

## **Social and Cultural Dimensions in East Asian Community Building**

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When it comes to assessing regional and international cooperation, there is a tendency to focus on economic, political, and security relations. Little attention is paid to the social and cultural aspects of such cooperation. Any assessment, however, of ASEAN-Japan cooperation toward building an East Asian Community must, of necessity, consider its social and cultural dimensions a central theme. Not only is social and cultural cooperation essential in community building, but also, because of East Asia's complex economic, political, and security profile, broad cooperation in social and cultural activities becomes the more critical in breaking down barriers.

There are several requirements for regional community building in non-economic and non-political/security areas, as was seen in the integration process in Europe. The first is the development of a positive, mutual understanding among the people of the nations within the region through education, educational and cultural exchange, information exchange, and media coverage. The second is the fostering of strong intellectual underpinnings through networks of opinion leaders by way of systematic dialogue, academic exchange, and collaborative activities. The third is the development of a sense of community on the individual level through cooperative efforts among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), nonprofit organizations (NPOs), and grassroots organizations. The question faced here is, in the evolution of the ASEAN-Japan relationship are these requirements being met?

Community building in East Asia demands perhaps greater effort than elsewhere because of the region's sheer diversity. Among countries in the

region, there are extreme levels of economic development that make the building of a regional community quite challenging. East Asia has the second largest economy in the world and some of the poorest economies in the world. The range of political systems is similarly problematic—with stable and fragile democracies, authoritarian and feudal governments, as well as communist societies. Different security interests complicate the picture further: Four countries are traditional allies of the United States, three have commercial agreements to service U.S. forces, two were bombed by the United States in the cold war, one has been under U.S. sanctions since the 1990s, and one defeated the United States in a long, bitter guerrilla war. Another could embroil itself in the future of Taiwan and compete for global supremacy. Then there is the additional matter of Japan's history in the region, where Japanese colonialism in the last century has left deep animosities, particularly in China and South Korea.

These obstacles notwithstanding, the ASEAN-Japan relationship, through concerted efforts at exchange and collaboration, goes a long way toward setting the stage for broader regional community building. At the same time, several factors have emerged that could work against this larger goal: the rise of China, which diverts Japanese attention from ASEAN; increasing contacts between Japan and South Korea; declining financial support from public and private sectors in Japan for this relationship; and fragile institutional infrastructure to advance the effort. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, with the changing regional and global environment, adjustments to the exchange effort as well as to the nature of the ASEAN-Japan relationship itself are called for.

## Government Initiatives in Exchange Activities

One striking feature of the ASEAN-Japan relationship is the emphasis Japanese leaders have placed on exchange as a critical element of enhancing the relationship. This would seem to reflect Japan's concern about a possible backlash against any perception of Japanese intention to dominate the region—economically now as opposed to militarily or colonially earlier. It is no coincidence that the Fukuda Doctrine was enunciated not long after the anti-Japan riot that greeted Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei's visit to Jakarta in January 1974. In his now famous policy speech in 1977 in Manila, Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo set forth the vision of a philosophical framework for Japan's relationship with ASEAN: "as a true friend

of the countries in Southeast Asia, Japan will do its best for consolidating the relationship of mutual confidence and trust based on 'heart-to-heart' understanding with these countries and become an equal partner of ASEAN and its member countries." This pledge was followed by declaration of the two other principles of the Fukuda Doctrine—Japan's renunciation of any desire to become a great military power and Japan's support for the economic development and stability of the entire region, including ASEAN countries and Indochina. But as regards the first principle, it is remarkable that a statement of this kind would provide a foundation for Japanese diplomatic relations over the years, for a series of government initiatives since have been based precisely on this policy framework. In fact, after Fukuda's tenure, almost every prime minister Japan has had has proposed an exchange program or created an institution to promote exchange with ASEAN countries:

- The ASEAN Cultural Fund of ¥5 billion to promote intra-ASEAN cultural exchange, established as a follow-up to Fukuda's ASEAN speech in 1977.
- The Southeast Asia Youth Invitation Program to promote better understanding of Japan among outstanding youth leaders of ASEAN countries through visits to Japan, established in 1979 by Ohira.
- The Japan Scholarship Fund for ASEAN Youth to provide US\$1 million each year between 1981 and 1989, announced in 1979 by Ohira during a visit to Manila. After a visit to Southeast Asia in 1989, Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru announced provision of an additional US\$10 million for the scholarship fund between 1991 and 1995.
- The Human Resources Development Project, established in 1981 by Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko during a visit to ASEAN countries.
- The Japan-ASEAN Research Cooperation Fund to promote intra-ASEAN area studies and ASEAN-Japan academic exchange, established in 1982 by Suzuki.
- The ASEAN-Japan Friendship Program for the 21st Century to bring Southeast Asian students to Japan for travel, training, and exchange with their Japanese counterparts, established in 1983 by Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro after a visit to Southeast Asia.
- The Southeast Asia Cultural Mission, organized in November 1987 in preparation for Takeshita's visit to ASEAN in December 1988.
- The Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Exchange Program, announced in December 1987 by Takeshita, incorporating ideas proposed by the Southeast Asia Cultural Mission, including the establishment of Japan

Foundation offices in ASEAN countries and the ASEAN Cultural Center, which in 1995 was transformed into the Asia Center.

- The Japan-ASEAN Multilateral Cultural Mission, proposed and established by Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro in January 1997.
- The Plan for Enhancing Human Resources Development and Human Resources Exchanges in East Asia, proposed by Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo in November 1999.

These initiatives have helped to promote exchange at the academic level as well as the citizen level. They have also developed a solid group of individuals, both Japanese and Southeast Asian, who by their experience have a favorable attitude toward one another and are committed to serve the relationship in their respective capacities. Many of these initiatives, however, have been put together hurriedly, without careful planning and essential follow-up mechanisms, typically occurring just prior to an official visit by the prime minister to ASEAN capitals for delivery as *omiyage*, or a souvenir gift.

Those who are familiar with Japan's policy-making process acknowledge that the most effective way to influence the Ministry of Finance (presently the Treasury Ministry) in initiatives requiring substantial financial outlay is to time their announcement with official visits of the prime minister abroad. Thus, if there is careful planning, such occasions can be useful in launching these programs. Takeshita's visit to ASEAN capitals in 1988 had been prepared for well by a study group of leaders from intellectual, educational, and cultural fields who had visited Southeast Asia and formulated recommendations to be announced at the time of the prime minister's official visit. Some of the initiatives taken at that time have had a long-term, continuing impact on exchange activities between Japan and ASEAN countries.

While exchange has been promoted, however, the proportion of government funding dedicated to exchange with ASEAN countries has been declining. This is due to the general contraction of the budget and competition for funding to promote similar exchange with other countries such as China and South Korea. Government officials, aware of competition for the limited funding, are exploring ways to promote exchange making qualitative modifications to programs, giving consideration to the changing regional environment and building on what has been accomplished over the years.

## Youth and Future Leadership Exchange

Some government-initiated projects have been instrumental in promoting the exchange of ASEAN students and youth leaders. Former students of the program have organized associations within each ASEAN country, and the ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni (ASCOJA), a council of these national associations, has been established to promote student exchange further. ASCOJA has a membership of 80,000, with alumni from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand; of these, 26,000 attended Japanese universities and 54,000 did research in Japan for a year or more. It is expected that ASCOJA members as well as former students of the program still residing in Japan will play a useful role in enhancing the relationship between Japan and ASEAN countries.

The ASEAN-Japan Friendship Association for the 21st Century, formed in 1988, is another group whose purpose is to unite and cement the bond of friendship among ASEAN alumni. Each ASEAN country takes its turn hosting the annual Youth Forum on the 21st of January each year; youths from Japan and ASEAN countries are invited, thus fostering a new generation of friendship.

