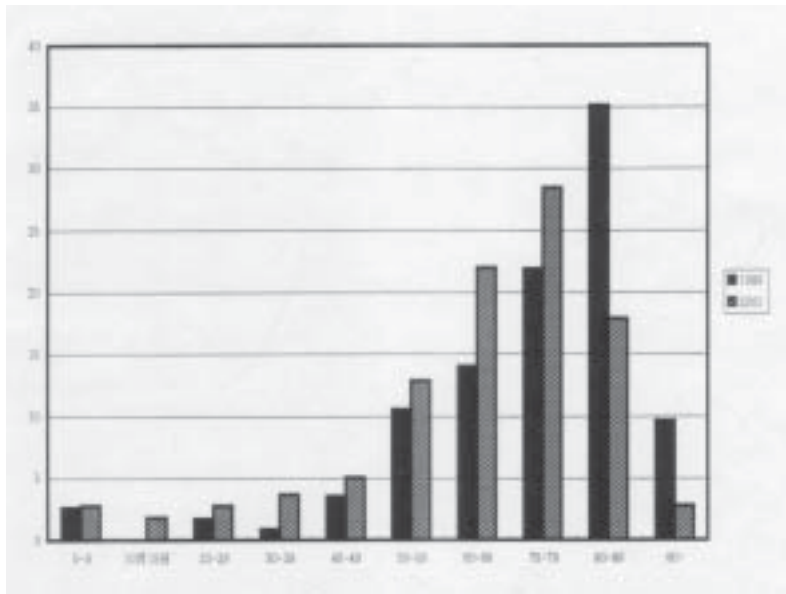

Figure 5 shows how many minutes students spent on homework. We also divided the students into three groups based on what I call the "cultural background" of their family. We wanted to ask them about their social and economic background, but it was not easy to include such direct questions in questionnaires for younger students. So we instead asked such questions as, "Does your family own a computer?" "Do your parents often watch news programs on TV?" "Do your parents take you to museums or concerts?" and "Does your family have lots of books in the house?" Based on their answers, they were divided into three groups: upper, middle, and lower classes, using some statistical techniques. The result showed a clear difference in study minutes among these groups. The students from an upper cultural background spent more time on homework than those from middle-or lower-background families.

Figure 5. Junior High School Students' Homework Time per Day by Family Cultural Background
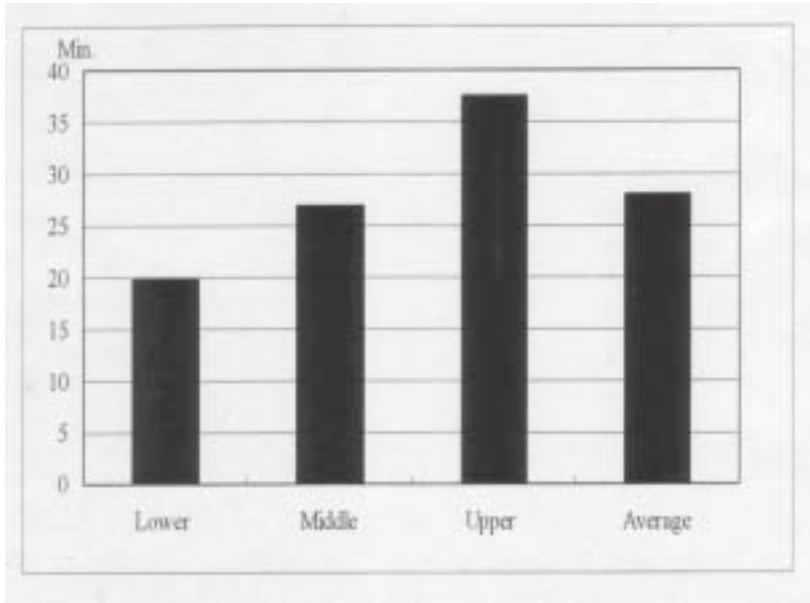
To find out the effect of the types of learning they received in elementary school on their math scores in junior high school, regression analysis of junior high school math scores was also done. What can be concluded from the result is that the child-centered "new competence" type of learning has a negative impact on students' math scores in junior high school, while the traditional type of learning has a positive effect. Hence, it can be said that even though the idea of "new competence" is good, if it is not implemented in the right way, it will have a negative impact on students' academic skills in the future.

So far we have looked at "traditional" competence such as math skills. I will now proceed to show whether or not "New Competence" is equally distributed, and whether or not the cultural environment of students influences their commitment to new learning situations.

To find out the influence of the students' family background on their commitment to learning, the first question we asked was how active they were in classes where students are expected to search for knowledge themselves. This is the idea of "new competence"; students are encouraged to formulate their own questions and solve them. It is students, not teachers, who should know their interests, set up projects, work together, and find solutions. Again, students were divided into three groups, and there was a

clear correlation between their family's cultural background and their active-ness in such classes (Figure 6).

