Emerging Pluralism in Asia and the Pacific

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This book is part of the research programme on Cultural Relations and Identities in East Asia of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies. The programme aims at enhancing our understanding of the complex cultural phenomena of the late 20th on the way towards the 21st century in East Asia and accommodating multi-disciplinary research projects addressing contemporary issues of culture within China, Japan and Korea and among these countries and other Asia-Pacific countries. Major research themes include "Food and Culture in East Asia," "Cultural Identity in East Asia," "Cultural Unity and Diversity in Asia and the Pacific" and "The Emergence of a Pan-Asian Popular Culture." Should readers have any comment on this book or the research programme, please contact the Programme Director, Professor David Y.H. Wu, by e-mail eastasiaid@cuhk.edu.hk or fax 852-2603-5215.

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Contents

Preface

Cultural and social pluralism is not new in many places of Asia and the Pacific region. However, what this book addresses is the plural phenomena of a global scale and of transnational nature that have emerged more recently. As the first part of this volume discusses, this new pluralism results from a globalization process of economic and political interactions; it impacts deeply on local and regional cultural relations and social institutions, as the second part of the book illustrates; and it affects all the people in terms of self, community, and national identities. The unprecedented nature of this impress is elaborated in the third part. This complicated experience of pluralism and diversification among Asia-Pacific countries has become more prominent in the post-cold war era, as cultural activities carry new political meanings, and cultural items become commodified, being promoted and traded across national and regional boundaries. Issues, problems, and interpretations concerning this emerging pluralism attract intellectual inquiries and debates. Hence, we have a book sponsored by the Research Programme on "Cultural Relations and Identities in East Asia" at the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

This intellectual discussion, resulting in the collaboration of three editors as well as the contributors to this volume, would not have taken place without the initiative, active planning, and generous sponsorship of the JAL Foundation in Japan. This book is one of the products of the 1995 Asia Forum held in Kumamoto City on 23 and 24 August, 1995, when a group of scholars gathered to present their views on the Forum theme: "emerging pluralism in Asia and Oceania, within and between nations." In 1993, the JAL

Foundation had inaugurated an annual event of "Asia Forum" which aimed to explore the "possibility of creating a transnational community in Asia and Oceania." Since then, each year the Foundation has brought a large group of young university students of many Asian nations and places, including Japan, to participate in Forum activities and meet with prominent intellectuals invited from the region to discuss the Forum's theme. All three editors, and the majority of the contributors to this volume, were participants of the Kumamoto meeting.

We are grateful to Professor Yamamoto who helped to design and organize the intellectual part of the 1995 Forum, and who took enormous responsibilities in organizing this book and in seeking further funding for this publication with the JAL Foundation. We thank the JAL Foundation for its sponsorship of the Asia Forum and generous support of this book. We would also like to express our appreciation for the support of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, especially to its Director, Professor Yue-man Yeung, for his genuine interest in and resource support given to our project.

Despite inconveniences arising from the fact that the three editors reside in places far apart, good collaboration among them produced this publication. The second editor, Mr. McQueen, did the copy editing of the manuscript papers. However, to get this book out, we owe a great deal to the efficient assistance during the past year of Miss Law Hau Wai, Programme Research Assistant, who pulled together a collection of draft papers into a presentable book manuscript. We wish also to acknowledge the enormous work and assistance in editing and publication production by the Editorial Committee of the HKIAPS, with special thanks to Ms. Wan Po-san and Dr. Maurice Brosseau, Research Officers of the institute.

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The Editors
June 1997

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PART I

Globalization and Pluralistic Society

Repressive Pluralism

Humphrey McQUEEN

"Pluralism" vibrates with the promise of openness and a welcome to diversity. "Emerging" intensifies such expectations with its aura of birth as well as excitements from the unknown. Yet 1960s' radicals had pictured political pluralism as an apology for the privileged. Those critics pointed to three fallacies: (1) pluralism's assumptions about a system of countervailing power ignored the disparity of influence, for example, between the concentration of control in corporations against the choice available to individual consumers; (2) governments were not neutral referees but partisans who favored established rights; and (3) leaders of the less powerful had been co-opted so that the disadvantaged were left without tribunes.[1] Pluralism lost its shine among political scientists only to be revived for discussions of multiculturalism. This paper argues that pluralism as a touchstone for the politics of ethnicity conceals a comparable bias.

Several firms are economically larger than many nation-states in Asia and Oceania. Marketing can reshape perceptions of our individual selves and of groups, whether delineated by class, ethnicity or faith. The prospects for diversity across all levels of society cannot be understood without attending to firms such as Coca-Cola Inc and News Corporation Ltd since the impact of transnationals will continue to be at least as significant for emerging pluralism as will be the policies of any government. Corpora-

tions offer to increase the diversity of products but their drive to expand means that a new beverage or television network can reduce the range of effective choices. That process of restriction is best described as repressive pluralism.

Immigration laws and home-stay schemes retain influence although they too intersect with corporate behaviors. Australia for example encourages business immigrants from Hong Kong if they bring capital and managerial skills. Such arrivals are possible only because the White Australia Policy had been scrapped by the early 1970s. Individual contacts between peoples from different cultures depend to some extent on mass tourism, another corporate endeavor. Hence, to discuss pluralism solely in terms of state-sponsored programs or volunteer activity will give an unbalanced account of the institutions that shape how societies will develop.

Some alternatives threaten the survival of others, and thus constrain choice. An economy is neither a zero-sum game nor is it infinitely elastic. Growth permits new entrants, but those latecomers can marginalize previously dominant actors. Two instances, one from commerce and the other from colonialism, demonstrate this point.

Corner stores in the USA were so named because shopkeeping families sought street-corner sites to attract the pedestrian traffic that accumulates around an intersection. Nowadays corner stores deserve that title because they have been driven into the corners of retailing which is dominated by multinational chains through their hypermarkets at drive-in shopping centers. To survive even along the edges of the economy, most small stores must band together to purchase in bulk at lower prices.

Equally, the arrival of 1,200 Europeans at Sydney in 1788 at first increased the diversity of Australia's population but within a hundred years the indigenous people had been marginalized, their social systems broken up, many of their languages lost and the remnant feared annihilation. High among the reasons for this switch from an initial increase in diversity towards a nearly mono-cultural population ("ninety-eight percent British" boasted officialdom) was the incompatibility of the pastoral industries of the

settlers with the hunter-gatherer practices of the original occupiers. Those examples remind us that some steps towards diversity result in an elimination of alternatives. Entrants bring no guarantee of enhanced pluralism.

Australia has an ambivalent place in this business realm, at once an activator for its own interests and a vehicle driven by larger players. Coca-Cola is expanding into Indonesia through an Australian-based company — Coca-Cola Amatil — which began as an offshoot of a British tobacco firm but is now more than 50 percent owned by a US company, Coca-Cola plc. News Corporation Ltd is registered in Australia but its chief proprietor, Rupert Murdoch, renounced his Australian citizenship in 1985 so that he could secure television licenses in the USA. He participated in the 1995 Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race as a crew member on the US winner. Even the US government had difficulty in pinning down the nationality of the Foxtel arm of his family-dominated corporation. Murdoch keeps News Corp. registered in Adelaide because Australian company law requires fewer disclosures than those demanded in the USA. Loose Australian accounting standards "allowed him to overstate the value of his varied assets" in order to borrow billions.[2] If head office for News Corp. is wherever Murdoch happens to be — perhaps his yacht in the Mediterranean — its epicenter remains the USA.

These uncertainties are repeated in disputes over whether to refer to global corporations as *trans-* or *multi-* national. Although *multi*-national is often treated as if it were synonymous with *trans*-national a distinction deserves to be drawn. *Multi-* implies that nation-states persist and that firms must balance the interests of several of them. An opposing view is that such firms are *trans*-national, that is, neither dependent upon nor subject to the laws of any of the countries in which they do business. Evidence for this second tendency is available from transfer-pricing schemes to minimize tax and in threats to withhold capital unless laws are amended in favor of foreign investors.

The notion that nation-states are being bypassed depends on the assumption that they were ever neutral regulators in a plural-

ist contest. Corporations remain national in relation to their metropolitan states but anti-national in their impact on peripheral ones. Transnational firms work with their home-base state to crack open those aspects of the client states that impede foreign business interests. At the same time, repressive elements in those subaltern states are strengthened through their connections with the armed forces of the major power.[3]

Nations like empires came into being to patrol access to markets and resources. Thus, intimate relations continue between national governments and global corporations, no matter which prefix, *trans-* or *multi-*, is attached. The US Commerce Department acts on behalf of US-based firms which want easier access to Japanese markets. Although General Motors operates in Germany as part of its globalized manufacturing, Bonn is less likely to pressure Tokyo on GM's behalf than is Washington. German officials will be more concerned about sales by BMW. Hence the global reach of corporations has not severed their links to host states. Berne authorities protect the trade practices of Swiss-based drug companies as if they were national secrets. The KGB and CIA have been "privatized" to spy on allies for their technologies. In short, national governments continue to privilege certain corporations over others just as even the most globalized of corporations rely on the administration of one nation-state more than any of the others with whom they cut deals. In place of the expression "nation-state" it is more informative to speak of a "nation-*market*-state" since the political system secures markets, whether its own through protection, or those overseas against rivals.

Deregulation of an economy will not of itself generate a democratization of the polity or a greater diversity in the culture. Indeed a stronger central state can emerge to keep the market open to non-local firms. No essential conflict exists between the state and the market once the latter is recognized as a citadel walled in by competing monopolizers and not an open field on which farmers and craftspeople sell their products. The vegetable market in a Burmese village is qualitatively different from the Chicago Market in Grain Futures, not its prototype.[4] Markets do

not become "free" because government controls are removed. Corporations still manage both supply and demand to determine price and profit levels. Barriers to entry are secured through set-up and marketing costs. For instance, proliferation of soft drinks from Coca-Cola conquers supermarket shelf space and thereby marginalizes smaller firms which cannot offer a discount to the retailers in exchange for the most effective points of sale. Hence no entrant to the soft drink market could afford to promote its beverage to the level of recognition held by Coca-Cola. After 1977 when the Indian government sought to support a local producer it not only banned Coca-Cola but marketed the newcomer as Carma-Cola with a red-and-white florid script and in the distinctive bottle.

Any diversity among village traders is challenged by the arrival of corporations. Sales of home-grown coconuts on the equatorial island group of Yap had been slashed by Coca-Cola until activists in the mid-1970s promoted the local product. During that campaign the value of imported soft drinks fell by three-quarters. In terms of development, and given that the Yapese had already demonstrated their capacity to create low-cost systems of water reticulation, a vending machine on a thoroughfare was less necessary to social justice than the delivery of potable water closer to each household.[5]

A comparable situation arose in regard to the promotion of Nestlé baby food, Nestrogen, as a substitute for breastmilk. Dangers arise because that powder has to be mixed with water which is often impure and so leads to diarrhea which is the principal cause of deaths among children. In India the rate of mortality is fourteen times higher for infants fed on formula food than for those on their mother's milk. To secure sales Nestlé has adopted the marketing tactic pioneered by Coca-Cola of giving away samples. Pressured to abandon that method, the company instead gives presents to health volunteers in the Philippines who sell Nestrogen in their districts. Nestlé's drive has the same origins as McDonald's, Coca-Cola's and Hollywood's: a faster growth rate of effective demand in Asia than in Europe or the USA. That

Coca-Cola's marketing provides a model for other companies was voiced by the Nestlé's Chief Executive in 1988: "In chocolate Nestlé missed the part of the world that belongs to Coca-Cola and rock'n'roll."[6] In areas such as mineral water, Coca-Cola and Nestlé are in competition but for the vending-machine sale of canned coffee and tea they have formed a partnership.[7]

Moreover, Dennis O'Rourke's 1980 documentary, *Yap — How Did You Know We'd Like TV*, traced how the introduction of television to Yap was part of the US government's strategy to retain control over the island group after the people achieved self-determination. O'Rourke's film documented how US authorities gave the islanders free television and flew in round-the-clock tapes, advertisements and all, from Los Angeles channels, to subvert local cultures with the promise of consumer goods such as Coca-Cola and Nestlé.

Anyone born into a film culture can no longer recognize the impact that the cinema, television and video screens have had on our conceptions of the world. Only by examining the reactions of a people as they meet the moving image for the first time can we glimpse the depth of our own complicity. Poet and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini railed that the arrival of television to Italy in the 1950s had imposed a curfew on the streets of Rome stricter than had operated under Fascism. Anthropologist Edmund Carpenter reported in *Oh, What a Blow That Phantom Gave Me!* (1976) that New Guinea highlanders had abandoned some traditional ceremonies in favor of watching the ethnographic films of those rituals.

As two transnational corporations with active support from US administrations, Coca-Cola Inc and News Corporation Ltd are positioned to increase their effects upon the social, political, cultural and economic future of the peoples of the Asia-Pacific. Attention to Coca-Cola and News Corp. in this paper will direct discussion beyond any equation of emergent pluralism with governmental policies or personal contacts.

Coca-Cola

By 1978 less than 1 percent of Japan's population had not heard of Coca-Cola. Among countless examples of its visibility is the seven-meter-high aluminum-sheet Coca-Cola bottle erected in 1989 at one of the busiest intersections in the Indonesian city of Surabaya. A similar monument went up in New Delhi.[8] Coca-Cola is not only the best known brand around our planet but its marketing strategies highlight how the self-images as much as the living standards of nations and individuals are affected by the needs of corporations.

Coke's high level of recognition has been assisted by the distinctiveness of its red-on-white logo, created at the same time as the beverage, as well as of its packaging in a bottle adopted around 1910. Colors and shapes however would not have earned their level of brand recognition had not the Coca-Cola company policed their use through a 38-point guide to advertisers.[9] Company secretary, Mr Rainwater, told the Coca-Cola Bottlers Association conference in 1924 that there was "a wonderful effect in the uniformity of things."[10] Standardization underpinned the beverage's worldwide identification, making diversity and pluralism dirty words for Coca-Cola's marketing division. By 1940 the company had won 240 patent suits in the USA to protect its name from imitators such as Coke Ola.[11]

Attempts to find Chinese characters to capture both the sense and sound of Coca-Cola have given rise to Kokuh-Koluh which could be read as "Can Mouth, Can Happy" or "Tastes Good, Tastes Happy."[12]

From the start Coke's promotional campaigns were as standardized as its syrup formula. Atlanta's marketing division began to police its displays in soda fountains and the advertisements used by bottlers as a condition of their franchises. Coca-Cola's advertising flattened perceptions of such cultural icons as Santa Claus whom we now recognize from his red suit with a white fur trim. That image was a by-product of the Christmas campaigns by Coca-Cola which began in 1931 as their commercial artist,

Haddon Sundbloom, emphasized red and white to associate the soft drink's colors with the spirit of goodwill in a season when the demand for cold beverages was minimal in the northern hemisphere. Coca-Cola's image of Father Christmas repressed local customs in which his appearance had varied from a hand-sized dwarf to a figure dressed in black.[13] This appropriation was but one by-product in the strategy by Coca-Cola to control every detail of its sales effort because creation of demand was the key to profits from a product which, as Pepsi's chief executive once admitted, no one needed.[14]

The formula for the essence of Coca-Cola would not have been worth stealing if the thief could not monopolize the associated imagery. Although the 1983 attempt to dump the classic Coke taste proved disastrous, no executive has been so rash as to suggest changing the brand name or its red-and-white logo. In the late 1970s the Pepsi executive who initiated its challenge complained about Coke that "people were drinking the trademark."[15] Pepsi never achieved so distinctive a look but rather has tried to pass itself off as Coke. Hence, early in 1996 it could risk switching its colors from red, white and blue to blue to achieve a unique image since many consumers cannot tell the difference by taste. Before the end of 1997 all Pepsi cans will be blue. Because Pepsi is already an oligopoly, it could afford the necessary publicity campaign which included a British tabloid, the *Daily Mirror*, coloring its pages blue to coincide with the launch.[16]

Conformity in the promotion for Coca-Cola paralleled drives to control the taste of its product and to eliminate consumer preferences for any other drink. From the 1880s, its proprietors were scrupulous in enforcing the percentage of syrup in each serve when soda fountains were the prime outlet. The company resisted the provision of straws in the 1950s because their wax coating altered the flavor in the mouth.

Between Coca-Cola's origins in Atlanta in 1886 and the Pepsi Generation of the 1960s, Coca-Cola executives sought to standardize tastes across the globe so that everyone would want to drink what is now known as Coke Classic. When the company came to

Australia in 1937 its agents recognized that they would have to undermine the Britishers' preference for tea.[17] After the war, the US parent company tried to suppress Fanta which had been created by its German branch when it had not been able to receive supplies of Coca-Cola essence.[18] Coca-Cola was also slow to offer a diet version. When competition from Royal Crown's Diet Rite Cola forced the introduction of a low-calorie alternative in 1963 Atlanta called its new beverage TAB so as not to tarnish the name of Coca-Cola.[19] This concentration on a single product was typical of the mass production stage of capitalist industry, sometimes called Fordism. The aim was to hold down unit costs by standardizing production, epitomized in Henry Ford's promise that his customers could have any color T-model they liked so long as it was black.

Nowadays, Coca-Cola is a diversified beverage company which aims to profit from whatever people drink. Hence, its subsidiaries sell water purifiers, tea, coffee, fruit juices, a variety of soft drinks other than Coke as well as several kinds of Coca-Cola, ranging from caffeine-free diet coke to a Cherry Coke.[20] High calorie soft drinks conflict with the advertisers' emphasis on dieting for beauty. The appeal of the heavily sugared Cherry Coke had to be balanced by the introduction of a Diet Cherry Coke.[21] This range of products acknowledges a diversity inside national markets and parallels the shift towards low cost customized products made possible by Computer-Aided Design and Manufacture (CAD-CAM). Global reach is now pursued through a plurality of marketing percentiles and segmented markets. Atlanta went too far by scrapping Coke Classic in 1983, forgetting that a large niche still wanted the core product.

The task before Coca-Cola in Asia is not to squeeze drink preferences down to only Coke Classic but to create addicts for any of the varieties of Coke, while providing branded versions of local favorites. Hence, Coca-Cola markets a soluble fiber in Japan and a rice-based soft drink to Koreans.[22] To appeal to sweet teeth while offering some consolation to weight consciousness, Coca-Cola in Japan has promoted Coke LITE rather than its Diet Coke.

Global strategy is to overtake water as the drink of choice, even while packaging tap water under the brand label H$_2$OH![23]

Cultural diversity nowadays can be almost as great between age groups within one society as between two language groups. Senior citizens in Japan coined the expression *shinjinri*, meaning new human being, to account for a lack of manners in their grandchildren. The layering of tastes is most pronounced among younger consumers, with pre-teens, early teens, mid-teens, late-teens and young adults registering distinct preferences in dress and music. Coca-Cola now promotes "OK Soda" for Generation X. Clear Colas came and went during 1994 without finding their slot. From a marketing executive's perspective "Generation X" should be relabeled "Generation ?"

To deal with this challenge from age-based preferences, Coca-Cola in 1994 broke from its practice of giving its advertising account to a single Madison Avenue firm, McCann-Erickson since 1954. Instead, a score of small to huge agencies have been offered the chance to promote a spread of beverages across a fissiparous and febrile marketplace. One winner has been Creative Artists Agency, a cooperative venture by actors and artists. This multi-headed approach is one more sign that marketing's so-called experts are less certain than ever how to package potential customers. At the same time, Coca-Cola attempted its first global television commercials for six of its major products. These advertisements not only placed the Coke name in front of its customers but were designed to lead audiences towards cosmopolitan preferences which would be more manageable than the recent proliferation of tastes.[24]

The individualism of the Pepsi generation has got out of hand with ceaseless segmentation along ideological as well as fashion lines. The use of Madonna or Michael Jackson to promote Pepsi appeals to a large section of the younger end of the market but offends the religious Right of all ages. A star, like Cliff Richards, who appealed to the Christian coalition, would be too bland for the rest of the youth market. Ray Charles however helped position Diet Pepsi for sophisticates, irrespective of gender or age.

This scramble to advertise to target audiences continues the Coca-Cola tradition of putting more effort into sales than into production. Expansion overseas extends equally long-standing patterns. Yet there is a new imperative. Between 1985 and 1991 the share of Coca-Cola's profits earned outside the USA rose from 50 to 80 percent. The firm's expansion beyond the USA is more necessary than ever for profitability. The value of shares granted to executives is linked to growth and hence to ever more customers. The US market is almost a super-saturated solution with daily sales of a 230 ml serve of one of the Coca-Colas for every adult and child. This rate contrasts with 112 serves per annum for Japan, 95 for the Philippines, 65 for Korea, 50 for Taiwan and only five in Indonesia. Corporation president, Donald R. Keough, looked upon Indonesia as soda-pop heaven because it is "on the Equator with 180 million people, a median age of 18, and a Moslem ban on alcohol."[25]

While the variety of Coca-Cola drinks has multiplied since the 1970s, the company itself has become more concentrated. Coca-Cola began its continental expansion around 1900 by franchising its brand label and syrup to existing bottlers. The advantage of this approach was that the Atlanta owners did not have to raise capital to build their own bottling and distribution networks in competition with established suppliers. Franchises were given away for a dollar to those with the investments to ensure that profits flowed to Atlanta through the sale of syrup. This arrangement worked well enough until the 1960s when Pepsi mounted its challenge for the youth market. Long-time Coca-Cola bottlers were reluctant to invest in a counter-offensive. Despite doing very little they had comfortable incomes which they did not want to reduce by capital outlays or additional advertising costs. Atlanta took a wider and longer view, fearful that neither its own income nor that of its bottlers would be secure if more of their earnings did not go into equipment and marketing. In order to re-invigorate its sales effort, Coca-Cola in Atlanta began to buy back franchises from local distributors, often for hundreds of millions of dollars. Thus the pressure to cope with a rival oligopoly in Pepsico

resulted in concentration within the Coca-Cola network. Competitiveness in marketing demanded a narrowing in ownership across the globe.[26]

One instance of this integration came in 1989 when Coca-Cola bought into a company operating in Australia, now known as Coca-Cola Amatil (CC-A). CC-A became responsible for sales into Indonesia and large sections of Europe including Austria, Switzerland, the Ukraine, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Poland. To assist with marketing into Indonesia, in 1992 CC-A recruited Richard Woolcott as its consultant, only weeks after he had retired as Secretary to Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade where his major assignment had been to attract support for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC). CC-A bought "his advice on its global expansion."[27] Woolcott had been a leader of an Indonesian lobby within Australia's governing circles, an agent of influence for the Suharto regime, whether on East Timor or its nepotism. His appointment was a further instance of how government and business interact in nation-market-states.

Thus, Australia is not just part of the APEC zone, or merely another bridgehead for European and US firms to reach into Asia. Australia is also a springboard for a US firm to operate in Eastern Europe. This diversity in trade links is expedited because Australia's immigration program after 1947 brought in East Europeans whose offspring can now use their cultural and language inheritances to do business in their parents' countries of origins. Comparable opportunities arise from the large and wide-ranging groups of Asian immigrants who have arrived in Australia during the past twenty-five years.

Even with the backing of its metropolitan state, a corporation is rarely powerful enough to ride over every palate, regulation and business habit. In the Philippines, the market leader among the fast-food chains is the indigenous Jollibee Foods which seasons its chicken and beef to the locals' tastebuds as well as selling a favorite noodle. Elsewhere, food has to be prepared to accord with religious obligations.[28]

Coca-Cola's experiences in Japan illustrate this connection. The beverage's ultimate success there contrasts with the complaints made by many US firms as they are tripped up by Japanese distribution networks, or other restrictive trading practices. Big business pressure did more to alter the national government policy towards Coca-Cola than did consumer preferences, fervent though that demand was. With the end of the occupation and the Korean war, sales of Coca-Cola by 1954 were being marginalized because constraints on Japan's balance of payments first prevented the import of the secret essence and then delayed the repatriation of profits. Further opposition came from the small and medium suppliers of soda pops as well as from the larger brewers who owned soft drink subsidiaries. An early ally for Coca-Cola was Mitsubishi Heavy Industries which had been supplying Coca-Cola with its equipment. Mitsubishi then pressured Kerin Beer, a fellow member of its conglomerate (keiretsu), to accept a Coca-Cola franchise and so throw its weight behind the effort to relax governmental policies. Part of the final arrangement was that Coca-Cola should assist Japanese soft drink manufacturers to modernize. Coca-Cola's method for entering any market had been to franchise a local bottler. Hence, the alliance with Kerin was Atlanta's usual way of ending conflicts with established distribution networks.[29]

One lesson from that ten-year battle is that Japan's small local bottlers needed a tough government and more powerful partners in business to secure any respite or compensation. In the current era of deregulated financial regimes and anti-protectionist pressures out of the World Trade Organisation and the IMF-World Bank, local producers in more vulnerable states will stand far less chance of surviving a challenge from Coca-Cola than did its Japanese rivals.

By 1950, Time had referred to Coca-Cola as "the sublimated essence of all America stands for." The spread of Coca-Cola as a commodity gave rise to "Coca-Colonisation" as a rallying cry against any erasure of local cultures by any US corporation. Coca-Cola became a generic for anti-foreign rhetoric. In India and the

old USSR, the term "Coca-Colonisation" has been used to attack even Pepsi. Scholars who are embarrassed to mention imperialism even in connection with the cultural aspects of US influence will use Coca-Colonisation as a light-hearted admonition.

Coca-Colonisation became a synonym for US cultural imperialism because two features of the soda-pop corporation highlighted key dynamics from capitalist modernization. As we have seen, Coke seeks to market its products in every corner of the globe and thereby break through local traditions. Secondly, during the post-war decades when the phrase Coca-Colonisation gained currency, the corporation's marketing strategy was to sell nothing but Classic Coke through promotional campaigns which were as standardized as its secret formula. Coca-Cola was the epitome of mass society.

Many complaints by both radicals and conservatives against the United States sound like grouches about modernization. This aspect of prejudice against the USA is a contemporary version of nineteenth-century anti-Semitic arguments which pictured "rich urbanized Jews as the advance agents of modernity."[30] During this century, anti-Americanism, like Coca-Colonisation, became shorthand for the gaggle of objections to the stresses from industrial, urban existence, with its speed, standardization and waste fed by corporate overproduction and marketing. Similarly, current alarms within the US about an economic menace from East Asians is a further updating of that resistance to modernity, but this time the concern is that the baton of industrial leadership is passing to Japan and its tiger cubs. The USA's own devotion to technology as the measure of civilization is under challenge now that the driver's wheel is not always on the left-hand side.

A link exists between the ways that US corporations do business overseas and the behavior of individuals, such as the "ugly American" tourist. The arrogance peculiar to US marketing and military leaders rests in their readiness to behave as if the entire planet were populated by latent US Americans. Those strategists assume that the rest of the world is US mindspace. Once US citizens identify their culture with progress, their attitudes to-

wards other ways of living sound offensive because they perceive everyone else not as different, but as backward. Such US Americans consider it dumb of Parisians to select from a dozen goat cheeses at streetstalls rather than getting slices of plastic from supermarkets.

Coca-Colonisation has value as a critical term only in as much as it illuminates how standardization will benefit firms such as Nestlé or McDonald's which seek to profit from managing dietary preferences. Anti-Americanism turns vapid if it is but a snob's disdain for the grossness of over-production and conspicuous consumption. In that case, anti-Americanism becomes a way to project one's own failings onto individual US citizens rather than prompt an analysis of the global corporations that fashion modernity everywhere.

After all, some flagships of Coca-Colonisation, notably several Hollywood majors, recently have had non-US owners. Matsushita bought Universal, Sony took Columbia and Credit Lyonnais went into MGM. Forces impelling the concentration of ownership and the commodification of culture are no less powerful in Europe where Italy's Silvio Berlusconi and France's Martin Boygues operated by the same rules as their Hollywood counterparts.

As a major spender on the production and screening of television commercials, Coca-Cola had direct links with the advertising-funded mass media even before it bought Columbia studios. In the 1950s, Coca-Cola hired actors to make celebrity commercials which were screened during the drama series in which those stars appeared. Coca-Cola in Japan contracted David Lynch in 1993 to produce a four-part commercial based on his high-rating drama series, *Twin Peaks*.[31] Late in 1995 Coca-Cola set up a joint venture with Walt Disney to create commercials just as six years earlier it had arranged a joint promotion with News Corporation.[32] The $5m. fees to Michael Jackson and Madonna put Pepsi, according to its chief executive, into the entertainment business.[33] It is truer to say that this connection is no more than an extension of the soft drink industry's emphasis on marketing.

The spread of Coke-owned beverages increases the diversity of products available. How long does that competition last? What newcomer could match the US$500m. that Coca-Cola and Pepsi will each spend on advertising in 1996? A single television commercial for Pepsi has just cost US$3m.[34] Pluralism is at the level of brands, not market share. Pluralism in products is achieved by a contraction in the range of suppliers.

News Corp.

News Corporation Ltd was reborn in the Australian city of Adelaide after 1953 when the 22-year-old Rupert Murdoch took control of one afternoon newspaper. More than forty years on, his company controls every kind of media across the globe from *The Times* of London to pay television in Indonesia as well as satellite television into Brazil.[35] One of his nicknames, Mass Murdoch, plays on the phrases Mass Media and Mass Murder, the latter deriving from sensationalist crime reporting by his British and US tabloids.

When Murdoch first became fascinated by satellite telecasting he claimed that its technologies would disarm totalitarianism, just as programs beamed from Western Europe had contributed to the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Similarly, governmental censorship of the media in the People's Republic of China, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia would be made irrelevant, he believed, once news services and current affairs could be supplied from outside those nation-market-states. Local populations would defy their governments to acquire the satellite dishes (parabolic antennae) needed to catch the signals.

Murdoch's utopianism values a plurality of ideas and information above certain local beliefs and customs. One of these attitudes is a so-called Asian way which has been promoted by ruling elites from Marcos to Suharto to justify their sectional powers and privileges. At one level, this Asian way is a cover under which the powerful can marginalize dissenters. Yet, it can also

voice a resistance to sex and violence in news coverage as much as in entertainment programs.

The preservation of moral standards while opening up to information presents a dilemma for policy-makers in Asia: a loss of values or a loss of business? A different conflict affects transnational chief executives who still need permission to transmit into nation-market-states. Corporate reach must expand through such contradictions which have no pre-determined pattern, as Murdoch is discovering.

No sooner had Murdoch bought into Star TV in July 1993 than he learned that open airways would not be easy to set up. To pay for Star, Murdoch sold his half share in the Hong Kong newspaper *South China Morning Post*, which had supported the colony's British governor against Beijing. At that time Star rebroadcast BBC news programs which angered the Chinese leadership. That conflict was part of the assault on totalitarianism that Murdoch had hailed. Then, in March 1994 Star replaced its BBC World Service with Mandarin-language films on its schedules into the People's Republic. Three months later, Murdoch admitted that that change had not been for the "purely commercial reasons" announced at the time but was to cement his relations with China's authoritarians.[36] Notwithstanding this deal, during a lecture delivered in October 1994 Murdoch returned to his theme of how technology would overcome tyranny, although by then he was careful not to name any real existing dictatorships. A few days later he was in Malaysia agreeing to let its government operate a block-out switch over programs on Star, the same offer being made to Beijing in the following January.[37] By July 1995, News Corp. had a joint venture with the *People's Daily*, an official party newspaper.[38] The anti-totalitarian Murdoch had linked up with China's Ministry of Truth. In January 1996, Star executives were negotiating with Beijing's television authorities for link-ups. Although Murdoch parades a pluralist position in front of Western audiences, he submits to government dictates elsewhere in order to gain access to those "whole new audiences and markets" he expects will be "goldmines" for media entrepreneurs.[39]

Although Murdoch has abandoned his commitments to un-censored information via his satellite, he continues to hope that his Star network will spread a dominant language throughout India, as he explained in that 1994 lecture:

> Indian leaders have long been desperately worried about disunity in their vast, teeming, multilingual country. This is something we can hardly understand in the English-speaking world, where we achieved total political stability so long ago. To try to achieve it in India, there has been an effort ever since independence to promote Hindi as the *lingua franca*, what in India is called the "link language." But the effort has failed. Until now. With the coming of the electronic mass media, Hindi is finally spreading, because everyone wants to watch the best television programming. And I suspect we will see this story repeated throughout the developing world, not least in China with Mandarin.[40]

Murdoch is not advocating the suppression of minority languages, yet neither is he anxious to preserve linguistic diversity. Indeed, if Urdu with 40m. speakers can be denied the "best" programs what hope will there be under the Star footprint for Kashmiri with only 3m.?

Hopes that the installation of a common language will reduce ethnic tensions are as venerable as they have proved unsuccessful. Resentments fester when minority languages are sidelined, as had happened in Sri Lanka by the early 1980s. Ethnic rivalries may be more manageable when differences are acknowledged, even valued. If realized, the dislodgment of Cantonese by Mandarin would represent a far more profound change than any political censorship which follows the reversal of Hong Kong to China in 1997.

Why should all the "best" television programs be in Hindi or Mandarin, and not in Urdu or Cantonese? Murdoch's desire to see the triumph of Hindi as the link language for India and of Mandarin for China is tied to his own marketing needs as well as to those of his clients and advertisers. He hopes to universalize more than

language through the telecast of mono-lingual feature films. Star seeks to standardize consumer tastes to the extent necessary to expedite mass marketing. Although the need to reduce the unit costs of production by offering the same item to everyone every-where is becoming less intense because of computerization, cor-porations still aim to direct demand into the most profitable band of choice.

One instance of such channeling occurs with feature films because, as with Coca-Cola, Hollywood's future depends on its exports. Murdoch has not only tied his corporation to television across the planet but also owns Fox Studios. US film corporations collect more than half of all earnings from both cinema releases and home video rentals around the globe.[41] The US market for new feature films is growing at only half the rate overseas. Indus-try analysts expect that by 1997 more than half of Hollywood's revenues will be gained abroad, up from 38 percent a decade earlier.[42] No wonder then that the US government has been pro-moting "free trade" for audio-visuals, while demanding a tighter copyright regime to snare earnings.

The stickiest point in the 1993 negotiations for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade concerned the quantity of US films to be admitted to France. The USA rejected the final offer because, in the words of its delegation leader, such a deal "would have enshrined the principle of limiting viewers' rights to see what they wish."[43] The European reservation of 51 percent of television programming for local productions is indeed a limita-tion by the state. But would the alternative of rule by market forces as embodied in Murdoch ensure the viewers' right to see what we wish? The preferences of viewers do not determine which programs the Hollywood studios offer because networks attract viewers for sale to marketing corporations. That audiences are looked upon as just a commodity to be packaged is spelt out by advertisements in the trade journals. For example, in 1994 Murdoch promised that his Australian newspapers would "De-liver more 'Purchase-Active' Readers" to marketing agencies than would television.[44] The emphasis on "purchase-active" is

marketers' jargon for those people with the money to match their wants, for instance, a two-income professional family with two young children, rather than a pensioner. (Murdoch does not own free-to-air television in Australia and so can make claims for the advantages of print, which he would not proclaim in the USA where his Fox network is a prime investment.)

