



## Rebuilding a national identity

Time for a “third opening”

Ken'ichi Matsumoto, critic, writer, and professor at Reitaku University, talks with SPF Chairman Setsuya Tabuchi

### Not yet the “Asian century”

**Setsuya Tabuchi:** Broadly speaking, the world can be divided into four major economic blocs: North America, the European Union, Asia, and the Islamic world except for Africa. Some people predict the advent of the “Asian age” in 50 years or so. What do you think?

**Ken'ichi Matsumoto:** Before answering your question, I'd like to talk about the course of Asia's economic development so far. Before World War II Japan followed a strategy based on military might, developing by amassing a large territory and abundant resources. After the war, though, it switched to a direction of no territory, no resources, and, fundamentally, no military power. It shifted to a national strategy based on the economy, buying resources from overseas, fostering strong



industries, and developing through trade. That strategy was successful, and through the 1960s Japan enjoyed a period of rapid growth.

The “four little dragons” of Asia—Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan—succeeded by emulating Japan, and in the 1980s Malaysia, Thailand, and other Asian countries also achieved development. Finally China joined the chase. In the 1990s Asia as a whole became vigorous, with each country engaging in nation building based on its own economic power.

**Tabuchi:** I think Japan grew affluent in large part by reaping the benefits of the cold war.

**Matsumoto:** It's true that during the cold war all Japan had to do was follow America's lead as it waged war in the name of anticommunism on the Korean Peninsula and in Vietnam and provide economic assistance. As a result Japan was able to achieve economic development under U.S. protection. The “four little dragons” and the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations were able to do the same by exporting goods to the United States. In the 1990s some people

even began prophesying that the twenty-first century would be the “Asian age.”

A little before the Asian currency crisis of 1997 I wrote a magazine article cautioning that the Asian century wouldn't come soon. Vigorous though Asian countries appeared, their underpinnings were actually weak. Their economic development depended to a great extent on Western hedge funds and other short-term capital. This short-term capital could take flight extremely swiftly; it could even be pulled out overnight. As a matter of fact, in July 1997 Western hedge funds pulled out all at once, sending the Thai baht, the Malaysian ringgit, and the Korean won tumbling in quick succession and plunging those countries into a currency crisis.

**Tabuchi:** It seems to me they hadn't done their homework.

**Matsumoto:** Both in order to avoid another such situation and to address environmental and security problems, from now on Asian countries need to think jointly. International organizations and international law, whether it be the World Trade Organization or the International Court of Justice, have been

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created almost entirely by the West. Asia finally began to develop 20 or 30 years ago; it hasn't yet created forums and agreements for joint debate. Until it does, Asia won't be able to develop as a cohesive entity. That's why I thought the Asian age wouldn't arrive soon.

### Japan's new isolationism

**Tabuchi:** I agree. But I have a feeling Japan won't take leadership in the coming period.

On another subject, you're well known for your research on Ikki Kita [1883–1937]. A succession of great men—people like Kita, Kanji Ishihara [1889–1949], and Kaishu Katsu [1823–99]—emerged in Japan's isolationist period or shortly thereafter. In contrast, there's a lot about Japan's young people today that worries me. I hear that at the University of Tokyo entrance ceremony all the students are accompanied by their mothers. I'm a survivor of the old Imperial Navy. When I was 20 I was about to be sent to the front as a student armed with a rifle. When I compare that with students accompanied by their mothers to a university entrance ceremony I feel depressed.

**Matsumoto:** Still, I think the Japanese people deserve praise for having built a peaceful, affluent, and stable nation. It's said that Japan has been internationalized, but in fact it's now in a kind of isolationist condition. It's my pet theory that when a country becomes isolationist

because of defeat in war and there is sustained peace, affluence, and stability in a closed environment, the level of culture rises.

To give an earlier example, after the Japanese forces lost the Battle of Hakusukinoe in 663 and withdrew from the Korean Peninsula, in the succeeding Nara [710–94] and Heian [794–1185] periods Japan sealed itself off almost totally. Meanwhile, it indigenized the elements of civilization it had introduced from continental Asia, such as the *kanji* writing system, the *ritsuryo* system of legal and administrative codes, and Buddhism, and gave birth to such superb cultural artifacts as the *Tale of Genji*.

The same thing happened in the Edo period [1600–1868]. The isolation imposed after the failure of the warlord Hideyoshi Toyotomi's Korean expeditions of 1592 and 1597 lasted some 260 years. The Tokugawa shogunate [1603–1867] created peace, affluence, and stability, and a highly sophisticated culture flourished, typified by haiku poetry, *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, and ceramics. In today's Japan, too, almost 60 years after its defeat in World War II, there's a high level of culture.

