

JAPAN *letter*



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 new Secretary General of ASEAN



Japanese Film Festival 2008



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(3) *Wild Geese (Daiei, 1953)*

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(4) *Mother*

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(9) *A Room For Rent*

(5) *The Ditch (Kindai Eiga*

(*Takarazuka Eiga, 1959*)

Kyokai, 1954)

HowTo

(10) *Elegant Beast (Daiei, 1962)*

Memoirs of a Geisha

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(6) *A Geisha (Daiei, 1953)*

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Memoirs of a Geisha

(7) *The Ghost Story of Yotsuya (Shin-Toho,*

1959)

Japanese Film Festival 2008

The Root of Japanese Films

Edited By Graivoot Chulphongsathon

During the past 10 years, we can see the influences of Japanese films on Thai films in many aspects

To pick out one of the good examples, that should be "Last Life in the Universe", Pen-Ek Ratanarung's outstanding film in its released year. Although it is counted as a Thai film, the leading actor (Tadandou Asano) is Japanese, and its style reflects that of many Japanese movies. If you look for it in DVD shops in other countries, you will find that this movie is placed along with other Japanese movies.

If you watch "Shutter" a Thai horror movie, the ghost in that movie exactly resembles the Japanese ghost in 'the millennium era' well-known from the famous film "Ring". While you are laughing with the comedy "The Odd Couple", you may also see that the leading character who protects the Thai transvestite is a Japanese guy.

Our blockbuster movies like "The Legend of Suriyothai" and "The Legend of King Naresuan" might remind you of Akira Kurosawa and his big production films.

It is clearly seen that there are influences from Japanese films on Thai films. What about the root of Japanese films?

The answer can be found in Japanese films from the 1950s to 1960s or "the Golden Age". After World War II, people in the Japanese film industry had to rebuild their own industry. The films in this period can be grouped in many genres succeeded by Japanese films until the present.

The films in that era have been rarely shown in Thailand with the exception of some movies by Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu which are internationally accredited. However, in the Japanese Film Festival 2008, audiences will have a chance to see 10 movies by elite directors of that period.

Among these 10 showings, there are various genres of films.

The first is a melodrama which is one of the main genres in Japanese movies, and it is also the genre which usually makes a success showing in Thailand (the examples are "Always" and "Be With You"). Melodrama in the Golden Age had its special

characteristic because it criticized and explored the life of Japanese women from various points of view.

The director who stands out in this genre is **Naruse Mikio** who makes exquisite exploration in a complicated relationship between people in the context of daily life. His film (1) "*A Married Life*" (*Toho, 1951*) starred Setsuko Hara, a famous actress who played the role of a housewife whose long married life was lifeless. Everyday she did her daily routine as a housewife while her husband was always busy with his work. One day his niece came to stay with them and her husband seemed to change to be more happy and cheerful, and that was when she started to question the relationship between her husband and herself.

Once again Naruse explored the relationship between men and women of different ages in his other film (2) "*The Echo*" (*Toho, 1954*). The film tells the story of a man 62 years old who happened to know that his son was cheating on his wife by having an affair with another woman. He felt sympathetic for his daughter-in-law who looked somewhat similar to his lover in the past and they slowly weaved their beautiful relationship.

Expectation from the society is one great burden placed on women both in the past and present; the expectation includes getting married and being a good wife. As a consequence, the reason for marriage is not love but social necessity, which can be seen in (3) "*Wild Geese*" (*Daiei, 1953*) directed by **Toyoda Shiro**. In this film, a poor girl was arranged to be married to a widower by a matchmaker who confirmed to her that this widower was a good man. However, she found out later that he was already married and she actually became his mistress. (4) "*Mother*" (*Kindai Eiga Kyokai, 1963*) directed by **Shindo Kaneto** portrays the life of a mother who was tortured when her eighty-year-old son had a brain tumor and urgently needed an operation. The only way that she could get money for the operation was from getting married. Although she had been married twice and had faced hardship from it, what could be compared with the love of a mother?

Women are also exploited by the society on another issue, and that is sex. We can see this point in Shindo Kaneto's (5) "*The Ditch*" (*Kindai Eiga Kyokai, 1954*). It is a story of a factory girl



“ The root of Japanese films can be found in Japanese films from the 1950s to 1960s or “the Golden Age”. After World War II, people in the Japanese film industry had to rebuild their own industry. The films in this period can be grouped in many genres succeeded by Japanese films until the present ”

whose money was stolen and she had to work as a prostitute. She was sold from one warehouse to another. The chance to be free was by working as a prostitute in order to save money to ransom herself.

