

Proceedings of the  
Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP)  
Special Symposium

## **The Future of Civil Society in Asia**

February 6, 2013

The International House of Japan  
The Japan Foundation



Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP) Special Symposium



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Session 2



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## Foreword

As more than half of the world's population will be concentrated in Asia and the center of the world economy will be shifting from the West to Asia in the near future, world history is facing a new stage centered around Asia. In Asian countries, new nation-state systems and independent ways of governance are emerging while, with the expansion of globalization, we see issues such as economic crisis, environmental concerns, and widening income disparity, that are shared throughout the region. Against this backdrop, the question of what precepts Asia should use in shaping this new future is drawing much attention.

The International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation have been inviting Asian intellectuals who have demonstrated leadership in various fields to Japan for more than fifteen years to create a human network going beyond discipline or profession that would contribute to civil society. Since its inauguration in 1996, nearly a hundred fellows have participated in the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP). At a time when Asia is at a crucial turning point, the ALFP fellows—who have predicted major social changes and proposed new values and ways of society—are more important than ever for Asia and its civil society, in particular.

On February 6, 2013, the ALFP special symposium entitled “The Future of Civil Society” was held inviting a dozen of the past ALFP fellows to think about the role of Asian public intellectuals and the future of civil society. In three sessions, we heard how the ALFP fellows, who are leaders in their region and know well the realities of Asia, address the issues from a people's perspective as they move forward.

The first session entitled “New Politics and Civil Society in Asia” dealt with a world-wide movement seeking new forms of democracy and politics, as can be seen in Occupy Wall Street and the “Arab Spring.” The desire for change is not only directed at authoritarian systems but also at representative democracy in the traditional sense. This “Democracy 2.0,” a loose form of solidarity linked through networks such as the Internet, is becoming a tide to deliver the voice of citizens against political oppression, economic policy based on the market and widening societal disparities. In Asia also, we see movement towards political reform and democratization from a civil society perspective—a movement to create politics from the bottom up for a new type of state system and governance never seen before. In this session, we invited people involved in political reform and democratization from

the perspective of civil society as speakers and examined new types of democracy and the role of civil society.

In the second session titled “The Future of Asia, the World and Humanity from Japan after 3.11,” speakers discussed about the world they saw after the March 11 earthquake and the nuclear power plant accident which have revealed the structural problems of a Japan that has been promoting modernization in almost every facet of life (politics, economy, society). In this session, Japanese and Asian intellectuals thought together about the challenges and questions—a social structure based on economic growth, the relationship between society and nature, the revitalization of communities—that Japan poses as one of the first Asian countries that has had to confront issues such as energy, the environment, pollution, an aging population, and problems of education.

In the last session, “Challenges and Possibilities of ALFP: What Can Civil Society in Asia Do for the Next Decade?” we heard from the speakers how they foresee the next decade and what civil society should do, in light of the forecast for Asia and the world discussed in the previous sessions.

These proceedings include summaries of the speakers’ remarks at this symposium. The ALFP organizers firmly believe that the critical voices of its fellows, which challenge the status quo, as well as their proposals for alternative solutions, will lead to the development of new norms and value orientations in the region.

The International House of Japan  
The Japan Foundation

## Program

February 6, 2013

1:00-1:20 pm	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b> Akashi Yasushi (Chairman, International House of Japan)</p>
	<p><b>Overview of ALFP</b> (history &amp; concept) Ogawa Tadashi (Executive Director, Southeast Asian Bureau, Japan Foundation)</p>
1:20-2:00 pm	<p><b>Session 1</b> “New Politics and Civil Society in Asia”</p> <p>Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon (Undersecretary, Office of the President, Republic of Philippines/ Philippines) Imtiaz Gul (Executive Director, Centre for Research and Security Studies/ Pakistan) Vinod Raina (Visiting Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)/ India) [Commentator]: Huang Ping (Director General, Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences/ China) [Moderator]: Suzuki Yuji (Professor, Hosei University/ Japan)</p>
3:00-3:10 pm	Coffee Break
3:10-4:55 pm	<p><b>Session 2</b> “The Future of Asia, the World and Humanity from Japan after 3.11”</p> <p>Ōhashi Masaaki (President, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation/ Japan) Lee Seejae (Co-President, The Korea Federation for Environmental Movement/ Korea) Huang Jiansheng (Professor, Yunnan University of Nationalities/ China) [Commentator]: Diana Wong (former Deputy Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies/ Malaysia) [Moderator]: Ashiwa Yoshiko (Professor, Hitotsubashi University/ Japan)</p>

4:55-6:00 pm	<b>Wrap up Session</b> “Challenges and Possibilities of ALFP: What Can Civil Society in Asia Do for the Next Decade?”
	<p>Fouzia Saeed (Director, Mehergarh/ Pakistan)</p> <p>Goenawan Mohamad (Founder of <i>Tempo</i> magazine/Steering committee member, Komunitas Salihara/ Indonesia)</p> <p>Marco Kusumawijaya (Director, Rujak Center for Urban Studies/ Indonesia)</p> <p>Chandra Kishor Lal (Independent Columnist and Commentator/ Nepal)</p> <p>[Moderator]: Takenaka Chiharu (Professor, Rikkyo University/ Japan)</p>

## **Biographical Information of the Speakers (ALFP Fellows)**

(as of February 6, 2013)

**Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon** (Undersecretary, Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines/ Philippines/ ALFP 2008 Fellow)

Mr. Gascon is a lawyer, political activist, and social reformer. Currently, he is the undersecretary at the president's office. In the 1980s, he was a student leader at the University of the Philippines and became a fighter in the "People Power Revolution." He was a member to draft the Philippine Constitution and a member of the government's negotiating panel in peace talks with the National Democratic Front. He has been engaged in advocacy work concerning political and electoral reforms, conflict resolution, and human rights.