If that state of affairs persists, however, a country finds itself lagging behind world trends. The world order can change suddenly. When it does, it's necessary to adapt. But people who don't understand the world situation lack a sense of crisis. Reform begins with the sense of crisis expressed by the thinker Shozan Sakuma [1811–64], who said, in effect, "Since the world has already begun to change, Japan too has to acquire [Western] civilization." Men like Katsu and Kita understood how the world was changing and how Japan should change itself.

I've been studying Kita for over 30 years. There has been a bias against him in postwar Japan, when he has been labeled as a right-winger and an ultranationalist. I think that's why there hasn't been proper study of his thought.

**Tabuchi:** He was a romantic, wasn't he?

**Matsumoto:** Yes. And he understood the world situation very well.

He was executed in 1937, after the failed coup attempt of February 26, 1936, four years before the commencement of hostilities between Japan and the United States. In his petition of 1932, he wrote that Japan should never go to war with the United States. If Japan fought America, Britain would be sure to come to America's aid, and China would also take America's side. So, probably, would Russia, which had been defeated by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5. So if Japan went to war with the United States it would have to fight America, Britain, China, and Russia. He was the only person who understood the world situation well enough back in 1932 to realize that war between Japan and America would lead to world war. I think he was brilliant.

**Tabuchi:** But by and large people like Kita, who could see the way the world was going, came to a bad end, didn't they?

**Matsumoto:** Most of those around the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 were killed. Shozan Sakuma, the thinker during the final years of the Edo period whom I most admire, was assassinated. But perhaps that was an almost inevitable fate for a thinker. The power of thinkers lies in their persistent advocacy. It is the activists who actually campaign for change in response to that thought who change society as a whole. In the last years of the Edo period they included such patriots as Ryoma Sakamoto [1836–67] and Shinsaku Takasugi [1839–67]. Finally, political figures like Takayoshi Kido [1833–77] and Takamori Saigo [1827–77] emerged.

When you have the three types—thinkers, activists, and political figures—change goes well. Even if the thinkers and activists die in the process, change succeeds if they manage to pass the baton on to the political figures. That's why the Meiji Restoration was a successful revolution. Today we truly need a national change like the Meiji Restoration.

### Japan's "third opening"

**Tabuchi:** After isolation comes national opening. Because of Japan's

falling birthrate, the number of children is dwindling rapidly. The difficulty in attracting brides to rural areas has also become a problem. Won't we see more and more foreigners in Japan from now on, not only as labor but also as rural brides?

**Matsumoto:** The numbers are already growing.

**Tabuchi:** In that case, it seems to me, Japan is bound to change.

**Matsumoto:** If the transition from the Edo period to the Meiji era [1868–1912] was Japan's first opening and the postwar period, when Japan switched from the "territorial game"—a national strategy based on military might—to the "wealth game"—a strategy based on economic might—was the second opening, Japan is now approaching its third opening, I think. In meeting this third opening in the context of an international situation shaped by advancing globalization, naturally Japan will have to admit foreigners. But I think the falling birthrate is a separate problem.

Young people today don't know how to go about constructing their lives. They don't know what will become of Japanese society, including the pension problem, so they can't have hope in the future. In the 1960s young people aspired to the affluence represented by "must-have" products and had hope that society would develop; they had a dream. But today's young people can't have hope in the future, so they've tuned out. The question is why. The falling birthrate is the result of young people wondering what point there is in having children. That's why policy incentives and subsidies for having children won't do any good.

The government needs to show what kind of nation Japan will create for the future, what the national goals are. If big national goals are articulated, individuals' life goals and hope should emerge. Some people may think that because prewar Japan established national goals that failed, it's better not to have national goals. But to drift around without any national design is an oddity in the eyes of other countries,

I think. Because they don't know what Japan will do.

**Tabuchi:** Does this mean we should create national goals for a third opening?

**Matsumoto:** Yes. To do so, first Japan should have a clear sense of what kind of nation it is and then set national goals that are responsive to the new age. China, for example, revised its constitution in 1993, making its national goals a rich country and a strong military. With that national support, the Chinese are focusing on making money. Since their own lives are moving in accordance with the national goals, the Chinese are full of vigor.

**Tabuchi:** What do you think Japan should aim for?

**Matsumoto:** After the collapse of the cold-war setup, the circumstances dictated that each country protect itself. At first glance this appears similar to the situation that prevailed at the time of World War I, but it differs in that now, both militarily and economically, no country can protect itself on its own. To survive in such a world, each country needs to recognize what kind of country it is and rebuild its national identity accordingly.