Funds have been established by the governments of Japan and ASEAN countries that have made sustained exchange and cooperation possible. The ASEAN Secretariat administers the Japan Scholarship Fund for ASEAN Youth, the Japan-ASEAN Cooperation Promotion Program, and the ASEAN-Japan Special Cooperation Fund. In addition, Japan contributes about half the funding for the ASEAN Foundation, which aims to promote people-to-people exchanges, youth activities, and enhanced regional awareness in ASEAN.

There have been some innovative initiatives as well, largely from non-governmental sources, that have focused on future leaders in ASEAN countries and Japan in the hope that they will develop a close network based on mutual understanding and joint exploration of common challenges. Generally speaking, the emerging leaders in ASEAN countries tend to be more broadly engaged in regional or international affairs than are those whose specialty is Japan. Fostering this network of future leaders thus helps to ensure that the future of the ASEAN-Japan relationship will be placed positively in a broader regional context. Current programs for successor-generation leaders include the following:

—The Asia Leadership Fellow Program, begun in 1996 by the International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center, whose

aim is “creating a close personal network among Asian intellectual leaders who are committed to engaging in intellectual discourse beyond their disciplinary boundaries in order to confront and overcome the challenges that the global community is facing today.” Each year eight Asian fellows with diverse backgrounds, about half of whom are from ASEAN countries, are invited to spend two to three months in Japan to focus jointly on common themes.

- The Fellowship Program for Leaders of the Next Generation, begun in 1995 by the Japan Foundation Asia Center, for young Japanese working at nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations or enrolled in appropriate graduate degree programs. The fellowship supports research in the applicant’s field for twelve months; research must be carried out in another Asian country.
- The Fellowship for Asian Public Intellectuals, begun in 2000 by the Nippon Foundation, for young academics, researchers, NGO staff, journalists, and artists from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Japan who, during the program, pursue a set of common themes, spend a period of time in other countries, and meet once for a joint workshop. In 2002, thirty fellows were chosen to take part in intensive programs run by supporting institutions in the five participating countries.
- The Japan Institute of International Affairs Fellowship Program, initiated in 1989 by Foreign Minister Kuranari Tadashi, which provides young scholars the opportunity to conduct advanced research and intellectual exchange in Japan. The program, which aims to promote intellectual collaboration and mutual understanding between Japan and other countries, has since its inception had the participation of 109 fellows from ASEAN and South Asian nations.
- “The Young Leaders Exchange Program: Dialogue for Enhanced Partnership in the 21st Century,” carried out from 1999 to 2003 by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, which brought together more than twenty delegations of young leaders from the new ASEAN member countries—Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam—and Japan, including young government officials involved in policy planning. A one-week exchange workshop in Indonesia was organized for successor-generation leaders from Southeast Asian countries.
- The Hitachi Young Leaders Initiative, begun in 1996 by the Hitachi Corporation, which each year brings together twenty-four students from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Japan

for forums, workshops, and other activities to address common challenges and to foster a sense of community among participants.

These programs are designed to bring together future leaders in ASEAN, Japan, and other East Asian countries, encouraging them to work together for a period of time, thus enabling them to learn from each other and to develop collegial relations among themselves. There is the assumption in these programs that this region of East Asia will be more integrated in the future and that networks of young leaders will provide the joint leadership needed in the emerging regional community.

## Academic and Intellectual Exchange

It is generally acknowledged that academic research, particularly policy-relevant research, on Southeast Asia has not been sufficiently emphasized in Japanese universities. There are few university-wide institutes for comprehensive study in this area, and much of the academic training and research efforts has depended on the limited number of scholars with a specialty in Southeast Asia or ASEAN.

In addition to the paucity of policy research on ASEAN, there is now the challenge of studying and analyzing ASEAN-Japan relations in the broader context of East Asia, which is gaining importance as an emerging region. In particular, most of the political, security, and economic issues in the ASEAN-Japan relationship are now closely related to those issues found in the respective relationships ASEAN and Japan have with China, South Korea, and other countries. Because of the compartmentalization of academic disciplines and areas of concentration, however, institutions of higher learning in Japan are not well suited for comprehensive study or research on policy issues related to Japan's relationship with a region such as East Asia. While it may not be feasible to develop a center of East Asian Studies in the near future, launching a major study project on the future of East Asia as a regional community and Japan's role in its development is conceivable and warrants serious consideration.