**Imtiaz Gul** (Executive Director, Centre for Research and Security Studies/ Pakistan/ ALFP 2011 Fellow)

Mr. Gul is currently the Executive Director of the Islamabad-based independent Centre for Research and Security Studies that he founded in 2007. As a journalist, he has been reporting for various media such as Deutsche Welle, CNN, NHK, and Al-Jazeera. He also regularly writes for *Foreign Policy* and *Wall Street Journal*, on the military conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan-India relations. His books include *Pakistan: Before and After Osama bin Laden* (Rolli Books, 2012).

**Vinod Raina** (Visiting Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Developing Societies [CSDS]/ India/ ALFP 2002 Fellow)

Dr. Raina has a Ph.D. in theoretical physics. He resigned his job at Delhi University to work full-time for the education of deprived children. He is deeply involved in rights-based work—right to education, right to food. He also works on science-society issues such as the Bhopal gas disaster, Narmada dams, and nuclear energy. He is part of the People's Science Movement in India, which looks for people-based solutions to issues such as water, food, energy, and climate change.

**Huang Ping** (Professor, Director General, Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences [CASS]/ China/ ALFP 2001 Fellow)

Having received his Ph.D. from London School of Economics, University of London, Dr. Huang is an internationally acclaimed sociologist. As a scholar, he has written

numerous books and papers in the field of the social sciences. In his empirical studies of contemporary Chinese society, he attempts to re-examine the validity of Western conceptual frameworks in the social sciences. Through various UN-related activities, he explores the application and implementation of theoretical studies and research into action. He also serves as president of the Chinese Association of American Studies.

**Ōhashi Masaaki** (Chairperson, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation [JANIC]/ Japan/ ALFP 1999 Fellow)

Professor Ōhashi worked in the 1980s with Shapla Neer: Citizens' Committee in Japan for Overseas Support. He was the Director of Shapla Neer's operations in Bangladesh and acted as Secretary General. He became Deputy Head of Delegation and Development Delegate in Bangladesh for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. He is also a Professor of Development Studies at Keisen University. Currently, as chairperson of JANIC, he is involved in the relief effort for the victims of the March 11 earthquake and the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident.

**Lee Seejae** (Co-President, Korea Federation for Environmental Movement/ Korea/ ALFP 2006 Fellow)

Educated as a sociologist at Seoul National University (B.A.) and the University of Tokyo (M.A. and Ph.D.), Dr. Lee teaches sociology at Catholic University of Korea. He has participated in the environmental movement from the early 1990s and worked on anti-desertification in China. Currently, he focuses on the emerging civil society in China and functions of neighborhood organizations in urban Japan. He is also involved in the Environmental Research Committee of the International Sociological Association, the East Asian Sociologists' Symposium (annual), and the East Asian Environmental Sociologists' Conference.

**Huang Jiansheng** (Professor of Social Anthropology, Yunnan Provincial Institute of Ethnic Researches, Yunnan University of Nationalities/ China/ ALFP 2007 Fellow)

Dr. Huang is currently director of Social Impact Assessment & Monitoring and director of Southeast Asia Ethnic Studies at Yunnan University of Nationalities. He is one of the Dai peoples, an ethnic minority in China. He was the Chinese representative of "Education Policy and Sustainable Community Development," and

the team leader of “Targeted Capacity Building for Mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples Concerns in Development.” He has also been a consultant for several social impact assessment projects supported by Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

**Diana Wong** (former Deputy Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore/ Malaysia/ ALFP 1998 Fellow)

Dr. Wong has been active in coordinating research cooperation and networking among researchers in Southeast Asian countries. Also, as a cultural anthropologist, she has made considerable achievements over years and approached various problems from the perspective of the weak, such as women, immigrant workers, and refugees. Her publications include *Looking for a Life: Rohingya Refugee Migration in the Postimperial Age*, in Malini Sur and Barak Kabir (eds), *Illegal but Licit: Transnational Flows and Permissive Politics in Asia* (Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

**Fouzia Saeed** (Director, Mehergarh/ Pakistan/ ALFP 2010 Fellow)

Dr. Saeed is well known in activist circles in Pakistan, having worked for decades on women’s issues, especially those linked to violence against women, women’s mobility and sexual harassment. She founded the first women’s crisis center in Pakistan in 1991. A sense of urgency to work on anti-Talibanization has moved her to be a part of a nationwide movement against this vicious process. Following Aung San Suu Kyi, Dr. Saeed received the 2012 Battle of Crete Award, an award given to a woman in recognition of her valiant actions for freedom and democracy.

**Goenawan Mohamad** (Founder of *Tempo* magazine/Steering committee member, Komunitas Salihara/ Indonesia)

Mr. Mohamad is a journalist, poet, art critic, and activist. He is widely known as the founder and former editor-in-chief of *Tempo* magazine. He is well respected in civil society of Indonesia as a champion and advocate of people’s rights. He has published several volumes of essays and poetry. He currently works as a steering committee member of Komunitas Salihara, the first private multidisciplinary arts center in Indonesia.