I think Japan, with its limited territory and lack of natural resources, shouldn't vie with the huge countries of China and the United States in the aim to be "number one" but should aim to be the "only one"—that is, unique—understanding and maximizing its own special characteristics. The Japanese, secluding themselves in their little island country, have made everything well for themselves while building a peaceful, affluent, and stable environment. They are skillful making things. Looking at overseas Chinese, I get the impression that the Chinese are particularly skillful moving goods. And the Jews and Singaporeans excel in moving money. I think the Japanese should recognize anew that they are a people who enjoy making good products and possess a high level of technological skill.

**Tabuchi:** In connection with a third opening, I wonder whether Japan has patriots and politicians of the caliber of those at the time of the



### Ken'ichi Matsumoto

Ken'ichi Matsumoto was born in Gunma Prefecture, Japan, in 1946. After graduating from the University of Tokyo with a degree in economics in 1968, he worked for Asahi Glass Co. before pursuing graduate studies in modern Japanese literature at Hosei University. In 1971, while still a graduate student, he published *The Young Ikki Kita* (in Japanese) and since then has pursued a career as a critic and writer as well as an academic. He became a professor at Kyoto Seika University in 1989 and a professor at Reitaku University in 1994. His many books (in Japanese) include *The Ideology of the Right Wing*, *The Postwar Mentality*, *The Legend of Yukio Mishima as Exile*, *The Game of World History Transcends Japan*, *I Have an Eternal Heart*, *A Critical Biography of Shozan Sakuma*, *Civilization of Sand*, *Civilization of Stone*, *Civilization of Mud*, the five-volume *Critical Biography of Ikki Kita*, and *Modern Asia's History of the Spirit*.

Meiji Restoration.

**Matsumoto:** Under the postwar education system, if you want to become a politician you study law at university; in other words, you study for an individual occupation. This is "private" learning, not "public" learning. Nowadays, because there's such a dislike of the excesses caused by the way the state monopolized "selfless devotion to the public sphere" and imposed it on people in the prewar period, there's no field of learning concerning the public sphere—how to maintain and run the nation. That kind of cultivation still existed in the Tokugawa period and the Meiji era. People cultivated in the public sphere

dedicated themselves totally to politics. Now, though, people become politicians for the sake of private rights and interests or for preservation of the organization.

### Thoughts on amending the constitution

**Tabuchi:** What, specifically, is needed to rebuild the Japanese people's national identity? I think amending the constitution is necessary, but what do you think?

**Matsumoto:** We should think about the constitution's provisions on the emperor and Article 9, and also the Fundamental Law of Education. Article 9 is what's made the constitution known as the "peace constitution." We need to bring a clear-eyed historical perception to bear here. Paragraph 1 of Article 9 renounces war as a means of settling international disputes. It was inserted as a penalty for Japan's violating the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact with the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and subsequent actions. Paragraph 2 forbids the possession of armed forces. There are other countries that have constitutional provisions renouncing war, but no other country forbids the possession of armed forces. This provision was added because Japan was seen as a belligerent nation. But you can't protect your country without military power.

I'm against sending troops to Iraq without amending the constitution. They say the Self-Defense Force personnel have hardly any weapons, but they have machine guns and heavy firearms. In short, they possess military power. The state shouldn't perpetrate deceit. We should make it clear that our country maintains the minimum force necessary to protect itself.

This constitution that forbids the possession of war potential is misrepresenting reality. When the state is deceitful, it can't tell young people and children that they shouldn't be duplicitous or tell lies. The constitution, as the expression of the national principle, mustn't be deceitful. That's why I think amendment of Article 9 is necessary.

**Tabuchi:** It's absolutely essential.

**Matsumoto:** Moreover, the present Fundamental Law of Education extols respect for the individual alone. Because of memories of the prewar period, the authorities probably don't want to use the terms "public" and "nation." But we should be fully conscious of the existence of public entities, including the emperor. There's absolutely nothing about this in the Fundamental Law. Post-war Japan regained its vigor by choosing private occupations, protecting private rights, and pursuing private interests, but under today's education the private sphere has gone too far and there's no concept of the public sphere.

**Tabuchi:** The emperor epitomizes Japan's public sphere, doesn't he?

**Matsumoto:** That's right. The ideograph for "public" [公], read *koh* or *ohyake*, originally meant "big house." The opposing concept is expressed by the character for "private" [私], or *shi*. The left-hand component of *shi* [禾] means "harvest" or "crop." It is made up of the character for tree [木] topped by a diagonal stroke [丿], which together mean "bearing fruit"—in other words, ripened ears of rice. The right-hand component [厶], read *mu*, denotes an arm bent at the elbow and raised to strike. Altogether, then, the character *shi* indicates that the harvest is mine, in other words, I monopolize the harvest. If education taught this meaning, it would be crystal clear that fighting to monopolize things is bad.

