

Asia Leadership Fellow Program  
2007 Program Report

Unity in Diversity: From Exclusive State to  
Collaborating Communities

International House of Japan  
Japan Foundation

Unity in Diversity: From Exclusive State to Collaborating  
Communities

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## Preface

In 1996, the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation jointly created the Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP). The ALFP provides selected public intellectuals in the Asian region with the opportunity to reside for two months in Tokyo and to engage in collaborative research and exchange activities on common subjects pertinent to the region. Through such intellectual dialogue, the program seeks to create a close, personal, and professional network of public intellectuals in Asia, deeply rooted and committed to civil society beyond their own cultural, disciplinary and geopolitical backgrounds.

There are now over 70 fellows, who all come from diverse professional backgrounds, including academia, journalism, publishing, law, education, the arts, NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), and nonprofit organizations.

The general theme set for the 2007 program was, for the second time, “Unity in Diversity: Envisioning Community-Building in Asia and Beyond.” From September 10 through to November 9, 2007, the six fellows resided mainly at the International House of Japan in Roppongi, Tokyo, and took part in workshops, resource seminars, field trips, and a retreat with scholars, journalists and NGO/NPO leaders based in Japan. At the end of the two-month program, on November 6 and 7, a public symposium entitled “Unity in Diversity: From Exclusive State to Collaborating Communities” was held to report on the outcome of the collaborative interaction as well as on the research interests of each fellow.

This program report includes the reports submitted by the fellows after the program was completed, as well as summary of resource seminars and other activities in which the fellows participated.

The Program believes that the fellows’ critical voices, challenging the status quo, as well as their proposals for alternative solutions, will lead to the development of new norms and value-orientations, which will have significant benefits for the future of the region.

The International House of Japan  
The Japan Foundation

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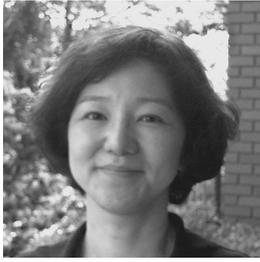
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## Profiles of fellows



### **Kaoru Aoyama (Japan)**

COE Fellow, Gender Law and Policy Center, Tohoku University/ Co-president, People's Plan Study Group

Dr. Aoyama obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Essex, UK, in November 2005. She has specialized in issues of gender and sexuality, social inclusion/exclusion, trans-border migration, and sex work and trafficking while handling the multiple jobs of a contract researcher, an associate lecturer, a translator and a single mother. Striving to create theoretically and methodologically sound social research that will be useful for those being researched, she has been involved in team research projects including one on women returnee migrants in northern Thailand and another on migrant sex workers in Japan, both publicly funded and led by the migrants themselves. Also being co-president of a Tokyo based independent organization, People's Plan Study Group, her civic activism revolves around the networking of socially committed academics and activists aiming for participatory democracy beyond national and other hierarchical borders in the Asian region. She has been an ARENA fellow since 1998.



### **Bina Sarkar Ellias (India)**

Editor and Publisher of *Gallerie* magazine

Ms. Ellias is the editor of *Gallerie*, an award-winning global arts and ideas publication from India. Since 1997, she has been committed to generating critical awareness and understanding of cultures as interpreted through the arts, performing arts, essays, poetry, features on communities and people, cinema and photography. She is also a freelance writer and social observer, having written for national newspapers such as *The Times of India Sunday Review*, and had columns in the *Indian Express* and *The Hindu*. She edited *Fifty Years of Contemporary Indian Art, 1997*, for the Mohile Parikh Centre for Visual Arts, Mumbai, and has designed catalogues as well as designed, edited and published books for artists, poets and photographers. Her chapbook of poems, *The Room*, was published by AarkArts, UK. She was recently felicitated in Tehran for her special issue "Contemporary Culture in Iran," intended to generate understanding of a nation misrepresented in the world media. She has given talks and chaired discussions on art at events in India and overseas.

## Profiles of fellows



**Petula Sik-ying Ho**  
(Hong Kong, China)

Associate Professor, University of  
Hong Kong

Dr. Ho is one of the few recognized experts in the relatively uncharted territory of gender and sexuality studies in Hong Kong and China and also one of the very few critical voices for the promotion of an open discussion of sexuality and intimacy issues in Hong Kong society. She received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Social Sciences at the University of Hong Kong before pursuing her Ph.D. in Ideology and Discourse Analysis at the University of Essex (UK). Her main research and teaching interests are in the area of homosexuality, gender and sexuality issues. She has made contributions to the development of a dynamic theory of gender and sexuality to help problematize feminist theories and resist Western hegemonies through empirical case studies that connect discourse, cultural practices, political economy, and social change. Currently, she is co-hosting a phone-in program on FM MetroBroadcast, on relationship and intimacy issues. The local media frequently covers her analyses of current issues.



**Huang Jiansheng**  
(China)

Associate Professor, Yunnan  
Nationalities University

Dr. Huang is an associate professor at Yunnan Nationalities University (previously named “Yunnan Institute for Nationalities”), where he has taught English for 12 years. He studied with Fulbright scholars at Shanghai International Studies University. Later on, he received his M.phil and Ph.D. from the Department of Social Anthropology of the University of Bergen, Norway, after studying there for eight years. He was team leader of the China-EU cooperative project “Sustainable Users’ Concept for China Engaging Scientific Scenarios (SUCCESS)” under the China-EU 5th Framework between September 2002 and August 2005. He was a visiting scholar at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) in the U.S.A (2004-2005). His current research mainly focuses on sustainability, guanxi and cultural issues, particularly those in rural China.

## Profiles of fellows



### Sriprapha Petcharamesree (Thailand)

Lecturer, Office of Human Rights  
Studies and Social Development,  
Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol  
University

After receiving her first degree in political science from Thammasat University, Dr. Petcharamesree received her D.E.A. and Ph.D. in international politics from the University of Paris-X Nanterre, France. Her first formal contact with human rights works started when she served as a social worker for the UNICEF's Emergency Operations for Cambodian Refugees. She joined the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation, and then Mahidol University where she remains till present. Until June 2007 she chaired the first International Master Program in Human Rights ever established in Thailand and in Southeast Asia. Active in the human rights field both in the academic community and among human rights activists, both at the national and regional level, she works closely with NGOs, grassroots people, marginalized groups, ethnic minorities, migrant workers, and asylum seekers. Her recent works focus mainly on issues of citizenship, economic, social and cultural rights, community rights, and human rights education at the grassroots level.



### Hishamuddin Rais (Malaysia)

Lecturer, National Arts Culture and  
Heritage Academy) (Malaysia)

Mr. Rais, an artist and activist of many talents, was an influential student leader in the 1970's at the University of Malaya. He went into exile from 1974 until his return in 1994. Educated in filmmaking in London, he made his first feature film in 1998. He also initiated an agit-prop theater group that conducts guerrilla performances. Currently teaching film theory at National Arts Culture and Heritage Academy, he also writes actively in both Malay and English for the print media, covering a wide range of topics from politics, lifestyle, culture, and sex to cuisine. His weekly columns have gained wide public support for his fairness and transparency. Mr. Rais recently initiated an "unemployed-youth-collective" that runs a politically correct alternative café in a newly opened arts center in Kuala Lumpur. At the arts center, he delivers weekly free lectures and workshops for the public on philosophy and critical thinking. He performs as a stand-up comedian at various venues in Kuala Lumpur and also has been one of the commentators from Malaysia for Aljazeera International.

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**India**  
Bina Sarkar Ellias

To begin, Bina Sarkar Ellias briefly described the demography of India: India is the seventh largest country in the world, with a population of over one billion. Three ethnic groups reside in India: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, and Mongoloid. It has fourteen official languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, and Assamese, as well as many sub-languages. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are some of the main religions in India. It has a literacy rate of 59.4 percent; however, Ellias noted that the literacy rate for women is lower than that for men, as some people still find it unnecessary to send their daughters to school. Scholarly opinion agrees that people started inhabiting India about 9000 years ago. After a series of invasions from European countries into Central Asia, India became independent in 1947.

After giving an overview of India, Ellias gave a vivid description of life in Mumbai, formally known as Bombay. She has an interesting perspective on this issue not only because she comes from Mumbai, but also because she considers Mumbai one of the most important areas of India: She emphasizes that, although Mumbai has some problems that need to be solved, such as poverty, crime, and water shortage, it is a fascinating place for those people who are gutsy and work hard.

Mumbai is also known for Bollywood. Ellias says that Bollywood has become an ambassador of India, its films reach throughout the world. According to Ellias, Bollywood films attract many people because they speak in simple languages such as the language of love and romance; languages that anyone can associate with.

Ellias considers that, although India is said to be a country of democracy, its reality gives a somewhat different impression. Ellias investigates whether this implies India is a country of hypocrites. She believes that the main problem within Indian society is religious fundamentalism. According to Ellias, India has currently seen a surge in fundamentalism, Hindu fundamentalism in particular, which seriously undermines the principle of pluralism, i.e., the embodiment of “Indian-ness.” The problem with religious fundamentalist movements, she argues, is that they are tied up with politics. Political parties actively use religion to gain support from the public. It is worth noting at this stage that the majority of people in India are Hindu. In describing Hinduism as pacifist and community-oriented, these political movements provide people with a sense of belonging, pride, and superiority over other

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religions. Consequently, conflicts between Hindus and Muslims have continued and, recently, have intensified. In addition, government censorship over the matter of sexuality has become stronger than before, suggesting that the influence of Hindu fundamentalists is increasing in the political arena. On being asked why India has seen the current upsurge of fundamentalism now, Ellias proposes that political parties have been pacifist for too long, and now feel it is necessary to show their strength. Ellias believes that just as Hindus represents one part of India, other religions, including Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Sikhism, represent India too.

Other problems within India are the caste system and racism. Ellias argues that the practice of the caste system, although prohibited by the Indian constitution, still exists in India. In everyday life, discrimination against those known as “untouchables,” has been preserved in many forms, including in professions and social customs. Racism is also prevalent in Indian society, especially excluding people from regions such as northeast India or Kolkata (formally Calcutta). Ellias thinks that the problems of the caste system and racism make it difficult for India to build a sense of “we-ness” across India.

**Malaysia** Hishamuddin Rais provided a powerful account of how youth culture facilitates social resistance in Malaysia. While the Malaysian state attempts to control youth culture in order to create and maintain a unified Malaysian national identity, Malaysian youth continues to resist such a mainstream national identity and instigates a number of alternative ways of being.

After a long colonial history under British rule, Malaysia became an independent country in 1963. However, as the population is made up of Chinese, Indians, and Malays, Malaysia has struggled with the creation of a “unified” country. As is suggested by the occurrence of conflicts such as the confrontation between the Chinese and the Malays in 1969, the creation of a national consciousness has been an important agenda in Malaysian politics since its independence. Rais argues that the Bumiputra Policy, advocated by the government since the 1970s, is one example of the wider attempt to “engineer” the management of racial diversity within Malaysia, while strengthening economic power. Under the formal democratic system, various social engineering policies such as the Bumiputra Policy are implemented in order to achieve a more equitable social distribution among the various ethnic groups within Malaysia. Since 1979, when the Iranian revolution took place, the

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government has supported pro-Muslim and pro-Bumiputra policies and constructed a “Malay-Bumiputra-Muslim” identity as the model for the ideal Malaysian national identity.

In the meantime, the government has continued to oppress youth culture. Rais points out that many students and youths have not been allowed to function independently from, or express opinions different to, the state. At the same time, religious consciousness is also cultivated by some religious groups, and some youth groups are also under the heavy influence of religious organizations.

However, Rais argues that there is a set within youth culture that completely resists state- or religious-sponsored mainstream culture. Rais illustrates his argument with the music scene of the youth in Malaysia. In contrast to the mainstream, state-supported, rock music, there are some independent punk rock bands which express their identity in a different way, with different music tunes to the mainstream rock bands. There is also a number of the youth who are called “the underground geeks,” and who occupy places either illegally or legally to perform music. These youngsters, Rais argues, articulate their own political opinions through music.

In addition, Malaysian youth expresses its opinions by creating alternative magazines to communicate their ideas with others. Some young people create magazines which are then photocopied and widely distributed among the young. In such magazines, non-mainstream youngsters share alternative music, culture, fashion, lifestyle and politics and make clear their difference in stance to that of the mainstream, state-led youth culture.

One worrying tendency is that the Malaysian government suppresses alternative youth culture in a violent manner. Rais reports some incidents where youths performing alternative music were arrested by the police. Rais also laments the apparent lack of understanding that youth culture receives from opposition parties and NGOs in Malaysia. He argues that they fail to understand the youth phenomena and are afraid that, by associating with alternative youth culture, they will lose public support.

In conclusion, Rais suggested that, despite some counter-movements from the government, aimed towards embracing the alternative youth culture, young people have more freedom to express their opinions overseas. Various social forums and anti-WTO meetings exemplify these strong connections between young people, on a global scale.

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**China (Mainland)** Huang Jiansheng introduced China by focusing on a small village called Du Jia in Yunnan province. His spotlighting of Du Jia village was not only because his current research interest is focused on rural areas but also because more than 80 percent of the people in China still live in rural areas. By showing pictures of people leading their lives in Du Jia village, he explained how the recent changes in China affect rural areas, both positively and negatively.

Rural areas have undergone some major changes, as they have been affected by the changing situation in China—especially in terms of production relations and social mobility. Under the guidance of the Communist Party, the production model was shifted from the individual ownership type, where individuals were responsible for their own land, to the collective ownership type, where the whole village managed land together. In the 1980s, when Deng Xiaoping came into power, land ownership was returned to individuals again; a transformation that immediately helped people to produce enough food.

The social mobility of people living in rural areas was heavily influenced by the identity registration system, based around criteria called Hukou and Minzu. While the former divides individuals into either rural dwellers or city inhabitants, the latter divides individuals into either Han-ethnic identity or other ethnic minority identities. Before the economic reforms in 1979, individuals whose Hukou identity designated them urban citizens, received free medical care, free apartments, and were given food and jobs by the government, while those whose identities were farmers resided in rural areas, being unable to receive support from the government. For farmers, the only way to move from rural areas to cities was either to join the army or to become university students. As for Minzu identity, Huang says that, nowadays, many people prefer having an ethnic minority identity which enables them to access better opportunities in terms of education and jobs, as a result of the current policy of affirmative action for ethnic minorities.

Huang outlined several positive and negative aspects of the economic reforms in rural areas. First, while the economic reforms improved the production level significantly and ensured that rural people could produce enough food to consume, it is clear that rural Chinese communities are, often, still without the means to procure cash. Consequently, farmers have started producing more and more cash products such as sugarcane and pigs, which has had resulted in people cutting more firewood in order to feed the pigs, and cultivating mountainous areas in order to produce more cash products. This has

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caused serious deforestation in rural areas. The changing production model, to one of individual landownership, has also weakened the strong social relationships of rural communities; a social relationship that had been sustained under the collective landownership system.

In addition, after the economic reforms, the young generation aspired to live in cities, leaving their lives in rural areas behind. As a result, the villages have become depopulated. According to Huang, the government is attempting to solve the problem of depopulation in rural areas by sending young people to developed areas, with the aim that they will come back to rural areas once they learn some skills in the cities. In addition, some model villages are selected and promoted, to show how some villages can improve their living conditions and make villages more attractive places to reside.

Huang further mentions other problems resulting from the economic reforms. For instance, the lack of medical care and insurance are urgent issues that need to be solved. While people in the city receive pensions, the elderly people who live in rural areas do not receive any pension, which means they depend entirely on their children in old age. While the government did set up a cooperative medical care system in 2006 and encourages people to join private insurance schemes, the situation in much of rural China remains serious.

**Japan**  
Kaoru Aoyama Kaoru Aoyama's presentation de-mystified a number of outmoded assumptions about Japanese identity using some statistics and with her own observations about Japanese society. First of all, she argues that, in spite of the assumption that Japan is a classless society, the income gap between the rich and poor is getting wider—both between female and male workers, as well as between generations. She points out that the different income levels affect people's family planning: those whose income level is low tend to avoid having children and getting married. The (re)emergence of class has also affected images of the ideal woman. For instance, some women aspire to be upper-class full-time housewives by marrying rich men so that they can secure enough time and money to pursue their hobbies.

Secondly she analyzes that, while Confucian ideas have been assumed to be the principal philosophy of Japanese society, the young generation no longer follows such a philosophy. For instance, ideas about sexuality, gender issues, as well as lifestyle are not limited to ones based on Confucianism. Instead, the young generation of Japan understand these issues in various ways.

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Thirdly, Aoyama also questioned issues of gender and sexuality. She argues that the image that Japanese women are submissive and polite, and that all Japanese are sexually “straight,” does not reflect changes in Japanese society. For instance, the fact that the 1990s saw the Gay Pride Parade in Japan exemplifies the increasing popularity of, and interest in, gay and lesbian issues. In terms of the gender issue, she admits that, despite more and more women being treated equally with men, there still exists a glass ceiling in Japanese society. This is indicated by the United Nations Gender Factor which proved that Japanese women are generally excluded from top positions in the academic, political and business fields.

Lastly, she questions the national image that Japan is a homogenous society, by highlighting other ethnic groups in Japan, such as the Ainu people and Koreans, as well as the increasing numbers of newcomers (migrant workers). Speaking about how to create a multicultural society, she argues that foreigners are likely to be excluded from Japanese society because nationality is defined by blood rather than place of birth. On the more positive side, however, Aoyama notes the changing behavior of local governments, especially in the area of education. Facing the increasing number of children of migrant workers, public schools have gradually accommodated these children, by employing special teachers who communicate in the mother tongues of these students, as well as providing services specifically for foreign children.

Aoyama further elaborated on her understanding of “Japaneseness.” She argues that, historically, economically and educationally, Japan has associated itself with the West, more so than it has with Asia. She is sceptical about the idea of “Asian-ness” because it is constructed against the idea of the West, so it is hard to clarify what, exactly, “Asia” is.

**China (Hong Kong)** Sik-Ying Ho presented China by focusing on the sex life of people living in Hong Kong. Coming from Hong Kong, and being interested in gender and sexuality, Ho powerfully described how the sexual relationships between people from Hong Kong and people from mainland China reflect the identity struggle the Hong Kong people have been experiencing since 1997, when Hong Kong was returned to mainland China.

She started her presentation by introducing a series of interviews with Hong Kong men. Her interviewees are men from Hong Kong, whose social and economic status are relatively high, and who are

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generally considered attractive bachelors in Hong Kong. By showing her interviews with these men, she revealed the increasing number of Hong Kong men having a sexual relationship with women from mainland China. She argues that these men perceive Hong Kong women as demanding, pragmatic, vulgar and strong, whereas they fantasize women from mainland China as romantic, caring and fragile.

By analyzing the different ways of representing women from Hong Kong and mainland China, Ho argues that part of the core identity of Hong Kong is tied with money. People in Hong Kong are embedded in the capitalist economy through their involvement in the stock market and investments; they tend to become materialistic and calculating.

According to Ho, most of the women from mainland China whom Hong Kong men are sexually involved with work in the sex industry. She says that she is not sure if such relationships between Hong Kong men and mainland Chinese women suggest sexual exploitation or pure “romance.” Yet she argues that this somewhat distorted relationship certainly shows that Hong Kong men would like to play the role of “rescuer,” wanting to “help” women, while mainland Chinese women, if not deliberately, are willing to play such a role of victim, awaiting a savior.

She also noted that Hong Kong men face complex responses by having an affair with mainland Chinese women. On the one hand, they face social stigma because only those of lower income who cannot “afford” Hong Kong women usually have relationships with mainland Chinese women. On the other hand, the Hong Kong men are worshiped by their partners, i.e. mainland Chinese women (these women who “play” the role to worship men from Hong Kong) owing to their strong economic power and high social status.

Ho further argues that gender relationships changed after 1997, when Hong Kong was returned to China. Although Hong Kong is quite different from China economically, politically and culturally, it nevertheless was “forced to get married to” China since 1997. This “marriage” has caused a serious identity crisis in Hong Kong: people from Hong Kong want to redefine themselves against China because they had been so different until 1997, but have yet to find a way to assimilate their identity to China after 1997. She considers that such an identity struggle is reflected in the complex sexual relationship between Hong Kong men and mainland Chinese women. By coining the term “geographies of desire,” Ho argues that sexual desire is mapped geographically. It is imperative to understand how sexual desire reflects

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the identity struggle brought about by the change of geography, i.e., Hong Kong's unification with China.

**Thailand** Sriprapha Petcharamesree gave a talk on Thailand, focusing especially on the period between 2001 and 2007, which saw the rise and fall of Prime Minister Thaksin. As a political scientist with a special focus on human rights, Sriprapha succinctly explained the recent political situation, as well as the worrying trends in human rights and democracy in Thailand. Before the presentation, Sriprapha showed a series of pictures highlighting the key events that occurred during the period between 2001–2007, such as the inauguration of Prime Minister Thaksin as well as the military coup d'état in 2006.

In 2001, Thaksin and his party achieved a landslide victory in the election, gaining two-thirds of the seats in the parliament. According to Sriprapha, Thaksin popularity was due to his populist policies. Among them was a policy called “war against poverty” that allocated national budget funds to rural areas where the poor were concentrated. His popularity continued for some time, exemplified by his second victory in the election in 2005.

However, Sriprapha pointed out that, during his premiership, Thaksin abused his power for his own ends. He expanded his own business by using his political position, an abuse which eventually led to his downfall. In 2006, faced with his increasing unpopularity, Thaksin dissolved the parliament and called for a new election in April 2006. Opposition parties opposed Thaksin's decision, arguing that there was not sufficient time to prepare for the upcoming election. They further decided to boycott the election, which brought about an extremely low voting rate and challenged the legitimacy of the Thaksin government itself.

In 2006, a military coup took place. It was widely supported by the Thai people not only because they had begun to think that Thaksin was a dictator, but also because they hoped the military government would be able to rebuild democracy in Thailand once again.

After the success of the coup, those who initiated the military coup formed a group called “The Council of Democratic Reform under Monarchy.” They emphasized the importance of the monarchy and drafted a new constitution. According to a referendum held in August 2006, the draft constitution was supported by about 60 percent of the population. Sriprapha argues that the fact that the draft constitution could not attain more support shows that people feel somewhat

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ambiguous toward the changing situation. According to her analysis, people supported the constitution not because they fully understood or read the draft constitution, but rather because they simply supported the leader of the Council of Democratic Reform under Monarchy, and also because they hoped to end the domestic disorder as soon as possible.

Regarding the domestic situation in Thailand after the coup, Sriprapha notes three worrying points. First, under the new constitution whatever the present government does, it would be considered lawful. She says that this is quite concerning because it justifies any unlawful deeds done by the present government. Second, in terms of human rights, violence in the southern parts of Thailand has worsened since 2004. Even after the coup, martial law has still been applied for as many as 35 provinces in the Southern region. Sriprapha argues that free and fair elections cannot be conducted under martial law. Third, the economic situation has not improved, even after the coup: many workers, especially female workers, are losing their jobs.

Lastly, Sriprapha points out three contradictions in Thai politics. First, while people want democracy, they also gave flowers to the soldiers who led the coup and army members are well respected in Thai society. Since Sriprapha believes that democracy cannot be built by military power, she finds such phenomena quite contradictory. Second, although people are allowed to participate in politics through elections and referendum, they do not really read constitutions and engage in politics, a fact which she finds quite frustrating. Third, Sriprapha expresses her worry that, while she protests against the Thaksin regime, she also protests against the military coup which replaced the Thaksin regime, suggesting that she herself still wonders about what kinds of alternatives she is really aiming for.

## Unity in Diversity: Community Building in Asia and Beyond

Bina Sarkar Ellias

Often, a topic such as “Unity in Diversity” may evoke a sense of déjà vu, as well-worn and rehashed subjects for seminars tend to do, yet, without any doubt, it is a discourse that needs complete and repeated attention. Reiterating the issue is an exercise in reminding ourselves of how little we have evolved as civilized humans and how much work we have ahead of us, especially since both globalization and an alarming swell in fragmentation are running parallel in the current world order.

If we are to go by Samuel Huntington’s theories on the clash of civilizations, particularly after the attack on the Twin Towers—which unfortunately reaffirmed his views—then we need to look again at the state of the world since then: the US invasion of Afghanistan, the Bali bombings and Godhra riots in India in 2002, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Madrid train bombings in 2004, the cartoon crisis, the London bombings in 2005, the ongoing Iranian nuclear issue, the ongoing Israel-Palestine issue, and the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. All of this clearly proves that cultural and religious conflicts are becoming endemic.

### **ANTI-PLURAL CONFLICTS**

And it is not just a clash of civilizations that are endemic but also wars between diverse communities within the walls of a nation as well, as is clear in the case of the 1992–1993 communal riot in Ayodhya after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, which itself led to the horrific Mumbai riot. More than 900 people were killed in these riots which occurred in two phases: a Muslim backlash in Ayodhya and a Hindu backlash as a result of the killings of Hindu Mathadi Kamgar (workers) by Muslims in Dongri (an area of South Mumbai). Arson, killings, and the destruction of property occurred in distinctively different kinds of areas. Violence affected not only the slums but also apartment blocks in upper middle-class areas.