Despite the increase in viewing choices promised by satellite, cable and pay television, the rights of viewers will remain imprisoned by the logic of profit-taking. Early in 1994, production ceased on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, although that show was still one of the most popular on US television. Despite returning a profit of US$1m. on outlays of US$1.7m. per episode, the series died for "business reasons." In the words of a *New York Times* report, "the departure of *Next Generation* is part of a well-orchestrated campaign that says a great deal about how popular culture is sliced, diced, packaged and sold by giant entertainment companies these days." The big dollars on a popular series come from its re-runs, five or even seven nights a week, on regional stations across the USA. With 182 episodes, *Next Generation* could play for at least six months. Beyond that time-scale, stations become chary about locking up their schedules and funds. In addition, stations expect to pay less per hour as a series approaches its 200th episode. Therefore, a studio's profit margin shrinks. Hence, the *Next Generation* was killed for those "business reasons." The rights of viewers to see what they liked were not infringed by the state, but through the operations of a free market.[45]

A different reason to doubt that Hollywood supplies what audiences want is the marketing that the studios give their products. Up to a third of the US$120m. cost of *True Lies* went into its promotion by Murdoch's Fox Studios. Why was US$40m. needed to make consumers recognize what we are supposed to want naturally?

A further restriction on consumer sovereignty nowadays comes from the practice among Hollywood studios of buying the rights to French films but never releasing the sub-titled original. That failure, in turn, means that there will be no video. The minor-

ity audience for such films thus loses our best chance to see what we like. Instead, choice is determined by the tiny minority who run the studios. *True Lies* was a remake of a French film *La Totale!*. The US$40m. spent on its promotion would have gone some way towards encouraging US audiences to cope with sub-titles. Around Hollywood, diversity always means that the subordinate market, no matter how much more populous, must open up further to the dominant US one. Not even the switch to "glocalization" proposes that US audiences should adjust their tastes to those from elsewhere in the world.

Small markets can remain independent as is demonstrated by Hong Kong where locally produced films gross more than Hollywood blockbusters. That survival does not guarantee sales for Hong Kong movies in the USA. On the contrary, Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* was a partial make-over of Ringo Lam's *City on Fire* (1987).

The power of News Corporation Ltd was revealed in a dispute brought before the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) after Murdoch acquired twelve television stations and transferred their affiliation from NBC TV network to his Foxtel.[46] A lawyer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People became active in the case because his organization had hoped to create diversity in telecasting by securing a black interest in the Philadelphia station. The lawyer uncovered proof that Foxtel was 99.9 percent owned by an overseas firm, News Corp., in violation of a 1934 law which allowed only 25 percent foreign ownership.[47] With Murdoch unable to rebut these numbers and the FCC unable to ignore the evidence, the solution seemed to be for Fox and News Corp. to reorder their relationship so as to match the law of the land.[48] Instead, the FCC agreed to overlook the violation if Murdoch could show that the costs of a corporate restructure would harm the "public interest." Ethnic diversity was less important than company stockprices.[49]

Notions of political pluralism had taken a belting at the FCC. The USA had ignored its own laws to accommodate Murdoch's profitability. Identification of Foxtel's finances with the public

interest undermined claims that liberal democracy and the free markets represented pluralism in action. Rather, sectional interests from within the power elites dominated as surely as they did among conflicting bureaucrats in Beijing for whom Murdoch had trimmed his anti-totalitarian principles to peg out market "goldmines." Experience with Coca-Cola and News Corp. demonstrates why freedom for corporations need not increase substantial choices for citizens or customers.

The *Guardian* newspaper has contrasted complaints about the loss of Britain's sovereignty under European integration with complacency in the face of Murdoch's failure to pay a penny of company tax in 1995 and his rewriting of Britain's sporting calendar:

> Murdoch has sensed that there simply isn't the political will to contain his power in Britain. Indeed, he has discovered all over the world that national governments will drop their objections to his plans for short-term political advantage.[50]

In the USA, Murdoch can threaten to use his media against presidents or legislators during elections. This situation does not apply "all over the world." The balance of power between foreign corporations and nation-market-states is different wherever no electorate needs to be influenced or feared, as remains the case across much of Asia. The combination of deregulated markets and repressive polities — nicknamed "market-Leninism" in China and Vietnam — keeps the advantage with the state. However, once elections become contests which the opposition can win, corporations have opportunities to win their conflicts with governments through influencing voters. Just as the opening of a national market to foreign corporations is likely to reduce the choice available from local suppliers, so the achievement of pluralism at election time can expand the influence of those oligopolies at the economic level. Without state intervention to balance the corporations, political pluralism is subject to the criticisms made of it in the 1960s.

Those criticisms, of course, mean that the state is not likely to be a neutral referee but partisan on behalf of the already powerful.

NOTES

1. John Playford. 1960. "The Myth of Pluralism." *Arena* (Melbourne) 15:34-47.

2. *Business Week*, 13 June 1994, p. 22.

3. The case for the collapse of the nation-state is overstated, for example in David C. Korten. 1995. *When Corporations Rule the World.* London: Earthscan.

4. Karl Polanyi. 1944. *The Great Transformation.* New York: Rinehart and Company.

5. *South Pacific Bulletin*, Second Quarter 1978, pp. 15-16; Rosalind L. Hunter-Anderson. 1986. *Indigenous Fresh Water Management Technology of the Yap Islands, Micronesia.* Guam: Water and Energy Research Institute of the Western Pacific, University of Guam.

6. *New Internationalist*, January 1996, pp. 23-25; Prakash S. Sethi. 1994. *Multinational Corporations and the Impact of Public Advocacy on Corporate Strategy: Nestle and the Infant Formula Controversy*, pp. 335-54. Boston: Kluwer Academic.

7. Helmut Maucher. 1994. *Leadership in Action: Tough-minded Strategies from the Global Giant*, pp. 13, 24. New York: McGraw-Hill.

8. *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 26 April 1989, p. 7; *Age* (Melbourne), 9 June 1994, p. 14

9. Lawrence Dietz. 1973. *Soda Pop: The History, Advertising, Art and Memorabilia of Soft Drinks in America*, pp. 126-28. New York: Simon and Schuster.

10. Quoted in Pat Watters. 1978. *Coca-Cola: An Illustrated History*, p. 71. New York: Doubleday.

11. J. C. Louis and Harvey Z. Yazijian. 1980. *The Cola Wars*, p. 32. New York: Everest House.

    Although Coca-Cola registered Coke as an alternative trademark in 1941, the company preferred to use its full name and not Coke because of rumors about the presence of cocaine, an allegation which resurfaced in the late 1980s under the Reagan era's zero tolerance regime for illicit drugs. In 1989, Coca-Cola sued a

US candy manufacturer who was selling white sugary powder in a look-a-like bottle, *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)*, 11 August 1989, p. B3.

12. E. J. Kahn. 1960. *The Big Drink: An Unofficial History of Coca-Cola*, p. 42. New York: Random House; *New York Times (NYT)*, 20 December 1978, p. 1.

13. Louis and Yazijian, op. cit., pp. 97-98; Brian Rice. 1995. *A Pictorial History of Santa Claus*. London: Chatto and Windus.

14. Quoted in Stephen Bayley. 1986. *Coke: Designing a World Brand*, p. 7. London: Victoria and Albert Museum.

15. Quoted in Thomas Oliver. 1986. *The Real Coke, The Real Story*, p. 43. London: Pan.

16. *Australian*, 4 April 1996, p. 28.

17. Australian insert in Bayley's catalogue, unpaginated.

18. Watters, op. cit., pp. 170, 185.

19. Louis and Yazijian, op. cit., pp. 136-37.

20. *WSJ*, 23 July 1991, p. B3; 21 April 1994, p. B7.

21. *WSJ*, 16 November 1989, p. B1.

22. *WSJ*, 16 November 1989, p. B1; 30 May 1995, p. C15.

23. *Australian Financial Review*, 15 March 1988, p. 42.

24. *WSJ*, 10 January 1996, p. B5.

25. *NYT*, 21 November 1991, p. D1; McDonald's is also expanding faster outside of the USA. In 1985, only 22 percent of their outlets were overseas; now it is 38 percent. Moreover, the majority of its operating profit comes from beyond the USA. *Economist*, 29 June 1996, p. 65.

26. George Stigler, a beneficiary of the self-styled Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science, explained how monopoly was compatible with perfect competition: "A perfect market is one in which the traders have full knowledge of all offer and bid prices ... in realistic cases a perfect market may be more likely to exist under monopoly, since complete knowledge is easier to achieve under monopoly." George J. Stigler. 1957. "Perfect Competition, Historically Contemplated." *Journal of Political Economy* 65:14-15.

27. *Age*, 10 April 1992, p. 18.

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29. Mark Mason. 1992. *American Multinationals and Japan: The Political Economy of Japanese Capital Controls, 1899-1980*, pp. 161-73. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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31. *WSJ*, 10 February 1989, p. B3; 26 March 1993, p. B4.

32. *WSJ*, 10 November 1995, p. B9; 7 July 1989, p. B4.

33. Roger Enrico. 1986. *The Other Guy Blinked: How Pepsi Won the Cola Wars*, p. 111. New York: Bantam.

34. *Age*, 2 April 1996, p. B3.

35. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 March 1996, p. 33; *WSJ*, 20 November 1995, p. B7.

36. *WSJ*, 14 June 1994, p. B4.

37. Will Atkins. 1995. "'Friendly and Useful,' Rupert Murdoch and the Politics of Television in Southeast Asia, 1993-95." *Media International Australia* 77(August):54-64.

38. *WSJ*, 14 June 1994, p. B8.

39. Rupert Murdoch. 1994. *The Century of Networking*, p. 5. Sydney: Centre for Independent Studies.

40. Ibid., p. 11.

41. Joseph Turow. 1992. *Media Systems in Society: Understanding Industries, Strategies, and Power*, p. 209. New York: Longman.

42. *Financial Times*, 23 December 1993, p. 10.

43. Ibid., 15 December 1993, p. 6.

44. *Broadcasting and Television Weekly*, 23 September 1994, p. 5.

45. *NYT*, 24 July 1994, p. H29.

46. *WSJ*, 6 December 1994, p. B4; 7 December 1994, p. B10; 12 December 1994, p. B1; 7 February 1995, p. B10; 21 February 1995, p. B7; 27 February 1995, p. B5.

47. *WSJ*, 6 April 1995, p. B1.

48. *WSJ*, 24 April 1995, p. A3.

49. *WSJ*, 5 May 1995, p. A4.

50. *Guardian Weekly*, 29 December 1996, p. 17.

The Impact of Ministry of Education Policy on Pluralism in Japanese Education
An Examination of Recent Issues

Kirk MASDEN

Introduction

This paper is the result of an examination of articles published in Japanese newspapers between the fall of 1994 and the summer of 1996.[1] The initial objective was to do a survey of contemporary issues related to pluralism and/or internationalization in Japanese schools and among children in Japan. In the process of reading and organizing a wide variety of clippings, three general issues emerged: (1) the impact of the examination system on intercultural education; (2) the social sanctions against enrollment in so-called ethnic schools; and (3) the treatment of Japanese imperialism and nationalism in textbooks. In regard to each issue, the role of Japan's Ministry of Education is central and, unfortunately, usually diametrically opposed to the pluralization of Japanese education and society.

Accordingly, I have chosen to direct most of the paper to the explication and analysis of Ministry policies and their impact. In doing so, I have been forced to give short shrift to a large number of newspaper articles that point to the pluralization of Japanese education at a grass-roots level — articles that describe the breaking down of historic ethnic barriers, volunteers reaching out to

help newcomers, local governments taking positive initiatives not endorsed by the national government, teachers overcoming obstacles to promote intercultural understanding. It may be argued that this focus on Ministry policy leads to an excessively pessimistic view of the future of pluralism in Japanese education and society. I would counter, however, that it behooves one to examine Ministry of Education policies first because they contribute greatly to the social context and institutional barriers with which grass-roots efforts to promote pluralism must contend.

Intercultural Education and the Examination Monoculture

The number of children attending Japanese elementary and junior high schools who require remedial Japanese language instruction has increased steadily in recent years. According to the Ministry of Education, the total number of such children in Japan rose from 5,463 in 1991 to 10,450 in 1993 and reached 12,542 in 1995. Their greatest concentrations are in large metropolitan areas, such as Osaka and Tokyo, but a general increase in the need for Japanese language training can be observed throughout Japan. In the city of Kagoshima, for example, the number of elementary and junior high school pupils in need of Japanese language training rose steadily from 6 in 1991 to 38 by September of 1994.[2]

The children in need of remedial Japanese instruction are very diverse. They are, for example, the children of legal and illegal workers, refugees, business people, and foreign students. Moreover, not all of the children are "foreign" in the typical sense of the word; many are of Japanese descent or citizenship. There are, for example, the children of the so-called "orphans left in China" (Chûgoku zanryû koji). The parents of these children have lived in China since becoming separated from their Japanese families in the confusion that accompanied the end of World War II. For many of them, it has only become possible to relocate in Japan in recent years. There are also many Japanese-Brazilian children living in Japan today. Their numbers have surged since the 1990

amendment of immigration laws made it possible for persons of Japanese descent to come to work in Japan with a "permanent resident" visas. By early 1996, Japanese-Brazilians numbered approximately 160,000, making them the third largest minority in Japan after Koreans and Chinese. Since many of the Korean and Chinese residents of Japan have been in the country long enough to learn the language whereas the Brazilians are largely new arrivals, Portuguese is now the most common native language among children in need of remedial Japanese instruction.[3] Finally, there are the so-called "returnees" (kikoku shijo). In a typical case, a returnee who requires remedial language training has accompanied his or her Japanese parents on an extended sojourn abroad and, as a result, has not been able to acquire basic skills in the Japanese language, particularly the written language. Some returnees have only lived outside Japan for a few years while others were born and educated abroad. Depending on the circumstances in which the child lived abroad, levels of skill in both Japanese and the language of the host country could vary widely from child to child.

It is important to note here that there is a very large group of "foreign" children in Japan who speak Japanese as well or better than any other language, i.e., second- and third-generation Koreans. Thus, statistics on the number of "foreign" children in a particular locale may not give an accurate indication of the number of children requiring special language training. Though, for example, approximately 22,000 children of foreign citizenship were reported to be attending elementary, junior, or senior high schools in Osaka Prefecture in 1995, the vast majority (about 20,000) were North or South Korean citizens who were born and raised in Japan.[4]

Because of the diversity of the children requiring remedial instruction in the Japanese language, it is difficult to find one concise phrase that can be used to refer to the entire group. In this paper, I use the phrase "foreign-born children" whenever a short label is needed. The phrase is not entirely accurate as many of the returnees, for instance, were not born abroad. It does, however,

accurately describe the majority of children requiring remedial Japanese language training and avoids confusion with the children of Korean residents, for example, who are "foreign" but do not require special help in learning the Japanese language.

One method of helping pupils to acquire basic skills in Japanese is to group them in special "Japanese classes" (*Nihongo gakkyū*). In such classes, one or more instructors work full-time with groups of about ten to twenty students. Recent newspaper reports on the classes have emphasized the difficulty of meeting the diverse needs of the students enrolled in them. Differences in skill levels and the native languages of the children often make collective instruction difficult. Teachers frequently choose to work with one or two students at a time, leaving the remaining students either to study on their own or sit through regular classes that are still far beyond them. Unable to give adequate attention to the needs of all of their pupils themselves, some teachers seek additional assistance. One newspaper article, for example, described a junior high Japanese class in Nagano Prefecture in which teachers of other subjects assist voluntarily.[5]

Children with access to such Japanese classes, inadequate as they may be, are probably far better off than most. According to the Ministry of Education, in 1995, 90 percent of the elementary and junior high schools attended by children requiring remedial Japanese language instruction had between one and five such pupils — too few to meet requirements for the establishment of a special Japanese class.[6] In such schools, volunteers are sometimes available to help the students adjust or to overcome language barriers. Without the assistance of volunteers, however, individual teachers must assume complete responsibility for the foreign-born pupils placed in their classes. In some cases, teachers adopt a sink or swim policy towards these pupils, treating them as observers until they are able to learn enough language on their own to participate in class. Teachers more committed to helping them adjust must find ways to meet their special needs without unduly sacrificing the quality of instruction provided to the other students.[7]

The task that these teachers face is daunting. First, most have little time in the course of a day to tutor individual pupils. Secondly, there is a dearth of appropriate teaching materials. The Ministry of Education has distributed some basic materials, but it is usually necessary for teachers to develop materials that meet the specific needs of their pupils on their own. Thirdly, most teachers have had little experience or training to prepare them to help children from different cultural backgrounds. Among thirty teachers in charge of Japanese classes in the Tokyo area, for example, only twelve reported that they were able to speak a foreign language. Fourthly, the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children are very diverse. The Ministry of Education reported that in 1995 a total of forty-six native languages were spoken among the foreign-born children in the schools.[8]

Not surprisingly, some teachers and administrators are not eager to face the challenges of introducing these children into their schools. Though the Ministry of Education has issued a directive stating that all requests for admission to public elementary and junior high schools should be granted, some schools refuse to admit children whose parents do not plan to live permanently in Japan. According to a survey of approximately 1,000 teachers in Fukushima Prefecture, nearly half do not welcome the introduction of foreign-born children into their schools.[9]

There are, of course, many educators who see the introduction of these children positively. Over half of the teachers who responded to the Fukushima survey look upon their introduction favorably. As pointed out by an elementary school teacher in Nagano Prefecture, all children learn from cultural interaction. An innovative elementary school textbook developed by teachers in the Osaka area is based on this idea. The text is designed for Japanese and foreign-born children to use together in pairs. In one lesson, illustrations of common objects appear beside three lines onto which the name of the object is to be written. The Japanese child writes the name of the object in Japanese on the first line. This is then copied by the foreign-born child on the second line. Finally, the foreign-born child writes the name of the object in his

or her native language, exposing the Japanese child to that language.[10]

The number of foreign-born children in Japanese schools is still relatively small; only about 10 percent of the elementary and junior high schools in the country are attended by such children and, as indicated above, in about 90 percent of these schools there are not more than five students who require remedial Japanese training. Thus, there are not enough such students in most schools or in the nation as a whole for them to become the objects of wide-spread resentment. If their numbers continue to rise, however, more teachers and parents may begin to react negatively. The degree to which such hostility can be avoided may depend upon the extent to which a positive view of their potential to contribute to the learning of other students is adopted by parents and teachers. If their presence is perceived to be educationally valuable, that perception will help to ease tensions and facilitate the amicable resolution of problems. Unfortunately, however, "educationally valuable" tends to be defined in Japan as that which helps one's child gain access to a prestigious high school or university. If this view remains dominant, exposure to a foreign culture or language other than English is not likely to have much "educational value" in the eyes of most Japanese parents.

One indication of current attitudes towards the value of intercultural experience is a phenomenon referred to as "Japan immersion" (*Nihonzuke*). A "Japan-immersed" child is one who remains immersed in Japanese culture and language throughout an extended sojourn abroad. The phenomenon is particularly common among Japanese families that live in Asia. Over 80 percent of Japanese children sojourning in the region attend "Japanese schools" (*Nihonjin gakkô*) exclusively. Moreover, relatively few of these children take an active interest in the language or culture of their host country. A survey of high school students at the Japanese high school in Singapore revealed that over 60 percent had no non-Japanese friends and less than 40 percent read a local newspaper. By contrast, 90 percent of respondents reported that they read Japanese newspapers regularly.[11]

When efforts to achieve "Japan immersion" are unopposed, there is no reason for friction to occur; parents and children may simply remain indifferent to the culture they consider to be irrelevant to educational success in Japan. However, when attempts to isolate Japanese children from the distractions of intercultural experience are frustrated, parents may become hostile.

A disturbing example of such parental hostility was described in a 1995 newspaper article about a Japanese school in the Philippines. The article reported on efforts being made by parents and school administrators to exclude children of mixed parentage. Since its establishment in 1991, the percentage of children of mixed-parentage attending the school had risen from 15 percent to over 30 percent. Due to divorce and various other circumstances roughly a third of these children was being raised entirely by their Filipina mothers. As the children did not speak Japanese at home they required special help from the school. Opposition to their enrollment stemmed from parental concern that they were slowing the progress of classes and thus putting "Japanese" children at an educational disadvantage. Administrators attempted to placate irate parents by taking steps to reduce the enrollment of these children. Tuition was raised, and Filipina mothers interested in enrolling their children were warned that by doing so they would cause "a great deal of trouble." Moreover, the school began to require that the guardian of a new pupil reside in the Philippines and be a member of the local "Society of Japanese Persons" (*Nihonjinkai*). Thus, the school ignored the Japanese citizenship of the children and attempted to use the status of their mothers as grounds for exclusion.[12]

The "Japan immersion" and hostility just described should not be construed as indifference or hostility to foreign culture in general. Rather, these attitudes are probably better understood as judgments about the relevance of specific languages and cultures to life in Japan. When, as in the case of the United States, familiarity with the language and/or culture of the host culture is perceived to be advantageous after return to Japanese society, behaviors change dramatically.

In sharp contrast to the dominance of "Japanese schools" in Asia, in the United States over 95 percent of sojourning Japanese children attend an American school exclusively or merely supplement such attendance with one day per week at a Japanese school. In some cases, studying in the United States is considered to have enough value to warrant undertaking a so-called "reverse separation" (*gyaku tanshin funin*). In a typical "separation" (*tanshin funin*), the father, who has been ordered by his company to work in a new location, travels alone to the new site in order to avoid disrupting the education of his children. In a "reverse separation," the father returns to Japan after an extended sojourn but leaves his family in the host country so that the children can continue their schooling there. According to a study done by the Japan Business Association in 1995, 39.7 percent of 121 member corporations admitted having "reverse separation" families among their employees. More than a third of these companies said that they support the family members remaining in the United States by paying for such things as visa renewal expenses, housing for the family, and medical care. The study indicated that the primary objective of such "separations" is to allow the children to stay long enough to qualify in Japan as "returnees." As such, they can bypass standard entrance examinations and gain entrance to prestigious universities more easily.[13]

The discrepancy between the "Japan immersion" observed in Asia and the willingness of Japanese sojourners to enroll their children in local schools when in the United States reflects, in part at least, the influence of the examination system. Knowledge and understandings gained by attendance at most Asian schools or in a multicultural settings do little to enhance performance on typical Japanese entrance examinations while, conversely, attendance at American schools may at least be expected to lead to improved scores on the English portions of such tests.

Recent reports on English education in Japan illustrate the power of the examination system to influence educational decisions. At this writing, the dominant trend in Japan today is towards greater emphasis on and earlier exposure to English

education. The Ministry of Education is, for example, considering the introduction of English in the elementary school curriculum. Private and public television stations feature a variety of programs that introduce pre-school children to English words and phrases. Day care centers that employ native speakers of English are becoming increasingly popular. More junior high school students than ever before are studying English in cram schools (*juku*). The popularity of such educational programming, day care centers, and cram schools derive in part from the expectation that familiarity with English will enhance entrance examination performance.[14]

When, however, English education is not considered to be relevant to the examination process it may be resisted stubbornly. In Osaka Prefecture, for example, elite high schools have refused to cooperate with the board of education's plans for expansion of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program. Under the program, native speakers of English act as assistants in high school English classes. The program is intended to help students develop oral communication skills, an area in which Japanese students have traditionally been weak. In 1991, the board of education planned to expand the program to include all Osaka high schools by the year 1994. At the end of the four-year effort, however, only about 60 percent of the city's high schools had acquiesced and no further expansion was planned for 1995. Resistance stemmed from the view that the conversation lessons conducted by the JET teachers were of little help in examination preparation and in fact took precious time away from traditional cramming sessions. Accordingly, opposition was strongest among the schools where test preparation was most intense, that is, the schools that had the highest rates of success in sending students to prestigious universities. Even among high schools where the program had been adopted, JET teachers were rarely allowed to teach students in their third and final year of test preparation.[15]

The power of the examination system to limit the scope of educational values depends on two factors: (1) the social importance of the examinations and (2) their uniformity. Educational

values in the nation as a whole are influenced most heavily by the examinations when large numbers of people are paying close attention to them and their uniformity leads all those who pay attention to study similar content. In both respects, recent indications are that the sway of the examination system over Japanese society is increasing.

First, in regard to the importance of the examinations, cram school attendance figures indicate that the examination pressure cooker is continuing to heat up. In 1993, children at all grade levels in elementary and junior high school were spending more time at cram schools than their 1985 peers. The percentage of third-year junior high school students attending cram schools, for example, increased from 47.3 percent to 67.1 percent. Even among first-grade elementary school pupils, cram school attendance rose from 6.2 percent to 12.1 percent.[16]

Secondly, increases in the numbers of students sitting for the so-called "Center Test" (*Sentaa shiken*), the standardized entrance examination sponsored by the Ministry of Education, indicate that the examination process is becoming more uniform. The Center Test must be taken by all applicants for Japan's prestigious national universities. In addition, as a result of the Ministry of Education's "administrative guidance," a growing number of private universities now administer the test and allow prospective students to take it instead of their own unique entrance examinations. The cooperation secured from private universities accounts in part for record numbers of students sitting for the test in 1996. Another factor contributing to the increased popularity of the test is the growing disparity between government subsidies for the national and private universities. This disparity has resulted in marked differences in tuition and educational services at public and private schools. Average tuition fees at a private university (¥980,000 per year) is now well over double that of national universities (¥410,000). Moreover, average expenditures per student at private schools are, at ¥1,250,000, less than half the ¥3,050,000 spent per student at national universities. Increasing subsidies for national universities and increased cost consciousness brought on

by the recession are leading ever larger numbers of students to strive to enter national universities. As more and more students must prepare for and take the Center Test, high schools and cram schools are forced to focus their lessons more narrowly on the specific kinds of questions asked on the examination. Thus, the increased importance of the Center Test contributes to a general narrowing of the type of knowledge that is commonly deemed to be of value to examinees.[17]

The rise in cram school attendance and the increasing importance of the Center Test do not bode well for the future of intercultural education in Japan. They are likely to contribute to a further narrowing of parental assessments of what is educationally beneficial and harmful to their children. If the popular view of what is educationally valuable continues to narrow and if the numbers of foreign-born children making demands on classroom time and school resources continue to increase, then one can expect resentment to grow. In this sense, the response of Japanese parents and teachers in the Philippines to the increased enrollment of children of mixed parentage may be an omen of what is to come to schools in Japan.

The "Miscellaneous School" Designation as Punishment for the Assertion of Ethnicity

When the "Japanese classes" function as intended, pupils gain the linguistic skills needed to participate in Japanese schools. This, in turn, puts each pupil in a position to compete for academic advancement and prepare to participate in Japanese society. Simultaneously, however, because participation in Japanese schools requires children to follow the monolithic curriculum endorsed by the Ministry of Education, it discourages the maintenance of distinct, positive ethnic identities. For this reason, many parents choose to enroll their children in international schools or so-called "ethnic schools" (*minzoku gakkô*).

Korean schools constitute the largest group of ethnic schools in Japan. At the high school level, about 20,000 students attend

either North or South Korean schools throughout Japan. North Korean schools are particularly numerous. In the Tokyo area, for instance, twelve of twenty-three "ethnic schools" are North Korean; the remainder is comprised of nine international schools, one Chinese school, and one South Korean school.[18]

Courses at Japan's North Korean schools are taught in Korean, by North Korean citizens, using Korean-language textbooks. Some of the subject matter in the curriculum, such as Korean geography and history, is not taught in Japanese schools. Yet, in other ways, the schools are more similar to Japanese schools than to the schools located in North Korean territory. Like Japanese schools, for example, the pattern of progression in Japan's North Korean schools is 6-3-3 (six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school, three years of high school), not 4-4-2 as in North Korea. In required Japanese-language courses, students learn to read sophisticated Japanese works by authors such as Shiga Naoya and Akutagawa Ryûnosuke. Moreover, courses taught in the Korean language are often similar in content to those of Japanese schools because the Ministry of Education's *Course of Study* (*Gakushû shidô yôryô*) is used as a reference in curriculum design. This similarity in curriculum design stems from the realization that most students of Japan's North Korean schools will remain in Japan after graduation. Thus, the curriculum is designed to prepare students to participate in Japanese society while instructing them in their ethnic heritage.[19]

Though similar to Japanese schools in content and rigor, the legal status of Japan's North Korean schools is very different. The legal category under which the Ministry of Education recognizes all ethnic and international schools is "miscellaneous school" (*kakushu gakkô*). This is the same designation given, for instance, to driving, sewing, beauty, and English conversation schools. The designation puts the schools and their graduates at a great disadvantage in Japanese society.

The most serious disadvantage is that study at a "miscellaneous school" does not qualify one in the eyes of the Ministry of Education to apply to enter a high school or university. Under

Japan's School Education Law (*Gakkô kyôiku hô*), graduation from a junior high school is a prerequisite for matriculation to a high school and graduation from a high school is required to sit for a university entrance examination. According to the Ministry of Education interpretation, since the ethnic schools are legally categorized as "miscellaneous schools," they do not satisfy these requirements. The Ministry allows individuals who wish to attend a university but have not graduated from a Japanese high school to take the University Eligibility Examination (*Daigaku kentei shiken*), but only if they have graduated from a "junior high school." Because "miscellaneous schools" are not recognized as junior high schools the only path that the Ministry's interpretation allows foreign residents to follow to prestigious universities is through Ministry-regulated schools.

Fortunately, however, not all municipalities and universities follow the Ministry of Education interpretation. The School Education Law also allows the matriculation of individuals with "academic ability equal to or exceeding" that required for junior or senior high school graduation. Tokyo, for example, uses this wording to justify admitting North Korean junior high school graduates to the city's high schools. At the university level, the wording has made it possible for over 170 private and public institutions of higher education (more than 40 percent of all such institutions) to allow graduates of North Korean high schools to sit for their examinations. The Ministry of Education disapproves of this interpretation and actively discourages it. At one conference of school administrators in Tokyo, for example, a Ministry of Education official is reported to have cautioned that the wording "was intended to help the graduates of prewar schools and not intended to apply to miscellaneous schools." At this writing, however, the Ministry has not yet attempted to crack down on intransigent institutions and regional governments.[20]

Strict enforcement of the Ministry's interpretation may not be necessary; the current level of compliance is already sufficient to significantly limit the educational opportunities available to graduates of North Korean schools. Opportunities are limited enough

in Niigata Prefecture, for example, that the occasional matricula-
tion of a North Korean junior high school graduate into a presti-
gious public high school warrants media attention. According to
an article in a local paper, Li Seong-Hwa succeeded in passing the
entrance examination to the elite Niigata Prefectural High School
after first graduating from a North Korean junior high school then
re-enrolling as third-year student in a Japanese junior high school.
Thus, in order to move from a North Korean junior high school to
a prefectural high school, Li was forced to spend an extra year.
Another way to circumvent the obstacles presented by the Minis-
try of Education stance is to study in a correspondence or night
school as one studies in a North Korean high school. Successful
completion of a high school degree at a correspondence or night
school qualifies students to sit for the entrance examinations to
national universities. This is the method that was chosen by Kim
Hae-Young, a Kyoto University student who is lobbying against
Ministry policy. However, even this circuitous route to higher
education is due to the magnanimous interpretation of the School
Education Law on the part of the correspondence and night
schools; if these schools followed the Ministry interpretation
strictly even this avenue would be closed off.[21]

While many local governments and private universities are
allowed to interpret the School Education Law liberally, the pres-
tigious national universities are clearly under great pressure to
follow the Ministry interpretation. In response to a survey done
by the Committee for the Protection of the Rights of North Korean
Residents of Japan (*Zai Nihon Chôsenjin kenri yôgo iinkai*), all of
Japan's thirty-six national universities indicated that they do not
accept diplomas from Japan's North Korean high schools; none
said that they were considering a change in this position. When
requested to meet with the Committee to discuss the matter, some
of the universities replied that they could not do so because they
would soon be submitting budget proposals to the Ministry of
Education.[22]

Though the national universities remain intransigent, there is
a growing movement in the country to recognize diplomas from

ethnic schools. In October of 1994, for example, the Kyoto City
Council unanimously passed a resolution stating that foreign
schools located in Japan are equivalent to Japanese schools.[23] In
September of 1995, the city of Kawasaki decided to accept gradu-
ates of Japan's North Korean high schools as applicants for the
city's junior college of nursing. In response, the Ministry of Wel-
fare indicated that it would defer to the judgment of the junior
college and that these North Korean students would be allowed to
take the national examination in nursing. The Ministry of Educa-
tion, however, responded by reiterating its opposition to such
recognition.[24]

Additional pressure to reconsider its position may come to the
Ministry of Education from abroad. In Geneva on 7 August 1995,
Kim Hae-Young, a third-year student at Kyoto University and
representative of the Council Demanding that Kyoto University
Recognize the Qualifications of Ethnic School Graduates (*Minzoku
gakkô shusshinsha no Kyôdai e no juken shikaku o motomeru renraku
kyôgikai*), submitted a petition to the United Nations Commission
on Human Rights calling for a study on Japan's denial of educa-
tional opportunity to its North Korean residents.[25]

Such international pressure may have a significant impact.
Pressure from the German government has led the Ministry to
recognize a passing grade on the *Abitur*, an examination taken by
graduates of German Gymnasia, as equivalent to a Japanese high
school diploma. In October of 1995, the Ministry formally notified
all national, public, and private universities that students of 18
years of age who had already passed the *Abitur* examination were
eligible to sit for entrance examinations. The change in policy
stemmed from a basic contradiction in Ministry's traditional
stance. That is, though the School Education Law stated that indi-
viduals who had successfully completed an educational course of
twelve or more years abroad were eligible to sit for university
entrance examinations, the Ministry denied this eligibility to stu-
dents who had completed the same course of study in Japan.
Pressure from the German government forced the Ministry to
admit that the double standard was not justifiable and thus

brought about the change. Ironically, the Ministry followed the lead of municipal governments and private universities by justifying the new policy with the "academic ability equivalent or exceeding that required to graduate from a Japanese high school" wording in the School Education Law.[26]

The change in policy should make it easier for other ethnic schools in similar positions to gain recognition. That is, schools that offer the same credential that is offered in another country should be able to cite the German case as a precedent. It does not, however, provide a precedent that is of immediate benefit to the North Korean schools in Japan. The Ministry of Education takes the position that since Japan has no official relations with North Korea it therefore cannot verify the quality of education in North Korean schools.[27] Moreover, even if diplomatic relations were reestablished with North Korea, the Ministry can be expected to resist recognizing the North Korean schools in Japan. Since there is a pronounced difference between the curriculum in Japan's North Korean schools and that of the schools located in North Korea the Ministry might argue that it can approve the curriculum as taught in North Korea but cannot accept the credentials of the North Korean schools located in Japan.