The character *koh* is composed of the component *mu* [厶] topped by the component [八], read *hachi*, which means "go against, defy" and "open." Because the emperor is the quintessence of *koh*, the public sphere, he mustn't advocate *shi*, private interests. For the sake of the nation and the perpetuity of the people, the Japanese created an imperial system different from China's authoritarian imperial system. If the emperor started saying, "I don't want to do this" or "I want to do that," it would be only natural that some people would say, "Who needs an imperial system?"

**Tabuchi:** Some people point out that there's a contradiction between

the main principle of democracy and the imperial system.

**Matsumoto:** The first to do so was the writer Yukio Mishima [1925–70]. Article 1 of the constitution speaks of the emperor "deriving his position from the will of the people," which expresses the democratic principle. But Article 2 says that "the Imperial Throne shall be dynastic," which is inconsistent with the democratic principle. That's why Mishima repudiated the democratic principle and advocated a national principle that places the emperor, as a cultural value, at the center. But in a nation like Japan, with a long history, we find many such double standards.

For a constitution less than 120 years old to try to delimit an institution 2,000 years old itself is too much to ask. To survive the times it's necessary to understand the world situation and acquire the principles and rules that are part of the civilization of the times. On the other hand, there's the people's way of life, in other words, their culture. "Double standard" has a derogatory connotation, but we need to think of civilization and culture as different.

There's still a kind of defeatism in Japan that comes from having lost World War II. That's why some people say it serves the national interest to follow America. But if things continue as they are, eventually the world will ask us what the spirit or backbone of our nation is. Japan recognized that the war was a mistake, engaged in soul searching, and reformed the nation. In that process it amended the prewar constitution and replaced the Imperial Rescript on Education with the Fundamental Law of Education. Now, as we approach the third opening, we need to undertake nation building again.

To me, the third opening doesn't mean just discerning the world situation and changing one's nation to accord with it but prevailing over outside civilization by means of Japan's culture.

**Tabuchi:** Our national leaders need to think long and hard about this.

# Coconuts College of the Pacific open lecture series on Kohamajima island

By Keiichi Torii

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### A dream come true

There was a period in my youth when I was addicted to the works of Toshio Shimao (1917–86). Sympathetic to the freshness of his idea of what he called Japonesia, I wanted to travel to the Ryukyu arc, the islands stretching from the Osumi islands of Kagoshima Prefecture to the Yaeyama islands of Okinawa Prefecture.

Soon after getting a job in the press, I was sent to Okinawa to cover the negotiations for its return from U.S. to Japanese control. After that I visited Okinawa many times to report on events there, but for some reason I did not have an opportunity to travel to Yaeyama and the other Sakishima islands.

Several decades passed as I continued to want to visit the Sakishima islands. But in late June this year, a chance to visit Kohamajima, in the Yaeyama islands, finally came my way. I was invited to take part in an open lecture series of Coconuts College of the Pacific, sponsored by the Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund. I flew from Tokyo via Naha to Ishigakijima island, where I spent the night. The next morning I took the high-speed ferry via Hatomajima island to Kohamajima, where I stayed overnight, returning to Tokyo the following evening. It was a whirlwind trip, but my dream had come true.

Kohamajima has an area of 7.84 square kilometers, and a circumference of 16.6 kilometers. You can drive around the island in less than 30 minutes. The population is about 500. Kohamajima used to be home to over 3,000 people and proudly called itself the “lucky island,” being the only one of the Yaeyama islands growing rice and other crops. But in the name of “land improvement,” the government undertook public-works projects, bringing in red clay and converting the fertile fields to sugar cane production dependent on the use of machinery. A major developer has built a big resort at one end of the island, and today the main sources of revenue are tourism and sugar refining.

The islanders now call Kohamajima “Chura-san’s island,” after the heroine of the popular television drama series *Chura-san*, set on the island. Pragmatically, the islanders have renamed the school Chura-san attended, the house on which a set was modeled, and other landmarks familiar from the TV series. Before it aired, fewer than 10,000 tourists a year visited the island; today the number exceeds 50,000. “Pragmatic” is an apt term. Chura-san Observation Platform, which was built recently, provided a panoramic view of its surroundings. A string of islands stretches out between clouds and waves, lowlands alternating with mountains. Far off is the southernmost island, Haterumajima, is faintly visible. It’s like viewing

the primal scene that gave birth to the ancient Okinawan belief that far off in the sea lies Nirai Kanai, the land of the gods and of the dead.

### Yaeyama’s problems are Japan’s problems

The Coconuts College of the Pacific open lectures took place after the sun had lost its glare. The venue was a public hall seating 200 people. The wall backing the stage was adorned with plaques bearing the names of 147 men and women over 70 years of age—a third of the island’s inhabitants. This is truly an island of longevity. The lectures stressed the importance of preserving the indigenous culture of remote islands and small island nations.