**Marco Kusumawijaya** (Director, Rujak Center for Urban Studies/ Indonesia/ ALFP 2009 Fellow)

Mr. Kusumawijaya is an architect by training and one of Indonesia's most renowned intellectuals. He has been working as a professional and activist in the fields of architecture, environment, arts, cultural heritage, urban planning, and development. He is focusing his thought and practice on sustainable approaches to urbanism and architecture, and the social changes required towards sustainability. His experiences include an award-winning project of community-driven reconstruction of twenty-three villages in post-tsunami Aceh.

**Chandra Kishor Lal** (Independent Columnist and Commentator/ Nepal/ ALFP 2008 Fellow)

A leading political commentator in Nepal, Mr. Lal is currently a columnist for *Republica* and *Nagarik Dainik* newspapers as well as the *Himal Southasian* monthly magazine published from Kathmandu. He reads and writes in four languages—Maithili, Nepali, Hindi, and in English—and is widely known by the public through his publications and appearances on radio and television in South Asia. In 2006, he was voted the most influential columnist in Nepal. His book *Human Rights, Democracy and Governance in South Asia* was published in 2010 (Pearson, New Delhi).

## Overview of the Asia Leadership Fellow Program

**Ogawa Tadashi** (Japan Foundation)

ALFP began as a joint program established by the Japan Foundation and International House of Japan (I-House) in 1996. In the previous year, 1995, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, an organization called the Asia Center was established within the Japan Foundation. The Asia Center's purpose was to enhance the sense of connectedness between Japan and other Asian countries. At the time, I joined the office for preparations to establish the Asia Center, and as Deputy Director of the newly formed Intellectual Exchange Division, I was involved in setting up various new programs.

Until then, the Foundation had run the Japanese Studies Fellowship, through which individual researchers were invited to Japan. However, in order to achieve the goal of enhancing Japan's sense of connectedness with other Asian countries, I felt there was a need to create a program along the lines of the residential fellowship program of America's Wilson Center, where fellows could interact and forge new relationships. Meanwhile, at I-House, Japan's most prestigious and traditional private-sector cultural exchange organ, there was a move to strengthen programs to invite intellectuals and leaders in civil movements to Japan, from not only the United States but also other Asian countries, especially from the 1970s onwards.

The Asian Intellectual Cooperation Committee, a forum for intellectual discussion among experts from Japan and other Asian countries, was established in 1967 by I-House, and with its network as a base, the Roundtable Conference of Asian Intellectuals was formed in 1973 and Pacific Asrama for young Asian intellectuals in 1974. Since I-House wished to further enhance Japan's intellectual exchange with the rest of Asia by extending beyond such efforts, the intentions of the Japan Foundation and I-House matched, and the two decided to work together, and established ALFP in 1996.

At the time, the main issue under discussion was "development and culture." However, from the late 1990s, the focus of discussion expanded to "formation of a new global security in the post-cold war world," and after the simultaneous terrorist

attacks in the United States in 2001, this encompassed issues relating to international politics and religion, culture, and values. Moreover, after the start of the twenty-first century, we also discussed the question of human security, and in the current “post-3.11” conditions after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, the relationship between Japan and other Asian countries is being reviewed. This reflects how the topics under discussion throughout the history of ALFP have been determined by the current urgent issues of each particular period.

Going back to 1995, when we the staff of Japan Foundation and I-House set up this program, we discussed our basic stance. Even the word “Asia,” as viewed through the lens of the “orientalism” of Edward Said, was a concept invented by the West, which tended to have a rather negative connotation. Also, Asia was seen through a Western filter, and this included Japan, where modern education had taken place. Further, there was an ideological climate that made it easy to link “fundamentalism” with nationalism and the tendency to unnecessarily over-idealize Asia’s past, in order to better resist Western modern civilization.

From the late 1980s, Asia exhibited economic growth, and as economic interdependence and political dialogue progressed in Asia, we felt that there was a lack of deep-reaching discussions among fellow Asians on a cultural and intellectual level. For ourselves, although we were conversant with Western culture and academic trends, we often had little awareness of the equivalent in our neighboring fellow Asian countries. We decided that creating ALFP would be a meaningful step towards achieving greater awareness of our Asian neighbors. Now, 18 years later, my personal opinion is that the direction we took was right, and I believe that lateral discussion within Asia is now more important than ever. Currently, an urgent issue is the need to build a framework that enables more people to participate in this flow and process. My heartfelt wish is that today’s discussions will open up new possibilities and a new future for this program.

## **[Session 1] New Politics and Civil Society in Asia**

**Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon (Office of the Presidential Political Adviser, Republic of the Philippines)**

Mr. Gascon reflected on new politics and civil society in Asia from a Filipino standpoint. He mentioned the concept of waves of democratization. In particular, the third wave ushered in a moment for democratization bringing in a period in the twentieth century that saw a transition to democratic systems across all continents. However, the Philippines is a case in point of how merely transitioning from an authoritarian to democratic system does not necessarily mean society and politics are functioning well. There are still a number of areas to be addressed. After the “Arab Spring” it has been suggested that we will see an “Asian Summer,” but what we should focus on is working every day on consolidating democracy by building the necessary economic and political structures to ensure that democratization is sustainable.

The Philippines is influenced by its colonial past, as is the case with most of the other countries in Asia. This has impacted the rules of the nature of politics. For example, in the Philippines, the politics that emerged after its colonization were like that of the United States. Contestation of power has occurred among sections of the political and economic elites, while the great majority has been excluded from decision-making, outside of elections. This has created conditions for unsustainable democracy where each administration has made decisions based only on their own personal interests. In fact, the instability and growing friction between the public majority and the ruling elites resulted in a shift from a democratic to an authoritarian regime with the declaration of martial law in 1972.