As a direct result of the riots, a large number of Hindus migrated from Muslim majority areas to Hindu majority areas in the city, and vice versa. The demographics of the city changed drastically, on a religious basis. Reports widely indicate more than 200,000 people (both Hindus and Muslims) fled the city or their homes during the time of the riots. While a large number of them returned back due to economic

## Papers of the fellows: Bina Sarkar Ellias

compulsion, nonetheless separation and mistrust between people, on religious grounds, was widely believed and reported until more than a year after the riots.

In February 27, 2002, 58 people—including 25 women and 15 children—were burnt alive in a railway coach in the town of Godhra, following an altercation between local Muslims and activists (Kar Sevaks) of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), who were returning by the Sabarmathi Express train from Ayodhya. Initial media reports blamed the local Muslims for setting the coach on fire, in what Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and the VHP leader Giriraj Kishore alleged was a “pre-planned” attack. The bodies of those killed in the train were brought to Ahmedabad, where a procession was held; a move that was seen as a major trigger for the ensuing communal violence. The VHP issued a call for a statewide strike on February 28, 2002; a call which was supported by the BJP-led state government.

Thereafter, 151 towns and 993 villages in fifteen to sixteen of the state’s 25 districts were affected by the post-Godhra violence, which was particularly severe in about five or six districts. The first incidents of attacks on the minority Muslim community started at Ahmedabad, where some Hindus burned a Muslim housing complex, and then moved to destroy other areas. Hundreds of mosques and other Muslim shrines were damaged or destroyed and makeshift Hindu temples were installed in their place in some cases. In Ahmedabad, the dargah of the Sufi saint-poet Wali Gujarati in Shahibaug and the 16th century Gumte Masjid mosque in Isanpur were destroyed. The Muhafiz Khan Masjid at Gheekanta was ransacked. Police records list 298 dargahs, 205 mosques, 17 temples, and three churches as damaged in the months of March and April.

Today as I am writing this note, Raj Thackeray, previously of the Shiv Sena and now leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNC), is fuelling another fire of hate. He is targeting the non-Maharashtrian Indians in Mumbai, especially North Indians, who he claims have infiltrated the mainstream Maharashtrian community of Mumbai, which, in reality, is a cosmopolitan city. The state government is presently in a predictable confusion as to whether he should be penalized or not, while small time vendors and business people are being attacked and threatened by his hoodlum party members.

In such a climate, the intention of dialogue becomes all the more urgent. Therefore, participation in the two-month Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP), organized by the International House of Japan

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and the Japan Foundation, was a perfect exercise in exchanging views and ideas. Shaped around the context of “Unity in Diversity: Community Building in Asia and Beyond,” the subject of the fellowship program was intrinsic to the elemental validation of *Gallerie*, the arts and ideas journal I edit and publish. In addition, the idea of an intense “lock-in” with five other fellows from Asia, each bringing their specific spheres of learning, was excellent; six individuals engaging with the public world: overturning, demolishing, and evolving new thoughts and ideas, could only be an exercise that would be conducive to a reconciliation of civilizations, as opposed to a “clash.”

In fact, the program was, indeed, a test in tolerance and endurance between the six core participants (all from diverse disciplines) and, by extension, this proved that dialogue is the ideal means to bridge cultural and intellectual divides, while also creating awareness, understanding and forbearance of differences.

The question of differences, in particular, is large, complex, and at the crux of our existence—cultural, religious, linguistic and political differences represent our specific identities, traditions, and histories. Bridging these divides does not mean one has to subscribe to uniformity, or allow a “McDonaldization” of the world. It means that, while we preserve our identities we must also recognize that differences in cultures are a positive requisite for a plural world of civilized co-existence.

### Culture

“Culture” is a term that has been misused, misunderstood, or even dismissed by some academics and intellectuals as inconsequential in the “greater” discussion of world issues. However, music, art, and literature have crossed borders for many, many years, influencing the ideas and sensibilities of individuals and groups as they travel. Considered as “soft ambassadors,” they do not threaten governments—although there are examples of conflict, both in Israel, where the proposal that high school students should have the option of reading Palestinian poems almost brought down the government, and also in India where the author-in-exile Taslima Nasrin is presently facing the wrath of Indian fundamentalists, and the government is in turmoil trying to appease both sides. However, these are exceptions as, by and large, there is an ever-growing osmosis taking place, even through borders that were earlier non-permeable, for instance in Eastern Europe, China, and Japan, have opened their doors to the world, allowing for a slow but tangible cross-ventilation.

## Migration

Culture is also in constant flux, given to dynamics of change and evolution; now, more so than ever before, various global cultures are evolving in a most interesting manner. There is a growing multiculturalism which, hitherto, was inherent only in nations like India, Africa the US, and Canada, and is now becoming a growing phenomenon in parts of Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. The magic of the Internet, and the prevalence of air travel, which has jet planes whizzing around like local buses of the air, have indeed, expedited a fast-forward in global connectivity, and in transporting cultures to different far-flung corners of the world. Therefore, migration, which is a natural process of human life, is more prevalent today; citizens of the “third world” seek superior economic or professional conditions in the “first world” and the reverse: first world industries and conglomerates outsource to avail of cheap labor in the “third world.” Also, the new nomads are straddling several worlds today, with their luggage of creativity, professional skills, and wandering entrepreneurship.

However, migration has its pitfalls. Governments open doors to migrant labor and expertise, to feed and fatten their economies. However, they do not encourage them to settle, partake of the fruits of their labor, or assimilate within their societies. This is borne out of a sense of nationhood and empire that does not allow for “infiltration” from the other; not to mention the tainting of cultures. Also, the need for policy coherence at national and international levels is important in making a comprehensive policy for migrants, as often contradictory pressures shape such policies. For example, as argued in a report by Kathleen Newland of the Migration Policy Institute, there is a need in some countries for more immigration to reinforce national competitiveness, while these same countries have placed greater restrictions on immigrants for security reasons.

A deep concern is that it is not merely a question of transnational tensions, but a plague at regional levels within the peripheries of a country as well. Drawing parallels with the Dalits (the untouchables in India) and the caste system, I find resonance with the Buraku and the Ainu, the Okinawans, and the Korean minorities in Japan. Echoes of a similar issue can be found among the native Americans, or the Aborigines of Australia, and disparate ethnic groups in Africa. The gay and homosexual communities are just as marginalized, reaffirming the fact that much of the human race is xenophobic, territorial, and given to spreading its chauvinistic views through political agendas.

## Religion

Religious chauvinism is as widespread; it wreaks more havoc than good, more harm than the spirituality, wisdom, co-existence, and sense of right and wrong that it is meant to prescribe. The crux of our global problems lies in the economic, political, and religious ambitions of the world powers. They are the real axis of evil today. As American journalist, James Goldsborough astutely remarked, “George W. Bush’s Iraq war is America’s first religious war, one inspired by groups of Christian fundamentalists and Jewish neoconservatives, a coalition whose zeal for war is as great as that of the original crusaders.” As long as the electorate subscribes to these powers, it is expediting the corrosion effect. We have only ourselves to blame—our apathy towards issues that do not touch us enough for us to respond.

Religion is one of the main sources of conflict between civilizations, conditioned by the narrow premise of superiority and bigotry that excludes humanistic values. Religious intolerance has led to terrorism worldwide, indeed it has bred terrorists when there were none. Bin Laden understood the vulnerability of young people seeking ideologies in today’s frenetic and cluttered world of consumerism. In the absence of idealism or appropriate iconic figures to emulate, he sowed the seeds of a movement, “a moral mission” as it were, to oppose the hegemonic dictates of the West. He skillfully used the medium of religion to fire the imagination of the youth, enough to relinquish their lives for the preservation of Islam and decimation of those who are a threat.

Not only do we have clerical figures in Islam, in Judaism, in white supremacist Christian churches in the United States, but we also see the Hindu fascist Mafia, and examples of extremism even within the Buddhist community in Sri Lanka; all of these examples use liturgy to justify violence and ensure power positions for themselves. The religiopolitical nexus has come of age, especially since the 1980s, where the void left by the fall of communism and the rise in secular beliefs resulted in a shift towards mass consumerism.

Religion is essentially a matter of emotion. Emotion has always proved stronger than reason. Therefore, the ancient nexus between religion and politics has been a lethal tool for manipulation by the scheming few. Unless the masses recognize this, there will always be manipulation and conflict. Although Bush has given a feast in celebration of the breaking of the fast during the Ramadan period, and the United States Postal Service introduced a beautiful stamp with Arabic calligraphy on it since 9/11, as a recognition of Islam, it is only tokenism. Bush is still unleashing havoc in Iraq and only when he pulls

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back his troops and puts a definitive stop to infiltration in other territories will he have proved that wisdom has prevailed.

### **Globalization**

The emergence of globalization has facilitated the process in some ways and proved detrimental in others, for instance whereby the less privileged have had to relinquish their rights for an equitable share in new flourishing economies. The people of the developing world, in the words of the “Notes from Nowhere” collective, remain “disconnected from what they produce and what they consume, from the earth and from one another,” living in an “arid homogenised culture.” For instance, while a “shining India” of software kingdoms and glass-and-steel office towers, shopping malls, and highways is presented to the world, the horrific reality is that more than 150,000 farmers have committed suicide in the last decade alone, due to economic deprivation. And dams like the Narmada that serve ambitious industries, have submerged whole villages causing thousands to migrate to more dismal poverty in urban slums. In Bangladesh, the total number of urban and rural poor amount to 55.2 million. In Somalia, poverty has become a way of life and in El Salvador, 49 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

With globalization, it is clear that there has been a deterioration in the protection offered to weaker nations by stronger industrialized power; a power shift that has resulted in the exploitation of the people in those nations to become cheap labor. Due to the lack of protection, companies from powerful industrialized nations are able to force workers to endure extremely long hours, unsafe working conditions, and just enough salary to keep them working. The abundance of cheap labor is giving the countries in power incentive to leave the inequality between nations unrectified. If these nations developed into industrialized nations, the army of cheap labor would slowly disappear alongside development. With the world in this current state, it is impossible for the exploited workers to escape poverty. It is true that the workers are free to leave their jobs, but in many poorer countries, this would mean starvation for the worker, and his/her family. And these are just a few instances of the many injustices nurtured through the impact of globalization.

### **Dialogue**

It would require immense knowledge, “true” wisdom and a clear vision for world leaders and the intelligentsia for a blueprint for a

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globalization that benefits a larger people to be drawn up. Mutual understanding and just alternatives to the present status quo in world policy are clearly required, rather than the feeding and fattening of a stratum of society that is already economically obese. Unfortunately, we willfully elect leaders of governments who are short-sighted and the struggle for equity continues.

Pessimism, however, offers no solution. Therefore, it is left to individuals and small groups of concerned organizations, to map directions for a “greater good;” to exchange ideas, solidarity, and mutual understanding towards a civilized coexistence. A vital approach is the encouragement of a multi-dimensional dialogue that involves economic, environmental, intellectual, as well as cultural projects that all benefit people outside the elitist few. It is crucial to recognize the perils of what the Greeks call hubris, or arrogance, in this case, arrogance of the nation-state, or religious arrogance. Erasing this sense of national or religious identity in favor of a larger world community, is clearly a beginning towards a more plural world.

According to Baskin Shehu, an Albanian writer, cultural plurality is the capacity of the individual to have different identities beyond national ones, which involves the possibility of finding common ground in terms of communication and belonging between individuals of different cultures. Cultural or national identity is not indivisible because other collective identities exist that define the individual and can be useful as a communication point that promotes coexistence on a daily basis.

This is where cultural exchange plays a key role in impacting the masses seamlessly, developing people-to-people ties, through bilateral and multilateral activity, filtering through literature, art, music, theatre, dance, and cinema. These spaces are the meeting places of ideas, offering opportunities for exchange, and a force for international understanding and intercultural dialogue. Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, for instance, is playing successfully worldwide, in six Indian languages and Sinhalese, proving resoundingly that unity is possible in diversity. In another dialogue, where music is the language of discourse, musicians from Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, and Egypt come together in an inspired artistic collaboration between Argentinean-Israeli conductor Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said, the eminent Palestinian-American literary theorist and music and cultural critic. Said explains in *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* that in a

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“being among difference” these disparate identities unified and “suddenly [the performers] became cellists and violinists, playing the same piece, in the same orchestra, under the same conductor.” There are many such instances in the creative fields that assure a better understanding of our world and how boundaries can be traversed and blurred.

The new canon, as suggested by Peter Watson in *A Terrible Beauty*, is “in the importance of understanding and appreciation of all the relevant sciences, the significant phases of history, the rise and fall of civilizations, and the reasons for the underlying patterns. Great works of religion, literature, music, painting and sculpture shape this system of understanding, in the sense that all cultures have been attempts to come to terms with both the natural and the supernatural world, to create beauty, produce knowledge, and get at the truth. The significance of language, the way languages have related and evolved, and yet remains very different, is part of the understanding.”

Needless to say, it is imperative to begin inculcating the young. The youth need to be educated with secular ideas as a way of life; the dogmatism of “Nationhood” and religious prejudice must be firmly removed from societal structures if we are to make a difference to the present status quo. The present status quo is a by-product of manic consumerism—inflicting intellectual atrophy on a massive scale. The youth are cynical of the legacy we are bequeathing them, as they should be. More and more, they are becoming indifferent to issues that concern the larger wellbeing, as they do not wish to be tethered to the burden of repairing the damage we have unleashed. It is crucial, therefore, to develop critical rethinking of the world order as it is evolving; to be alert to the increasing fragmentation in our lives, and to arrest its progression—through relentless dialogue across territorial, cultural and religious boundaries. The importance is not merely in being “tolerant” (tolerance suggesting an acceptance under duress) but going beyond that to acknowledge and recognize diversity as intrinsic, and an enrichment of our societies. It is most appropriate at this point to evoke Edward Said’s view on this issue, “The critical spirit is to avoid the pitfalls of national pride and narcissism, which then enables us to see different cultures not as competitors for the title of greatest or most developed but rather as movements of a majestic, symphonic whole, the history of humankind in all its variations and divergences.”

## MALAYSIAN AND JAPANESE YOUTH—looking and lurking

### Hishamuddin Rais

My interest has always been in social change. Social change has been the core and the hope of my existence. This is not an academic desire, neither an academic exercise, nor an academic question. To me the need for social change is real—as real as the sun rises on the Izu Peninsula, and as real as the snow capped Fuji San in November.

Data collecting to back up a thesis is a great idea but leaving the data as unchangeable figures is a futile exercise. I come from the tradition of accumulating knowledge for the sake of changing the very knowledge itself, to break new boundaries, and to push knowledge towards the cutting edge.

The journey towards social change is tedious but the possibilities of changing are always there. I am not a sociologist but I believe the social laws are there for all of us to probe, to experiment, to dwell upon, and to explore, in order to explode the existing conceptual norms into something new: something fresh and something exciting.

As an experimental artist I am bored with the ancient, the passé and the “has been.” I am always excited by something new, something fresh, and something I have never seen before. The human narrative is the narrative for change. The day we fail to change is the day that we have lost the desire to participate in the dynamic forces in our society.

The social experiment of the “workers” has been seen through the Bolshevik Revolution. The peasant has revolted in China. The holy and the pious have overthrown the Shah of Iran. We have witnessed these social forces moving mountains then degenerating and losing their burning idealism.

In Malaysia, I am observing and exploring the new potential force of change. To me the new possibilities are there—not with the workers, not with the peasants—but with the youth. Romantic it might sound but I am putting my case forward to be probed and to be dissected

I am proposing that we could look deeper into the sign and meaning of popular culture. What I mean by popular culture is not a Korean soap opera, top of the pops of the day, or the newest Hollywood film. To me, all these formats have been promoted, packed, and sold by the media. What is accepted, what is en vogue, is never exciting and never

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challenging. It would never be part of the social force for change. As a matter of fact these are cultural products enhanced and sweetened by the current social order. They are promoted, given the right sound bite, and the correct tag line so that they can be consumed, hook, line and sinker, by the consumers.

I am more interested in the culture that acts in opposition to the mainstream. This is the counter-culture: the culture and the art form that goes against the accepted norms and the rules of the day.

I am looking at three areas that are connected to one another—fashion, art, and life style. At one level one could be mistaken to consider these counter-cultures as low art as compared to high art. It might be useful to recall how the snobbish Times of London took almost five years to report anything about the Beatles. I hope we will not trap of acting like the toff, or a member of the Lords. Indeed, today some universities in the UK are turning Beatles songs into a discipline of knowledge.

Fashion is associated with desire: the desire to define one's identity. When one clothes oneself, one gives meaning to one's existence. Each morning when we look at the mirror, what we are doing is actually facing our identity. We reshape, we design and we paint the way we want to be seen.

Our "look" is our definition of our self. We gave sign and meaning through the dress we wear, through the hairstyle we coiffure or the shoes on our feet. We are communicating not through body language or verbal sound but through the signs and grammar of our body. These signs and meanings are as ancient as human existence itself.

Walk into the streets in Kuala Lumpur one will not failed to see the multiply sign of fashion that gives various meaning for our eyes to decipher. The youth's fashion sense, which I observed both in Kuala Lumpur and in Tokyo, looks similar yet it might not convey the same meaning.

The desire to be different in Malaysia is a political decision. Piercing and tattooing the body, wearing torn jeans, having a Rastafarian-style hairstyle, all of these decisions are about making a political statement. This is to create a clear demarcation line between You and Me—between the ruler and the ruled, a boundary or personal space, and a sign that is loaded with meaning.

In Malaysia, where the state is oppressive, the counter culture fashion—breaking away from the mainstream—is a bold political statement. The Malaysian state is obsessive in her desire to mould her citizens to conform. Here, conformity/uniformity has been the object of desire of

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the state. Uniformity has been construed as equality. Therefore, in an oppressive political ambience like Malaysia, anti-fashion fashion is subversive.

Anti-fashion fashion is not part of the mainstream consumer culture. Yes, it does represent the capitalist relationship of buying and selling, but it is subversive. In almost every town, big or small, in Malaysia one will find Kedai Bundle, a second hand shop that specializes in used and recycled products. These shops are mostly run by young people.

These shops, the counter culture fashion houses, run parallel with the mainstream. The desire to wear, to utilize recycled products has become so fashionable that it has affected some trade within the mainstream fashion houses. It has forced the fashion houses to churn out, for instance, new torn jeans, broken t-shirt or shirts that look aged. It is not killing capitalism but it has caring attitude: an attitude of not willing to waste whatever is usable. This attitude is admirable and also subversive because they are not willing to be fashion victims or be easily manipulated by the fashion industry.

The moment the fashion industry produced the same look, the demand for that product is abandoned.

The arts products of the counter culture are exciting. Galleries and art salons are considered to be anti-art. The new venue for the counter culture galleries are the street and open public spaces. Writing on the wall has moved to a higher level. Public spaces have been liberated to be painted with graffiti. The new art form is not collectable, is not to be kept as an investment, is not to be displayed in private houses but instead is meant to be seen freely by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Public. There are no curators and no gallery owners involved in the counterculture art form.

Yes, the state defines graffiti as vandalism, but to the youth this is an expression. Challenging the bill board, the commercial neon-lighted-sign advertisement that displays consumer products, is an on going battle: a battle to liberate public space. It is very tough and dangerous battle. The counter-culture artists work individually in secret or in a team. Graffiti artists are unknown, unseen, and always incognito—in contrast to the publicity seeking salon or gallery artists who ever willing to sell their soul to the highest bidder.

The arrival of new technologies brought along new possibilities. Technology democratized the most expensive art form—the creation of moving images. With the presence of cheaper and lighter video camera, a new kind of image-maker emerged, making new types of narrative and

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opening subject matters that had no mainstream film maker had yet had the courage or audacity to touch. Recently, when Malaysia was celebrating her 50th anniversary a new documentary appeared to challenge the narrative of the state. This has never happened in the history of the state. The state has not had experiences of facing such a challenge.

The new economy brought along a new lifestyle. The extended family is breaking up. In response to the new economic reality, a new mode of living has developed—based around neither the nuclear family nor the extended family. The idea of collective living and space sharing has emerged, partly as the result of economic necessity.

The Malaysian state is not happy with these developments. On religious and moral grounds these new lifestyles are seen as an outrage. Moral police with authority from the state religious department, and in the name of God, from time to time raided homes and places of collective living. The inability of the state and her unwillingness to understand that moral values can change is outmoded in this world of new economic forces and new modes of production.

This situation is tense and at times explosive. These are very fertile and dynamic situations that give birth to new creativities. Tension and danger are part of the creative process.

At the personal level, the new life style is also rearranging notions of sexual desire. The hegemony of the man/woman relationship has been challenged by the counter culture. A new sexual arrangement is slowly coming out, into the open social space. Homosexuality, which is forbidden by the Malaysian state and that has existed since the days of Sodom, has now been adopted as part of the counter culture.

Unlike dressing up and unlike graffiti, sexual desire has a more explosive potential for social change. If one allows the state to control one's sexual desire than one is giving away one's existence. In Malaysia, like in most Islamic nations, the obsession of the state to control sexual desire has become part of the national agenda. Here, the Islamic religion has been used to justify punishing so called sexual deviants.

Five years ago, a national program was introduced by the state. All the “feminine or soft looking” male university students were rounded up. They were then sent to various “summer camps” to be reoriented into the macho-male culture.

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Today, in Malaysia, feminine male students are no longer allowed and they are discouraged from becoming school effeminate males, is an almost mind boggling exercise.

Homosexuality and cross dressing has always been accepted within the ancient Malay culture. Old Malay sensibilities allow for the diverse expression of all its members. Unity and diversity has always been the cultural strength of the Malay civilization. Being able to be individual, yet also to be part of the community, has never been a major problem.

Homosexuality has always existed within the Malay culture, running parallel to heterosexual culture, without disturbing the tranquillity of the community. The assault by the state and the religious moral authorities has opened a new debate on gender equality, sexuality, and sexual desire.

For more than a month I have been observing the street culture of the Japanese youth. Clichéd it might sound but I must admit that, despite the superficial similarities between the Malaysian youth and the Japanese youth, internally I think there are vast differences.

The absence of the police force looking and lurking on the street—a reminder of the presence of the state's authority in Malaysia—makes it clear that the Japanese state need not necessary publicize the presence of the state authority. The authoritarian nature of the Japanese culture itself is sufficient for state policing. The Japanese are policing themselves without a heavy state apparatus. This also means that the state has the confidence and the strength that will ensure that no counter forces could ever challenge and displace them.

Time and again I keep hearing that there is no possibility of replacing the current political structure in Japan. The LDP seems to be here to stay, for ever and ever. It seems to me that the Japanese, at least those whom I met, have accepted the assumption that the state and the ruling class is here to stay.

The obsession with kawaii is not solely part of the youth culture. The Hello Kitty range, for example, is not just a young, girlish desire to be seen as kawaii and pretty, but is a national pastime for young and old Japanese.

It was very strange for me to read that kawaii is also for adults. The little dangling thingy on every school girl's mobile phone is also there on her mum and dad's mobile phone. How unexciting it must be to share the same taste with one's parents.

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The kawaii Super Dollfie costs so much that surely only adults are able to enjoy it. But the essence of this toy is the same, it is an example that young and old need to be part of the same sphere of the kawaii culture.

The youth that gather around the streets of Shinjuku or Harajuku could be seen as examples of a counter-culture in their form, but I am not very sure in terms of their content. The form could be superficially similar to the Malaysian counter-culture, but the sign and meaning could be totally different.

Here and there I saw poor attempts at graffiti expression. It is so hidden that its presence is not felt, especially when compared with the huge billboards that dominate the landscape and assaulted our eyes. Those billboards that represent conformist consumer culture, have not been challenged.

I am beginning to understand why—the nail that sticks out will be hammered down. I also understood why Jonathan Livingstone Seagull, the book by Richard Bach, has the highest sales in Japan. There is a desire to fly away from the flock. However, there is also fear of being seen as the nail that stands alone. The danger of being unique must be real for the Japanese.

Looking and lurking for a period of more than a month in Japan only allowed me to see some of the manifestations of the authoritarian nature of Japanese society. Language has been a major problem in trying to understand the nuances of sign and meaning that I saw in the street.

Cruising in the book shops, glancing at the anime magazines, and watching Japanese TV without the ability to read the language is difficult.

The notion of “Japanese-ness” has bizarre connotations for many foreigners. The sense of humor is especially unique—owarai—for instance the idea that farting and burning one’s arse is a laughing matter in Japan, would seem alien to many. Carrying heavy items by using only one’s testicles is not seen as funny, unless you are Japanese. The Hard Gay Man—Masaki Sumitami—with his “wah wah wah” tag line and eccentric body language, would be seen as very strange from the point of view of another culture. These art forms could be seen as the manifestation of a counter-culture; a culture is not safe, is risk taking, and has an attitude daring enough to challenge the values of today.

I am also curious about the meaning of compensation dating, or the knickers from the vending machine, and the cafes and teas houses with kawaii young girls all dressed up like Dutch ladies?