Another disadvantage of the "miscellaneous school" designation is financial; whereas roughly 30 percent of the operating expenses of Japan's private elementary, junior, and senior high schools are covered by government subsidies, "miscellaneous schools" have no legal claim to such assistance.[28] Accordingly, none of the twenty-four ethnic schools damaged in the Kobe earthquake of 1995 was included in initial plans for government relief. Only after a delay of over two months did the government finally agree to provide half of the funds needed to repair and rebuild the schools. In doing so, it reminded the "miscellaneous schools" that they had no legal right to receive such relief by describing the aid as an "exceptional measure" (tokurei).[29]

Though not bound to do so by Japanese law, some regional governments do subsidize ethnic schools. Here too, however, the aid is usually limited in some way that reflects their inferior sta-

tus. Ibaraki Prefecture, for instance, subsidizes ethnic schools at the elementary and junior high levels (i.e., through compulsory education) but provides no assistance to its ethnic high schools. Similarly, in 1995 when the city of Tokyo announced plans to provide aid to its ethnic and international schools it stipulated that the funds were to be used for permanent foreign residents and not the Japanese students and short-term foreign students who also attend the schools.[30]

The "miscellaneous school" designation also serves to exclude ethnic schools from the National Athletic Meet (Kokumin taiiku taikai). This sporting event is sponsored by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Japan Athletic Association (Nihon taiiku kyôkai) and the government of the region in which a particular competition is held. Ministry of Education regulations require that participants be Japanese citizens but an exception is made for permanent residents who attend Japanese schools. Thus, this "citizenship clause" (kokuseki jôkô) actually functions as a "miscellaneous school" clause.

Exclusion from the meet eliminates an opportunity for positive interaction among students of ethnic and Japanese schools as it reinforces the social stigma of ethnic school attendance. In addition, it eliminates an opportunity for educational advancement. Many of the private universities that do accept graduates of ethnic schools have established separate examination processes for athletes. In a typical case, applicants who have first demonstrated minimal proficiency in standard examination subjects are ranked according to their performance in regional and national sporting events. An outstanding performance at the prestigious National Athletic Meet would greatly improve an aspiring athlete's ranking. Conversely, denial of the opportunity to perform at the meet further reduces the opportunity to advance to higher education.

The governments of Hiroshima, Osaka, and Kanagawa prefectures (hosts for 1996, 1997, and 1998 meets, respectively) have all formally requested that the Ministry of Education and the Japan Athletic Association consider the elimination of the citizenship clause. These requests are indicative of a general movement

away from so-called "citizenship clauses." There is, at this writ-
ing, a growing movement in Japan to recognize the right of per-
manent residents to participate in regional elections. The calls of
the governor of Kôchi Prefecture and the mayor of Ôsaka City to
allow permanent residents of foreign citizenship to be employed
as regional civil servants are also frequently discussed in the
press. In addition, there are other examples of sporting associa-
tions abolishing citizenship clauses. In 1994, the National High
School Athletic Association began to allow ethnic and interna-
tional school students to participate in the national competitions it
sponsored. The Japan Soccer Association took similar steps in
1995 and, in 1996, the National Junior High School Sports Associ-
ation announced that it would allow the participation of ethnic
and international school students beginning in 1997. Unfortu-
nately, however, in each of these cases students of ethnic schools
will only be allowed to participate on an "exceptional" basis; the
ethnic schools themselves will not be allowed to join the associa-
tions as Japanese schools are.[31]

These shifts in policy, though incomplete, are evidence of a
growing consensus among athletic organizations that citizenship
clauses should be eliminated. In response to a survey of local
sporting groups conducted by the Osaka city government, for
example, roughly 70 percent indicated that they approve of the
participation of long-term foreign residents in the National Ath-
letic Meet.[32] The Ministry of Education, however, remains obdu-
rate. Commenting on Osaka's request for the abolition of the
citizenship clause, a high-ranking Ministry official cautioned that
the regional governments could not abolish the clause on their
own and that broad popular support would be necessary to real-
ize a change in policy. In view of the Ministry's zealous efforts to
shape and lead popular opinion in regard to issues of ideological
importance (the Japanese flag, national anthem, interpretations of
history, etc.), couching cautionary statements in deference to pop-
ular opinion seems disingenuous at best.

Japan's defeat in World War II and its subsequent occupation
finally made it possible for Korean residents to establish ethnic

schools, an activity that had been prohibited by the wartime au-
thorities as part of their systematic effort to expunge Korean cul-
ture and assimilate Korean residents. By 1947, the number of
Korean schools in Japan had mushroomed to 578, serving a total
of more than 62,000 students. Since then, a variety of factors (in-
cluding anti-communist suppression in the later years of the
American occupation) has lead to a dramatic reduction in the
number of students studying at ethnic schools. Total attendance
figures at Korean elementary and secondary schools declined
from 31,200 in 1980 to 25,500 in 1985 and then to 17,600 in 1993.
The percentage of school-age persons of North or South Korean
citizenship attending such schools fell from 20 percent in 1980 to
15 percent and 11 percent in 1985 and 1993, respectively. The
reasons for the decline are complex. Many in the North and South
Korean communities of Japan point to factors within the schools,
such as the ideological rigidity and inadequate introduction to
Japanese society and culture. It cannot be denied, however, that
the government policies discussed in this paper have also played
a significant role in reducing the attractiveness of ethnic schooling
and, thus, contributed to the precipitous decline in attendance.
Though not as draconian as in the prewar era, contemporary
Ministry of Education policy continues to punish efforts to assert
distinctive ethnic identities. In this sense, it is not fundamentally
different from the assimilation policies of the prewar regime.[33]

Textbooks and the "Careful Selection" of Historical Perspective

The treatment or neglect of Japanese imperialism in school text-
books has long been a source of friction between Japan and her
Asian neighbors. This has been particularly true of Korea, China,
Taiwan, and Singapore where students learn much more about
Japanese aggression than do Japanese children. Due in no small
part to such external pressure, recent textbooks differ substan-

tially from those approved by the Ministry of Education several decades ago.

In an article comparing two sixth-grade textbooks, for example, the *Asahi shinbun* described significant differences in the treatment of issues, such as the annexation of Korea and the Rape of Nanking. The only reference to the annexation of Korea in the 1965 edition of *New Society* (published by Tokyo Shoseki) read as follows: "Japan annexed Korea and extended its influence into the continent." The 1996 edition of Tokyo Shoseki's text of the same title, however, explains that "Japan suppressed the resistance movement of the Korean people with force, finally making Korea accept a treaty by which it became a Japanese colony." Similarly, whereas the 1965 edition did not mention the Nanking Massacre, the 1996 edition tells pupils that "when the capital city of Nanking was occupied, a very large number of Chinese people were killed, including women, children, and soldiers who had thrown down their weapons."[34]

New Society is not alone in devoting more attention to Japanese imperialism. All five sixth-grade social studies textbooks approved for use in 1996 contain descriptions of Japan's colonization of Korea; in each of the books pupils learn, for instance, that Koreans were forced to use the Japanese language and to take on Japanese names. Three of the five deal with the 1919 March First Movement for Korean independence. One of these describes Yoo Kwan-Soon, a young girl who began to participate in the independence movement at the age of fifteen and died in prison at age sixteen. Though Yoo has long been considered to be a national hero in South Korea, this is her first appearance in a Japanese elementary school textbook.[35]

This shift towards more coverage of certain aspects of Japanese imperialism, however, does not constitute a general relaxation of the Ministry of Education's control over textbooks or an across-the-board liberalization of the Ministry's treatment of the events of World War II. Rather, the changes noted above are more appropriately viewed as specific concessions the Ministry has made in response to foreign pressure. Though many Asian nations have

expressed outrage at the treatment and/or neglect of Japanese imperialism, criticism from Koreans has been particularly vociferous. It is no coincidence that the preponderance of the new material in the textbooks relates to Korea or Japanese treatment of Koreans.

While recently approved textbooks demonstrate the Ministry's willingness to make strategic concessions in order to placate its harshest and most stalwart critics, Ministry demands for textbook revisions reveal where it has determined to draw the line on national soul searching. The Ministry did not approve, for example, of the following passage in an elementary school social studies textbook:

> Many of the countries of Southeast Asia had been ruled by European countries or the United States. Then, Japan invaded and colonized Southeast Asia. In the interval, many people of Southeast Asia had property taken from them, were forced to live in very difficult circumstances, or lost their lives.

The Ministry opined: "It is a fact that Japan occupied the countries of Southeast Asia but is it appropriate to say that Japan 'colonized' the countries of the region?" The revised text read as follows:

> Many of the countries of Southeast Asia had been ruled by European countries or the United States. Then, they were invaded by Japan but Thailand maintained its independence throughout. Today Thailand and the countries of Southeast Asia are, with the help of official development assistance from Japan, developing at a phenomenal rate.[36]

Similarly, a description of famine that occurred in Vietnam as a result of Japanese policies was eliminated after the Ministry opined "too detailed. Choose your content more carefully." In another instance, the publisher of a textbook that included an estimate of 200,000 deaths resulting from the Nanking Massacre was instructed to replace the number with the word "many" in

consideration of "the developmental level of elementary school children."[37]

The above Ministry "opinions" are not particularly new; in issuing them, Ministry officials have merely refused to allow additional liberalization of the treatments of the war in Southeast Asia and the Nanking Massacre. However, in regard to two key symbols of Japanese nationalism, i.e., the "Rising-Sun" flag (*Hinomaru*) and the anthem called "His Majesty's Reign" (*Kimigayo*), the Ministry's stance has actually become more conservative in the 1990s. The Ministry's current stance is evident in its criticism of the following passage from a textbook submitted for approval in 1995:

> During Hitler's reign Germany adopted the flag of the Nazi party as its national flag and conducted a war of aggression. After the war, it returned to the three colored flag and, in contrition for its aggression, strove to compensate the countries that it had victimized.... In the eyes of the people of Asia whose countries were invaded by Japan, the Rising Sun has been perceived to be a symbol of that invasion. Even now, complex emotions remain among the people of Asia in regard to the Rising Sun.

In response, the Ministry opined, "this may lead to debate about whether Japan should change its flag as Germany did. We want you to tone down the section on the history of the German flag." Regarding the perception of the Rising Sun as a symbol of invasion, the Ministry wrote "the *Course of Study* does not ask for this much detail," adding that "regardless of its history, the Rising Sun must be respected *a priori*." In the revised version of the textbook, a description of the history of the German flag remained but not the comments about how Germany's contrition and efforts to compensate victims. Also on the cutting floor were the references to the Rising Sun as a symbol of invasion and a conclusion which read "it is important to reflect on history as we strive to regain the trust of our Asian neighbors."[38]

In addition to demanding the removal of material it considers undesirable, the Ministry also occasionally calls for the addition of patriotic passages. In 1994, for example, it told publishers of a sixth-grade textbook that "not enough has been written here to foster an attitude of respect for and understanding of the significance of the national anthem and the Japanese flag."[39]

The use of textbooks to inculcate respect for symbols of Japanese nationalism parallels the Ministry policy, in effect since 1990, of enforcing the display of the flag and singing of the anthem at matriculation and graduation ceremonies. The policy, as explained in a 1987 report issued by the Ad Hoc Council on Education (*Rinji kyôiku shingikai*), is intended to "foster awareness of one's status as a Japanese and to promote love of Japan."[40]

Throughout most of the postwar era, the Japan Teachers Union has vehemently opposed government imposition of these nationalistic symbols on the schools. This opposition stemmed in part from knowledge of how the flag, anthem, and other symbols were used in imperial Japan to foster emotional attachment to the myth of the Japanese as a "leading race" and promote unquestioning obedience to the State. Accordingly, the Union did not view calls for the need to use the Rising Sun and "His Majesty's Reign" to foster a sense of "Japaneseness" and to promote love of country with equanimity. As recently as 1994, it proclaimed its firm opposition to "the historic role played by 'His Majesty's Reign' and its lyrics which contravene the principle of popular sovereignty."[41]

By 1994, however, decades of bitter conflict with the Ministry of Education had badly weakened the Union. Between 1958 and 1994, Union membership fell from 86.3 percent of all teachers to 34.1 percent. Moreover, as teachers with direct knowledge of the prewar education system and its ideology retired year by year, the maintenance of the Union's acrimonious struggle with the Ministry became increasingly difficult. As a result of these and other factors, in 1995 the Union abandoned its epic struggle with the Ministry over the flag and anthem. Though the Union did not reverse its position by endorsing Ministry policy, it acquiesced by neglecting to mention the subject in its 1995 position statement

(*undô hôshin*). In this context, the Ministry's demands for revisions of textbook treatments of the Rising Sun and "His Majesty's Reign" should be viewed as part of an effort to consolidate a hard-won victory.[42]

The textbook screening process has been an important tool through which the Ministry has kept recalcitrant teachers in check and gradually gained more complete control of the classroom; by limiting the content of the textbooks, the Ministry has made it increasingly difficult for teachers to steer children to ideas and insights it does not endorse. Now that the Ministry has gained the upper hand in its struggle with the Japan Teachers Union, one might expect some relaxation of the screening process. Indeed, some relaxation is observable in the 1995 and 1996 screening results. In other important ways, however, the Ministry is actually in the process of tightening its control of textbooks and textbook publishers still further.

The *Course of Study* and publication guidelines issued by the Ministry constitute the formal foundation of its control of the textbook industry. One way in which the Ministry can increase its control over publishers is to add requirements to these formal documents, as in the addition of concrete admonitions regarding the treatment of the flag and anthem. Another equally important method of extending control is to require textbook publishers to adhere to the guidelines more exactly. The Ministry used the latter method extensively in elementary school textbook screening in 1995. In several instances, publishers of textbooks previously approved under the current guidelines were told that the same material would no longer be acceptable in 1996 editions. The Ministry directed two publishers of history textbooks, for example, to delete references to such subjects as economic growth in postwar Japan and Japan's anti-nuclear movement. In doing so, it enforced a stricter interpretation of its publication guidelines, which read "it is appropriate to end material on postwar Japan in the vicinity of the San Francisco Peace Treaty."[43]

In these "opinions," the Ministry requested a "careful selection" (*seisen*) rather than issuing a direct command to delete mate-

rial. The purported rationale behind the "careful selection" policy is to eliminate extraneous details from textbooks and thus reduce the test-preparation burden of the students. It is a convenient expression for text-screeners, however, because it allows them to indicate obliquely that specific material is to be deleted without having to directly call for the deletion. In this sense, the expression is merely a euphemism. In another sense, however, the expression aptly describes the approach to textbook publishing that the Ministry is attempting to cultivate. Ambiguities in the screening process lead publishers to assume a cautious "when in doubt, leave it out" stance.

Publishers complain that they need more explicit communication in writing to anticipate what will and will not be acceptable to the Ministry. The Ministry, on the other hand, counters that the physical demands of putting everything in writing are prohibitive. Deprived of adequate written guidelines, the publishers are forced to pay careful attention to the "whispers" of Ministry officials. One editor, for example, reported that an official musing "Is this really necessary?" in reference to a passage that read "the people of Asia still have complex emotions about the Rising Sun" was enough to lead to the removal of the offending sentence from subsequent drafts. Thus, the "streamlining" of the screening procedure in 1989 has, in the eyes of 60 percent of textbook publishers, made the process more confining than before.[44]

The disposition towards caution and "careful selection" cultivated in publishers is evident in the treatment of the "comfort women" issue in recently approved high school textbooks. International pressure has made it incumbent on the Japanese government to encourage publishers to address the issue in textbooks. On the surface, it would appear that significant progress has been made. A group of Tokyo high school teachers reported that the percentage of history and social studies textbooks that referred to the practice of the forcing of women into sexual servitude increased from 34 percent (21 of 62) in 1994 to 61 percent (27 of 44) in 1995. The teachers noted, however, that only one tenth of the textbooks included wording which pointed explicitly to the types

of abuse suffered by the women, for example "the Japanese soldiers' violent assaults on women" or "as sexual partners for Japanese soldiers." Most of the books used euphemistic phrases like "forced to work in comfort facilities near the front lines" or "unmarried women were made into female 'self-sacrifice corps' (*teishintai*)." Moreover, only six of the books contained explicit statements indicating the source of responsibility for the policy, such as "by the Japanese government" or "established by the military." Most of the statements were in the passive voice (e.g., "women were taken away to be comfort women"), leaving the source of responsibility vague.[45]

Another example of "careful selection" may be observed at the junior high school level. Since 1993, the junior high school *Course of Study* has called for the detailed geographical study of "about three regions." Though the phrase sounds rather open-ended, in practice it has led to the "careful selection" of the United States, Europe, and China. This in turn has meant that material on Southeast Asia has been removed from most textbooks; some of the eight junior high geography textbooks available in 1995 did not even touch upon Southeast Asia.[46]

When the screening results for a new set of junior high school textbooks were made public in late June of 1996, "careful selection" was no longer a buzzword. Yet, the fundamental strategy of retreating on issues where recalcitrance would cause international censure while insisting that publishers toe the line on issues of ideological importance remained unchanged. More liberal treatments of women, minorities, and Japan's actions during World War II were allowed while textbook writers were compelled to amend, so as to conform with official government positions, passages on topics such as the Rising Sun and "His Majesty's Reign," the legal status of Japan's "self-defense forces," war reparations, and Japanese aid to developing countries.[47]

The result was sharp criticism from both the left and the right. From the left, scholar and best-selling author Teruoka Itsuko's criticism was particularly cogent because she had just succeeded in forcing the Ministry to admit that its blind faith in the rectitude

of official statements and positions had led it to reject a passage of hers unjustly. In 1992, the Ministry rejected as "mistaken" a passage that Teruoka had written merely because it contradicted statements made by a government bureaucrat in the Diet. It was only after a four-year struggle that she finally succeeded in forcing the Minister of Education to admit that the bureaucrat, not she, had been in error. When asked about recent criticism of the Ministry's insistence on fidelity to government positions, Teruoka argued that in order to avoid abuses of power the screening process should either be eliminated entirely or conducted by an independent agency. Historian Ienaga Saburô, a veteran of decades of legal battles against the screening system, also stressed the dangers of the equation of government opinion and truth and urged Japanese citizens not to allow the Ministry to continue to convert textbooks into government propaganda.[48]

Critics on the right took exception primarily to the newly approved treatments of Japan's actions in World War II. The reactionary *Sankei Newspaper*, for example, ran a series of articles criticizing textbook accounts of the forced prostitution of "comfort women," the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, and the Rape of Nanking. In late July, the *Sankei* also reported that the Liberal Democratic Party had formed a committee to consider whether the Minister of Education should be asked to exercise his power to demand that additional revisions be made in the texts. Similarly, Kuroda Yasuo, career bureaucrat and head of one of the committees that screened the junior high school textbooks, complained that the books make students feel "embarrassed to be Japanese" and argued that the authority of the screening committees to demand more sweeping revisions needs to be extended.[49]

As was the case with the elementary school textbooks approved in 1995, the junior high school textbooks that passed the screening process in 1996 are in some ways more compatible with the ideal of pluralism than their predecessors. In the 1996 screening, the Ministry issued far fewer "opinions" than it had in previous screenings, thereby widening the "strike zone" for textbook authors.[50] The increased diversity of content, where allowed, and

the repudiation of narrowly nationalistic interpretations of histor-
ical events are both conducive to the development of more plural-
istic perspectives. It is important to bear in mind, though, that the
increased tolerance observed here is not a result of a fundamental
change in the screening process but rather indicates merely that
the Ministry no longer deems it necessary or wise to demand
conformity to conservative views on certain issues. Where ideo-
logical conformity is still considered to be necessary, however, the
Ministry remains as intransigent and conservative as ever. In this
sense, the stance of Ministry is, now as before, fundamentally
incompatible with the ideal of pluralism. Moreover, if reactionary
factions are successful in putting pressure on the Ministry, the
modest gains that have been made recently may be wiped away.
Now that the Japan Teachers Union can no longer be expected to
put any significant pressure on the Ministry in opposition to nar-
rowly nationalistic textbooks, it is probably more important than
ever for foreign governments and citizens' organizations to be
vigilant in opposing the abuse of the screening system.

Conclusion:
The Rejection of Intercultural Identity

In Japan, one does not frequently here talk about what might be
called "hyphenated Japanese." Whereas hyphenated phrases de-
scribing intercultural identities (e.g., Japanese-American, Chi-
nese-American, Anglo-American identities) are commonly used
in the United States, analogous expressions are still relatively rare
in discussions of the internationalization and pluralization of
Japan. It is not that appropriate expressions do not exist; a Japan-
ese citizen of Korean descent might easily be called a *Kankokukei
Nihonjin* or Korean-Japanese. Such expressions, however, are still
relatively rare. Sorting individuals into one of two categories,
either "Japanese" or "foreign," and ignoring identities that fall
somewhere between the two is still the norm.

This tendency may be observed throughout Japanese society.
It finds its most extreme expression, however, at the highest levels
of the Japanese bureaucracy, the Ministry of Education in particu-
lar. The Ministry simultaneously pursues policies that maintain
and intensify the "Japaneseness" of the country's educational in-
stitutions on the one hand and insulate them from "foreign" influ-
ence on the other. An artificially homogeneous, uniform "Japan-
eseness" is sustained through the Ministry's primary instruments
of social control: the examination system and the textbook screen-
ing system. Evidence examined in this paper indicates that the
Ministry is tightening its grip on both of these tools. In doing so, it
discourages most families who travel abroad from immersing
their children in the local culture, punishes Koreans and members
of other ethnic groups who refuse to assimilate, constricts the
scope of ideas and information available in Japanese textbooks,
and encourages Japanese school children to become emotionally
attached to the Rising Sun and "His Majesty's Reign," traditional
symbols of an unambiguous, unsullied "Japaneseness."

Conversely, according to the Ministry paradigm, that which is
not Japanese must be entirely foreign. Until recently, graduates of
German high schools located in Japan did not receive the same
recognition from the Ministry as graduates of truly "foreign"
schools in Germany. This double standard has been eliminated
but only by following the logic that German schools, even when
located in Japan, are essentially the same as the schools of Ger-
many. North Korean schools, by contrast, lack the imprimatur of a
foreign government recognized by Japan and thus are unaccept-
able.

The insistence on the Japanese-foreign dichotomy occasion-
ally boarders on the absurd. In October of 1995, for example, a
citizens' group called the Council Against Ethnic Discrimination
(*Minzoku sabetsu to tatakau renraku kyôgikai*) demanded that a citi-
zenship clause be removed from regulations governing the Japan
Youth Overseas Cooperation Corps (*Nihon seinen kaigai kyôryoku
tai*). The organization, begun in 1965, has thus far sent over 14,000
Japanese youth to sixty countries to assist in nation building. The

Foreign Ministry defends the citizenship clause by asserting that "Japan Youth" in the title of the organization means "Japanese citizenship." It would appear that the Ministry does not want to allow any ambiguity about the fact that the *Japanese* are providing aid to *foreign* countries.[51]

The Ministry of Education has already been encouraged to find alternatives to the Japanese-foreign dichotomy. The final report, submitted in 1987, of the Ad Hoc Council on Education called for the establishment of schools in which returnees, foreigners, and Japanese children could study together. Initially, the Ministry showed interest by asking a group of scholars to study the question. The project, however, was later dropped quietly, and a final report never submitted.[52]

One might speculate that the Ministry found the concept of recognizing truly pluralistic schools to be too threatening to consider seriously. Recognition of pluralistic schools, that is, schools that neither distinguish sharply between Japanese and foreign students nor require all students to follow the standard "Japanese" curriculum, could lead to a substantial weakening of Ministry control. It would provide Japanese citizens with useful educational credentials that did not require submission to the standard, heavily censored curriculum. Already, substantial numbers of Japanese parents send their children to international schools in order to avoid the stultifying effects of the Ministry's curriculum. They do this even though it means accepting the disadvantages of graduation from a "miscellaneous" school. If the Ministry supported pluralistic international schools it would become increasingly difficult for it to argue that all Japanese (except those in its international schools) must study the standard curriculum.

Thus, the Japanese-foreign dichotomy is necessary in part to maintain control over the Japanese population. It is equally important to note, however, that the dichotomy is fundamentally discriminatory towards ethnic minorities. Forcing minorities and their children to choose between assimilation and exclusion is a usurpation of fundamental human rights. Article 30 of the United

Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Japan has ratified, states that children have a right to carry on their culture and use their own language. The refusal of the Ministry of Education to respect this right and its foisting upon minorities of an ultimatum to either attend Japanese schools or face social ostracism follow the traditional pattern of discrimination against Koreans in Japan. Newspapers still carry reports of teachers who discriminate against Korean children by refusing to pronounce their names in the Korean manner and of attacks against the traditional Korean dress worn by children commuting to Korean schools. These are attacks on the expression of ethnicity. In this sense, they are not essentially different from the Ministry of Education's sanctions against ethnic schools.

NOTES

1.   Many of the articles cited in this paper were originally located in *Kodomoron* (Tokyo: Crayonhouse) or *Kirinuki sokuhô: kyôiku ban* (Tokyo: Nihon mikku), periodicals that publish facsimiles of Japanese newspaper articles related to children and educational issues.

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3.   "Nikkei Burajirujin rôdôsha no kodomo tachi: kikokugo no shingaku ni shôgai." *Asahi shinbun*, 15 November 1995, Nagoya morning edition; "Zainichi Nikkei Burajirujin no rôdô/seikatsu no jittai o hon ni." *Asahi shinbun*, 17 January 1996; "Kyôshitsu no kokusaika susumu: Nihongo tsukaenai gaikokujin kôritsu shôgakkô no ichi wari ni." *Asahi shinbun*, 16 February 1996.

4.   "APEC kodomo kaigi kaisai: ibunka de sodatta omoi katariatta." *Asahi shinbun*, 20 November 1995.

5.   "Gaikoku kokuseki jidô/seito no ukeire: kimekomakana shidô muzukashiku." *Shinano mainichi shinbun*, 19 June 1995; "Susumu gakkô no 'kokusaika': odoroki kara shitashimi e." *Nishi Nihon shinbun*, 5 January 1996, morning edition.

6.   Ishii Sayoko. 1995. "Nihon ni genzon suru 'jinshu sabetsu' no jittai." *Kodomoron* 10(12):16; "Kyôshitsu no kokusaika susumu: Nihongo tsukaenai gaikokujin kôritsu shôgakkô no ichi wari ni." *Asahi shinbun*, 16 February 1996.

7.   "Gaikokuseki seito no Nihongo kyôiku ni tsûyaku borantia: Naganoshi no chûgakkô de kokoromi." *Yomiuri shinbun*, 1 August 1994; "Gaikoku kokuseki jidô/seito no ukeire: kimekoma-kana shidô muzukashiku." *Shinano mainichi shinbun*, 19 June 1995; "Nihongo gakkyû: hanasetemo yomenu kyôkasho." *Yomiuri shinbun*, 17 May 1995.

8.   Ishii Sayoko. 1995. "Nihon ni genzon suru 'jinshu sabetsu' no jittai." *Kodomoron* 10(12):16; "Kyôshitsu no kokusaika susumu: Nihongo tsukaenai gaikokujin kôritsu shôgakkô no ichi wari ni." *Asahi shinbun*, 16 February 1996.

9.   Ishii Sayoko. 1995. "Nihon ni genzon suru 'jinshu sabetsu' no jittai." *Kodomoron* 10(12):16; "Honken no sensei, gaikokujin wa nigate?: Kenkyôi ga ankeeto." *Fukushima minpô*, 3 May 1995.

10. "Gaikoku kokuseki jidô/seito no ukeire: kimekomakana shidô muzukashiku." *Shinano mainichi shinbun*, 19 June 1995; "Kaigai kara no tenkôsei to ukeire kurasu: kodomo dôshi de 'oshieai'." *Sankei shinbun*, 2 June 1994, evening edition.

11. "Kikoku shijo ni ihen: kaigai demo 'juken benkyôzuke'." *Nihon keizai shinbun*, 10 November 1994, evening edition; "Sekkaku Shingapôru ni iru noni, tomo wa Nihonjin dake, genchishi yomanai." *Asahi shinbun*, 7 December 1994, Fukuoka evening edition.

12. "Yureru konketsuji kyôiku: nyûgaku shikaku no henkô, 'seigen ka' to hamon." *Yomiuri shinbun*, 22 July 1995, morning edition.

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15. "Juken Eigo no jama!?: gaikokujin no kaiwa jugyô keien." *Yomiuri shinbun*, 29 October 1994, Osaka evening edition.

16. "Kore ga jukugayoi no jittai da: chûgaku 96 percent ga 'Eigo'." *Sankei shinbun*, 7 July 1995.

17. "Wakamono no 'kôsei na kyôsô' sogai: hirogaru shidai/kokudai no gakuhi kakusa." *Nihon keizai shinbun*, 17 February 1996.

18. "To, gaikokujin gakkô ni hojo: 23 kô ga taisho." *Tôkyô shinbun*, 4 November 1995.

19. "Chôsen gakkô wa ima: tsuyomaru 'Nihon shikô'." *Ibaraki shinbun*, 23 August 1994, morning edition.

20. "Chôsen gakkô wa ima: kagirareru shôrai no yume." *Ibaraki shinbun*, 25 August 1994, morning edition; "Chôsen gakkôsei no juken shikaku: kokuritsudai 36 kô de mitomezu." *Okinawa taimuzu*, 28 July 1995, morning edition.

21. "Zainichi sansei 'semaki mon' toppa: ichi nen okure de juken shikaku." *Niigata nippô*, 17 March 1995; "Kokuritsudai no juken shikaku: Chôsen gakkô ni naze mitomerarenu." *Kyôto shinbun*, 18 July 1995, morning edition; "Chôsen gakkô wa ima: kagirareru shôrai no yume." *Ibaraki shinbun*, 25 August 1994, morning edition.

22. "Chôsen gakkôsei no juken shikaku: kokuritsudai 36 kô de mitomezu." *Okinawa taimuzu*, 28 July 1995, morning edition.

23. "Kokuritsudai no juken shikaku: Chôsen gakkô ni naze mitomerarenu." *Kyôto shinbun*, 18 July 1995, morning edition.

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25. "Chôsen gakkô sotsugyôsei ni mo kokkôritsudai juken shikaku o: Kokuren de zainichi sansei Kyôdai uttae." *Kyôto shinbun*, 8 August 1995, morning edition.

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51. "Seinen kaigai kyôryokutai ni mo kokuseki jôkô: Gaishô ni teppai yôkyû," *Tôkyô shinbun*, 3 August 1995.

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PART II

Evolution of
Cultural Diversity

The Making of a "Plural" Malaysia
A Brief Survey

SHAMSUL A.B.

Introduction: A Pluralism of Perspectives

It is necessary, at the outset, to clarify how I wish to use the term "pluralism" in this essay in view of the fact that there exists a "pluralism" of meanings or different levels of understandings of "pluralism" as a key concept in the social science and humanities. I find McLennan's description and analysis of this concept extremely enlightening and helpful.[1] He suggests that it is useful to distinguish between three broad levels of pluralism, namely, (1) methodological (for example, a multiplicity of research methods and paradigms, many truths and worlds); (2) socio-cultural (for example, many types of important social relations, subcultures, identities and selves); and (3) political (a scale of commitment to diversity in the polity, such as recognition of socio-cultural difference, facilitation of difference, and representation of difference in all basic decision-making arrangements).[2] In the present essay, it is inevitable that parts of each of the levels mentioned above will be dealt with directly and indirectly.

Let me raise and highlight, next, a serious methodological and analytical problem which confronts anyone who examines present-day "pluralism" in Malaysia, or for that matter of any country in the so-called Third World. The nature of the problem is simul-

taneously analytical, historical and geo-spatial which has led to the distortion of social reality. This has happened sometimes either through denial or ignorance and at other times through the selective use or political manipulation of social facts by elites.

As a relatively new political entity or unit, Malaysia officially "registered" its existence, as a geographical and political territory, in September 1963, when the Federation of Malaysia, consisted of Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore (left to be on its own in 1965) and the Federation of Malaya (which in itself contains eleven provinces or *negeris*), was declared an independent state. Therefore, when one talks of Malaysia's history or the historical origins of Malaysia's pluralism, one immediately has to expand the analytical, historical and geographical space to a much larger constituency, to include what was once known, especially in the pre-colonial period, as the "Malay archipelago" (or the "Malay world" as some scholars called it), or, during the British and Dutch colonial era, the "East Indies" or "Far East," or, since the Second World War, known as "Southeast Asia."

For instance, it is a common claim made by some scholars and politicians that, like the "immigrant" Chinese and Indian laborers who came to Malaysia in the early part of this century, the indigenous peoples of Malaysia, especially Malays, were also "immigrants" because they came from various islands of "Indonesia" and "Southeast Asia." Here the term "immigrant" is used, in a rather simplistic, if ahistorical, understanding of the present-day legal system, to indicate that the Malays, Chinese and Indians, as social groups, originate from outside the present-day territorial boundary of Malaysia, and, at some point in the "past," have "migrated" to this "territory." But, we know that this "territory" and nation-state called Malaysia did not exist before 1963. What existed in the past, for instance in the pre-colonial era, was a *kulturkreisse,* (lit. "culture circle") known as the Malay world, which in present-day politico-geographic context includes Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Southern Thailand, Southern Kampuchea, Southern Philippines. At the same period, there existed the "Chinese world" or "the Chinese *kulturkreisse*" or now

known as "East Asia," which includes the present-day China, Taiwan, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Macau, the two Koreas and Japan.

So, when a male person, who originated and whose family had lived for generations within a "Chinese *kulturkreisse*," moved from place to place within it as a part of his natural human activity to eke out a living he could not, for all intents and purposes, be labeled as an "immigrant" as defined by the present-day context of modern nation-state built upon the rule of law, constitution and territoriality. Similarly, a male person, who originated and whose family had lived for generations within the "Malay world," moved, say, in 1650, from the Riau islands (now in Indonesia) to Johor (now in Malaysia) to find new economic opportunities for himself and family, was not an "immigrant" then but he is now.

This means that if one were to explain the origin of Malaysia's pluralism, one has to adopt a "methodological pluralism," an approach which recognizes and accepts that there exists "philosophical and interpretative problems in assessing diverse claims to knowledge about the social world."[3] What I am suggesting here is that, not only has one continuously to "travel to and fro" from the "unity-and-diversity" of the present to the different, diverse and "divide-and-rule" pasts, and vice versa, in one's attempt to describe and analyze Malaysia's pluralism, but also to shift between substantive interpretative paradigms whether historiographical or anthropological in nature, oral and written traditions as well as orientalist and subalternist types. It is not at all difficult to imagine that one might lose one's way on this pluralistic-analytic journey, or totally abandon it.

The Making of Plural Societies in the Pacific Oceania Region

That Malaysia is a "plural society" is not in question. Indeed, many societies in the world today, in the industrialized and non-industrialized world alike, are "plural societies." Plural societies are those in which there are several large ethnic groupings, in-

volved in the same political and economic order but otherwise largely distinct from one another. As a result of colonization, most post-colonial societies, including those in Asia and Oceania, are plural societies because of political unification imposed on a variety of pre-existing cultures (indigenous and immigrant). It could also be argued that virtually all modern societies are pluralistic to a certain extent.

However, we must remind ourselves that "plurality," "pluralism" or "being pluralistic" is by no means only a character of modern societies. Pre-modern societies of Asia and Oceania, especially during the 12th and 13th centuries, were highly pluralistic and cosmopolitan in outlook and composition. This circumstance was much before the advent of European hegemony. Southeast Asia, for instance, being a strategic region which linked the East and the West during that period, was indeed a vibrant region, both in economic and social terms. The great entrepot of Malacca, at its height, was the home of Spanish, Portuguese, Arab, Chinese and Indian merchants, hence no less pluralistic, for instance, than the famous Japanese port city of Kobe today.