This shift, in turn, gave rise to new social movements, based around workers’ rights, issues of the landless, and lack of access to employment, among others, creating alternative centers of power outside of the state. Essentially these were self-help organizations at the ground level. Media and NGOs also played a role by providing alternative sources of information. Solidarity among the different groups and sectors was eventually achieved, providing a political base for them to challenge those in power.

However, despite the flourishing of many interest groups in the period following the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic system, it was difficult to build strategic unity across all groups. Furthermore, because of the tradition of these groups being alternative centers, anti-politics became the dominant ethos which resulted in only fragmented engagement in politics by the public.

The 1990s ushered in economic crises whereby the Philippines underwent successive boom-then-bust cycles for two decades. In that time populism emerged as an alternative to the dominant neoliberal development strategy offered by most elites. However, the challenge was that this was not an empowering form of populism. The government had adopted a predominantly paternalistic approach. In the wake of the emergence of populism, middle forces and often elements of the middle class are faced with a dilemma of whether they are committed to democracy in form or in substance, and how they should react.

Fortunately, since then, the Philippines has experienced a democratic renaissance with the emergence of politics, governance and democracy frameworks aimed at sustainable democratic reform. There has now also been a demand for cross-cutting issues that unite rather than divide people.

Mr. Gascon also listed what he believed was required of governments for politics of empowerment, including respect and engagement with the people, an ambitious agenda of reform, and mechanisms for participatory governance, among others. Going forward, it is important to note that other countries in Southeast Asia have undergone similar experiences and there is a need for intra-regional support and solidarity among them.

**Imtiaz Gul (Centre for Research and Security Studies)**

Speaking from the Pakistani perspective, Mr. Gul started by explaining that in countries undergoing democratic transitions, great challenges are being posed to traditional forms of governance and political structures. He stated his belief that civil society was being torn between two forces. There are the ruling elites at the top trying to maintain their grip on power, and then there are the middle and lower classes who are trying to break out from the status quo. Governance continues to represent the upper echelons of society while claiming to act in the name of public interest or

national security, but in reality it fails to pay close attention to the needs of the public.

The combination of the emergence of greater access to information resulting from the rise of mass media, communication, and social media, as well as the failure by governments to address the needs of society, has helped promote a common rise in civil society activism and solidarity that can be seen in numerous countries. These movements are centered on rights and constitutionally-based practices within government structures. The most notable example would be the toppling of repressive regimes during the “Arab Spring,” that was brought about by civil activities assisted by social media.

Nevertheless, while we have witnessed numerous revolutions in recent years, there still exists a huge difference between haves and have-nots. The primary question in light of the “Arab Spring” is whether it can bring about socio-political change and people-focused politics. Conflict continues around the globe, with extractive ruling elites resisting change and ensuring that change for the masses has been painfully slow.

As for the Pakistani political structure in particular, like in much of the rest of the world, there exists a well-entrenched ruling elite, exercising its political and military power to extract resources from the rest of society. Similarly, like in other countries, the shortcomings of the state have given rise to non-state actors. In Pakistan, in addition to the usual non-state entities such as academics, technocrats, and the general public, there has also been increased activity by militant groups such as the Taliban.

The role of media is also complex. While it has emerged as a powerful monitor, it is also a stakeholder in the status quo, due to the fact that it receives revenue from ruling elites as payment for political campaigns and the like. In light of these issues, the challenge for civil society to play a greater role in Pakistan is particularly urgent.

In terms of necessary skills, Pakistani civil society needs to learn how to articulate and lobby against systemic injustices perpetuated by a suffocating bureaucracy and an indifferent political elite. Perhaps Japan and the prosperous members of ASEAN could contribute to this challenge as well by fostering capacity building in civil society and helping create a human network in Asia for fostering dialogue and sharing

experiences.

Another challenge for civil society in Pakistan and other Muslim countries is to find a way to destigmatize the perception of the practicing Muslim as defined and influenced by the United States and its allies over the last ten years. This perpetuating image has also been the source of much conflict.

Mr. Gul ended on a point of optimism by paraphrasing Leymah Gbowee, one of the winners of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011:

The work is hard. The immensity of what needs to be done is discouraging. But you look at communities that are struggling on a daily basis. They keep on — and in the eyes of the people there you are a symbol of hope. And so you, too, must keep on. You are not at liberty to give up. (*Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War*, Beast Books, 2011, p. 230)

### **Vinod Raina (Center for the Study of Developing Societies)**

Dr. Raina spoke about the global situation regarding politics and civil society. He noted that when examining and discussing civil society in Asia, it cannot be separated from the global context. In fact, we are witnessing a sea of problems globally, and no part of the world can be seen without reference to that. In particular, three crises are dominant today, namely, the economic crisis, the ecological crisis, and the crisis of war and militarism. However, Dr. Raina pointed out that the term “crises” was the diplomatic language of the UN and that, personally, he referred to these as “imperialisms,” signifying that the issues concerned the oppressors and the oppressed.

The challenge is to not view these issues separate from each other in a compartmentalized manner, which is what many activists, social scientists, and journalists do. In fact, many new issues are emerging at the seams between the three categories of economy, ecology, and war and militarism and it is important to understand their inter-connectedness.

Next, Dr. Raina discussed the issue of identity in the context of world politics. Our ability to analyze in terms of class or environment has receded because there is a

dominant need for people to talk in terms of identity. The demonization of Islam in particular is a pressing concern, as the demonization of one identity can spiral into the demonization of all identities. As a result political or economic issues, such as the disparity in wealth between the rich and the poor, become mixed up with senses of identity. And nothing breeds more violence than identity politics; the “war on terror” is a glaring example of that.