Another question we asked was how often students became leaders in group work-type learning situations, which supposedly is another attribute of the "new competence." There was also an obvious connection between the cultural background of the students' family and their commitment to such "new competence" type of learning situation (Figure 7). Students from upper cultural backgrounds became group leaders more often than those from lower strata.

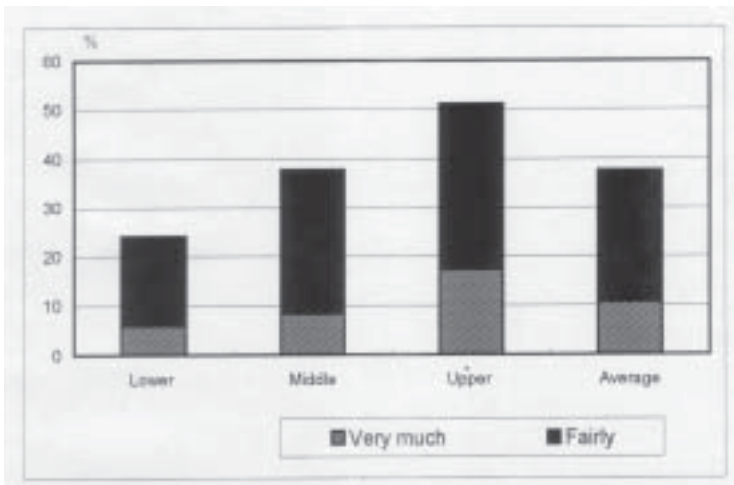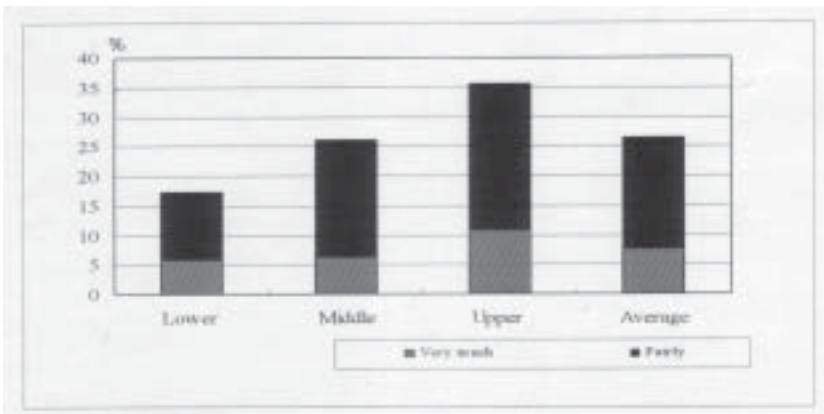*Figure 6.* "I am active in classes where students search for knowledge themselves."

Figure 7. "I often become a leader of group-work learning."

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What then contributes to such increasing inequality? Not only in the education environment but also in the Japanese society as a whole, there is a growing trend to put more importance on "individuality" rather than on a "group-oriented" mindset. We have also come to value "self-esteem." These new values have emerged as counterattacks against the criticism on the old-fashioned, cramming type of schooling.

Such new values, however, also convey a hidden message to the students that school is not important anymore. Old schools crammed knowledge, and crammed knowledge is useless—this is the message students receive these days. And naturally, they will begin to wonder why in the first place they have to go to a school that teaches useless knowledge.

In another survey conducted on twelfth-grade (senior high school) students, we asked how much they want to contribute of themselves to society or the country. We then calculated their study minutes at home per day, and we also asked them about their parents' occupational and educational background. The result shows that among those students who wished to contribute to society, the difference of study minutes among social economic statuses was not so big. However, the less students wished to contribute to society (or, we can say, the more self-centered they were), the bigger the gap in study minutes between social classes became.

Generally, if you want to contribute to society, you will study hard no matter what your family background is. However, if society becomes more and more individualistic (and in my view Japanese society is moving toward that direction), young people will lose the sense of linkage to society as a whole. Once they lose the sense of what they can do for society, they may also soon lose the reason for working hard or finding jobs, and eventually, they could stop studying. The study, in fact, shows this happening more likely among those from a lower social background. If this trend continues, we will have greater inequality in the future.

We also conducted another regression analysis. We asked students if they think it is possible to get almost every knowledge and skill without attending schools (again the idea was to find out if they still think of schools as useful). Then we divided the students into two groups based on their answers (agree or disagree). The result shows that among those students who found schools useful, the gap in study minutes between social classes was smaller than the class gap among those students who did not regard schools as useful. This confirms that those who do not find schools important stop studying. But who are these who are the first to stop studying? Yes, those students from the lower family background. The point I reiterate here is that it is happening unequally.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I must say that what happened during the 1990s in the education sphere was a nationwide experiment. A countrywide education reform has already taken place, and we have seen declines in scores, expansion of inequality in scores and studying hours, and a widening gap in acquiring the "new competence." Japanese education used to be an "equalizer" of society, but not anymore. What is problematic is that the majority of people do not know what is actually happening in schools. They still believe in the ideals of the reform. Yes, the ideals and intent were good, but one has to look closely at what has been happening as a result. Japanese education stopped functioning as an "equalizer" of society.