One of the misunderstood concepts of Japanese women is the story about Geisha. Geisha is not quite correctly pictured in Hollywood’s “Memoirs of a Geisha”. In this Japanese Film Festival 2008 you will have a chance to look into the life of Geisha from the film by a gifted director, Mizoguchi Kenji, (6) *A Geisha (Daiei, 1953)*. Some part of the story in this film might be similar to “Memoirs of a Geisha”, but with more accurate details.

Apart from melodrama, one of the Japanese film genres which Thai audiences are familiar with is inevitably ghost movie, as we might agree that the scariest ghosts are Japanese ghosts. This film festival will show a real Japanese ghost movie which is called “Kaidari”, and that is (7) “*The Ghost Story of Yotsuya*” (Shin-Toho, 1959) by Nakagawa Nobuo. It is the story of a Samurai and his companion who committed many murders in order to prove their love for two sisters. However, later on when the Samurai wanted to leave her for a rich man’s daughter, he killed her heartlessly, but the story would not end here. The ghost of his wife wanted her revenge and would not let him escape the punishment. This story keeps haunting Japanese people and might be compared to the Thai story of “Mae Nak Phrakong”.

“Death” is one concept usually found in Japanese movies such as (8) “*Heart*” (Nikkatsu, 1955) by Ichikawa Kon which tells us about the suicide of a professor after the death of Emperor

Meiji, leaving his students to find out some meaning that he had left.

The other genre which emerged in the Golden Age and is becoming one of the important genres in modern Japanese movies is black comedy. Kawashima Yuzo is one of the skillful directors in this genre. This film festival will show two of his films which both focus on a group of people involving a limited space. One is (9) “*A Room For Rent*” (Takarazuka Eiga, 1959), a black comedy about a girl who moved into an apartment and found out that she had strange neighbors such as a mafia man who liked to steal underwear, an insurance salesman, a prostitute, a sexual inefficient man and a Howto writer who was not able to find a girlfriend.

The second one is (10) “*Elegant Beast*” (Daiei, 1962). The entire story happened in a small apartment. When the president of a company came to visit the poor Maeda family, he told them that their son who used to work at his company stole the company’s money of 1,000,000 yen. However, when the president left, the family moved out their hi-technology furniture from the hiding place. Were they rich or poor?

It might be quite hard to believe that these movies are from the 1950s-1960s because if we cross out the year and put in the names of the new generation directors, we would believe without any doubt that they are today’s films.

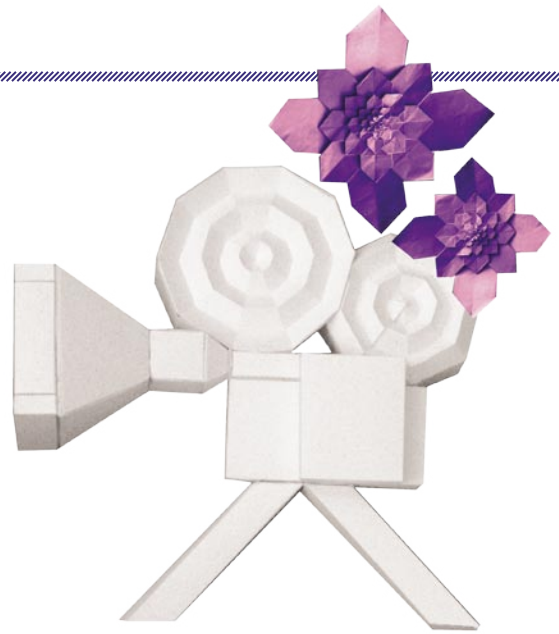
These films remind and reaffirm to us that nothing is new in this world. Same stories are repeated again and again with new context in new era. However, the root in criticizing the core of human beings still remains strong and never fades away. C