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Here we all are, looking and lurking, united as a human race, but so diverse in our cultural forms. Is there a common thread? There must be, like oxygen in the air, there is something that binds us all together. This is for us to find out.

I think this poem by T.S. Elliot could sum up my experiences here in Japan:

Because I know that time is always time  
And place is always and only place  
And what is actual is actual only for one time  
And only for one place –

( Ash Wednesday 1930 )

And now the collection of images

END

## Tu Zheng Ce (local policy): a game between Di Fang (the local government) and Zhong Yang (the Central Government) in Chinese administrative system

### Jiansheng Huang

#### Chinese bureaucracy in social life

The policies of the Chinese Government are basically formulated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which controls the “direction” in the way China is going, and which makes the final decisions on policies. The CPC is a heavily centralized and powerful body. My concern here is the extent to which lower level interest groups can influence implementation of central policies, particularly on regional levels.

As a starting point for the discussion I shall draw on Weber’s classical perspective on bureaucracy as an “ideal type.” All concepts in sociology are “ideal types.” Their construction entails a peculiar translation of ordinary typifications into the scientific frame of reference. Therefore they are not “real”– not “really out there”–but are artificially constructed for specific cognitive purposes.<sup>1</sup> Weber’s purpose was how to understand a phenomenon specific to the modern world, namely the rationalization of social organization, particularly in the administrative field where it leads to bureaucratization. Through his “ideal type” construct, Weber intends to establish a conceptual framework for interpreting the extent of bureaucratization as expressed in different forms of organization. The conceptual dimensions in his framework can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ The extent to which rights and obligations between legally instituted authorities and subordinate officials are clearly defined (as expressed in written regulations).
- ▶ The extent to which rights and obligations between legally instituted authorities and subordinate officials are clearly defined (as expressed in written regulations).
- ▶ The extent to which authority relations are systematically ordered.

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<sup>1</sup> Weber, Max. (1981). *General Economic History*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 41.

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- ▶ The extent to which appointment and promotion are based on contractual agreement and regulated accordingly.
- ▶ The extent to which bureaucratic employment is based on technical training.
- ▶ The extent to which incumbents of bureaucratic positions have fixed monetary salaries
- ▶ The extent to which administrative work is a full-time occupation

These dimensions are best understood as continua on scales from 0% to 100%. An empirical form of administration that manifested a 100% score on these dimensions (probably impossible) would be an example of a “perfect” bureaucracy. It would be possible to conceptually construct an ideal type absolutely opposite to bureaucracy where all dimensions had the score 0%.<sup>2</sup>

The advantage of “ideal type” constructs is that they allow us to conceptualize the extent to which specific empirical forms of administration are characterized by these dimensions and to explore the processes affecting the way they “score” on them.

Formally the Chinese administrative framework seems to score quite high on these dimensions. In the first item of the “Organizing Principles” in the Dang Zhang (the Party Constitution), it is clearly declared that each individual party member should obey the party, the minority should submit to the majority, the lower levels of offices should obey the higher levels of the organization, all levels of the offices and individual party members submit to the National People’s Congress and the Central Committee (The Party Constitution, Nov. 14, 2002, Item One in Chapter Two). Although the Party Constitution has been amended several times since the foundation of the Party, the fundamental principles of organization remain largely the same. In this structure, it is clearly stated that the lower should submit absolutely to the higher and the personal interests should be subordinated to the interests of the party and the collective.

Looking at how administration in “real life” is actually performed, the score would be rather different. It is the processes that affects this “real life” performance of administration I am concerned with here.

Before I go into discussion of case material, I would like to draw attention to the fact that in China (like in other communist countries) it

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<sup>2</sup> I am using the percentage to illustrate the point that the dimensions of the “ideal type” constitute continua. I certainly do not think that one should try to measure how actual cases of administrative behavior “score” on these continua.

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is not only the system of administration that is bureaucratized, but also the system of political mobilization: the Communist Party itself. On all levels of organization from the village to the Central Government there are two hierarchical organizations—the Communist Party organization and the Government Administration under State Council. On all levels of the administration, the Communist Party exercises political controls. While the Communist party is the most powerful and autonomous political actor when it comes to formulation of state policies, this does not mean that state administration is able to implement these policies in the intended ways. Performance of incumbents in offices on different regional levels in the administrative hierarchy is constantly affected by their relations to incumbents of offices in the party hierarchy. This is only part of the picture; incumbents of offices in both Party and Administrative hierarchies are also affected by their non-bureaucratic relations to a range of actors, both inside and outside their regions of operation. To husband their career interests, occupants of administrative offices have to play a very complicated “game” in their implementation of government policies. It is this “game” I shall try to explore in my presentation of case material. As formulated by Jean C. Oi: “...the state, as represented at the local level by its agents—the local level cadres who are also responsible for representing their collective’s, and their, own interests—is a distinct entity whose interests cannot be assumed to be the same as or even compatible with those of the government.”<sup>3</sup>

By looking at how actors on different levels of organization (the villagers, the Forest Bureau, the township government, the county government and the higher government) interpret and implement the Central Government's policy of *tian ran lin bao hu* (the preservation of natural forest), I shall argue that, within the Chinese state system, the interests of different actors on different levels may lead to a weakening of state power, in the sense that the commands being issued from the government center in its bureaucratic execution are transformed into effects very different from the interests of the state. The actors in the bureaucratic system, in general, cannot openly challenge the state power. All the policies from the central government are claimed to be carried out precisely, and the slogans are exactly what they are supposed to be. Yet those who implement the policies have their own career interests to manage.

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<sup>3</sup> Oi, Jean C. (1989). *State and Peasant in Contemporary China: The Political Economy of Village Government*. UC Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 3.

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My task is to look at how incumbents of administrative positions in certain parts of China perform in relation to Weber's dimensions and, from there, to explore processes that affect the way they "score" on these dimensions.

### **The administrative framework**

Before I go into details about how bureaucrats actually perform in their positions, I shall briefly outline the main structures of the administrative framework.

This can be sketched as follows:

The hierarchical order in this diagram is quite clear. The Central Government is at the top of the administrative system. The township government is at the lowest and has direct interaction with villagers. The Forest Bureau is under the leadership of the county, and township government has no power over this bureau. Yet, so far as the policy of forest preservation is concerned, both the Forest Bureau and township government have the obligation to implement the policy—because they are all under the direct leadership of the county government. Usufruct of the mountains is also clearly defined. Villages can use village-owned mountains and the Forest Bureau is limited to protection or reforestation of state-owned mountains.

The problem is that there are no systematic rules about how state-owned mountains and village-owned mountains are distributed. In other words, the state-owned and the village-owned mountains are in intersections. The villagers know roughly that the mountains from one valley to another (or from one range of mountain to another range of mountain) belong to the state or to the village. But a person outside of the village (except experts with maps) can hardly know which parts of the mountains are state-owned and which are village-owned. What is more confusing is that, for example, in village A, the mountains on the east side of the valley are state-owned while in village B the mountains on the west side of the valley may belong to the state. Thus the state-owned mountains and village-owned mountains are often intersected. In other words, there are both state-owned and village-owned mountains nearby each individual village.

### **The villagers in Jiangbian Xiang (Jinangbian township)**

As an empirical case I shall first deal with material from a small township in Yunnan. I shall begin by giving a brief introduction to the economic concerns of the villages in that township and some of the rules governing their use of natural resources.

Jiangbian Xiang (Jiangbian township), like thousands of the other townships, is at the bottom level of the Chinese administrative system. Under its administration are 58 small villages which are scattered in

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chains of mountains with a total area of 585,406 mu (about 39027 hectares<sup>4</sup>). Among them, the cultivated land takes 17,102 mu (1140 ha.) (Mile Gazetteer, 1987). The altitude varies from 995 meters to 1731 meters above sea level and the population is a little bit more than 12,000, consisting of different ethnic groups, such as, Yi, Zhuang, Dai, Miao, Han, and Bai.

Jiangbian Xiang (in the red circle) is located in the Nan Pan Jiang, which is one of the most important branches of the Zhu Jiang, the third largest river in China. On the east side of Nan Pan Jiang river is a township called Chongtuo, which is attached to another county: Qiubei. The Nan Pan Jiang flows from southwest to northeast and soon enters the territory of Guizhou province and Guangdong province. Thus, from the national perspective, Jiangbian is one of the most important places; a place where forest protection is crucial, because it is located at the upper part of the Zhu Jiang. The deforestation in this part may cause serious floods in the rainy season and lack of enough water in the dry season. In fact, it is reported that in the last few years, seawater flows into the Zhu Jiang during the dry season due to the lack of enough water in the river. Such “back-flow” of seawater leads to a shortage of drinking water in Guangzhou City.

From the perspective of the provincial government, however, this part of the province is not very significant because the production of grain is low and there are not many valuable resources that can help to increase the provincial revenue. What is more, the river is flowing out of the province. The damage caused by the deforestation in this part does not have much influence on Yunnan Province.

It seems that, from the perspective of the county government, Jiangbian Xiang is a marginal place which is far from the center of the county. On the other side of the river is another county (Qiubei). The county government can hardly get any benefit (in an economic sense) from this locality. Instead, it has to give some subsidies to the farmers or governmental offices, from time to time. When the economy becomes the main target of governmental effort, the protection of the forest becomes less significant because “more trees do not bring any benefit to the local people and the local government.”

The mountains in Jiangbian township, like those in most parts of China, are divided into two parts: the state-owned (guo you shan) and the village-owned (cun you shan). The village-owned mountains have been subdivided and contracted to each household since the early 1980s.

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<sup>4</sup> Henceforth the abbreviation of hectares, “ha.” is used in this essay.

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In general, the contracted, village-owned mountains are all well preserved. Various trees, bushes and grass fully cover the mountain slopes, which is in sharp contrast to the state-owned mountains. No cultivation (except some fruit trees) is seen on the contracted, village-owned mountains. If the villagers want to cut any pine trees from their contracted mountains, they have to get permission from the Xiang (township) government. They can cut any other trees at will. Even so, people do not cut firewood and make charcoal from their contracted mountains, nor do they cultivate the slopes of contracted mountains. Most of the mountain slope cultivation is done on the state-owned mountains.

The cultivation on state-owned mountain slopes (mainly for sugarcane and maize) is a common practice in the villages. Every household has a certain size of such cultivation.<sup>5</sup> It is also the main source of cash income. In 1997, under the policy of the Chinese Central Government, the local government set some limits on the mountain slope cultivation. The rule was that the villagers could continue cultivating on the land they had been cultivating, but they could not expand it or shift to a new piece of land. Such measures prevented people from cultivating more on mountain slopes, and this served to protect the natural environment from further deforestation. However, the repeated cultivation on the same piece of land they were allowed to cultivate, deteriorated the soil and led to an increase in the use of chemical fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide.

Economically, the main problem for the villagers is lack of cash income. More than two thirds of their production activities are centered on their endeavors to increase cash income through all possible means. For the villagers, the quickest and most direct way of earning cash is growing maize and sugarcane. In general, in the last 3 to 4 years, the price of maize has been 0.8–1.30 yuan/kg, and sugarcane is sold to sugar processing plants at a price of 0.13–0.15 yuan/kg. If one takes all the chemical fertilizer and labor costs into calculation, such a price is not very profitable, particularly for sugarcane. People say that they are fully aware of this, but they have to continue because these two products bring them the largest amount of cash income.

Since the level of rice production is just a little bit more than enough for self-consumption, only a small part of the paddy fields can be saved for sugarcane or maize growing. This ensures that the villagers have something to eat in the coming year. To increase cash income, the

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<sup>5</sup> On average, each person may have up to 3-4 mu (0.2-0.27 ha.).

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plantation of maize and sugarcane has been moved to the state-owned mountain slopes. The more cultivation on the mountain slopes, the more erosion may result. In the mid 1990s, a big flood destroyed some of the paddy fields in the bottom of the valley in the summer, and a serious drought brought irrigation problems in the paddy fields in spring and early summer, in the midst of rice planting.

After 1997, under pressure from the central government, the township government took some tough measures to prevent any further cutting and cultivation on mountain slopes. These measures include no cutting of pine trees without permission, no charcoal making, and no expansion of present cultivation. Things got better after these measures. No serious flood or drought occurred within the next eight years. However, when one looks at the mountains, one still feels pessimistic about the natural environment. Most of the mountains are barren, with only patches of green growth. The growing number of goats and cattle in the village greatly threatens the sustainability of the mountain vegetation, because the grass is eaten, trampled, and some smaller trees are cut down in order to let the goats eat the leaves.

In spite of these direct and visible consequences of over-use, people seem to pay little attention to the declining natural environment. The priority is always placed on the increase of cash income. According to the villagers' way of thinking, the gain is always private and the loss belongs to the public—when the flood comes.

When interviewed, most of the villagers interpret the state policy of forest preservation in the following terms: (1) not cutting pine trees, (2) not making charcoal, (3) the business of the Forest Bureau,; (4) we cannot live in green, beautiful mountains without food and cash.

In other words, the villagers understand the state policy of forest preservation in the following three ways. First, the villagers cannot cut down pine trees. This implies that they can cut down all the other trees. Second, they cannot make charcoal, but this does not say that they cannot cultivate crops on mountain slopes. Third, both the task and the consequence of forest preservation have nothing to do with them. They cannot benefit from such a policy.

In this sense, any agency that comes to implement the state policy of forest preservation may become the opponent or adversary of the villagers. At the very least, this agency will be seen as having no program relevant to the villagers' lives.

**Jiangbian Lin Ye  
Ju (Jinangbian  
Forest Bureau) as  
one of the state  
agencies**

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In the last few years, particularly after 1998, the Chinese Central Government has initiated a national policy to prevent the deterioration of the environment, and to improve the living conditions of the people. From the national perspective, “keeping the mountains green” in thousands of the villages in Yunnan is particularly important, owing to the fact that they are mostly located at the upper parts of several big rivers in China, such as the Yangtze River, the Zhujiang River, the Lancangjiang River (Mekong), and the Honghe River. Deforestation and pollution in these areas may bring damage not only to these places but also to the lower parts of the rivers. Considering the negative impact on the natural environment, the production in these small villages is not very significant, from a national perspective. Rather, the ecological balance is crucial in these areas. So cultivation on mountain slopes whose grade is over 25 degrees should be stopped, so they can be converted into forest.

Greater efforts have been made in the last ten years to reduce emissions and deforestation. For example, in Jiangbian, anyone who is found making charcoal will be fined 500 yuan, plus the person must plant as many trees as he has cut down. Anyone who cuts down pine trees (even on the mountain he is contracted to) without permission, will be fined or even sent to jail. Large subsidies have been allocated to those who have given the land back to grass and forest. If a villager plants “economic trees” (such as fruit trees or other fast-growing trees) on cultivated land, they receive 75 kg of grain each year for five years. If a villager plants non-economic trees, they will get the subsidies for eight years.

Such a policy is implemented through different levels of the government. The government level that directly interacts with the villagers is the xiang zhengfu (township government). In theory, the conflict between the villagers and the Forest Bureau has to be reconciled by the township government. Tui geng huan lin (land conversion) and tian ran lin bao hu (the protection of the natural forest), etc. should be an important part of their regular work. But, in practice, the township government has its own problems with which to deal.

The state-owned mountains legally belong to the state. The Jiangbian Forest Bureau (Jiangbian Lin Ye Ju) is supposed to be the state agency that takes care of these mountains. But from the late 1950s, to the middle of the 1980s, the Jiangbian Lin Ye Ju cut down almost all the big pine trees on the state-owned mountains for logs, without planting any new trees. What is worse, between 1985 and 1990, some village people complained it is not right to let these “outsiders” cut

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down and sell the trees when they, who had been living there for generations, stay poor. From such reasoning, they began to cut down the rest of the pine trees for logs as well as other trees for charcoal on the state-owned mountains. This cutting frenzy plus large-scale maize and sugar cane cultivation on mountain slopes brought disaster both to the villagers and the Forest Bureau. The Forest Bureau, with no more pine trees to cut, was put in a difficult situation. Many workers had no pay and those who were retired had no pension.

Since 1999, the state has allocated over 100 million yuan to the Forest Bureau for forest preservation. The purpose of this effort is clear: to restore the destroyed ecological balance in the whole region; a region which is particularly significant for the Zhu Jiang river. Basically two measures are employed to reach the goal: (1) replanting trees; (2) protecting the wild trees (tian ran lin bao hu gong cheng) through tui geng huan lin (converting cultivated land to forest). This policy of forest preservation is supposed to be not only good for the environment, but also beneficial to the Forest Bureau. The workers can be re-employed.

The Forest Bureau tried to plant some fruit trees and bamboo on mountain slopes, intending to cover the mountains with trees, and thereby achieving two objectives: (1) increasing cash income and (2) preventing erosion. The fruit and bamboo shoots can be sold or canned. Yet this proved to be very difficult. After a worker from the Forest Bureau planted fruit trees during the daytime, some villagers simply pulled the fruit trees and bamboo out during the night. The Forest Bureau was put in a helpless situation.

The phrase for protecting the natural trees (tian ran lin bao hu gong cheng) is often shortened by the villagers as tian bao gong cheng (literally “heaven protection”). This shortened phrase, from the perspective of the villagers, twists the original meaning into one that has heaven (state) giving protection to the “dying” Forest Bureau. Thus the state allocation of money for environmental protection is interpreted by the villagers as given to help the Forest Bureau survive rather than to preserve the forest.

Some villagers feel the situation is unfair. Why does the state give them so much care, but not the villagers themselves? They feel that if the money is given to them, they can grow many more trees. With such an interpretation, the original conflict between the villagers and the Forest Bureau continues.

What is more, the traditional way of understanding the forest in the local place, still has some impact on people’s (even administrators’) minds. When they say “to protect the forest,” they seem to understand it

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as “to protect pine trees.” In other words, one does not violate the law unless he/she cuts down pine trees. Such an understanding leads to the reduction of bio-diversity and failure to maintain “green mountains.”

The Forest Bureau is financed by the Central Government. The size of the mountains protected is often the crucial evidence for the bureau staff to show the effort they have put in. In order to increase the size of protected mountains, the first step is to reverse as much mountain slope cultivation as possible. The Central Government has ruled that any cultivation on a mountain slope whose grade is over 25 degrees should be returned to forest (called tui geng huan lin [land conversion]). Thus, the Forest Bureau insists that any cultivation on mountain slopes, particularly those on state-owned mountains, should be stopped.

From the farmers' perspective, however, over 85 percent of mountain slope cultivation is done on slopes whose grade is over 25 degrees. Converting these cultivated lands to forest means that the villagers most important source of cash income is gone. Consequently, despite the effort of the Forest Bureau, most of the mountain slopes remain cultivated. The Forest Bureau has no means to get them back.

### **Xiang (the township): the local bureaucrat's dilemma**

First of all, while the higher governmental offices look at the problem from a larger perspective, the local government offices have to deal with very immediate, practical problems. As mentioned above, each person in Jiangbian can have only 0.6 mu (0.04 ha.) of paddy fields. All other cultivation is on mountain slopes, which are mostly on 25-degree slopes. If all mountain slope cultivation is forbidden, life there can hardly be maintained at subsistence level (in many other similar villages in Yunnan, the situation is even worse). So the township government often has to balance between satisfying the local farmers' needs and implementing state policy. This makes it difficult to reconcile the Forest Bureau's demands with the farmers' antagonistic feelings toward the state policy of protection and conversion.

Secondly, it is the township government's task to help farmers get a better life. It is almost the only way to demonstrate the township government's work. In such mountain areas, however, these local leaders cannot think of any other ways to improve living conditions, except growing maize, sugar cane, or tobacco. These crops have to be planted on mountain slopes and they are often in conflict with forest protection.

Thirdly, an important concern for government leaders' promotion or transfer to positions in cities is zheng ji (political achievement). Being

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promoted or moving into larger cities has always been the dream of most people who are working in township government. At the moment, economic growth is still the main criterion for demonstrating zheng ji. Asked why they do not stop the villagers from expanding cultivation on mountain slopes, one of the local leaders said: "I do not care, so far as they can increase their income." On another occasion, this leader even declared as follows: "Anyone who has a production of 10 tons of maize a year, I will give him a bonus of 300 yuan." The increase of farmers' cash income, and of the governmental revenue, are often taken as the only indication of a township government's zheng ji. Certainly it is a good thing to increase production. But in this specific context, an increase of maize production means more deforestation, land erosion, and more application of chemical fertilizer, as well as pesticides. Repeated cultivation on the same spot makes the land barren and leads to increased use of chemical fertilizer. In addition, more insects move into the cultivated land in search of food.

In ironic scene, not far from the township government, there is a concrete stele on which several big Chinese characters are written: feng shan yu lin qu (area of natural forest preservation). Looking at the mountain slope behind this stele, however, one can hardly see any trees or bushes. People told me that for several years, the forest in the area was preserved. But this spring, after a forest fire, the villagers simply cultivated on the mountain slopes because the price for maize was quite good last year (1.3-1.5 yuan/kg). The township government leaders neither said "yes" nor "no."

This case indicates that, although both forest preservation and economic growth in rural areas are state policy objectives, their effect in implementation may be quite different. When there is no way to reconcile both, one leader may focus on the one, and a new leader may shift to the other. Obviously the previous leader may have paid more attention to forest preservation so that the concrete stele was built, and people admit that the forest was protected. But the present leader seems to be shifting the focus to economic growth. Once cut down, the trees or bushes take many years to recover. This is not just a personal choice of the local leader. It is also closely related to the higher levels of the government. When the higher government offices put more pressure on forest preservation, the township government will put more effort on forest protection. In other words, when the pressure is reduced (even temporarily), the township government may "neglect" it.

**Sheng province, Zhou  
prefecture, and Xian  
county:  
the government at  
higher levels**

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The higher levels of the government, including sheng (province), zhou(prefecture), and xian(county), all take the state policy of forest preservation seriously, and the popular slogan is zai zao yige xiumei shanchuan (to re-make a beautiful landscape). In practice, however, the understanding and explanation of such national policy can differ from place to place and from different levels of government office, depending on the practical situation.

From the Chinese Central Government's perspective, improvement of the living environment is a long-term policy. Forest preservation is naturally one of the key parts in this policy. Yet this does not mean that all places are equally attended to. The mountains by the main highways, at the upper part of big reservoirs, nearby to tourist sites, etc., often get the attention of the local government because these places may be inspected by officials from the higher levels of the government, or easily seen by journalists or tourists. Most of the mountains, like those around Jiangbian, are said to be important. But few inspections are really carried out. In other words, if the township government reports that 5,000 mu of the mountain slopes have been converted to forest land in this area or that the forests are well protected, few persons from the higher levels of the government would bother to go and confirm it, let alone to monitor what happened in the following years.

This leaves some space for flexibility in the implementing of state policy. It is often the case that the lower levels of the government make decisions according to practical situations (gen ju shi ji qing kuang), which take into consideration local interests and conditions. These decisions may be good for the local people or local government, but they may bring damage to the ecological balance as a whole. From the perspective of the national interest, the benefit from such decisions may be much less than the cost of later investment to restore it. On the economic level, these decisions seem irrational. From the perspective of the local government, however, it is rational because, in most cases, the benefit is gained by the local government or local communities, while the latter investment is paid for by higher levels of the government. For instance, when farmers cultivate maize on mountain slopes, farmers get cash income, and township leaders get zheng ji. Once the damage to the forest is done, the state needs to allocate an enormous amount of money to restore the ecological balance. The Forest Bureau receives subsidies. The province, prefecture, or county may have to pay part of the bill for recovery, but it is the central government that pays most of it.

In this sense, the general policy from the central government is often twisted, more or less, to fit the local situation and local interests.

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Sometimes, it may be twisted to fit personal choices of the local administrators in the name of the local situation. Though most of the people know the importance of protecting the environment, it is hard to insist on it consistently. Such distortion is often done in the name of tu zheng ce (the local policy).

### Conclusion

The bureaucrats at different levels of government office will always claim that they “yu dang zhongyang baochi yi zhi” (are consistent with the central government). Any policy or order from the central government is passed on from higher to lower levels through meetings and documents. Any new slogan from the central government immediately becomes the pet phrase of the bureaucrats at different levels. At meetings, all of them openly express their determination to implement policy or orders from the central government. In most cases they do take action to respond to the calls of the central government. This sounds quite close to Weber’s “ideal type” of bureaucracy (at least 70–80 percent). The empirical process of implementation, however, shows a great variety in terms of different context, agency, interest and purpose.

While the bureaucrats at different levels of government office claim that they are following closely the central government, some high officials in central government sigh with the feeling that “one of the biggest problems in Chinese bureaucracy is zhengling bu tong (government decree impeded).” Zhang Baoqing, former vice minister of education, exclaimed at the moment of his retirement in 2005 that “if 20–30 percent of the policies (orders) from the central government had been implemented completely, the situation would not be as it is now.” Zhang’s personal estimation may not be accurate. But it indicates the intricate relationship between policy making and policy implementation.

“Forest preservation “is a state policy from the perspective of the central government. Yet, as my essay has shown, it is rather like a game, in the local context. In this game, the villagers, the Forest Bureau and township government are primary participants (because they are fully involved in the game) while the province, prefecture and county government are secondary players (because Jiangbian is only one of the places they have to deal with). Each of them has their own interpretation of a policy based on their own knowledge, interests, strategy, and ability.