Such phenomena as a rapidly growing inequality or a drastic widening of income gaps might have happened even without the influence of education. However, when such a trend starts to be witnessed, education could play the role of either an accelerator or a brake. The Japanese government used education as a gas pedal and contributed partly to the expanding inequality in society.

Another observation was that the "new competence" is also unequally distributed. The ideal goes that every child has his or her own interest and so teachers should help them find said interests and according to those, provide them with proper education. But this is not an easy task for most teachers. Imagine that you are teaching a class of thirty-five or thirty-six students, and you have to make them think their own way and find their own interests, questions, and solutions. I am fortunate to have only ten to fifteen highly motivated university students in my class, and I still find it difficult to have each student find his or her own question and then solve it. That was what the Japanese government demanded all the school teachers in Japan to do, starting on the same day, regardless of whether they were prepared or not.

Inequality in acquiring or learning the new competence is closely linked with students' family background. It has been "less help" for those students from "less advantaged" families. Because of the nature of this new competence and the multiple-criteria policy, assessing how students perform in school is becoming more and more difficult. Teachers still make comments like, "You have an interest in so and so subject" or "You are better than so and so," but it is hard for parents to interpret and to know how their children are performing in classrooms or how much their understanding has improved.

Those who are educated know what problem finding and solving is, and therefore can teach their children. For example, when my daughter had an assignment to write an essay on the role of newspapers, my wife and I were able to help her, utilizing the Internet, newspapers, and other news

sources. However, such a task is not as easy for other families, especially those from a lower socioeconomic background. And who suffers the most from such inequality? Of course, the children. Nevertheless, Japanese education reform has ignored these phenomena, and in fact, our society is moving toward more inequality. If we decide that this is the direction our society and economy should take, we should do something for the youth before they enter the extremely competitive job market. I believe that the government is responsible for reducing social gaps, particularly through public education. The education reform, however, has only widened the inequalities in Japanese society even more.

People understand the ideal of the "new competence," but most of them do not know how to attain it, implement it, or teach it. I am of the opinion that those who are ready to take this new course of education should do so. But those who are not, should wait. However, the Japanese centralized system asked every teacher to start this new course on the same day: April 1, 2002. And I must say that as our survey results show, the reform was a failure.

The Japanese government tried to follow other advanced countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom that have adopted child-centered education or the twenty-first-century-style new competence in place of traditional skills. However, there is a difference between these countries and Japan. The U.S. and the U.K. have a decentralized education system, so one part of the country can start implementing new competence while others continue with the traditional style of education. In Japan, however, we have a very centralized system, so such an experiment will have to involve the entire nation. In Japan, therefore, the reform should have been done or implemented slowly and carefully; otherwise, it could lead to tragedy. We must distinguish between ideals and reality.

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Questions and Answers

Q: Are there any similar studies on the social and cultural backgrounds of university students?

A: Most Japanese universities and colleges are private and some 70 percent of all university students go to private colleges and universities. There is also

a clear correlation between university enrollment and the sociocultural background of students' families. In the case of the University of Tokyo, one of the most selective national universities in Japan, about 75 percent of the students come from the upper middle class.

Q: Is it valid to use the time spent by students on homework outside of school to evaluate the effectiveness of the education reform, even though there might be students who have to spend time on farming or doing chores for the family?

There are only a few Japanese students who have to help the family. Also, there is a clear correlation between students' socioeconomic background and the time spent watching TV. Lower SES (Social Economic Status) students watch more TV than higher SES students. And the time spent on the TV among lower SES students is increasing yearly.

Comment: Critical thinking or writing should be taught in public schools, not just in private schools which only privileged families can afford. That is more egalitarian.

A: I agree with you, but the question is at what stage and how you start teaching such skills. Critical thinking requires a lot of expertise, including the basic knowledge students learn in elementary schools. Critical thinking or problem-solving skills cannot be separated from basic knowledge. Therefore, I think we should start teaching such advanced skills at the senior high school level.

Q: Is there any kind of study which may indicate the impact of the changes of the 1945 reform, such as how long it took before students began to exhibit high levels of achievement or how they became exam-oriented? This may be too soon to evaluate the impact of the 1992 reform.

A: The education reform in Japan has an unfortunate history. Until 1950, the schools, teachers, and the government had a relatively good relationship. However, during the 1950s and the early 1960s, there were political disputes between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Socialist and Communist Parties. In this conflict, the teachers' union supported the Socialist Party or the Communist Party and the Ministry of Education supported the government and the LDP. Thus, teachers were excluded from important decision making on future education policies.

One of the issues they discussed during this period of conflict was whether standardized testing should be conducted nationwide. The government tried to conduct such testing to predict what skills or knowledge should

be taught more extensively to educate future doctors, engineers, and so forth. However, this governmental trial was met with great opposition and criticism at the local level, particularly from teachers' unions who were supported by most education researchers. Because of this political conflict sometime in the 1960s, the government gave up on holding a national standardized test or any kind of evaluation on students' achievement. Hence, the central government had no data necessary for policy making and evaluating the effects of reforms.