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Jan 18 (Fri)	1900	Opening Ceremony			
	1930	Talk Session			
	2000	ELEGANT BEAST (96 mins)	Jan 21 (Mon)	1900	MOTHER (101 mins)
		菜崎臯探鷲			潮
		Directed by KAWASHIMA Yuzo (1962)			Directed by SHINDO Kaneho (1963)
Jan 19 (Sat)	1500	THE DITCH (112 mins)	Jan 22 (Tue)	1900	HEART (122 mins)
		碓桜			砦砦参
		Directed by SHINDO Kaneho (1954)			Directed by ICHIKAWA Ken (1955)
	2000	A GEICHA (85 mins)	Jan 23 (Wed)	1900	A ROOM FOR RENT (112 mins)
		祇囃囃放			パ脈催晒
		Directed by MIZOGUCHI Kenji (1953)			Directed by KAWASHIMA Yuzo (1959)
Jan 20 (Sun)	1500	WILD GEESE (104 mins)	Jan 24 (Thu)	1900	A MARRIED LIFE (97 mins)
		雁			殺菜
		Directed by TOYODA Shiro (1953)			Directed by NARUSE Mkiio (1951)
	2000	THE GHOST STORY OF YOTSUYA (76 mins)	Jan 25 (Fri)	1900	THE ECHO (95 mins)
		陋 殺嗅べ磅子			樂搾塚
		Directed by NAKAGAWA Nbuo (1959)			Directed by NARUSE Mkiio (1954)

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The Return of Japanese Movies

By Panu Aree

In fact, Thai people have been familiar with Japanese movies for a long time. Especially in the 50s, at that time Japanese movies screened in cinemas almost every week.

Every Friday, those who passed by Sri Rajawong Theater in Chinatown would always noticed a new film's name placed over the entrance. Japanese movies showed at this theater ranging from Samurai films, monster films to soft-pink-R-rated films.

The popularity of Japanese movies carried on to the 60s by that time many gangster films and superheroes adapted from cartoon books were alternative for the audiences. They were popular to the point that there were some co-funded projects between Thai and Japanese producers for making kids' movies such as "The Giant and Jumbo A", "Hanuman and 7 superheroes" and "Hanuman and 5 Kamen Riders". But after that, its popularity started to fade, especially in the early 70s when the Thai movie industry got stronger because of the rising tax rates for importing foreign films. In the late 70s Hong Kong movies stepped into the picture as an alternative for the mainstream Hollywood movies. At that time, it could be said that no one saw Japanese film advertisements in any newspaper anymore.

Japanese films didn't make a come back until in the 90s, almost 20 years later. The interesting point is that, it returned quietly, not as flashy as before. But there was strength and continuity and

kept an eye on as to whether it could regain its former glory like 5 decades ago.

The Point of the Return

In the 90s, there was a big change in the Asian film trend in Thailand. First, Hong Kong movies were out of fashion and Korean movies, followed the great success of its television dramas, made its debut. While Korean films booming in every theater were appreciated by the masses, one horror movie, adapted from the famous Japanese novel, "Juon", was screened in August 1999 and became a smash hit within no time; it gained over 30 million Baht. Some said it might be because of the well-planned marketing or because Thai people always love a ghost story. But, even though "Juon" was a big hit, film distributors were not very sure about the Japanese film market in the country. Many thought "Juon" was just a one-hit phenomenon, and it may not happen again, while others had more trust in Korean movies that had a stable market. Until August 2003, a small romantic film from Japan, a story of a young woman who received a letter from someone with the same name as her dead fiancé called "Love Letter" was screened at the Libb Theater in June 2003.

Actually, this film was released in Japan 8 years ago, but when it screened in Thailand, the response was so good that it could

make 500,000 Baht, that meant 5,000 people bought tickets for this film. Many said it's because, at that time, it was the only heartwarming and heartbreaking love story on screen, while others were horror or comedy or action. As the result of its success, Japanese film imports were increasing. Mostly dramas or melodramas with an impressionistic aspect, such as the Cannes' winner "Nobody Knows", a heartfelt story of man and his dog "Quill", a breath-taking romantic story "Be With You", a friendship-valued story "Nana" and "Swing Girls". The peak was in 2006 when a film adapted from famous manga "Death Note" gained over 40 million Baht when screened, moreover, its DVD was also a hit. It was not a surprise that "Death Note II" could get an impressive income.

At this moment, Japanese films are unavoidably included in the list of Thai distributors when they go out shopping for new films.



The Reason of Success

If we try to find reasons for the boom of Japanese films in Thailand, the answers might be like these:

1) **Its impressive drama story.** It's true that in the past year many Asian films focused on dramatic stories that should impress the audiences. But what made Japanese films different from the rest were the 'touchable impressions'. In "Be With You", a story of a woman who woke up and found out that she could live with her beloved family only until the end of rainy season, the 'love' feeling in the film was not only between man and woman, but also love in family that every audience could experience as common ground. In another film "Always", good old concepts that were lost with the coming of the civilization and globalization were inserted in the story of life in a small community in late 50s Tokyo, which was the most important era of change in Japan. The audiences felt touched by the 'positive thinking' of this story.