Dr. Raina also highlighted the recent financial crises. He considered this to be the economic implosion of the imperialistic hegemonies in the world. Nevertheless, this implosion comes with seeds of hope, one of which is the rise of non-traditional hegemonies among the BRICs countries and others. Moreover, the rise of the Occupy Wall Street and similar movements has been one of the most important civil society happenings in recent years, as it represents an outcry against economic disparity that has taken place in developed countries, when in the past this issue has traditionally been limited to poorer developing countries. Perhaps these two phenomena can be considered to be part of a breakdown and blurring of the categories of haves and have-nots, and the oppressors and the oppressed.

Further elements of hope include the shift away from autocratic regimes achieved by young students in Asia and Africa, without relying on the power of traditional hegemonies. This bodes well for the potential power of civil society, and left-thinking persons are confused as to what sense to make of these uprisings, and how to find a way to be part of these movements.

Dr. Raina concluded his presentation by posing a question to the audience. When we talk about the need for democracy in civil society, what exactly is this democracy we are trying to preach? Democracy may be a good idea but how do we make it a good practice? There are hardly any stirring examples of democracy in practice in the world today. We are faced today with a realization that what we call democratic is not what we desire democracy to be, certainly not representative democracy through which we elect our governments. Going forward we need to seek a form of a democracy that is really about the power of the people, and to bridge this gap we need to move beyond the traditional framework of the sovereign state and place our hopes in the rise of directly elected local governments (called Panchayats in India), supported by civil society formation.

## **Huang Ping (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)**

Dr. Huang was invited to comment on the preceding presentations. He noted that while many people are talking about the “Asian Century,” Asia is still the region with the least integration economically and in terms of identity, when compared to Europe and North America. While its size and recent economic growth give rise to optimism for its future potential, Asia faces many problems as well, which need to be addressed from a global perspective.

Globalization has brought about many new possibilities. The global flow of information and people has created opportunities for ordinary people to be empowered and heard and has helped to promote the strength of civil society.

That being said, Asia is still in the shadow of international politics. There still exist problems between countries in the region and difficulties within countries themselves among different groups. Asia needs to find a way out of this shadow. The problem lies not only with the intellectual framework, but also political and economic constraints.

Still, although Asian countries are catching up in terms of democratization, Western countries have suffered as well, as witnessed in the polarization of U.S. politics or the disintegration of the EU, despite great efforts by European countries to move beyond the nation-state network and integrate further.

Nonetheless, we face a number of non-traditional challenges that civil society cannot tackle on its own. We need new politics and frameworks, and a new networked society, where rights can be enjoyed by all. Within this society, civil elements, the private sector and the media must all work together to address these issues. Dr. Huang called this process “glocalization” and stressed that under such a scenario, local practices would be more than merely appreciated, and local cultures would be more than merely protected in museums; rather they will be real sources of power for the people.

## **Q&A**

In the ensuing Q&A session, the first topic to be discussed was the impact of investment in education and social capital on civil society. Mr. Gascon pointed out

that much of the developing world was in urgent need of better access to formal education. Furthermore, there should be a conscious effort to equip people with more than just skills, but empower them to engage in the multiplicity of life. Moreover, there is a disconnect between community leaders and youth and the globalized world, which means that youth are more focused on getting a job but are not taught how to engage in politics. Therefore, he proposed the construction of networks of activists across the region and also institutions for making knowledge accessible. Dr. Raina also warned against the commodification of knowledge, which has been seen in the area of intellectual property rights.

Next a participant questioned the importance of cross-border alliances when they seem to have failed in the past. In reply, Dr. Raina explained that the oppressed need to come together. Because the issues we face are cross-border, alliances need to be cross-border as well. These problems are not solvable by sovereign-state actions alone.

Finally, a question was raised regarding the concept of “frenemies” (friend+enemy) emerging in Asia. Dr. Raina responded that while countries could experience conflict on a state-to-state level, their relationship on a human level could be one of friendship. Dr. Huang added that the term may represent an effort to move beyond traditional binary definitions of relationships. He also mentioned the idea of everyone existing as part of one completely inclusive world.

## **[Session 2] The Future of Asia, the World and Humanity from Japan after 3.11**

### **Ōhashi Masaaki (JANIC)**

Professor Ōhashi spoke about the lessons from Fukushima for individuals as well as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). He gave his presentation from the viewpoint of an activist, rather than an academician, and began by outlining the impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the subsequent accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant by listing figures for the number of people who had to evacuate the area and leave their homes.

Regarding the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, the earthquake caused the loss of external electric power while the tsunami flooded the plant's back-up diesel engines. The biggest cause of the accident at the power plant was the breakdown of cooling systems which led to melt-down and melt-through, while the structure for housing reactors one, three and four exploded, damaging the reactor housing. Leakage from the spent fuel pool was also contaminating soil, water and sea water. Overall, the amount of radiation discharged was about 17 percent of the Chernobyl accident, both into the air and through ground contamination.

In the ensuing aftermath, there has been a breakdown in the reliability of government-led action and trust in the government owing to the government changing the evacuation radius on multiple occasions, or raising the upper limit of safe nuclear radiation exposure from 1mSv/year to 20mSv/year. This has caused numerous incidents of anger and anguish among local people as well as civil society and as a result, the role of civil movements and NGOs has expanded to fill the space traditionally occupied by the government.