Comment: We should understand that schools can only do so much. Education can never be equal because families are different and individuals are different. But it is important for educators to constantly be engaged in the process of adjusting and fine-tuning the system.

A: Yes, I agree. Education is not the sole solution to equalizing the society. We should know however to what extent education can be, or not be, effective.

Comment: In my country, where the modern education system started very recently, many Western "experts" on education come and tell us, "You should teach creativity," or "We (or other Asians) have made such mistakes, so don't repeat them," and so on. But we also have to know that though it is a good idea, we do not have teachers or resources who can teach these values, nor do we have enough understanding of such concepts among our people.

A: One thing we should not forget is that cramming knowledge and critical thinking or creativity do not contradict. Once you have a set of basic knowledge, then you can add to it the skills of critical thinking and creativity. That is my point. Without knowledge, we cannot possibly find problems or solve them.

Comment: Universities should be part of the education reform if the government is trying to shift its focus to "creativity." Though some universities have implemented new ways of admission, still most universities conduct crammed knowledge-based entrance examinations.

A: The government does not force universities to stick to conducting entrance examinations, but they opt to do so partly because standardized written examinations cost less and partly because college professors still believe in the value of traditional knowledge.

THE WAY WE LOVE (TO HATE) THE U.S:
THE LOCI OF "AMERICA" IN JAPAN TODAY
Yasushi Watanabe

Definition

The word *anti-Americanism* is used here as a short term for anti-American sentiment and discourse. It is less coherent and tangible than ideology. Calling anti-Americanism ideology is perhaps too strong. It is as vague as Orientalism, racism or anti-Semitism. It is a bit difficult to give an exact definition of anti-Americanism, but a mere opposition to American policies and attitudes should not in itself be sufficient to constitute anti-Americanism. It is based on the idea that "something associated with the U.S., something at the core of American life, is deeply wrong and threatening to the rest of the world."[1] Joseph Nye defined it in a simpler way: it is a "deeper rejection of American society, values, and culture."[2]

Comparative and transnational perspectives

According to the most recent Cabinet Office poll on foreign affairs in 2003 in Japan,[3] 75.8 percent of respondents feel "attachment" to the U.S. This figure has changed little in recent years, and the percentage is quite high when compared to the percentage of those who feel an attachment to other countries in the region.

The same poll shows that 79.1 percent of respondents regard Japan's current relationship with the U.S. as good. This figure has remained more or less the same in recent years and is remarkably high when compared to the percentages of those who regard as good Japan's relations with other counties and regions.

The Yomiuri-Gallup polls, which have been conducted since 1978, have consistently demonstrated that Japanese respondents select the U.S. as the "most reliable" other country in the world.[4] These polls show that Japanese public perception of the U.S. has been rather positive and stable, and that the U.S. holds a special status in the public consciousness of the Japanese.

According to a recent report by the Japan National Tourist Organization (July 2003),[5] the U.S. was the most popular destination of Japanese overseas travelers until 2001, before 9-11 occurred. In 2000, five million Japanese visited the U.S. while 3.6 million traveled to China (including Hong

Kong), followed by South Korea (2.5 million), Thailand (1.2 million), and France (one million). In 2001, 4.1 million visited the U.S. while 3.7 million traveled to China, followed by South Korea (2.4 million) and Thailand (1.2 million). In 2002, after 9-11, China became the most popular destination with 4.3 million visitors, followed by the U.S. (3.6 million), South Korea (2.3 million), and Thailand (1.2 million).

According to a recent report by the New York-based Institute of International Education,[6] the number of Japanese students studying in the U.S. has tripled over the last two decades and has been around 46,000 in recent years. Japanese constitute the fourth largest population of foreign students in the United States.

This figure is exceedingly high when compared to the number of students from Japan studying in China (13,806), the U.K. (6,150), Canada (2,371), South Korea (2,324), Germany (2,182), Australia (1,913), and France (1,566); it represents about 60 percent of Japanese students studying overseas.[7]

It is worth noting that the number of students, unlike that of tourists, has hardly changed in spite of economic recession in Japan, a decrease in the number of school-age children in Japan, and the whole complex of consequences of the 9/11 disaster.

These facts are only a few examples that illustrate the special status of the U.S. in terms of acceptance and permeation in Japan.

At the same time, in spite of (or perhaps because of) this special status, the U.S. has been a constant reference of new vocabularies in Japan, both positive and negative. In books and articles, I encountered a multitude of words coined to depict Japanese attitudes towards the U.S., including such popular terms as the following:

chibei—well informed about the U.S.
shinbei—pro-American
kohbei— favoring the U.S.
haibei—admiring the U.S.
raibei—praising the U.S.
hanbei—anti-American
kenbei—hateful of the U.S.
haibei—rejecting the U.S.
bubei—despising the U.S.
aibei—pity for the U.S.
hohbei—enough of the U.S.
enbei—weary of the U.S.
kenbei—tired of the U.S.

kyohbei—fearful of the U.S.
kyohbei—scared of the U.S.
datsubei—leaving the U.S.
ribei—distancing from the U.S.
juhbei—obeying the U.S.
tsuibei—following the U.S.

