

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of a rolled-up Indian flag. The saffron, white, and green stripes of the flag are visible, along with the texture of the fabric and the folds of the roll.

ALFP

Asia Leadership Fellow Program

Sharing Asia's Experience
for the Future of the World

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Preface

The Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) is a joint program of the Japan Foundation and the International House of Japan (I-House) launched in 1996 for the purpose of creating a network of public intellectuals deeply rooted in and committed to civil society in Asia.

This was a period of accelerating globalization, and Asia, a region encompassing diverse cultures and ethnicities as well as possessing abundant human and natural resources, was undergoing rapid economic development. It was also during this time that many countries in Asia were striving to create new norms and value-orientations for the future of the region—as a wave of democratization was sweeping through Asia following the end of the Cold War.

Against this backdrop, the ALFP was conceived with the hope of providing a forum for public intellectuals in Asia to engage in candid discussion about the future of the region and to share their own knowledge and experience. Between 1996 and 2018, the ALFP offered select leaders in Asia, individuals active in a broad range of endeavors extending beyond the parameters of their respective nations, the opportunity to reside for two months at I-House in Tokyo and engage in collaborative activities and dialogue as ALFP fellows.

While continuing to deepen their thinking and expand their activities, these fellows have come to form a network connecting civil society in Asia. For over two decades, a total of 139 fellows from 17 Asian countries and regions participated in the program.

In 2018, the long history of this fellowship program came to a close. Since then we have shared the fruits of the collaborative work of the fellows with a wider audience through a lecture series and the publication of an e-magazine. This brochure was compiled in a continuing effort to advance the aims of the program. By looking back on the ALFP's activities for the past quarter century and reviewing both the significance and remaining challenges of the program, we hope to lay a foundation for the further development of cultural exchange in Asia.

December 2020

The Japan Foundation Asia Center
The International House of Japan

About ALFP

Why Asia? Why ALFP?

More than 60 percent of the world's population lives in the region called Asia, where different social institutions, economic systems, cultures, religions, and ethnicities coexist. This rich diversity at the same time brings a wide range of difficult problems—socioeconomic disparity, environmental deterioration, and racial, religious and cultural conflict, among others. The ALFP believes that the key to breakthrough lies in the solidarity of concerned people who initiate action while respecting each other's cultural background and values.

Two Months as a Fellow

ALFP fellows selected from countries and regions in Asia stayed in Japan for two months and took part in various forms of dialogue including resource seminars by experts and opinion leaders, a field trip to learn about social issues and local initiatives specific to an area of Japan, interaction with the Japanese public, and workshops for fellows to share their expertise and regional and global concerns. Free and open discussion in both formal and informal settings was the highlight of the program and provided the foundation for future networking among Asian intellectuals.

ALFP aims to...

Address issues
through dialogue—
by sharing
knowledge and
experience

Work together
beyond cultural,
disciplinary,
and geopolitical
backgrounds

Respect diverse
values and
alternative voices

Build a foundation
for civil society,
for solidarity and
cooperation



A Brief History of ALFP (Japanese fiscal year)

1996 ALFP launched
Two-month fellowship program organized in Japan every autumn until 2018 (except for 2005 and 2012)

2001 ALFP Reunion Conference 2001
"Conflict Management in the Face of Globalization:
Initiatives, Alternatives, and Imagination"
August 3–7, 2001, Bangkok and Surat Thani

2005 ALFP Reunion Conference 2005
"Asia as a Community: Concept or Reality?"
June 26–30, 2005, Fukuoka and Busan

ALFP Panel at the International Convention of Asia Scholars 4 (ICAS 4)
"Identity, Security and Democracy: Contradictions in a Globalizing Asia"
August 20–24, 2005, Shanghai



ALFP Reunion Conference 2005

2006 ALFP Alumni Publication
The Community of Asia: Concept or Reality?
(Anvil Publishing Inc., 2006)

ALFP 10th Anniversary Project: ALFP Forum in Hawaii
"The Community of Asia: Concept or Reality?"
May 19–20, 2006, Honolulu / co-hosted by the East-West Center

Park Won Soon (2000 Fellow, Korea)
receives the Ramon Magsaysay Award
in Public Service

2007

Palagummi Sainath (2003 Fellow, India)
receives the Ramon Magsaysay Award
in Journalism, Literature and Creative
Communication Arts

2012 Fellow Seminar "So, Are You Still Asian Enough?
Latest Perspectives on Tolerance, Governance and Identity"
July 5, 2012, Jakarta

ALFP website launched

Fellow Seminar "Let's Talk about the Future of Japan and Asia
from the Perspective of Civil Society with Active Civic Leaders in Japan"
February 2, 2013, Tokyo

ALFP Special Symposium "The Future of Civil Society in Asia"
February 6, 2013, Tokyo

Fellow Seminar "Asian Intellectuals Discuss the Present
Conditions and the Future of East Asia"
February 7, 2013, Tokyo / co-organized by Waseda University
Institute of Asia Pacific Studies



ALFP Special Symposium in 2013

2014

Kong Rithee (2010 Fellow, Thailand)
receives the Knight of the Order of
Arts and Letters

2015 ALFP Panel at the International Convention of Asia Scholars 9 (ICAS 9)
"Seeking Our Commons in Asia: Visionary Collaboration of the Asia
Leadership Fellow Program Over Two Decades"
July 6–8, 2015, Adelaide

2016

Ambeth R. Ocampo (2014 Fellow, Philippines)
receives the Fukuoka Academic Prize

2017

Urvashi Butalia (2000 Fellow, India)
receives the Goethe Medal 2017

2018 Fellowship program terminated
ALFP e-magazine *Voices of Asia* launched
● 1st, 2nd and 3rd issues of e-magazine published

ALFP Lecture Series launched
● Lecture Series #1 "Journalism in Asia: Searching for the Truth"
October 14, 2018, Tokyo
● Lecture Series #2 "Bridging Divides and Disparities in Asia"
February 19, 2019, Tokyo



ALFP Lecture Series #1 in 2018

2019 ● Lecture Series #3 "Religion in Asia: A Possible Role for Peacebuilding"
September 4, 2019, Tokyo
● Lecture Series #4 "Documentary Filmmaking in Asia: Hopes and Challenges"
January 25, 2020, Tokyo
● 4th, 5th and 6th issues of e-magazine published



ALFP Lecture Series #4 in 2020

Intellectual Exchange in Asia

—The History and Significance of the ALFP

The Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) terminated in autumn 2018, with the 2018 fellows being the last to participate in the program. Since then, we have continued to share the fruits of the over twenty years of collaborative work more widely in society through a lecture series and the publication of an e-magazine, inviting former fellows as speakers and writers respectively. The ALFP network has expanded across national boundaries as a platform for bringing together voices of civil society in search of creative solutions to the issues surrounding Asia. To reflect back on the ALFP, we convened a roundtable discussion among four individuals closely involved with the program to consider its significance within the broader history of intellectual exchange in Asia. (Conducted at the International House of Japan, January 2020)

Ogawa: Today, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Tatsuya Tanami from the Nippon Foundation, Professor Lee Jong Won from Waseda University, and Professor Chiharu Takenaka from Rikkyo University—who are all closely associated with the ALFP. I hope we can use this time to review the process leading up to the birth of the ALFP and the significance of the program, while also looking back on Japan's relations with Asia and the various structural changes that have taken place in the region over the past quarter of a century. First, will each of you explain your

involvement in the ALFP? Then, I would like to hear your views on Asia, or on the situation between Japan and Asia at present, and conclude our discussion with your evaluation of the ALFP.

Tanami: I joined the staff of the International House of Japan (I-House) in 1973 and was involved in intellectual exchange between Japan and the United States, and between Japan and Asia, until 1999. This was the era when Yoshiyuki Tsurumi^{※1} and Mikio Kato^{※2} were pioneering Asian Studies and cultural exchange

※1 = Yoshiyuki Tsurumi (1926–1994) served as Program Director at the International House of Japan from 1963 to 1969, where he developed person-to-person exchange programs with Asia such as the Asian Intellectual Cooperation Program. As a scholar in Asian studies, he taught at Sophia University and Ryukoku University. Major publications include *Banana to nihonjin* (Bananas and the Japanese; Iwanami Shinsho, 1982) and *Namako no me* (The Eye of the Sea Slug; Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1990).

※2 = Mikio Kato (1936–2020) joined the staff of the International House of Japan in 1959 and served as Program Director, Associate Managing Director, and Executive Director. He was actively involved in intellectual and cultural exchange between Japan and the United States, and Japan and countries in Asia. Publications include *Rokkufera-ke to nihon* (The Rockefellers and Japan: Five Generations Spanning the Pacific; Iwanami Shoten, 2015). He was awarded the Japan Foundation Special Prize in 2003.



Tadashi Ogawa

Professor, Atomi University

Tadashi Ogawa joined the Japan Foundation in 1982. He served as Director-General of the Japan Foundation in New Delhi and then in Jakarta before assuming his current position in 2017. His research covers international cultural exchange policy, contemporary culture in Asia, and comparative religion and society. Publications include *Indonesia taminzoku kokka no mosaku* (Indonesia as Multiethnic Nation; Iwanami Shinsho, 1993), *Tero to kyusai no genri shugi* (Fundamentalism: Twisted Terror and Salvation; Shincho Sensho, 2007), *Sengo beikoku no Okinawa bunka senryaku* (American Postwar Public Diplomacy in Okinawa; Iwanami Shoten, 2012), and *Indonesia Isuramu taikoku no henbo* (Indonesia: Transformation of an Islamic Great Power; Shincho Sensho, 2016).