For example, citizens have bought and distributed equipment for measuring radiation in farm soil and agricultural products, as well as creating measuring stations. They have also organized recuperation programs for schoolchildren in Fukushima, as one of the lessons learned from Chernobyl was that removing children from areas of elevated radiation for prolonged periods of time allows for the regeneration of cells and cleansing of radiation from the body. Finally, members of civil society have also prepared and proposed a victim support act to the government and sought funding for

medication for exposure to radiation.

Tokyo Electric Power Co., Inc (TEPCO) has provided compensation for evacuation, marketing damage to products, rumors, mental anguish, income loss, medical compensation and property loss. However, these complicated compensations have been a source of conflict and tension among residents because of differing rates of compensation depending on different evacuation criteria.

Professor Ōhashi noted that nuclear power is not sustainable and called for Japan to become nuclear free. Not only should Japan find alternative means of power generation, but it should also stop its plans to export nuclear power plants to the rest of Asia and to developing countries around the world. These countries include Vietnam, Lithuania, and Jordan, among others. Furthermore, although four nuclear power plants in Fukushima are being decommissioned, of the remaining fifty in Japan, two have already been restarted and it is likely that others will be as well.

Finally, he shared JANIC's appeal with the audience. He advocated expanding citizen participation in the governmental decision-making process, empowering the people affected by the nuclear accident and guaranteeing their human rights, making a fundamental change in the national energy policy, and setting a clear national policy not to export nuclear power plants and to promote the utilization of renewable energy in developing countries.

### **Lee Seejae (Korea Federation for Environmental Movement)**

Dr. Lee questioned whether Fukushima will open the way for a sustainable future. In his presentation he focused his discussion on the contending forces in the struggle for a post-Fukushima future. The post-Fukushima future demands many changes to civilization, not least a nuclear free energy system. He further advocated a shift to a post-risk society, a low-growth economy, a down-shifter life style, and a "big society" among others.

Next, Dr. Lee explained the need to demythicize nuclear power energy. It is no longer safe, and contains many failings that are technical, human, and social. Moreover, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident was not, as commonly believed, a freak accident, but a normal one. Additionally, there is no safe way to dispose of high levels of

nuclear energy waste, the cost of which is already insurmountably large.

Since Fukushima, there has been a worldwide shift in attitude towards nuclear power with a rise in civil movements calling for its abolition, and many countries such as Germany and Switzerland are setting timetables for the termination of all nuclear power generation. Furthermore, in Japan, efforts have been made by the government to boost the development of renewable energy, potentially creating favorable conditions for Japan to accomplish a quick energy conversion from nuclear and fossil-fuel to more sustainable ones.

Nevertheless, strong promotion of nuclear power generation continues to take place in Korea, Russia, and China. In these countries, not only are reactors in operation or being built domestically, there are even plans for exports of nuclear plants abroad. In essence, nuclear power is not merely a local issue, but one that is transnational.

In terms of civil movements, in Japan, there have been various campaigns involving large numbers of people calling for the abolition of nuclear power. In Korea, much support was rallied for the Japanese people and similar anti-nuclear campaigns have also been taking place domestically.

Similarly, despite responses by the Japanese government, Dr. Lee warned that many so-called “nuclear-power villagers” (or “nuclear mafia” in Korea) still remain. These are informal groups with vested interests who seek the promotion of nuclear power for their own profit, and include government elites and businessmen. As such they are not easily separable from social, economic and political matters and can hinder society’s objective evaluation of various issues relating to nuclear power.

Overall, international governments, global nuclear power strategy, and the existence of competitors in the form of China, Korea, and Russia, are all factors that are holding Japan back from progress. The window of opportunity for Japan to move away from nuclear power is limited and there is significant risk of momentum stalling. For example, the Japanese government has extended its target for abolition from 2030 to the 2030s, and many nuclear power plants that were temporarily stopped after 3.11 have been restarted.

In light of this, it must be concluded that it will be civil society that will bring about the abolition of nuclear energy. There has been an undeniable growth of civil society movements in Japan and Korea. Similarly, there is promise in China in the form of a growing social space for similar movements, with potential for further growth of such organizations. Civil society networks are also being formed. A breakthrough is possible, but given the various contending forces and geopolitical interests, we must rely on civil society.

### **Huang Jiansheng (Yunnan University of Nationalities)**

Dr. Huang Jiansheng made a presentation on knowledge fragmentation, sense of risk, and their implications in community life. He began by outlining his background in ethnic minority research, with a particular focus on government policy regarding the provision of financial support to smaller ethnic minority groups, as well as the social impact of the modernization process and state-planned development on ethnic minority communities. He then shared his views on the nature of risk perception in society, with a focus on local Chinese communities.

According to Ulrich Beck, we are living in a time of the risk society, in which perception of risk is socially constructed. Moreover, the main feature of modern social risk is that it is invisible and unclear to the majority of average citizens. When news of the Fukushima nuclear accident reached China, two main forms of reaction were visible among the population. One was of irrational panic, while the other was of total indifference. The urban population ran to buy masks and salt because there was a public misperception that these could prevent radiation exposure. This is particularly irrational in a time when so much information is available to us. On the other hand, many of the rural community, particularly those living away from the coast in places such as Yunnan, Dr. Huang's main research base, did not seem to care at all. They did not have much knowledge about radiation, but they felt it was irrelevant to them. Both of these reactions are dangerous for society.

In 3.11 and many other social events, the ensuing confusion or public discourse exhibit the sense of risk and uncertainty among the public in the modern risk society. These are indications of knowledge fragmentation and are the result of institutional maneuvering. They further threaten human safety in a time of the risk society. The solution to this lies in knowledge—humans must know what the danger is, before

they can act accordingly.