Japan's intellectual and academic outreach to ASEAN, the Asia Pacific region, and, more recently, to East Asia has been facilitated by regional track two activities such as conferences, seminars, and joint studies. These efforts have been promoted by research institutions that initially specialized in international security issues and have expanded their focus to include economic and social issues. In particular, ASEAN-ISIS (ASEAN Institutes for

Strategic and International Studies) and its member institutes in ASEAN countries have played a catalytic role in enabling Japanese research institutions and policy analysts to reach out to their Southeast Asian counterparts. Similarly, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), established in 1993, and the Asia-Pacific Roundtable (APR), established in 1987, have become entry points for Japanese international security specialists to participate in broader regional dialogue and studies.

One sustained effort to promote intellectual dialogue and policy research between ASEAN and Japan has been promoted by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) in collaboration with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), several institutions under ASEAN-ISIS, and the East-West Seminar of Tokyo. In 1977, JCIE initiated the ASEAN-Japan Dialogue, a project involving policy research and dialogue, to address salient issues in the ASEAN-Japan bilateral relationship as well as in the multilateral environment surrounding it. The project, which lasted until 1992, was organized in six phases over the period of fifteen years, and the subjects under study included the roles of trade and investment in the development of ASEAN countries, ASEAN-Japan mutual perceptions, security and political relations, the role of China, and the concept of a Pacific community. This project of interdisciplinary, inter-professional policy research and dialogue has contributed significantly to the development of a close network of policy specialists from diverse academic disciplines and professional fields in ASEAN and Japan. The later stages of the project included outreach to specialists in China and South Korea, after which these two countries started to contribute to the dialogue.

Following up on the ASEAN-Japan Dialogue series, JCIE, with major funding from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, launched the Asia Pacific Agenda Project (APAP), a consortium of policy research institutions in Australia, Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, and the United States (at the East-West Center) in 1996. APAP promotes joint policy studies that usually culminate in a major conference convening policy experts from universities and research institutions, public intellectuals, business leaders, journalists, and government officials participating in a private capacity. The current phase of the policy study project on "ASEAN-Japan Cooperation in East Asia Community Building" was preceded by a study and dialogue project on "The Rise of China and the Governance of the Asia Pacific Region."

Another series of intellectual dialogue buttressed by joint studies is "An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow," initiated by JCIE in



December 1998 in collaboration with ISEAS. This followed upon the suggestion of Obuchi, while he was foreign minister, to conduct regional dialogue and joint studies that focused on human security issues. A series of five conferences has been organized thus far, bringing together intellectuals and NGO leaders to explore how the concept of human security can be put into action.

The Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA) has organized a range of research and dialogue projects within ASEAN countries over the years, one of which was a Japan consultation conference, in October 2000, on the theme "Towards Vision 2020: ASEAN-Japan Consultation Conference on the Hanoi Plan of Action." The most recent conference organized by JIIA was on "Building a New Japan-ASEAN Partnership—Governance, Human Security and Community Building," held in September 2003 as part of the ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year.

Finally, the ongoing project of the ASEAN-Japan Research Institute Meeting at the Institute of Developing Economies of the Japan External Trade Organization is notable in view of the overall paucity of such efforts in Japan. Launched in October 2002, IDE-JETRO is collaborating with policy research groups in each ASEAN country, among them the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Malaysian Institute of Economic Research, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Singapore Institute of International Affairs, Thailand Development Research Institute, and Thammasat University in Thailand. As a part of this project, IDE-JETRO invites policy analysts from Southeast Asian countries to Japan for a series of meetings and workshops.

As we look toward the future of East Asia, the development of institutional infrastructures to focus on the diverse policy issues that countries in the region will have to address individually and cooperatively is imperative.