The villagers see the state-owned mountains as an important resource for cash income. But the villagers’ exploitation of the mountain is often impeded by the Forest Bureau, which claims that it is protecting

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the forest on behalf of the state. The Forest Bureau has to convert more land to forest because they get allocations from the central government. The bureaucrats in the Forest Bureau also want to show their zhengji so as to get promoted. Yet the more effort they make, the more conflicts they have with the villagers. Consequently, the Forest Bureau has to rely on the cooperation of the township government to implement the state policy of forest preservation.

Taking into consideration the local situation, township government is often caught in the dilemma between either protecting forests or increasing economic growth. From the perspective of the central government, both of them are very important. From the township government's perspective, it is difficult to deal with both at the same time. The bureaucrats have to make choices which are mostly affected by regional or individual interests.

The other, higher, levels of the government also have similar problems. The government may shift its focus from time to time, for instance this year on forest preservation and next year on economic growth. The main consideration is which one can bring the most benefit to the region (or to the bureaucrats who are in administrative positions).

This uncertainty (or flexibility) in implementing policy and orders makes it possible for personal or regional interests to be integrated into bureaucratic operations. Formalism becomes prevalent. Everything is done in the name of implementing policies and orders from the central government. The bureaucrat who focuses on economic growth may justify his choice by emphasizing that "getting rid of poverty is a priority of the Chinese government's work." One who pays more attention to forest preservation may stress the importance of "better living conditions for younger generations." It is true that both economic growth and natural environment protection are part of state policy. Instead of making efforts to reconcile the two, most of the bureaucrats choose to make a choice depending on the empirical context: which of the two may benefit them most at the moment.

If bureaucrats can, to some extent, distort state policy for the sake of personal or regional interests, there is the possibility of influencing the decision-making in policy implementation. Some individual persons or interest groups may try to get in contact with bureaucrats (good guanxi), so that some policies may be twisted for personal or regional interests. Such personal choice alienates bureaucratic operations from the "ideal type" of bureaucracy, which is supposed to be quite impersonal.

In conclusion, my essay has demonstrated the following: (1) bureaucracy is not a machine-like mechanism which can function

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without any personal (regional) consideration, (2) in bureaucratic principles, personal (regional) interests should be excluded from bureaucratic operation, and (3) the efficiency of bureaucratic operation depends on the degree to which the central government is able to contain the exploration of personal (regional) interests. When the central government exerts more pressure and monitoring, the lower bureaucrats may implement the policies more faithfully. When the control of the central government is somewhat loosened, the lower bureaucrats may seek the opportunity to distort policy for their own interests. On the one hand, this may reduce the efficiency of bureaucratic operation. On the other hand, it may lead to some serious problems which the central government has to either find a way to solve or to spend more money on. Such low efficiency significantly weakens state power in domestic administration. The interesting point is that the forces that cause this weakening of state power are neither anti-governmental groups nor international nor transnational non-governmental organizations. Rather it is the bureaucrats, who claim to always maintain consistency with the central government.

## Migrant Women in Japan: Beyond the Dichotomy of Trafficking Victims and Voluntary Sex Workers

Kaoru Aoyama

### Introduction

During the course of ALFP 2007, I have been pursuing my research on migrant women in Japan's sex industry, who have dealt with Japanese customers. I have been involved in this area of work since my volunteer experience at the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center, a Tokyo based NGO. I did my MA in Gender and International Development between 1993 and 1995; in my PhD research, I particularly focused on Thai women's cases. Since I completed my PhD, I have further conducted some more research into the issue not only with academics but also with civil activists who commit themselves to support women in the sex industry. As the gap between the haves and have-nots is said to have widened, the issue of migrant women working in the sex industry becomes a more and more influential global topic. In this sense, I think, my research topic is an apt subject for the discussion of this fellowship bridging between Asian societies, citizens and social movements beyond academic interest.

### Background

For these three decades or so, there has been a trend of migration to Japan from other countries and regions. The trend was at first induced by an official liberalization, though slight, of the tight immigration policy of Japan at the end of 1970s. What followed was, however, a drastic increase in the undocumented migrants staying without visas once they had entered Japan. The originating country of the trend has changed for these decades as national level diplomatic agreements, as well as the agents of formal and informal trade, change their focuses from one country to another. The undocumented migrants in Japan have changed their profile of origin from Korea to the Philippines, to Thailand, to Colombia, to the former Soviet Union states, to China and most recently to Indonesia. But the immigration flow on the whole has not yet decreased.

The first group of undocumented migrants who gathered acute public attention were the Filipinas in the 1980s and then Thai women until the mid 1990s. Thai women's migration to Japan, to work in its rampant sex industry, was considered to be particularly phenomenal.

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There were several reasons why Thai migrant women in the sex industry received a lot of public attention in Japan. In the peak years of their migration around 1993, there were tragic homicide cases revealed within the sex industry involving Thai nationals, as both victims and perpetrators. The Japanese mass media covered them scandalously. Their number was large; a Thai feminist estimated numbers to be around 40,000 to 50,000 in a year. Their move coincided with interrelated hyper growth of both the Thai and the Japanese economies. Finally, feminist social movements and research into both Thailand and Japan matured their discourses to describe and analyse the phenomena, and appealed to the public.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Rescue Work Against “Sexual Slavery”**

What the media and social movement focused on was the fact that neither victims nor perpetrators in these homicide cases should simply be categorized as “victims” or “perpetrators” under the Japanese criminal justice system. The “victims” who were killed had often been “perpetrators” with regard to their acts of exploitation of and violence against, those who committed homicides. By the same token, the “perpetrators” who killed had mostly been enslaved “victims” of these exploitation and violence, and been made to believe that they had to “make the exploiter disappear” for their own survival. Behind these cases, there was huge economic disparity as well as a gender gap. Both of these factors drove these people to come to Japan and outstay their legal allowance, with scarce protection from the Japanese jurisdiction in the first place. Therefore the social climate was to blame for the creation of this unequal mechanism. Then, concrete actions and civil networks were formed to support those who were involved in the crimes, as well as to rescue those who were enslaved.

Because these cases happened in the sex industry, the mechanism was deconstructed as structural sexual slavery. This then linked the problem of undocumented migration to a long standing feminist aim of eliminating prostitution as a materialization of women’s sexual and economic subordination to men in patriarchy and capitalism. In other words, the structural sexual slavery was now seen in the light of globalization, and those who migrated to become involved in selling sexual services were considered to be “victims” of the structural slavery. As citizens responsible for the social structure, Japanese supporters and

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<sup>1</sup> Aoyama, Kaoru. (forthcoming) *Migrant Sexworkers from Modernisation to Globalisation* (working title). Hampshire: Palgrave/Macmillan, Introduction.

**A Perspective to See  
Migrant Women as  
Agents**

rescue workers, took a firm stance against the buyer (presumed male) and those who were accumulating profit out of the deprived migrants.<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, it was in the name of justice and equality that the feminist discourse had a serious drawback. By focusing almost solely on structural force and treating the migrants in the sex industry all as victims, it unwittingly minimized their agency. Following Anthony Giddens, a British social theorist, I defined “agency” as “ability to act against or in compliance with the situation.” Of course, there had been clear cases, as above, in which undocumented migrant women were trapped in situations with near total deprivation of their agency, thus akin to slavery. But, even those who became trapped in a slavery situation could well have had intention and/or awareness of getting into the sex trade on purpose, with the aim of gaining economic as well as social upward mobility. In Thai women’s cases, particularly after the late 1990s, it became empirically rare to find an “innocent victim” in the global sex trade who came to Japan without any knowledge of what she would be required to do as work. They came to Japan as one of their strategies to utilize their inevitably disadvantaged position in the unequal global mechanism of economy and gender relations.

The researchers in this area are required to investigate more of the motivations of migrant women in the sex industry, who are involved, trapped and rescued or survived and succeeded in making money. Without such investigation, we would fail to understand the mechanism and to prevent the migrants to be deprived of their civil rights. In other words, the necessity of an acknowledgement of the migrants’ agency, as such, came to our attention, as the focus on the trade shifted from structural causes to the details (particularly of agents’ actions and their immediate conditions). Otherwise, the feminist criticism against the structure would paradoxically work for fixing or even reproducing the structure as overpowering migrant women’s ability to act.<sup>3</sup>

**The Discourse against  
Trafficking in Persons**

Those who identified undocumented migrant women in the sex industry as vulnerable and as being trapped in structural slavery developed this analysis into a discourse against trafficking in persons.

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2 Aoyama, op. cit., chapter 1.

3 Aoyama, Kaoru. (forthcoming) *Migrant Women in Japan’s Sex Industry: Deconstructing Out-casting through Their Agency*, in Fujimura, F. K. ed. *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future*, Second Edition. New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York.

Coincided in the international arena was the route to enactment of the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, especially its protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons. Although some have pointed out that there are problems with this convention in terms of the possibility of breaching civic liberty, the major feminist movement against exploitation and violence towards migrant women, evaluated this to be a progression not only towards the protection of the victims but also towards the elimination of prostitution as a whole.

This convention, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000, has been approved, but not yet concluded, by the Japanese government. But, particularly after the US Department of State released the annual Trafficking in Person's Report of 2004, which criticized Japan as a major receiving nation of the trafficked with poor preventative and protective measures, the Japanese government amended its Penal Code, Immigration Control Law and Prostitution Prevention Law in 2005, in preparation for concluding the protocol.

### **The Discourse for “Sex Work”**

There is another group of people who are concerned about migrant women's status in the sex industry in Japan from a different stance. They are those who have emphasized agency of women, men and transgender persons, in the sex industry. They have, quite logically, argued for treating undocumented migrants, not as mere victims, but as agents with their own purpose to work. Scholars and activists who take this stance require the public to recognize the right to work in the sex industry, to recognize migrant workers in the sex industry as sex workers. This group, including myself, has not denied the fact that some people, mostly women and children, fell into victimization during the course of trafficking in the global sex trade.

Nonetheless, they have, on the whole, opposed the above feminist movement against prostitution in the name of protecting the victims. Having intercourse in exchange for compensation is prohibited under the Prostitution Prevention Law in Japan. Furthermore, as stated above, as the law surrounding sex work has recently been amended to give a more severe punishment against those who profit from the sex trade, the policing has become more acute. As the sex workers have been experiencing at the moment, the more policing develops, the more the sex industry goes underground. Consequently, the sex trade becomes even more abusive; it became more difficult for migrant sex workers, especially those who are already in need of help, to survive. Looking at such a situation, some argue that, to secure the rights of migrant as well

as Japanese people who work in the sex industry, sex work should be decriminalized. Therefore migrant women are to be considered as being able to act for the betterment of their own situation as they have been given a lawful status in Japan. This discourse also enables the Japanese counterparts to empower themselves and cooperate with the migrant workers.

## The Migration Ground

I do not support the “traditional” dichotomous argument: the discourse for sex work based on “free choice” of the women in focus verses the one against the whole sex industry as structural sexual and economic subordination of women to men. Rather, I consider that the new wave of sex workers--who aim to bridge the gap between themselves and the migrant workers in the sex industry, with or without their own will--to be creating a middle-ground between the dichotomies. Any one in either group could well be trapped in a slavery situation. By recognising the social pressure, severe working conditions, and illegal status surrounding them, people from both sides could find a way to see each other as not so different. I also see this as a cue to form alliances here against exploitation and violence. These alliances are lead by the sex workers, as actors on the central stage, escaping also from the identification of “victim” awaiting others’ rescue.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, I am, and will be continuously, working with various actors in the social movement in this area, hopefully contributing to the creation of the middle ground. It is high time that “public intellectuals,” if there is any particular role they play, to include migrants in the so-called “underground” or “illegal” economy. Migrant workers “underground” share a large part of the sex industry. In this regard, in their consideration of multi-cultural society, “public intellectuals” should include these migrants, so that the situations of those who have been deprived of citizenship rights as well as personal safety might be improved, instead of pulling up another abstract discourse which discounts their existence in our everyday life.

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4 Aoyama, Kaoru. (2007) Beyond the Fixed Identification of “Victim” or “Criminal”: A New Look at the Debate and the Policies surrounding Trafficked Women, in Tsujimura, M. and Yano, E. eds. Gender and Law in Japan. Sendai: Tohoku University Press, 99-118.

## Possibilities of a “Second Spring”: the interplay of desire and social realities for Japanese shufu

Petula, Sik-Ying Ho

### Introduction

This study is an attempt to understand how middle-aged married women in Tokyo deal with their identities as shufu (housewives) and how they cope with personal, relational and social changes in Japan. In the present study of Japanese shufu, I have attempted to uncover the diverse interplay of social mores and the personal, unspoken pleasures and desires in women’s lives, through inviting women to talk about their dreams, hobbies, romances, relationships and everyday life. This is to provide a wide and inclusive perspective of life situations of women in different kinds of relationships, with differing marital status, sexual inclinations and practices, as they confront challenges such as pregnancy, forced reduction of responsibilities after marriage, illness, extra marital affairs, separation from husbands, and children leaving home. I then attempt to document and analyze the imaginative agencies they employ to cope with the new social meanings that have been given to womanhood, and the forms of relationship taken in the meandering course of their desires, in the light of the limited economic and cultural resources that they possess as women in a patriarchal, capitalist society.

### Methodology

My analysis is based on the interviews I conducted in Tokyo in 2007. The interviews were all conducted by me, but in three cases where the interviewees did not speak English, I had the help of 3 Japanese volunteer interpreters who are my friends. Interview questions included the following: How do you describe yourself and your life? How do you understand the meaning of the Chinese term “second spring”? Is there an equivalent in Japanese? If so, how do you associate your life with that term? How does your imagining of a good life change and develop as you age? If you have a lot of money, what do you want to do with it? What are your expectations and imaginings of “the last sex ever”? What is the importance of sex in your life? In-depth interviews were conducted with 13 Japanese women, in 3 months of fieldwork in Tokyo. The profile of the interviewees can be summarized as follows (name, age, occupation, academic qualification): Miwa, 43, former actress/restaurant owner, overseas BA; Keiko, 48, photographer/artist, overseas BA; Misa 44, freelance translator/former NGO worker,

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overseas BA; Tomomi, 39, language teacher/6 months pregnant with her second child, overseas Master's; Ryoko, 45, part-time secretary for a public institution, high school; Takami, 46, free-lance video editor, high school; Hidemi, 57, former maid who had held different kinds of manual jobs, junior high school; Miki, 57, housewife/freelance translator/active participant in the peace movement, high school; Yumiko 44, academic/former NGO worker, overseas PhD; Yayoi, 46, academic/part-time teacher, overseas PhD; Risa, 46, academic/former news anchor, PhD; Mayu, 52, musician/artist, BA; and Mia, 63, housewife/formerly ran family business with husband/now retired.

### **Findings** What happens to women after marriage?

Of the 13 women, three were divorcees. Two women had divorced their husbands, 1 had been divorced by her husband; two had married again, while one had divorced twice. One had become a lesbian or bisexual after divorce. Of those who were married, 2 felt that their marriages were in crisis. We will see how the happy marriage, middle-class home, and family that women desire so much, especially as young adults, are not as rosy as they appear to be. Against all the stereotypes about Japanese women as wives and mothers, we see how some feel they have “had too much” and “cannot take it anymore,” and decide to leave their husbands and homes or come up with new living arrangements with their husbands.

### Marriage in crisis

Miwa, aged 42, is the wife of a Thai restaurant owner. When I met her, she openly said she was not really happy with her life because her husband, who was Thai, had just entered a monastery. In Thai Buddhist practice, it is uncertain whether this will be permanent, as it is not unusual in Thailand, for a man to do this for a variable period of time upon the death of his father. The wife apparently did not understand what this was about.

“On the 10th of July, my husband left Tokyo and went back to Thailand. His father was dying and so he had to hurry back home. My husband is Thai Chinese. One week later, his friend called me and told me that my husband had gone to the monastery to become a monk. I called his family. His mother just said he was in the monastery, that was it. They did not tell me anything. When I first heard that he had become a monk, I panicked, because I thought that means forever. In Japan, to be a monk is forever. Many Thai people have told me that in Thailand, you can be a

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monk for 3 months. I hope this is the case. We argued often and so I am not sure if he had left me.”

Two weeks after the interview, Miwa told me that her husband had gone back to his parents’ home. He refused to come home because he felt that Miwa had paid too much attention to the theatre, rather than to the family. Before her husband’s apparent desertion, Miwa had been a stage actress with a theatre group. She had to give up her theatre work to take care of the restaurant in a joint project with her husband. He even refused to talk about this with Miwa. Her husband’s refusal to talk led her to think about divorce. She did not want to do this, but felt her husband’s actions gave her no choice but to consider this as an option.

Similarly, Keiko was in the middle of a marriage crisis. Keiko is a photographer. Keiko was not happy about her marriage, not because her British academic husband was not nice to her but because she could not bear the stability and stagnancy of her life. She wanted to review her life and find a new direction in her art. Recently, she had acquired a boyfriend, also British, and she hoped that her husband would agree to a divorce.

“I am 48. My life was in decline, not a big decline, but just a stable life. My new boyfriend is 10 years younger than me. He is feminine and he has long hair. He said he wanted to be a housewife. I feel like we are lesbians. My ex-husband is very straight, a nice man but very straight. My boyfriend now is almost like a “transgendered lesbian” to me in terms of his personality. I can understand my husband’s anger but I hope that sooner or later he will accept the reality.”

Those who seemed happily married might also have had moments of doubt about their marriages and wanted to leave home. Tomomi is a case in point. She was 40 and had then been pregnant for 6 months with her second child.

“I had a miscarriage last year but this time I really hope that I will be okay. There are times when I really want to run away from home. Once, I packed everything and wanted to leave home. I had to leave the house. It was too much. My daughter saw me crying and she wanted to come with me. I asked, ‘Why are you coming?’ She said, ‘Because I am your son’ [she mixed up the word daughter and son. In Japanese, son is musuko and daughter is musume].”

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Tomomi eventually went back to her husband's place and did not talk about the event again with her husband. Her hope is now the second child, and she does not want to think too much about her marriage problems.

"I got home and life goes on. Now I am pregnant. You never know how long you will live. Life is something you cannot have control over. A baby is given as a gift. I am happy. My husband too, we were so happy to have the opportunity again to be mother and father and for a second child."

### Settled into post-divorce life

There are others, like Yumiko and Yayoi below, who seem to have already passed their marriage crisis and have settled into post-divorce lives. Their reflections on marriage speak to the changing expectations of middle-aged married women towards "the good life."

Yumiko, 43, an academic, had just gone through her second divorce. She was completely disillusioned about marriage and wanted to focus on her career.

"My first husband. He was 21 and I was 24 when we got married. We worked together. He does not speak any word of English. In working with NGOs, you need this. He envied me. He tried to dictate to me, not in the office but at home. His family had a huge debt and they expected us to pay it back for them. After 3 years, I decided to leave him."

Yumiko's second marriage, to an architect, lasted for 7 years. Unfortunately, when the economy declined, his office got much less business and he became unemployed. For 7 years, Yumiko had to take care of him and her two sons.

"One day I discovered that he had become involved with pachinko. In English, this is pin-ball games. I really blamed him for not taking care of our sons. The first son was not his, I could not blame him, but the second son is his own son, he should take care of him instead of playing pachinko. He thought he could earn some money."

Yumiko left her second husband and decided that she would devote her time to her career, especially as she could now leave the second son to the care of his father.

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Yayoi divorced her husband. She left her children to the care of her husband, and left for the United States to pursue a doctoral degree. There, she met the woman of her life and became lesbian.

“Looking back, there is something good about marriage. You don’t have to decide, other people decide for you. ‘Family responsibilities’ are a big word. It is easy, in a way. They have a decision mechanism. There is stability, no hassle with colleagues. You can have a middle-class way of life. But I just could not go on like that. I left my children to my husband and go to study in America and then I met the woman of my life. She was 26. I loved her very much.”

Yayoi was deeply hurt when her girlfriend, who felt that she could not cope with a long-distance relationship, left her for a man. Yayoi was devastated but she hung on to the hope that she would find another woman. “Men are okay but women are much better. Relationship with women can be much, much deeper,” she said.

### Unconventional marriages

There are women who describe their marriages as happy. This is somehow related to the way they manage their marriage lives. Mayu is a case in point.

“I am 52. Many men have proposed to me but I said no. I have never wanted to get married, but my husband is different. He called me and asked me to help him with his visa. Otherwise, he had to leave the country. He is British. I said, okay, let me help you. “

Mayu did not believe in marriage, but she treasured friendship. She felt that she and her husband were able to survive 18 years of marriage because they had not always lived together. Mayu seemed to be proud of her life and her unique marriage but she was also very much aware that this is not something to brag about. It appears that at least some Japanese women are searching for alternative ways to lead their lives, either within marriage or after divorce. So what do Japanese women want? How can we understand their desires, both those that can be articulated and those that cannot? I hoped to find a way to understand their dreams, through the way they define the term “second spring,” which was used as a sensitizing concept in this study, to allow the women the opportunity to articulate their ideals, dreams and wishes as they entered mid-life.

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### The two springs No first spring

For many shufu, the first spring never was. Many of their dissatisfactions with their marriages are perhaps best captured by what Tomomi, aged 39, said about her second spring really being her first spring. This is because it was only when she began her “second spring,” that she felt able to live life’s many different dimensions.

“The term itself is ‘second’ but actually, for me, it is the first time or just at the beginning of the time that you really [are] enjoying your life.”

When asked about her second spring, she mentioned her pregnancy with her second child and her life after returning home to stay with her husband after an argument. Tomomi wanted to enjoy her second spring, not because it was simply a recurrence of the first spring, which was innocent, ignorant and escapist. In her second spring, she wanted to be able to live life more fully, embracing its hardships as well as its goodness.

For Tomomi, the notion of second spring is a positive way of looking at her problems. Instead of running away from problems, she now takes them head on. Is she really enjoying her life? Was it just wishful thinking? Nobody knows. But what is obvious is that she knew that she needed to be positive and strong in order to be able to turn difficulties into some form of “spring.”

Some older women also feel that they cannot afford to have a second spring. The oldest woman in the group, Mia, was 63 years old. She told me she had not even started a second spring because, after the children had left home, she still had to take care of her parents, who were in their 80s. When asked whether she felt this was a heavy burden, she said,

“It is my responsibility. I don’t think too much about it. That’s life. I would have more time to travel and enjoy life later on, but now I just have to be there for them.”

In any case, she still teaches flower arranging to keep her interest alive and to have social contacts. Other older women mentioned they had not had any first spring. They felt the need to catch up.

Miki was 58. She had become a volunteer in a peace movement in the previous few years, after her mother-in-law had gone. She had found it

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difficult to enjoy any “spring” because of her mother-in-law, who was chronically ill.

“She broke her bones four times and had been in and out of hospital many, many times before she passed away two years ago. I was exhausted. My husband did not want me to do any volunteer work for the peace movement, but I insisted. Otherwise, I would go crazy.”

Recent studies of aging and the family in Japan involve intensive discussions of care for the frail and dependent elderly, tossing the responsibility and burden between the public and the private spheres.<sup>1</sup> Many women had not had any “spring” because of their roles as caregivers, but some had tried to balance their lives with some form of community involvement, hobby or dream on the side, as their so-called “second spring.” In fact it was their first.

### Second spring as falling in love again

Some women were more fortunate. They claimed to have had a fair share of a good first spring. But like all smooth sailing, sooner or later one arrives at the destination, and they had to get off and embark on entirely different journeys for their second springs. For many women, this meant falling in love without threatening their marriages and families.

Risa’s first spring was her career as the administrator of, and worker for, an NGO, but she had had to give up her career for her family and herself. However, she had not given up hope for a second spring as a happy working mother, with some “stimulating” relationships outside marriage.

“I am 43. I have worked for 18 years for an NGO before I quit. It was a painful decision. Second spring is second life. In my second life, I want a lifestyle that can satisfy me as a mother and as a working person. I want to, if possible, to have a challenging job. I know it is greedy.”

Her need of more “stimulating” relationships was largely platonic. From these relationships, she derived a satisfaction that could not be found in marriage.

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<sup>1</sup> Tanaka, K. and Jonson, N.E. (2008). “The Shifting Roles of Women in Intergenerational Mutual Caregiving in Japan: The Importance of Peace, Population Growth, and Economic Expansion.” *Journal of Family History*, 33: 114.

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“Maybe my body is not as good as before and so I am not interested in showing it to different men. But I am really interested in establishing different "simulating" working relationships with interesting guys. My husband is not so good at lovemaking. He is a life partner. It is not so bad to have a life partner and to have different men who can work with me in different projects.”

Some shufu were highly aware of the bodily changes that accompanied them into their second spring. However, instead of focusing on bodily attributes and trying to compete with younger women, they learned to seek sexual stimulation in different ways, which were both legitimate and pleasurable.