Therefore, what we witness in present-day post-colonial Asia and Oceania is essentially a process of further pluralization of societies within the region. Indeed, viewed in *longue durée* terms, it is the "third wave" in the long cycle of pluralization processes that the region has experienced; the "first wave" came during the era of pre-European hegemony and the "second wave" was during the period of European domination.

When viewed against this background, the use of the term such as "emerging pluralization" to describe the recent experience of many Asia-Oceania societies is historically problematic. Perhaps, "the third wave of pluralism," or "the third wave of pluralization," is more accurate to label the present-day process of pluralization which Asia and Oceania societies are experiencing. It is "third wave" because, on the one hand, as a social phenomenon, it has deep historical roots in the past ones and, on the other, it has emerged from a set of specific modern structural and post-war circumstances, such as global capitalism, the rise of nation-states,

dependent development, sophisticated technologies and transportation systems, the Cold War and increased regionalism.

However, it must also be recognized that, even though most nations in the Asia and Oceania region are affected by the "third wave of pluralization," the nature of that experience could be quite different from society to society. For instance, although most societies have had their "second wave" during a period of colonization, in East Asia, Japan was the colonizer of China, Korea and Taiwan. Admittedly, many parts of Southeast Asia were once colonized by Japan, too. However, it was the experience of European colonization which shaped most countries in Asia and Oceania. It could be argued that the "second wave" of pluralization in East Asia was very much an "internal" one, that is, within the "East Asian cultural region" (e.g., Japanese have resided in China, Korea and Taiwan or Koreans were brought as laborers to Japan and then resided in Japan).

However, in the contemporary "third wave," the experience of the societies of Asia and Oceania has been quite similar, demonstrating what could be described as a global pattern. For instance, people who have migrated to East Asia in search of work have been from both the "traditional areas" (China, Korea and Southeast Asia) and new ones, such as those from the Middle East (Iranians, Turkish, etc.), Latin America, Australasia, Europe and the USA.

We must also include in this "third wave" group the children of Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese expatriate families who have lived abroad for a long period to serve the hundreds of Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese overseas ventures. Many of them have acquired lifestyles constructed within a number of different cultural contexts. Being locals, when they returned to the East Asian region, they, more than the new immigrants, would have been the social agents in the diffusion of "non-East Asian" cultural elements, thus engendering the kind of cosmopolitanism and pluralization never experienced before in the region.

Irrespective of the stage of pluralization that each of the nations in the Asia and Oceania region is experiencing, one simple

fact remains true in all cases. Increased pluralization has engendered new social tensions and highlighted old ones, not only within a particular nation, but also between nations because the process involves large-scale movements of people across nation-state boundaries, both legally and illegally organized. Sociologically speaking, this process, in many ways, has also challenged both the existence and the notion of the modern nation-state and, hence, its concept of citizenship, territoriality and the rule of law.

We can cite a number of examples regarding this process from the Asia and Oceania region. However, in this brief essay, I wish to focus on the experience of Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia, as an empirical case study. I am confident that the patterns of pluralism and pluralization found in Southeast Asia can be found elsewhere too. One notable observation that could be made from the Southeast Asian case is that the more plural the society becomes the more conscious people become of difference. Management of the constructed difference becomes the biggest challenge in the pluralized world today. Let us now turn to our Southeast Asian case, that is, Malaysia.

The First Wave:
Malaysia in the Malay World

Maritime Southeast Asia and parts of its mainland, in the pre-colonial era, were known as the Malay archipelago, or "the Malay world." In the heyday of its "Age of Commerce," around 12th and 14th centuries, people in the archipelago moved from island to island or from the islands to the mainland to eke out a living, to trade, to conduct wars, to find wives, and the like. So they moved from Sumatra to the Malay Peninsula, from Sulu to Borneo, from Champa to Patani, from Makasar to Negros and Darwin in pursuit of the various activities mentioned. There were also traders, travelers and religious specialists from India, China, the Middle East and Europe who came to the Malay archipelago to establish trade, to discover the exotic life of the local peoples, or to convert them to

their faith. In that process, many of them decided to make the Malay world their home, either through marriage or establishing business houses in the various port cities or because they could not simply resist the "exotic life of the East." So, the Malay archipelago was culturally vibrant, commercially active and became increasingly pluralized on the eve of colonial period.

The Malay Peninsula and parts of the Borneo island, which later became components of Malaysia, belonged to this Malay world. As early as 1,700 years ago, the region received visitors from India, both merchants and religious specialists, such as Hindu priests and Buddhist monks, spreading their religion to the area. In fact, the contact with India stimulated other responses among the peoples of the Malay world. Some of the Malay rulers accepted the religions and cultures that came from India, albeit in syncretic indigenized forms. Hinduism in Bali, architectural evidence such as the Borobodur temple in Yogyakarta, and archeological findings in the form of stone artifacts of Buddhist and Hindu images in Kedah, testify to the spread of Indianized influences in the Malay world.

The coming of Islam around the 13th century further pluralized the already diverse social life in the Malay world. Malacca, a Malay state and kingdom, was the center of economic activities of the whole region. Its strategic position along the Straits of Malacca provided it the opportunity to be host to Asian as well as European traders, religious specialists and travelers who plied between Europe and China. One could argue that Malacca became the "image" of what Malaysia would be in the future, a thoroughly "melting-pot" center of peoples and cultures. In other words, by the time the European arrived in the region in the 16th century, the ebb and flow of regional empires and extensive trading networks, centered in Malacca, had already created multiethnic communities in this port city.

Many groups indeed became assimilated while others remained accommodated by the indigenous Malay society of Malacca. For instance, many Chinese who came to trade in Malacca stayed on and married with Malays without becoming Muslims

and eventually formed a community of their own called the Babas. Indian traders, many of whom were Muslims, were also married to the local Malays and played a critical role in forming an Indian Muslim community, influential both economically and politically. Some of the non-Muslim Indians also stayed on and formed their own communities, such as the Chitty.

However, with the advent of European colonialism and eventually the introduction of the concept of nation-state, the nature of pluralism in Malaysia took a new turn.

The Second Wave:
The Making of a "Plural" Malaysia

When the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British, the French and the US Americans came, some with the motto "God, gold, and glory," the whole Malay archipelago was eventually broken up, especially by the late 19th century, and parceled out into colonies of the European powers or "colonial states." Movement of peoples within the new spheres of influence in the region continued but the pattern changed qualitatively in a redefined economic and political matrix. The introduction of plantation economy and large-scale mining, for instance, created a new labor arrangement and increased the demand for imported laborers. Local supply of labor was perhaps sufficient but politically it was also seen by the colonial governments as unwise to recruit them. As a result, migrant workers, mostly displaced peasants, from South China and South India came in the thousands organized by labor syndicates and endorsed by colonial governments. Or, thousands of people from the islands were recruited by the same labor syndicates to be taken to work in the mainland. This was the era of plural society construction, a product of capitalist and colonial state demand.

There were contestations between the local states and the colonial powers as well as between the colonial powers themselves. So, a disharmony of intra- and inter-state relations, some

owing to the massive movement of people, was established during the era of European colonial domination. The Dutch, the British and, to a certain extent, the Siamese, were the main actors in the theater of politics of pluralism in the Malay archipelago then. Within this context, the modern nation-states in Southeast Asia began to take shape, when a series of treaties between the said powers was drawn up to formalize their spheres of influence. Inevitably, Malaysia was caught in this web of European imperialism, too.

Arbitrary physical boundaries were drawn up and eventually officialized by maps, hence the birth of the Straits Settlement states of Penang, Malacca and Singapore and subsequently to demarcation of the Malay provinces, or *negeri*. Ethnic categories were introduced for purposes of census to help colonial governments to systematize the exploitation of natural and human resources. The dismantling of traditional thought systems was quick and it was replaced by the Western system introduced through administration and education. The rise of print capitalism, which enabled the public to read and relate to the colonial state, engendered not only the imagined notion of oneness, the feeling of connectedness but also the sharpening of the sense of difference among the populace because there were different newspapers in different languages available while textbooks in different languages for vernacular schools were distributed by the thousands to children.

Local histories were redefined and repackaged in museums for the public view and mass education. Even nature was reorganized and represented in capsules of the fabled "Garden of Eden" but known generally then as "botanical gardens," in which plants of various kinds brought from other parts of the world were nurtured and exhibited. Even new heroes were created, mainly of high ranking European colonial officers or Kings and Queens in Europe, in the form of monuments occupying central locations in the state capitals. In fact, schools and buildings were named after famous European figures, too. Massive government offices with architectural forms imported from Europe or other parts of the

colonized world were constructed to symbolize domination. Large clock towers that could be heard miles away when they chimed were built by the dozens in most towns and became a common feature countrywide, apparently meant to instill a new sense of time, discipline and order among the allegedly lazy and indolent natives.

New sports and leisure activities were also introduced through the establishment of exclusive clubs for the local elites and the families of the colonizers. The introduction of new design of clothes engendered a transformation in the general dressing style of the local public, for instance, from *sarong* to skirt. Even the local palate, too, began to change with the introduction of new cuisines and confectioneries, such as steak and sandwiches or bread, butter and cakes; thus, they became new additions to the local standard menu of rice porridge, *tom yam, tosai* and *tempoyak belacan.*

What I am emphasizing here is that the "second wave" of pluralism in Southeast Asia, including in Malaysia, was the direct consequence of the creation of plural societies by the colonial powers; it was dominated, however, by the process of Westerniza-tion. In short, it was Eurocentric. The cultures of the immigrant populations were hardly noticeable until they were organized along ethnic lines. The immigrants eventually had to reclaim their identities in a number of ways, such as through the formation of business guilds among the overseas Chinese and the setting up of Chinese schools. The culture of the majority of the indigenous population was retained but very much modified to suit the colo-nial needs and often existed in the margin. Only the culture of the indigenous elites, or the palace culture, received special treatment from the colonialists.

One noticeable development in the pluralization process was the dominance of vertical divisions in which the Western culture of the colonizers and the palace-oriented cultures of the local elites occupied a "higher" position by virtue of the higher class position of those who practiced them. The cultures of the indigenous mass and that of the immigrants were perceived as of "lower" status

because people who practiced them were in the poorer classes. The overlapping of culture and class became a significant feature in the kind of pluralism that the plural societies in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, had engendered. Therefore, it could be said that culture and class differences became part of the collective symbol of the said plural societies.

Another dimension of difference which the pluralization pro-cess had created was in social and physical space. Very often, distinctions between rural and urban areas became increasingly marked as the cities became centers of administration and com-merce which accommodated a large number of the immigrants. The indigenous population seemed to be retained in the rural areas conducting their agricultural activities and had to feed those in urban areas. Hence, this unspoken division of labor between the largely immigrant urban areas and the indigenous rural areas eventually resulted in the construction of different types of social space: on the one hand, the urban was supposed to represent modernity and, on the other, the rural became the home of tradi-tions. This dichotomy of social space persisted into post-colonial Southeast Asia. The colonial practice of divide-and-rule institu-tionalized all these differences into laws and regulations which, in the post-colonial era, did not change very much.

The need to observe the creation of a plural society in Malay-sia during the colonial period in terms of Southeast Asia is analyt-ically important because the nation-state called Malaysia that we know of today did not exist then. Besides, the British did not only rule the area that has now become parts of Malaysia. Their colony was much bigger including a part of Java, then known as Batavia and which is now in Indonesia, present-day Singapore, Burma and Brunei. The movement of immigrant labor, which contributed to the formation of plural society in Malaysia, was not only from other British colonies to the ones in Southeast Asia but also within the latter.

The Third Wave:
Management of Difference in a "Plural" Malaysia

Historically, a majority of the post-colonial states in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, emerged after the Second World War. Those in the *insulinde* and maritime region did not experience much structural change but underwent a lot of cosmetic adjustments, particularly, in the political spheres.

The plural structures created by colonialism in Malaysia remained intact and so did much of the economy. There was a clear ethnic identification in the economy and society, with the economy mostly in the hands of foreign interests and the immigrant communities while politics was largely in the hands of the indigenous people. Therefore, the structure of difference changed little in the 1950s and 1960s. The impact of the culture of difference was felt most at the grass-roots level, sometimes resulting in ethnic tension and open conflict. In fact, in the late 1940s the ethnic tension turned into civil war. Ethnic violence happened again in May 1969 but was quickly put down by the authorities.

But, as the push for modernization in Malaysia became more intense, beginning in the 1970s, we saw a different type of contradiction loom larger. The two main components of the "modernization project" of Malaysia, namely, the economic and the political, became increasingly opposed to one another, engendering yet another form of social difference.

On the one hand, industrialization was seen as the vehicle to economic modernization. So, there was a big push for technology in Malaysia during the 1970s and 1980s. Achieving a high growth rate target became the pre-occupation. The country became a major economic "playing field" for corporations from Europe, the USA and Japan, which was the result of direct foreign investment encouraged by Malaysia through its "pioneer status" policy and other related programs.

On the other, Malaysia was also committed to the exercise of nation-building and creating a united society from what was essentially a socially divided plural society inherited from the colo-

nial rulers. The main motto of this whole exercise of nation-building was inevitably "unity in diversity," almost a mirror image of the colonialists' "divide-and-rule." Understandably, the emphasis was on "national integration" or "national unity." Various laws and regulations were introduced to effect this motto and ideology. Some were successful. Others failed miserably.

However, with increasing globalization, especially, in the economic sphere, the nation-state slowly receded into the background as, for instance, "growth triangles" began to mushroom in Southeast Asia, mainly involving Malaysia and Indonesia and a third country. There were at least three of such "growth triangles": The first between Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore; the second, involving Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, and the third, involving Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

With the development and expansion in the information technology and communication and in the transportation industry, distances between these countries, previously measured in miles and kilometers, have now shrunk to a matter of hours or minutes. The demand for labor increased phenomenally. Malaysia, like Singapore and Brunei, became dependent on migrant laborers to realize its economic dreams. These laborers came from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and even from South Asia. This situation has unleashed the "third wave" of pluralization in Malaysia, and also in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia, intent on creating a united Malaysian nation by the year 2020, is facing an incredible dilemma because the divide between the Malaysian and the non-Malaysian has deepened with roughly one million immigrant workers, or almost 10 percent of the total population, and many of whom are illegal residents. And yet, the internal differences between the ethnic groups, such as between Malays and Chinese, remain problematic, to say the least. One of the consequences of the presence of the illegal immigrants, most of whom are Indonesians, is that relations between Malaysia and Indonesia has become difficult at times despite attempts made by both countries to deal with this rather intractable prob-

lem. Malaysians from all ethnic groups seem to become increasingly intolerant of the presence of these immigrant workers.

The paradox is that, at the political level, the Malays in Malaysia have often said that they and the Indonesians are people of one origin, or *bangsa serumpun*. This claim is of course not untrue, since many of their ancestors came from the islands that are now part of Indonesia. But, the same Malays, who are now Malaysians, are the very people in Malaysia today who have expressed great uneasiness at the presence of the Indonesian migrant workers. A further paradox is that, in the economic sphere, the Malaysians need these Indonesian workers not only to support their economic activities but also as domestic servants, to look after their children, while they are busy "making money." So, the plot of "the game of difference" thickens day by day as do the paradoxes.

Therefore, the Malaysia case has demonstrated how each phase of the pluralization process has created different consequences to local communities. But, since the formation of the Malaysian nation-state, its peoples have become very conscious of their difference, even though many of them once belonged to the same cultural region and shared many things in common. The colonial states and, later, the nation-states have constructed and heightened the difference to the detriment of their own mutual existence. This is the meaning of plural society and pluralization in Malaysia, in particular, and between nations in Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by saying that many of the nations in Asia and Oceania, as a result of the globalization process, are experiencing, lately, increased pluralism and dilemmas with the arrival of groups of "new people" within their societies, mainly for economic reasons. Let us now take an example closer to "home," namely, Japan.

During the last decade or so the arrival of the "new people" has been a source of mental trauma and political perplexity to

many of its people and leaders, an experience not dissimilar to the Malaysian one, thus demonstrating the unpreparedness of the Japanese to handle this "game of difference." But, some observers in Japan argue that this incapacity is because of the claimed "fact" that Japanese society is homogenous, hence they are not used to "aliens." If that is so, it only strengthens my belief that the Japanese have not really acquired the art of managing difference despite the fact that they have had Ainus, Koreans and Chinese living among them for decades or even centuries. It is no surprise, therefore, that they find the arrival of the "new social groups" in Japan rather difficult to handle, nonetheless they are trying hard.

After all, it is a Japanese, by the name of Kenichi Ohmae, who introduced the term, the "borderless" world. Perhaps, he has provided the right conceptual and mental construct for the Japanese to come to terms with what they see as the "emerging pluralism in Asia and Oceania."

In the context of Malaysia, the delicate demographic balance between the indigenous and immigrant population, idiomized in everyday parlance as *bumiputera* versus non-*bumiputera*, is both the source of weakness and strength. At the grass-roots and everyday level, it is dominated by the culture of difference but, at the authority-defined level, it is dominated by an homogenizing ideology. There is a clear tension between these two levels articulated in various forms. Hence, Malaysia could be described as a state in stable tension.

For instance, the government is keen to project both to the world and to its populace that Malaysia is united as a polity and as a society in spite of its multiethnic nature. Through "social engineering," it has introduced numerous policies to weld together the different ethnic groups, such as through one-language policy implemented through the national education system. But, such policies have had limited success because private education, conducted both in Mandarin and English, is also allowed. Its one-culture policy has always been contested. However, the recent economic growth that Malaysia has experienced has been successful in suppressing the ethnic tension resulting from the

plural nature of its society. How long this economic boom will remain no one can tell. There is a fear amongst many local and foreign observers that once the economic boom is gone the scramble for survival may bring to the surface the ethnic tension once again. But, this outcome may not happen. Many ordinary Malaysians have experiences or memories of the bitterness and trauma of open ethnic conflict in the late 1940s and in 1969. They fully realize that the loss is greater than any benefit to themselves should they tear at old wounds.

The encouraging thing for Malaysians these days is that a number of Third World countries, many of which are plural societies themselves, seems to believe Malaysia is a model they should emulate. Perhaps, the pressure of being perceived as a model could be the healing bridge between Malaysians of various ethnic origins, strong enough to motivate them to sustain the "stable tension" position.

Acknowledgments

NOTES

1.   Gregor McLennan. 1995. *Pluralism*. Buckingham: Open University Press,

2.   Ibid., pp. 6-7.

3.   Ibid., p. 6.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Thailand's Cultural Interaction with Its Neighbors

KHIEN Theeravit
CHAIWAT Khamchoo

Introduction

Cultural relations are of considerable importance in inter-state relations. Compared with economic, politics and defense, the cultural dimension of inter-state relations is relatively subtle and constructive. However, it becomes dominant only in a peaceful atmosphere. It has its uniqueness: it may proceed with or without an institution, and it may be conducted on the initiative of either private or public sectors. In recent years, culture and related factors have increasingly been a major consideration in the formulation of Thai foreign policy. Some may be used as instruments for diplomacy, while others as vehicles for international understanding beyond cultural diplomacy. In this article, we will give a brief account of cultural exchanges (e.g., ethnicity, attitudes, arts, expertise) devised by the Thai people in relation to their neighbors (namely China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Malaysia).[1] Some thoughts and observations will be given to the impact on the countries under study and internal impact on Thailand's foreign policy community.

Cultural Relations

From the 1932 revolution up to the end of July 1995, in Thailand, there were altogether forty-three government policy statements presented to parliament. Of these, only seven included some concepts on cultural policy. The first Chatchai government policy statement (25 August 1988) pledged "to promote Thai culture in foreign countries so as to make them understand Thailand and the Thai people better." This was a one-way-flow concept, and it did not aim to achieve mutual understanding. The second Chatchai government policy statement (9 January 1991) maintained the above policy. In addition, it further stated: "The government will develop people-to-people relations [with foreign countries] through the exchange of culture and information and through extending technical cooperation so as to promote mutual understanding." The foreign policy statement of the Anand government, announced to the National Legislative Assembly on 4 April 1991, also retained a clause on cultural policy. It pledged to foster economic, technical and cultural cooperation with all developing countries, especially with close neighbors.

The short-lived Suchinda government had no chance to put its policies into practice.[2] Suchinda's policy statement made four references to cultural factors in the context of foreign policy. First, the policy statement pledged to foster closer cooperation with ASEAN in political, economic, social and cultural areas. Second, it was committed to promote cooperation with foreign countries in the fields of economics, technology, culture, and human resource development. Third, it pledged to promote a good image abroad by making foreigners understand Thailand and the Thai culture. And finally, it was committed to use cultural relations as a means to promote friendship with foreign countries, both at the governmental and the non-governmental level. The policy statements regarding Thai cultural relations of the two following governments — the Chuan government (October 1992 - July 1995) and the present government — contained similar contents to that of the previous government.

In short, until recently successive governments of Thailand have given very little consideration to the use of cultural factors as part of the country's foreign policy formulation. Moreover, the cultural dimension has been included in the policy statements only in the past seven years.

In diplomacy, however, cultural dimensions had been evident much earlier. The Thai government and its people began to interact passively with dominant foreign cultures, such as those of the US, the UK, France, China, and Japan. Now, Thailand sends and receives cultural attachés to and from the said countries. The patterns of interaction are increasingly and mutually beneficial.

With its close neighbors, however, the Thai government's interest is still negligible. From the six neighboring countries under consideration, only China has exchanged cultural attachés with Thailand. Vietnam, Laos and Malaysia have each exchanged cultural officials with Thailand. Their areas of responsibility include information. Of course, the ambassadors have always had jurisdictions over all areas of inter-state activities which include cultural relations. The objectives common in all these embassies' activities with regard to cultural and information services have been predominantly propaganda in nature. The officials concerned may have had to struggle within their own minds and among their colleagues as to whom they should serve: to honestly present the facts of their countries as expected in the cultural field, or to present their countries to their targeted groups by means of propaganda as required by the policy.

For Thailand, there is a will to increasingly rely on cultural diplomacy to foster closer cooperation with its close neighbors. The younger generation of diplomats (Thai ambassadors to Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia are under the age of fifty) tends to appreciate the real meaning of cultural diplomacy and is ready to give higher priority to its diplomatic functions. The diplomats have the will to purvey an honest picture of Thailand rather than a rosy one, and they are eager to learn the culture of their host countries. Moreover, they have made it clear that it is their responsibility to promote cultural interactions between the

private sectors as well. However, the problems as to how to improve the existing diplomatic structure to fit with new demands and aspirations still remain unresolved.

It would be unrealistic to anticipate a similar change of attitude in the diplomatic corps of Thailand's neighboring counterparts. China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar all have political systems which require that culture must serve politics.

And, the Malaysians are still highly nationalistic: to broaden the diplomatic base to include the private sector is still unacceptable. Officially, at least, Thailand's cultural relations with Malaysia are different in status from the other neighbors' under study. As members of ASEAN, Thailand and Malaysia have been blessed by the two agreements which facilitate their cultural interactions: the Agreement for the Promotion of Cooperation in Mass Media and Cultural/Activities (Cameron Highlands, 17 December 1969) and the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Cultural Fund (Jakarta, 2 December 1978).

The trend in recent years has been clear: the Thai government has increasingly paid attention to the utilization of cultural factors to support conventional diplomacy. The driving forces for this move have ranged from an ideal to a realistic one: cultural relations as a means of promoting peace, friendship, better understanding, etc., and cultural relations as a lubricant for trade.

This conscious move on the part of the government has its own foundation: the economic base has been encouraging; human resource development has been relatively advanced; and like its close neighbors, Thailand has been rich in cultural heritage; moreover, the peaceful environment has provided greater opportunities for inter-state cultural relations in place of politics and force of arms.

The more effective means to foster cultural relations is through people-to-people channels. This has been going on from time immemorial, with or without the official sanction, but the impetus has just become visible in recent years.

Today, cultural interactions in official and unofficial sectors between Thailand and its neighbors consist of numerous compo-

nents. Exchanges of expertise in various fields are featured prominently at the upper class of society. Presentations of arts can reach various targeted groups. Attitudinal dimension of cultural exchanges is often at work without giving too much publicity. The cultural values that are inherent in some ethnic groups often play significant roles in inter-state relations. Some of these cultural flows deserve closer examination.

Exchanges of Information and Arts

Consciously or unconsciously, cultural interactions of these categories are likely to promote good-will, mutual progress, and better understanding among the peoples.

Among the countries under study, China seems to have received the widest attention. Soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Thailand and China, the two governments signed, on 31 March 1978, an Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation. Ever since, the policies of the two governments have been to promote exchanges and cooperations of various kinds. During the last fifteen years, China and Thailand have carried out over 330 cooperation projects under this agreement. Most of them have been study tours and short-term training programs in the spheres of science, economics, and social development. Only approximately 10 percent of the cooperation projects belong to the category of cultural exchanges, such as exchanges of experts, training in language studies, or sports.

Cultural exchange activities between Thailand and its six neighboring countries in the last few years have been too numerous to list, the more popular ones being the exchange in the arts (music, drama, dance, film, video, painting, sculpture, cultural artifact, literature, etc.), the exchange of experts (linguists, historians, scientists, administrators on cultural affairs, etc.), the exchange of fellowships for training and study tours, the exchange of all kinds of information, cooperation in seminars, conferences, symposia, and sporting activities. They have been carried out at

the governmental level, the semi-official level, or in the private sector. The political conditions in Thailand have been in favor of the participation of the private sectors more than that of its governmental counterparts. Thailand has also hosted such activities more often than others.

Since the Anand Government (in office from 2 March 1991 to 7 April 1992) the annual budget has been increased to support activities in the realm of cultural cooperation with neighboring countries. The notable activities in this component are the exchange of specialists, fellowships for short-term and long-term training, and study tours. Some specific guidelines and objectives are worthy of mention. Religious cooperation was stressed in the case of cultural relations with Myanmar — as the Thai and the Burmese have always been devout believers of Buddhism. Aid to Cambodia was instructed to be channeled through the Supreme National Council headed by Samdech Norodom Sihanouk. Priority was given to dispatching Thai experts to help Cambodia's reconstruction effort. Experts had to receive training in advance on Cambodian culture. As for assistance to Laos, the main objective was to inculcate in the Lao a good attitude towards Thailand.

The Thai government has made it clear that, either in the above technical cultural cooperation program or other similar activities, the role of the private sector must be supported. Hence, cultural exchanges are now being carried out by numerous channels, government agencies, universities, NGOs, and even private companies. The government officials concerned are ready to render them a helping hand.

Linkages of institutions in Thailand and those in the other six neighboring countries have been emerging, though still few compared with their relations with the developed countries. Numerous universities and cultural institutions in Thailand and China have established sister relationships. Peking University and Chulalongkorn University have such an agreement. The Institute of Asian Studies of Chulalongkorn University alone has established similar relations with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies at Zhongshan University, the Institute of Southeast Asian

Studies of the Academy of Social Science of Yunnan, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies of the National Center for Social Sciences in Vietnam, and the Social Sciences Committee of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. These bilateral relations have been carried out with joint activities such as research, seminars, conferences, study tours, short-term training, dictionary compilation, film and slide production. Chulalongkorn University's Institute of Asian Studies also presently serves as the Secretariat of The Mekong Development Research Network which involves China, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand. Meanwhile, Khon Kaen University's Research and Development Institute is serving as Secretariat for Southeast Asian Universities' Agro-ecosystem Network (SAUAN). Khon Kaen University still has many other joint research projects with Lao government organizations.

In short, institutional cooperation, bilateral as well as regional in nature, has been emerging along with various kinds of exchanges. The Thai have been the key players in such patterns of cooperation, as their political system has been more open while their social and economic conditions have been the most favorable of all countries under investigation.

Attitudinal Dimension of Culture

In the countries under study, there are diverse cultural traits, even within each society. Inherent in the diversity are the differences in attitudes, values, and beliefs, which are mostly invisible. Some of these cultural traits are instrumental, positively or negatively, to Thailand's relations with the countries involved in this study.

To begin with, there was a misconception among outside observers that countries with various brands of socialism (China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar) had attained uniformity in their belief system and that the "backward" or "undesirable" elements of culture were gone. That assumption is no longer tenable. With the decline of communism, cultural diversity is once again re-emerging. This development has created new conditions for

Thailand to foster cultural relations with its socialist neighbors. Ideology is still an obstacle, but not an insurmountable problem. Diversified cultural traits can now interact more freely between the Thai and their neighbors.

Secondly, Buddhism remains a strong vehicle for Southeast Asian people to trace their common identity. Thailand's Buddhist establishment has been relatively stable, compared with those in its socialist neighbors, so that it has been natural for the Thai to lead in religious diplomacy. Exchanges of visits by religious leaders and exchanges of Buddhist literature have been active in recent years. There is no Mecca Homage for Buddhist fellows, but temples, especially the established ones, in Myanmar, Laos and China, have attracted organized Thai Buddhist groups to visit and perform religious functions. Religion knows no boundaries.

In general, Buddhism positively serves as a vehicle for friendship between the Thai and their neighbors. Some of the television programs in Thailand on the Thai as well as on the day-to-day life of the people in neighboring countries have made great contributions to this effect. The image of socialist countries, thus, has been greatly improved after the Thai learned from the films that Buddhist life still exists in these troubled countries.

On the other hand, the suppression of Tibetan Buddhists by the Chinese authorities has created problems negative to Sino-Thai relations. Hence, political leaders should no longer take it for granted that an internal matter can be handled without taking external cultural reactions into consideration.

Thirdly, the attitudes of the Thai and their neighbors towards human rights have been traditionally similar: greater emphasis has been given to duty, not right; order and harmony have always been considered more important than "excessive democracy." Due to different historical experience, however, Thailand has been more receptive to Western ideas than its six neighboring countries. On human rights issues, the difference has been of degree. They share, more or less, a common value. This is why, either individually or sometimes collectively, at times, a different stance has been taken from the West regarding human rights violations in such

countries as China, Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand. The West, therefore, should try to understand that human rights have specific cultural roots.

Ethno-Cultural Dimensions

Each of the countries under investigation is inhabited by a number of racial-ethnic-linguistic groups. The role of these ethnic minority groups has often been crucial to relations between and within states under this study.

The *ethnic Chinese*[3] in Thailand have been highly influential in Thailand's foreign affairs. Their role in Sino-Thai relations has changed significantly since World War II. The following changes are notable.

(1) Prior to World War II, the Chinese government conducted its foreign policy in relation to Thailand on the basis of cultural affinity rather than national sovereignty. Hence, the Chinese agents operated freely, without due respect to the Thai authorities, in rallying support either for Sun Yatsen's revolutionary cause in 1905-1915 or for China's war of resistance against the Japanese aggression in 1931-1945. Nowadays, the ethnic Chinese in Thailand no longer have that kind of sense of belonging to their homeland. It would be unimaginable for a similar pattern of behavior to be repeated should the same events occur again.

(2) During World War II, the Thai leadership embarked on an expansionist course based on racial affiliation. Phibun Songkhram's pan-Thaism schemed to include Sipsong Panna's Thai community in Southern Yunnan into the Thai empire. Similarly, this would be unthinkable under the present conditions.

(3) Traditional Chinese believe that a civilized Chinese who departed from his home village should return to die at his place of origin. Today, nearly all ethnic Chinese in Thailand no longer observe this tradition. However, they and their descendants are still sentimentally attached to their home towns, located mostly in the southern parts of China. Thus, they make frequent visits to

their home towns. Even those who have already lost their links because of generational distance still seek opportunities to go to southern China to trace their roots. This is an expression of cultural attachment.

(4) Chinese ethnic factors, in the past, proved to be liabilities when predominant conditions were given to political or security considerations. The episode of World War II and its aftermath were cases in point. After siding with the Japanese aggressors who waged war against China, the Thai government adopted various severe measures against overseas Chinese in many parts of the country. The outcome of the war consequently encouraged many overseas Chinese to create a series of disturbances throughout the country. Another example was when the Thai government in the early 1970s considered recognizing the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government in place of the Republic of China in Taiwan. The presence of a large Chinese community was cited as one of the negative conditions. In the last twenty years, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Thailand and China, East and Southeast Asia's environment has changed significantly. It is difficult to imagine that similar changes will ever happen again.

The *ethnic Vietnamese* are now mostly living in eight provinces in Northeast Thailand. These people, numbering about 70,000, migrated into Thailand immediately before and after World War II (1930-1954). Although they have never been sizable in terms of number, they have constituted a significant factor in Vietnamese-Thai relations.

Culturally, the Vietnamese are a determined and organized race: they are hard working, disciplined, and united. To most Thai in the areas of heavy Vietnamese presence, the Vietnamese are formidable, if not threatening, as economic rivals. On one occasion, before the collapse of communism, the Thai in the Vietnamese-inhabited areas were most disturbed to discover that, despite the Vietnamese displaced person's patriotism and loyalty to their revered leader, Ho Chi Minh, they were unwilling to return to

their own country even after reunification. Subsequently, they harbored ill feeling against each other.

According to Thai law, these ethnic Vietnamese in Northeast Thailand are illegal immigrants or displaced persons. However, they are now free to settle in any of the eight designated provinces, although they are required to obtain official permits if they want to travel outside the designated provinces. Professional restrictions, nevertheless, have been imposed on them, but law enforcement in this case, as in many others, is highly flexible. In theory, the ethnic Vietnamese are awaiting repatriation, but in reality, they have firmly settled down.

During the American Indochina War (roughly between 1962 and 1975), the ethnic Vietnamese in Thailand were perceived as a threat to Thailand's security. The US military installations were largely located in the areas contiguous to Vietnamese settlements, as those eight provinces were contiguous to Indochina. It is not surprising that some of these Vietnamese settlers were engaged in subversive activities as Hanoi's "fifth column" opposing Thai-American military campaigns against their homeland.[4] Security agents simultaneously applied repressive measures against them. As a result, the situation in these areas was tense.

The American Indochina War ended in 1975 with a communist victory in all Indochinese countries so the pro-Hanoi ethnic Vietnamese had good reasons to rejoice. They celebrated the event in small parties. Furthermore, they sent delegates to Bangkok to welcome Hanoi's official delegation in August 1975 and took the opportunity to demand more freedom of movement. At the same time, the Thai in the Northeast also had good reasons to believe that with peace in Vietnam the "Vietnamese refugees" could be repatriated. Right-wing elements began campaigns against the continued presence of the "Vietnamese refugees."[5] These Thai expectations never materialized. Between 1976 and 1978, Thai and Vietnamese delegations held numerous meetings to negotiate this issue. The result was that Hanoi had agreed to accept only 3,000 Vietnamese refugees back to their homeland.

The ethnic Vietnamese will probably continue to be a liability to Thai-Vietnamese relations. With the demise of communism and the economic debacle, there are no good reasons for the "Vietnamese refugees" to return to their homeland. The issue is now how to make the ethnic Vietnamese a positive factor for mutual interest.