## Media and Information Technology

Media and information technology (IT) are important vehicles for the exchange of knowledge within and among countries. In this regard, they play a critical role in the process of community building. It is, however, in this area where there are huge gaps among ASEAN countries and Japan. The physical and human infrastructures of media and IT in these countries are grossly uneven, with the new ASEAN members on the underdeveloped end, Japan, Singapore, and Malaysia on the developed end, and

the rest at varying stages along the spectrum. Obviously there is a need to narrow the gaps if media and IT are to serve the goal of regional community building.

In the field of media, several groups in the region have launched a variety of activities to improve the situation. These include not only the distribution of publications and audiovisual materials, but also the creating of networks and the building of professional capacity, particularly for new ASEAN member countries:

- The Publication Exchange classification of activities of the Japan Foundation, which assists publishing companies in Japan and abroad in the publication of important Japan-related books in foreign languages. It also publishes, for distribution abroad, periodicals for people interested in cultural exchange in Japan.
- The Audio-Visual Exchange classification of activities of the Japan Foundation, which produces international versions of Japanese television programs, including dramas, documentaries, and cultural and feature films, and screens them abroad in an effort to introduce Japanese culture overseas. In Japan, conversely, it holds film festivals promoting foreign films. Monetary support is provided for film production by both overseas and domestic groups.
- The Asia-Pacific Journalists Meeting of the Foreign Press Center, which was organized in 1995 in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Foundation. At its November 2003 gathering, which included participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, the theme was “ASEAN-Japanese Media: Common Issues and Common Challenges,” discussion of which was broken down into “How media in ASEAN countries have reported on Japan, and vice versa, in the past,” “Key issues reported by the region’s day-to-day media—security, economic development, foreign affairs, social issues, religion, etc.” and “Toward greater cooperation for stronger presentation of the region’s viewpoints and media growth, including press freedom and economic underpinnings.” The Foreign Press Center Fellowship Programmes and Study Courses were organized to increase awareness of Japan among young journalists from ASEAN and other regions. The one-month program, which includes tours through regional Japan, is conducted through lectures by Japanese specialists on the economy, politics, social issues, and culture.
- The Journalist Forum in Southeast Asia, part of the Sasakawa Southeast Asia Cooperation Fund, which as a human resource development

program, seeks to promote journalism, deepen mutual understanding, and build personal networks among the region's journalists. In 2000–2002, twenty journalists from Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, and other countries took part in the forum.

—Journalist Training for Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar, part of the Sasakawa Southeast Asia Cooperation Fund, which was set up for professional capacity building for journalists in these new ASEAN member states. In 2000, twelve journalists (six from Myanmar) participated in the training, which covered the basics of journalism, elimination of subjectivity, and presentation of different opinions in print media.

In this knowledge and information age, IT has been a powerful tool for disseminating information and putting people in touch with each other in real time. Its role in community building has been discussed in a recent paper by Paul Evans and Cameron Ortis entitled “IT and Asia-Pacific Security: Encountering the Dark Side.” “IT,” the authors write, “promised to open new opportunities for building networks for cooperation and understanding, pluralizing policy discussion, and creating the foundations for a nascent regional community. More practically IT could be an instrument for connecting the organizers of meetings, improving the quality of research and its quick and effective dissemination, expanding the reach of the dialogue process, recruiting new participants, and reducing costs.” Moreover, beneath the advances of IT is a consistent process of changes in mindset and cultural transformation. Herein lies what could be the most significant impact of IT on government-to-people dynamics—it opens up the resource of communication channels for risk takers and innovators to evolve ways of formation of and advocacy in civil society.

This facility for community building afforded by IT has the additional benefit that it can be performed without physical infrastructures or IT engineers. Yet, at present, many participants in Asian dialogue, for example, do not use the Internet; those who do, or who express the desire to learn more about it, have a much lower level of knowledge about the Internet than their counterparts in North America, Australia, and Europe. ASEAN governments, furthermore, may be wary of IT because the principle of noninterference in internal affairs, highly valued within ASEAN, would be difficult to support when evidence of internal events and affairs is readily available on the Internet. Even so, the Internet provides a variety of opportunities that governments would welcome—such as the promotion of commerce and tourism, and even the enhancement of their governance.