Takami had a happy marriage too, but she felt it was unreal. She found more passion in Korean dramas than in her married life. Together with some other housewives, she started to look for cute partners, and found a new love in a musical. It was second spring for her, as her life changed from gemstone collecting and watching Japanese soap operas to falling in love again. Lamenting the late arrival of her second spring that gave substance to what had only been a dream, Takami spoke about dating cute young male actors along with some other housewives, and embarking with them on a journey of romantic or sexual adventure.

“I am 46. Second spring is second dream for me. It is a dream. It has no roots and that is why it can be big. My second spring is Korean drama. It makes me feel sad. I could almost imagine myself a part of it. I want to be in love forever and stay young. I have a kid and a husband. I feel like I am chasing something in my memory. The drama is much more passionate. Many things happen one after the other, you are so hooked and there is no room to think about other things. Lee Byung Hon, the Korean actor is so precious to me.”

From the above, we can see that very few women have boyfriends. Most of the women claimed that their lovers were all imaginary. Intimacy could only happen in fantasy. Whatever these women do with their second spring, they are embarking on a journey of no return—not only because they are aging and their bodies are losing their original, youthful form—but also because they are finding new values and lifestyles. One is never sure if the adventures and the hard pushing is a

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desperate attempt to make full use of their bodies and their abilities before they lose them, or whether there is in them some form of awakening or enlightenment that allows them to see youthful bodies and aspirations as vain illusions which have proven to be disappointing. The shufu were all aware of this.

### Second spring as new love relationships

Keiko was the only woman who had admitted to having a new boyfriend. Keiko celebrated her new relationship with a man with a personality of a transgendered lesbian, which made her life “blue” and sexual. She was quite straightforward about what she meant by second spring.

“Second spring? Maybe it is called second youth. It is about falling in love again. Spring... We call it blue spring, the period of youth. In English it is green. In Japanese it is blue, and blue and green are interchangeable....We Japanese think in terms of four different seasons.... Spring is young. As you grow older, it is summer and autumn is declining years. Spring for Japanese has some sexual connotation. It is about coming to realize your sexuality.”

Some say second spring is second youth—people want their youth back. But how can middle-aged women do this? Obviously, second youth means falling in love again. Yayoi became a lesbian after her divorce and postgraduate studies. She wanted to have the acceptance of her children.

Yayoi was glad that her sexual choice had not affected her relationship with her children but she was deeply hurt by her girlfriend when she left her for a man. Yayoi was devastated and could only resume normal functioning after 2 years of depression. She had discovered that a relationship with a woman could be deeper than that with a man, and she hung on to the hope that she could find another woman of her life.

### Second spring as career

Many middle-aged women find a good job more important than a new romance. Risa is a case in point.

“I was the news announcer on the TV. I was dreaming of marriage and he proposed to me. Wow...I was happy that I could get married! But the reality was not the same. I had to cook and I had to clean. I had no social position. Just a wife. I watched TV and saw other women

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appearing on TV. Yesterday, I was there. Oh, no! While I was a housewife, I had a hard time. I lost my identity. I cannot forget the pain. Career is important to me. I don't want to go back to the life of a housewife."

For women who are fed up with men, their second spring can only be about their careers unless they can accept lesbian relationships, as in the case of Yayoi. Yumiko said she could not imagine intimacy with men again:

"I am too sick of males especially those who are born and grow up in Japanese society because our society is quite macho. They expect you to serve them. Now I only want to develop my career."

### The last sex ever

Since I could not ask these women directly about the last time they had had sex—my two interpreter friends refused to translate such explicit questions for me—I resorted to asking them about their "last sex ever": if this were the last time you could have sex in this life, what would you expect from it?

### Soccer and opera

In response, some women emphasized that it would not be sexual intercourse. For instance, Ryoko emphasized tenderness, and looked for beauty.

"Before I die? I want to have Pavarotti sing for me. Do you know the Italian opera singer who has just died? I want to see him sing for me at the Milan Theatre and I want Manchester United to play a match for me."

### Pillow talk

Some of these women had learnt, in their second spring, why sex is quite often impossible in marriages and homes, institutions and places where sex is supposed to take place – which can very often be obstacles to sex. The 58-year-old Miki thinks pillow talk is what she wants.

"The word sex has much deeper and broader meaning for me now. Just touching and talking, side by side, yes, pillow talk is sex. When I was young, I used to think sex is intercourse. Now I think it is pillow talk."

### A young lover who will never appear

Only Misa was able to be specific about her dream sex partner. "Last sex? In my imagination only. Because I am working, I bring my

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daughter to child care centre. One of her friends' father was there. When I was pregnant, he came to talk to me. He said, my wife is also pregnant. He has 2 sons and he wants a daughter. He would not admit it. I asked him if he would want a daughter. He said no. He was very shy when he talked. He is very cute.... If I were to choose someone other than my husband with whom i would have a one-night adventure, it would be him.”

### Handsome actors as fantasy lovers

Some of the women could not imagine their last sex partner but they could visualize the environment.

“Last sex. Do you mean with Lee Byung Hun? (Laugh) I would like it in a room overlooking the ocean. Maybe a very gentle breeze. Very slow. I mean time is going slowly, it is a relaxed atmosphere. What I am imagining is after sex. In fact, I cannot see what is there. I cannot see my partner there. I cannot see who the partner is. Yes, it is empty.”

### Hugs and reassurance

In second spring, sex takes on a new dimension; sex does not necessarily mean intercourse. These shufu have come to realize that anxieties, expectations, and drama are part of the package that we normally understand as sex. However, they have deconstructed sexual intercourse as the epitome of the myth of sex. This insight is well captured by what Misa said about the last sex ever for her. It was not the multiple orgasms that throw couples into convulsions that we witness on TV. It was much calmer, less dramatic but more deliberate. It was Misa's sex:

“My last sex—just hugs, to be hugged. Heterosexual sex is like a battlefield, a big theatre production. For me, sex is a safe place to be. My final sex, just hugs maybe. Just need some reassurance.”

In their second spring, some of these women started to think and value sex in its own right, rather than as sex with someone with whom they were associated by social conventions—a boyfriend, or a husband. If there was anything about the nature of sex in the shufu's second spring, it was this: a partner for sex is different from sex for a partner. Sexually relating had a legitimacy of its own, one that transcended the social mores and expectations of those who were associated with it. It was not a fling, a selfish act of the flesh, but a right, or even a morality in itself, which necessarily breached the laws of mutual ownership and possession. It might be so meticulously carried out that it would not

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upset the existing social order, which was unnecessary, for they knew that what we mean by honesty is not a universal virtue, at least not in this case. It might only create a catch-22 situation that would guarantee pain on both sides and not promise a better life. What good was that?

Many interviewees reported that, if they were to have their last sex ever, they would imagine it in a very romantic seaside setting. But they could not see anyone there at the point when they were asked to visualise the scene. Of course the meanings of dreams are open to different readings. A viable reading may be that they were so tired of the men they had been with that they rather wanted to imagine having sex without a man being there. Another viable reading might be that they had realized sex is possible without attachment to any man in particular. Either way, their narratives highlight sex without having recourse to anyone in particular.

Not even pillow talk was needed. In this sense, sex of the second spring takes an entirely new meaning, without being tied down to conventions and the media's definition of sex.

### **Discussion** **Big dreams and small** **comforts**

Almost all the Japanese shufu seemed to suggest that they were plagued by multitudinous demands from the social world around them simply because they were shufu— despite the fact that many were very well educated and cultured, and most had high hopes and aspirations. Yayoi got a doctoral degree, and Hidemi also went back to study for a postgraduate degree, which eventually led to an academic career. The multitudinous, and sometimes mutually exclusive, demands on them are best reflected by Takami:

“While I was a housewife, I had a hard time.... Washing the toilet is the Japanese life. Washing their body. Avoiding virus is the key point in people's life. We want our family to be healthy.”

What was Takami's life before she had cute guys as imaginary lovers, whom she sees on TV and in musicals? Other people may find this either trivial or depressing, but these guys are her source of energy.

“Before these guys appeared in my life, I had Japanese TV dramas and other things.”

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The social demands on Japanese housewives can only spiral up in time, with increases in societal expectations and the strong adherence to social mores associated with Japanese womanhood. To be a shufu often means one is a manager, waitress, maid, cleaner, and perfect wife and mother at the same time. Managing a home and family includes the ability to clean the scum in the drain of the family bathtub. Shufus must do so perfectly, with grace, looking nice, and smiling too. Who would not want to get out?

Many Japanese women only get relief from such demands in flights of fantasy and dreams. Ryoko meticulously articulated her desire for social recognition this way: when asked about her last sex ever, she wanted a small hug—but she also wanted Pavarotti to sing for her, and Manchester United to play a game just for her, too! It may not be far from the truth to say that what some women really want is the social recognition due them for their contributions as shufu, including accomplishments both in the outside world and at home. Misa, for her second spring, wanted a small hug for the housewife and pomp and ceremony for her career as an NGO. Two trends may be seen in the interviewees' conceptions of second spring. One may properly be called "pushing"—to go all the way to attain previous life goals that they had not been able to attain as housewives, or as career persons, or both. These life goals range from new relationship patterns, to careers and lifestyles, but they are approached with full fervor, in a "now or never" manner, sometimes even at the expense of upsetting the micro social order of their families and friends.

### Dreams and springs: romantic Japanese shufu

The shufu we interviewed described a rich repertoire of strategies for living their lives in and after marriage. Some continued to have dreams of "spring," although the ways they defined the term second spring varied. Very few upheld the illusions associated with love and marriage as they first understood them. Those whose first marriages had lasted had come to a different understanding of them. This suggests that the desire of normal married heterosexuals to explore alternative lifestyles has to be recognized. Some shufu fantasies of love were revealed through fascination with Korean dramas, operas and other cultural productions. They had grand dreams about love and fantasies about love, and were articulate and expressive in connecting whatever they saw in the dramas to their own lives, making one wonder if their lives were unfinished tapestries awaiting re-designing and continued

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weaving. However, most, it seems, did not put their dreams and desires into practice, in consideration of their families. Many of the women chose to use metaphors rather than concrete events to express their wishes. They described beautiful things in detail –especially, how they related a “good life” with nature. In their imagining of their “last sex ever” there was always nature, slow breezes, the ocean, etc., but the specifically sexual part seemed a little empty – as one said, she could not see who she would be with. One cannot help but ask: Is it because they have no romance in their lives that they are so alive in their fantasies? Are they nostalgic for things they had never had, things that had never existed in their lives, as some scholars have described?

### Theatre, nature, and travel: culturally sophisticated Japanese women

In talking to these women, one cannot avoid getting the impression that Japanese women are exposed to “sophisticated” cultural activities. They describe “the good life” in terms of more cosmopolitan and globally-appreciated middle-class images, and enjoy what most people consider cultural luxuries in their everyday lives—hot springs, for example. They also tended to refer to nature in their discourses about love. Some explained that this might be because they had grown up with four seasons, and so had a lot of images about nature and the flowers of each season, as the society is so season-oriented. The highly-developed Japanese cultural sensitivity and refinement concerning “nature” and natural images are always evident. They had a strong passion for travel, and often said they wanted to see “nature” overseas as well as in their own country. The countries and regions they knew of and had traveled to included Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, Sicily and Greece. One cannot help but think that a strong element of curiosity, exploration, and adventure is always present in these women of an island country.

This “cultural” orientation allows them to multiply the definitions and forms of their second springs, giving them the cultural tools and the content, so to speak, to make their transition to a second spring smoother and more justifiable in conventional terms. Instead of viewing “second spring” as only a transition from one relationship to another, it can be seen as a form of exploring, of taking on a new life orientation. Six interviewees had overseas educations, and most seemed to have had considerable exposure to Western art, literature and movies—a situation that reminds me of Kelsky’s book, *Women on the Verge*. This is perhaps the “eroticization of national power relations,” in which a society transforms: a phase in which women participate in cross-cultural

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or transnational activities in interactions with “the other,” breaking with formerly conventional modes of work and family and discovering new selves in “the atmosphere of ‘freedom’ of the foreign/West.”<sup>2</sup> At any rate, this seems a significant factor in shaping the definition and forms of their second springs. There is clear statistical evidence that increasing numbers of young Japanese women are spending time abroad.<sup>3</sup> Considering Japan’s integration into the global economy, characterized by economic development and the unprecedented ease of travel, it is not surprising that the number of Japanese women working, studying and traveling abroad is on the rise.

From living room to  
kitchen:  
the perfect  
mistress/handmaiden

I was impressed by the high-heeled shoes my interviewees wore to meet me. What these women wear for casual occasions, for me anyway, is symbolic of the balance and the elegance of these Japanese women. Japanese women are always presentable, polite, hospitable, and organized—it seems they want to be beautiful and proper for themselves and for “you.” But is this a matter of social pressure? This may be at a core part of the identity of Japanese shufu. This need for perfection, for proper presentation, makes them stand out as women or wives par excellence—yet they pay a heavy price for it. It comes hand in hand with their willingness to work very hard, physically and mentally, to attain a level of “presentability” both in personal appearance and manners and in the places that they care for, such as their offices and homes. They spend a lot of effort and time finding out about and studying products and beautification techniques. This applies to the strict dress codes, the high heels, and various home products and kitchenware. For every small problem in life, the Japanese always have a well developed solution. The banana hanger, for example, is not just useful and practical, but beautiful. The list is almost endless and so is the amount of time and effort devoted to acquiring this huge body of know-how. The maintenance of the well-known Japanese aesthetic refinement takes work, and much of it is female work. Most middle-class Japanese women go without the privilege of hiring housemaids in their homes.

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2 Kelsky, K. (2001). *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 121.

3 Ono, H. & Piper, N. (2004). “Out of Asia: Skilling, re-skilling and deskilling of female migrants. Japanese women studying abroad, the case of the United States.” *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 27(2), 101-118.

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Almost every interviewee had to cook and clean with her own two hands. But what a great job they do! In this respect, they are like housemaids. That Japanese women can be perfect mistresses and housemaids at the same time is a contradiction I really want to explore further. It is best represented by one of the interviewees, the 46-year-old video editor Takami, who put it bluntly: Japanese women are living an impossibility.

“I would say I am typical because I have 4 or 5 friends who are very much like me. If you look at me from outside, I am free willing. I am doing what I want to do. But when I go home, I am doing household chores very late at night. The gap between what I am doing and what I appear to be doing is huge and this is the life of most Japanese women are like. The gap is almost a given to Japanese women. It is part of life for Japanese women. What we have to deal with at home is so hard to the extent that we have to relieve from it through dreams.”

Something very strong is needed to hold this blatant contradiction together. To be beautiful, *kawaii* (cute) and appropriately feminine and to be a manager, waitress, maid, cleaner all at the same time requires one to be very tough. Tough means resilient, being in control, with inner strength. Tough also means being willing to have a façade or wear a mask, if necessary. It is almost combativeness, hidden, like the popular image of the samurai. But these apparently contradictory qualities also have a degree of complementarity, and at certain times actually fuel and energize each other. Behind the beautiful mistress are hard-studied, practiced makeup skills. Behind the beautiful home is the knowledgeable and hard-working cleaner. The harder you work, the more you know, the more perfect you are. However, one day these elements seem to lead to unstoppable, vicious cycles, and subvert each other. Rosenberger argues that women perform a self, on both a front stage and a back stage, and that the two do not necessarily fit neatly together. Thus, “front-stage personas and backstage personalities may differ—contending, complementing, subverting, and overlapping with each other.”<sup>4</sup> Among Japanese women, these contradictory and complementary qualities are held within the individual.

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4 Rosenberger, N. (2001). *Gambling with Virtue: Japanese Women and the Search for Self in a Changing Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 60.

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The Japanese shufu identity thus is a matter of beauty and pride, but also of suffocation and enslavement. This psychological makeup is inherently unstable, constantly a target for subversive dreams of “second spring.” Whether such dreams can be realized or not, their prevalence may reflect the magnitude of the problems of the shufu.

### Conclusion

This study contributes to a growing body of work which gives recognition to the desire of women to move out of the charmed circle of married heterosexuals and explore alternative forms of relationships outside the frontiers of boring “normality,” even though many women seem to stay within it.<sup>5</sup> The nature of this desire is ambivalent and seeks its own realization in ways that can never be adequately captured by the limited conceptual categories available to us, be they categories of gender, sexuality or identity.<sup>6</sup> The most “normal” and docile of Japanese shufu have their strategies of pleasure, even though the label shufu carries more positive connotations. These so-called “normal” married heterosexuals may also want to gain new experiences of self and relationships as they approach mid-life. Their discontent and deviations from “normality” are generally ignored, in an effort to maintain the illusion that there really is a core of good married women with no sexual or life desires to achieve, who are content to reproduce the accepted social order.<sup>7</sup> The idea of a second spring helps us see more clearly how the erotic satisfaction of these married women is obtained in a multitude of ways, including love and care, sexual intimacy and gratification, erotic pursuits, and other desire-fulfilment that may be carried out supplementary to, or within, their roles as wives and mothers. This can be seen for instance, in soap operas, musicals, and extra marital relationships, all of which are “passports” to other options, including that of no longer being a mother and wife, or at least making being a wife and mother more tolerable.<sup>8</sup>

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5 Ho, 2006; (2007a) “Desperate Housewives—The Case of ‘Si-nai’ in Hong Kong.” *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 22 (3), 255-270.

6 Tsang, A.K.T. and Ho. P.S.Y. (2007). “Lost in Translation: Sex and Sexuality in Elite Discourse and Everyday Language.” *Sexualities*, 10 (5), 623-644.

7 Ho, 2007 a; (2007b). “Money in the Private Chamber—Hong Kong Chinese Women’s Way of Planning for Their Retirement.” *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 22, 84-98.

8 Ibid.

## Stories from Borders and Stories of Borders

Sriprapha Petcharamesree\*

### Introduction

“Borders define geographical boundaries of political entities or legal jurisdictions, such as governments, states or sub-national administrative divisions.” A nation-state, therefore, “defines its geographical limits by territory and its demographic limits by nationality.”<sup>1</sup> A national of a given state is considered as a member of that particular political community. Those who are not nationals are “aliens” or “foreigners” who are not usually entitled to the same membership goods or the same treatment. Division between nationals and non-nationals is, oftentimes, so clear that it creates the sense of “us” and “others” and it perpetuates the sense of “exclusive state” through borders which no one can pass without control and restrictions.

As admitted by Coleman and Harding, political (and economic) borders are arbitrary and imperfect.<sup>2</sup> Still, political authorities of the modern nation-state system use borders both conceptually and in practice, to regulate membership in terms of national citizenship, in spite of the fact that the boundaries of political community are not only no longer adequate<sup>3</sup> but are also being challenged by the global economy, communication technology, internationalization, and the transnationalization of networks and cultures, etc. Seyla Benhabib points out that “citizenship and practices of political membership are the rituals through which the nation is reproduced spatially. The control of territorial boundaries, which is coeval with the sovereignty of the

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1 Wetherall, William. (2006). Nationality in Japan, in Soo Im Lee, et al, (eds), Japan's Diversity Dilemmas : Ethnicity, Citizenship, and Education. New York: iUniverse, Inc., 11.

2 Coleman, Jules L. and Harding, Sarah K. (1995). Citizenship, the demands of justice, and the moral relevance of political borders, Warren, F. Schwartz, ed., Justice in Immigration. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 35: 38.

3 Benhabib, Seyla. (2004). The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1.

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modern nation-state, seeks to ensure the purity of the nation in time through the policing of its contacts and interaction in space.”<sup>4</sup> She further argues that “the history of citizenship reveals that nationalist aspirations are ideologies; they attempt to mould a complex, unruly, and unwieldy reality according to some simple governing principle of reduction, such as national membership. Every nation has its others, within and without.”<sup>5</sup> This argument reinforces what Benedict Anderson calls “imagined community.” “A Nation-state is an imagined political community. It is imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. Because of this imagination, a nation (-state) is inherently exclusive.”<sup>6</sup> This means that certain categories of people are included within its self construction, based on particular and narrowly defined criteria, and many other are excluded. This is true for all nations.

However, the notion of borders could not be understood only from territorial and geographical perspectives. Borders have been created within cultural and social spheres. Also borders can easily be created from within oneself and one’s own society. The discrimination, such as against women everywhere, against the Ainu, Okinawans, the Koreans, and the Buraku in Japan, or discrimination against ethnic minorities in Thailand, has nothing to do with nationality or being foreigners. They are only considered “different from us.” We cannot understand the notion of discrimination against particular groups of people(s), without understanding the self-constructed psychological borders that we create within ourselves.

This paper attempts to examine the politics of borders and citizenship<sup>7</sup> as well as the politics of difference in Thailand and Japan, through different stories that either the author encounters by herself or by referring to some empirical studies conducted by other researchers. It argues that when a given state decides who will become members, or when any particular person or group of people treat others perceived to be substantially different- and more than likely, by virtue of that difference, inferior –this represents a betrayal of the principles of human

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4 Ibid 18

5 Ibid.

6 Anderson, Benedict. (2000) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 6.

7 The terms “citizenship and nationality” in this paper are used interchangeably to mean a citizen or a national of a particular country.

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rights. Explicitly, that it violates “the ideal that all human beings are equal and that all human beings have the same basic bundle of fundamental rights.”<sup>8</sup>

The papers begin with different empirical stories that all are real and have emerged from the real people who live in Japan and Thailand. The section which follows will discuss the concept of political community, political membership and access to membership goods. In the subsequent section, I will argue that the issues of discrimination have nothing to do with being a national member or an alien, but have to do, instead, with the politics of difference. In this sense, the concept of borders is interpreted in a broader sense than just political and geographical or territorial boundaries. They cover social, cultural and psychological boundaries. The last part will focus on looking critically at policies and practices of a so called “liberal democratic polity” and its behavior towards people living in their territory. Universal human rights principles and widely accepted human rights standards are used as a basis for analysis.

### Stories from Borders

The first story is from the Northern part of Thailand along the Thai-Myanmar borders where many small villages are hidden in the valley of the Mae Hong Son province. Mae Dee, one of those hidden villages, has been inhabited by Karen ethnic minorities. Among 90 villagers, Zomu is the only young man in the village who can speak a bit of Thai. His father was the first to have resettled in this village almost twenty years ago. None of 90 inhabitants in the village has any ID card. Zomu has been volunteering to teach Thai to the children in the village. He was arrested many times without much understanding for what charges he was put in jail. In the prison, he was taught to sing the Thai national anthem. He thinks this could be the only way to escape from the arrest and to one day become Thai; so he has been teaching children how to sing the Thai national anthem.

Zomu’s father told the team of Law students from Thammasat Law School (working on the legal status of hill tribes and ethnic minorities) during one of their visits to the village that:

“I recall that my descendants came here back and forth. In the past, we did not think which country we were in as this village was/has always been inhabited by the Karens. Some officials used to come and

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8 Hampton, Jean. (1995) *Immigration, Justice and Identity*, in Warren, F. Schwartz, ed., *Justice in Immigration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 77.

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asked if we have any identity card, we said “NO.” We don’t want to go back to another side of Salween,<sup>9</sup> too much fighting.” “But today is not the same as in the past. Borders and citizenship become more and more important. We want to become Thai citizens, one day.”<sup>10</sup>

Zomu and many others entered into Thailand illegally and their legal status is still irregular in the eyes of the Thai authorities. The status of people remains illegal until they are granted proper documents. This is the case of Ayu Namthep, a stateless mother. Ayu was born in Burma in 1955 of Karen parents with Burmese nationality. Her parents who were recognized by the Thai government as political refugees were allowed to live in Mae Hong Son since 1956. Although Ayu was born in Burma, she was never registered anywhere. She has been stateless since the day she opened her eyes.

Ayu was brought up in Mae Hong Son and got her degree from Payap University in Chiang Mai where she has been teaching at the Musical Department since she graduated in 1978. She was legally married to a Thai in the same year and had two sons; both are Thai nationals. Her husband died in 1985. He left her with two sons but not Thai nationality. She remains stateless. She was not recognized by the Thai state.

All went well with Ayu and her children, until her two sons were selected to join the competition of student’s chorus in the Philippines. As they were still minors, signature of their mother was required. The matter became complicated since Ayu has never had any legal documents. Another time her elder son was invited to participate in the Youth music festival in the United States. He faced the same problem; his mother could not provide him with documents. Ayu was trying to negotiate with the Immigration Office. The only suggestion (or rather “threat”) she received was to stay silent otherwise her two children could have their nationality withdrawn.

Her two sons have now passed the age of maturity. But Ayu remains stateless. She applied for Thai citizenship and the process has been

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9 Salween is another international river running from China and some part of it separates Thailand and Myanmar. A number of large dams are being constructed and/or developed for hydro-electric power.

10 Chamlongraj, Paskorn and Zomu-Pamiew. (2007). in Oonkaew, Pinkaew. (ed.), *Stateless and Nationalityless Persons in Thai State*. Bangkok: Winyuchon, 143-148.