In recent years, especially after Hanoi's announcement of a total withdrawal of troops from Cambodia, there have been good indications of a move to integrate most of the Vietnamese settlers into Thai society. The ethnic Vietnamese have increasingly loosened their ideological ties with Hanoi. They have admitted that Thailand can offer them better security, freedom and material comfort than Vietnam. At the same time, Hanoi has also begun to appeal to the ethnic Vietnamese in Thailand to abide by Thai laws. On the Thai part, signs of greater flexibility in granting Thai citizenship to ethnic minorities have been emerging. A Cabinet's decision in early 1992 will enable a great number of ethnic Vietnamese to become permanent residents of Thailand. If Thai-Vietnamese relations continue to improve, ethnic Vietnamese in Thailand will turn to be an asset to Thai-Vietnamese cultural relations. It was indeed encouraging that Thailand and Vietnam signed a cultural agreement on 8 August 1996 to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.[6] The agreement covers communications and cooperation in various fields, including literature, education and research, sports and religion. It served to demonstrate the two countries' mutual desire to foster cultural cooperation.

The *Thai Muslims* constitute a large majority in the provinces of Satun, Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, including a large minority in Songkhla. They are not only Muslims, but also speak Malay as their only or primary language. Thus, culturally, their ties are closer to Malaysia than to Thailand. Hence, they tend to identify themselves with Malaysia rather than with Thailand. Therefore, the Thai Muslims have constituted an important factor in Thai-Malaysia relations.

How to integrate this ethnic minority into Thai society has been a major national policy consideration since World War II.

The Phibun Songkram governments (1942-1944, 1949-1957) adopted a policy of active assimilation, or forced assimilation, which created resentment. This policy and the subsequent tension continued in the following decade. Without due consideration to cultural forces in the sensitive areas, the Ministry of the Interior under General Praphat's leadership (1957-1973) attempted to reduce the Muslim's cultural influence by replacing street names in Malay by Thai names and by introducing Bangkok officials into the lower levels of large Muslim majority communities. As a result, tensions were aggravated.

The Muslim separatist movements were active in the 1960s and early 1970s. There were several groups, but the stronger ones were known as the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN). Their sanctuaries were said to be in Malaysia, and they survived with foreign aid.

Subsequent governments were more tactful in dealing with the separatist movements. The authorities changed their previous policy which had threatened the Muslim ethnic identity to a policy which recognized cultural pluralism. Hence, the term "Thai Muslim" has since been in use in place of "Malay Muslims." Moreover, the government has sponsored the building of mosques, facilitated pilgrimages of Muslim believers to Mecca, and employed various techniques to honor the Muslim spiritual leader. Another approach has been the attempt to reform local administration simultaneously with new economic development programs. The most effective approach, however, has probably been the one actively guided by the Royal Family. This approach has aimed to reduce the level of foreign aid to the separatist movements by trying to improve Thailand's relations with Muslim states, especially neighboring Malaysia. Malaysia has had its own interest to compromise with Thailand because its security has also been threatened by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), most of whose leaders had been based on the Thai side of the border since their expulsion from Malaysia in the late 1950s. Both governments have been forced to bargain over each other's security interests by exploiting the other side's minority problem.

By the end of the 1980s, Thailand went so far as to unilaterally help Malaysia disarm the CPM and to grant its followers the right to settle down in Thailand. At present, both Malaysia and Thailand seem to have basically resolved their minority problems. For Thailand, the Thai Muslim minority will remain a foreign policy issue in its relations with Muslim countries. The Gulf War in 1991, for example, was embarrassing to Thailand. The Thai government limited its commitment to the US-led UN military operations partly because it did not want to alienate or antagonize its Muslim brothers in Southern Thailand.

Cultural Relations and Trends for Regional Integration

With the help of new information technologies and modern communication, cultural interactions have been and will be further intensified. What are the impact and implications of such cultural interactions? What will be the future trends in terms of regional integration?

Ideally, cultural pluralism within the country, the region, and the world should be preserved. In reality, however, the cultural identity of a society can hardly survive if it lacks protective mechanisms. With the demise of communism, all countries discussed in this paper, except Malaysia, have tried to learn from Thailand the guidelines for economic development. But, economic relations are often carried out along with cultural components. In the past few years, concern has been expressed over Thailand's "cultural imperialism" which has taken place alongside "economic imperialism."

There are some elements of truth in these accusations. There have been attempts by some influential groups to transfer their value systems and to hold Thailand's neighboring countries in economic bondage. Like many people in the developed countries, there have been some who have assumed the superiority and righteousness of their (Thai) system.

How Thailand's neighbors have been able to resist or be reconciled with Thai socio-economic intrusions is not yet clear. One scenario is that resistance to Thai economic and cultural domination will continue to be as sporadic as before. Certain forces are irresistible. The existing peaceful atmosphere will facilitate economic and cultural flows in a reciprocal manner rather than as one-way traffic. However, under present conditions, the formation of cultural domination seems to work in favor of Thai values.

To take commercialism as a value system, for example, nowadays, most Thai businessmen behave like Japanese capitalists in their customer relations. The producers rely not only on modern media, but also on the cultural values of the targeted consumers, to promote sales. We have witnessed how people living across the border, especially Lao, have learned how to behave like Thai consumers. Their consumer values have been mainly influenced by propaganda through modern mass media.

Language barriers will be one of the biggest obstacles to cultural flows. However, economic force will probably lead the way to breaking down these barriers. In any case, Thai-Lao relations do not have this language barrier. Moreover, due to close ethnic ties, Thailand will find no difficulty in transmitting Thai values to the markets of Cambodia and Myanmar.

In recent years, increasing numbers of Chinese in mainland China have visited their relatives in Thailand. During their visits, they were able to witness for themselves the wide gaps in the political and economic systems between Thailand and China. It is difficult, however, to assess how much the differences will affect their thoughts and behavior in the years to come.

Internal Implications

In recent past, Thais and their governments have accepted ethnic pluralism. Ethnic groups are now allowed to express their interests as well as their potentials. Their interests sometimes promote causes which are detrimental to the national interests. In such an

instance, consensus and reconciliation are essential for societal development. This process is a positive factor that fosters greater participation of the ethnic minority groups. As a consequence, it generates their sense of belonging, opportunity, and freedom, which may be regarded as part of "cultural democracy." The decision-making of Thailand's policy towards the Gulf War was the case in point.

The second notable change in Thailand's communal policy has been the disappearance of cold war rhetoric. The term "fifth column" used to be applied to every ethnic group in Thailand. The following perception of ethnic Vietnamese was expressed by the Secretary General of Thailand's National Security Council over nine years ago : "Vietnam still advances its interests through the Vietnamese refugees. In particular, it uses the refugees as instruments for subversion in and bargaining with Thailand. The refugee community is used as a base for Vietnam's future operations. For this reason, Vietnam has rejected our refugee repatriation programme."[7]

This concept was popular in the cold war era. The policy towards ethnic Vietnamese then was to repatriate them en masse. Assimilation was not acceptable. The change in this attitude has been clear in recent years. Naturalization for ethnic minorities is now more open than ever before. This is possible partly because of the disappearance of the external threat and partly because economic relations with foreign countries are now taking the lead in foreign policy considerations.

Thirdly, the measures towards ethnic minorities have been improved. The concept of assimilation in the early years often meant enforced conformity to the norms of the majority. The measures applied included occupational restrictions and language restrictions. These have now been partly liberalized and partly ignored by law enforcement agencies. More positive approaches, greatly beneficial to the minority communities, have been applied by the rural development programs. A large part of Northeast Thailand had been the home of ethnic Lao. The communist insurgents, consisting of Thai-Lao elements, first made the region their

base in 1956, at the start of their subversive activities. The area was most backward economically and the people there had grievances and demanded redress. Furthermore, the selection of this region was also logical in terms of logistic and strategic factors since it was adjacent to areas of heavy communist presence. As a result, the Thai government gave these "sensitive areas," as well as the Thai Muslim communities in the South, top priority in rural development programs. Although the running of the programs was not always smooth, standards of living for the people in these areas did improve.

Finally, whether Thailand's cultural traits will make its relatively strong economy an aggressive power is not clear. Concerns on this are not groundless when its economic structure is taken into consideration. But culturally, the Thai people are relatively peaceful, especially since World War II. It is rare in history to witness a militarily stronger country accepting border lines as stipulated in the unequal treaties imposed by colonial powers. Although the legacies of these unequal treaties have sometimes given rise to confrontations, Thailand has made it clear that it has always wanted to adhere to the existing unequal treaties. The military clashes with Laos over three disputed villages were a revealing exception. In 1987, an armed confrontation took place when a strategic road was extended into the remote villages. Later, proofs revealed that the Thai side had consulted the wrong map, although a point could still be made over the location of the demarcation line through the villages. During the dispute, Thailand proposed to conduct a joint technical survey to ascertain the exact boundary between Thailand and Laos. Laos rejected the proposal and threatened to obstruct any unilateral effort by a Thai technical team of independent experts. Instead of being firm on the matter which could at least gain international sympathy, Thailand withdrew its troops from the villages. By international standards, such an admission of defeat is now unthinkable to most Thais.

Concluding Remarks:
How to Promote Cultural Cooperation

Ideally, cultural relations should be independent of direct government control. In reality, however, all governments use cultural factors as instruments of foreign policies and as a means of putting certain restrictions on their people's external behavior. Thailand has shared these experiences with other world communities and has increasingly promoted its people-to-people cultural relations. The trends are in favor of national, regional and international integrations with cultural pluralism.

Thai governments have been using cultural relations as a means to support conventional diplomacy, as an instrument for peace, and as a vehicle for international understanding. The government and private business have been working together to promote cultural relations as a lubricant for trade, especially in Indochina and Myanmar. To get to know and, if possible, to respect each other through languages, literatures, arts, etc., requires cooperation from the academic communities. The trend towards this joint effort is evident. Competition with other developed countries will be extensive. The moral dilemmas of the academic communities are many: how to balance the interests of Thailand against those of the targeted countries; how to recognize mutual interests; how to draw a line between economic imperialism and just economic interactions.

We are of the opinion that cultural exchange and cooperation among peoples and nations should be more vigorously and systematically promoted. We also believe that while cultural pluralism within the country, the region, and the world should be retained, it should not be allowed to develop haphazardly, or be led by a strong "culture." It should not become "cultural imperialism" which destroys the ethnic culture, traditions, and people's unique way of life.

As has correctly been observed, the bulk of cultural cooperation is promoted with the initiatives taken by the more economically advanced and powerful partners of cooperating nations. The weaker partners tend to view cultural programs as instruments of the stronger partners to facilitate some economic or political objective. However, whoever takes the initiatives and whatever the motives of cultural cooperation are, cultural exchange should not be a one-way street but should yield mutual benefits.

Institutes or centers to promote cultural exchange and cooperation among nations should be established. The proposed center may be under the auspices of the United Nations University as has been suggested by some academics.[8] As a presumably neutral organization without vested interests in the countries concerned, the proposed center could perhaps work out appropriate programs for fruitful and mutually beneficial cultural interactions. It should be borne in mind, however, that the ultimate goal of cultural cooperation and exchange is not to create an homogenized global culture, but rather to enable people of different cultures to understand each other better. Such mutual understanding may be formed through international contact, the bringing together of people from different backgrounds, the learning of other languages, history, culture and ways of life, together with opportunities to meet and interact, thereby helping promote international harmony.

The ultimate aim of cultural cooperation is, in short, to create an awareness and appreciation of cultural differences, tolerance and understanding of cultural diversities which would eventually contribute to a peaceful world. We agree with prominent Japanese intellectual Masakazu Yamazaki's view: "From a political and economic standpoint, it is clear that national security based on trust and understanding is better than national security based on an expensive, threatening buildup of military force."[9] Thus, each country's foreign relations should put more emphasis on promoting cultural understanding.

This article draws substantially on Khien Theeravit's "Thailand's Cultural Relations with Its Neighbours" in Volker Grabowsky, ed., Regions and National Integration in Thailand, 1982-1992 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowtz, 1995).

NOTES

1. China and Vietnam are close but not contiguous neighbors of Thailand. They have been included in this study mainly because culturally they have special relations with Thailand.

2. General Suchinda Kraprayoon was appointed as Thailand's 19th Prime Minister on 7 April 1992, heading a 5-party coalition government. He read his government's policy statement to Parliament on 6 May amid massive demonstrations against him jointly organized by the four opposition parties and the "democratic movement." The demonstrations turned into riots and violent suppressions which resulted in over fifty deaths and nearly 1,000 wounded. He was pressured into resigning from the premiership on 22 May.

3. The ethnic Chinese are those Chinese and their descendants who normally speak Chinese and/or behave culturally like Chinese. They number approximately 2 million out of the 57 million Thai population.

4. See Khien Theeravit. 1987. "Vietnamese Refugees' Attitudes Toward Thailand." *Asian Review* 8(1):43.

5. Ibid., p. 45.

6. It is Thailand's first cultural agreement with a country in mainland Southeast Asia, and the 18th with other countries in the world. Thailand is also the first country Vietnam has such an agreement with.

7. Prasong Soonsiri. 1983. "Foreign Policy Implementation and Security Problem." *Saranrom* XI(Special Issue, 10 February):31.

8. See, for example, Sylvano D. Mahiwo. 1995. "Japan-ASEAN Relations: Agenda for Cultural Cooperation in the 21st Century." In *Regional Cooperation and Culture in Asia-Pacific*, Khien Theeravit and Grant B. Stillman, eds, pp. 175-89. Tokyo: The United Nations University.

9. *Look Japan*, November 1987, p. 7.

CHAPTER FIVE

Singapore: Multiracialism and Its Effects

CHUA Beng-Huat

Singapore, a reluctant nation whose first national day, 9 August 1965, was marked by worries and uncertainties has indubitably been transformed, under the continuous governance of the single-party-dominant government of the People's Action Party (PAP), into an economically successful city-state.[1] There is little need to provide an endless list of statistical figures to prove this point. Suffice it to note that in a World Bank comparative study of per capita gross national product (GNP) across nations, adjusted for purchasing power parity, Singapore emerged number nine, ahead of all European countries except Germany and behind only oil-rich Middle East nations and the United States.[2] Social stability over the past three decades has been both a contributing factor and a consequence of the spectacular economic growth. This social stability is all the more remarkable given the multiracial composition of the citizenry;[3] Singapore has clearly been successful in maintaining racial peace, as there has not been any serious racial disturbances since 1964.

Given the historical and geopolitical conditions at the time of independence, Singapore may be said to have adopted a "pragmatic" position on its nation building project on two related fronts: first, a constitutional recognition of Singapore as a multiracial nation; secondly, industrial modernization as the only rallying point for members of all the races. As will be shown in this

essay, these two positions are mutually supportive in keeping "race" out of the political arena: (1) multiracialism as official policy enables the state to place itself above all races, rather than be identified with a particular race, especially the Chinese majority, and (2) the promotion of industrialization and its attendant social and cultural attitudes is placed above all races without exception. It is this ability to prevent race from being "politicized" that is central to the social stability of the multiracial society itself.[4] The interest of this essay is thus to examine Singapore's policy of multiracialism as a means of social administration and the evolution of its effects to the present configuration of society.

Multiracialism and the Relative Autonomy of the State

After three years of membership in the Federation of Malaysia, Singapore was forced to go its own way as an independent nation in 1965. Consequently, a new arrangement between the three major constituent races had to be worked out. The Chinese, being approximately 75 percent of the population, were numerically dominant, but of migrant stock, and did not have indigenous proprietary rights to the new nation. Furthermore, the geopolitical condition placed them in a region of an overwhelmingly Malay-speaking population of Malaysians and Indonesians, who were unlikely to accept a Chinese nation in their midst with equanimity. On the other hand, the Malay population, though regionally indigenous, constituted a numerical minority of about 17 percent and was, therefore, unable to dominate Singapore politics. Finally, the Indians were both migrant stock and in absolute numerical minority. Given these conditions, "multiracialism" appeared to be the most rational, defensible and practical administrative principle. Singapore was, thus, declared constitutionally a multiracial nation.

Central to multiracialism as a national policy is a discourse of race which makes the ontology of race a "relevant" phenomenon

in political practices which are aimed at disciplining the social body. This discourse of race is so constituted: Race is officially defined by patriarchal descent; a person's racial descent defines his or her "culture" (multiculturalism); this racialized culture is assumed to be embedded in the language of the respective race; the language is assured continued existence through compulsory school instruction in the respective "mother tongue" language (multilingualism) of the student.

In this formulation of race/language/culture, substantive differences among the population are conceptually, radically "erased." For example, different dialects which had sharply divided the Chinese, are erased by the exclusive use of Mandarin as the "language of the Chinese" in schools and the mass media;[5] differences among Malays, Javanese, Bawaenease and Arabic are reduced under a common formal "Malay" language; differences among Indians were initially eliminated by privileging Tamil, a south Indian language, as the "race" language. However, after protests from other Indian language speakers were Bengalee, Hindi and Punjabi made available as official "mother tongues." A more intractable "cultural" difference is that between those who were exclusively English-educated and those who were exclusively educated in the vernacular languages. The most persistent and prominent example of this distinction is the cultural division between the Chinese-educated and the English-educated Chinese groups, which is still ascribed with political significance until today.

Religious differences are also subjected to rationalization. Malay as a "race" is further defined by Islam, all Malays are by constitutional definition Muslims; Indians are identified with Hinduism, marginalizing those who are Buddhist and Christian; while religion is completely excluded as a marker of Chinese. The uneven overlapping of religion and ethnicity facilitates certain pragmatic practices of "racial equality." For example, annually two public holidays are dedicated each to Hindu (Indian) and Islamic (Malay) festivals, and the Chinese new year accommo-

dates Chinese of all religions. Christmas, Easter and 1 January are annual public holidays which are racially unmarked.

The boundaries of each "racialized" group are, therefore, redrawn and (re)enforced in order to attribute to it a "homogenized" existence. The multiple layers of racialized cultural activities, both sponsored by the government and organized by the racialized groups themselves — the latter reflecting the resonance that the government's construction evokes in the population — have given rise to an impression that the "cultures" of Singaporeans are frozen in three respective "traditions." The result is a generalized repetition, not only in official but also popular and academic circles, that Singaporeans can be represented in a simple formula of "CMIO" — "Chinese," "Malays," "Indians" and "Others."[6] This impression is very much promoted by the government itself to achieve certain ideological and administrative effects.[7]

Effects of Multiracialism

Containing Racial Chauvinism

The insistence of separate and bounded races has one immediate political consequence. It eliminates "race" as a political currency while seemingly giving it a rightful place in the public sphere. By promoting formal "equality" between the "races," the state claims for itself a "neutral" space above all races, without prejudice or preference. It represents itself as an equal and disinterested protector of the rights of each and every group, under the auspices of "national" interests.

Neutrality gives the government a high level of relative autonomy to govern. Among other possibilities, it enables the state to police inter-racial boundaries with negative legal sanctions. Any public raising of social issues on the basis of race may be officially construed as instances of "racial chauvinism" with those who instigate it subjected to legalized repression. This reduction of the political currency of "race" is rationalized in terms of the

need to eliminate potential racial conflicts, or "race riots," in local parlance. That there has not been any inter-racial conflict since 1964 may be read as the effect of both "equal" treatment of the racial groups and the stringent policing of their points of contacts.

The political advantages of "neutrality" are best illustrated through the government's position vis-à-vis the numerically dominant Chinese population. The government might have made available, unwittingly, to the Chinese a large political space, when it eliminated their internal differences and "homogenized" and "unified" them into a "majority" under the Mandarin language. To preserve its relative autonomy, the state is logically concerned to resist formal identification with the interests of this Chinese majority, even if in practice the interests cannot be ignored politically. Formal neutrality enables the government to deny to those Chinese with chauvinistic ambition, the "rights" to raise the "majority" to the level of the "national," in other words to raise Chinese culture as national culture.

This mechanism was noted by a conference of African leaders seeking to gain insights from Singapore's development experience. They were impressed by the absence of special privileges being granted to the Chinese majority and were convinced that similar deprivation of privileges for majority tribes would have been politically unacceptable in their own respective nations.[8] Therefore, any argument that reduces the Singapore state to a Chinese state merely because of its majority population is a misunderstanding. Similarly, the suspicion that promotion of Mandarin among the Chinese is at the same time an attempt to Sinicize Singaporean society and culture is misplaced. In both cases, to eliminate racial differences is to eliminate one of the government's important instruments of social control. Besides, the insistence that a Singaporean's culture is defined in terms of race along patrilineal lines excludes by its logic the possibility of assimilation into other race/culture.[9]

Internalizing Social Problems

The efficacy of racial neutrality is reinforced by its ability to encourage the "homogenized" racial groups to turn in on themselves and "racialize" the problems faced by individuals interpellated into the groups. As a result, each group is encouraged to seek its own solution, sometimes with the help of state agencies. This approach can be illustrated by focusing on Malays.

Problems of drug addiction are increasingly being seen as a "Malay" problem because they are statistically over-represented among drug addicts and a majority of new addicts are Malay youths. The logic of "racial essentializing" of drug issues is immediately problematic when it is duly noted, as did one Malay scholar, that in other crimes Malays are in distinct minority; by the same essentializing logic, these other offenses should be considered "Chinese" problems. However, "racializing" drug addiction predisposes government agencies and the public to conceptualize issues in a racial frame and to seek solutions accordingly.

Consequently, the fact that almost all drug abusers, regardless of race, are lowly educated individuals with immense difficulties making it in a highly competitive economy is not thematized as an area where problems may be located and solutions found. Instead, Malay community organizations are asked to contribute actively to help to solve a "Malay community problem."[10] On their part, the organizations are willing to accept the racialization of drug problems and shoulder the responsibility of helping their own kind; a move which reinforces their own legitimacy in the eyes of the government.

A second area is the apparent relative economic position of Malays as a "group." Malays are (1) exhorted to examine the internal economic position of themselves as a group over time, in order to elicit the fact that "as a group" they have improved and (2) advised to resist comparing themselves with the better positioned Chinese. The "internalized" understanding of their economic position is emphasized to "prevent" inter-racial conflicts from becoming manifest as a result of inter-group comparisons.

With eyes turned in on themselves, the Malays are thus instructed to continue to develop self-help strategies towards higher achievement, with the help of their own community organizations and the supportive role of government agencies behind the organizations themselves.

Community Self-help Organizations

In addition to voluntary tendencies to turn in on themselves, the racialized communities can also be mobilized, with government sponsorship, into solving their own problems. The recently institutionalized "community self-help organization" is a good example of this government-community cooperation. Each group is sponsored by the government to develop its own organization to provide remedial tuition programs to children of its respective needy families. The four organizations are the Council on Education of Muslim Children (Majlis Pendidikan Anak-anak Islam, MENDAKI) and the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) for Malays (more on these two organizations in the latter section), Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) and Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA). With the exception of AMP, funding for the agencies is to be drawn from their respective "communities"; a small, fixed contribution is deducted monthly from the compulsory social security savings of every employed individual and transferred to his/her own racial agency.

Arguably, the establishment of three racially exclusive organizations to manage a set of social problems common to all lower income households is a costly duplication of efforts and, thus, unnecessary. Furthermore, the different sizes of the racial groups inevitably result in unequal distribution of assistance among the similarly needy;[11] the Indian organization is short of funds and is least able to cater to its designated constituency, while the CDAC, with its much more sizable financial resources drawn from a much wealthier community, has moved ahead of other organizations to assist the upgrading of skills among Chinese adults.

Concerns of costs and substantive equality of assistance should be reasons enough for a national administration to be developed to manage the social problems of relative deprivation. However, this approach is resisted by the government for the following reasons. First, it is claimed that the leaders of each respective racialized community are better able to understand the community's needs. Secondly, that members of each racialized group are more ready to assist one's own kind than members of other groups. Beyond these racial arguments, community-based assistance rendered by the "community self-help organizations" is not a matter of entitlement by racial identity. Rather, it is conceived as a "charity," in which the receiver is dependent on and is presumably grateful for the largesse of the agencies themselves. Alternatively, if assistance were to be provided uniformly by a state agency in a national program, it would be quickly rendered as an entitlement by right of citizenship, as for any welfare claims. This position is antithetical to the PAP government's vehement anti-welfarist ideology.

Continuing Racial Divisions

While multiracialism as a policy has the above arguably positive effects, it nevertheless also has the effect of perpetuating racial divisions in the society. Indeed, what emerges as a result of the multiple layers of organized self-help and self-disciplining activities is the hardening of the boundaries of the discursively constituted racial groups themselves. The effects of this hardening are felt most acutely by those who are at the boundaries of the "groups." An example is Malay organizations' concern for the "singlehood" of many Malay women who are university graduates; a "problem" exacerbated by the consistently greater number, over the last decade, of Malay women graduating than Malay men. The concern centers around the likelihood of the women marrying out of the Malay community and the likely conversion to other religions. Converts often face serious psychological trauma of social rejection by other Malays. The anxiety of Malay

organizations is a reflection of the felt need to maintain group solidarity in a racialized social space.

Multiracialism: Perpetuating Politics of Race

The multiracialism policy has clearly delivered some advantageous political effects to the long-governing PAP. Political ambitions of some Chinese chauvinists might have been denied. The economically disadvantaged position of the Malays relative to others and the substantive inequality of assistance to the low income Indian population are both internalized by their respective groups, each developing its own institutions to absorb and find solutions to their respective problems, without demands on the state beyond that to which it voluntarily accedes. The self-help agencies particularly have deflected direct welfare claims on the state as part of citizenship entitlements, leaving the state much less economically encumbered. In sum, the policy has insulated the government from significant quantum of political, social and financial demands from the racialized groups themselves.

This insulation is consistent with the argument that under multiracialism, the state derives a high degree of relative autonomy in the exercise of power, by placing itself at a "neutral" position above the racialized groups and their respective cultures, yet "protecting" the rights and empowering the groups themselves both culturally and institutionally. Indeed, the insulation is an effect of the state's neutrality claim. A negative consequence is, unfortunately, a hardening of racial boundaries in the social body which unwittingly undermines some of the more lofty motivations of multiracialism as a move towards the realization of a Singaporean-Singapore.

Thus, in spite of the conceptual and substantive ability to position itself in a neutral space, the government is, nevertheless, unable to eliminate the politics of race altogether. Its own insistence on maintaining racial divisions inevitably contributes to the hardening of racialized categories under the very auspices of mul-

tiracialism. Racialized groups become and continue to be sites for active social and political developments which engage the government, keeping the latter in a constant state of active social management of race, often inverting the initiatives between state and society.

The Emergence of the AMP

The government's continuing ability to occupy its neutral position within multiracial policy depends heavily on the racialized groups' refraining from identifying and raising issues of social and economic inequalities along "racial" lines. When social developments reach points at which inequalities can no longer be contained within the rhetoric of multiracialism, explicit voicing of the issues become manifest. This happened in 1990 when a new Muslim organization, the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP), which positioned itself in opposition to the PAP-sponsored Malay community leadership, was inaugurated.

By the early 1980s, the "under-achievement" of Malays as a group in a context of economic growth was an issue that could no longer be contained without public debate. The lower position of Malays in terms of education, occupation and housing with reference to the national averages was reported in the 1980 census. Such statistics, according to Zoohri,[12] caused the Malay MPs, which included himself, to rally the support of Malay community organizations to seek long-term strategies for the uplifting of the community as a whole, particularly in the educational performance of the young. Out of this initiative, the earlier mentioned MENDAKI was established. Its inauguration was endorsed by the government, with Goh Chok Tong, then Deputy Prime Minister, as its patron and with a generous seed fund of ten million dollars. However, throughout the 1980s, dissatisfactions among Malays kept accumulating, with the government contributing its share of aggravations.

Socio-economic problems among the Malays persisted and, according to one Malay leader, in the eyes of many Malays the government's response had been half-hearted and had fallen short of their expectations; its support for MENDAKI was perceived as an exchange in return for Malay political support. This perception was in contrast to the government's effort to promote Mandarin, including generous grants to Special Assistance Programme (SAP) schools which teach Mandarin as a first language to educationally talented Chinese children, and the generous conditions extended to potential Chinese migrants from Hong Kong in order to maintain the existing racial composition of 75 percent Chinese, in view of the higher birth rate among the Malay population.

In addition to education and language issues, the "loyalty" of Malays to the nation was questioned. Malays were chastised for their objections to the visit of the Israeli President, excluded from key positions in the Armed Forces and criticized for their "tenacious adherence to traditional values" and to their Islamic religion. In response, they were generally not interested in government-sponsored community committees preferring to be engaged in mosque-based organizations and activities. Their support for the Malay leaders in the PAP were, at best, calculating. Arguably, it was under these conditions that the Malay constituency voted, according to the PAP itself, against the Party in the 1988 general election.

It was under these conditions that a group of Malay professionals organized themselves into the AMP, to review the position and set directions for the Malay community. Headed then by Dr Hussin Mutalib, a political science lecturer at the National University of Singapore, the group's aim was ostensibly to set up a Malay/Muslim association of professionals to serve as a think-tank and to provide leadership and feedback to the government on issues pertaining to their community. The leaders' expectation of 200 participants at its inaugural convention was quickly exceeded; by the time of the convention in October 1990, more than 500 had signed up. This success was indicative of the commonal-

ity and resonance drawn by the leaders of the AMP from within the Malay community.

In spite of AMP's announced non-partisan disposition and expressed intention to work with all existing Malay organizations for the advancement of the community as a whole, its very establishment unavoidably constituted a challenge to existing PAP-backed Malay leadership. The challenge was obvious in AMP's direct criticism of MENDAKI, in which key appointments had always been held by PAP politicians. AMP argued that the lack of independence from the PAP and the government had tainted MENDAKI's credibility in the Malay community, especially among professionals. Among the proposals at the AMP convention was the "depoliticization" of MENDAKI, with the Malay MPs progressively relinquishing their positions, and transforming it into a community organization answerable to the Malay/Muslim community, rather than to the government.

The general discontent with Malay PAP MPs was re-phrased by Abdullah Tarmugi, then Deputy Speaker of Parliament, now Minister of Community Development and Minister in-charge of Muslim Affairs: "Implicit in all this is the assumption that Malay MPs do not fully understand or care enough for Malay aspirations and do not empathize with their community, or if they do, they are impotent in shaping policies and conditions which could further Malay interests and alleviate Malay concerns."[13] Significantly, Mr. Tarmugi agreed that there was some truth to these charges and sought to answer them by explaining the difficulties that Malay MPs faced, in their dual role of having both to represent the Malay community's interests and to serve the other Singaporeans in whose constituencies they stood. In view of those dilemmas, the reactions of all the Malay MPs, but one, was not to attend the convention, lest they be targets of "mud-slinging."[14]

Contrary to the Malay MPs' reaction, then Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, publicly endorsed the AMP's initiative as the kind of positive action needed from the Malay community and was to be welcomed. The government, he said, should support all practical proposals that emerged from the convention. The First Deputy

Prime Minister also agreed to attend an open dialogue at the convention. In this session, he proposed that, instead of "depoliticizing" MENDAKI, the government would support, with matching dollars, an alternative organization, if the professionals would establish it. This was a most astute move that took the wind out of the sails of the implicit opposition of AMP to the PAP government. The strategic offer of equal financial assistance inverted the challenge. Lee Kuan Yew then proceeded to argue that the professionals' belief "that disassociation or no association with Malay PAP MPs or ministers will inspire them and galvanize the community better" should be put to the test and be given a chance to prove itself.[15] The Malay/Muslim community itself was ambivalent to this invitation, doubtful that its own resources could support two parallel organizations. Eventually, AMP accepted the government's offer and now provides similar educational services to the Malay community.

Although the final outcome of the AMP episode may be seen as the re-establishment of the government's controlling position over the Malay community, the significance of the emergence of AMP should not be overlooked. First, with the establishment of AMP, cracks in the Malay community were at least somewhat exposed, with each faction vying for influence in the community and in the government, in spite of public appearances of unity. Secondly, it should be noted that the initiatives to establish AMP was rooted in the Malay community itself and not government sponsored. AMP was a result of the emergence of a group of Malay professionals who, in spite of injunctions against raising racial issues, were willing to air the racial community's grievances. Finally, the emergence of the Muslim professional group was indicative of the emergence of a middle class in Singapore. It is a middle class which is capable of offering alternative definitions of social order and, in so doing, takes on initiatives to which the ruling government is forced to respond; the ruling government, in spite of its relatively hegemonic position in electoral politics, no longer holds all the cards in social development.

The Voice of Chinese Intellectuals

Notwithstanding the earlier argument that multiracialism policy enabled the government to distance itself from Chinese interests, one source of discomfort to the Malay community was the perceived privileging of Chinese culture, which appeared to contravene the spirit of multiracialism itself. This unease took a further turn when the government began to explicitly promote Confucianism as the "culture" of all Chinese.

Confucianism was initially intended for a limited sphere, as a religious knowledge option for secondary students in moral education, along with Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. However, in the context of a prevailing intellectual argument that Confucianism was the cultural underpinning of East Asian capitalist success, its promotion began to take on greater ideological significance. The scholars who were invited to develop the school syllabus were used in public fora, television programs and other media interviews to espouse Confucian virtues. Undoubtedly, there was a government-sponsored effort to "Confucianize" the Chinese segment of Singapore, if not the entire multiracial nation.[16]

In spite of the disproportionate amount of resources committed to these promotions, enrollment in Confucianism relative to other religious knowledge programs was disappointingly low. This was indicative of the shallowness of formal Confucian values as a system of moral teachings in the everyday life of Singaporeans. Ironically, the process was curtailed as abruptly as its initial enthusiastic promotion. When a government commissioned social scientific study on religion in Singapore suggested that the religious knowledge classes were inducing rigidity of religious divisions between students and that this may have long-term consequences on religious harmony in Singapore,[17] the religious knowledge program was abolished, and with it state Confucianism.

Nevertheless, during the period of its promotion, it gave segments of the Chinese a potentially unifying focus. Consequently,

the promotion was supported by the Chinese press, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Federation of Clan Associations, academic groups such as South Seas Society and the Association of Asian Studies. These organizations sponsored fora, seminars, public lectures and conferences on Confucianism or related topics throughout the period of its promotion. The teachers of Confucian Ethics also formed their own Association of Confucian Studies, which published its own journal, *Confucian Studies*.

Beyond the institutions, at a broader social level, the promotion "led many Chinese to a 're-discovery' of their Confucian 'roots' and, among those convinced, converted them to be 'born-again' Confucians."[18] The overall effect of the promotion is best summarized by Professor Kuo:

> Now that the Confucian movement, together with the speak Mandarin campaign, were both endorsed by the political leadership, the Chinese-educated, including a small number of latent chauvinists, could safely jump on the bandwagon to promote Chinese culture by way of promoting Confucianism. To many Chinese and Chinese organizations, whether it was Confucian or not may be secondary, but what was fundamentally important was that this serves to promote Chinese culture, Chinese education and hence, Chinese identity. Confucianism hence served as a symbol of collective Chinese identity.[19]

The room that was provided for the expression of a Chinese identity was a radical reversal in the politics of the Chinese community. The participation of Chinese students in left-wing politics during the 1950s and 1960s, which left behind a legacy which equated pro-Chinese sentiments with pro-communism, had discouraged any overt expression of pro-Chinese culture.[20] Such sentiments could be and were channeled into the promotion of Confucianism. Indeed, it is suggested that even the Chinese educated who were strongly influenced by the anti-Confucianist sentiments of the 1920s Chinese modernist May Fourth Movement

were eventually persuaded to support the promotion of Confu-
cianism as a device for promoting Chinese culture and Chinese
identity.