These rhetorical expressions clearly exemplify the ingenuity and struggle of the Japanese in making sense of the special status of the U.S. as a preeminent cultural "other." They are also evident in the sheer volume of popular literature, including a whole range of negative and provocative titles, on the U.S. in recent years. According to one survey, more than three hundred books with anti-American flavor have been published over the past five years. No other country holds such a special status in the literary imagery of the Japanese.

The Pew Global Attitudes survey,[8] conducted among 38,000 respondents in forty-four nations in the autumn of 2002, reveals that discontent with the United States has grown around the world over the past two years.

Japan is no exception, with a favorable view dropping from 77 percent to 72 percent. Still, popular approval of the U.S. remains as high in Japan as that in Great Britain (75 percent), Italy (70 percent), and Canada (72 percent), and higher than that in many Asian counties, especially South Korea (53 percent), another long-time U.S. ally in Northeast Asia. According to the most recent survey, the Indonesian rating has dropped to 19 percent; Indonesia is probably the most anti-American country in Asia.

Unlike in South Korea, there was no boycotting of American products in Japan, and protests against U.S. military bases were far less massive and violent. In recent years, physical attacks against Americans, the U.S. flag, or U.S. government offices have rarely been made as a collective action against the U.S. The way in which Japan has expressed its anti-Americanism appears to be more indirect, subdued, and intricate.

In order to clarify the locus and implication of this distinctive feature, I would like to explore the various contexts and expressions of anti-American discourse and sentiment in contemporary Japan in historical perspectives.

Historical Perspectives

Anti-Americanism, as articulated in literary practice in Japan, is by no means new. For example, in 1909 the historian Kan'ichi Asakawa expressed his concern that the Japanese tended to take more pleasure in pointing out

U.S. shortcomings as they became more cultivated. Ten years later, in 1919, the scholar and diplomat Inazo Nitobe related that there was a tendency in Japan, even among top diplomats and military officers, to despise the U.S. Akira Irie, a noted expert of U.S.-Japan relations at Harvard, points out that a sense of respect for the U.S. had been long lost among well-educated Japanese by the time of World War I. Shunsuke Kamei, a former University of Tokyo professor and another pioneer Americanist, argues that the dichotomy and oscillation between "admiring the U.S." and "rejecting the U.S." has been conspicuous in the social imagery of the Japanese ever since the Meiji period.[9]

In recent years, though, the tradition of anti-American discourse and sentiment as a mode of thinking has been reinvented in new contexts.

In the late 1980s, with the unprecedented prosperity of the Japanese economy (the so-called "bubbly economy") and the prolonged downturn of the American economy, the "we have nothing to learn from the U.S. anymore" type of discourse flourished in Japan, and the U.S. was increasingly perceived as declining, decaying, and falling apart. Parallel to this was the rise of a self-congratulatory tone in public discourse, including the popular literary genre of "*Nihonjin-ron*" (theory of Japanese uniqueness).[10] While things that were perceived to be unique to Japan were praised, all that was conjectured as characteristics of the U.S. was rejected. For instance, American policies on crimes, diplomatic affairs, the economy, education, energy policy, the environment, family, finance, human rights, infrastructure, the military, technology, transportation, and warfare were denounced. News reports on crime, drug use, guns, lawsuits, materialism, me-ism, moral corruption, poverty, racial discrimination, and individual bankruptcy were negatively recounted. The U.S. increasingly became the model of how not to be, rather than an example to emulate. Kunihiro was completely correct in depicting it as "Japan as Number One Syndrome."

The image of the U.S. was further damaged by a series of so-called "Japan bashing" and "*gaiatsu* (outside pressure)" incidents in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, sharp American criticism of Japan's unwillingness to contribute troops and its "checkbook diplomacy" at the time of the Persian Gulf War intensified anti-American discourse and sentiment and stiffened Japan's national pride as a sovereign state.

It was during this period that the expression "*kenbei*" (hateful of the U.S.) was coined to describe the new feelings of the Japanese toward America. The word became so rampant as to appear in *Gendai Yohgo no Kiso Chishiki* (The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Words) in 1992.[11]

Mid-1990s to early 2001 (pre-9-11)

The image of the U.S. bashing and pressuring Japan gradually faded as the economic conditions of the two countries began to reverse themselves in the mid-1990s. Instead, the perception of the U.S. as the sole winner in the new world order of globalization in terms of culture, finance, information, the military, politics, science, and technology became dominant. The ingenuity of U.S. society and its politics were idealized and held up as models for Japan to emulate. But at the same time a discourse on its "hidden and dark motivations" was constructed and appropriated to account for Japan's failure: the so-called "lost decade."