Tatsuya Tanami

Special Adviser, Nippon Foundation; Managing Director, Center for Human Rights Education and Training

Tatsuya Tanami graduated from the Department of Spanish Studies at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 1973 and joined the staff of the International House of Japan. As Program Director from 1990 to 1999, he was involved in intellectual and cultural exchange with the United States and countries in Asia, and in international human resource development programs such as the Nitobe Fellowship Program. He went to the Nippon Foundation in 1999, where he served as Executive Director until 2017 and was responsible for its leprosy programs, the API Fellowships Program, and programs to promote understanding of Japan.



Lee Jong Won

Professor, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University

Lee Jong Won served as an assistant professor in the School of Law at Tohoku University, a professor at Rikkyo University's College of Law and Politics, and a visiting fellow at Princeton University before assuming his current position in 2012. He specializes in international political science and contemporary Korean studies. Publications include *Rekishi toshiteno nikkau kokko seijoka* (Normalization of Japan-South Korean Relations as History; coauthored, Hosei University Press, 2011) and *Kokusai seiji kara kangaeru higashi ajia kyodotai* (The East Asian Community in the Context of International Politics; coauthored, Minerva Shobo, 2012).



Chiharu Takenaka

Professor, College and Graduate School of Law and Politics, Rikkyo University

Chiharu Takenaka served as a professor at Meiji Gakuin University before assuming her current position in 2008. She specializes in international politics, South Asian (Indian) politics, and gender studies. Publications include *Sekai wa naze nakayoku dekinaino? Boryoku no rensa o toku tame ni* (Why Can't the World Get Along? To Untie the Chain of Violence; CCC Media House, 2004), *Tozoku no indo shi* (The Bandit History of India; Yushisha, 2010), and *Gandi heiwa o tsumugu hito* (Gandhi, A Man Spinning Peace; Iwanami Shinsho, 2018).

at I-House. I learned a great deal from them while working on both traditional intellectual interchange programs^{*3} and experimental programs like the ALFP. Before the inception of the ALFP, I-House and the Japan Foundation had already been conducting intellectual exchange with Asia, but we began running up against the limitations of the existing approaches aiming at the betterment of mutual understanding. And this brought us to the fundamental question of what could actually come out of exchanges among intellectuals. This then led us to explore a new direction in cultural exchange and a new multilateral framework for intellectual exchange. I consulted with Mr. Ogawa, who was with the Japan Foundation back then, and the ALFP was launched as something of an experiment.

Later, I transferred to the Nippon Foundation and established a program called the Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowships Program, which was an extended version of the ALFP in terms of duration of the program, criteria, and scale of activities. The API Fellowships were terminated in 2015, and with the ALFP also having come to a close, I feel we have come to the end of an era. Both programs had the mission of discovering intellectual leaders in Asia, nurturing trust among them, and encouraging them to later collaborations based on that mutual trust. Accordingly—and as a final step in the programs—I feel Japan’s duty now is to take leadership in thinking of some possible mechanism to further stimulate the ideas of the fellows for collaborative activities and pass them on to the future.

Lee: I was fortunate enough to be given the chance to work with the ALFP from its first year, in 1996. I was invited as a guest to the retreat conference held immediately after the fellows arrived in Japan. The experience left a deep impression on me, and I remained involved in the ALFP for a decade or so thereafter as an advisory committee member. The first thing to note is that whereas many intellectual exchange programs up to then were organized on a bilateral basis, the ALFP was a multilateral

program. It was clearly different from traditional intellectual exchange. Since the concept of region-building in Asia was important from the standpoint of my own field of specialization as well, its being multilateral particularly resonated with me. The idea of East Asia as a region had emerged since around the 1980s, first economically, and I was curious to see how that framework would play out in the context of international politics.

The second point I found interesting was that, although the ALFP was funded by Japan, it was not designed solely for the interest of Japan. The purpose of the program was not to be beneficial for scholars specializing in Japan or for Japan itself, but to facilitate regional exchange and networking among intellectuals in Asia. It was refreshing to see a program that did not aim to serve one’s national interest in a narrow sense. The third point was that the ALFP invited fellows from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. This group resided together and engaged in dialogue—it was like mixed martial arts matches of intelligence and great minds, so to speak. Such an approach had not existed before and struck me as very fresh. I liked the new model of assembling, say, academics, poets, dramatists, journalists, and activists in the same session. The individual fellows were also free spirits who crossed boundaries in every sense, engaging in a lively discussion. I found this truly inspiring and gained a great deal from my decade of involvement.

Takenaka: I also was involved in the program from its early years. This was around the time I returned from my research in the United States. I remember my husband, Kiichi Fujiwara of the University of Tokyo, and I welcomed some of the first fellows like Kwok Kian-Woon and Janadas Devan from Singapore, and Diana Wong from Malaysia, along with Mr. Tanami, at our house. Going back further, I had taken part in an international conference in Kiyosato in July 1984, organized based on the ideas of Mr. Tanami, who was then active in the Program Department at I-House. The event was

a prototype of what would be the Asia-Pacific Youth Forum (APYF).^{※4} It invited young leaders from neighboring countries in Asia as well as from countries in North and South America to Japan to engage in free discussions about the present and future of our society in the Asia-Pacific region. This type of dialogue-based program had not existed before, and to a young participant like myself, it provided a fresh, creative experience of international intellectual exchange.

True to its historical origins, I-House had promoted international exchange primarily between Japan and the West, centering on the United States. Later, in the midst of Japan's growing economic power, the focus shifted to what should be the nation's role as a major actor in international society. At that time, I remember Mr. Tanami saying that he wanted to expand the horizon to Asia and the Pacific, to promote internationalization outside of that Japan-US framework. I see the ALFP as the realization of his vision. Around 2000, when the participation eligibility expanded to South Asia with the invitation of Urvashi Butalia from India, I became more involved in the program and a few years later started serving as an advisory committee member. Multilateral international dialogue and exchange continue to stand out as the program's distinguishing feature today. The ALFP steered clear of sectionalism, adopted a nongovernmental framework, and carefully considered the representation of

countries, disciplines, and gender. It constantly sought out the frontier in selecting fellows, not restricting eligibility to urban elites; in many ways, the program broke conventional barriers. Normally, a fellowship is a grant given to individuals for conducting research, or is a sort of award presented to those who have made some exceptional achievement. Thus, it is quite rare to find a fellowship that falls outside these definitions even from an international perspective. The ALFP is even rarer in that it aims to foster solidarity and promote networking among the fellows and alumni. To this day, I believe the program is one of a kind.

Ogawa: Allow me to elaborate a little more on the establishment of the ALFP. In 1990, the Japan Foundation formed the ASEAN Culture Center^{※5} to introduce the cultures of ASEAN countries to Japan through a new type of operation. In 1995, this was expanded to cover all of Asia with a larger number of programs and disciplines with the opening of the Asia Center^{※6}—which was established with funding under the Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative,^{※7} a project which had been announced by then Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama in the previous year, aiming at the promotion of friendship between Japan and neighboring countries in Asia over a period of ten years. At that time, I was at the Asia Center serving as Assistant Director of the Intellectual Exchange Division and had to develop a raft of new programs. It was around then, I think, that

※3=Back then the term “intellectual interchange” was chosen over “intellectual exchange” after extensive discussions concerning the two terms among the founding members of I-House in the 1950s.

※4=The program invited youths from different countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific to live under the same roof, think about and discuss common regional issues, and through that, to deepen mutual understanding and solidarity and to broaden the circle of exchange. The program originated from the Pacific Asrama conference established in 1974. It was renamed the Asia-Pacific Youth Forum (APYF) in 1995 and was jointly operated by the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation from 1996.

※5=The ASEAN Culture Center was established in January 1990 to introduce the diverse culture of Asia with a focus on ASEAN countries. In October 1995, it was expanded and reorganized into the Japan Foundation Asia Center Department (the former Asia Center).

※6=The former Asia Center was integrated into the Japan Foundation headquarters through the major reorganization of departments in 2004.

※7=The Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative was the government's ten-year plan marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. It was inaugurated to look squarely at Japan's history of relations with neighboring countries in Asia and, by furthering mutual understanding with these countries, to work together and build forward-looking relations.

Mr. Tanami approached me with the idea of launching a new type of fellowship.

The relationship between the Japan Foundation and I-House up to that time was one-way: the Japan Foundation provided funding, and I-House received it. But Mr. Tanami and I had a similar vision that we deal with each other as equals and launch a fellowship. Being a government-affiliated organization, it was a new challenge for the Japan Foundation to partner with a private organization, acknowledge each other's strengths, and manage an intellectual exchange program. That in itself felt extremely fresh, and I began discussions with Mr. Tanami about the program.

So, Mr. Tanami, earlier you made mention of coming to feel a sense of limitation in regard to traditional intellectual exchange programs. Could you elaborate on how you felt? I am particularly interested in your motivation for launching a new type of program like the ALFP, and in the program's concept and goals. Also, Professor Lee and Professor Takenaka have brought up some points that are unique to the ALFP. Could you explain your thinking at that time about the program's design?

Tanami: Please keep in mind that my involvement in the ALFP only lasted for the first three years of the program. That is to say, my knowledge centers on what I did along with the fellows during that time.

In terms of a sense of limitation, intellectual exchange with Asia at the time was bilateral, as Professor Lee pointed out: bilateral in country-to-country and bilateral in person-to-person. The exchange was one-to-one, and that was somewhat restricting. Also, the role of intellectuals was not clear. They produced knowledge and relayed it, but the question was whether that was really enough. Asian intellectuals back then were good at expressing their ideals, but they seldom translated those ideals into action. As problems were mounting in society, the feeling grew that these intellectuals needed to take on social responsibility to bring change through action. Rather than just sitting

around and thinking, shouldn't they be seeking solutions by taking concrete action? That was my concern, one shared by others.