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going on for years. Until today, Ayu whose husband was a Thai and whose two children are Thai, is still not granted Thai nationality.<sup>11</sup>

Access to citizenship and nationality, or any other proper legal documents, has proved difficult for many people but collective withdrawal of nationality by the authority seems (too) easy. On February 5, 2002, the Thai Ministry of the Interior, on the recommendation of the governor of Chiang Rai province, has withdrawn the Thai nationality of 1,243 indigenous people living in Mae Aie village. The population in the whole village became suddenly “nationalityless.” The case was brought to the Administrative Court who ruled clearly that the withdrawal of nationality from those people was unlawful, and therefore, the court instructed the agencies concerned to return the citizenship to the 1243 villagers. However, in order to regain their citizenship, each of them was required to prove that they were “Thai.” By mid-June 2008, only a handful of over 100 people were able to reacquire their nationality.

The story moves away from the borders to Bangkok and this is the story of Sorbi. Sorbi was born in Bangkok of Rohingya parents in 1982. His parents illegally entered into Thailand. His father did not have chance to make his way to the Thai capital but died from malaria while at the border between Myanmar and Thailand. His mother was luckier, for she was able to reach Bangkok where she gave birth to a child, Sorbi. Sorbi did not have a birth registration because his mother did not dare to report to the authorities, for fear of being arrested as she entered Thailand without any proper documents. She died when Sorbi was only about ten years old. He has been, since then, on his own and assisted only by neighbors. Sorbi has no personal legal status. He has been arrested and deported back to Myanmar three times but has always managed to come back to Thailand.

“Where do you want me to go? I was born and grew up here. I don’t speak any word of Burmese. My family is here. Although I was not recognized by law, I am a human being. I exist.”

In 2005, Sorbi registered himself as a Burmese migrant worker. The work permit is the first official document he has had in his life.

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11 Kanchanachitra-Saisoonthorn, Punthip. (2007) Stateless and Nationalityless Mothers, in Oonkaew, Pinkaew. (ed.), Stateless and Nationalityless Persons in Thai State. Bangkok: Winyuchon,138-141.

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Although he holds a work permit, Sorbi, who has been earning his living by selling roti, has been still arrested from time to time. Preparing and selling roti has been his only way of living but it is not a profession that a migrant worker is allowed to perform. Moreover, having a work permit does not mean that he lives legally in the country.<sup>12</sup> Sorbi is a de facto and de jure stateless person.

The issues of legal status and citizenship in Thailand are rather complex. There are four different groups of people living in Thailand without legal status. The first group is made up of the Thais without legal status and documents. The reasons for not having legal documents vary: some have not reported to the authorities, some are not registered, others are abandoned. The second group is hill tribes and ethnic minorities. Most of them live in the remote areas in the North, along the Thai-Myanmar or Thai-Laotian borders. For security reason, the Thai government has been reluctant to grant them Thai citizenship. The third group is migrant workers who can be divided into two categories: regular migrant workers and irregular/undocumented migrant workers. Some in the latter category are registered under the registration scheme launched by the Thai government in the late 1990s, and the others are un-registered. The fourth group is people fleeing from fighting, asylum seekers, and refugees. Some of them have been living in temporary shelters along the Thai-Myanmar borders for more than a decade.

In 2007, Kritya Achavanijkul and her team compiled statistics of different groups. The statistics reveal that there are still about 514,420 Thais, ethnic minorities and hill tribes without proper documents, out of which 69,229 are children. By October 2006, there were about 1.52 million migrant workers. These two groups already account for 2,021,643 people. Out of the total number, the children of 5-18 years of age amounted to 249,129 or 12.3 %<sup>13</sup> of people living in Thailand without proper legal status.

It is important to note that the statistics compiled may not give the actual picture of a large number of people. Although they were born and live in Thailand, many decide to apply for work permit as Burmese,

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12 Paisampanichkul, Darunee. (2007) Sorbi: Person without State nor Nationality, in Oonkaew, Pinkaew. (ed.), *Stateless and Nationalityless Persons in Thai State*. Bangkok: Winyuchon, 157-163.

13 Achavanijkul, Kritya. *Migrants and the Issue of Management of Education in Thailand*, IPSR, Mahidol University.

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Laotian or Cambodian migrant workers<sup>14</sup> for the lack of proper documents. That is the only way for them to have a job and earn their living.

Access to citizenship or having legal status has been difficult for some groups of people, not only in Thailand but also in Japan. The conditions may differ, though. During my fellowship in Japan, I come across a number of Koreans living in Japanese society.

“I was born in Japan as Korean (3rd generation). Now I am Japanese national. My first attempt to get Japanese nationality was dated back to 1975 when I was 18. I applied 3 times before I was granted Japanese nationality in 2001. When I was young I was using Japanese name until I was 18 because I was afraid of discrimination. I could not speak much Korean. Even if I spoke Korean well, I would not have been seen as Korean by my Korean fellows in Korea.”<sup>15</sup>

While a number of Koreans living in Japan opt to apply for Japanese nationality, some decide to remain Koreans with permanent residency status. A Korean professor told me in our conversation that:

“I am third generation Korean born, grown up and educated in Japan. I am Korean by nationality. I don’t want to be Japanese because the Japanese state discriminated against us. The naturalization process is so humiliating for us. Our Korean identity and cultures are not recognized. I make distinction, though, between Japanese people and Japan as a nation-state. My son, he was born in Japan too but I don’t want him to be Japanese.”<sup>16</sup>

Atsuko Abe explained in her article as follows: “the government’s restrictionist policy discourages those who may consider naturalization. ‘Zainichi’ or permanent residents, especially in the younger generation, do not necessarily turn away from naturalization because of historical resentment, but often because of the sheer bureaucratic nightmare and

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14 Only migrant workers from three countries namely Burma, Cambodia and Lao PDR are allowed to register under the registration scheme.

15 Dr. Soo im Lee, a prominent scholar from Ryukoku University, Japan, in her self-introduction before her talk which was given during the visit of ALFP fellows in Kyoto on October 10th, 2007.

16 A private conversation made on October 23rd, 2007.

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the prohibitive attitude by the government officials that they face. The fact that dual citizenship/nationality is not an option for Korean permanent residents also discourages naturalization.”<sup>17</sup>

What about new comers in Japan? During my trip to Himeiji, I met a few Vietnamese refugees who were resettled to Japan in the mid 1980s. At a learning center run by a group of volunteer teachers, I had chance to talk to one Vietnamese refugee. She came to Himeiji 14 years ago. She married a Vietnamese refugee who is still traumatized by the long years of war in Vietnam. She is, therefore, the only bread-winner of the family with three children. Her three children have Japanese nationality to which she still does not get access. She could hardly speak Japanese. Her work in the line-industry does not require her to speak. Recently she has started learning Japanese in order to communicate with her children, who do not speak much Vietnamese any more.

It is worth noting that, as of December 2006, there are about 2,084,919 foreigners (with legal entry) in Japan. The biggest group is Koreans whose number is 598,219 followed by Chinese (560,741) and Brazilians (312,979) and the Filipinos (193,488). Smaller numbers are from Peru (58,721), the USA (51,321), Thailand (39,618), Vietnam (32,485), Indonesia (24,858), India (18,906), and others numbering 193,583 persons.<sup>18</sup> Out of this number, about 800,000 of them are considered as trainees.

The number shown above is not unimportant as it is widely recognized that Japan has been applying a very strict immigration policy. Abe suggested that the reform of the Immigration Act in 1990 did not change the policy, because “its aim is solely controlling the entrance and exits of the people into the country, nothing to do with the immigrants as persons.”<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to note that the Immigration Act, according to Abe, “specifically allowed second and third generation Japanese from abroad (mostly from Brazil, Peru, and the Philippines) to stay unconditionally. The decision making process within the Ministry of Justice coincided with the process to provide clear legal status to third

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17 Abe, Atsuko. (2006) *Citizenship, Colonial Past and Immigration Policy – A comparative Study between Japan and the United Kingdom*. *Obirin Review of International Studies*, 18, 117.

18 Statistics compiled by Kimura, Yuji, RINK, Osaka, on October 25th, 2007.

19 Abe, op cit, 119.

generation Koreans in Japan.”<sup>20</sup> She referred to the work of Kajini who suggested that “within the Ministry, the two issues (ethnic Japanese overseas on the one hand and Koreans in Japan on the other) were combined, and the government contemplated the question of which group was closer to Japanese, thus eligible for the right to permanent stay without work limits.”<sup>21</sup> For Abe, there is a direct correlation between citizenship policy and immigration policy. The Japanese government committed to grant more rights to both groups (one “Koreans as foreigners” and the other “third generation Japanese overseas-as immigrants), “only for the sake of balance.”<sup>22</sup> In this case, other foreigners or migrants such as the Thais are to be treated differently. They are not considered as member of Japanese political community thus are not entitled to “membership goods.”

**Political Community,  
Political Members and  
Access to Membership  
Goods**

What is political community? Who are political members? What are the goods usually given to membership of a particular political community? Why have those people, whose stories are told in the previous section, not been able to get access to the goods nor considered as political membership? This section will attempt to elucidate those questions from the perspective of citizenship.

A political entity is defined by geographical borders within the legal jurisdictions of governments and other sub national administrations. The usual practice of any given nation-state is that it defines its geographical limits by territory and its demographic limits by nationality. Although some political theorists, such as Benedict Anderson, argue that a political community is imagined, it seems that the Westphalian model which “presupposes that there is a dominant and unified political authority whose jurisdiction over a clearly marked piece of territory is supreme,”<sup>23</sup> although being challenged, remains widely accepted. One cannot deny that in current international relations and international national order, the sovereign and exclusive political community known as a nation-state is more and more strengthened.

Historically, one could say that it was the nation that had accommodated a large number of individuals in their territories, made them feel that they shared some things in common, building the trust

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20 Ibid,120.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Benhabib, Seyla. op cit, 4.

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and loyalty necessary for the functioning of a nation-state. Each political community has constructed a so called collective identity, a robust sense of belonging and social cohesion within its borders. Post-nationalists “agree that reference to a common nationality allowed the political mobilization of its inhabitants, calling on their shared descent, history or language...”<sup>24</sup> The sovereign territorial state, therefore, became the necessary framework for citizenship and vice versa. “Citizenship both as legal status and as an activity, is thought to presuppose the existence of a territorially bounded political community, which extends overtime and is the focus of a common identity.”<sup>25</sup> This premise is being contested because globalisation has rendered the borders so porous. However, a large number of states are still tied to the formal expression of membership. This model has a formal institutionalized political community and assumes that it has both legal and moral rights to choose its members and to close or open its borders and where the “monopoly over its territory is exercised through immigration and citizenship policies.”<sup>26</sup>

Seyla Benhabib pointed out that “political boundaries define some as members, other as aliens. Membership, in turn, is meaningful only when accompanied by rituals of entry, access, belonging, and privilege. The modern nation-state system has regulated membership in terms of one principle category: national citizenship.”<sup>27</sup> She further commented that “citizenship in the modern world has meant membership in a bounded political community which was a nation-state, a multinational state, or a commonwealth structure. The political regime of territorially bounded sovereignty...could only function by defining, circumscribing, and controlling citizenship. The citizen is the individual who has membership rights to reside within a territory, who is subject to the state’s administrative jurisdiction...”<sup>28</sup> This model which begun in the countries of Western Europe was later copied by other modernizing states in all regions including Asia. In this model, the national citizen is considered as a full political member of a particular political community.

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24 Habermas, Jergens. (1998) *The Inclusion of Other*, in Cronin, C. and Greif, P.de (eds.), *Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 132.

25 *Citizenship*, First published on October 13th, 2006.

26 Benhabib, Seyla., *op cit.*, 5.

27 *Ibid.* 1.

28 *Ibid.*, 144.

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Who are eligible or who can access membership of a given political community? Citizenship is always attributed by birth. Regardless of what forms of attribution they follow, either *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*, states grant citizenship to persons born in the country who would otherwise be stateless. *Jus soli* “confers citizenship based on birth on state territory,” and *jus sanguinis* “confers citizenship based on descents.”<sup>29</sup> Citizenship has never been attributed to someone born outside of the country, non-citizens, but can be acquired by naturalization or registration procedures.

In Japan and Thailand, it is quite interesting to note that, not so many decades ago, the (legal) statuses of people in the two nation-states were “subject” to the empire and kingdom respectively. Like many other countries in the world, Japan and Thailand adopt a *jus sanguinis* principle to grant nationality to the selected individual. Both countries do not accept dual nationality/citizenship. In Japan this citizenship policy has serious effect on the Koreans and Taiwanese who have been residing in Japan for generations. In Thailand it affects the lives of more than a million people who are ethnic minorities, hill tribes, and indigenous peoples who have been in the country even before the Thais came. It also affects the newcomers whose legal statuses are in limbo.

From the stories presented in the previous section, we realize that Japan and Thailand are among many other countries that exhibit a conception of social membership connected with ethnicity. Japan/Thailand grants citizenship on the basis of parentage rather than place of birth: one is automatically granted citizenship if one is a child of Japanese/Thai parents, no matter where one is born, whereas a child of non-Japanese/non-Thai parents born in Japan/Thailand is not automatically a citizen and can become one only through naturalization procedures. The person who speaks no Thai/Japanese, has never lived there, and whose only connection with Thailand/Japan is that his/her parental grandparents left the country for a century ago or so, has a better legal claim on citizenship than the child of a migrant/refugee (and indigenous in the case of Thailand) in these countries, born and educated here, and culturally Thai/Japanese, and speaking no other language than Thai or Japanese.<sup>30</sup> The children of the latter group can

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29 Aleinikoff, T. Alexander. and Klusmeyer, Douglas (codirectors) (2002). *Citizenship Policies for an Age of Migration*. Washington, D.C.: MPI, 2.

30 Hampton, *op.cit.*, 71-77.

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neither enjoy the privileges of citizenship, nor access the membership goods. But what are these membership goods?

Jules L. Coleman and Sarah K. Harding have identified goods in different forms.<sup>31</sup> Goods include:

1. Employment. Permanent residents can usually pursue any type of work with one major exception: noncitizens are usually prohibited from working in the civil service or the public sector. Temporary residents are, in general, subject to further job restrictions. Visitors, students, and foreign government officials and their families are, for most part, prohibited from obtaining employment. Illegal aliens, in principle, have no right to employment. But, in reality, in spite of the penalization or even criminalization, illegal aliens (or undocumented aliens) still enter and obtain employment in the so-called 3Ds jobs—dirty, dangerous and difficult ones.

2. Emergency services and socio-economic resources. The right to socio-economic resources is determined more by the permanence of residence and the legality of status than by citizenship. Some emergency services such as access to medical care are available to everyone while other services, including education, child allowance, may not. However, it varies greatly depending on the status of the recipient and each country's policies.

3. Political participation. This type remains for the most part a privilege exclusive to citizens. The right to vote, and to run for public office are not, in general, available to foreign nationals. However, in some countries, these rights are extended to non-citizens to certain extent. Other forms of political participation such as joining trade unions are allowed in most liberal and democratic countries.

4. Right to permanent residence/access. Access to permanent resident is, in general, conditioned by some restrictions in most countries. One can say that Japan and Thailand are rather reluctant to grant permanent resident status to foreign nationals.

5. Immunity from expulsion. Immunity from expulsion is one of the most important privileges of citizenship. For non-citizens, immunity may depend on many factors, one of which is duration of residence. In general, non-citizens, whether they reside temporarily, permanently, or illegally, can be deported.

6. Citizenship. The concept of citizenship is connected to states, in some countries it is garnered through birth in the territory (*jus soli*) and

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31 Coleman, Jules L. and Harding, Sarah K., *op.cit.*, 26-34.

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in others it is achieved through parentage (*jus sanguinis*). Citizenship is never attributed to someone born outside of the country to non-citizens; it can be acquired through naturalization or registration procedures; and it depends on different conditions in different countries.

The most difficult goods to obtain are, in many respects, permanent residence and citizenship. These might be the privileges most sought by immigrants, stateless and “nationalityless” people. It does not mean, in any case, that other goods are easy to obtain. The access to the membership goods heavily depends on laws, state policies, political will, and the level of openness and democracy.

The stories of Zomu, Ayu, and Sorbi in Thailand, all of whom remain legally nonexistent within Thai borders, and the Koreans who cannot or might not want to become Japanese citizens, reveal some anomalies in membership policies and access to membership goods. It is, in fact, indicative of unfair and unjust societies in which lines between territoriality, sovereignty, and citizenship are totally disconnected to human beings and the moral responsibilities of a state. For Zomu, Ayu, Sorbi and over half a million people born and residing on Thai soil, not having proper documents and proper legal statuses, is, to borrow the expression used by Seyla Benhabib, “a form of civil death.” They are sentenced to civil death not because they chose to do so, but because they are inside political borders that deny their rights as human being. In Thailand, in many ways more strict than Japan, political boundaries are problematic even for those who could have been become members.

### **Stories of Constructed Borders from within**

If political borders render human beings legally invisible and deprive them of the necessary membership goods, we also witness another kind of constructed borders which is hard to understand let alone to accept. During my trip to Osaka, I had chance to visit the Human Rights Museum. I was struck by some pictures and artefacts exhibited in the museum. Many of them reminded me what I heard a week before when I visited Sapporo in Hokkaido where I was allowed to attend the very first seminar of the most marginalized groups in Japan. These groups are all Japanese; they are Japanese with Korean origins: they are the Okinawans, the Ainu, and the Buraku.

## The Story of Stone



If this stone is a border, it is one that bars women from entering into religious shrines. This stone reads “women are prohibited from entering.” It was carved and put in front of the shrine a few centuries ago. I am not certain of whether this practice still exists in Japan, but, in some Buddhist temples in Thailand, it remains.

In the same museum in Osaka I saw a picture which depicts traditional social strata and social status of different groups of citizens in Japan. The picture shows how subjects of the Emperor were classified into different categories. Those who are outside the social circle found themselves “outcaste”: they are the Buraku who, a few centuries ago, were doing menial work. In this century, many of them are still engaging in more or less the same activities. What seems to be unchanged is the Japanese people’s attitude toward this group of people who are also Japanese nationals. This is confirmed by a life story told by a Buraku women whom I met during the seminar in Sapporo.

## The Story of “Outcaste”

“I am Buraku. My family and I, we have been discriminated since I was child. When I went to school, my teacher put me at the back of the class and told my classmates not to play with me because I am Buraku. In Japanese education system, the teacher will have to visit home of the student; my teacher has never visited our place.”

Mario Jorge Yutzis argues as follows: “Imagine a group of people who are regularly subject to arbitrary differentiation from the rest, obliged to suffer the worst working conditions, verbal abuse, sexual molestation, who are excluded from all forms of social benefits and social distribution for the simple reason of being born within a particular group and with no particular distinction from the rest of the population...Victims of discrimination based on descent are single out, not because of the difference in physical appearance or race, but rather by their membership in an endogamous group that has been isolated

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socially and occupationally from other groups in the societies.”<sup>32</sup> Yutzis further analyzed that “discrimination based on caste is always a social and ideological construction, with a global character, created by the supposed superior caste, so as to create and maintain their hegemony by ways of cultural goods(knowledge and education), social goods (patriarchic domination), politics(power), and material goods(wealth).”<sup>33</sup> The socially (self) constructed borders which result in discrimination against some groups of people within the same society is expanded to different areas including discrimination based on race. While ethnic minorities are clearly discriminated against in Thailand, the Ainu in Japan follow, more or less, the same fate.

“Until 1986, a mere six years ago, the Japanese government denied even our existence. In its proud claim that Japan, alone in the world, is a “monoethnic” nation. Here today, however, our existence is being clearly recognized by the UN itself. In the eyes of the government, we were a people whose existence must not be admitted.”<sup>34</sup>

At the seminar in Sapporo, I witnessed the perseverance of the Ainu people to maintain their distinctive cultures and traditions. What they have been fighting against for centuries has been the assimilation policy of the Japanese state. To deny them their very identity as Ainu is to deny their very existence and thus right to self determination and right to perform their traditional culture.

As Jean Hampton has rightly commented, the practice of the Japanese government indicates that “to be one of us” in Japan is not only to have a certain kind of cultural identity. But it is also to have a certain kind of genetic connection to others in the group—to have a certain blood line. As in Germany, the cultural requirements are not as important as the genetic background, because, no matter where a person is born and subsequently raised, the Japanese government will grant a right to citizenship to a child of Japanese parents. Japan is another

### **Conclusions: Borders and Borderless Human Rights**

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32 Yutzis, Mario Jorge. (2004). Racial Discrimination Based on Descent: A Challenge for All Human Beings, IMADR: Peoples for Human Rights, 9, 10-11.

33 Ibid, 12.

34 Statement delivered at UN General Assembly 1992, by Giichi Nomura, an Ainu, in Ainu Spirit of a Northern People, 2005.

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country with a nationalist conception of citizenship.<sup>35</sup> The Thai government has been upholding the same concept.

According to Hampton, the exclusion from membership is not only based on racial and genetic backgrounds, but also on values. There is an assumption that the values constituting a polity are fixed. But this assumption is unfounded. Values always change, resulting from the generational changes. Children may have different values from their parents. The predetermined Japanese-ness or Thai-ness exclude so many people considered “not like us or not enough like us.”<sup>36</sup> In fact, the value-based exclusion serves to hide a race-based, caste-based and gender-based exclusion which many countries, including Japan and Thailand, do not admit. This type of exclusion is, in many ways, a by-product of a much deeper form of injustice and inequality within our society.

Hampton further stresses that “if a country continues to deny the rights to membership goods to a non-national who has been living a long and productive life within its borders on an equal basis with other nationals, it already allows a system of different classes of people in that society.”<sup>37</sup> It is equally serious that even among the same nationals, citizens are treated differently. This politics of differences creates resentment and dissent which may lead to possible conflicts and would do damage to all groups in the society.

Japan and Thailand, so far, have been representing themselves as “liberal democratic societies.” Meanwhile, each country does its best to refuse citizenship to those people whose ethnic and cultural background is distant from its “citizens.” In the case of Thailand, we also see that the Thai authorities have made some groups of people relinquish their nationality. By rendering people stateless and/or “nationalityless,” the Thai state has no doubt violated its obligations prescribed both by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as well as other international human rights treaties, including especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 15 of UDHR stipulates that “no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.” Article 24 of ICCPR echoes the same message.

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<sup>35</sup> Hampton, *op cit*, 72.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

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By reading the international human rights norms carefully, one may realize that “everyone has rights” regardless of his/her legal or social status. Everyone can enjoy rights only “in a political community in which one is judged not through characteristics which define us at birth, but through our actions and opinions—by what we do, and say, and think.”<sup>38</sup>

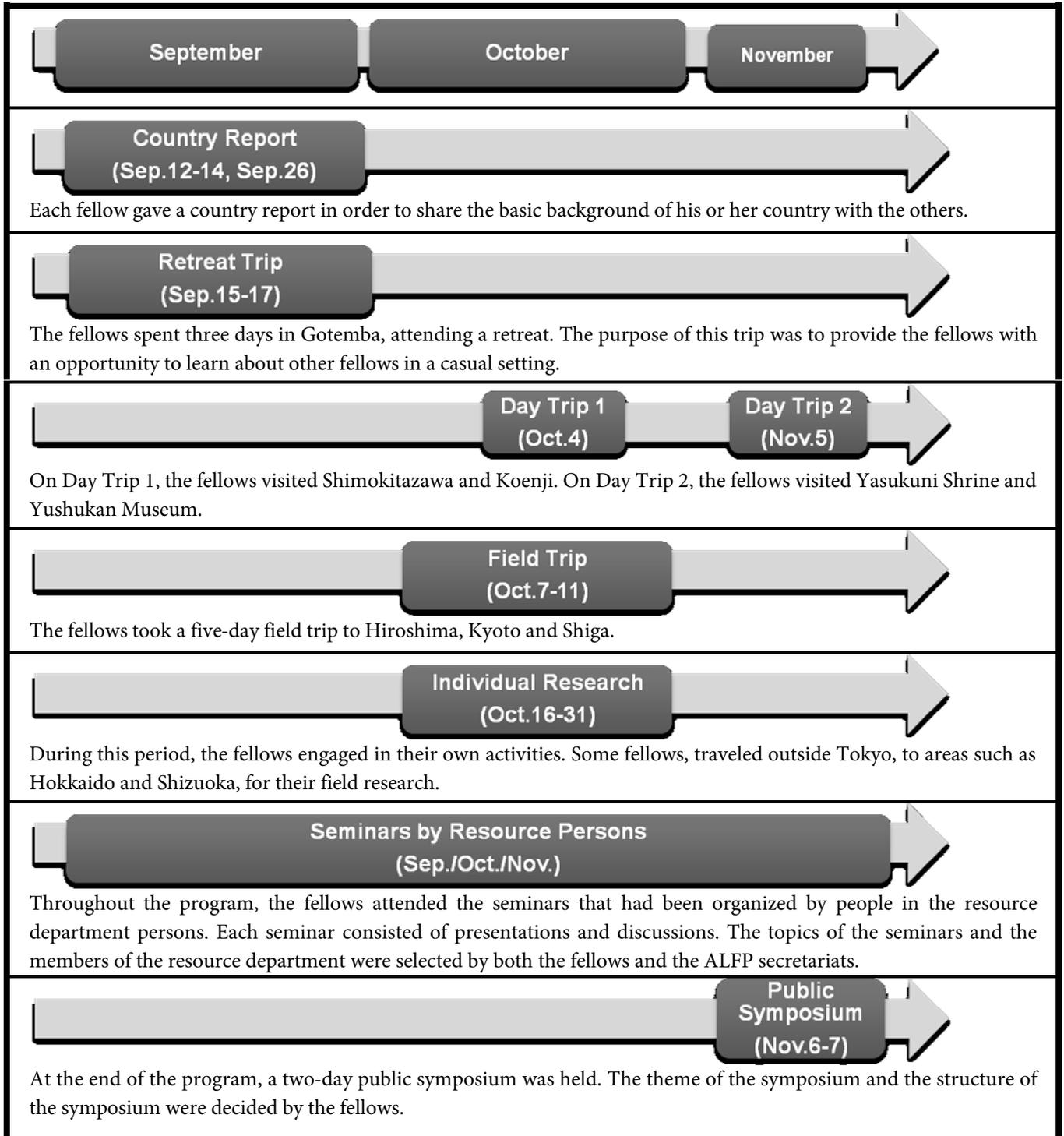
It is absolutely unacceptable that a person is barred from membership and availing of the membership goods within their own “borders” because of legal status and the type of “being” they are. We believe that no one is illegal and we are all equal; we have rights only because we are human beings; human rights are, therefore, borderless. Human rights are inherent, universal, and indivisible. Human rights are the key to peaceful co-existence, not separation and exclusivity. The notion of borders that exclude people is no longer justifiable in any way.