The program was followed by a banquet, with traditional dances for entertainment. I praised the old man for being a fit representative of the “island of longevity.” But he replied glumly, “The island of longevity is finished. The young people don’t like the hard, tedious work of the fields and the sea. They leave the island and no one returns, so there’s no next generation.” He added that it would be hard to preserve the traditional performing arts.

The old man’s remarks indicated all the problems faced by the Yaeyama islands: an aging population and a falling birthrate, lack of job creation, lack of public investment, environmental deterioration, and on and on. The problems he mentioned are the problems of Japan as a whole. While agreeing with what he said, I suddenly recalled the word *Japonesia*.

In 1955 Shimao moved to Amami Oshima island, where he coined the word *Japonesia* to refer to all the Japanese islands, comprising the Honshu arc and the Ryukyu arc. He maintained that the “mainland” (the four main islands) and Okinawa should be regarded as one regional space. If the problems of the Sakishima islands are those of the mainland, ironically, we now have Japonesia in a negative sense. Shimao’s grand, forward-looking vision also embraced the idea of partnership between Japonesia and the islands farther south, including Polynesia and Indonesia. This notion is surely basic to the principle of the Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund. Gazing at the big hands of the old man, toughened by work in the fields, I pondered anew the meaning of Japonesia for today.

The banquet was prepared painstakingly by island’s women. The delicious soup, made with ground soybeans and bonito broth, went beautifully with the rice brandy. The sound of the three-stringed *sanshin* and the saucy island songs, wafting in the open windows of the inn, provided a fitting lullaby.

Coconuts College of the Pacific aims to provide knowledge of the peoples, natural environment, and cultures of the Pacific islands and promote exchange and cooperation between Pacific island nations and Japan by means of the Internet and open lecture series. The seventh open lecture series “Nurtured by the Islands” was held June 26–27.

## Helping Asia meet its international challenges

*About the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund*

By Sim Yee Lau

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### Changes to enhance the Fund's responsiveness

East Asian countries' dramatic economic growth has led to predictions that the twenty-first century would be "the Asian century." But in reality the 40-plus countries of Asia are characterized by great diversity and disparities in development and standards of living.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States, ethnic and religious tensions in Asia that had been latent have bubbled to the surface. Twenty-first-century Asia is being pressed to deal with a variety of challenges: confidence-building measures in the context of bilateral and multilateral security, conflict prevention and postconflict responses, the new form of security known as human security, diversification of domestic politics, sustained economic growth, economic globalization, dialogue across civilizations, and the dissemination of intellectual information in relation to the rebuilding of the international order and international systems.

In response to these international realities, the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund has received a total of ¥8.5 billion from The Nippon Foundation over

the last four years to boost the Fund's endowment, and in June 2002 the Fund's name was changed from the Sasakawa Southeast Asia Cooperation Fund. At the same time, the scope of its activities was expanded from the original four target countries—Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam—to encompass a vast area stretching from Turkey in the west to the Russian Far East in the east. This was divided into six priority regions: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. Every year about 30 projects are implemented in the categories of people exchange, human resource development, and research with tangible applications, targeting the domains of politics, economics, society, and culture. Below we introduce four current projects.

### *Toward an Asian Economic Community: The Way Forward*

The European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are pushing ahead with enlargement, and the World Trade Organization is proceeding with trade liberalization by means of a multilateral framework. Asia, too, is being required to establish closer intraregional cooperative setups, as indicated by bilateral free trade agreements like that between Japan and Singapore and such multilateral

linkages as the ASEAN Free Trade Area, ASEAN plus 3, China and ASEAN, and India and ASEAN. In particular, it is hoped that creation of an Asian Economic Community will encourage sustained and stable economic growth and balanced enlargement for the region as a whole.

In this context, since fiscal 2003 the Fund has been awarding the India-based Research and Information System for the Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries grants to implement the project *Toward an Asian Economic Community: The Way Forward*. This project is conducting activities through policy studies, consciousness raising, and information transmission in regard to intraregional trade, investment, finance, currency, energy, and technology-transfer issues, concentrating on 14 countries: the 10 member states of ASEAN, China, India, Japan, and South Korea.

It is hoped that the project will accelerate economic integration of the region by engaging in consciousness raising and producing concrete policy proposals aimed at creating an Asian Economic Community, establish a basis for intellectual endeavors among Asian experts and policymakers to resolve shared problems and build a system of cooperation with the international community, encourage cooperation among and strengthen networks of think tanks and researchers within the region, and elucidate the parameters of activities to encourage stronger relations between South and East Asia with the cooperation of Japan and India.