The collective investment in the process of inscription of Con-
fucian values on themselves as Chinese was apparently substan-
tial. However, it should be noted that this investment was not in
strict alignment with the government's intention. Indeed, it might
be said that the Chinese community was borrowing the govern-
ment's agenda to achieve its own desired ends of enhancing the
visibility, position and status of Chinese culture and Chinese iden-
tity as such, rather than the more limited aim of promoting Confu-
cianism. Also, the possibility that segments of the Chinese
community might have harbored chauvinistic dreams, behind the
veil of abiding by the government's program, could not be ex-
cluded. In any event, if the collective financial and psychic invest-
ments were substantial, presumably, so too must be the depth of
disappointment when Confucianism was withdrawn from public
discourse.

The disappointment might have been symptomatically ex-
pressed in the 1991 general election, which was the first opportu-
nity to publicly express, through secret ballot, one's opinion about
the government since the down-grading of Confucianism in
schools and in official discourse. In the election, the PAP lost four
seats, two of which in largely working class Chinese constituen-
cies.[21] According to the PAP itself, the result showed that "Neither
the Malays nor the English educated are the center of Singapore
society. The Chinese mass base has reminded the government of
their weight."[22] Within this "mass base" which cast anti-PAP
votes was allegedly a substantial portion of Chinese-educated
intellectuals. The PAP's own explanation was that these intellectu-
als had been marginalized for too long by an economy which
privileged the English-educated and were thus expressing their
anger. It is entirely possible that this frustration was intensified by
being let down rudely, after having been primed up for the pro-
motion of Chinese culture and identity.

In the episode of Confucianization of Singaporean Chinese, it
is apparent that the government's insistence on "racializing" the
population had provided the opportunity and space for the Chi-
nese to advance their own cultural agenda. In this process of both
containment within and exploitation of racialized space, the bal-
ance of interests between the racialized groups, in this case the
Chinese community, and that of the government cannot be drawn
unequivocally once and for all. The outcome of each instance is to
be determined in its own right.

Conclusion

The long-ruling PAP government's insistence on maintaining
clear "racial" boundaries arises from a deep-seated belief that
racial sentiments are "primordial" emotions which cannot be
eliminated, even reduced. Therefore, rather than promoting a pol-
icy of progressively homogenizing the nation culturally, towards
a Singaporean-Singapore, it elects in terms of political realism to
maintain multiracialism as a national policy. The above analysis
shows that, in this stance, there are substantial gains to the gov-
ernment in terms of relative autonomy which enables it to govern
all races. However, one consequence of this gain is to rigidify
racialized group boundaries and intensify racial divisions in the
population itself. This outcome gives rise to (1) a politics within
the racialized communities, such as the parallel leadership of the
AMP and MENDAKI, and (2) the possibility of the racialized
groups borrowing from government's policies to promote their
own interests, as in the Chinese-Confucianism episode. In both
instances, the racialized groups are not simply passive receivers of
government initiatives, rather they are "creatively" engaging the
government and its state institutions to make political room for
themselves, without confronting the policy of multiracialism; in-
deed, they are protected by the policy of multiracialism.

One of the overall achievements of the multiracial discourse
that is inscribed on the society is the political displacement of the

substantive quotidian experiences shared by all Singaporeans, that is their "culture of everyday life." This shared culture arises as a consequence of all Singaporeans being transformed into a disciplined work force which is subject to the logic of a globalized capitalism. Its displacement is aided by the "fact" that economic development is both necessary and, indeed, desirable to the very physical survival of every Singaporean, regardless of race. Its desirability is manifest in its ability to expand different levels of material comfort to an increasingly stratified citizenry.

Within an economically and socially stratified society, the political discourse of multiracialism serves to displace and submerge the likelihood of social or class inequalities from being discursively thematized and, thus, politicized. The politics of multiracialism has the effect of displacing class politics. However, as PAP's losses during the 1991 general election were partly attributed to difficulties among lower income groups to keep up with rising costs of living, so-called "bread and butter" issues, such displacement can no longer be, if it ever was, successfully executed without slippage.

NOTES

1. Garry Rodan. 1989. *The Political Economy of Singapore's Industrialization*. London: Macmillan.

2. *Straits Times (ST)*, 13 February 1995.

3. The term "race" rather than "ethnicity" is used in this essay because it is the term used in political and public discourse in Singapore.

4. Beng Huat Chua. 1993. "Singapore: Development, Ethnicity and Democracy." *Ethnic Studies Report* 11:143-61.

5. Reflecting the multiracialism policy, Mandarin in Singapore is known as the "language of the Chinese" (*huayu*), in contrast to being known as the "national language" (*guoyu*) in Taiwan and "the common language" (*putonghua*) in the People's Republic of China. See Allen Chun. 1994. "From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan." *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 31:49-69.

6. Sharon Siddique. 1989. "Singaporean Identity." In *Management of Success*, K. S. Sandhu and Paul Wheatley, eds, pp. 563-77. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

7. From an anthropological viewpoint, this impression may be considered to be seriously mistaken. See Geoffrey Benjamin. 1976. "The Cultural Logic of Singapore's Multiculturalism." In *Singapore: Society in Transition*, Riaz Hassan, ed., pp. 115-33. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press; John Clammer. 1985. *Singapore: Ideology, Society and Culture*. Singapore: Chopman Publishers.

8. *ST*, 10 November 1993.

9. Clammer, op. cit.

10. *ST*, 6 December 1994.

11. Lily Zubaidah Rahim Ishak. 1994. "The Paradox of Ethnic-based Self-help Groups." In *Debating Singapore*, Derek Da Cunha, ed., pp. 46-50. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

12. Wan Hussin Zoohri. 1990. *The Singapore Malays: The Dilemma of Development*. Singapore: Singapore Malay Teachers Union.

13. *ST*, 3 October 1990.

14. Ibid.

15. *ST*, 13 October 1990.

16. Wei-Ming Tu. 1984. *Confucian Ethics Today: The Singapore Challenge*. Singapore: Federal Publications.

17. Eddie C. Y. Kuo, Jon Quah, and Tong Chee Kiong. 1988. *Religion and Religious Revivalism in Singapore*. Singapore: Ministry of Community Development.

18. Eddie C. Y. Kuo. 1992. "Confucianism as Political Discourse in Singapore: The Case of an Incomplete Revitalisation Movement." Singapore: Working Paper No. 113, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore.

19. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

20. Denis Bloodworth. 1986. *The Tiger and the Trojan Horse*. Singapore: Times International Press.

21. Bilveer Singh. 1992. *Whither PAP's Dominance?* Selangor: Pelanduk Publications.

22. Lee Kuan Yew, *ST*, 5 October 1991.

Growth and Diversification
Current Trends of Ethnic Groups in Japan Appearing Through the Japanese Newspaper

YAMANAKA Hayato

Introduction:
Ethnic Images Created by the Mass Media

A plastic doll of a little black boy named "Chibikuro Sambo" produced by a Japanese toy maker was declared discriminatory by a human rights organization in the United States, which demanded its recall. News media in both the United States and Japan repeatedly reported this case, which co-incidentally took place during a period of US-Japan economic friction. However, the image of this doll in itself was not originally created by the Japanese maker but modeled an African boy drawn in a series of children's books published in the United States, half a century ago. In the original story, the African boy was characterized according to the ethnic stereotype of "negroes." This biased image of Afro-Americans was diffused internationally and brought into Japan through various media such as television programs, novels, movies, juvenile literature, cartoons and advertisements. Since then it has inhabited the basement of Japanese mass culture.

Thus in many cases, a society will have encountered the ruins of an ethnic group without any direct contact. Daniel Boorstin in his eminent book, *The Image*, suggested that human beings of the

modern age, in which mass media have become highly developed, are likely to form a certain image or knowledge prior to any interaction with the real object. His insight can be also applied to the image of ethnic groups.

Once a culturally heterogeneous group flows into a society in some way, the host society starts forming attitudes towards the newcomer. In the process of image formation, the mass media exercise a potentially critical influence.

The mass media's interest in any ethnic group is generated by the outbreak of some newsworthy event. For instance, the recent issue of foreign laborers in Japan raised media concerns because of several aspects, such as labor, employment, crime and cultural exchange. Virtually all these events take place in working class communities of the metropolitan cities or on construction sites in rural areas, where foreign workers are initially received by the host society. At the critical point, the mass media transmit experiences or comments about such contacts all over the country.

Mass media carry out additional functions. They determine the image of the ethnic group by providing detailed and concrete accounts which ascribe a negative or positive value to each group. This process often tends to be manipulated socially by authorities or interest groups who already possess a certain image on that ethnic community.

Figure 1 shows the numbers of articles related to foreign laborers appearing in the *Asahi* each year between 1986-1992, by using the reference service of the Asahi Database. Figure 1 also indicates the actual number of foreigners registered in Japan by year. These figures imply that the number of the relevant newspaper articles grows as the number of foreign laborers increases. In that sense, the degree of interest by the media at a glance seems to correlate with the actual contacts with foreign workers by the host society.

On the other hand, it is also true that the rate of increase of these articles is remarkably higher than that for foreign workers in Japan. Such an excessive response is basically caused by the circumstances in which the expansion of the foreign population be-

Figure 1   Changes in the frequency of articles related to foreign residents and the real number of foreign residents in Japan
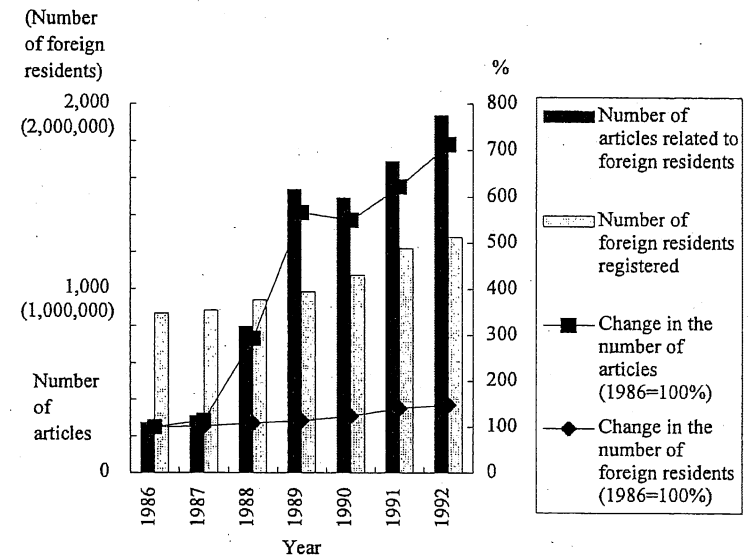
comes a critical social issue. Because of the shortage of laborers generated by the prosperity of Japanese economy in the 1980s, various arguments over the acceptance of foreign laborers took place in the fields of politics, business, labor movements and human rights. The mass media were sensitive to this situation. Thus, once the editors regard cross-cultural contact with an ethnic group as a social issue, larger numbers of reports and images about these ethnic groups begin to diffuse among the host society. This function of the mass media is known as agenda setting, or gatekeeping. Generally, such information or images are provided to the host society prior to any actual contact with the ethnic group.

Invisibleness of Ethnic Groups in Japan

The major concern of this study is to clarify various aspects of the ethnic groups in Japan as they have been represented through the Japanese mass media. For this purpose, needless to say, demographic and statistical data indicating precisely the status of ethnic groups in Japan is necessary. Until such data are obtained and compared with the frequency of mentions in the mass media, the biases or correlations between their appearance in reports and their existence in the real world cannot be evaluated. However, even basic statistics on ethnic groups do not exist in Japan.

The only data available for this study are the immigration statistics provided by the Japanese Bureau of Immigration. These figures can identify the present number of foreign residents staying in Japan and their proportion by category of admittance. These numbers are primarily utilized by the Japanese authorities for the control and management of foreign residents in Japan. Therefore, figures cannot clarify the status of ethnic groups who have Japanese nationality but belong to non-Japanese cultures. However, no other statistics are available for this study.

The situation in which no statistics are available, except for the immigration statistics, shows that the Japanese government has not yet accepted the idea of multiethnic society. The authorities have never approved the existence of ethnic groups in Japan. This stubborn attitude is closely related to the delicate issue of the Ainu, an indigenous people in Hokkaido Province in the northern part of Japan, who have asserted their rights in recent years.

In any case, whether or not the Japanese government officially admits the existence of ethnic groups in Japan, it is an historical and sociological reality that Japan has been and is a society where a plurality of ethnic groups coexists. Especially, the recent remarkable development of so-called "internationalization" as a fashion of Japanese society inevitably has led to the expansion of the range of ethnic groups in the country. As a matter of course, the existence of ethnic groups in Japan has attracted considerable attention from the mass media.

Until the 1980s, the major ethnic groups in Japan have been the Ainu, as an indigenous population of Japan; and Korean residents, as immigrants during Japan's annexation of the peninsula between 1910-1945, and their descendants. Because of the acculturation policy adopted by the Japanese government, these two ethnic groups, the Ainu and Korean residents, have not always been visible as distinct socio-cultural practices. However, in recent years even these groups, especially their younger generations, have begun to raise their own consciousness and established their ethnic identities. This trend can be identified as a reflection of the birth of multiculturalism in Japanese society. Therefore, the quantity of news and information on ethnic-related topics carried by the mass media is increasing year by year. The quality is the core of our concern.

Method of Analysis: A Metrical Bibliography

To clarify the recent trend in the Japanese media regarding their reports on ethnic groups, the *Asahi* has been selected for analysis. The *Asahi*, one of the major newspapers in Japan, has more than seven million subscribers. At the same time, the *Asahi* has an established reputation for quality. Some other newspapers, such as the *Yomiuri* and the *Mainichi*, have high reputations and several million subscribers. Therefore, the major reason for selecting the *Asahi* is not the uniqueness of its contents but its similarity with other major newspapers. In fact, researchers who conducted a content analysis on the major Japanese newspapers concluded that these major Japanese newspapers indicated a high degree of similarity in terms of major topics reported. Whichever of these major newspapers is measured for the frequency of its relevant articles, approximately similar outcomes will be obtained.

For the study, a database was available. Since 1985, the *Asahi* has provided an online reference service on virtually all articles it carries. Using this service, a series of analyses was conducted by means of relevant keywords and/or reference codes.

This database, however, changed its coding system in 1993. It discontinued the middle level classification which had included a specific code number for "foreign residents in Japan." Therefore, some analyses for this research could be conducted only with data from before 1993. The outcomes should be considered in light of this limitation.

General Condition:
Rapid Increase in the Last Half of the 1980s

First of all, it will be shown how the total number of newspaper articles the *Asahi* gave on foreign laborers has changed by year. Before 1993, articles related to "foreign residents in Japan" were coded as 609. Figure 1 indicates by year the total number of articles extracted by that tag, revealing that the increase across the seven years between 1986 and 1992 was quite sharp. In 1986, it accounted for only about 300 cases, but it began to expand rapidly after 1988. Especially, the change between 1987 and 1989 was remarkable. During the period, Japanese newspaper journalists, as well as those of the other mass media, were insisting that Japanese society, in comparison with the other developed countries, needed to do with more if it were ever to internationalize. This insistence involved several aspects.

First, some propagated the idea of cultural pluralism in order to make Japanese society more tolerant towards other ethnic cultures. In the background of this position was the issue of Korean residents, approximately 750,000, most of whom retained non-Japanese nationality. However, after the war from 1937 to 1945 they were segregated and ignored as foreigners by the Japanese government.

In Japan, the minority issue has been alive and still is virtually synonymous with the issue of these Koreans. Following this context, to assert the internationalization of Japanese society at the same time highlighted discrimination against ethnic minorities, such as Korean residents, and the need to improve their human rights and socio-economic conditions.

A second position was to insist on the internationalization of Japan. This position emphasized acceptance of foreign laborers into Japanese society. This option tended to be supported by business circles whereas, on the other hand, the opinion mentioned above was proposed by people concerned with human rights.

In the late 1980s, Japan's so-called bubble economy was reaching its final phase. With domestic industries growing, the shortage of labor was becoming more serious. Reflecting these situations, opinions that emphasized depending on foreign laborers were gaining support among business circles. These ideas worked in close correlation with calls insisting on an open-door to the Japanese domestic market for foreign products. Major points of this program were to collapse the non-tariff barriers established by Japanese bureaucracy and to carry through a resolute relaxation of governmental regulations.

Thus, the late 1980s was a noteworthy period, because pro-human rights groups and pro-free economy groups, who usually were in opposition, joined forces under the banner of internationalization.

As a result, arguments on "the second opening of the country" were heatedly developed in the mass media. Indeed, the issue of foreign residents actually took place later. However, the mass media played an important role in leading public interest on the issue and considerably affected the image formation about ethnic groups in Japan.

Gaze on Ethnic Groups:
Foreign Laborers Issue as a Clue to Discovery

Regarding the quantitative change in newspaper articles related to foreign residents, the sharpest expansion was observed around 1988. In addition, trends in detail by each minority-related category will be described below. Here the following three minority categories are highlighted:

1. Korean residents as the largest ethnic minority group in Japan;

2. the Ainu as the most well known aborigines in Japan; and,

3. foreign laborers who were the most critical minority category in recent years.

Figure 2 indicates by year the frequency of newspaper articles relating to each of these. A significant finding obtained by reviewing this figure is that a large number of articles related to foreign laborers suddenly appeared in 1988. Despite only a few articles being found before 1987, in 1988, 78 articles emerged in *Asahi*. By contrast, articles relating to Korean residents or the Ainu showed a small increase in number. Although the rate of increase was not so sharp as that shown in regard to foreign laborers, articles about Korean residents or the Ainu also increased after 1989.

Figure 2   Change in articles related to social minorities
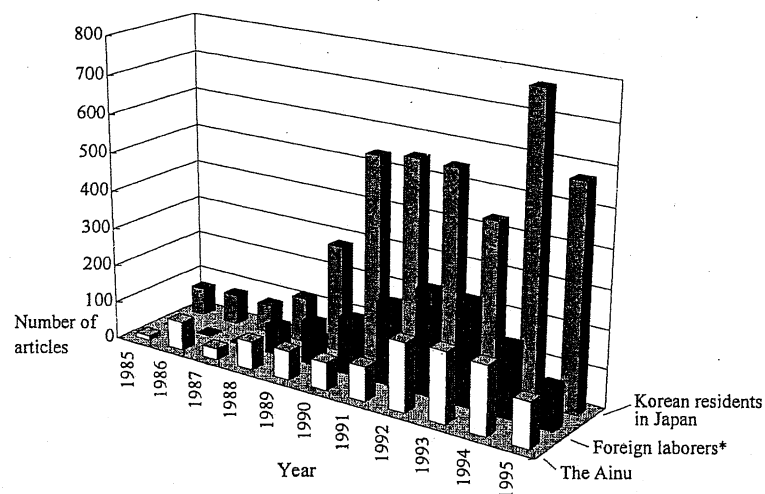
Note: * The category of "foreign laborer" does not exist in 1985.

This finding clearly indicates that the expansion of articles on foreign laborers could be a motor to enlarge the number of articles related to each of the other two minorities. This implies how important the change in 1988 was, a tendency which generally continues today.

Diversification of Ethnic Groups: Variety in the Contents of Articles

Expansion of the population of foreign residents necessarily affects diversification of their existence. The newspaper reflected the variety of foreigners in Japan. Table 1 shows the frequency of newspaper articles containing the term of *zainichi gaikokujin* (foreign residents) by content category and period.[1]

First, this table clearly indicates that the large expansion to be found in 1995 contrasted with the little difference between 1985 and 1990. Secondly, activities of foreign residents have come to be observed in various fields of society. For example, regarding politics, only two articles were found in 1985 and 1990 under the item of "administration," but grew to seven in 1995. This trend was particularly acute on the item "local administration" where the number of articles thus categorized was but one in 1985; however it registered twelve in 1990 and had shot up to forty-six by 1995. This tendency implied that many disputes took place during the decade in relation to suffrage and employment in local governments for permanent Korean residents. The call to grant local suffrage to permanent foreign residents has certainly existed since the end of the war; further, it is becoming more realistic in recent years. This demand is partially supported by the recent judgment by the Supreme Court according to which there is no legal condition to deny local suffrage to permanent foreign residents. In addition, some leading local governments, such as Kawasaki City Government and Osaka Prefectural Government, have partially opened their employment opportunities to permanent foreign residents. These facts increased the relevance of *Asahi* articles.

Table 1   Frequency of newspaper articles containing the term
zainichi gaikokujin (foreign residents)

	1985	1990	1995
Total	91	89	191
Administration	2	2	7
Local administration	1	12	46
Economics/Business[1]	0	13	8
Labor[2]	0	3	2
Culture[3]	1	30	44
Medicine/Public health	0	4	6
Welfare	1	2	23
Family/Life	0	1	3
Events	0	3	5
Crime	0	1	1
Sports	0	2	14

Notes: [1]   Economy, business, finance, international trade, commerce,
industry, energy, agriculture and fishery, communications,
construction, transportation.
[2]   Labor, employment, labor condition, wage, labor movement,
labor union, occupation.
[3]   Culture, history, language, literature, education, religion, arts, fine
arts, drama, movie, music.

The field of culture as well as politics indicated the remarkable
increase. Under "culture," literature, education, religion, arts, en-
tertainment, drama, cinema and music are included. Compared
with only one article on this realm counted in 1985, thirty articles
appeared in 1990, while forty-four were found in the 1995 newspa-
per.

As for specific items categorized into the field of "society," for
example, the articles related to "welfare" accounted for one in

1985 and two in 1990, but had increased to twenty-three in 1995.
"Sports"-related articles also increased from zero in 1985 to two in
1990 and fourteen in 1995.

Compared with these articles showing a simple increase,
some fields of articles, such as economics, family/life, labor, and
crime, indicated different patterns. "Economics"-related articles
counted nil in 1985, but increased to thirteen in 1990, before de-
creasing to eight in 1995. Articles related to "family/life," "labor"
or "crime" showed a common pattern in that few articles were
found in each of the three periods.[2]

In consequence, despite some differences in detail among the
fields of articles, it could be concluded, on the whole, that the
articles relating to foreign residents in Japan have become diversi-
fied in number and content during the ten years from 1985 to 1995.

This phenomenon may correspond to the reality of Japanese
society in which various ethnic minorities are beginning to form
themselves for the first time since the war.

In this sense, it can be said that today's Japanese media pay
the most attention they have ever given to ethnic groups. Even
though it is hard to forecast the future of this phenomenon, at least
none can deny the fact that media reports have been one of the
crucial forces enhancing multicultural concepts through the Jap-
anese society.

Foreign Resident Issue as a Social Problem

However, the expansion and diversification of ethnic groups in
Japan pose various problems to be resolved in Japanese society.
For instance, crime by foreign residents is typical of its negative
phase. On the other side, discrimination against ethnic minorities
still remains unsettled in Japanese society, and human rights is-
sues on the legal status of permanent foreign residents need to be
solved. How did Japanese media report these topics?

Figure 3 indicates by year the frequency of articles related to
"human rights of foreign residents" and those related to "crime by

foreign residents" as reported by the *Asahi*. In accordance with the general increase in articles related to "foreign residents," both these categories expanded. However, carefully reviewing the findings, the rate of increase for the articles about "crime by foreign residents" was higher than that for "human rights of foreign residents." In 1992, the number of articles related to "crime by foreign residents" reached eight times as many as for 1986. This acceleration was faster than that on "human rights of foreign residents" which went up by five times. Moreover, the rate of increase of articles related to "human rights of foreign residents" was lower than the general increasing rate of articles related to "foreign residents" during the same period.

Figure 3   Change in the articles related to crime or human rights of foreign residents in Japan
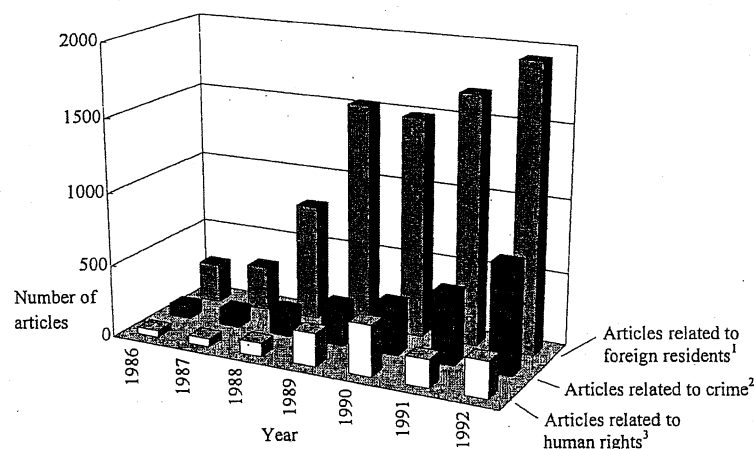
Notes: [1] Foreign residents: reference code 609.
          [2] Crime by foreign residents: reference code 705.
          [3] Human rights of foreign residents: reference code 609 and 606.

What does this evidence imply? If Japan's lack of understanding towards the human rights of foreign residents in comparison to their crimes is a fact, the nation will face obstacles solving such problems in the near future. In addition, excessive anxiety about crimes by foreign residents may cause negative responses among Japanese before they accept various ethnic groups as members of society.

Although the Japanese people are surely raising the level of their social consciousness regarding the existence of ethnic groups, it is unpredictable whether such consciousness will provoke a xenophobic reaction against ethnic minorities or develop towards multiculturalism.

NOTES

1. For this analysis, code number 609 could not be used to extract the articles, because in 1995 the code system was changed by the database producer. Instead of the code number, a key word was used for the analysis. Therefore, the results here do not always correspond to the outcomes obtained by using the code number.

2. The result here only indicates the change in the number of articles that include the term of "foreign residents." The articles analyzed here do not contain, for example, an article which refers to the country from which the foreigner comes. In fact, by applying the code number 705 (crimes by foreign residents), used before 1992, to this analysis will produce somewhat different findings.

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PART III

Individual Identity and Collective Identity

Facing the Challenge of Multiple Cultural Identities

David Y. H. WU

What are some of the common cultural phenomena observed in the late 20th century in Asia and the Pacific that are not quite conscious to the peoples of Asia and the Pacific? What are some of the interesting developments of emerging common cultures shared by people across geographic and national boundaries? What are some of the paradoxes or conflicts of the 21st century identity at the individual, collective, national, and global levels of awareness? With these questions in mind, as concerning the theme — cultural diversity and multiculturalism — of this symposium, I wish to comment on three major points:

(1) How can we challenge the conventional thinking about culture and identity and break the myth of exclusive ethnic or national boundaries?

(2) How to understand the increasing prominence of the "diaspora culture," "cosmopolitan culture," and "transnational culture" of the 21st century?

(3) Under what conditions can "salad bowl culture," "transnational culture," and "multiple identities" transcend cultural nationalism?

The Old Paradigm of Race, Culture, and Identity

The conventional thinking about race, culture, community, and identity is still influential in today's world. People believe that:

A culture is organic, territory bound, and normative;
a society is a bounded community;
a nation-state has only one cultural system which eventually leads to the assimilation of people with different cultures.

Most of us are accustomed to thinking of cultures within fixed national bounds; for example, "Chinese culture," "Japanese culture," or "Indonesian culture." When we discuss the concept of culture, community, ethnicity, and tradition, we often use a single nation-state, or a fixed locality, as the point of reference. Even the concept of "multiculturalism" is also boundary oriented in that different ethnic groups are members of many independent and separated communities; although the concept recognizes cultural and ethnic complexity within a society, or a nation.

Something is very wrong with the old concepts of culture within well defined, exclusive borders. To begin with, this kind of thinking in today's world is so remote from reality, as shall be explained later. The old concepts are developed because people, including scholars, believe each culture, a custom, or a tradition is unique, static, and exclusive. What is worse, politicians often use these concepts, manipulate them and propagate them in promoting thoughts of nationalism.

What kind of problem does the conventional line of thinking about stable, bounded, normal, and centralized culture and community cause? The world today is full of people who have crossed ethnic, cultural, or national boundaries, but they are forced to think that they are abnormal or out of place. The people who are crossing the border or boundary are described as travelers, immigrants, mixed-blood, or becoming diaspora — left "home" forever and there is no "return." It is a mistake to think that very few people are crossing the boundaries — they are rare, and are in a marginal, temporary, peripheral, abnormal, and unorthodox exis-

tence. According to the old thinking in the mental health profession, people or group under such marginal circumstances need help, need to be corrected or cured; and they ought to make adjustment in their culture and behavior, and eventually must assimilate (into the host culture) in order to be accepted by the others. The situation for people who have crossed borders has changed dramatically today. Furthermore, the problem, or even danger, for the conventional thinking, is having the tendency to regard race, culture, identity, tradition, and nationality as absolute, essential, and substantial. This ignores the moving of populations and culture in the past as well as the increasing modern diaspora experience in every city, every region, and every country. The reality is, more and more people in the late 20th century have left home permanently as immigrants, expatriates, refugees, (guest) workers, international business persons, exile community, overseas populations, and ethnic community of a transnational nature.

Take the Chinese for instance, they are in many countries and are keeping family relations, emotional connections, and kinship ties across several continents. Some Chinese do not speak any Chinese language, and some even do not look like a "Chinese" (my Papua New Guinea and Hawaii story). Our research shows that the diaspora Chinese, those born in the United States or Canada, may not speak, think, and behave like "Chinese"; or, on the contrary, some Chinese may keep more old "Chinese" values, and they may behave like Chinese of two or three generations ago; and they are so different from many of the young Chinese in Beijing, Taipei, or Hong Kong today.

We have ample examples in today's world to dispute an essential, absolute concept of the Chinese race, or Chinese culture. A good example is the Baba community (also known as the Straits-born Chinese) in Malacca, Malaysia, Singapore and the *peranakans* (local born Chinese) in Indonesia. The Malays think they are Chinese, while the Chinese think they are Malays. They have for generations inter-married with the Malay population, adopted Malay language and custom, yet still maintain a strong "Chinese"

identity. To the Chinese from China, they are more like foreigners, but they themselves insist on their "genuine Chineseness."

Another example is the classic claim of the Hakka (客家) people of having migrated from the heart-land of Chinese civilization in north China, descending from the "pure" Chinese race, and speaking the ancient, real Chinese language. They would not accept the fact that, during the course of migration, they have absorbed languages, cultures, and racial characteristics of many local peoples. A recent root-searching movement in Taiwan brought surprising discoveries that some Hakka and Minnan (閩南) migrants to Taiwan during the 16th century came from the She (畬) minority regions in Fujian (福建) province, indicating possible indigenous, or non-Han, ancestries. It should come as no surprise to historians and anthropologists that the so-called Chinese race is a mixed race. The process of inter-marriage of ethnic groups and cultures has never stopped in China.

The Nature of Diaspora, Cosmopolitan, and Transnational Cultures

Today's diaspora includes the phenomenon of the Jewish Diaspora as conventionally defined; and its current usage includes any people similarly dispersed, forming expatriate communities. Ordinary thinking characterizes the Diaspora by emphasizing the diaspora separation, the state of exile in which a population is situated. The transnational business community, the guest workers, and many immigrant communities have changed the nature of diaspora experience. They have become a permanent part of a more diverse community. The "temporality" may have lasted for three or four generations, or, forever.

Emphasis should be given to two important points that are associated with the modern diaspora situation. First, the diaspora people are involved in transnational connections, not just the minority and majority relations social scientists used to portray. Second, they have double, or even multiple consciousnesses of their

cultural identity, not necessarily just the temporary, one identity of an immigrant community that people assume.

The marginal diaspora situation can become central. We know, for instance, that today there are more Polynesians (such as Samoans, Tongans, and Cook Islanders) living outside of Polynesia than in the "home" islands; more Polynesians are in the United States (including Hawaii and California) and New Zealand. Take the Japanese people for instance: although the Japanese believe they travel or are temporarily assigned to foreign countries, there are sizable and permanent Japanese communities in almost every major city of the Asian and Pacific region. We should rethink the meanings of such phenomena as President Fujimori of Peru, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan of Papua New Guinea (and US Senators Fong, Inoue and Matsunaga, former Governor of Hawaii, Mr. Ariyoshi, and current Governor Cayatano).

Many diasporas choose to stay away from home, and they are not up-rooted as mental health theorist used to conceive; because they have connections, either real or imagined, with several homelands. Modern diaspora consciousness can, therefore, make the best of a bad situation and have the best of two worlds. The assimilation model of psychotherapy becomes invalid when we rethink the diaspora consciousness.

Another important phenomenon of an emerging transnational culture shared by people across national and regional boundaries in Asia and the Pacific is what I call the "cosmopolitan culture" and pan-Asian "youth popular culture." Due to the global trade and commercialism that have reached every corner of the region, modern living in the major cities in Asia is becoming more similar than between a city and remote rural areas in the same country. Similar values, working styles, recreation, and living conditions are drawing the cosmopolitan people into one culture of lived ways. A heavily Japanese-influenced youth fashion, music, comic books, food, and sports are spreading among the teenagers in all major cities in East and Southeast Asia. With the media promotion, the youth culture again is showing dra-

matic convergence in value and way of life that will bridge cultural difference and language barrier of the past generations.

With the increasing diaspora experience and shared identity of the transnational culture, it is hopeful that the 21st century Asia may become a better place for ethnic tolerance and international understanding.

Can "Salad Bowl Culture" Transcend Cultural Nationalism?

However, we cannot be so naive as to assume that divergence and multiculturalism in each society will naturally bring about better understanding of cultural differences and tolerance for people across ethnic, cultural, and national boundaries. We should ask, then, under what conditions do "salad bowl" culture and "transnational culture" transcend cultural nationalism?

We have to face the challenge from the exclusive, or essentialized definition of race, culture, and identity. I can only cite a few examples that I am familiar with to explain this kind of thinking: Japan's *Nihonjinron* (the uniqueness of the Japanese culture) and exclusive attitude towards "outsiders" living in Japan; Chinese chauvinistic belief that every Chinese is superior to any other Asian or Pacific islander for his or her 5,000 years of civilization. Can archaeological artifacts and ancient buildings be translated into individual cultural achievements as well as the foundation for exclusive identity?

In conclusion, other conditions need to be considered before we can propose cooperation among nations:

(1) Cultural nationalism or even ultra-nationalism will continue if among countries or between ethnic groups there are continued unequal social status, unbalanced trade hence economic status, and one way economic, cultural, or political domination of an imperial nature. True multicultural identities or true mutual interdependence must be built on the basis of equal status in social, economic and political terms.

(2) To be aware of the reality that any national culture is politically constructed or created for political persuasion of nationalism. Local and national cultural identity should be enjoyed by all who come into contact with it, and appreciated by both citizens and non-citizens. Cultural identity or multiple identities should not be subject to militant indoctrination or myth perpetuation.