It was during this period that such sensational expressions as "second defeat," "tributary country," and "fifty-first state of the U.S." appeared in public discourse to describe what Japan was all about, and that books with such provocative titles as *The Destruction of Japan*,[12] *Why Japan Lost the War Twice*,[13] *The Re-defeat of Japan*,[14] and *Playing the "Without Japan" Game*[15] crowded bookstore shelves.

The United States was portrayed as the hegemonic super-/hyper-power, which engaged with the world unilaterally and using a double standard. For instance, Washington's refusal to release funds for the United Nations and to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the Landmine Ban Treaty was denounced; "globalization" was apprehended as mere Americanization of money, mass media, and military power. Various national publications began discussing the rise of anti-American discourse and sentiment under such titles as "Revival of 'Kenbei (Hateful of the U.S.),'"[16] "Anti-American Discourse Ignited,"[17] and "Kenbei Sentiment Has Come to the Fore."[18] As a matter of fact, several articles claimed that even Kunihiro, a renowned expert on the U.S., was getting increasingly critical of the United States during this period.

When Bill Clinton did not stop over in Japan on his way back from China in June 1998, a feeling spread that the U.S. was practicing a policy of "Japan Passing" (or "Japan Nothing"), failing to pay due respect to the U.S.'s long-term ally in the Asia Pacific region.

This discourse of crisis, saturated with both self-torture and anti-American sentiment, provided a platform from which the so-called anti-American conservatives gained ground in public discourse. Some conservative intellectuals sharpened their critique of the U.S. by reexamining such notions as "capitalism," "democracy," "equal opportunity," "freedom," "free trade," "human rights," "individualism," and "modernity," as these concepts were interpreted and implemented in the contemporary United States. This is re-

markable because during the Cold War, Japanese conservatives, with the exception of far-right activists, had been mostly pro-American, based on their opposition to socialism and communism; anti-Americanism had more to do with liberals in academia, the mass media, labor unions, peace and human rights groups, and far-left activists. Thus, the rise of anti-American-ism conservatives in the 1990s was a conspicuous development.

Popular conservative monthly magazines like *Seiron* and *Shokun*, which reach an average of 70,000 to 100,000 readers, have reported a marked increase in the number of young readers, especially those in their twenties and thirties, and women. *SAPIO*, another conservative monthly magazine which reaches an average of 120,000 readers, has intentionally targeted the young generation and now reports that two-thirds of its audience are in their twenties and thirties. This success is attributed partly to "Goman-ism Sengen (Declaration of Arrogant-ism)," an elaborate and chauvinistic cartoon series authored by Yoshinori Kobayashi, which constantly makes negative refer-ences to the U.S.

Books and magazine titles became rather sensational, even chauvinistic; and they were often expected to be so in order to appeal to public sentiment and reach out to a wider audience. For example, the cover of the January 31, 2000 International edition of *Newsweek* had a photo of a fat cowboy with his belly hanging out in an American flag T-shirt, with the headline "Honk If You Hate America" and the subtitle "Buddy or Bully? Rethinking the Role of the U.S." *Newsweek*'s Japanese edition (February 2, 2000), in order to appeal to a wider audience, changed the headline to "Amerika ni Igi Ari (Strong Objection to the U.S.!)" and the subtitle to "Sekai-jyu kara Kirawareru Goin de Migatte na Cho-taikoku (The Forcible and Selfish Superpower Hated All Around the World)." Its cover story "The Superpower They Love to Hate" read "Sekai-jyu ni Hirogaru 'Kenbei' no Uzu (A Storm of 'Kenbei' Spread-ing Worldwide)."

Also, the locus of public interest has gradually shifted from the U.S. to elsewhere, especially to Asian countries. A recent study of international pub-lic and private sector exchange programs disclosed a decline of enthusiasm for the U.S. (Honma 1995) My interviews also revealed that American Stud-ies is no longer a popular major at colleges; that private foundations are more eager to support Asia-related programs than those focused on U.S.-Japan relations; that variety programs on TV tend to focus more on Asia and Africa at the expense of the U.S.; and that emphasis on the alliance with the U.S. is often taken as a pro-forma mannerism. A freer flow of people, goods, money, and information across Asia is believed to be solidifying an imagined community of Asia, whether invented or rediscovered, especially among the younger generation, and thus to be contributing to a relative de-

cline of interest in, or preoccupation with, the United States. The Asia Leadership Fellow Program, which started in 1996, may be situated within this larger tendency in Japan.

9-11 and after

The results of different public polls about the 2003 war in Iraq significantly differed and fluctuated according to the stage of operations. Shortly after the initial strikes at the end of March 2003, approximately 60 to 65 percent of respondents disapproved of the U.S. attacks. Considering the fact that the rate of disapproval of the war in Afghanistan was around 40 percent at the same stage of operations in 2001, it can be inferred that the Iraq war has further eroded the image of the U.S. in Japan. Antiwar demonstrations, though modest in size and action, took place in local cities across the nation and at the American Embassy in Tokyo and at consulates in other cities.