The basis for this idea was a study report on the future of cultural exchange, *Reconstituting the Human Community*,^{※8} published in the early 1970s, which was a relatively unknown, secret bible for those of us engaged in cultural exchange. It was the record of a conference held in the early 1970s with 16 intellectuals from Japan, Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, India, and the United States.^{※9} Participants included the Indonesian former rector of the United Nations University Soedjatmoko and the Thai thinker Sulak Sivaraksa. The intellectuals engaged in discussion for a period of three years and published this report. The United States-based Hazen Foundation provided the funding, and I-House assembled a study group from Japan and served as its secretariat. The contents of the discussions were ahead of the times: what to do about ever-deepening interdependence, the progress of science, and changing world views; topics from advances in technology to changes in cultures; and problems from population to the environment. In short, the issues were not unique to any one nation, but regional or global in nature, and the discussions revolved around what cultural exchange could do to improve the situation. The debate concerning the need for ever more transnational cultural exchange and knowledge exchange, in particular, inspired us to think about new frameworks for intellectual exchange. The final chapter of the report stressed the importance of multilateral exchange among young people in the Asian region in the future. This led to the creation of the Asia-Pacific Youth Forum (APYF) that Professor Takenaka mentioned earlier.

Takenaka: Yes, I remember.

Tanami: Thus progressive ideas existed as early as the 1970s. The Japan Foundation's establishment of the Asia Center later on also motivated us to consider a framework for discovering more proactive intellectuals and working with them toward solutions. This was



ALFP was created as an embodiment of the spirit of the times, leading half a step ahead and facilitating a network of the civil society sector in Asia.

the starting point of the ALFP.

The 1990s was a time of significant movement in civil society, and this also led to changes in the overall environment that should not be overlooked. Civil society started gaining an increasing amount of power when it came to addressing problems that politics alone could not take on. We wanted to create a framework of exchange that leaned toward this civil society—a framework that was neither track one (governmental) nor track two (nongovernmental), but a sort of track three centering on intellectual

leaders who were actively engaged in social issues. This led to the ALFP.

Ogawa: Now that you mention the emergence of a track three and the changing role of intellectuals, the second half of the 1980s saw a wave of democracy spread throughout Asia. The Philippines underwent a democratic revolution, and South Korea and Thailand also made a transition toward democracy. Economic development was underway particularly in urban areas, leading to the rise of a middle class. This middle class consisted of urban youths

※8=*Reconstituting the Human Community* was a study report published by the Edward Hazen Foundation, Connecticut, USA, in 1972. The Japanese edition was translated by Yoshiyuki Tsurumi and appeared in I-House's *Kokusai Bunka Kaikan Kaiho*, No. 30–31 (combined issue), published in August 1973.

※9=This was a cultural exchange and joint international research program organized by the Hazen Foundation in 1970. It assembled intellectuals from the United States, India, Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Japan to conduct joint research into the ideals of international cultural relations in human society.

who demanded democracy and free discussion. Mr. Tanami, being in this atmosphere, you must have felt in your bones that the role of intellectuals was changing.

Tanami: I wasn't alone. Many others felt the same way. And those who understood the changes in the environment, the situation, and the role of intellectual leaders saw this as an opportunity to create something new. Now, when it came to defining those intellectual leaders committed to social issues, I believe the ALFP was the first to use the term "public intellectuals." The expression itself had been around for a while. But the idea of fostering socially-committed intellectual leaders who will play a new role in society, and calling these people public intellectuals, started with this program.

Ogawa: The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the United States, or the Wilson Center for short, hosted a residential fellowship where all of the participants lived under the same roof and engaged in dialogue. Can I assume you had new types of fellowships like the one at the Wilson Center in mind?

Tanami: Yes, we envisioned providing a space where everyone could stay together and engage in dialogue. As luck would have it, I-House had housing accommodations, dining service, and conference rooms. We felt it was the ideal place for a residential program. The program also represented a new venture for I-House. We set the fellowship period at two months because it was difficult to ask the busy participants to commit any more time. We then started thinking about what could be offered during that time frame.



Japan intended to work with other Asian countries as a member of Asia and as an equal partner.

Ogawa: When we established the ASEAN Culture Center, the Japan Foundation was in the midst of cultivating connections with artists, culture figures, and intellectuals in cities such as Jakarta, Bangkok, and Kuala Lumpur where we had overseas offices. We discovered some amazing people and wanted to connect them with Japan. Our main scheme for extending invitations to Asia, however, was the Japanese Studies Fellowship Program for scholars in Japanese studies. This meant, no matter how amazing the people were, if they were not scholars in Japanese studies, we had no way of inviting them. The ALFP enabled us to introduce to Japan the connections our overseas offices had developed with people other than scholars in Japanese studies. This was a huge advantage and a morale booster for the Japan Foundation, especially for those working in the overseas offices.

In the year of its inauguration, in 1996, all of the ALFP fellows were selected from ASEAN countries. The program did not yet cover South Asia and East Asia. I remember discussing the possibility of expanding eligibility to other countries and regions, and whether it would be effective or not, under our limited budget, to invite just one person from a big country like China or India.

Tanami: That's right. We had extensive discussions about expanding to East Asia.

Lee: During the period of 1998 to 2000, when I was conducting overseas research in the United States, Mr. Tanami asked if I knew anyone from South Korea who would be suitable as a fellow. If I remember correctly, I recommended Cho Hong-Sup. He continues to be active today as a leading journalist specializing in environmental issues. The program was expanded to Northeast Asia including South Korea and then to South Asia around this time, during which I was appointed as an advisory committee member.

Ogawa: I was stationed at the Japan Foundation's New Delhi office from 1998, and was able to send off Urvashi Butalia, a leading expert on gender studies, as an ALFP fellow in 2000. Masaaki Ohashi, a former ALFP fellow who later served as an advisory committee member (and currently a professor at the University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo), had told me that India was an NGO superpower, and that everyone who works with an NGO is an intellectual. That was how Urvashi's name came to mind.

Lee: Listening to Mr. Tanami and Professor Ogawa's account of the background to ALFP dating back to the 1970s, it strikes me that the birth and development of the ALFP correspond closely with a transformation in international politics and concurrent changes in Japanese diplomacy.

Ogawa: Could you elaborate on that?

Lee: From the 1970s through the 1980s and to the 1990s, Japan played an important diplomatic role in the process of building a regional framework for East Asia. During the Ohira administration in the late 1970s, Japan's foreign policy toward Asia evolved around the concept of interdependence, which was first put forth by Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane in their path-breaking *Power and Interdependence*^{※10} published in 1977. In that book, they argued that a new dimension of international politics was emerging, where various transnational connections and interdependencies between not only states but also societies increased dramatically, thus reducing the relevance of traditional power politics in international relations. They named it complex interdependence, analyzing and envisioning a fundamental transformation of international politics. The Ohira administration was quick to accept this and applied it to a new Japanese diplomacy.

Furthermore, international politics in the 1970s witnessed the beginning of a long-

※10 = Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977).

term decline in the dominant American hegemony, and the emergence of a more horizontal international order. As a nation with a “Peace Constitution,” Japan strove to find ways to contribute to a new regional order with nonmilitary means—economic, social, and cultural.

When the United States showed signs of disengaging itself from Asia and retreating from leadership in the region since the Nixon Doctrine and the end of the Vietnam War, the Ohira administration put forward the idea of the Pacific Rim, which set in motion a cascade of proposals for regional frameworks in the Asia-Pacific. In close cooperation with Australia, Japan played an important role in establishing APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) for regional stability. As political democratization and economic development spread in East Asia in the 1980s, not only political and economic but also social and cultural exchanges among regional states expanded dramatically. The concept of East Asia began to evolve from an idea to a reality.

Traditionally Japanese diplomacy put the focus on Southeast Asia, in close relations with the ASEAN countries. When the Asian financial crisis broke out in 1997, it became an urgent task to integrate the bigger three countries in Northeast Asia in a regional cooperation system. In this context ASEAN Plus Three—Japan, China, and South Korea—was established at the initiative of ASEAN. In this process, Japan played an important background role. Based upon the framework of ASEAN Plus Three, a vision for an East Asian Community was pushed forward at the initiative of South Korean President Kim Dae-jung in the late 1990s. Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi worked hand-in-hand with President Kim to launch a Trilateral Cooperation among Japan, China, and South Korea as an essential part of that vision. In 2005 the first East Asia Summit meeting was convened in Kuala Lumpur, which was expected to be a big stride toward an East Asian Community. Unfortunately, efforts towards this

vision have come to a standstill today, and Asia is being divided by the ever-intensifying US-China rivalry.

One of the features of Japanese diplomacy in the process of building such frameworks was that it practiced the art of “leading from behind,” as we saw in APEC and ASEAN Plus Three. The idea of Japan leading from the front could still be seen in a negative light, considering the memories of World War II and Japanese colonial rule. This was the sense in which Australian scholar Alan Rix coined the expression “leading from behind.” I imagine Mr. Tanami and other founding members of the ALFP were sensitive to such discourse and policy developments, and responded to them in formulating their concept for the new program. It was in this context that the ALFP was created as an embodiment of the spirit of the times, leading half a step ahead and facilitating a network of the civil society sector in Asia.