Against Purity
Reflections of an Indonesian Writer

NIRWAN Dewanto

The thoughts below were written by an Indonesian writer, namely myself. But, calling myself an "Indonesian writer" does not mean that I represent Indonesia. My experience reflects not just my artistic aspirations but also the environment that brings my art to life. Indonesia is not a large abstract unit except that it is continually formulated through power and bureaucracy. Indonesia, or the Indonesian experience to be specific, is something concrete when reflected in daily life, particularly in the experiences of its citizens in their various fields. There is actually no original, pure, formal, static or eternal Indonesia. An Indonesian person is a human being first before being an Indonesian. Consequently, I am pulled between being a human and being an Indonesian, between a universal and a local source of strength. The result of this contest all by itself has already led to a complex reality, i.e., pluralism. But pluralism does not show up out of the blue. Sometimes it is only a hope, sometimes a risky reality. My experience suggests that complexity is not a gift, but an oftentimes painful struggle.

1

Since our country began implementing open door politics (from about 1968), more and more of us have become migrants or urban-

ites. We leave our childhood homes in droves, our limited first environment, and head for a more modern and more receptive space, to get a better education, to find a good job, to make broader contact with the outside world and so on. I am no exception. For my education and my health, I left Banyuwangi and Jember (two small towns in East Java) for Bandung (the provincial capital of West Java), and finally Jakarta. Where are the roots of my culture? What are my traditions? It is often true that any understanding of tradition and culture follows a stereotypical pattern, is rarely looked at in any thorough way, and is usually not discussed productively. All of us as people, wherever we are in the world, often do not recognize that we live within a certain tradition.

I want to give tradition a creative and productive meaning here. For me, tradition is never just a set of rules that I follow and use at the behest of my own society. Tradition is not just a piece of past glory nurtured for the dignity and well-being of a particular society. In a world which is already so specialized, tradition can also be a paradigm, a discipline and a medium for each cultural actor — each person — to join in strengthening modernity. However, on the other hand, in the desire to move forward, a tradition can control our path in life, without our knowing it. An intellectual can be great if he or she is brought to life by scientific traditions. A painter may become brilliant if there is a tradition of modern art to support this work. Tradition then, does not have to pass down through primordial ties.

In daily life, nonetheless, we often hear the derisive comment, "it's really traditional." The word "traditional" here is pejorative, being connected with something from a time and place that is not "modern." If there is a festival of traditional art, it may have the intention of "preserving" art which is not modern, and which is almost extinct. If a boss in a private company says, "my workers are rather traditional," he is probably implying that they are too relaxed, not creative, do not work based on the clock and cannot adjust to machines or computers.

Of course, tradition can still be seen as a refreshing and inspiring treasure trove from the past. This kind of tradition actually does not have any direct productive value, probably because no one — at least up to my generation — wishes to be without roots or history. Going home at the end of Ramadhan (Islamic fasting month), no matter how expensive or difficult, is still a tradition with the Javanese. The handicrafts or ethnic art found in executive boardrooms or international hotels are not just for show but also act as a means of underlining identity. The study of history in schools can be seen as part of the effort to uphold the tradition of Indonesian nationalism.

Tradition, in fact, does not hold itself up against modernity or modernism. We know that modernization, a movement sweeping the world, is not just a path chosen consciously by formerly colonized nations, but also an unavoidable force resulting from the dynamics of economic contact between the nations of the world. Avoiding this dynamic means to risk impoverishment in the arena of global interaction. But the problem is, who decides the shape of the progress and prosperity? The measurement of prosperity and the use of technology, for example, are often not a conscious choice. The determination of these criteria is not in the form of a crude decree, but a gentle and intoxicating courtship. This has not always been bad. In terms of human rights, for example, the Third World has to accept the universal standard, even if it is painful to do so. But, modernity (or modernism) as a tradition and system of knowledge and philosophy born in the social history of Europe was not imported here as a whole, only incompletely and in fragments.

Indonesia, particularly in its big cities, seems to be becoming ever more increasingly part of the global system. The pull of its cities, especially Jakarta (where I live), grows stronger every day, as they are inundated with information and capital from the First World, and serve as the prime disseminators throughout the archipelago. Many multinational corporations have opened branches in Jakarta and carry out operations in even the most isolated parts of the country. University graduates come here looking for work. So too come the drop-outs, the insignificant, the poor (including artists and would-be artists). Jakarta's draw is

obvious, with the main attraction being its economic possibilities. The island of Jakarta, inhabited by ten million during the day and nine million at night, is a place where money is both accumulated and dissipated. This metropole serves as a lesson (and warning) to other regions on how to develop.

As a center of modernization and of the globalization process in Indonesia, Jakarta is obviously no longer supported by some great tradition. What survives are many traditions, or a mix of many traditions. Looking at the various realities in Jakarta, it is probably easier to say that what has the best chance of surviving is new traditions. Clearly, our problem is not cultural preservation, meaning the preservation of tradition. However, for me, no past tradition will truly die out. At the very least, it will become a painful nightmare or a collective memory influencing future dreams. Our culture is at heart not a national culture formulated by a meddling bureaucracy, but rather a mosaic or eclecticism. I recognize the impossibility of any one tradition — call it a cultural core or center — supporting our lives. To the contrary, we live in the midst of many traditions, and none of these can be called original or pure.

State bureaucracies frequently worry about "the negative influences of foreign culture." But, culture is primarily a direct reflection of the need to go on living and the struggle to survive. Culture does not appear out of the blue. As a standard of value, it will be respected and maintained as long as it remains relevant in daily life. It will continue to stand out or grow in real terms as long as it props up our lives. In this sense, a "cultural strategy" is not a formula but rather a kind of open-ended dialogue, not just left on the drawing board while based in good intentions and morality, or the result of an overactive fear of monoculture.

As a Third World metropole, only parts (but not all) of Jakarta resemble Tokyo or New York. We have skyscrapers, supermarkets, cineplexes, five-star hotels, flyovers, housing developments, condominiums and so on. But we also have run-down slums, an exhausting public transportation system, rivers filled with chemicals and garbage, traffic jams, sidewalks used as parking lots and motorcycle pathways and so on. We not only have yuppies and housewives spending millions of rupiah but also street hawkers and sidewalk vendors. We have our traditional *lenong* folk theater, *tanjidor* and *dangdut* music, and shadow puppets, but also classical music concerts, modern theater, fashion shows, and exhibitions of the latest paintings. We can get not only the latest Hollywood films and CNN broadcasts but AIDS as well. This metropolitan culture may seem to have no form or character at first glance. What is called the singularity — or uniformity — of culture is nothing less than the destruction of identity, both conscious and unconscious, in order to meet short-term needs.

But, that is our mosaic. As a citizen, I do not dream about impossible things. For me, the most pressing issues relate to public facilities. Overcrowded buses, traffic jams, gaping holes in the sidewalks — to name a few examples — are serious matters for those with little or no money if they want to be "civilized." If culture is related to expression and creativity, the opportunity to carry it out diminishes whenever people are not close to, and are isolated or alienated from, their environment. In this context, we must wonder why the face of Jakarta and of other cities becomes more monotonous as the days go by. The main roads are filled with architecture of an international-functional style. Houses in elite areas are surrounded by tall fences, with overly elaborate security systems. Old and historic buildings are knocked down and replaced by buildings able to attract money (but for whom?). Majestic old trees fall or are felled in great numbers to make the land even more barren. If this all keeps up, it may happen that we will end up living without a sense of history, without roots, without a real community. But at the very least, for now, people can still seek out a number of oases, such as art galleries, youth centers, art happenings and maybe also cafés (even if they are expensive). A number of these oases is really places of recreation, or re-creation for people who, once they leave, become "economic animals" once again.

Our prerogative is not to maintain the purity of a certain tradition, but to open a healthy dialogue between traditions. This

is because tradition is not some great and holy object to be dis-
played, adored and caressed. Tradition is a direct reflection of life
itself, a life of passion and blood. Tradition gives life to, and is
brought to life by, human beings, but if one well-guarded tradition
can be wiped out, humans, as the creators of tradition, live on. A
number of traditions have firmly established themselves, fighting
over a place in our subconscious. There is no winner here. They all
become broken shards asking for recognition in our daily actions.
We need to recognize that we, especially in Jakarta, can no longer
live with a single identity, in a harmonious unity. Accepting atom-
ization and disharmony — and not pretending to believe in "the
complete human being," *manusia seutuhnya*[1] — may be a begin-
ning to a "cultural strategy."

2

The theme repeatedly thrust before us lately, particularly by for-
mal jargon, is "the quality of human resources facing the informa-
tion era." It is with this jargon that we are herded towards the free
market which has increasingly become a fact of life. We are indeed
being flooded with a never-ending flow of information — things
and signs — the world over. But, the word "flood" here disguises
the reality, that what is happening is not a spontaneous overflow
(as with a river) but a systematic and endless bombardment. What
is at work here is the principles of priorities and profit. But, is it
true that consumers, in this case information consumers, as a
group are passive and exploited?

For me, the information era, or the information society, is a
term creating the fantasy that we are truly involved and drawing
benefits from this worldwide flood of information. The term
seems neutral, but in reality it includes an organized concept on
how to make use of resources — natural and human — in a more
polite and refined way. It replaces another word that has been
long reviled: exploitation. But, the information era is not auto-

matically evil. It holds benefits and the possibility of living hap-
pier and more complex lives.

We should certainly not plunge into pessimism. I actually
prefer to use another word: globalism. I think this concept more or
less makes room for global events and synergy without denying
the factors of history and geography. Globalism believes that the
information explosion brings profit and danger to different
groups. In the creative field, globalism (remember the — ism) is a
framework to think and act simultaneously. I imagine this world
as a system, because all of us can no longer live within some
specific original and pure cultural environment, either locally or
nationally. If we turn our backs on the global system — such as if
we pretend to be protected by some great sense of nationalism —
we will more likely be crushed by it than derive its benefits.

We learn that the world first experienced a concentration for
the acquisition and dispersal of capital. This process has been
happening slowly since the colonial era and has been going
through an unbelievable rate of acceleration since the end of the
Second World War. But, has this flow of commodities and capital
created a single world culture? The dynamics of capital have
indeed already made use of culture: by packaging culture (turning
it into an industry and thus making it more uniform). This concept
goes along with the growth of wealth in great centers through the
exploitation of powerless peripheral areas. The problem in the
end is that this centralization is eventually exhausted and no
longer able to create a uniform and monolithic chain of produc-
tion and consumption. In the next stage, in fact, the basis for the
use of culture changes shape. Capital dynamics begin to respect
local differences in feelings, aspirations and identities — as if Coca
Cola had to create different tastes for each country.

I do not want to surrender to economic determinism. What I
have just laid out is how one world system is formed. This is a
system in which the tie between the center (the exploiter) and the
periphery (the exploited) probably no longer exists. Commodity
worship is replaced by the worship of information. The means of
production are exchanged — or wrapped in — the means of

communication. Indeed, in the sea of information, it is as if we are not passive consumers or workers, because we can choose the way to express ourselves, like changing TV channels with the remote control. In the broader picture, if we are truly shaken up by the flood of images and information, then it is not possible for us to be shackled to only one cultural environment.

It is quite appropriate if pluralism is to become an issue and agenda, at least for the artistic community. Within the new world system we have outlined above, pluralism is not just a desire or subjective effort by artists, based in the freedom of expression and the uniqueness of personal creation, to attack monoculture. There is, in fact, a mutually supportive connection between pluralism and industry, specifically the culture industry. Jadedness in the market must be overcome with many new cultural products. So, we can understand why Third World cinema, rock music, literature and art are beginning to spread to Western markets. In the meantime, variety is also what is stimulating new discoveries, new cures, new medicines. Research centers make use of the knowledge of ethnic groups in the world's tropical forests, for example, to create medicines and vaccines for AIDS.

I do not want to say that creating art is misguided, inspired only by global capital dynamics. Of course, there is still enough freedom, enough space to make "modern" artists feel at home and able to express themselves unhindered — except for the formal censors, of course. What I want to say is that within the limits of that world, the romantic position of the artist no longer exists. Artists are no longer complete subjects able to glue together the broken pieces of the world. Artists no longer play the part of the prophet, to purify the world. Even if an artist still believes in "creative freedom" and "the autonomy of art," these principles are not neutral, and do not come from the inner being of the artists themselves, but are tied in quite tightly, and are used and renewed, by the links of the culture industry.

In the past, modern Indonesian art got its energy from two styles. The first involved the effort to learn from the West (Europe), in absorbing the ideas of modernism. Artists established

themselves as complete subjects for entering into history and universal truth. The second concerned the continual effort to strengthen the "nation," or a form of cultural nationalism, in other words. Within this framework, artists dreamed about and created centers or waves to override local traditions. However, although the first style was never able to align us properly with the movements in the West, there did develop a national attention to the ideology of modernism.

Those trapped (or maybe not, if they felt at home and happy) inside this hot house believed in — or more precisely constructed — a true, strong, original and pure national artistic identity. (We are reminded of the bureaucrats and politicians who cry for "self respect and national pride.") But in time, since the end of the 1980s, this attention has begun to be undermined in our country: both because it was not brought into formal politics and because the market and industry gnawed away at its resources. But, for the time being, nationalist art continues to be a beautiful illusion for newcomers. And, if you ask (because you are pulled in by formal jargon, for example) how to make use of artistic resources in the information age, the first thing we must understand is how this beautiful illusion operates, particularly within our own unconscious.

Putting ourselves at the global limits, in globalism, means to understand the many cultural environments we can enter. It means leaving behind a cultural center that has continued to falsify — by "strengthening" — its identity. Let us turn cultural nationalism over to those who, along with opening the door to foreign capital, cover up partiality and injustice by using the excuse of the national interest. Distancing oneself from the celebration of this falsehood is to be opened to many traditions — from every sort of direction — at the same level, and to receive their currents without fear. It means to think of our identity as a hybrid moving as part of an endless process, since a single identity is one signifier of hegemony.

Involving oneself in globalism does not mean surrendering to history and universal truth. We have already discussed above

how renewal continually rejects centralization in the chain of global production. Pluralism, it turns out, has slowly been put into practice by cultural centers and Western thought to recognize and empower otherness, meaning the cultures of the periphery. The centers decanonize because they are already tired of, and no longer productive though, the ideas of universal history and linear progress. On the one hand, this is the Western way to self-renewal, through continual self-doubt. Not understanding the problem means to let orientalism and ethnocentrism survive within ourselves, at the same time as it wastes the chance to project ourselves more freely.

Plunging into the information age means to recognize the flow of information as a force ready to break down old hierarchies about what is great and what is insignificant, what is high and what is low, what is the center and what is the periphery, what is modern and what is traditional, and what is new and what is old. This force is also part of the process of democratization, and means that restrictions or blockades on information are put in place by those who, while busy protecting traditional authority, suffer from paranoia. The sea of information and images chip away at the idea of "the complete human being" (i.e., mankind as a tool of progress) desired by the technocrats. Once again, the identity thought of as being pure and original up until now slips away, to be replaced by the emergence of multicultural, even transcultural, attitudes.

3

If I think about the art world amidst the tumult of daily life, a rather ingrained romantic image starts to appear, of artists as the seekers and discoverers of truth. This image is not just what the artists personally believe (as it provides them with the desire to create) but is also emphasized by the critics, art academies, art centers, museums and art markets of the modern era. Modern art, says a philosopher, brings forgotten truths to life. In the history of

Europe, the emergence of modern art was accompanied by the emergence of a bourgeoisie, the group fighting for a market economy, industrialization and democratic representation. Modern art aided them by putting the experience of individual freedom into practice. Then, the bourgeois influence expanded and put down firm roots, becoming capitalism, and spreading throughout the globe.

The capitalism rampant in Indonesia during the past two decades has definitely not been the capitalism seen in the history and ethos of the bourgeoisie. But, this does not mean that it has no role in developing art. The painting boom seen in Indonesia's big cities about five to six years ago, and again today, is but one example. At that time, the (new) rich flocked about buying paintings, particularly decorative ones. These people have certainly profited from the growth of Indonesia's economy but they are not a bourgeois class in the European sense. Buying paintings does not imply any thorough support for the existence of art over the long term.

When looked at more closely, the painting boom is not intimately connected with the "success" of domestic capitalism. (Capitalism only has meaning if put on the world stage.) The internationalization of the economy which has increased in pace in the last ten years has been underway since 1968. The business world grew and designs were needed on a grand scale. A design boom encouraged the internationalization of style and taste. The growth of interior design (in offices, hotels and private homes) created a need for paintings. This trend, infected also by the tendency to collect paintings as investments, found in the capitalist countries as well, then spurred on the painting boom.

The Indonesian art market is probably not much different from the market for exclusive goods. It is seasonal. This market in Europe and the United States can trigger the growth and institutionalization of a movement because the market is joined in with the network of art criticism (inherited from the bourgeoisie). In Indonesia, it is sufficient to say that the art market has created some significant fears among our artists. On the one hand, it is

thought to have contaminated art's "purity." On the other hand, it is celebrated for undermining the established elitism nurtured by our art history. In other words, the strength of the market in its broadest sense has inspired heterogeneity.

This heterogeneity has also been decisively championed by Indonesian art critics and thinkers who attack the universal criteria and hierarchy that overwhelm Indonesian art. This type of criteria is in fact only derived from the history of Indonesia's modernist intellectuals and is not supported by any particular social class (such as the bourgeoisie in Europe) or by the cultural politics of the state. As a result, the work of these critics is more a form of deconstruction of our art history, haunted as it is by European modernism.

If there is an agreement in the push for heterogeneity, it does not mean that the critics are in alliance with the marketplace. They are merely putting art back as a symptom of society. It is through them that we are made aware that the romantic position of the artist is a myth and that economic and political change exert a great (albeit hidden) influence on the creation of art. At the very least, their ideas can create a more healthy acceptance of international upheavals, upheavals which turn out to be inseparable from the late capitalism.

The late, global capitalism is a capitalism which has changed its nature because of what it has learned from its detractors and critics. This capitalism has shifted at its fundamental points from manufacturing to the provision of service and information. It has cleverly accommodated labor union demands, environmental sustainability and the creative and critical power of the consumer for its long-term needs. It has also integrated many elements of socialism within itself even while staying rooted in the principles of decentralization and deregulation, necessary because a centralized system is not efficient in facing rapid change. This capitalism does not offer a uniformity of style or of cultural images because the market and the labor force have been so thoroughly diversified. In this latest era of global capitalism, the emergence of (the so called) postmodernism is so inevitable.

Postmodernism is not anti-modernism or the end of modernism. Postmodernism breaks down the modernist pathology which believes too much in rational thought and linear social historical development. It points out that the systems of knowledge spread around the globe (once considered objective, neutral and universal) are actually cloaked in power. Postmodernism attacks Eurocentrism or, in general terms, the leadership of the West in the vast melting pot of world culture. Postmodernism brings forth the other — such as minority groups and the Third World — who have long been belittled even as they have been appropriated, and so excites pluralism.

The demands of the postmodernists are not pointless. Real pluralism is carried out by a number of centers for the assimilation and dissemination of knowledge in the West. Publishers and universities receive works of literature from South America, Africa, The Caribbeans, Asia, and other former colonies. Museums re-assess the principles motivating their collections in order to display the Third World art which was formerly looked down upon as being only "a variation of Western art." The pluralism practiced in the West can be looked at in two ways. First, the West is atoning for its arrogance and for the wrongs committed from colonial times. Second, pluralism has an economic impact because it is part of the variety of markets and resources.

If pluralism (read: postmodernism) has been hotly debated among Indonesia's intellectuals of late, it is clear that they have already received some "benefit," either direct or indirect, from the latest form of capitalism. At least this debate, in many areas, is a sign of the fear of becoming jaded, and of efforts towards totalization and excessive uniformity. Of course, pluralism by itself is not a fact, but is also not without any manifestation at all, in the arts in particular. Our latest art shows a movement away from the center. Over the past five years, I have seen brilliant creations, thoughts and actions coming from small laboratories and pockets supported by their own resources. The movement away from the center is just a first step, in rejecting the center's authority and domination by the nationalist modernists. The art world is the

most direct and critical. By investigating shifts of the criteria in the international art world, it has reorganized the basis for judgment and its own history.

In the coming years, the development of Indonesian art will depend on these small pockets. It has been proven that overly large art centers (paid for and supported by the government) are actually wasteful and bureaucratic. Busy making sure of their own survival, they have no time to see new artistic trends. The small pockets — enlivened by a pluralistic vision — are spontaneous, cheap, fresh, flexible, and resolute. Those giving life to such places have usually been brought up amidst the tumult of domestic capitalism — meaning the old-fashioned capitalism that often gives in to the demands of the latest form of international capitalism. They are somewhat schizophrenic because they have witnessed the continual clash between culture and politics. While culture becomes increasingly complex and cosmopolitan, politics becomes more nationalistic and monolithic. But, this schizophrenia is actually productive because it makes them distrustful of totalization and centralization. It is completely appropriate that they bring small-scale discourses to life.

They will certainly not reject artistic centers because they know such centers are not only useful but also part of the history of art in Indonesia. What they reject is the opinion that artistic centers represent the centers of movements and criticism, and serve to baptize art and national culture. Postmodernism provides a theoretical base in the struggle for pluralism. As an intellectual commodity, postmodernism has spread out along with several other commodities, courtesy of the movement of international capitalism. But, it is also, at the same time, the most consistent reaction against capitalism. It is appropriate if it provides optimism and a critical power since it opens up so many possibilities and directions for progress. Had not modernism (and modernity) been usually understood as the primary direction for progress, and as accepting difference?

If pluralism begins to become a reality for the arts, those (who think of themselves as) pluralists cannot yet relax. They must

know that many parts of life are still dominated by the concepts of centralization, totalization and linear progress. But, they can at least point out that parts of society are not just the targets of power, but rather those who actively use power. And, that this system was a mental construct first before it became a reality. Actual praxis in "unimportant" areas like art therefore suggests two possibilities: strip away this system's legitimacy, or think of it as completely insignificant. If pluralism is still very far from being realized in many parts of life, art can at least give a lesson to politics: that the suppressing of differences in the name of progress and order is a major mistake.

4

Each person is oppressed by the image of his or her nation, often without knowing it. This image is strengthened, for example, when I exchange views with a European, even more so if the person says, "Is it true that individual rights and human rights are not that important in your country?" To answer this question is not a form of self-justification or an exposition of nationalism, but an explanation of the nation in its (post-) colonial condition. Someone can be easily trapped into upholding cultural relativism if defensive and angry, saying that each culture has its own values. In any strange country, the burden of one's own culture as well as its manifestation — once again unrecognized — emerge as a type of secret shield or mask, providing a feeling of security. That burden roots a person to society and keeps that person from the grip or afflictions of others. It is a manifestation which allows that person to return home and have meaning.

Feeling bound to an environment! It is very simple. A friend of mine, the child of an Indonesian diplomat, who spent his childhood and teenage years in Europe, United States, and South America, once said to me that while he liked traveling to different parts of the world (partly because of his work as a photographer), he still preferred to live in Indonesia. There were many things he

did not like in Indonesia, but he needed an environment and society where he did not need to explain his identity, "It's wonderful to be with people whose skin color and language are the same as mine." This feeling is even more true with those who grow up in Indonesia, meaning the generation educated in the national language. So I wonder again, how is it possible for us to bring about a consciously transcultural attitude, as I have often talked about in my writings? Does it not turn out that a person tends to be bound — without choosing to be — to a cultural environment? Don't we tend to depend on a cultural center, where actions and identities can be certified, validated and protected?

Indonesia does not come to us as a scientific formula. We have been experiencing it since an early age, letting it grow within ourselves. When I was young, my family spoke Javanese at home. Outside the house, I was in an environment of the Using and Madurese languages.[2] I also knew, from when I was small, that the habitat for these regional languages was limited. Faraway happenings did not come to us in the local language. Didn't we hear the radio news and read the newspaper in Indonesian? I have studied the national language since kindergarten. Lessons on geography (since grammar school), history (since junior high) and the raising of the flag ceremony every Monday continued to emphasize the concept of Indonesia. When I was a teenager, I began to love Indonesian literature. Slowly then, Indonesia became an imagining full of certainties, sheltering and protecting our local environment. I mention imagination because at the time there was no television at all in our small town, so there was no clamor of established visual images. Imagination brought Indonesia's expanse and distances close to our hearts (at the time, even traveling to Jember, only 105 km from our town of Banyuwangi, felt like a distant and exciting excursion).

Indonesia is not something we request, but something that pushes itself forward. It is not something we create but grows quietly within ourselves. And, there is certainly no concept of a pre-Indonesia here (as has been stated by one of our philosophers, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana), since the entirety of what Indonesia is

stands in the present. In other words, for my generation (if the word "generation" can be used), Indonesia is no longer something to be fought for, but already a concrete part of life ("Indonesia is an important part of my village," says essayist Emha Ainun Nadjib), and able to provide a sense of security and certainty about the future. Every sought-after aspiration and role and all forms of progress and modernity are made possible (and are also limited) by the state of being Indonesian, just as our teachers have said, "become people useful to your native land."

Now, I am reminded of when I joined up with a group of young people studying how to write poetry in Banyuwangi (when I was fourteen). They all put themselves into the framework (or cage) of Indonesian-language literature. Their idols, and spiritual teachers, were the greatest Indonesian poets, from Amir Hamzah to the poets of the 1970s. Even though their poems had a local flavor and appeared also in local newspapers (in Yogyakarta and Surabaya), their work continued to be based completely on some kind of centralized national literature.

Years later I saw that artistic nationalism of this sort infected other branches of "modern" art. It gave the artists a sense of security on the one hand but also provided some room for creative freedom on the other. The sense of security seemed to include the essence of Indonesian art — a soul blossoming from within — able to appropriate influences from anywhere and not change this essence, except in its outer coating, and ensured that Indonesia's treasury would be opened as widely and as deeply as possible in order to bring about creative freedom. In the case of art, nationalism cannot provide an identity — except for myths about identity — because identity always emerges from a struggle, as a direct result of the art's own particular value. The problem for us is simple — to escape from this kind of national criteria. Or to be more precise, to avoid judging from nationalist prejudices. That is why I like to proselytize, perhaps to excess, for comparative studies about transcultural behavior.

Nationalism today can be simply a problem of pragmatism, by recognizing that the nation-state is the most appropriate form

for representing society. This state, it is hoped, can bridge or overcome many different interests and manage conflict between groups. In this sense, the state must be "objective." The nation-state, meaning the institutionalization of nationalism at a particular time, is obviously one of the most important facets of modernity. History tells us that the nation-state developed from the ground up, from society itself, growing "naturally" and almost flawlessly in the French and American Revolutions. In Western Europe in particular, the nation-state is one of the high points in the journey towards modernism. Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe, at a later time, the nation-state is part of the imported idea of modernity (and modernism) imposed on society. Or to be more extreme, the nation-state for (former) colonies is the point of departure, the foundation for establishing modernity.

Look at the countries of South America, for example. We recognize that their wars of revolution were truly impressive, freeing them from Spanish colonization. But, what really happened here? The *criollo*, the descendants of the white settlers, became the oligarchs and bourgeoisie and did not want to be held back by the colonizers. They wanted to stand as equals, both economically and culturally, with Europe. So, wars of independence erupted and were won, and they established nation-states along with parliamentary democracies.[3] But, the oligarchy survived, and took root even more deeply. The national interest was only a mask for what the oligarchy wanted. Parliament became a referee between (more) conservative and (more) liberal groups. Would it not seem then that a state can never be objective?

I am now reminded of my teachers in grammar school and junior high who said that to become modern "was to sit as low as or to stand as high as the rest of the nations of the world." This is the simplest form of nationalism and was obviously the easiest to ponder in my childhood and teenage years, before advertising and television were as prevalent as they are today. When I was young, what was real were the people around me, who were brown-skinned and who spoke Indonesian, Javanese and Madurese. (Of course there were three small movie theaters in my town which

showed films from America, India, and Hong Kong, but the foreigners in these living pictures were as strange as the angels and devils our religious teachers told us about.) For children today, every image and style coming in from the outside is equally real, or possibly even more real, than their immediate environment.

Nevertheless, children in our big cities who like to roam the shopping malls and eat in McDonald's are still taught lessons about the heroism of Diponegoro and Soekarno fighting the colonizers. In the villages as well, with no exception, an amazing fascination has emerged for Mexican soap operas, and American aerobics. The relentless, terrifying onslaught of foreign things and images is spreading throughout every corner of the country. What is Indonesia to them, in their heads and hearts? How do they comprehend "doing service to the nation"? It is indeed amazing that the growth of interest in television far outstrips interest in the printed word. (In 1991 there were 400,000 satellite dishes in Indonesia. In the next year, this number jumped to 800,000.[4] Meanwhile, a print run for Indonesia's largest newspaper stands at 500,000 copies, as it has for the last ten years.) Imagining a nation and possessing it was much easier in the days when television was not so omnipresent.

5

So, the fundamentals of Indonesianization, or nationalism, are increasingly rocked by the image industry. But, those who are affected by global images do not necessarily or automatically become cosmopolitan on their own. What is most common, and most real, as I have stated in many of my writings, is a schizophrenia or division in the soul. A completely intact soul only exists in a pure and closed cultural environment.

Nowadays, it is no longer possible for us to live from, and in, one cultural environment. In this era of explosive growth in the media industry, many cultural environments approach and assault us. So, where is the nation and where is the national culture?

The problem is, do we want to admit our impurity, or pretend we live within the boundaries of a national culture? Many, even too many, people feel free living within a national culture because the nation no longer seems to be functioning as a regulator, but as a protector, particularly after the bloody conflict of 1965.[5] This sense of security has slowly been made into an institution and has become more important than tolerance. Security makes people care too much about their own interests and futures, and makes the interest of the group masquerade easily as the national interest. As a result, tolerance — which allows for equality and a critical perspective, as well as for the deficiencies (and rudeness) and excesses of every person — is increasingly pushed aside.

Making security an institution has prevented cosmopolitanism, particularly with the nation always enthusiastically developing (the myth) about Indonesia's original, pure and holy spirit. In this case, we can consider our own history. Dutch colonialism was not able, and did not want, to bring Europe directly to its colony. Significant cultural, intellectual or scientific achievements from Europe did not reach the Netherlands Indies. In fact, compared with India and Senegal (which were British and French colonies), the Netherlands Indies was very much isolated from the latest developments in European modernism. What the Dutch did do, to the contrary, was to implant, expound upon and make an institution of a kind of tawdry romanticism, convincing students (including the elite group of nationalists) that this was Europe's high culture. This is why our nationalism has romantic characteristics.

The Dutch also very cleverly built a modern bureaucratic machine by making use of the indigenous feudal culture. Feudalism did not end in order to bring about modernity but, instead, became a significant unifying factor in forming a modern society. The many reasons for this were also married with another long-existing unifying force, namely the use of the Malay language over the centuries as a lingua franca. So, in the former Dutch colonial territory, independence meant unity, a unity overcoming all differences, which pitted itself against Europe and the West, as if

modernity can grow from within a nation's soul, as if contact with the West was not an exchange but an expansion of this soul.

National culture is fundamentally a political matter. The people within a nation cannot be created without an identity. National culture is a problem of identity. During the nationalist era and in the early years of independence, the national culture was most easily defined as whatever was not Western, not white-skinned, not colonial. One dictate here was even formalized within our constitution — that "national culture is the culmination of regional cultures." National culture was a problem of consciousness, consciousness raising or raised consciousness, to become what-is-not-Western, or not-just-formerly-colonial.

In the meantime, many of the institutions learned about and adapted from Europe, such as education, political parties, Parliament, elections and the nation-state, immediately became validated and were put into use in daily life while also being implanted in the subconscious — without being problematized whether they were Western or not. On the other hand, the suggestion to adopt the West completely, as proposed by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, seemed to become merely an abstract antithesis against overly nationalistic fortifications.[6] Takdir's proposal also, as time passed, began to become a complete tautology. If we have appropriated their clothing, their Parliament, their planes and their political parties, it is not because we want to be Western, becoming (like) the West. In even broader terms, every nation's journey towards modernity is a natural process, not a requirement.

If modernity is thought of as a system of institutions and knowledge, it is clear that it came about or was created by Europe. Modernity, like religion, can spread anywhere, by any means, either peacefully or violently. We can say that modernity or modernism is a side effect of colonialism, and so distinguish between what modernity is and how it spreads. The means by which it spreads can be denounced, criticized or destroyed, but its meaning cannot, because it can encourage truth and well-being. But, what is modernity's meaning? It is a system of knowledge and of

institutions existing as an extension of mankind's own metabolism, able to function universally. Heliocentrism, printing machines, the theory of gravity, political parties and Parliaments, for example, although found in Europe, can be useful — even important — to people all over the world. The white colonizers certainly did not teach the many meanings of modernity to be the truth, but as part of their own superiority (unconsciously), and to support their machines of production (consciously).

Where are the national characteristics within the meanings of modernity? There are none. As I have already said, these national characteristics are constructed to legitimize how modernity is activated. The struggle for independence was to demand the right to organize, possess and control one's own wealth. Independence was to become modern, "equal with other nations." However, this independence could not be aspired to without the idea of modernity, could it? And, the nation, the nation-state itself, had to be acknowledged as an imported idea. The nation, the historian Onghokham said to me one day, grew from the ground up in Western Europe, while in the former colonies it was imposed from above. And, on what basis was this territory established? Is the Republic of Indonesia created out of the lands where the Malay language has been a lingua franca for centuries? It is not, because if it were, Malaysia, northern Kalimantan, the southern Philippines and even more areas would be included. Legally and politically, Indonesia can only exist within the territory of the Netherlands Indies, as a former Dutch colony. National culture then is put forward for "a sharing of destinies," in order to legitimize this legal and political union.

I imagine cultural nationalism in its early stages as a tremendously powerful form of energy, of passion and solidarity, not just as speeches transfixing the masses but emerging also in concrete forms. It clearly motivated people like Soedjojono (painter), Soekarno (politician, political thinker, first President) and Pramoedya Ananta Toer (novelist) between the 1930s and 1940s. What I mean here is nationalism that serves as a source for creativity and with the creativity contributing to nationalism. Their

works include the paradoxes and contradictions in creating the Indonesian nation, and the Indonesian people who at that time were not yet adjusted to become "complete human beings."

This is a nationalism that does not need to be interpreted by the established political authority alone. It is a nationalism that has a few chaotic and uncontrollable characteristics which are allowed to roam about seeking a shape. At this point, it becomes the point of discovery for many groups. Of course, I do not want to overpraise this early stage of nationalism but want to recognize it and its historical context. Aren't we aware that in the past two decades, (interpretations of) this nationalism have been debated by many political groups, with the peak being the tragedy of 1965? And, wasn't what happened later a concentration of the opinions about the nation?

How very insufficient is Indonesia or "Indonesian culture" at fulfilling the many creative streams and new creative possibilities! My thoughts do not yet move from that point. We would indeed be very naive if we put a stop to the wealth and variety of creations or creative potential with what is called "national culture." In other countries, I am required to test not only stereotypes of cultures (of people, actually) that I meet, but also my own culture. We know that a stereotype exists because we, each person and group, can explain our presence when comparing ourselves with others. The question is, do we seek out our own essence or origins in this comparison? In answering yes, does it not mean that (a type of) orientalism is in the process of asserting itself within us, in our subconscious?