### *Capacity Building in Strategic Decision Making: Lessons from the Development Experience in the Asia-Pacific Region*

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 the South Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia became independent. It was hoped that these countries would achieve stable nation building based on the market principle and democracy. In reality, however, military clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan have generated large numbers of refugees. And while Georgia has attempted to strengthen



A seminar titled "Building a New Asia: Towards an Asian Economic Community" was held in New Delhi on March 10–11, 2003.

relations with the EU and the United States, Russia, separated from its southern neighbor Georgia by the Caucasus Mountains, fears the expansion of Western countries' influence on the South Caucasus. Given this situation, there is a need to encourage the creation of a multilateral security framework for stability and confidence building in the region. At the same time, it is essential to develop policymakers who can undertake this task. Japan, a neutral party, can play an important role in this kind of multilateral confidence building.

In fiscal 2003 the Fund initiated the project Capacity Building in Strategic Decision Making: Lessons from the Development Experience in the Asia-Pacific Region. Grants are being provided to the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS) to develop policymakers equipped with the skills to resolve the problems of the South Caucasus and organize a "track two" multilateral security conference to encourage confidence building in the region.

In the area of human resource development, GFSIS is offering training seminars in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, with experts from Georgia, Japan, and South Korea as lecturers. These seminars are sharing the development experience of Japan and other East Asian countries with the three South Caucasus countries and providing participants from Armenia and Azerbaijan, where tensions persist, with a forum for dialogue for confidence building.

The track-two multilateral security conference, scheduled for February 2005, will emphasize the participation of not only stakeholders from the three South Caucasus countries, Europe, the United States, and Russia, but also representatives of Japan and other East Asian countries. It is hoped that this project will help lessen the influence of Europe, the United States, and Russia on the South Caucasus and lead to the active engagement of East Asian countries, on Japan's initiative, in addressing interregional issues.

#### *Supporting Journalism in Asia*

Today Asia has a great impact on the world and is approaching a crossroads. Despite this, information

about Asia and its transmission in the international community still tend to be dominated by the West. Given this situation it is extremely important to encourage the formation of public opinion based on plural values and to ensure the transmission of information about Asia by Asia to the rest of the world.

The Fund inaugurated the project Supporting Journalism in Asia in fiscal 2003 in order to improve the quality of Asian media and strengthen their ability to transmit information from an Asian viewpoint. The project aims to expand the network of journalists created in Southeast Asia through earlier SPF projects supporting journalism to the entire Asian region and enable Asian journalists to exchange information and share experiences. Specifically, there is an annual Asia Journalists Forum, including young journalists from Southeast, Northeast, Central, and South Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. In addition, a platform for transmitting information via the Internet has been set up with the help of leading Southeast Asian media organizations, which make up the nucleus of the network of Asian journalists. The weekly online magazine *AsiaViews* ([www.asiaviews.org](http://www.asiaviews.org)) publishes articles on political, economic, social, and cultural issues in Asian countries. *AsiaViews* is transmitting information on the way in which Asia engages with problems facing the international community from a world perspective based on a distinctively Asian viewpoint.

#### *Business Case Development: Enhancement of Business School Education in Uzbekistan*

Since achieving independence in 1991, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been engaged in the transition to a market economy. Development of human resources to manage private-sector companies is urgently needed, but the Western-style business management education provided so far is poor in quality, and there are no educational materials that reflect the realities of corporate management in Uzbekistan. Business Case Development: Enhancement of Business School Education in Uzbekistan project was inaugurated in fiscal 2003 to help fill this gap. The project aims to

share East Asian countries' experience of business management with Uzbek business-school teachers and students in a systematic manner and develop teaching materials tailored to the realities of corporate management in Uzbekistan.

Following are the major activities planned. First, with the help of management experts from Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, case studies of 30 selected Uzbek manufacturing and service companies will be conducted and business management teaching materials prepared. Second, East Asia business management seminars targeting managers of small and medium enterprises and representatives of state enterprises will be held twice a year in Tashkent, with East Asian experts as lecturers. Third, each year 30 people will be selected from among the teachers and students involved in preparation of teaching materials to participate in a study tour of East Asian countries to deepen their understanding of business management in those countries.

It is hoped that the project will enable the transitional economy of Uzbekistan to learn from the experience of East Asian growth, improve the management know-how needed to deepen and promote its transition to a market economy, and lay the foundation for the development of the human resources essential to improving the vitality of the private sector.

#### **Supporting creative intellectual activities from a global perspective**

Due to such developments as China's sustained economic growth, the rise of the Indian economy, and the chaos in West Asia caused by the post-9/11 U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the environment surrounding Asia is approaching a major turning point. Amid Asia's increasingly complex and confused conditions, the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund, taking a global perspective while respecting Asia's diversity, will continue to support creative intellectual activities addressing the myriad challenges Asia faces in the international community.