Ogawa: The Japan Foundation Asia Center was established under Prime Minister Murayama’s Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative. As you said, one of its pillars was to build a future-oriented regional community in the Asia-Pacific including Japan. Because the initiative marked the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, overcoming the negative legacy of Japan’s past was certainly in the minds of diplomatic officials and of the staff at the Japan Foundation. At the time of the Center’s founding, the Asia side was on guard thinking Japan might try to recreate either a prewar Asia centering on Japan or a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere-style Asia based on its economic advancement. But no, Japan intended to work with other Asian countries as a member of Asia and as an equal partner—and having the ALFP in place gave this explanation credibility.

Tanami: Many of the Asian intellectuals who came to Japan in the era of traditional intellectual exchange, in the 1960s and the 1970s, were anti-Japan. They had a negative image of Japan’s bad deeds against Asia since the war. A typical pattern was that they would

engage in exchange with Japanese intellectuals, but seize the opportunity to criticize Japan and assert their Asian point of view at the same time.

That changed starting around the 1980s. Asian intellectuals were now willing to work with Japan, embracing an Asia that included Japan as a member. This was when individual countries in Asia were becoming more stable. They were making the transition from dictatorship to democracy. Their economies were picking up. Above all, civil society was growing in Asia. And the ALFP was a program that reflected those changes particularly well.

Lee: By putting civil society front and center in its program, the ALFP made proactive and horizontal networking possible. It gathered together the leaders of civil society, like journalists and those who entered politics from civil movements, and provided the opportunity to build diverse and proactive relationships across Asia.

Tanami: When you look at it from a different angle, socially-committed intellectuals are usually anti-government. The Japan Foundation was quite broad-minded to welcome and accept these people.

Ogawa: If you ask me, that is precisely the role of cultural exchange, and the area which cannot be covered by politics or the economy. The twenty-first century brought further changes in Asia. The optimism about the global future prevailing since the end of the Cold War vanished with the September 11 attacks in the United States. The rise of China and India was also a significant change. These circumstances went on to cause a relative decline in Japan's status in the world. The way we interact and communicate also changed owing to the Internet and social media, to the information revolution. Professor Takenaka and Professor Lee, could you tell us how these structural changes in Asia and changes in international relations affected the ALFP, or how the ALFP responded to and discussed those issues?

Takenaka: In the 1980s and the 1990s, many

Asian countries achieved quite rapid political and economic development, and civil society became vibrant and empowered to tackle the various challenges emerging in Asia at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The ALFP also focused on the construction of a new partnership among actors in civil society in Japan as well as in that dynamically changing Asia. Naturally, civil society, democracy, and human rights became keywords in this endeavor. Also, when international society grew more volatile owing to the crisis of terrorism and the war on terror in the 2000s, we came to address the issues of the securitization of state-society relations and the violation of human security. The issue of Islam and religious tolerance became crucial as well, since many Asian countries had a large Muslim population. To tackle those challenges by understanding each other and developing a lively discussion among us, it became clear that we must enlarge our own perspective in order to exchange views and to cover a wide range of topics such as poverty, education, discrimination, minorities, and gender equality. Whenever we started discussions, we faced the same questions: What is Asia? Who are Asians? Do we call ourselves Asians? Do we already have a community of Asia? Are we representing our own countries or speaking up for ourselves as individual citizens? It was a refreshing experiment for all of us involved in the program to go beyond the familiar barriers of nationality, cultural difference, gender, ethnicity, and professional discipline.

I should be careful not to fall into cultural stereotyping, but it was interesting to see how the combination of the ALFP fellows with different backgrounds generated a uniquely Asian community: the fellows from South Asia were good at taking the initiative in discussion, those from ASEAN countries created a harmonious atmosphere for dialogue, and those from East Asia often stood out to present a unique point of view. Japanese fellows played an important role in helping other fellows

interact with people in Japanese society.

Lee: Having joined the fellows' discussions at retreat conferences, my feeling was that whether it was Southeast Asia, Japan, or South Korea, all Asian countries struggled with similar political, economic, and social issues at one time or another. This is why I think fellows could blend in and engage with each other, and have in-depth discussions at once, though coming from diverse backgrounds. In the early years of the program, topics were in fact set around community building in Asia based on common experiences.

As we entered the twenty-first century, the September 11 attacks occurred, triggering the mechanism of exclusion which caused people to build walls to exclude "others." That trend is still seen today. People have turned their minds to division and boundaries in society as a reaction against globalization. China joined the World Trade Organization in 2000, and soon it achieved a remarkable economic rise, which triggered a power transition in international relations. This had an influence on various aspects of international politics, particularly in East Asia. In building a regional framework in East Asia, the ASEAN Plus Three lost momentum, and the concept of the East Asian Community started to fade around 2005. This was when the East Asia Summit started, but, ironically, dialogue about an East Asian Community quickly waned. Instead, dealing with the new, growing power of China became an important challenge for East Asia and international politics. Around this time, Japanese diplomacy also started to focus less on the concept of community and more on creating a traditional balance of power system to deal with the rise of China. This shift strengthened Japan's emphasis on its national interests in the conventional, narrow sense. Formerly, Japan tended to promote its national interests less conspicuously than other countries. This made Japan attractive. But it was quickly reverting to an "ordinary country" in this sense as well. Seeking to discuss these changes at greater

length, the ALFP set grand themes such as identity, security, and democracy starting in 2003. A couple of years later, it proposed the necessity of discussing community building in Asia.

However, because the ALFP had placed importance on having an open and free discussion, some fellows criticized the idea of limiting their dialogue to Asia. Why confine themselves to Asia, they said. In his keynote speech at the ALFP reunion conference held in Fukuoka and Busan in June 2005, a leading intellectual from Indonesia, Goenawan Mohamad, borrowed a quote by John Lennon. In his characteristic, poetic way, he said something along these lines: Asia is like God. Nobody can prove or deny its existence. We do not know where it begins, and where it ends.

Comparatively speaking, Northeast Asians have lived in more or less clearly-defined ethnic and state frameworks for a long period of time in history. As such, I have the impression that discussions by fellows from Northeast Asia tend to be stiff, for the most part. By contrast, Southeast Asians experience diversity as a reality of everyday life. Accordingly, their discussions are based on diversity from the start. The intellectual contribution of Southeast Asian fellows to the ALFP has been huge beyond description. Their flexible thinking that would break down boundaries had an enormous impact on me as well as other intellectuals from Northeast Asian countries. I have actually talked about this with some of the South Korean fellows.

Tanami: Another point to consider is that it is often difficult to produce tangible results with a program like this. What new knowledge did the ALFP create? Did it build a community of intellectual leaders? Have those intellectual leaders worked together and taken visible action, or launched a program and produced results? I believe we should follow through and properly verify and evaluate the outcomes of the ALFP. We should think about the future



The question is how we generate a follow-up mechanism for translating the outcome of the program into concrete action.

activities of the intellectual community we have created, if there is any such community. Only then can we formulate any new programs as an extension of that.

Intellectuals have their respective fields of specialization such as the environment, human rights, and social development. Should our new direction include exploring those specific individual themes as common regional or community issues and seeking out solutions? Or should we invite people with diverse backgrounds and disciplines and foster discussions covering broader themes like identity, development, culture, and globalization? I believe the time has come to rethink all of this and decide on the next step.

Ogawa: Based on our talk today, I think we can say that the ALFP developed in line with two major global trends. First, in the search

for a new, post-Cold War world order in the 1990s, there was an effort to create a regional community in Asia similar to the European Union. And second, after a period of very high expectations for globalization, the September 11 attacks brought into relief globalization's negative aspects and shifted the mood in Asia from uniting to building dividing walls. The world of intellectuals followed suit and turned to building small walls and looking inward. Does this more or less sum up your views?

Takenaka: May I suggest another point of view? The information revolution has enabled us to connect with one another at all times. In fact, we are never "out of touch." We do reach out, offer support, and exchange information among each other all the time, on both good days and bad days. Sometimes, we are able to receive happy news such as wonderful awards



It is important to evaluate and articulate the concept, institutional arrangements, and practice of the ALFP.

being presented to our colleagues. Other times, we might get distressing news such as natural disaster or serious incidents affecting our friends. The important thing is that we are able to keep our ALFP community alive in this rapidly changing world.

Ogawa: In other words, there is a way of creating a community supported by new technology like social media. This brings us back to the problem raised by Mr. Tanami. Would each of you evaluate the ALFP—what it has achieved and what it has not been able to achieve in terms of its value and uniqueness?

Lee: First, my personal impression is that the program is a great asset for the fellows who participated. The individual fellows have made use of the ALFP network in their own work, and every now and then have produced something

new from it. Although the fellows were limited in number, many of those who were selected have wielded a great deal of influence back home. Sometimes I joked that I wanted to be a fellow. I wished I could directly join the network of fellows, engage in dialogue, and participate in collaborative activities. When you are in the position of an advisory committee member, you inevitably keep a certain distance.

From an objective point of view, however, it was difficult to produce tangible results in the short term. If the program invited people in the same field of specialization and came up with policy recommendations for a specific challenge, then the social impact would be easier to see and easier for the media to cover. In a symposium where the participants were in the same field, it would be easier to reach a

solution. By contrast, the ALFP invited people from diverse disciplines to discuss a certain topic. The participants may gain a great deal of inspiration, but it is difficult to arrive at and present a single result. This is inevitable to a certain degree, considering the nature of the program.