The discourse on the U.S. has become more provocative since the war in Afghanistan. Books on the "neo-conservatives" in the Bush administration, the imperialist conspiracy of the U.S., and the intertwined fate of Japan are plentiful.

Even some highly academic works by respected scholars are accompanied by provocative titles. Koichi Mori's book (2003) on religious fundamentalism in the U.S. was titled, at the request of the publisher, "*Johji Busshu" no Atama no Nakami* (Inside Contents of the Head of "George Bush"), with a scornful cartoon of President Bush on the cover.[19] Hidekatsu Nojima's book (2003) examining the nature of American literature is entitled *Han-Amerika-ron* (Anti-American Discourse), although the book has little to do with anti-Americanism per se.[20] It is worth noting that the Japanese Association for American Studies, which currently has around 12,000 members, selected "The Loci of Anti-Americanism" as the theme of a symposium at its annual meeting in 2003, and featured "Images of 'America' in Conflict" in the *Japanese Journal of American Studies* in 2003.

Of additional interest in this period is that commentary on the U.S. has been imported from overseas. Such publications as *Addicted to War* (2002) by Joel Andreas, *9-11* (2001) by Noam Chomsky, *The Eagle's Shadow* (2002) by Mark Hertsgaard, *Stupid White Men* (2002) by Michael Moore, *Anti-Americanism* (2003) by Jean-Francois Revel, and *Why Do People Hate America?* (2002) by Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies have been quickly translated. Moore's *Stupid White Men* sold nearly 180,000 copies in six month after its Japanese translation appeared in October 2002, and continues to sell very well. The film Moore directed, *Bowling for Columbine*, attracted almost 20,000 people

across the nation in less than two months.

The confrontation between anti-American conservatives and their pro-American counterparts has become intense over the issue of the direction of Japanese diplomacy. Anti-American conservatives call for a true restoration of Japanese sovereignty and criticize Japan's blind compliance with U.S. policies. Pro-American conservatives, on the other hand, warn of the futility of anti-Americanism and see cooperation with the U.S. to be in Japan's best interests. Anti-American conservatives are more grounded in the humanities with some European biases in it, and their pro-American counterparts are more grounded in policy-making circles. The annual policy publication *Nihon no Ronten* 2003 (The Issues for Japan 2003) lists their debates as one of the hottest issues in today's Japan.[21]

Even the Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho o Tsukuru Kai (Association for History Textbook Reform), a group of conservative intellectuals aiming at correcting the liberal-leftist or self-torturing biases in history textbooks from an ethno-nationalistic perspective, are reported to be split over the legitimacy of U.S. operations in Iraq. Kanji Nishio, a theoretical pillar of the group and a long-time critic of the U.S., has turned more sympathetic to the Unites States, a stance which his collaborators Yoshinori Kobayashi and Susume Nishibe view as compromising and self-defeating.

Closely related to this phenomenon is the fact that the discourse of anti-American conservatives resonates with that of liberals on the Left in their antipathy to U.S. hegemony and Japan's blind obedience to it, almost like that of a client state. While liberals seek a pacifist world based on multilateral/international cooperation and cosmopolitanism, their understanding of the status quo has more in common with that of anti-American conservatives. Interestingly, Takaya Shiomi, who founded the Red Army Faction in August 1969 (and was imprisoned for twenty years), today insists on the restoration of nation and state as the basic units of human existence and defends patriotism as a breakwater against U.S.-led globalization (2001).[22] Though this is not a popular sentiment in the contemporary Left, the so-called patriotic Left is finding common cause with conservatives, especially those on the anti-American wing. It is worth noting, in this regard, that Mitsuhiro Kimura, a far-right activist, joined a September 11 anniversary press conference in 2002 with such liberal leftists as Makoto Oda and Shoichi Chibana to issue a statement opposing the U.S. strikes against Iraq.

Implications

Theoretical implications

The image of the U.S. as a primary reference or preeminent cultural "other" in the construction and appropriation of the Japanese national discourse has begun to lose its theoretical ground. Also, the conventional dichotomy between the "conservative (pro-American)" and the "liberal (anti-American)" has become increasingly more complex.

With the prevalence of anti-American sentiment and discourse on both sides of the political spectrum, it has become more problematic to be pro-American. "Pro-American" in Japan today can be easily taken as a synonym for blind compliance with or even obedience to the United States. At the same time, with the proliferation of "national" discourse, it has become more difficult to justify a pacifist prescription based on multilateral/international cooperation and cosmopolitanism. This is especially true today when Japan faces political and military tensions with North Korea and with the growing presence of China in the region. For liberals who also appreciate the reinventing and inclusive capacity of American society, it is a time of predicament. Being a "pro-American liberal" itself sounds like an oxymoron today.