Within this context, there has been marked growth in the spread of IT in the region, including in ASEAN countries, although rates vary widely. Prior to the establishment of the e-ASEAN Task Force in November 1999, data from the International Telecommunication Union indicated that there were fewer than two in 10,000 Cambodians or Vietnamese who used the Internet, compared with nearly 3,000 in 10,000 Singaporeans who did. Of the more than 300 million people connected to the Internet at present around the world, only 3.2 million, or less than 1 percent, are in Southeast Asia. Japan, however, and several ASEAN countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand—do already have strong communications links with each other in terms of the MITT indicator (Minutes of Telecommunications Traffic) for public voice circuits. The other ASEAN countries need to be incorporated into this so-called Japanese telecontinent.

Recognizing the importance of IT and ASEAN countries' disadvantage in this area, in November 2000 ASEAN adopted the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement to narrow the digital divide within the region. Fourteen projects, to be undertaken by the private sector, have been proposed so far, including e-commerce, tourism, real estate, culture, information, education, entrepreneurial development, and careers and recruitment. The projects fall under four clusters: ASEAN Information Infrastructure, e-Commerce, e-Society, and e-Government. These initiatives are to be extended to the ASEAN + 3 framework to include China, Japan, and South Korea.

In this regard, Japan could make a significant contribution to closing the IT gap between Japan and ASEAN and within ASEAN. Even ahead of the e-ASEAN initiative in Southeast Asia, Japan had put into motion several programs that contribute to the building of IT capability for its neighbors:

—The Center for International Cooperation for Computerization (CICC), an NPO established in 1983 to assist developing countries in computerization of information to facilitate social and economic development. In conjunction with the Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), JETRO, and other organizations, CICC conducts training programs both in Japan for invited participants and on-site in various countries. As of March 2003, approximately two thousand people had come to Japan for IT training, about half of them from ASEAN countries. As of February 2002, about 2,500 people had attended on-site training, which

has included 114 courses in eighteen countries, about four-fifths in ASEAN countries. CICC has offices in Singapore and Shanghai.

—The Asian Forum for Standardization of Information Technology, which is held yearly. The forum participants are mindful of the fact that Asian languages have complicated character sets and that Asian cultures may present challenges that stand in the way of advancing computerization.

After the e-ASEAN initiative, Japan announced in Okinawa in 2000 a comprehensive IT cooperation package of US\$15 billion over five years to bridge the digital divide around the world. ASEAN and Japan ministers stated jointly that “IT promotion and the narrowing of the digital divide should be a major focus for future ASEAN-Japan cooperation.” To follow through with this initiative, a bilateral meeting was held in September 2001 on ICT cooperation. After each side took stock, it was agreed that cooperation would be pursued in the following areas: policy and institution building, information infrastructure, human resources development, e-government, e-society, content, e-commerce, and promotion and facilitation of trade and investment. With the spread of IT capability helped thus by Japan, knowledge acquired through IT could serve as a medium of exchange on which to build an East Asian community.

## Grassroots Exchange

With the growing interdependence between ASEAN countries and Japan in recent years, there has been accompanying growth in exchange between municipal communities, NGOs and NPOs, and citizens in general. These activities clearly provide a broader basis for a close cooperative relationship between ASEAN and Japan as well as for their relationships with other countries in East Asia.

Unlike Japan’s relationship with China and South Korea, sister-city relationships between Japan cities and ASEAN cities are few. As of April 2002, there were only thirty-three Japan-ASEAN sister-city relationships out of 1,430 such relationships that 939 Japanese municipalities had with cities around the world. This lack of Japan-ASEAN sister-city relationships may be due to the financial burden and lack of administrative mechanisms on the part of municipalities in ASEAN countries. Nonetheless, there have been impressive regional efforts involving municipalities in Japan and countries in ASEAN and East Asia, as shown by these examples: —The Asia-Kyushu Regional Exchange Summit, which was started in 1994

at the initiative of Hiramatsu Morihiko, governor of Oita Prefecture in Kyushu, with the participation of governors and mayors from Kyushu and Southeast Asia. Meetings of the summit provide a venue for discussion of the challenges of community building, including regional development and economic revitalization. The topic of the 2002 meeting, held in Cambodia, was the role of regional exchange in human resource development and sustainable development of tourism. This was the eighth meeting of the summit, and forty-six municipalities from Kyushu, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam were represented.