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<sup>38</sup> Benhabib, op cit, 99.

ALFP Activities 2007

Schedule of ALFP Activities 2007



## Seminars by Resource persons

### Global Article 9 Campaign to Abolish War

Akira Kawasaki

Representative, Peace Boat

Akira Kawasaki gave a talk on a campaign called the “Global Article 9 Campaign to Abolish War,” which is led by a non-government organization named Peace Boat. After his brief account on the aim and activities of Peace Boat, Kawasaki explained how Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution remains important in the current context, and how the dual use of a grass-roots approach and a policy/intellectual approach can be useful in advocating the significance of Article 9. He convincingly argues that Article 9 can send a message to the world that war should be abolished.

Since 2005, Peace Boat has been focused on a land-based campaign called the Global Article 9 Campaign to Abolish War. It aims to disseminate the idea of building a peaceful world, by using Article 9 as the embodiment of such an idea. Its activities range from attending the United Nation (UN) conferences on disarmament and human rights, to organizing rallies and lobbying. According to Kawasaki, North East Asia is a unique region in the world because it is the only region which does not have any regional mechanism for peace. Therefore, he states that Article 9 can form the principal for the regional peace, and prevent armed conflicts in the northeast Asian region.

Kawasaki believes that Article 9 has significant influence in three respects. First, in relation to the Japanese Self-Defence Forces, having Article 9 in the Japanese Constitution itself heavily restricts the activities and roles allowed to the Japanese Self-Defence Forces overseas. In this way, it affects the current military policies of Japan. Second, Article 9 can be a guideline for the Japan-United States (US) Security Treaty. Kawasaki admits that Japan is in a contradictory position: while the constitution supports the idea of peace, its peace is assured by the US military presence in Japan. Facing this contradiction, Kawasaki argues that, by using Article 9, the Japanese can make concrete policy suggestions concerning the code of conduct of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces, the activities of joint operations between the Japanese Self-Defence Forces and US forces, as well as the realignment of US military forces in Okinawa. Third, in relation to international peace, the spirit of Article 9 can be shared with other countries. Kawasaki points out that one essence that can be extracted from Article 9 is the peaceful solution of conflict. This essence can be a tool to persuade other countries to disarm themselves, a call that includes

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nuclear arms. Since disarmament is mutual agreements of both sides, it can send a strong message of peace. Kawasaki suggests that Article 9 highlights the root-cause of violence as well as the tools of violence (i.e. weapons) and thus provides a useful entry point to advocate the idea of international peace.

As an activist, Kawasaki emphasizes the necessity of actively utilizing Article 9 to change policies. He indicates that many peace movement activists in Japan tend to only support Article 9, and they fail to connect their stance to real policies. According to Kawasaki, it is imperative to develop dual strategies, on the government level and on the public level. In terms of the government level, lobbying activities are a major way to develop direct appeals to policy makers. Japanese bureaucrats, who take on more significant roles than politicians in shaping policies, tend to consult with government-affiliated think tanks and scholars. Therefore, Kawasaki argues that advocacy and lobbying by Peace Boat should target these think tanks and scholars in order to change policies. On a public level, Kawasaki states that Peace Boat attempts to build and strengthen discourse that advocates the abolishment of war and the promotion of peace. He points out that many Japanese people are uncertain about their national identity. Under such situation, commitment to peace by advocating Article 9 can appeal to the public; a public who, at present, are at a loss in terms of their search for national identity. The promotion of peace can form the base of the national identity.

As a concluding remark, Kawasaki shared his belief that civil societies play indispensable roles in the facilitation social change and organization of the public. (Nov.1)

## The Role of Hiroshima in Peace-Making and Nuclear Disarmament from a Journalist's Perspective

Akira Tashiro  
Journalist, Chugoku Shimbun

Since 1972, Akira Tashiro has been working at Chugoku Shimbun, focusing on people who have been affected by nuclear-related issues, ranging from the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and nuclear technology to depleted uranium and nuclear power. Throughout his career, he has given voice to the cries and anger of those people who have been affected by nuclear development.

Tashiro points out that Hiroshima continues to be significant in the nuclear age. During the cold war, the world witnessed the expansion of nuclear weapons, the development of nuclear weapon technology, and the increasing

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power of nuclear weapons, especially between the West and East, a competition led by two superpowers: the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Seeing the escalation of the nuclear weapon regime, Tashiro lamented that human beings have still not learned from the experience of Hiroshima. Therefore, it is imperative that people in Hiroshima share their experience worldwide, proclaiming “no more Hiroshimas” and “no more war.”

Tashiro further touched on the subject of people who have been exposed to radiation, not only in Hiroshima but in other parts of the world. From the 1960s, Chugoku Shimbun began to cover the story of A-bomb survivors who left Hiroshima, for Korea and other Asian countries. Tashiro extended this line of enquiry to radioactive victims worldwide, in the US, Russia, India, Pakistan, China and other nations.

According to Tashiro, the development of nuclear weapons is carried out in the name of national security. Some countries think that possession of nuclear weapons will enable them to defend their countries. However, such an idea is a myth, as Tashiro points out by presenting a number of cases and examples of people who have been exposed to radiation at various stages: workers who manufacture weapons, people who test nuclear weapons, those who carry such weapons, and residents living in the vicinity of the manufacturing factories and nuclear waste dumps. Tashiro highlights how the security of the public is undermined in a trade-off for the promotion of national security. While Tashiro admits the difficulty of changing national security policy, he emphasizes the importance of concerned citizens who voice their opposition and exert pressure on their governments.

In conclusion, Tashiro emphasizes that, in order to cut the vicious cycle of hatred and violence in the age of nuclear terrorism, it is important to stop not only war itself, but also the creation of nuclear weapons. This can be achieved by exerting pressure on the Japanese government and governments of other countries. Hiroshima’s A-bomb experience provides an important lesson and message to the world. Although some may feel a sense of helplessness that the voice of Hiroshima has yet to reach widely across the world, Tashiro expresses his belief that one should not give up hope, but must continue to spread the principle message resulting from the Hiroshima experience, a message of peace. (Oct.8)

## Yasukuni, the Emperor and the Anti-war Movement

Amano Yasukazu

Journalist, People's Plan Study Group

Amano points out that the Yasukuni Shrine exists both to commemorate the modern state of Japan, as well as to celebrate the emperor system. Throughout the war, Shinto was combined with the military system. This combination became the foundation for the celebration of the military hierarchical system. Since the Meiji restoration, Shinto was defined according to its role as both the state religion, and the religion of the emperor families. It was against this religious background that the commemoration of the dead occurred alongside the war, which was an integral development in the creation of the nation state.

The combination of Shinto as the state religion and the religion of the people, created a structure in which ordinary people were pleased to die for the emperor. The dead were cherished as heroes, who had sacrificed their lives for the emperor and the state. In this way, the sorrow experienced by those who had lost loved ones, was transformed into an experience of happiness and joyfulness. Aside from this psychological mechanism, the families of the dead were also compensated with money: the families could live thanks to the death of their children. Thus, cherishing the dead involves both psychological and material aspects.

After the war, having been recognized as a public religious institution, Yasukuni Shrine survived. However, because Yasukuni Shrine was the location for those who were responsible for making records of the dead soldiers, Yasukuni Shrine continued to be heavily supported by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare. Therefore, Amano argues that Yasukuni Shrine is deeply related to the state under the current system. Furthermore, the emperor has continued in his role of formally recognizing those who died for their country in the wars. In this way, the relationship between Yasukuni Shrine and the emperor has been preserved.

Facing the dispatch of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces overseas, the Yasukuni Shrine system carries is involved in a modern dispute. The big debate at the moment is how to deal with the members of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces who die under the UN peace operation and whether the Japanese should commemorate these soldiers at Yasukuni Shrine or not.

Amano proposes that the mass media is responsible for the perpetuation of ideas about the Yasukuni Shrine and the emperor system relationship. For instance, in the media, the topic of the emperor system is taboo: the

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members of the imperial family are always referred to by the respected form of address: “Sama,” implying that the emperor is very special. The media also publicizes Yasukuni Shrine as a tourist spot, which ensures that visiting Yasukuni Shrine is an accepted and normal experience.

Lastly, Amano argues that Japanese national identity is embedded in the both the Yasukuni system and the emperor system. Although many Japanese people identify themselves as peace-loving, affluent and consumer-oriented, Amano warns that the backbone of the self-image of Japanese-ness, is deeply rooted in the Yasukuni spirit and the emperor system.

Amano is concerned about the current tendency for Japanese society to allow more open to participation in wars. For Amano, the movements against Yasukuni are inevitably correlated to anti-war movements. To question the system in which Yasukuni celebrates dead soldiers is to question the system which perpetuates Japan’s continuous involvement in wars by dispatching the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. (Nov.5)

## Lake Biwa Development

Atsushi Makino

Researcher, Lake Biwa Museum

**A**tsushi Makino, a member of the research staff at Lake Biwa Canal Museum, explained how the environmental problems faced at Lake Biwa have been solved. After providing background information about Lake Biwa and its environmental problems, Makino went into more detail about how Lake Biwa’s problems had been resolved. He stressed that natural science is not sufficient to examine environmental issues and that it is local residents who tend to identify the real problem. Therefore, it is imperative to employ a sociological perspective and examine the ways in which local communities around the area have developed.

The problem of water utilization has become widespread since the 1970s. With urbanization and the surge of population in Kyoto, Kobe and Osaka, water shortages became a serious issue. In response, the government started the Lake Biwa Development Project, which revealed the fact that Lake Biwa was suffering from red tide despite the general belief that such a problem would not take place at the lake. Makino said that it was difficult to determine why Lake Biwa, which is located on the upper part of the river, was polluted then. By employing an “insect’s-eye” approach examining the local community, as opposed to a “bird’s-eye” approach with a global scope, the researchers found

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that the discharge of waste water contributed to the red tide problem. Consequently, two measures were taken to solve the red tide at Lake Biwa. First, the infrastructure of the sewage system was improved. Second, instead of synthetic detergent, the usage of soap was encouraged.

Since the 1990s, Lake Biwa has faced another problem: the issue of biological diversity. Due to the development of the area, fewer people have been engaged in farming since the 1990s, which has contributed to a dramatic decrease in rice paddies in the Lake Biwa area. The lack of rice paddies resulted in a lack of fish because they can no longer deposit eggs in the rice paddies as they used to do. In this way, Makino points out, biological diversity has decreased at Lake Biwa.

In conclusion, Makino drew three lessons from the experience at Lake Biwa. First, he emphasizes the importance of “insect’s-eye” research. It is not enough to focus on the overall scope: it is imperative to examine environmental issues from the community level as well. Second, Makino suggested that paying attention to the culture of local villages is important in determining the cause of environmental problems, as well as finding solutions which correspond to the life of the local area. Lastly, the revitalization of small-scale communities is integral to preserving the cycles of the natural environment. (Oct.10)

## The Religious Conflicts in the Middle East: Past Roots, Present Situation, and Future Prospects

Ben-Ami Shillony

Professor Emeritus, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**B**en-Ami Shillony argues that monotheistic religion is a “mixed blessing” because of its positive and negative elements. On the one hand, monotheistic religion upholds the idea of “unity in diversity,” an idea that Shillony finds important in shaping a peaceful world. On the other hand, the conviction that the “truth” is held only by their gods can result in monotheistic religions’ denial of all other religions.

Shillony pointed out two current tendencies of religions in the Middle East. One tendency is that, since the 1970s, the Middle East has become much more religious as the activity of religious fundamentalists increases. In this trend, Christianity and Judaism are described as embodiments of the “West,” while Islam is the embodiment of the Middle East. Therefore, anti-west and anti-modern become equivalent to anti-Christianity/Judaism and pro-Islam. The other trend is that religion, not the nation, has become the

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driving force uniting people in the Middle East. Especially since the act of terrorism of September 11, 2001, Islam has become much more radical and de-nationalized than before. Shillony thinks that such disbelief in the nation reveals that “nation” is an artificial creation and accelerates the creation of supra-national organizations like Al-Qaeda. Because Islam is not nation-based, it is difficult to grasp who is fighting against whom. At the same time, although it is becoming difficult to identify who is leading the wars, the influence of Islam is growing and the impacts of these wars cannot be ignored.

Lastly, Shillony makes several suggestions as to how to solve the wars in the Middle East: using force to combat Islam, looking at the roots of the wars (poverty), letting the fundamental Islam movements crumble by itself, and finding the common enemy (environmental disaster, for example) between Islam and the West. Pointing out the shortcomings of each option, Shillony advocates the creation of a new religion and a new spiritual message as a preferable way to solve the current situations. Although it is difficult to create a new and universally-shared spiritual message, Shillony suggests that people are tired of radicalism and consumerism. Therefore, new messages such as human love, respect for others, and morals could replace other fundamental religious movements.

In conclusion, Shillony argues that it is our responsibility to decide what is wrong and what is right. The idea of human rights and democracy can exemplify the values that need to be promoted. (Oct.1)

## National identity and Foreign Policy in Modern Japan

John Barnett Welfield

Professor, International University of Japan

**J**ohn B. Welfield’s talk examined the roots of the Japanese national identity. Having lived in Japan for almost 35 years, Welfield has established an in-depth understanding of Japanese society. Mixed with various personal experiences he has had in Japan, Welfield presented a broad view of Japanese national identity from a historical perspective: he focused on the pre-war period, from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. According to Welfield, Japan identified itself as part of Asia until the middle of the nineteenth century, when it encountered the mighty economic and military power of Europe. This encounter with Europe became the moment when Japan re-examined its national identity.

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Welfield categorized the roots of Japanese identity into three streams: (1) Westernism, (2) Pan-Asianism, and (3) Japan as the bridge between East and West. The first stream, Westernism, was primarily conceptualized by Yukichi Fukuzawa. Fukuzawa advocated the idea that Japan cut its ties with Asia and re-model itself as a Western power. In this view, other Asian countries including China and Korea were perceived as underdeveloped and backward, whereas the US and Europe were regarded as the highest form of development. Following this view, a Japanese identity desiring a close association with the West was established.

The second stream, Pan-Asianism, identified Japan as part of Asia. For the followers of this position, Asian civilization was not inferior to Western civilization, but instead the latter had been imposed upon Japan. Welfield introduced different streams within Pan-Asianism. Some groups viewed Japan as the center of Asia with the monarchy and centuries-old paternalistic systems. Another believed that Asian countries should unite with each other: While some thinkers like Chomin Nakae believed that Japan should integrate itself into Chinese culture to compete against the Western powers, some including Fumimaro Konoe believed that Japan and China were competing rivals.

In the third stream, moral and cultural neutralism was embraced. Kanzo Uchimura, for example, argued that the conflict between East and West would eventually fade away, and thus, Japan should take a role to unite both sides and create a new world order.

In some Asian countries, Western practices are favored because people consider it as somewhat better than their own practices. Consequently, the current tendency is that Asian countries attempt to re-model themselves as part of the West. Welfield argues that, under such circumstances, the future role of Japan may be that it re-introduces Asian values and identities into other Asian countries. (Sep.11)

## Domestic Politics and Japanese Foreign Policy: Koizumi, Abe, and Beyond

Kiichi Fujiwara  
Professor, University of Tokyo

**I**n his presentation, Kiichi Fujiwara first gave a brief summary of two characteristics of Japanese politics: the “dominant party system” and “double-standard democracy.” By explaining these two major traits of Japanese politics, Fujiwara argues that liberal democracy not only opens up and guarantees

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political participation, but it can also limit political participation and sustain the elite (or dominant regime), as the Japanese case shows. Based on this understanding, Fujiwara focused on the Junichiro Koizumi and Shinzo Abe administrations and showed what has changed and what has not changed in Japanese politics under these two prime ministers. He further discussed the role of civil society and the youth in bringing about changes in politics.

Fujiwara argues that the Japanese political system can be called a “dominant party system” where one dominant party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan, has dominated the political scene over a long period. Furthermore, Japanese politics can be characterized as “double-standard democracy,” which results in the erosion of the significance of opposition parties.

Fujiwara argues that the public supports the LDP not because they actively sympathize with the LDP; they passively support it because the public considers that any non-LDP party would be unlikely to become the ruling party, thus the most the public can hope for is a “better” LDP party.

This passive support for the LDP dramatically changed when Koizumi became the prime minister in 2001. While the way Yoshiro Mori, who was Koizumi’s predecessor and was chosen Prime Minister, embodied the old nature of LDP faction-led politics, Koizumi ran for the candidacy by repeating the one sentence: “I will destroy the LDP.”

Fujiwara argues that several changes were brought under the Koizumi administration. First is the disappearance of the old politicians. Koizumi appointed many Members of Parliament (MP) to important ministry positions who were relatively young, as typified by his appointment of Makiko Tanaka as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Second, while many ministers used to come from a civil service background and maintained close connections with the government, Koizumi asserted political power over bureaucrats. Third, Koizumi was the first prime minister who asserted the prime minister’s power in appointing candidates.

The big paradox was that when Koizumi resigned, he nominated Abe, who promised to continue with Koizumi-line policies, yet who also was supported by the leaders of the factions. Fujiwara argues that this paradox shows that no matter how much Koizumi attempted to destroy the LDP, his popularity is directly connected with the high levels of support the LDP garner in elections. In this way, the support for LDP which characterizes Japanese politics did not change under Koizumi.

Unlike his predecessor, Abe could not bring about changes at the policy level

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and quickly lost popularity with the public, a fact which is epitomized in the LDP loss in the Upper House election of 2007. Abe's stance was different from that of Koizumi, especially in terms of foreign policy. Being "right-wing,"<sup>1</sup> Abe took a much harder line in foreign policies than Koizumi and was known as a "China hater." Unlike Koizumi who started a dialogue with North Korea, Abe considered that Japan should take a tough position toward North Korea and stopped negotiations with it. However, such a different political stance never became a coherent policy because he was easily influenced by bureaucrats as well as other political leaders within the LDP. Consequently, his policies became almost schizophrenic and inconsistent. Although Abe persisted in the reform of the Law of Educational Principles and preparing the ground for constitutional change, these two policies were neither taken seriously nor had any actual concrete outcome. Thus, Fujiwara concludes that not many changes were brought about under the Abe administration.

Fujiwara further mentions the roles of civil society. Civil society groups in Japan dislike working with established political parties, including the opposition parties, and in this way alienate themselves from politics to such a degree that they do not exert any influence over politics anymore. He argues that, although he understands their disbelief in the parties, it is nonetheless imperative to fight against the ruling party within the democratic system. One way to fight against the ruling party, Fujiwara suggests, is not to divide one's stance either as "right" or "left," but to formulate concrete positions on each political issue. (Sep.25)

## Migration and Asia

Mako Yoshimura  
Professor, Hosei University

**M**ako Yoshimura gave an overview picture of the migration which is happening within and beyond Asia. After explaining the current situation of migrant workers in Asia and the historical background of migrant workers, Yoshimura especially focused on migrant workers in Japan and the problems Japan faces in accepting them. She concluded with some suggestions for creating a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society in Japan.

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1 In Japanese politics, "right-wing" means those who 1) get votes from the Izoku-Kai (members of Japan veterans families, one of the largest pressure groups in the LDP), 2) visit Yasukuni Shrine, and 3) are members of Nihon Kaigi (the most extreme-right organization within the LDP). Abe fulfilled all the three criteria.

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The history of migration in Asia goes back to as far as the 6th century. The 17th century saw an increase of Chinese migrants as a result of European colonization. In the early 1970s, owing to the oil shock, many Asian migrant workers went to the Middle East to work as construction workers. Since the late 1980s, there has been the tendency that various destinations are earmarked for migrant workers, and migration within Asia has intensified.

Prior to the 1980s, little attention was paid to minorities in Japan, such as the Koreans, the Chinese and the Ainu. Yoshimura argues that ethnic minorities were forced to adopt Japanese ways of living. The minority groups were stigmatized as “uncivilized” and “backwards” and their cultures were depicted as “inferior” to Japanese culture. The government policies toward migrant workers were in step with this treatment of minorities, and showed a reluctance to promote the idea of a multi-cultural society.

According to Yoshimura, some changes took place when the labor shortage became a serious problem in Japan in the 1980s. The number of irregular migrant workers dramatically increased, and the existence of migrant workers, such as those from Iran and Bangladesh, suddenly became visible in the daily lives of the Japanese people. Faced with this change, discussion emerged in an attempt to promote a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Japanese society.

However, still being reluctant to embrace the idea of a multi-cultural society, the government decided to tightly control which migrants they accepted, in order to maintain the “Japanese-ness” of the society. Yoshimura argues that the 1990 Amendment of the Immigration Law exemplified such a government reaction. Following this law, the employment of Nikkei-jin, that is, people from Brazil and Peru with Japanese origins, was encouraged. Meanwhile, the government established a series of programs including Industrial Training Programs from Development Countries, Technical Internship Programs, and the Industrial Training and Technical Internship Programs in the 1990s. Yoshimura criticizes these programs which create a loophole for corporations to use foreigners as trainees without giving them proper training, although they are actually required to work in the same way as the other workers. Currently, these programs are condemned because many companies abuse the system to exploit foreign trainees.

Not only at the policy level, but also at the social and cultural level, migrant workers are excluded from Japanese society. Yoshimura suggests some reasons why migrant workers suffer discrimination from Japanese society. First, she argues that, especially toward ethnic minorities from Latin America, the Japanese people tend to regard them as those who “live like” Japanese because they “look like” Japanese. When this expectation is denied, however, the

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Japanese people perceive them as “aliens” to Japanese society. Another reason Yoshimura raised is the stigmatization of the 3D jobs (Difficult, Dirty and Dangerous, which is the equivalent of 3K in Japanese—Kitsui, Kitanai and Kiken) that most migrant workers do. She suggested that a hierarchy among work exists in Japanese society. In this hierarchy, migrant workers who take 3D jobs are likely to be perceived as “lower” than Japanese people, and in this way, are discriminated against by Japanese society. Lastly, she also points out the different levels of integration in accordance with the generation. While the young generation of foreigners can speak Japanese, in general, the older generation find it difficult to speak Japanese. The lack of language skills deepens the isolation of migrant workers.

In conclusion, Yoshimura made some suggestions for the facilitation of the integration of migrant workers into Japanese society. First, the Japanese government needs to recognize the human rights and labor rights of migrants. Simultaneously, not only a rights-based approach but also the promotion of cultural exchange among Asian countries must be encouraged. Yoshimura also describes the recent positive movements happening at the local government level to promote multi-cultural society: some local government agencies provide information to foreigners not only in Japanese but also in other languages. Lastly, Yoshimura emphasizes that trade unions must address the issue of migrant workers and monitor and establish working conditions for migrant workers equal to those of Japanese workers. (Sep.20)

## Poverty in Contemporary Japan: The Homeless, “Net Café Refugees” and Freeters in Need

Makoto Yuasa

Chief of Secretariat, NPO Moyai

Makoto Yuasa, Chief of Secretariat of the NPO MOYAI, ironically calls Japan a “great manufacturer of poverty.” Working with homeless people, Yuasa explained the current homeless situation in Japan, and how the activities of MOYAI help to alleviate the difficult situation homeless people face.

As of January 2007, the number of homeless people in Japan is about 18,500. This number is based on the definition of the homeless employed by the government: the homeless are those who cannot use shelters, have no access to jobs and have no access to social welfare. Yuasa suspects that because of this insufficient definition, the actual number would be much higher. According to Yuasa, the homeless include not only people who sleep on the street, but also those who stay in public shelters, cheap hotels, and who do not have official

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residence registration. In addition, a current worrying trend is the emergence of people called “Net Café Refugees”: people who stay in 24-hour Internet cafés. They also can be categorized as homeless, Yuasa says.