Searching for origins. Or strengthening the myth that Indonesia has a reality which has remained unchanged throughout history. This kind of epidemic infects not only the political elite but also the artists who crave innovation, as well as those from other layers who, startled in the face of a new wave, must seek prophets. See how much our bureaucrats love to talk about "noble values dug up from the earth itself," or about "the specific qualities of the nation." It is not uncommon for artists to validate their work as coming from "the original well" (in the 1950s) and from "the roots

of tradition" (in the 1970s). The factory owners often say that strikes and demonstrations are not in line with the Indonesian work ethic. More examples could be added. But, it is enough to say that origins are only a mask, a myth, protecting the operation of a particular truth and authority.

6

The myth of origin-and-purity not only denies influences coming from other places, but is also anti-historical. This not only covers "Indonesian values," but also "Asian values" or "Eastern values," now frequently discussed on the political stage in East and Southeast Asia. Aren't influences a part of the process of exchange in history? The origin myth also makes us increasingly determined to construct a static and exotic picture of ourselves which in the end prevents us from reaching "equality among the nations." It also blinds us to the creative energy which might be found in any place, both concealed and obvious.

    This is indigenous orientalism, which seems natural and formalized but only pretends to be strong. I think this idea is what makes the bureaucracy give too much meaning to "culture" in its handling of the meaning of identity-for-the-sake-of-power. By making security an institution, the state bureaucracy selects "foreign influence" within the scope of "culture," but not within the scope of the economy. "Culture," or that which is believed to be the mirror of collective values and aspirations, makes the state bureaucracy grow large and inefficient. When I say that "every person is a creator of culture,"[7] I would like all of us to create the basis for a strong civil society. We must decrease the state bureaucracy while making it efficient. This is a task of "political economy." "Culture" then is not something which binds or is bound by the bureaucracy but overtakes it and becomes public property. Yet, if this task of "political economy" is delayed, "culture" will continue to exist as the aspiration of every person, its durability and penetration relatively free from state power.

    So, to reiterate, what I should question is actually "culture" itself, a word increasingly unable to suggest the richness of its reality. Once we use the word "culture," our eyes are blinded to its meaning — in all its ambiguity, movement and complexity. What remains is just order, obedience and concurrence. Those who win in this contest, and become the powerholders, use "culture" as a potent legitimizer for their infiltration of power. Those who lose are overpowered, make "culture" work to displace their sense of being pushed aside, at least prove some past glory. These are the two extremes of the use of "culture" within the framework of power.

    Culture, with whatever adjective ("Indonesian culture," "Javanese culture," "local culture," "global culture," and so forth), can always be wrenched about by those who use it, to either of these two extremes. We cannot avoid this tendency, we who feel like the inhabitants and possessors of a certain culture. We must wonder though, are we living in only one culture? Can we actually choose a particular cultural environment? Am I a Javanese, an Indonesian, a modern person or someone else entirely? In fact, all of these identities emerge from within me at the same time, sometimes clearly, sometimes hidden. We can no longer live within, and be energized by, only one cultural environment — we are schizophrenic. All cultures are on their way and will come to us. This is the wisdom or misfortune of the age of the media and information industry. A tug-of-war with all the cultures will not, in itself, create a new hybrid. Because the strongest must be the nation. The nation protects us, makes us yearn for, and pushes us towards "international relations," that arena of modernity. Aren't we always in formation to make an unconscious priority of "national culture," in this tug-of-war?

    The primary pressure of the "national culture" in each person no longer requires a sermon. In daily life, the use of "national culture" by the state has obscured, and eroded, the value of the works that emerge within its boundaries. Of course, we cannot deny that many still look on nationalism as a source of creativity. Nationalism, in this sense, is complex and almost limitless. But, it

should be remembered that our nation acts from within a large and varied population. Compare Indonesia with Japan, for example, where the population consists mostly of a single group, and so can be generally uniform in determining what is "Japanese culture." This is not a true assessment however — rather, it is easier for an outsider to construct what it is to be Japanese in art, architecture, cinema and capitalism. But, what being Japanese is has a wide spectrum itself and is capable of overstepping its own limits. In cinema, Yasujiro Ozu may be considered very Japanese, while Nagisha Oshima insults this idea. In theater, *noh* shows Japanese refinement while *butoh* shows its brutality, and so on.

There are other examples as well, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria — where it is easier to categorize a "nation" and "national culture" because of their small and fairly uniform populations. Their small size, in the many stages of their historical development, has made it easier for them to open dialogues and conflicts and, also, to resolve them. The recognition and maturation of this self-image continues through the intermediate-world[8] of Middle or Eastern Europe, together forming the remnants of the Hapsburg or Ottoman Dynasties.[9]

This intermediate-world is a bridge leading towards the modern world, because it forms part of a great tradition supporting the fundamentals of modernity, a large treasure trove where the ideas of the Enlightenment of Western Europe were processed. (More distant places — South America, which is mostly a Spanish speaking world — also are an intermediate-world, leading to close relations with the sources of modernity in Europe.) However, no nation, in this modern era, can know itself from inside, or by relying only on its own origins. Japan also, like Indonesia, had no intermediate-world and performed a *salto mortale* with the Meiji Restoration at the end of the 19th century, when world capitalism was not as sophisticated as it is now. Without an intermediate-world, or a *salto mortale* at a precise historical moment, what about our nation, our national culture?

Indonesians sad about this reality may persist in asking, "What should we do?" I answer simply, "Do not do anything if

you are reluctant to acknowledge the handicaps we bring with us." In biological evolution, we may recognize the emergence of new species, or a type of new creature able to develop certain organs if others are stunted or do not grow. Being defective and incomplete can often be useful. Our social character — particularly that found on the political stage — seems to have the tendency to cover up what is defective. How many times have formal speeches discussed "the complete human being" along with "unification and unity?" This mix of positivism and romanticism is what motivates our bureaucrats. This strange mixture also prevents our creative people from swallowing or joining with traditions (thoughts and creations) from other countries as well as our own. Even more so if they feel bound to creative freedom — as if they are free to choose the source of their creations. The problem here is that the ideology for the freedom to create, particularly for the "cultured" groups, often only serves to cloak a rigid national standard.

So, this is why I want to say that culture is reaching its twilight. Twilight stands here as a symbol. "Culture" in many languages will not disappear from the dictionaries and will still be used in light and serious conversation. When I talk of a the twilight of culture, I mean that "culture" will no longer be a potent basis for research or creativity. What we face when using "culture" at this same time is something which does not allow us to see its wealth and variety, but a collection of stereotypical values and behavior at the level of the nation-state which have been made exotic by the latest form of capitalism.

The twilight of culture also means that those who conduct research or create can no longer stand on "culture." "Culture" for researchers (like anthropologists, for example) provides only an illusion of objectivity in depicting the society being studied. For the artistic community, "culture" also provides a sense of positivism, or an illusion about the freedom protecting their creations even when what has happened is an impoverishment in the medium. The twilight of culture spurs on the fusion between researchers and artists. An artist is also a researcher, and vice versa.

He or she relies on his or her field (in its medium, tradition and discipline) while also breaking through-spinning-embracing-twisting other fields in other places. A creation is at the same time a comparative study because any one tradition can blossom only by making itself equal to, and interchangeable with, other traditions. Clearly, the use of "culture" or "national culture" assumes the inequality of traditions, or the prioritization of one cultural environment (read: center) over many other cultural environments. For me, the twilight of culture is a potent way of exploding the creative energy of our irresoluteness, our schizophrenia.

Our nation lives within an explosion of images and signs. In the information age, all sorts of media come and assault us, all considering themselves important in conveying the truth. Pushed by the late, global capitalism, our big cities grow as reservoirs of capital overflow, services and images from all over the world and create a crazy consumer society. Crazy? Maybe not. Mass culture takes us over on the one hand but also makes us aware, on the other hand, that the state bureaucracy is no longer effective. This is because it is unable to break the dominance of capital, and so there is no "teleology" that can be made by itself. It can have the pretension of unifying society because in the flow of global things and images, society actually is a mixture, a game, a collision, of many interests, meaning that there is no one progress or one culture. If the postmodernists negate the aspirations of the Enlightenment (which they term as a grand narrative), they might be mistaken.

For the Third World, specifically us, this arbitrary denial means a laziness or inertia in expanding the civil institutions and public space and in restoring law and justice. But, we can consider a concept of micro-politics — that change can happen not within the framework of the state, but in small fields. Changes that are without heroism but part of a great game. Heroism is only for those with pretensions of leading the whole nation, of those who are convinced that change cannot happen before they themselves bring it about, even though a person is changed in the process of changing others.

This world at every moment is filled with new discoveries and creations, good and evil deeds. We live in a sea of services, things and images that increasingly lap up against us. We move in the midst of a chemical sea of history, a chain of changes and an unending world synergy. Those who concentrate their energy serving the state — both its defenders and its critics — may be mistaken. Those who close their eyes to the small events would be heroes in the Age of Romanticism.

The conclusion of politics is very important but not everything. Politics, or to be precise, political interpretation, as stated by Julia Kristeva is "the apogee of the obsessive quest for A Meaning."[10] In politics, the reality of the world is objectified, subjugated and concentrated to the will of the interpreters, the politicians, to the point where we experience "the whole range of domination from suggestion to propaganda to revolution." But, the world does not bow down to One Meaning. There is emptiness, meaninglessness, craziness, or little fields where every person can be an analyst and healer (and changer) of the world on their own. For me, creating in the field of the arts is a warning, no matter how softly stated, for our native land, our nation, frequently bewitched by One Meaning.

Translated from the Indonesian by Sarah Maxim Nuranto and the author.

NOTES

1. The "complete human being" is a "philosophy" recorded in the Broad State Guidelines of the Republic of Indonesia. This concept appeared during the New Order era (1966 to the present). Every Indonesian must become complete human being, meaning human being integrated into their society, their native land and their state. He or she does not highlight individual priorities. He or she has many "dignified" qualities, as in emphasizing discipline as well as sacrifice for the state, for humanity and for God, and so has an integrity and morality. This philosophy has a character of the "East" or "Asia" or "indigenous" as opposed

to the "West" which is individualistic, overly specialized, secular and greedy.

2.   Our country which consists of 13,000 islands has more than 300 regional languages and dialects. Many regional languages are still the mother tongue of many people. However, all schools use the national language as do the television broadcasts which reach throughout the archipelago. Although many regional languages have a strong oral tradition (in performance, for example), the written forms (literature and newspapers and magazines in regional languages, for example) are now fewer and fewer. There have been efforts to save regional culture, often with a bureaucratic tinge, such as those which since the beginning of the 1980s have been called Javanology, Baliology, Sundanology, etc.

3.   This is a general picture because, even though each Latin American country has its own history of independence, they are all tied together by the outline of Iberian colonialism on this continent. Read, for example, Edwin Williamson. 1992. *The Penguin History of Latin America*, pp. 194-284. London: Penguin.

4.   Read Mayong Laksono. 1994. "Televisi Pan-Asia dan Kita" (Pan-Asian Television and Us). *Kompas* daily newspaper, 24 August.

5.   What I mean is the period when Sukarno's regime fell, starting on 30 September 1965 until he was replaced by General Suharto on 11 March 1966. This period was a kind of civil war, in which the Indonesia Communist Party was confronted by many anti-communist groups as well as the army. At least 500,000 people were killed during this period. The Indonesian Communist Party was completely destroyed and remains banned to this day.

6.   Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1908-1994) was one of Indonesia's most important modernist thinkers. During a long debate over the identity and reality of Indonesia, which took place from 1935 to 1939, Takdir stated that Indonesia was completely separated from pre-Indonesia. (It should be remembered that Indonesia became independent on 17 August 1945). Pre-Indonesia, in Takdir's opinion, was an age of ignorance, an age of local-feudal kingdoms which ended in the close of 19th century after being defeated by the white colonizers. Indonesia, on the other hand, is a new entity, a new consciousness, meaning also individualism, rationalism, and materialism. Let us orient ourselves to the West, said Takdir, a message he pursued until his death.

7.   See my essay, "Kebudayaan Indonesia: Pandangan 1991" (Culture of Indonesia: An Overview of 1991) which I presented at the 1991 Cultural Congress in Jakarta (19 September - 2 October 1991). This essay is also an important part of my book *Senjakala Kebudayaan* (Twilight of Culture). Yogyakarta: Bentang, 1996.

8.   I take the meaning of the "intermediate-world" from Czech novelist Milan Kundera. See his essay "An Umbrella, a Night World, and a Lonely Moon." *New York Review of Books*, 19 December 1991, pp. 36-50.

9.   See Emil Niederhauser. 1992. *The Rise of Nationality in Eastern Europe*, translated from Hungarian into English by Karoly Ravasz and Bertha Gaster. Budapest: Corvina.

10. Julia Kristeva. 1986. "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," translated from French to English by Margaret Waller. In *The Kristeva Reader*, Toril Moi, ed., pp. 301-20. New York: Colombia University Press.

Running Away from the Ideological Juggernaut
A Story of a Third-generation *Zainichi* Korean

KYO Nobuko

Zainichi Koreans are Drifters Borne by Modernity

> Here's a little quiz.
>
> Q1. What is the nationality of *zainichi* Koreans, Korean or Japanese?
>
> Q2. Do *zainichi* Koreans have Korean passports? Or do they have Japanese ones? Or do they have a third passport based on an agreement between Japan and Korea?
>
> Of course some of you would be able to answer these questions correctly and with little hesitation. But most of you would be surprised to find that these seemingly simple questions are actually quite hard to answer.
>
> "Political Participation in the Homeland for the *Zainichi* Koreans," *Hangyeorae 21* (The Korean Minzoku 21), 15 February 1996.

Zainichi Koreans have Korean nationality. And, they have Korean passports. *Zainichi* Koreans are those and the descendants of those who came to Japan during the colonial rule, regained Korean

nationality following liberation of Korea after the World War II, and yet remained in Japan thereafter. Although there is an agreement over the legal status of *zainichi* Koreans between Japan and the Republic of Korea (South Korea), which includes a guarantee of their right to permanent residence status in Japan, there is no such thing as a third passport based on this agreement. When applying for a passport to the Foreign Office of Korea, therefore, they must obtain (1) a certificate from their country of residence, i.e. Japan, stating that they have been registered pursuant to the Aliens Registration Act, and (2) a copy of their family register from the local government located at their supposed homeland in Korea, a "homeland" most of the younger generation Koreans have never seen or been to in their lives. In other words, *zainichi* Koreans cannot get a passport without both Korean and Japanese authorities guaranteeing their status. This is the answer to the quiz cited in a cover story of a news magazine, *Hangyeorae 21*, aimed at Koreans who have become estranged from *zainichi* Koreans and, so, are unaware of the situation in which the latter are placed.

The background of this news magazine article, "Political Participation in the Homeland for the *Zainichi* Koreans," is the ongoing debate in Japan over the resident foreigners' right to political participation at the level of local government. Most resident foreigners in this case are, to be sure, *zainichi* Koreans. If a *zainichi* Korean who has Korean nationality can exercise political rights, in particular suffrage, as a resident of a local community in Japan, one ought to be able to exercise political rights as a Korean national, too; shouldn't a *zainichi* Korean be allowed to take part in the Korean national politics? This magazine article leads us into that issue.

Whether it is right or wrong to give Korean suffrage to *zainichi* Koreans, the underlying assumption of the affirmative side makes me uncomfortable. That *zainichi* Koreans are "Koreans" and that we are "nationals" of the Republic of Korea.

Of course, I know very well that the world we live in is the world of nation-states and that therefore everyone must be a na-

tional of one nation-state or another. Human beings are ascribed to the framework provided by nation-states and *minzoku*.

I grew up listening to the voices of the older generation of *zainichi* Koreans telling me to have pride in my Korean roots. As a third-generation *zainichi* Korean, however, whose country of nationality, Korea, is a nation-state which has fostered a strong ethno-nationalism but whose country of residence, Japan, embraces the idea of homogeneous nation with the *Ten'no* at its core, it is difficult for me to listen to words like *"minzoku"* or "nation-state," words that are laden with so much meaning, without qualm. What seizes me instead of pride is doubt, and I ask myself "what is *minzoku*? what is nation-state?"

For example, let us consider the idea of *"minzoku"* which ties *zainichi* Koreans and Koreans in the Peninsula together.

The Koreans in Korea have so little knowledge of *zainichi* Koreans that they cannot so much as answer the quiz in *Hangyeorae 21*. On the other hand, *zainichi* Koreans have endured decades of hardship in Japan by seeking for sources of pride in Korea and Korean *minzoku*. *"Minzoku"* exists as an idea which accommodates the two kinds of Koreans, yet the ethno-nationalisms of the two groups do not coincide with one another. The year 1945, when Korea gained independence from Japan, was a diverging point, and since then the ethno-nationalism of Koreans living in the Korean Peninsula and Koreans living in Japan have taken different paths. Talk of ties and solidarity between the two kinds of Koreans based on the idea of *"minzoku,"* without noticing the difference, makes me uncomfortable.

To unfold the story of my uncomfortableness we need to go back to the arena set by modernity.

The ethno-nationalism, which was subsequently linked with Korean nationalism in the Peninsula, emerged our of fear of the demise of the Yi Dynasty. This alarm was brought about against the backdrop of the advent of the powerful "Other," the West. Their ethno-nationalism fed on Japanese colonialism which embodied a logic of power and a peculiarly modern way of thinking acquired from the West.

Japanese colonial rule started in 1910, quickly turned ethno-nationalism into the focal point of struggle against the colonizers. It came into existence to counter the chauvinism of Japan, which had set out to become a modern state with the *Ten'no* ideology as its central tenet. Just as Japan's *Ten'no* ideology is an essentially modern idea based on myths, Korea's ethno-nationalism, too, is a modern idea constructed from myths and shaped by the needs of the arena of modernity. This idea of Korean nationalism was fortified politically by Japan's repression of Korea's independence movement, and culturally by Japan's policies aimed at "ethno-cultural genocide," such as forcing Koreans to adopt Japanese names.

The epoch of modernity that has given birth to such ideas is also an epoch that has seen the birth of mass migration. The Japanese emigrated taking Japanese nationalism with them, and the Koreans emigrated with their own ethno-nationalism.

My grandparents, for example, came to Japan in 1931, twenty-one years after the annexation of Korea to Japan, it was also the year when the war between China and Japan broke out.

Japan had undergone a radical change known as *Datsua-nyuo* (de-Asianization and Westernization) and raced through the path of modernization. With its logic of power and peculiarly modern way of thinking, Japan came to see the East with the same eye as had the West and began to exert its power and might over Asia. The time-space called modern East Asia was thus defined, and among the mass moving through it one could glimpse my grandparents too.

When discussing the origins of *zainichi* Koreans, one often thinks of the notorious Forced Migration which took thousands of Koreans to Japan, but in my grandparents case it was different. I heard my father recount the story of his father, i.e., my grandfather, who had already been dead for some years then. My grandfather used to work for a Japanese trading merchant in Pusan, and with help from his employer moved to Japan of his own free will. The other side of this story is that Korea, a deprived colony under the yoke of Japan, was no longer a place where young ambitious Koreans could fulfill their dreams and hopes.

As soon as Japan colonized Korea, a cadastral survey was carried out so as to establish modern private ownership rights in Korea for taxation purposes. Most people did not yet have any notion of exclusive private ownership, and the new authorities did not take much pains to explain it to them; the survey was notified to the mostly illiterate peasants in writing. Moreover, the survey required owners to come forth and report their own property. Consequently, thousands of peasants lost their land. They had to leave their native land and drift to Manchuria, the Maritime Province of Siberia, or Japan in order to make a living and survive. Manchuria and the Maritime Province, where many of these drifters came to live, gradually evolved as key points for the Korean independence movement.

In 1918, the Japanese incursion into Siberia to help overthrow the Bolsheviks caused a dramatic rise in the price of rice, thereby triggering a major social disturbance in Japan. Koreans were forced to grow rice on their farmland to secure a stable supply of rice for Japan. This additional burden laid on the peasants provided a further impetus for them to leave their land, become drifters and head for Japan. In addition to the drifters who were deprived of means of subsistence, some young men went to Japan to acquire expertise for the new era from one of the most advanced of Asian countries.

In 1923, eight years before my grandparents immigrated to Japan, 80,000 Koreans were already in Japan. This was the year that the Great Earthquake shattered Tokyo. In the confusion of the aftermath, rumors spread that Koreans were poisoning the wells. Inflamed by these rumors, vigilance committees of Japanese civilians massacred roughly 6,500 Koreans. Behind the large presence of Koreans in Japan at that time loomed, the shadow of colonization by a modern state called Japan, which adopted Western logic and whose modernization policies had led Koreans into a life of drifters. Japanese leaders absorbed the claim of modernity: "West signifies civilization and progress, East signifies savageness and stagnation." They therefore looked down on Asians and Koreans with a Western eye. The massacre of Koreans in the wake of the

Earthquake is one of the outcomes that Japan's modern and Western attitude brought about.

Forced Migration started in 1939 to provide manpower to the coal-mining and munition industries which faced severe shortages of labor. Although there is a widespread belief, both in Korea and in Japan, that "*zainichi* Koreans are the descendants of those who came to Japan because of Forced Migration," it is not quite accurate. We should take note of the fact that many Koreans were forced to migrate to Japan, but not all.

What is important to my story is that the idea of nationalism in Japan emerged as a result of encountering the powerful "Other" called the West, while the Korean ethno-nationalism emerged as a result of encountering Japanese nationalism; that in the new social system defined by modernity many people left their homeland; that ideas such as *minzoku* or nation-state came to be charged with great significance for these emigrants; and that amongst the wanderers there were those later called *zainichi* Koreans.

To me, *zainichi* Koreans are those who have left their homelands and continue to drift throughout this era when human beings are classified along the divisions set by the ideas of *minzoku* or nation-state.

If the Koreans in the Peninsula found a place where they could settle after the independence of Korea in 1945, the Koreans who immigrated to Japan during the colonial rule remain sojourners. They stayed on in Japan even after independence for various reasons and started to foster an ethno-nationalism different from that of the Koreans in the Peninsula. The difference in the ethno-nationalism of the two groups reflects the difference between those who stopped drifting and those who are still drifting with the year 1945 marking their point of divergence.

The Koreans in the Peninsula won back their national language, Korean, and their ancestral names. In the meantime, the Koreans in Japan lived under a continuation of colonial rule. In order to survive they had to speak Japanese and take on Japanese names. Korean schools were given no legal recognition, thereby forcing Koreans into the Japanese education system. Koreans faced discrimination by employers. The ethno-nationalism that had come into existence to counter Japan's colonial rule quickly turned itself into an ethno-nationalism to fight against the pervasive discrimination in the Japanese society. Koreanness became an idea to shore up a desperate fight against the reality in which one was acculturated to Japanese culture yet wanted to reject the very culture of ones oppressors; paradoxically, Koreanness helped one to find ones place in Japan.

Despite similarities on the surface, the ethno-nationalism of the Koreans in the Peninsula who have already found a place to be is far from that of *zainichi* Koreans who have yet to find a place. I refuse to be taken in by a sentimental ethno-nationalism which ignores the difference and talks only of ethnic solidarity.

As a *zainichi* Korean who is still in the middle of a journey to find my own place, I cannot help questioning this era called modernity which is keeping me adrift. Under my breath, I say there is something wrong with ideas like "nation-state" or "*minzoku*," ideas borne with modernity. There is also something wrong with the ethno-nationalism of the *zainichi* Koreans that has been shaped by its confrontation with Japanese society. In discussing one's identity only two alternatives are given to *zainichi* Koreans who must choose either: to carry on as a Korean or to assimilate and become a Japanese. I can see no way out from this stifling cul-de-sac.

For me, "nation-state" and "*minzoku*" are ideas which are the furthest from where I can place my identity.

"Emptiness" as Identity

> For many *"zainichi"* the act of writing is inseparable from giving one's "real name" (or ethnic Korean name). Because writing is one of the means whereby one establishes one's identity. By giving one's "ethnic name" one is effectively declaring that the statement is made in one's capacity as "a member of the Korean *minzoku*."
>
> Takeda Seiji, "A Basis Called *Zainichi*."

Names become a loyalty test for *zainichi* Koreans to measure one's ethnic consciousness. For a *zainichi* Korean, to use Japanese names implies that one is either wanting ethnic consciousness or one is defeated by the discrimination from a Japanese society which shows so little tolerance towards differences and diversity, that it represses the use of ethnic Korean names. A *zainichi* Korean who has regained ethnic pride will announce an ethnic name. It is a gesture that shows that one has won back the ethnic pride and ethnic roots of which one has been deprived since the colonial era. Many discover in their ethnic roots a support for their fragile self during adolescence when they are faced with the question of who they are and, hence, announce their ethnic names. Although they are not large in number, some *zainichi* Korean students are encouraged by typically conscientious Japanese teachers to declare their ethnic names. Many *zainichi* Korean children attend Japanese schools using Japanese names. These teachers believe that *zainichi* Koreans ought to take pride in their ethnic roots.

While the traditional view on names persists in the *zainichi* Korean community, among the younger generation there are increasingly those who take scant note of such traditional view. They care little about the historical background or issues related to *minzoku* that surround names. This neglect is conceived as a threat by the traditional *zainichi* community which values *minzoku* above all.

When I write, I do not use my real name "Kang Shinja" nor my Japanese pseudonym "Takeda Nobuko": I use the name "Kyo Nobuko." The *kanji*, or Chinese characters, of this name Kyo Nobuko are those of my real name, but read in a Japanese way. If it was a *zainichi* Korean tradition to establish one's identity by announcing and using one's ethnic name, then using neither the real name nor a Japanese pseudonym expresses my stance, if only tentatively, since I do not seek my identity in ideas like *"minzoku"* and "nation-state."

Nevertheless, mine is a tentative expression for there is nothing positive about the reason I chose this name, I had no other choice. If I, as a *zainichi* Korean, used the name "Kang Shinja," I would be endowed with the indelible burden of *minzoku*. Yet, I do not want to use the Japanese name that constantly reminds me of a Japanese nationalism intolerant towards the Others. The only choice available is the name "Kyo Nobuko."

What is, then, the identity I hope to establish through the usage of the name "Kyo Nobuko"?

I speak Japanese, I think in Japanese, and I write in Japanese. I have been shaped into what I am now in Japan.

I get on the plane to go to Korea from Japan, for example. It is a Korean airline. A Korean flight attendant senses the air surrounding each passenger and speaks to me in Japanese without hesitation. I go to a tourist resort. With their keen eyes, the shopkeepers instantly recognize the aura around me and say *"yasuiyo* (it's cheap)" to me in Japanese. While my friend, a Korean, who is walking beside me is thrown Korean words. From the way I move, the rhythm of my body, to the rhythm of my thoughts, my corporal perception is shaped by a culture defined by the Japanese language. In Japan, however, I am only an alien with a permanent resident status, though I was born here and have lived here for years. I am an "Other" in Japanese society, required by law to carry an Alien Registration Card at all times in order to verify my status. To have lived as an "Other" all my life has fostered a sense of the wanderer.

I lived in Korea for two years at the end of my twenties and learned to speak Korean. However, I could never learn the rhythm of the language nor the Korean way of conceiving the world. On the contrary, the more I was exposed to the Korean mores the more acutely aware I became that I was no Korean. How many times did I hear Koreans tell me "you smell Japanese"?

When a zainichi Korean goes to Korea, one does not become an ordinary Korean without the prefix "zainichi"; one only becomes a zainichi Korean in Korea. I was persistently confronted by this reality during my two years in Korea. I have Korean nationality, and have Korean ethnic roots, yet I remain an "Other" even in the Korean society.

A discrepancy stands between my corporal perception and the reality classified under the idea of "minzoku" and organized around the idea of "nation-state." Three choices offer themselves: the idea of a nation-state called "Japan" and that of "the Japanese" who constitute it; the idea of a nation-state called "Korea" and that of "the Koreans" who constitute it; the idea of "minzoku" which bundles up the two Koreans together. Were I to place my identity in one of these ideas, I would be lying to my own corporal perception.

My place is nowhere to be found. This sense of a void, this emptiness forms the most concrete part of my identity. To write under the tentative name of "Kyo Nobuko" best expresses the "emptiness" that is my identity.

For me, zainichi Koreans are neither Japanese nor Korean, but they are people thrown into a crevice between two modern nation-states. To talk about zainichi Koreans is to talk about the modernity that brought them into being, and this inevitably leads me to question the very framework of modernity established by the West.

In other words, for me, to examine the raison d'être of my existence — my sense of a void which stems from my not having a place to settle down, and the resultant emptiness of my identity by going back to the arena of modernity — leads me to think about the issues surrounding zainichi Koreans.

I therefore question the reality of those peculiarly modern ideas called "minzoku," "nation-state," and "nationalism." I question their existence because I refuse to be engulfed in these ideas.

The regrettable past between Korea and Japan continues to cause ripples in the Japanese society in the form of discrimination against Koreans. Traditionally in the process of trying to counter injustices, zainichi Koreans have looked to "ethno-nationalism" for spiritual support. Having kept my distance from this traditional way and having not been able to unconditionally accept what has long been understood as an axiom, i.e., the Korean ethno-nationalism, I have become a minority among the zainichi Koreans who speak out publicly. I am a minority in this community because I do not wish to be heard as a member of minzoku. Although it should be mentioned that compared to some youngsters who have no sense of ethno-nationalism whatsoever, even to express doubt about ethno-nationalism must surely mean that I have some sort of ethno-nationalism.

My identity is of a wanderer who regards "minzoku" not as the one and only place but as one of the many places where one can place one's identity; who examines what the zainichi Korean's ethno-nationalism that places "minzoku" above all has given rise to; who raises doubts about the importance attached to ideas such as "minzoku" and "nation-state"; and, who is seeking a way to overcome the ideological framework these ideas provide. My efforts to express these concerns have drawn criticisms from the most ethno-nationalistic quarter of the zainichi community who alleges that "what she is saying is just a confession that she is completely ignorant and incompetent about the situation surrounding zainichi Koreans."

I envy and, at the same time, fear their strength and confidence which enable them to cut down those who do not accept their view on "minzoku" at one stroke. I wince at the centrifugal force possessed by the idea of "minzoku" and the aggressiveness that it engenders. It also makes me sad that if one does not share a common factor called "minzoku" one is not given the chance for dialogue and is denied the effort to be understood.

This gag is yet another reason I cannot entrust myself to "*minzoku.*"

Running Away

> "Gypsies take pride in being artists. They take pride in not producing army men and thinkers. Armies kill, and thinkers bring in disruption."
> "Then what do you do when you are attacked or harassed?," I asked. "We run away."
> Their strongest point lies in the fact that they belong to no state. Not only have they never belonged to a state, they have never tried to build one themselves either. Ever since states came on stage in the 15th century, European history has been soaked with blood of peoples fighting to establish their own nation-state. Gypsies, however, have never belonged to a single state, have never acculturated to other *minzoku*, while they maintained their clan system from the time they left their place of origin in Punjabi, a province in India in the 10th century.
>
> Hiraoka Masaaki, "Street Performance and Freedom in the Outskirts."

How can I elude the web of words spun by ideas that try to capture me? How can I surmount the ideas of modernity which creates people like *zainichi* Koreans who drift in the crevice between nation-states even to this day? This is the theme I want to tackle now.

In 1492, European Christendom finished internal colonization and set out to colonize the world in a modern sense. It was Jacques Attali who spoke of Columbus' discovery of the New World not as a "discovery" but as an inevitable "encounter."

With the exclusion and expulsion of the Jews and the eradication of the Muslims, the year 1492 marked the transformation of Europe into an unadulterated Europe. The idea of pure Europe was established then.

The centripetal force inherent in the idea of Europe called for exclusion internally for the purpose of purification while its centrifugal force called for colonization of the world in the name of "Christianization" and "progress." Portraying itself as a benevolent bearer of civilization, Europe embarked on a voyage around the globe gracing the Others with its cultures.

The image of modern Europe suggested by Jacques Attali invokes a corresponding image of modern East Asia: an image of East Asia which was struck to the ground like dominoes on encountering the "Other" called Europe, and which later, in order to confront the next "Other," made itself over with the ideas that modern Europe had created.

Yes, the encounter with the "Other" left an indelible scar on the "Self." The "Self" needed an idea which supported it through its confrontation with the "Other" that left the scar. The idea of "*minzoku*" is one example, or that of "nation-state." Precisely because these ideas grew on confrontation with the "Other," they yearn for the illusory unadulterated "Self" and spur on the attendant elimination of the "Other." The unadulterated "Self" is often cruel, arrogant, violent, and inhumane towards the "Other."

Could an unadulterated "Self," nurtured by an unadulterated culture of an unadulterated *minzoku*, exist in this world? Could such a state possibly be? When I sense an impulse for purification beneath the words of those people who speak passionately of *minzoku* and who are driven by the forces of nationalism, I feel like running away from them, from *minzoku*, from nationalism.

Running away; running away from ideas; running away from the hostility they generate; running away from the ideological juggernaut imposed by others; running away like a gypsy.

The very existence of gypsies challenges modernity because they have drifted from one nation-state to another in Europe always as the "Other." Their culture is an amalgam of diverse cultures taken from the lands through which they have drifted. They have never been caught by the ideological juggernaut of modernity.

Yet, for someone like me, who has already been engulfed by the forces of modernity, to say that I want to live like a gypsy is merely a gesture of sentimental longing. Instead of searching for something that is capable of countering the forces of modernity, we need something totally novel that surpasses both modernity and its counterforce.

I therefore run away from the ideas that try to catch me when I am off guard. Sometimes, they appear as anodynes which would help me forget the pain. At other times, they appear as steroids to build muscles that enable me to carry on the fight. Their appearance is deceiving because by becoming dependent on them the essence of the pain is obscured. In distancing myself from these potentially maleficent ideas, I feel empathy towards the tactics employed by the gypsies, "running away."

Yet, however much one may try to run away from the ideological juggernaut and the conflicts it generates, there is something one cannot elude. That is the pain inscribed in the hearts of those who are destined to live as the "Others" wherever they go. If one chooses not to alleviate the pain by turning to ideas for spiritual support and by arming oneself with ideas, then one is doomed to live with the pain. I imagine that when the gypsies say they take pride in being artists they mean that they take pride in sublimating the pain with the help of art.

When I say that I run away like the gypsies, these words express my determination to live with the feeling that I am constantly drifting, looking for my place, and the feeling that I shall make the pain itself a place where I can secure my identity. As a *zainichi* Korean, I will not choose ideas such as *minzoku* and nation-state as havens for my identity. The emptiness of ideas: that is my identity. The pain that penetrates the emptiness is the force that drives me forward.

Translated from the Japanese by Odaka Naoko.

Contributors

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KYO Nobuko is a third-generation Korean resident of Japan. She is deeply interested in problems associated with identity, nationalism, and racism. Her diverse literary activities include the writing of essays, commentary on social issues, popular music reviews, and translation. She is currently examining ethnic nation-

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Index