# My hopes for the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund

*A role as Asia's communicator*

By Takehiko Kondo  
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Hamamatsu Gakuin University

## Educating the Japanese about Asia

The Sasakawa Southeast Asia Cooperation Fund was expanded and reorganized in June 2002 as the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund. Akinori Seki, director of the Fund, explains the thinking behind the change as follows: "The name 'Pan Asia' reflects our strong determination, not only to expand our assistance activities to new regions, but also to always be prepared to respond flexibly to the ever-evolving international situation by choosing not to narrow down our target regions" (*Ten Years of the Sasakawa Southeast Asia Cooperation Fund*, 2003, p. 96). This is something I welcome as a Japanese citizen.

I have been a member of the Fund's steering committee for several years. The wide-ranging discussions at the committee meetings, which last two or three hours each time, amount to veritable seminars on Asian issues. I have also learned a great deal from taking part in projects like dialogue with Cambodian parliamentarians and training for midlevel civil servants in Myanmar. All this has broadened my hopes for the Fund.

I have two key hopes for the Fund's activities. One is that they will provide feedback on the real Asia in a way that Japan's leading newspapers do not and thus educate the Japanese about Asia.

## FTA case

It is my impression that the major papers' coverage of Asia has gaps that preclude adequate understanding of the region. One leading paper is insensitive to information, and its analysis tends to be some years behind that of the rest of the world.


Another major paper covers events speedily enough but provides no follow-up. This is one reason Japan has lagged behind China when it comes to free trade agreements (FTAs), with China seizing the initiative in signing the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and China in 2002, the first step toward the creation a free trade area between China and the member states of the Association of South-east Asian Nations.

When talk of an FTA between Japan and Korea emerged in 1998, the Japanese media should have helped mold public opinion. At the time, one newspaper betrayed a lack of interest and had no understanding of the basic issues. Another paper's coverage indicated enthusiasm for the idea but was not sustained. Since then, Japanese newspapers have provided almost no commentary revealing reasoned insight with regard to the big issues of institutionalization and organization facing Asia in the twenty-first century. An American once asked me sarcastically, "Why, when it comes to issues having to do with their very own region, don't the Japanese put forward more original opinions and debate them vigorously?"

## A catalyst making Asia known to the world

My other hope is that the Fund will act as a catalyst in making Asia known to the world. Aside from Chinese affairs, which are a special case, Asia disseminates too little information regarding Asia, a vast region including India and Central Asia. It may be that Asia is not a single entity. The twenty-first century will probably continue to ask what Asia is. Be that as it may, in this information age I would like to see the actuality of Asia's vibrant movement transmitted to the world.

Put briefly, I hope that the Fund will play the role of a communicator about Asia. Masao Fujioka, formerly president of the Asian Development Bank, has written, "When I accompanied Prime Minister Takeo Miki to the first G7 Economic Summit, held at Rambouillet, France, I raised the question of whether Japan would represent Asia, but this has still not been answered" (*Forty years of Internationalization* [in Japanese], 1994, p. 307).

How will Japan associate with the rest of Asia in the twenty-first century? I have a feeling that the Fund will provide hints to an answer to this question, that Japan was not able to deliver in the twentieth century. 

Takehiko Kondo was born in 1941. While a student at Kyoto University he passed the Higher Diplomatic Service Examination and Senior National Civil Service Personnel Examination, and upon graduation from the Faculty of Law in 1965 he joined the Ministry of Finance. After gaining a master's degree in legal and economic faculty of the University of Grenoble, he served as a division director in the Economic Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; deputy vice-minister of finance for international affairs, and director of the Research Division of the International Finance Bureau in the Finance Ministry; minister of the Japanese Embassy in Paris; director general of the Yokohama Customs House; a deputy director general in the Minister's Secretariat of the Finance Ministry and an executive vice-president of the Japan External Trade Organization; and professor in the College of International Relations at Ritsumeikan University. In April 2000 he became head of the College of Asia-Pacific Management at Ritsumeikan Asia-Pacific University. He has been President of Hamamatsu Gakuin University since April 2004. In 1985 he received a J.D. from Chuo University for "A History of the Plaza Accord" (in Japanese), based on his experience as an aide to Minister of Finance Noboru Takeshita at the 1985 meeting of the Group of Five finance ministers and central bank heads in New York. He has been a member of the steering committee of the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund since 2000.