We have created a solid network of opinion leaders with tremendous influence in their respective countries. The limited number of fellows means we may not immediately arrive at concrete solutions for issues facing society. But problems between states will emerge in every era, and the role of public intellectuals is to think about how to approach those problems from a broader perspective transcending various borders. The program was important in that it thought ahead of the times and laid the groundwork for the medium- to long-term future, where those who held important positions in the intellectual community of their respective countries had the opportunity to exchange their thoughts with one another. It's almost unfair to expect this type of intellectual exchange to produce solutions in the short term.

Tanami: As Professor Lee says, the individual fellows take what they have learned back to their home country and spread an immeasurable amount of knowledge and wisdom to their local community and other communities. I am not denying that. The results may be difficult to measure or identify and describe. The fellows come together, engage in dialogue, and deliver the results to their country and community.

However, the fact remains that we may not have paid enough attention to the action that would take place after the program. To be honest, I had the same problem with the API Fellowships Program that I established at the Nippon Foundation. The program created a large community of remarkable fellows who were aware of various social issues and were committed to work on them. But it fell short of forming a solid community where the fellows would take collaborative action that could be presented as the results of the program as a

whole. The fellows themselves undertook a tremendous variety of projects as individuals or as groups but that did not lead to the creation of an integrated community. This is my personal view, but it seems that both the ALFP and the API lacked a follow-up mechanism for translating the outcome of the program into concrete action. That was an issue common to both programs. Doing so requires funding, a mechanism and an organization, and above all, leadership. With all of this in place, it may still be difficult but not impossible to produce tangible results.

Takenaka: I would like to acknowledge the fact that the Japan Foundation, a government-affiliated organization, and the International House of Japan, a private nonprofit organization, closely worked together for a common goal and carried out this intellectual exchange program for such a long period of time. For a quarter-century, the ALFP has accomplished the unique feat of maintaining freedom of speech and a high degree of political fairness and neutrality while promoting international intellectual exchange. It is, therefore, important to evaluate and articulate the concept, institutional arrangements, and practice of the ALFP in those decades, and to give a proper historical understanding of Japan's contribution to the development of intellectual exchange in Asia, while comparing that with similar programs carried out by other organizations in Japan and abroad.

Ogawa: I agree. We shall keep records and evaluate them, including today's roundtable talk. Keeping primary sources is important not only for us when thinking about the next program but also for the studies of younger generations. Listening to your views today has renewed my appreciation of the importance of person-to-person exchange. Asia is home to countless amazing people, many of whom are yet to be discovered, and we have various potential ways to connect with one another. Thank you for your time today.



Jakarta City on the weekend

The Thinking of Asian Public Intellectuals Today:

Reuniting with the Asia Leadership Fellows

Tadashi Ogawa (Professor, Atomi University)

In our world of 2020, the spirit of international cooperation is threatened by the expansion of isolationism, populism, and religious extremism, and democracy is on the wane in various parts of the globe.

The Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) is a joint effort of the Japan Foundation and the International House of Japan to foster international cooperation from Japan's unique standpoint. It was designed to bring together Asia's public intellectuals—defined as

intellectuals who, instead of sitting in an ivory tower, actively speak up and engage in social issues for the benefit of society and the larger international community.

What did Asia look like around 1996, when this program began?

The world at large was in the process of creating a new international order in the wake of the Cold War coming to an end. A wave of democratization was coming to Asia following the demise of authoritarian regimes in the

Philippines in 1986, South Korea in 1987, and Thailand in 1991. Japan reached its own milestone in 1995, the year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. It was a period of positive momentum for our country, with the hope—while facing the past squarely—of building a future-oriented relationship with countries in Asia and strengthening regional ties. This was also a time when the use of a revolutionary new communication technology, namely the Internet, rapidly spread throughout the world.

Over the twenty-two years from 1996 to 2018, 139 public intellectuals participated in the ALFP and enjoyed a productive time in Japan. With the international community now facing a host of critical challenges, what are those Asian scholars, cultural leaders, journalists, and civil activists thinking? How are they responding to today's challenges? As one of the program's founding members, I set out to visit them and find answers to these questions.

INDONESIA

Seeking Democracy

My first stop was Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest nation, which underwent a dramatic reconfiguration of governance during this twenty-two-year period. Indonesia's democratic reform process began with the collapse of Suharto's authoritarian regime in 1998, triggered by the Asian financial crisis. After overcoming a turbulent transition period, the country has seen strong economic growth from around 2005, and today over half of its population belongs to the middle class. As the middle class continues to grow, Indonesia is increasingly becoming an academic credential-oriented society. Digitalization is also advancing. Presidential elections allowing Indonesians to cast their votes to directly select the nation's top leader have been held several times, and democracy now appears to be firmly rooted in this country.

The fact that the world's largest Muslim



Dr. Jamhari

nation, with 87 percent of its population embracing Islam, has evolved into a successful democracy with sustained economic growth is another aspect of Indonesia that has drawn attention around the world.

Dr. Jamhari (ALFP 2004), Deputy Rector at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta), always greets me with a gentle smile, but his expression this time clouded slightly when I asked him to share his immediate concerns about Indonesia. His answers: “Intolerant attitudes of Muslim youth towards minority groups, despite living in a multiethnic, multireligious society” and “the proliferation of extremist ideology aiming to transform Indonesia into a nation based on Islamic law.” Inspired by the Islamic State group, some of his university students have headed for Iraq to become ISIS fighters. With assistance from Japan, he carried out an attitude survey of Muslim university students and teachers across Indonesia and found that intolerance toward religious minorities such as Christians has reached an alarming level.

The cause of growing intolerance among the urban middle class and educated Muslim youth, according to Jamhari, is social change wrought by globalization and an accompanying identity crisis. Indonesia's Islam, rooted in traditional village communities connected by neighborhoods and blood ties, is a unique faith syncretized with the indigenous culture, he explained. As the economy has developed,

traditional community bonds have been weakened. Individuals isolated from their communities face fierce competition and are left anxious about their future. Furthermore, the advent of digitalization means information pours into agricultural communities from the outside, blurring the boundaries between rural and urban areas. Young people today are yearning for clear answers to the meaning of life, says Jamhari, and radical groups and political organizations are taking advantage of this spiritual hunger to win them over to their side. And now with elections being held as a result of democratization, political parties try to capture religious voters by appealing to their religious identity. This is yet another factor contributing to a rising intolerance among Indonesian youth.

To fight this trend, Jamhari argues, Indonesians need to take a fresh look at and reevaluate their own tolerant Islamic tradition and reclaim the proud heritage of Indonesian Islam. Indonesian International Islamic University, slated to open in a Jakarta suburb this year, is designed to conduct research on Indonesian Islam from an international perspective and will serve as a center to restore that pride. As the deputy rector-to-be, Jamhari was hard at work preparing for the opening of the new institution.

I interviewed architect Mr. Marco Kusumawijaya (ALFP 2009) at the recently relocated office of the Japan Foundation, Jakarta. Dressed in a stylish batik shirt, Marco looked sharp as always. I may have noticed a few more



Mr. Marco Kusumawijaya

grey hairs than the last time we met. Marco is currently busy writing a new book about the history of Indonesian cities. Up until two months ago, he had served as an advisor to Anies Baswedan, the governor of Jakarta. As a member of the Jakarta administration's city-planning team, he headed the coastal management committee of the Governor's Team for Accelerated Development (TGUPP). But he resigned this post to focus on his writing.

During his tenure as an urban planning expert, Marco was committed to making sure that affected local residents were always consulted and their views reflected in the project planning process. Under Suharto's authoritarian regime, he had witnessed many instances of people being forced out of their homes, only to be left stranded with nowhere to go. In the last gubernatorial election, Marco said he supported Baswedan over Ahok, the popular former governor with Chinese ancestry, despite being of Chinese descent himself. Ahok had been so focused on getting things done quickly that his aggressive, top-down urbanization strategies neglected to include the participation of local residents. I presume Marco's deliberate decision to work in the government was made out of his sense of mission as a public intellectual. At the moment, he is quietly focused on gaining insights about sustainable urban planning, and the coexistence of cities and nature, from the history of cities in Indonesia.

My last interview in Indonesia was with the legendary journalist, poet, and essayist Mr. Goenawan Mohamad (ALFP 1997), who is the founding editor of the leading Indonesian news magazine *Tempo*. He has stepped down from the editor's post but continues to write thought-provoking essays for the magazine. Although *Tempo* was banned on publication twice by Suharto's administration, Goenawan has risen time and time again like a phoenix and remained committed to critical reporting on the government. His steadfast commitment to journalism has been recognized with prestigious awards at home and abroad. Upon hearing he



Mr. Goenawan Mohamad

had agreed to take part in the second year of ALFP in 1997, I recall thinking: “Now the ALFP brand is firmly established.”

It was a surprise to learn during the interview that Goenawan, the leading public intellectual who embodies Indonesian democracy, today holds a somewhat detached view of democracy.

People’s hope for democracy reached a peak when the first Joko Widodo administration came to power. For the first time in Indonesian history, the democratic movement elected not an aristocrat or elite military officer but a commoner as president. But now, this hope has turned into disillusionment. Forces are at work to undermine democracy, and the pro-democracy camp lacks the strength to fight back.

No democratic institution is perfect, nor is it responsive to the needs of every citizen. The process of choosing a representative through the election process inevitably creates a distance between the will of the voters and the candidate, and it is impossible for the elected to truly represent the voices of the electorate. Elections are no panacea. We must be prepared to accept that deliberate maneuvering will always be a part of an election.

He is pessimistic about the direction of democracy in the short term. What is important right now, he believes, is to nurture the creativity and critical spirit of young people.