However, three factors have contributed to the fragmentation of traditional knowledge, which was once very significant in the process of decision-making for individuals. First of all, in China modern education involves children being taken away from home to centralized schools at an early age. In addition, school education is oriented mainly toward national exams and less to daily life.

The second factor is labor migration. Young and middle-aged people are taken away from rural communities, and end up specializing in skills and knowledge for the labor market, leading to a disruption of traditional knowledge.

Thirdly, development is catered towards tourists. This challenges social equity and equality, and encourages individualization. For example, by catering traditional ceremonies towards tourists, this disrupts the symbolic importance of those ceremonies in reinforcing local values and maintaining stable knowledge about risks.

These three factors break up communities and narrow the scope of people's knowledge. There is no fixed value or knowledge for the local population to follow so all decision-making must be made by the individual which makes everything uncertain.

In conclusion, the institutional fragmentation of knowledge leads to public uncertainty, confusion about catastrophes, harm to human beings, and the inability to adopt proper approaches to avoid or prevent such harm. Furthermore, this uncertainty threatens social stability and safety in human life. Therefore it is necessary to readjust and reconsider systems of education, social institutions, and models of development.

**Diana Wong (formerly from Institute of Southeast Asian Studies)**

Dr. Wong summed up the preceding presentations, noting that we need to differentiate between natural risks and risks that our societies have created themselves. Furthermore, not only must everything change as a result of the 3.11 catastrophe, but if change is to be achieved, it will have to come through civil society.

She recalled that there once existed a much-vaunted flying geese paradigm of

industrialization that stressed economic growth at all costs. It was fuelled by the rise of Asian nations and the rapid economic growth in the region, such as Japan in the '80s, ASEAN in the '90s, and China in the 2000s, which generated a sense of Asian triumphalism. Neither has proved their worth. Such thinking risks trapping Asia in a mindset that is still obsessed with overly referenced Western thought and models. The Fukushima accident and 3.11 should and will give rise to a new modesty, a new reflexivity, and a new emotional basis for a shared sense of Asia.

Another lesson to learn, Dr. Wong mentioned, is that public memory is very short. Now the new policy towards nuclear abolition is already fading. Given that the public mind in society is driven by irrational fear on the one hand and indifference on the other, public intellectuals have a major role to play in terms of crafting a continuing narrative of a collective memory that we share, as members of the same risk society.

Dr. Wong added that there is still room for intellectual labor in the world today and while the flying geese model has been shattered, we need a new model to take its place or risk creating an ideological vacuum. Finally, she concluded that the lesson and point of Fukushima goes beyond the nuclear, and raises the whole question of a model of development that prioritizes justice and the environment, together with economic growth.

## **Q&A**

A participant pointed out that 3.11 showed that much of Asia is willing to support Japan and not just be supported by Japan. As such, what would Japan contribute to Asia going forward? Dr. Lee replied that Japan could set an example for the rest of Asia by shifting away from reliance on nuclear energy. Dr. Huang also pointed out that, as we live in a world of mutual interdependence, all countries, including Japan, should engage in knowledge sharing and promoting mutual understanding.

Another topic of discussion, in light of the Fukushima nuclear accident, was the idea that inherent risks exist in society. In particular, Dr. Lee believed that there were many man-made risks in Korea today, and several accidents that were waiting to happen.

The final question raised was regarding the influence of the Internet on the linking up

of young people in mass movements. Dr. Wong remarked that the Internet has been critical for the spread of information and the democratization of society, with students being the most directly influenced demographic. Professor Ōhashi added that the Internet has also played a role in improving the ability of NGOs to correctly identify urgent needs, such as in a disaster situation.

## **[Wrap-up Session] Challenges and Possibilities of ALFP: What Can Civil Society in Asia Do for the Next Decade?**

### **Fouzia Saeed (Mehergarh)**

The first panelist was Dr. Saeed, who discussed civil society and its balancing act in Asia. She noted that various region-wide issues exist in Asia, including tensions between countries, internal tensions within countries, and lop-sided development. One lesson to be learned from countries that have achieved economic growth via Western models is that we should avoid glossing over mistakes and gaps in developments, and not admitting to the existence of developmental issues.

On the other hand, there have been a number of positive trends with regard to the role of civil society. These include a willingness to engage in collective bargaining, protesting bad policies, demanding change, and condemning wrongdoings.

Nevertheless, the success of civil society has been limited. There are many issues that are yet to be addressed. While civil movements are able to bring about revolutions, more work is required to ensure that they are retained. Moreover, they should provide constructive solutions instead of merely criticizing the current status. Self-criticism is also necessary. Furthermore, there should be greater cohesiveness within domestic civil society but also across borders in Asia to influence cross-border conflicts. Overall, the most important role of society is to act as a balance against excess, for example by fostering economic wealth, but with less disparity, or promoting social advancement, but with gender equality.

In terms of concrete improvements, civil society in Asia should acquire skills of deeper analysis and adopt collaborative and constructive approaches. Regionally there needs to be more of a focus on intra-civil society dynamics in the Asian context and greater understanding of the Asian scenario, which could be fostered by the existence of more programs like ALFP.

Dr. Saeed concluded by reemphasizing that there has been a major shift in the role of civil society and offered advice for its future direction. Civil society should be proactive rather than reactive, operate regionally rather than nationally, act as a team player rather than take solo flights, learn to reflect rather than always simply taking

action, and be able to focus both inwards and outwards.