—The Kitakyushu Conference on Environmental Cooperation among Cities in the Asian Region, which was held in 1997. Cities represented were Dalian, China; Batangas and Cebu, Philippines; Ho Chin Minh City, Vietnam; Penang, Malaysia; and Semarang and Surabaya, Indonesia.

Japanese NGOs have been developing a close working relationship with NGOs in Southeast Asia on diverse challenges such as human rights, gender equality, human trafficking, immigration, environment, rural development, post-conflict development, de-mining, and HIV. As civil society organizations have grown impressively in both Japan and Southeast Asian countries, an increasing number are becoming involved in such collaborative activities. According to a recent survey by the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), over four hundred Japanese NGOs are involved in international cooperation, 125 of them in ASEAN countries, especially Cambodia.

In line with the UN Millennium Development Goals, Ito Michio, one of the founders of JANIC, organized in 2002 the Asia-Japan Partnership Network for Poverty Reduction (AJPN) with NGO networks in eleven Asian countries. More than three thousand organizations are affiliated with AJPN, whose goal is to halve the poverty rate of Asia by 2015 and to improve the standard of living of the poor. Their activities include raising public consciousness, creating networks, securing funding for collaborative activities, and making policy recommendations.

Japanese civil society organizations take active part in several international and regional organizations that provide frameworks and forums for cooperation and information exchange among nongovernmental organizations, among them the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, the Conference on Asian Foundations and Organizations, and the Synergos Institute. The International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) group

provides another opportunity for researchers and scholars from Asia to work together on the challenges facing civil society organizations.

With increasing globalization and interdependence, the importance of citizen involvement, often represented by NGOs and NPOs, in managing external relationships and promoting regional and international governance has become pronounced in recent years. Against this background, ASEAN-ISIS organized the first ASEAN People's Assembly (APA) in Batam, Indonesia, in November 2000, followed by the second APA in Bali two years later. The third APA was held in Manila on September 2003, with the theme "Toward a Community of Caring Societies." The fourth APA is being planned for November 2003, also in Manila. While APA's primary goal is to promote an ASEAN community through mutual understanding and tolerance for diversity, it has been seeking Japanese participation. Such forums can serve the purpose of bringing Southeast Asian and Japanese people together, and eventually people from other East Asian nations as well, for the purpose of building a broader regional community. In fact, a member of ASEAN-ISIS recently proposed an East Asia-wide people's assembly patterned after APA.

### Enhancing ASEAN-Japan Exchange for East Asia Community Building

The breadth and intensity of educational, cultural, and intellectual exchange between ASEAN countries and Japan in the past thirty years provide a unique and effective base for broader exchange involving other countries in East Asia. They also meet the three requirements for community building identified above: the development of positive, mutual understanding; the fostering of intellectual underpinnings; and the development of a sense of community. This means that while ASEAN-Japan exchange activities have to be strengthened, as much as possible a broader East Asian regional orientation should be introduced into the ongoing exchange activities. Particularly from the perspective of regional community building, there should be a strategic approach for advancing diverse exchange activities between Japan and ASEAN countries further. The following draft recommendations are offered:

1. ASEAN-Japan cooperation in strengthening the intellectual underpinnings of East Asia community building. Qualitative adjustments to exchange efforts are called for in order to provide more substantive

input to the debate on regional community building. In particular, track two exercises to promote nongovernmental policy research and dialogue among intellectual leaders and opinion leaders on both sides should be strengthened with a view to consolidating and broadening the networks of such policy research institutions, intellectual leaders, and public intellectuals. For this purpose, the governments of ASEAN countries and Japan might consider these recommendations:

- a) *Strengthen institutional infrastructure for intellectual exchange.* There are only a few institutions in Japan and in ASEAN countries that can promote and facilitate, on a sustained and active basis, intellectual exchange and policy dialogue. Any new proposal for intellectual exchange should be accompanied by a proposal to provide substantial support for these institutions that are playing a catalytic role.
  - b) *Strengthen regional organizations to promote regional intellectual exchange.* Regional organizations, such as ASEAN-ISIS, that have been critical to promoting regional policy dialogue and joint studies should be strengthened with particular emphasis on broadening the regional network of policy research institutions and on bringing into the network emerging intellectual leaders and public intellectuals of the region.
  - c) *Undertake a mapping of intellectual leaders and public intellectuals in ASEAN, Japan, and other countries in East Asia.* It is valuable to identify intellectual leaders, well established and emerging, who may be able to strengthen collaborative regional networks. A preliminary study conducted by JCIE with Japan Foreign Ministry funding may be a useful starting point.
2. Joint research and dialogue on the emerging East Asia regional community. Research institutions and universities in Japan and ASEAN countries should enhance their programs to address issues related to the emerging East Asian regional community. More comprehensive and sustained efforts than are presently possible will be needed with multidisciplinary approaches and inter-professional participation. The recommendations in this regard are the following:
- a) *Strengthen key ongoing programs for intellectual dialogue in ASEAN and Japan to play a greater role in regional institution building.* These programs include the Asia Pacific Agenda Project, the ASEAN People's Assembly, and the First East Asia Congress, which took place in August 2003. The governments of ASEAN and Japan should help these programs access funds already allocated by Japan—for example,



within the ASEAN Foundation—for community building–related objectives.

- b) *Strengthen fellowship and scholarship programs to develop future intellectual leaders for building an East Asian regional community.* These intellectual leaders could form a cadre that would deal with issues related to community building in the region. Training and exchange of scholars and researchers in this field will be essential both in Japan and ASEAN countries.
3. Joint study and program cooperation on human security. Human security was established as one of the pillars of Japan's foreign policy directions during the tenure of Prime Minister Obuchi. While some earlier enthusiasm for this concept may have dissipated, opportunities remain for ASEAN-Japan cooperation to convert the concept into concrete action. Human security pays special attention to people during violent conflict and in post-conflict situations, people who through such situations are forced to move, and people suffering from economic insecurity, unavailability and unaffordability of essential health care, and illiteracy and intolerance. As such, human security encompasses many of the policy priorities of Japan and ASEAN countries, thus providing areas for collaboration. The recommendations for areas of collaboration are the following:
    - a) *Promote policy dialogue and exploration of ideas for action by involving scholars and practitioners in Japan, ASEAN, and East Asia.* Funding might be procured from the Human Security Grassroots Fund of ¥15 billion, established by the Japanese government in the fiscal 2003 budget.
    - b) *Conduct a survey of successful efforts to address the human security concerns in ASEAN countries and East Asia.* Such a survey is essential to developing a better understanding of how the concept can be implemented creatively and meaningfully.
    - c) *Undertake case studies of how civil society organizations, international organizations, and governments can work together on human security issues.* This is an area where collaboration is indispensable. Perhaps the agreement between ASEAN and Japan on e-ASEAN could be expanded to setting guidelines for the use of IT to promote cultural exchange and greater mutual understanding among the nations of East Asia.
  4. IT capability improved and the digital divide narrowed. The uses of IT for various purposes, including community building, are increasingly

being recognized. Many ASEAN countries will require the sustained assistance and cooperation of Japan to catch up with the rest of the region in the digital field. In this regard, the following recommendations are offered:

- a) *Expand ASEAN-Japan cooperation within the e-ASEAN framework to cultural and intellectual exchange.* Here the content of IT cooperation should be a central theme.
- b) *Enhance learning and educational opportunities through electronic delivery methods.* This could be implemented through accreditation of private providers that use IT and the Internet as an instructional tool—as has been experimented with in Singapore—as well as funding the use of IT in public universities—common among the newly industrializing economies and throughout Asia Pacific, with the exception of the transition economies.