Author

Doing so will help build Indonesia’s democracy, and democracy can counter dogmatism and fanaticism. From this standpoint, he feels that Indonesian society needs to place greater value on the study of the humanities. While distinguished higher education institutions in the United States consider the humanities an important part of education, Indonesian universities have not internalized such disciplines and are focused only on drilling in technical training, he criticized. The veteran journalist has his eyes fixed not on tomorrow but far into the future.

INDIA

Confident about Democracy’s Resiliency

From Jakarta I flew to Singapore where the airport was on high alert due to the coronavirus pandemic, with masked personnel everywhere. From there, a six-hour connecting flight took me to New Delhi, India. February weather in the nation’s capital was so mild and pleasant it was hard to believe that scorching days were on the way. But once you step out of the airport, you notice a bad smell in the air. The pollution is so severe that local authorities issued an advisory for people to stay indoors. Since the 1990s, economic liberalization and the rise of IT industries have produced remarkable successes, but a look inside reveals the detrimental



With Ms. Urvashi Butalia



Prof. Mahendra P. Lama



Ms. Saba Naqvi

consequences of rapid economic development.

The day after I arrived in India, Ms. Urvashi Butalia (ALFP 2000) visited me at the Japan Foundation, New Delhi. Back when I was Director-General at the Japan Foundation, New Delhi, Urvashi introduced me to numerous public intellectuals, opening my eyes to India's intellectual community, and for that I am greatly indebted to her. A founder of a feminist publishing house that releases inspiring works for Indian women, she has contributed immensely to the development of Indian democracy through publishing. Her book *The Other Side of Silence* (Duke University Press, 2000), which depicts the tragedies of the partition of India in 1947 through the testimony of ordinary women, is an influential piece of writing translated and published in many countries, including Japan. In 2003, she received the Nikkei Asia Award for Culture.

In this meeting I learned that Urvashi continues to empower women through book publishing. One of the books she published in 2019 that I find especially notable is the novel *A Respectable Woman* authored by Easterine Kire, a female writer from northeast India. The Battle of Imphal is known as one of the bloodiest battles fought during World War II, and British and Japanese forces clashed in a ferocious encounter in Kohima. This conflict inflicted tremendous damage, including lasting psychological trauma, to the local people. The

novel is framed as a mother sharing with her daughter her own account of what she suffered during the Battle of Kohima, an experience she had long kept to herself. I found this work representative of Urvashi's feminist project—she seeks out and documents the faint voices whispering somewhere deep in the souls of women who were caught in the tides of history and lived through tumultuous times, the memories of which are now vanishing like bubbles in the air.

We should ask ourselves this: have we Japanese made any serious efforts to listen to the voices of the people, women especially, affected by the Battle of Imphal, upon whom we inflicted so much pain and destruction? This book is a must-read. Talking to Urvashi this time was once again an enlightening experience.

Another public intellectual I have continued to enjoy heartwarming exchanges with since my residence in India is Professor Mahendra P. Lama (ALFP 2001), an international political analyst, economist and professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University. After the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the faculty and staff of Sikkim University, where he was serving as vice chancellor (chancellor in practice), held a candlelight service commemorating the victims and praying for the region's recovery. He sent me a video clip of the gathering, and I was deeply touched by it. Being a Tibetan Buddhist from the Darjeeling Himalayan region famous

for its tea, Mahendra's facial features are distinct from typical Indian men and remind me of a Japanese mountaineer, which brings me a sense of affinity.

Mahendra is currently in particular keeping an eye on the geopolitical wrestling of major powers over the northeastern states of India. China is increasing its engagement with South Asia through its Belt and Road Initiative, and India's northeastern states are the gateway to China's expansion into South Asia. China is now using the global environment, animal protection, and Buddhism as tools for deepening its relations with the northeastern states and with the Himalayan Buddhist regions such as Nepal and Bhutan, according to Mahendra. In response, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Act East Policy and began serious efforts to develop the contended region. The northeastern states are a top priority for India's long-term land development strategies.

South Asia's regional integration lags behind that of the European Union, hindered in large part by tensions between India and Pakistan. India is distrustful of Pakistan and wary that it may join hands with China. An effective solution for alleviating the mistrust between the two neighbors, says Mahendra, would be joint energy development. When we see how the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), formed by France, Germany, and other European countries to create a joint coal and steel market, later evolved into the European Union, Mahendra's take on the situation makes a lot of sense.

Lastly, he said he was grateful to the ALFP for providing the opportunity for him to interact with Chinese scholars and network with China's intellectual community.

When I met with journalist Ms. Saba Naqvi (ALFP 2013), she seemed to have been busy covering Indian politics and social problems. As it happened, the Delhi Legislative Assembly election results had just come out the day before our interview, with the current ruling party of the National Capital Territory of Delhi,



Traditional cloth market in New Delhi

the Aam Aadmi Party, claiming a landslide victory over the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP / Indian People's Party) that rules the federal government.

Indian politics are complicated, Saba explained. The only reason the BJP led by Prime Minister Modi won the national election was the lack of suitable candidates for the top job, she said, and the ruling party's grip on power is by no means secure, as evidenced by their losses in various other local elections. Understanding the politics of this major power is no easy task, requiring factor analysis as complicated as solving a cubic equation. In Saba's opinion, the stability of Indian society depends on job security for youth. While support within traditional family relationships serves as a safety net for the unemployed, Saba fears that the current situation in which even highly educated young people are unable to find work or hope for the future may well push some into the arms of extremism.

Speaking with these three public intellectuals in India, I could feel their faith in the resilience of Indian democracy. As Urvashi argued, India's democratic system has been on the verge of collapse many times in the past, but somehow it has managed to survive to this day. The current rise of identity-based politics shaped by Hindu nationalism is a challenge in the short term, but these fellows continue to believe in the ability of



Central Manila

India, a large land of great diversity, to restore its democratic health when the pendulum swings back once again.

PHILIPPINES

Fighting Authoritarianism

I flew overnight from New Delhi to Manila. Humid air told me the sea was nearby. Peering out the car window on the drive from the airport to downtown Manila, I saw new clusters of skyscrapers rising into the blue sky and was reminded of a bamboo forest.

Long after the fall of the Marcos regime, the Philippines continued to suffer a negative image associated with repeated coup d'états, political instability, stagnant economic growth, and acute disparity of wealth between the rich and the poor. Since the turn of the century, however, the country has enjoyed a booming economy and generated an expanding middle class. Even more noteworthy is the nation's rapid population growth. With a 30 percent increase over the last fifteen years, the Philippine population has already hit 100 million and is on a solid trajectory to surpass Japan's population in the near future. As a young and vibrant nation, the Philippines is seen as an Asian rising star and is attracting strong interest from investors.

Under the bright Southern Hemisphere sun, I was in the company of four ALFP fellows at the Ateneo de Manila University, sitting on a green hill fanned by a pleasant breeze. Those present were Ateneo de Manila University professor

and Catholic priest, Fr. Albert E. Alejo (ALFP 2006); Ateneo de Manila University's researcher of security and conflict resolution, Dr. Jennifer Santiago Oreta (ALFP 2009); freelance journalist Ms. Marites Danguilan Vitug (ALFP 1999); and lawyer and chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Jose Luis Martin "Chito" Gascon (ALFP 2008). These ALFP fellows radiated the typical cheerful and fun-loving Filipino nature, but the stories they told me were grim and harsh.

Albert, Marites, and Chito named human rights protection in the Philippines as their biggest concern. The United Nations Human Rights Committee is investigating alleged extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances of suspected drug-related criminals under President Rodrigo Duterte's "War on Drugs" campaign. The campaign's illegal killings are a clear indication that the nation's democracy is regressing, says Marites, and this situation is connected with the rise of authoritarian political leaders around the world. These leaders are cleverly manipulating their people, she added. All this makes the role of the media in holding authorities accountable through their writing and reporting all the more important, she said, as if reminding herself as well.

Albert is focused on protecting the human rights of the victims of extrajudicial killings and their family members, and investigating the circumstances of such killings, including how and by whom they are ordered and executed, as well as the scale of these operations. There are times when witnesses holding the key to the truth come running to him and other priests seeking shelter. Albert has received death threats, but he is not backing down. "The truth must be brought to light," he vowed.

Chito is one of the architects of the democratic system now in place in the Philippines. As a leader of the student movement, he took part in the 1986 People Power Revolution that ousted the dictator Ferdinand Marcos and was the youngest member of the Constitution

Drafting Committee that drew up a democratic constitution. From his own experience he knows deep in his bones that democracy was earned with no small amount of sacrifice, and that democracy is not something to be taken for granted. Chito is now serving as chairperson of the Philippine's Commission on Human Rights, an independent watchdog monitoring the government, established in accordance with the constitution, and he declared that his mission is to protect the Commission on Human Rights and democracy to the end.

Jennifer's approach to democracy is a little different from the other three. As a security expert, she is involved in the organizational reform of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). According to Jennifer, from the time of the Gloria Arroyo administration, there have been growing reformist voices within the AFP advocating for the value of democracy, greater organizational transparency, political neutrality, and a focus on security duties. In 2014 the AFP formed the Multi-Sector Governance Council, composed of opinion leaders from various sectors, to promote internal reform. Jennifer was asked to join this initiative and agreed to help the armed forces improve its governance from within. As part of her work with the council, she is developing a training module for middle-ranking officers designed to foster a better engagement of the military with civilians.

PHILIPPINES

What Is a Nation State?