### **Goenawan Mohamad (*Tempo/ Komunitas Salihara*)**

Mr. Mohamad shared the experiences of Indonesia's development. In particular he spoke of the problems associated with economic growth. Politically, despite a return to democracy in 1998, there has been increasing corruption among politicians and parliamentarians. This has not simply been the result of political greed, but is also due to the high cost of politics because of the vast size of Indonesia and its numerous islands. Additionally, there exists an oligarchy in Indonesia, which results in the exclusion of sections of society.

In addition to political disparity, economic disparity has been widening despite healthy economic growth. While the Gini coefficient, which measures the inequality among values of distribution, in Indonesia is better than China, it is worse than India, and the problem is only being further exacerbated.

Mr. Mohamad also mentioned that one paradox of growth is the social limits to growth, citing a few examples that were happening in Indonesia, while also pointing out that the rise of wealth also comes with the rise of conservatism, particularly in religious contexts. He pointed out that economic wealth trickling down to other layers of the society will eventually create problems of congestion in the existing space (due to for example, the growing number of cars and private houses) and of ecological decay (climate change).

He added that economic growth does not seem to answer society's perpetual sense of frustration and that there will always be a gap between the lure of "positional goods"—which, by definition, belong to the few (top jobs, secluded places of residence, masterpieces of visual arts)—and the capitalist institutionalization of envy.

To close his presentation, Mr. Mohamad shared the importance of considering potential alternatives to the current way of doing things and suggested that support should be mobilized from among NGOs and civil society. Finally, he contemplated the concept of justice, noting that it was easy to notice injustice but that justice was illusive. Justice is always transitory, and unless we work continuously to make change sustainable and make it a universal idea, the situation will simply return to one of past

injustices.

**Marco Kusumawijaya (Rujak Center for Urban Studies)**

Mr. Kusumawijaya focused on the topics of urbanization and sustainability. To begin, he noted that in many areas, while conservationists had a good understanding of what not to do, they were far less certain about the best course of action to ensure sustainability. There have been several examples in Asia where conservationists have identified issues, but been subsequently unable to identify a concrete alternative.

Mr. Kusumawijaya also pointed out that the future of Asia and the future of urbanization were intimately tied, with Asia representing the crux of the second wave of urbanization. Japan will not be a part of this process because Japan has achieved a very mature urbanization. However, this is not to say that Japan does not need to be part of the change process towards sustainability. For Japan, the road to sustainability is about changing its energy source and consequently retrofitting its massive productive infrastructure. In addition, rapid population growth in the whole Asian region is also a pressing matter. Attention must ultimately be paid to the responsible use of the world's energy resources and materials, given their massive consumption by cities.

All in all, Mr. Kusumawijaya called for a new model of growth. This is where civil society and intermediary groups, such as urban communities and Asian intellectuals, can make a significant contribution because leadership from governments towards sustainability is lacking. While, again, it is easier to point out problems rather than to come up with solutions, more civic leaders in urban communities should be given opportunities to be exposed to the issues we face and to interact with others from the rest of Asia to co-produce creative ideas and actions together while navigating these uncharted terrains.

**Chandra Kishor Lal (Independent Columnist and Commentator)**

Mr. Lal highlighted the Occupy movement and discussed the disparity in power between the 1 percent or even the 0.1 percent and the rest of society, particularly in terms of economic and political power. Furthermore, he warned that human beings are the same if not worse than animals because of their penchant for deception and greed, which can manifest itself very easily in the form of corruption. One of the

major challenges we continue to face is how to deal with these human “animals.”

Mr. Lal also emphasized the fact that there has been a dominance of Western thought throughout Asian political systems and revolutions. However, these ideologies are no longer applicable. For one, many Western ideologies were developed based on Western experiences and in times of imperialism when there was a high availability of resources per capita, whereas in countries like Nepal and China, there are low resource levels per capita. These ideologies are no longer applicable. It is time to stop relying on borrowed ideas and come up with a new vocabulary and metaphors. Mr. Lal described this reliance on Western models as a crisis of responsiveness.

In addition, he believe that Asia is also facing a crisis of responsibility. Specifically, despite widely held discussions about the desirability of switching to alternative energy, we have yet to derive the necessary solutions to tackle the various downsides that come with it. For example, construction of hydro-electric power generation facilities displace local communities and significant portions of the population, while the technological shortcomings of solar power mean it must be supplemented by battery backups.

Finally Mr. Lal advocated a new and more dynamic definition of civil society to match the contemporary context. Civil society is an extension of the state and perhaps it would be best to think of the state as one wheel on the bicycle of democracy, civil society as the back wheel, and both working in tandem to propel democracy forwards.

## **Q&A**

During the final Q&A session of the day, panelists first addressed the issue of how to shift growth trajectories onto a more sustainable path. Mr. Lal answered that poverty of idea is more detrimental than poverty of wealth. This can lead states to remain fixated on the same old ideas and solutions. However, leadership can come from richer countries like Japan who can suggest alternative solutions. Their example and opinions may carry more weight. Mr. Kusumawijaya offered his opinion as well, pointing out that if we are to change towards more sustainable growth, many initiatives would fail without partnership and support from civil society. Therefore governments need to do a better job of mobilizing more members of society to ensure that everyone is involved. He also expressed optimism, noting that this was the time

for Asia to embark on a different trajectory of growth, towards safer societies and urban communities.

The final question concerned the panelists' views on civil society in Japan, specifically, to which Dr. Saeed replied that it would be a mistake to stereotype a people or society. She emphasized that the diversity of the civil society should be acknowledged and embraced in every country. It can be organized or scattered, or progressive and conservative.

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