## Developing the Asian non-profit sector

By Takahiro Nanri  
*Program Officer*  
*The Sasakawa Peace Foundation*

In the last 10 years Asian transitional economies have been democratizing rapidly, and along with this the nonprofit sector has been growing dramatically. Nevertheless, government regulation of nonprofit activities remains strong in these countries. It is thus highly likely that the sector will develop in a way that differs from that of Western and other Asian countries.

In fiscal 2003 SPF inaugurated the three-year self-operated project Comparative Studies of NGOs among China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Vietnam. The project is conducting case studies in these countries to test the way in which policy dialogue between government and NPOs can take shape. It also aims to use the findings to identify the peculiarities and problems of the sector in these countries and present directions for the further growth of the sector as a whole.

Last year, in preparation for the fully fledged case studies to be undertaken this year, a background



A scene from a meeting held July 5–6 in Beijing discussing research findings and details of further research.

paper was compiled for each of the target countries identifying the environment of and critical issues facing the nonprofit sector and the circumstances of policy dialogue. This year, those who had conducted the preliminary studies met in Beijing July 5–6 to share their findings and discuss the directions and details of the in-country research to be conducted this fiscal year. It was agreed to focus particular attention on communication and cooperation between government and NPOs in the policymaking process, analyze the issues and problem points involved, and compile a report on each country containing recommendations and suggestions for government and NPOs.

## Strengthening research on Northeast Asia

By Eriko Tada  
*Associate Program Officer*  
*The Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund*

With a grant from SPF, the Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia is organizing a series of lectures in Tokyo, to be known collectively as the New Northeast Asia Tokyo Seminars. This project aims to raise awareness in Tokyo and on the Pacific coast of Japan of existing and emerging research relating to the Sea of Japan coast as well as of the larger Northeast Asian region. It is expected that the seminars will further strengthen and invigorate research on Northeast Asia at the national level, as well as enable the possibility of issuing policy proposals.

The first seminar, “Regional Cooperation in Northeast Asia and Its Significance,” was held June 17. The seminar focused on the idea of Japan Sea–rim regional cooperation and related issues, with Ikuo Hirayama, governor of Niigata Prefecture, as the speaker. Over 100 people attended, attesting to the keen interest in this subject in Tokyo.

The second seminar, “The Potential and Strategies for Economic Cooperation between the Northeast Asian



A scene from the second New Northeast Asia Tokyo Seminar.

Region and Russia,” took place August 16. The speaker was Nodari A. Simonia, director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the discussants were Professor Hiroshi Kimura of Takushoku University and Professor Seiichiro Takagi of Aoyama Gakuin University. Simonia talked about the Vladimir Putin administration’s rising interest in Northeast Asia, centered largely on two themes: invigoration of the Trans-Siberian Railroad with an eye to developing energy resources and facilitating international distribution of goods, and the importance of a sustained policy of involvement in efforts to resolve the problems on the Korean Peninsula. Other subjects discussed included Russia’s domestic politics and Asia policy, Japan-Russia cooperation in addressing problems on the Korean Peninsula, and the problem of discord in relations among China, Japan, and Russia arising from competition related to Russian energy resources.

# FY2004 PROGRAM AGENDA (Projects approved September, 2004)

## Regular Projects

Project Name	Implementing Agency	Type	Year	Budget (¥)
Training Technical Advisors of Demining Teams	Japan Center for Conflict Prevention (Japan)	G	1/1	7,600,000

## The Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund

Project Name	Implementing Agency	Type	Year	Budget (¥)
Conference on "Local City Mobilization Measures": Case Studies of Images of Japanese and Chinese Cities	China Association for International Friendly Contact (China)	G	1/1	12,300,000
A Study of Asset Management Practices in State-Owned Enterprises: Learning from the Japanese Experience	China Association for International Friendly Contact (China)	G	1/1	7,200,000

## The Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund

Project Name	Implementing Agency	Type	Year	Budget (¥)
People Exchange Program: Strengthening Partnerships in the Pan-Asia Region	The Sasakawa Peace Foundation	SO	1/5	8,600,000
Support for Azerbaijan's Bid for WTO Membership	Economic Research Center (Azerbaijan)	G	1/2	3,600,000
Toward a New Partnership between Russia and Japan in Asia	The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, North Pacific Region Advanced Research Center (Japan)	SO/C	1/3	9,600,000
Development of Teaching Material for EOD and Demining	Japan Mine Action Service (Japan)	G	1/3	3,600,000

Note: G=Grant Project; SO=Self-Operated Project; C=Commissioned Project

## SPF PUBLICATIONS

• *The Formation of Networking Cooperation among Small Enterprises in Central Europe* — Published by SPF (Internet on-demand publishing service Book-

Park). Outcome of the fiscal 2002-03 Project Promotion of Small Enterprises: Sharing Experiences between Japan and Central Europe.

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Please note: The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.



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