Policy implications

Considering the positive and stable public perception of the U.S. shown by the public opinion surveys cited above, we should not overestimate these transfigurations of public discourse, especially those that take place primarily in literary circles. Some can even reject them entirely as fictitious constructions of the mass media. Yet we should not underestimate the efficacy of mass media in the construction of reality in the age of postmodern politics. This is especially so when populist images and sound bites are influential and the temptation to oversimplify the complexity of social realities is ever strong. Neither should we forget that the mass media, while shaping public opinion, are also shaped by public opinion and cannot maintain their influence if they become too far detached from the sentiment and disposition of society. Anti-Americanism is a minority view in the polls; yet it is a vocal minority view that has the potential to resonate more widely and thus to inform the policy-making process.

It would be rather perilous and tragic if support for a U.S. policy were automatically dismissed as "blind obedience to the U.S." and if, in turn, opposition to the U.S. were instantly to have populist appeal. We must remem-

ber that the U.S. became a campaign issue in elections in Germany, South Korea, and Pakistan during the past few years.

In addition, the rise of nationalistic sentiment and discourse, if underscored by anti-Americanism, could sensitize neighboring Asian countries and undermine policy cooperation in the region. The diffusion of anti-Americanism in the region could deter the U.S. from active engagement in world affairs, a result that would be extremely detrimental when U.S. engagement is indispensable and irreplaceable in coping with global issues. "Active U.S. engagement may not always be the best recipe for international problems," as Naim argues, "but it is often the only one available."

According to the most recent Yomiuri-Gallup poll, conducted in November 2003, 41 percent of Japanese respondents and 54 percent American respondents consider their countries to be on good terms. Forty-one percent of Japanese respondents and 71 percent of their American counterparts express trust in the other country. According to the 2002 poll, 65 percent of Japanese respondents and 82 percent of Americans regard the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty as important for the safety of the Asia Pacific region. Seventy-three percent of Japanese respondents and 43 percent of their American counterparts perceived the U.S. as a unilateral international actor. For a poll exclusively focused on bilateral relations, the overall result remains positive and stable. Yet it clearly shows that Japanese respondents are not as positive and affirmative toward the U.S. as their American counterparts are toward Japan. While tensions and conflicts are often the flipside of a close relationship, we should not overlook this obvious disparity. This is especially so when 49 percent of Japanese respondents in their twenties and thirties distrust the U.S., a figure which is 9 percent higher than that for those in the same generation who trust the U.S. and 10 percent higher than for the average respondent across all ages. Actually, this is the first and only generation with more distrust than trust in the Unites States. After all, the members of this generation are the ones who will carry on the bilateral relationship of the twenty-first century.

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THE ALFP 2004 FELLOWS

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Having completed his Master of Science degree in journalism at Columbia University, Mr. Dorji is in the responsible position of overseeing the management and editorial policy of Kuensel, the only newspaper in Bhutan. As a distinguished intellectual in the realm of media, he is a regular observer and commentator on the dramatic political and socio-economic changes taking place as Bhutan rapidly transforms its political system from a monarchy to a democracy. He also promotes Gross National Happiness (GNH) as a new notion for national development. Central to its conceptual framework is a more holistic approach to social development as a balance between the spiritual and the material en route to finding a "third way" between capitalism and communism. It is hoped that this innovative thinking in attaining well-being will pave the way for a new paradigm in human development.

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Dr. Fei is an esteemed artist-scholar of world theatre. Having obtained her doctoral degree from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, she taught critical theory, dramatic literature and theatre history in the United States for eight years before returning to Shanghai. Dr. Fei has authored and edited numerous publications including Chinese Theories of Theatre and Performance from Confucius to the Present (University of Michigan Press, 1999 hardcover, 2002 paperback). Dr. Fei is currently working on Theatre Herstory, a cross-cultural research project. Her talent as a playwright has gained international recognition, and one of her plays, China Dream, has been staged in the United States, Japan, and Singapore as well as China. She is also an author of poetry and short fiction.

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Dr. Kusago obtained an MA in development economics from Stanford University and later a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Incorporating his firsthand knowledge and extensive empirical fieldwork into relevant policies and planning, he is in the forefront of efforts to lay the foundation for partnership between industrialized and developing countries, as well as to connect various constituencies such as policy-makers, donors and local practitioners. During 2001-2003, he addressed dominant factors contributing to the exacerbation of rural poverty through his work as Poverty Advisor of the Bureau for Development Policy at UNDP Bangkok, and made suggestions for the effective implementation of development aid policy. His insight and leadership are increasingly seen as crucial in the search for lasting solutions in poverty eradication and socio-economic development in Asia.

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Dr. Nguyen Van Chinh obtained a doctorate from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. His Ph.D. dissertation " Work Without Name: Changing Patterns of Children's Work in a Northern Vietnamese Village" was awarded an honorable mention by the Netherlands Association of Social and Cultural Sciences (NVMC) in 2001. Focusing on the issues of children's work, education, migration and ethnic minorities, his current research interests lie in poverty reduction and the restoration of social justice for the disad-

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