My last interviews on this tour made me think afresh about what a nation state is and what makes a state a state. The first interview was with Dr. Ambeth R. Ocampo (ALFP 2014), who has a particularly warm and welcoming smile. He is one of Asia's leading historians and a recipient of the Fukuoka Prize. My second interviewee was Ms. Karina Africa Bolasco (ALFP 2004), who I think must have been a thoroughgoing booklover even as a child. She

is the founder of Anvil Publishing Inc., which publishes, imports and exports, and translates books.

Ambeth, the historian, laments that the ideals espoused by the Philippine founding fathers are being handed down to younger generations merely on a superficial level.

Jose Rizal, widely revered as a national hero and the Philippines' father of independence, authored two novels with the dream of seeing our country stand on its own feet and was executed by the colonial government for treason. Today our young people are required to read his works at school, but I wonder how seriously they read them. I intend to pass on to the next generation of Filipinos the ideals expressed by Rizal, that being the importance of having a pure aspiration for independence and open-minded nationalism.

Ambeth went on to discuss his views on national identity. The Philippines was not a unified nation before Spanish colonization, and education, media, and language played a pivotal role in uniting the various ethnic groups comprising the Philippines into a single state. Today, the sources of Filipino identity are English and Filipino, and embedding these two languages throughout society through education and the media is the basis of national integration. However, warned Ambeth, the prevalence of Filipino and English may lead



From the left: Director Uesugi of the Japan Foundation, Manila, Fr. Alejo, Mr. Gascon, Dr. Oreta, Ms. Vitug and author



Dr. Ambeth R. Ocampo and Ms. Karina Bolasco

to the suppression, erosion, and extinction of various ethnic and local languages. It is therefore important for the government's cultural authorities to preserve the diversity of local cultures, of which ethnic languages are the foundation. True to his status as a public intellectual, Ambeth's career includes chairpersonship of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, equivalent to Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs, a post in which he worked to preserve cultural diversity in the Philippines.

As a publisher, Karina is similarly well aware of the important role book publishing plays in shaping a nation's culture. She wants to contribute to the cultural development of her country and promote exchange with its Asian neighbors in the field of publishing by translating good English books into Filipino and vice versa, regardless of profitability. While some people consider social media as the enemy of print media, Karina believes this is not always the case. Inspired by social media, Filipinos are increasingly turning to print media and sales of printed publications are not falling, she says.

Indeed, the combination of a growing population, a swelling middle class, and an increasing emphasis on academic credentials means a large new publishing market is emerging in the Philippines. Living by the credo of walking alongside society, Karina told me about her continued commitment to publishing books that speak to the general public using everyday language, not in some technical

academic jargon understood only by those of similar background. She wants to create books that provide a common platform for social dialogue on topics such as LGBT and gender.

ASIA

Asians Don't Know Asia

"Asians don't know much about their fellow Asian neighbors," said Ambeth during our interview, and his words really struck a chord with me. I told him that the Japanese writer Yoshie Hotta, who attended the first Asian Writers' Conference held in India in 1956, wrote these same words back then. Ambeth replied, "Despite the evolution of transportation and communication technology, the situation in today's Asia is not all that different." He added, "And that's why projects like the ALFP are important."

Many of the public intellectuals I talked to during this trip remarked on how their time spent in Japan interacting and mixing with people from other Asian countries was an invaluable asset for them. Their ALFP experience has had no small impact on their careers today.

When I first embarked on this ten-day interview journey from February 8 to 17, 2020, the coronavirus outbreak was making global headlines. News of rising cases in Japan had reached the countries I was visiting, and people were beginning to cancel their trips to Japan. The myth that Japan is the safest nation in the world was crumbling. Nevertheless, Marites, the journalist who had plans to travel to Japan shortly, said her experience in Japan under the ALFP convinced her that the Japanese people are capable of responding to a crisis with cool heads. "I don't expect them to panic," she said, "And it's a democracy, so there is no information control. I am not afraid of going to Japan." Clearly, the ALFP has been successful also from the perspective of making good friends for Japan.

Fellows' Voices

The ALFP fellows, coming from diverse fields and professions in Asia, had different motives and reasons for participating in the ALFP at that particular time in their life. What impact did the ALFP—and the various encounters fellows had through the program—have on their life and career?



Suwanna Satha-Anand

Professor Emeritus in Philosophy, Faculty of Arts,
Chulalongkorn University (1998 Fellow, Thailand)

The world is now facing many critical issues such as the rise of religious extremism, global risks arising from drastic climatic change and health hazards, and the rapid advancement and proliferation of information technology which plays a key role in shaping societies and new forms of “human” avatars and relations. A new forum of “social cohesion in the 21st century” needs to be established.

My staying at I-House in Tokyo for two months in 1998 with other ALFP fellows and engaging in numerous seminars and discussions with scholars in Japan have left me with a lasting impression of what it “feels” like to be “with” other Asian scholars, activists, artists, and NGO members. In spite of our cultural differences, it helped me anchor the common concerns and anxieties, and dreams and anticipation of the future of the region. Without the ALFP experience, this imagination of the broader Asia would not come so readily and so personally. With my research in the last twenty years on Japanese Zen tradition, Confucian ethics, and Buddhist manifestations in different cultural worlds, my horizon of academic interests has broadened to include the many intertwining strands of thoughts, values, and practices of Asia, linking the classical worlds of my academic background to contemporary issues.



Kunda Dixit

Editor and Publisher, *Nepali Times*
(2006 Fellow, Nepal)

When I first applied for the ALFP in early 2006, I confess that it was mainly because I needed a break from newspaper deadlines in Kathmandu. I looked at the two-month fellowship as an opportunity to get to know about Japan, and perhaps do some relaxed sightseeing. How wrong I was. After the first few days of orientation and lectures, it was obvious that the ALFP offered much more than a holiday break. It was a great experience not just to learn about Japan and its history, culture, and political economy, but also to network with and learn about other countries in the Asian region. It strengthened my identity as an Asian, and changed my perspective on world affairs. The speakers were all first-class academics with a broad worldview and experience, and overall, we got an immersion course in what it means to be an Asian.

One of the major attractions of the ALFP is the venue. The International House of Japan is an oasis in the middle of an urban setting. The library provided me with an excellent opportunity to complete work on my first book on the Nepal conflict, and I spent most of my free time there. Our group trip to the Himeyuri Peace Museum, in Okinawa, was very emotional and moving. It inspired me to work towards setting up a similar peace museum in Nepal.



Ahn Byungok

Chairman of the Executive Management Committee of the National Council on Climate and Air Quality (2010 Fellow, Korea)

One of the most valuable experiences that I had as an ALFP fellow was the opportunity to visit various regions and institutions in Japan with my Asian colleagues and to exchange our views on shared prosperity and peace in Asia.

Emissions of greenhouse gases, a main contributor to climate change, are observed in many countries in the Asian region, some of which are categorized as highly vulnerable to climate change. I believe that strengthening a joint response system against air pollution and climate change is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of the region. Energy transition, currently gaining global momentum, is also a task for Asia to tackle urgently, considering that many countries are heavily populated and have high energy consumption levels.

As environmental issues share a close link with various aspects of society including human rights, justice, industry, technology, and culture, I can say with confidence that the experience and expertise that I have acquired as an ALFP fellow continues to play a substantial role in my current work. The diverse cultures and languages of Asia sometimes make it difficult for us to pursue swift joint-responses to fresh issues that emerge on a continuing basis. Therefore, it is also important to promote “social conversation” through the daily and regular exchange of people, information, and technology.



Nguyen Viet Khoi

Professor, University of Economics and Business, Vietnam National University, Hanoi (2014 Fellow, Vietnam)

As an ALFP fellow, I gained new perspectives for seeing and understanding long-standing issues. It was also a valuable experience for me to connect with many influencers and opinion leaders in Asia. They have affected my thinking and behavior, and support my current work as an educator. I have developed what I learned from the ALFP in the context of my country and tried to return the fruits of my experience to my local community and students.

I think the most important and critical issue in Asia now is consolidation in solving various regional issues. Due to a lack of trust among countries caused by misunderstanding and cultural differences, we often have to depend on a third party to solve our own problems. We need to work harder to enhance trust building in the region. For that, I strongly believe that a program like the ALFP will continue to be relevant to strengthen the ties of civil society in Asia.



Sun Dong

Poet / Professor and Deputy Director, Office of International Cooperation and Exchanges, Nanjing University of Finance and Economics (2018 Fellow, China)

The ALFP gave me the chance to establish bonds with my Japanese colleagues and other ALFP fellows. It was also a great opportunity to learn many aspects of Japanese society and other Asian countries. Now in my literature classes, whenever possible, I try to share my firsthand experience at the ALFP—what I saw and heard during my stay in Japan. A program like the ALFP is a rare chance to go deep into Japanese society and communities, and at the same time, share with other fellows our common experiences and different concepts in Asia. To increase mutual understanding in the region, more communication among counterparts is needed in addition to professional and academic collaboration. I think it is essential to promote both aspects as they are much like the wheels of a vehicle for solving various issues in Asia.