Yuasa criticizes the government policy regarding the homeless. He argues that the current government strategy is to crack down and remove visible homeless people from the streets and parks in order to “prove” that the homeless issue is solved in Japan. In fact, according to the government, the number of homeless people decreased to 6,700 in 2007. Yuasa points out that such a strategy misses the fundamental nature of the problem: why people become homeless in the first place. He argues that, in order to tackle the issue, it is necessary to know the social structure which produces homeless people, as well as the life of homeless people: that is how they survive and what their lives are like.

In Japan, poverty lies at the heart of homelessness. Yuasa argues that the reproduction of poverty is the reason why the homeless are produced in Japanese society. He illustrates his argument by showing how people who come from poor families or families with problems, tend to become homeless.

Yuasa further explains how the homeless survive. In Japan, there are few public shelters where the homeless can be accommodated. Even when they can have access to public housing, there are a number of strict rules such as age and marital status (a single person under the age of 60 is disqualified). Consequently, Yuasa suggests that many homeless people do not wish to/cannot access public shelters. In addition, Yuasa points out that because of the high fixed cost of living in private housing and the high cost of utilities, people who have temporary work status cannot afford to live there. Consequently, increasing numbers of people are forced to live in Internet cafés or, in the worst case, are thrown out to the streets and parks.

Yuasa expresses his concern over the dramatic increase in the temporary worker population in Japan. It is said that the working poor population is twice the size it was 10 years ago. Since the 1990s, from a total labor force population of 50 million, the number of non-regular employees (part-time temporary workers) has increased by 5.5 million, while the number of regular employees decreased by 5.5 million. This trend accelerated under globalization, where each corporation cut down on labor costs as much as possible by increasing the number of non-regular employees.

Lastly, Yuasa explained the activities of MOYAI, which aims to improve the situation of homeless people in two ways: to provide guarantors for the homeless and to provide a space where the homeless can connect with others. MOYAI also works for the empowerment of the homeless. In order to prevent

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the homeless from being isolated from the society, MOYAI provides an opportunity for homeless people to get together.

Yuasa concluded by emphasizing that it is imperative to provide a space where the homeless can relate to each other as well as create jobs by themselves. (Sep.27)

## The Human Rights Situation in Kyoto with Special Focus on the Korean Residents in Utoro, Kyoto

Masashi Saito

Secretary General, Utoro wo Mamoru Kai

**T**he Utoro district was established in 1941 in Uji City, Kyoto. It was originally an area of temporary shelters for laborers working on the construction of Kyoto airfield. The size of Utoro is 2.1 hectares, with about 200 people (65 households) currently living there. When Utoro was founded, most of them were from the Korean peninsula. After the war, some of the residents in Utoro remained in the area while some left for Korea. Some of those who left for Korea eventually returned to Utoro, as Utoro was the communication base for all Korean residents in Japan. Currently 80 percent of the residents in Utoro are from South Korea, 10 percent are from North Korea and the remaining 10 percent is made up of Japanese nationals, their Korean spouses and their children. The land was owned by the Japanese government during the war, sold to companies affiliated with Nissan after the war and later sold to the real estate company which currently holds the land ownership. In 1989, the company started a lawsuit against the people living in Utoro, claiming that they were squatters and demanding their eviction. As of October 9, 2007, the Korean government has helped the Utoro community purchase half of the land of Utoro with 5 million yen, leaving the remaining half in the hands of the real estate company.

Saito points out that the living conditions in the Utoro district are not much changed from the end of the war. Rather, he argues that the most tragic situation has taken place since the end of the war, because the residents of Utoro were deprived of jobs and foods and left alone without any support from the government. By taking the fellows to the various parts of Utoro, Saito showed how the residents of Utoro have to live under harsh living conditions. For instance, there is no sewage system in Utoro. Having no ditches, the roads become muddy and the floor of each house is flooded with water when it rains. Currently, most of the residents in Utoro district are elderly: the majority of young people leave Utoro and live elsewhere. This current situation reflects

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their changing attitude toward nationality. After the Second World War, many people in Utoro were reluctant to take Japanese nationality, due to their attachment to their Korean identity. However, according to Saito, this sense of attachment has become weak. Young people are likely to select Japanese nationality, which results in their leaving the Utoro district. Therefore, Saito argues that the main aim of the movement against the eviction order for the Utoro residents is to preserve the community and protect the right to reside there, especially for elder citizens who cannot live outside of Utoro. By preserving the Utoro district, the Utoro residents and their supporters are also attempting to secure a safety net where the Korean residents who once left Utoro can return.

Lastly, Saito argues about the future of the Utoro district. Rather than perceiving the land in Utoro as an individual property to make money, the land is considered as communal property for preserving the life of the Utoro residents. Therefore, the purchase of the land of Utoro, even if it is only half of it, allows the residents of Utoro a collective site for survival. Saito suggests that, from now on, the movement against the eviction order for the Utoro residents should pressure the Japanese government and the Uji municipal government to improve the infrastructure and build public housing on the land which the Utoro residents purchased. (Oct.9)

## Testimony of an Atomic Bomb Survivor

Miyoko Matsubara  
A-Bomb Survivor

**S**ixty-two years after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Miyoko Matsubara gave vivid and powerful testimony about her experience as an A-bomb survivor, or Hibakusha. Matsubara, sometimes in a monotone, sometimes in great agitation, described what she saw on August 6th, 1945, on the day an A-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Based on her experience, she explained the enduring effects of the A-bomb on the Hibakusha and the so-called secondary Hibakusha.

Matsubara explained the enduring effects on the Hibakusha. Soon after the bomb was dropped, she started suffering from diarrhoea, high fever, vomiting, and was on the verge of death for a time. Despite her recovery, Matsubara said that the “hell” continued. She was discriminated against by others on many occasions because she was a Hibakusha: despite successfully graduating high school, she could not get a job because of the keloids on her face, and was unable to get married because people thought that she was contaminated. When

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Matsubara was 20 years old, she had 12 operations over a 7-month period. According to Matsubara, these operations made her life somewhat bearable and helped her regain some of her lost dignity. Yet, Matsubara says the past kept haunting her; she has suffered from various illnesses including breast cancer. Her experience after the bomb powerfully suggests that the effect of the atomic bombs was far-reaching and everlasting. There are still 80,000 people who are suffering from the effects of radiation. Matsubara said that although the war ended 62 years ago, for the Hibakusha “every day is August the 6th,” and thus the Hibakusha have not escaped from the war and the A-bomb, nor will they ever.

The issue of the secondary Hibakusha was also raised during the talk. Secondary Hibakusha are those who were not in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb was dropped, yet were exposed to the massive radiation remaining in the city upon their return to Hiroshima. Matsubara herself lost her brothers who were both secondary Hibakusha.

Matsubara concluded her testimony with three messages. First, she argues that if Japan would have had the atomic bomb at that time, Japan, too, would have dropped it on other countries. Thus, instead of hating the Americans who actually developed and dropped the atomic bombs, the real enemy is war and nuclear weapons. Second, considering that Japan was both a victim (as having Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the only cities which have been attacked with atomic bombs) and perpetrator during the Second World War, Hiroshima could become a model of peace by sharing the Hiroshima experience. She urged other cities and countries to learn from it and stop the endless conflicts happening in the world. Lastly, Matsubara highlighted the worrying tendency of new weapons being continuously developed and spreading all over the world. She argued that the most important task for us is not to create more weapons and accelerate hatred among people, but to overcome differences and to cultivate friendships with others through religion, the arts, culture, education and economic assistance. Matsubara’s only wish is to help create a world where people can live happily and die peacefully. (Oct.7)

## In Search of Historical Reconciliation between Japan and Its Neighbors

Tessa-Morris Suzuki

Professor, Australian National University

**T**essa-Morris Suzuki examined the issue of historical conflict and reconciliation in northeast Asia. In her presentation, Suzuki talked about the

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background that affected how the problems of historical reconciliation emerged in the northeast Asian region, what the concept of reconciliation means, and possible future steps for reconciliation.

The background of northeast Asia's history of wars is affected by the Cold War. While in Europe there was a single dividing line which divided the east from the west, in Asia, there were multiple and tightly guarded dividing lines, such as the division within the east (China and Russia), the division between Taiwan and China, and that between North and South Korea. In this context, Suzuki points out that Japan was isolated from other neighbouring countries; an isolation that helps explain Japan's different understanding of past history from other Asian countries. Although, on the public level, the people made great efforts to reconcile with the past, as exemplified in popular culture in the 1960s and 1970s, Suzuki states that such sentiments of reconciliation were not expressed at the Japanese government level. The fact that Japanese politics was dominated by the single party, the LDP, where many members hold nationalist views, as well as the fact that the LDP was influenced by lobbying groups which took nationalist views on Japan's past history, all contributed to the government's failure to reconcile the wrongdoings of the imperial army during the wars.

Suzuki argues that because it was difficult to cross borders until the mid 1980s, the Chinese, Japanese, and the Koreans had few opportunities to share a common memory of the past. Instead, by being dominated by Cold War politics, northeast Asia experienced what is called "thin-reconciliation": although the political normalization between Japan and China and the Korea was achieved in 1965 and 1972 respectively, the underlying past history between these countries remained unresolved. Consequently, once the borders in northeast Asia became more open in the middle of the 1980s, it became inevitable for the Japanese to confront past history with China and Korea. Using an example of Japanese historical textbooks, Suzuki highlights how the past history of wars has yet to reach a reconciliation both between Japan and other Asian countries, and within Japan.

Suzuki further examines the concept of the reconciliation, or "wakai" in Japanese. Suzuki points out that the concept of reconciliation began to be widely used in historical research and historical teachings in the 1990s in northeast Asian context. According to her, there are two approaches to historical reconciliation: the government-led reconciliation approach and the non-government-led approach. As to the former approach, examples include the research committee set up by the Japanese and Korean governments in March 2002 and a similar committee set up between Japan and China in 2002. These

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committees attempted to promote a historical reconciliation on the government levels. As to the latter, Suzuki points out that a broad range of non-governmental reconciliation projects took place over the past decade: the East Asian Historical Forum of Critic and Solidarity, the China-Japan Intellectual Community Dialogue, and the summer camps for the young in Hokkaido.

Suzuki states that the concept of reconciliation is understood in a different way in these two approaches. The official projects for reconciliation tend to be based on the understanding that each country has its own unified understanding of history. In this approach, the meaning of reconciliation is to overcome this difference in understanding of history held by each country. On the other hand, the un-official non-government level projects show a somewhat different understanding of reconciliation. These groups take the view that there are various kinds of understanding of history within the nation. They attempt to create a forum for on-going dialogue in the process of reconciliation. Suzuki considers that the projects led by non-government actors are important because they not only aim to reconcile, but also to provide an opportunity to bring people from each country face to face in a tangible way, to remember past history, and disseminate past history to a wider audience.

Lastly, Suzuki raised the issue of mass-media in relation to reconciliation. Suzuki points out that visual media, popular mass media and the Internet have great power to convey the stories of the past to a broader audience, and can facilitate audience reconsideration of the past in new ways. Suzuki suggests that the process of reconciliation can be more effectively advanced through our effective usage of media. Suzuki concluded by saying that the usage of new medias in creative ways, such as the creation of on-line reconciliation web-sites, can help the long-silenced to speak and to be listened to, can help us convey information across borders, to reach a more wider audience. (Nov.5)

## Global Challenges and Transnational Civil Society

Yoshikazu Sakamoto

Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo

**Y**oshikazu Sakamoto argues that it is important to achieve unity in reality because of the following three global challenges: (1) international and internal militarization, (2) anti-democratic, inequitable globalization, and (3) eco-political crisis and victimization.

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### (1) International and internal militarization

In the international arena, the decline of US power has facilitated the emergence of a multi-polar global system led by the European Union, Brazil and Russia, etc. Under this multi-polar global system, the world is unbalanced because of the different level of power each state obtains. This is what Sakamoto calls the “inequality of states.” Each state attempts to acquire military power in order to protect itself and sustain the balance of power. This rationale justifies weaker states to ensure their security by maximizing their military power, while stronger states aim to maintain their military superiority over others. In this way, international militarization has accelerated.

In the internal sphere, social disparity within states has widened. Sakamoto argues that discrimination against those who are economically, culturally, and socially marginalized in society has created a hotbed of terrorists “in reserve.” The increasing resentment toward society among the marginalized and their sense of isolation from society are inclined to be expressing themselves according to military means. In this way, those who are domestically marginalized try to acquire military power. Meanwhile, states have dealt with these marginalized people by strengthening the police and surveillance system, labeling them as “enemies within (states).” This militarization is further hastened by the privatization of military weapons. Sakamoto argues that one must face these serious challenges to peace and unity happening both in the internal and the international arena.

### (2) Anti-democratic and inequitable globalization

Sakamoto points out two worrying phenomena, which display the anti-democratic aspect of globalization. First, because of the rapidly rising competitiveness of the former South, many regular workers in the North have lost economic power and become the working poor. In the meantime, economic disparities within states of the former South have worsened as a result of ruthless and keen competition on the global scale. Consequently, an increasing number of people have become marginalized, which makes the world more undemocratic.

Second, because the global media sends out enormous amounts of capitalized information, the world becomes a consumer society. Under such circumstances, even war is presented as a commodity. In this way, people become unconcerned about human suffering, which makes them undemocratic and passive citizens.

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### (3) Eco-political crisis and victimization

According to Sakamoto, there are two categories of conflict with respect to the environment. First is the conflict over natural resources such as oil, natural gas, marine resources, and clean water—both on the international and the domestic level. Sakamoto argues that depletion of resources is a political and social question of how to distribute resources equally and of how to consume them in a humane manner. Second is the conflict over global warming. Climate change affects world food production, the price of farm products and livestock, and sea levels, all of which aggravate global hunger, widen the gap between rich and poor, cause social and political conflict and produce ecological refugees.

In conclusion, Sakamoto suggests that the role of a transnational civil society is crucial in order to tackle these three problems that constitute the inhumane and inequitable global structure. For Sakamoto, civil society is “a creative public space founded on the idea of “humanity” and “the dynamic, open-ended process of renovating social relations on the basis of the reciprocal recognition of the dignity and equality of all human beings regardless of race, religion, creed, or sex.” Sakamoto argues that civil society must pursue both the universality of human rights and the diversity of cultural values. (Sep.21)

## Cultural Tour Tokyo: Visits to Shimokitazawa and Koenji

Yoshitaka Mori (Facilitator of Day Trip1)

Associate Professor, Tokyo National University of the Fine Arts and Music

**I**n Shimokitazawa, the fellows visited a place called Qvirivsha, a small café which provides a space where people living in Shimokitazawa and elsewhere can gather. There, Kimura Kazuho, a graduate student at the University of Tokyo, provided a talk on the anti-redevelopment movement in Shimokitazawa, called “Save Shimokitazawa,” as one example of alternative social movements in Japan.

In 2003, Setagaya Ward made a proposition to redevelop Shimokitazawa by setting up a high-rise building in front of Shimokitazawa station, as well as constructing bus terminals and 26-meter wide highways. The proposal for the reconstruction was approved by the Metropolis of Tokyo in 2006. This redevelopment policy has caused concern among the residents in Shimokitazawa. For instance, some residents are concerned that the

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“modernization” of Shimokitazawa will change the original and unique character of the town. These concerned citizens have created the “Save Shimokitazawa” movement in order to stop the government-led reconstruction plan of Shimokitazawa and they have proposed their own plan for the redevelopment of Shimokitazawa.

According to Kimura, around 100 people have joined the movement. It is organized through mailing lists, and includes a wide variety of people ranging from high-school students to elderly people. Its activities include the publishing of mail magazines on a weekly basis, as well as a community paper, organizing demonstrations on the street and holding symposiums. In 2007, the “Save Shimokitazawa” movement brought a lawsuit against Tokyo Metropolis and the Japanese government to stop the redevelopment project.

Kimura points out that people in Shimokitazawa have various interests, and therefore, it is difficult to organize the movement. For instance, about seventy percent of land owners have already agreed to sell their lands, considering that the redevelopment project was an effective way to revitalize the economy in Shimokitazawa. Due to different agendas, cooperation between the “Save Shimokitazawa” movement and other movements against the redevelopment is limited. Despite these difficulties, Kimura states that people are organizing the movement to seek an alternative ways to revitalize the atmosphere of Shimokitazawa.

In Koenji, the fellows visited a recycling shop and a café, both operated by the movement called “Amateur Riot.” This social movement is unconventional in the sense that it organizes demonstrations for entertainment. For instance, the demonstrators occupy public places and start partying at the protest site. The “Amateur Riot” movement is organized by young people who have unstable and irregular jobs. Although some are residents of Koenji and others live outside the area, this movement is based in Koenji, which has historically been a place attracting radical political activities. Mori suggests that the “Amateur Riot” movement is organized through the Internets and flyers and does not have any connection with other social movements. He also points out that the “Amateur Riot” movement greatly contributes to the revitalization of Koenji because it brings more and more young people there. (Oct.5)

## Retreat and day trip

During the 3-day retreat trip, the fellows gave presentations on their research topics.<sup>1</sup>

### **Migrants in Sex Work as Reality: How Not to Divide Us into Criminals, Victims and Rescuers**

**Kaoru Aoyama**

Aoyama's argument powerfully showed the necessity of filling in the gap between the two different discourses, i.e., migrant sex workers as trafficking "victims" and as sex "workers." While Aoyama admits the difficulty of going beyond the boundary that separates discourse about sex workers into two, she attempts to provide the threshold by making the taboo agenda—trafficking in persons—public.

### **New Social Movements through a Politics of Iconogenesis**

**Petula, Sik-Ying Ho**

Ho's presentation showed how political activities can be embodied by using one's own body as an "icon." By introducing the life of one woman called Choi Fung, and her various activities, Ho suggests a "new" way of being "political,"<sup>2</sup> which is called "iconogenesis": young women who use their bodies as a political tool in order to gather attention from others and create a social movement.

### **The Village Systems Supporting Sustainability: A Success Story from Du Jia, Yunnan**

**Huang Jiansheng**

The SUCCESS (Sustainable Users' Concept for China Engaging Scientific Scenarios) project attempted to seek how sustainable development can be practiced in rural villages. As a member of the SUCCESS project, Huang explained the purpose of this project, how the research was conducted, and what the findings from the project were.

### **Migrants and the Access to Membership Goods**

**Sriprapha  
Petcharamesree**

By presenting the situation of migrants in Thailand, Petcharamesree showed how migrants are given limited access to "membership goods." Membership goods are a set of goods that only members of a political

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<sup>1</sup> Since Hishamuddin Rais joined the ALFP 2007 from 20th of September onward, he could not attend the retreat trip

<sup>2</sup> Other ways of being political, Ho argues, are through interpersonal engagement (to engage in different forms of intimacy with others) and through creating communities (i.e., to create alliances).

## ALFP activities: seminars, day and field trips, and public symposium

community (i.e., citizens) are allowed to enjoy. She argues that being perceived as not part of “Us” (i.e., members/citizens) but as “Others” (i.e., non-members/non-citizens), migrants are excluded from political communities and not allowed to enjoy the same goods as citizens do.

### **Freedom and Censorship/Blurring Boundaries**

#### **Bina Sarkar Ellias**

In the first half of her presentation, Ellias presented each cover of “Gallerie,” the magazine she has edited since 1997. By introducing the kinds of topics her journal has covered since its inception, Ellias powerfully argues that it is important to address social and political issues through the lens of art, so that these topics become accessible to the public. In the latter half of her presentation, Ellias shared her concern over freedom and censorship in India. In a critique of the current movement toward censorship and self-censorship, Ellias emphasizes the importance of freedom of expressions. At the end of the presentation, she presented one of her Haikus she composed while in Japan and some music which represent the cross-border nature of art.

### **Day trips**

On the first day trip,<sup>3</sup> held in October, the fellows visited Shimokitazawa and Koenji to learn about alternative social movements in Japan. The trip was facilitated by Yoshitaka Mori. The second day trip was organized in November. They visited Yasukuni Shrine and Yushukan Museum. After the visit, Amano Yasukazu gave a presentation on Yasukuni Shrine, its relationship with Shinto religion, and the emperor system.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See pages 107 and 108 to learn about the details of the Day Trip 1.

<sup>4</sup> The summary of Amano’s presentation is shown on the pages 91 and 92.

## Field trip

**Hiroshima**  
7-8 Oct. 2008

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum → **Miyoko Matsubara (seminar)** → Peace Memorial Park → **Akira Tashiro (seminar)** → Miyajima

In Hiroshima, the fellows attended seminars by Miyoko Matsubara, an atomic bomb survivor and Akira Tashiro, a journalist specializing in atomic bombs and nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup>

**Kyoto**  
8-9 and 11 Oct. 2008

Kiyomizu Temple → the Yanagihara Bank Commemorative Museum (Suijin District) → Utoro District → **Saito Masashi (seminar)** → Ryukoku University

In Utoro District, Masashi Saito, the Secretary General of Utoro wo Mamoru Kai (The Society for Protecting the Survival of Utoro), explained the historical background and current situations of Utoro district.<sup>6</sup>

In the evening, the fellows attended a seminar held at Ryukoku University. The seminar was organized by Hiroshi Tanaka, Lee Soo im, and Hisashi Nakamura, all of whom are professors at Ryukoku University. First, a brief presentation on the experiences of the Korean minority living in Japan was given by Dr. Lee Soo im. Following the presentation, a candid discussion was held among the fellows and the students of Ryukoku University. What nationality means for Koreans, why ethnicity is so important for the Japanese, and the issue of discrimination against the Koreans were main topics of the discussion.

**Shiga**  
10 Oct. 2008

The Lake Biwa Museum → **Atsushi Makino (seminar)** → the Harie District.

In the Lake Biwa Museum, Atsushi Makino, a researcher at the museum, gave a seminar on the environmental situation of Lake Biwa.<sup>7</sup> After visiting Lake Biwa, the fellows had lunch at the community center hall in the Harie district, which is known for its own sewage system called Kabata. Kabata is a unique eco-friendly sewage system which uses the water coming out from the ground for domestic usage, depending on its natural power of self-cleaning. After lunch, the

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<sup>5</sup> See pages 102 and 103 for Matsubara's seminar and pages 89 and 90 for Tashiro's.

<sup>6</sup> See pages 101 and 102 for Saito's presentation summary.

<sup>7</sup> See pages 92 and 93 for Makino's presentation summary.

ALFP activities: seminars, day and field trips, and public symposium

residents in the Harie district showed the fellows various types of Kabata used in their community.

## Public Symposium

### Unity in Diversity: From Exclusive State to Collaborating Communities

- Day 1**  
6 Nov. 2008
- People, State, Whose Security?**
- ▶ Stories from Borders and Stories of Borders  
by Sriprapha Petcharamesree
  - ▶ Migration: Diverse Experiences  
by Kaoru Aoyama
  - ▶ Sustainability and Community System  
by Huang Jiansheng
- 

The idea of borders was the focal point of the first day of the symposium: how we understand the concept of borders, how people are affected by crossing borders, how people live within borders, and how people blur the boundaries of borders. The presentation of Sriprapha Petcharamesree critically examined the concept of borders<sup>8</sup> from both legal and political perspectives. With a focus on the experience of migrant women who work in the sex industry in Japan, Kaoru Aoyama examined their situations based on her interviews with them. By presenting his observations on village lives in China and those in Japan, Huang Jiansheng investigated the ideal community systems for the realization of ecological and social sustainability.

The theme of borders was further illustrated by the personal account of a migrant worker in Japan, which was given before the fellows' presentations. Amano Andera from Thailand, a member of staff at the House in Emergency of Love and Peace, presented her working experience with migrant women who accessed the House in Emergency of Love and Peace.

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<sup>8</sup> By the term "borders," Petcharamesree indicates not only the lines which cut through geographical territory, but also social, cultural and psychological territory.

**Day 2**    **Looks, Looking, and Lurking: Sex-Youth-Art: An**  
7 Nov. 2008    **Experience with Hong Kong, Malaysia, and India**

- ▶ The possibilities of a Second Spring: Japanese ‘Shufu’ and HK Chinese ‘Sinai’  
by Sik-Ying Ho
  - ▶ Energy 4 Change  
by Hishamuddin Rais
  - ▶ Gallerie: Another Way of Looking  
by Bina Sarkar Ellias
- 

The theme of the second day of the symposium revolved around sex, youth, and art. Each presentation provided a unique perspective on sex, youth, and art, with examples from Hong Kong, Malaysia, India, and Japan. Sik-Ying Ho examined what it means to be a “shufu” or a housewife in Japan. She reproduced her interviews with Japanese women. Fellows of the ALFP 2007 and others affiliated to the program took on “surrogate” roles as the interviewees and presented accounts of their lives in a theatrical and documentary way.

By showing a series of visual images collected during his stay in Japan, Rais compared the youth culture in Malaysia and that in Japan. Observing and exploring the potential force of change in the youth counter-culture, Rais argues that youth cultures in the two countries are different: the former works as a force to question the regime while the latter to confirm the regime.

Bina Sarkar Ellias’s presentation was composed of various seminar themes discussed throughout the ALFP 2007: poverty, discrimination, religion, and Hiroshima/peace. Ellias presented her views on each topic with the hope of creating a more equitable and just world.