1996

Ignas Kleden (Indonesia)
Wan A. Manan (Malaysia)
Arnold M. Azurin (Philippines)
Kwok Kian-Woon (Singapore)
Kasian Tejapira (Thailand)

1997

Goenawan Mohamad (Indonesia)
Ota Yoshinobu (Japan)
Ishak Bin Shari (Malaysia)
Kuo Pao Kun (Singapore)
Laddawan Tantivitayapitak (Thailand)

1998

Liu Xin (China)
Endo Suanda (Indonesia)
Diana Wong (Malaysia)
Sylvia L. Mayuga (Philippines)
Janadas Devan (Singapore)
Suwanna Satha-Anand (Thailand)

1999

Ayu Utami (Indonesia)
Ohashi Masaaki (Japan)
Cho Hong-Sup (Korea)
Marites Danguilan Vitug (Philippines)
Teo Soh Lung (Singapore)
Sanitsuda Ekachai (Thailand)

2000

Urvashi Butalia (India)
Faruk (Indonesia)
Kumaoka Michiya (Japan)
Park Won-Soon (Korea)
Saree Aongsomwang (Thailand)

2001

Huang Ping (China)
Mahendra P. Lama (India)
Shimada Kazuyuki (Japan)
Ryu Jeong Soon (Korea)
Ann Lee (Malaysia)
David M. Celdran (Philippines)
Anek Nakabutara (Thailand)

2002

Hu Tao (China)
Vinod Raina (India)
Kinoshita Reiko (Japan)
Maznah Binti Mohamad (Malaysia)
Nguyen Thi Hieu Thien (Vietnam)

2003

Ham Samnang (Cambodia)
Yang Guang (China)
Palagummi Sainath (India)
Hamid Basyaib (Indonesia)
Nakano Yoshiko (Japan)
Chung Chin-Sung (Korea)
Marian Pastor Roces (Philippines)
Supara Janchitfah (Thailand)

2004

Kinley Dorji (Bhutan)
Faye Chunfang Fei (China)
Jamhari (Indonesia)
Kusago Takayoshi (Japan)
Karina Africa Bolasco (Philippines)
Chandrika Sepali Kottegoda (Sri Lanka)
Nguyen Van Chinh (Vietnam)

2006

Mohiuddin Ahmad (Bangladesh)
Maria Hartiningsih (Indonesia)
Kamata Yoji (Japan)
Lee Seejae (Korea)
Janet Pillai (Malaysia)
Kunda Dixit (Nepal)
Albert E. Alejo (Philippines)
Nguyen Thanh Son (Vietnam)

2007

Huang Jiansheng (China)
Petula Sik-Ying Ho (China [Hong Kong])
Bina Sarkar Elias (India)
Aoyama Kaoru (Japan)
Hishamuddin Rais (Malaysia)
Sriprapha Petcharamesree (Thailand)

2008

Gu Yian (China)
Jyotirmaya Sharma (India)
Lee Soo im (Japan)
Kim Haechang (Korea)
Chandra Kishor Lal (Nepal)
Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon (Philippines)
Atiya Achakulwisut (Thailand)

2009

Tanvir Mokammel (Bangladesh)
Ma Jifang (China)
Marco Kusumawijaya (Indonesia)
Kuroda Kaori (Japan)
Andrew K. L. Soh (Malaysia)
Iqbal Haider Butt (Pakistan)
Jennifer Santiago Oreta (Philippines)

2010

Guo Zhiyuan (China)
Seki Kaoruko (Japan)
Ahn Byungok (Korea)
Fouzia Saeed (Pakistan)
Sasanka Perera (Sri Lanka)
Kong Rithdee (Thailand)

2011

Zhang Yali (China)
Miryam Saravasti Nainggolan (Indonesia)
Imai Chihiro (Japan)
Imtiaz Gul (Pakistan)
Elmer Sayre (Philippines)
Jehan Perera (Sri Lanka)
Vuong Thanh Huong (Vietnam)

2013

He Runfeng (China [Hong Kong])
Saba Naqvi (India)
Imata Katsuji (Japan)
Chin Oy Sim (Malaysia)
Lwin Lwin Mon (Myanmar)
Zubair Torwali (Pakistan)
Nelía G. Balgoa (Philippines)

2014

Sikder Monoare Murshed (Bangladesh)
Mera Akiko (Japan)
Lee Wonjae (Korea)
Vishalache Balakrishnan (Malaysia)
Mallika Shakya (Nepal)
Ambeth R. Ocampo (Philippines)
Nguyen Viet Khoi (Vietnam)

2015

Yin Shuxi (China)
Jaideep Hardikar (India)
Harry Surjadi (Indonesia)
Nomura Mai (Japan)
Karen Lai Yu Lee (Malaysia)
Dinah Roma (Philippines)
Arulanantham Sarveswaran (Sri Lanka)
Saranarat Kanjanavanit (Thailand)

2016

Amran Hossain (Bangladesh)
Kumar Sundaram (India)
Ayang Utriza Yakin (Indonesia)
Fujioka Emiko (Japan)
Lee Taeho (Korea)
Criselda Yabes (Philippines)
Phan Ngoc Diem Han (Vietnam)

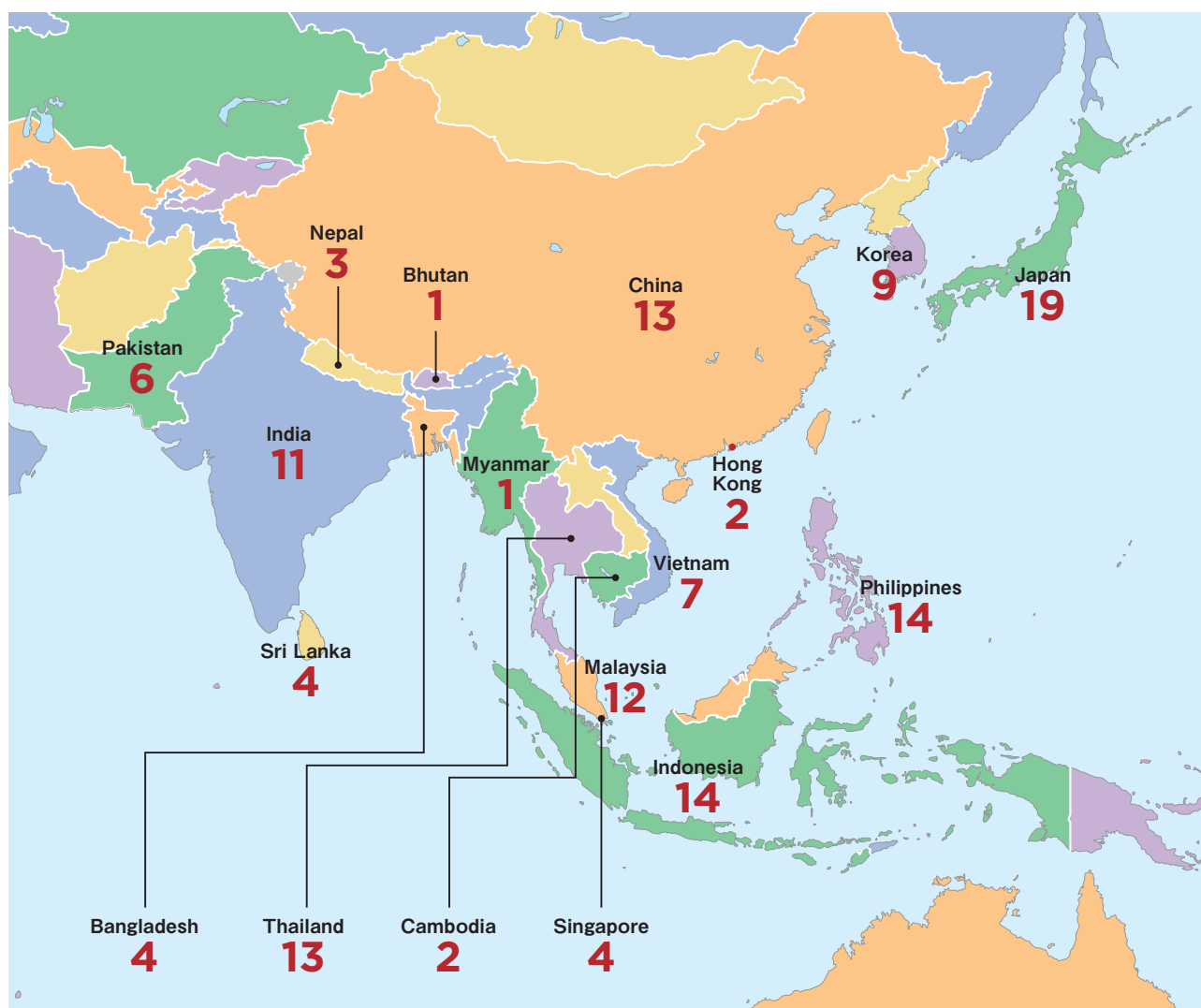
2017

Wang Xin (China)
Smita M. Patil (India)
Sudirman Nasir (Indonesia)
Hatano Ayako (Japan)
Fazal Khaliq (Pakistan)
Saroj Srisai (Thailand)
Phan Thanh Duc (Vietnam)

2018

Silot Uon (Cambodia)
Sun Dong (China)
Samrat Choudhury (India)
Asmin Fransiska (Indonesia)
Sawanishi Mikiko (Japan)
Lydia Lubon (Malaysia)
Aziz Ali Dad (Pakistan)
Alongkot Maiduang (Thailand)

Number of Fellows by Country/Region



| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| East Asia | 43 |
| China (including 2 from Hong Kong) | 15 |
| Japan | 19 |
| Korea | 9 |
| South Asia | 29 |
| Bangladesh | 4 |
| Bhutan | 1 |
| India | 11 |
| Nepal | 3 |
| Pakistan | 6 |
| Sri Lanka | 4 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Southeast Asia | 67 |
| Cambodia | 2 |
| Indonesia | 14 |
| Malaysia | 12 |
| Myanmar | 1 |
| Philippines | 14 |
| Singapore | 4 |
| Thailand | 13 |
| Vietnam | 7 |

Total Number of Fellows 139

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for the Future of the World

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“Asia is a diverse reality.
In our diversity lies
a unique opportunity for unity.”