2) **Adaptation of famous Mangas.** Even though many cultural aspects of Japan in Thailand have faded by the flood of Korean culture, however, manga culture is still very strong. Some mangas are famous to the point that there are groups of fans who


set up meetings and events regularly. When these mangas are adapted into films, they are expected to be famous. "Death Note", for example, before the actual screening, the distributor made direct PRs to the fans through many channels, such as cosplay events or advertisements in manga magazines, which led to the success when screening. For Thai distributors, Japanese films adapted from mangas will get special interest in every film market.

3) **Limited place screening.** The success of the film "Love Letter" shows that if it's a good film itself, even though you show it at only one theater, and no matter how far the audiences are, they will come. This theory is also true with other films such as "Nobody Knows", that screened at only one theater and gained 1.5 million Baht (approximately 15,000 in audiences); "Be With You" screened at two theaters and gained 3 million Baht in 3 months (approximately 30,000 in audiences); or "Nana" screened also at two theaters and gained 27 million Baht (approximately 27,000 in audiences). On the other hand, it's not a good idea to increase the screenings because the base audiences of Japanese films are not big enough for mass screening. Moreover, most of these audiences work or live in downtown. For example, for "Nana 2" the distributor increased the showing theaters 3 times compared to its first part, but just acquired the same income as showing in the limited theater.

4) **The time of video release in Japan.** This subject might sound like it's the outside factor and not really related to the distribution in Thailand, but actually it affects quite a lot. That's because normally the time of video release of American films is 3 months after screening in theater, but for Japanese films, it is 6 months after. For this length of time, the distributors are able to schedule the screening without worrying about pirate DVDs.

Tendency

Even though the tendency of Japanese films in Thailand looks bright because of all the above reasons, it's not a guarantee that Japanese films can jump to the masses in the near future like Hong Kong or Korean films used to do. The flop of blockbuster Japanese films such as "Shinobi", a ninja movie full of special effects or "Sinking Of Japan", a disaster film which was very successful in Korea and Singapore or even Doraemon, animation film that Thai audiences were very familiar with, proved that Japanese films may not be ready to be sold to the mass. Market share of Japanese films in Thailand at this moment may be limited only for the niche films.

Anyway, Japanese films are still of interest to the Thai distributors and are a good alternative for Thai audiences. However, while the mainstream is still films from Hollywood, a 'golden age of Japanese movies' in Thailand like 50 years ago may not likely happen. But that doesn't mean in the long run it couldn't come about. 

Special Interview

ASEAN and East Asia:
Toward the People-oriented Socio-Cultural Community

Interview

with

H. E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, new Secretary General of ASEAN

(This interview was done on 5th November 2007 for Japan Letter.)



ASEAN, as the Vision and as the Vehicle

JF *Towards the ASEAN community building, and further regional cooperation and integration of East Asia, it is important not only to address the political/security problems and economic tasks of the region, but it is also indispensable to solve the common socio-cultural issues from multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approaches. Could you suggest to us how ASEAN could strengthen cooperation and networking among civil society and enhance their linkages with other stakeholders?*

Surin Well, I think all the components or what you call the stakeholders and all the partners in the community building of ASEAN have to first be very convinced that ASEAN is a vision, and also a vehicle and practical tool for the creation of a very genuine community for Southeast Asia. So far, we have heard a lot of lip service and expression of support. I think we need

more of a passionate commitment or the real establishment of the community. These forty years, ASEAN has achieved a great deal. It has achieved a measure of stability, security, and a high degree of cohesiveness among us. With the challenges of competition coming with globalization and the rise of China and India, ASEAN needs to do more of its own community building. That is why the ASEAN leaders decided that we should have the Charter and we should have a more defined structure and a clearer mandate for the Secretariat, for the Secretary General.

Now we are entering a new era, and it's a new decade. We cannot be as informal and very soft in our approach to community building. From now on, it will be more legalistic, more formal, and more systematic. So I think all the stakeholders, all the sector partners, whether they are NGOs, civil

societies, educational institutions, business communities, and government agencies, have to reevaluate their own perceptions, roles and contributions into the process of ASEAN community building. I hope that we will be able to use the occasion of launching the ASEAN Charter to remind every stakeholder in the community and dialogue partners, to realize that this is a new era providing new opportunities for ASEAN. I don't think there had ever been a real good network of forum for all these people to get together and reopen up and talk heart to heart on why ASEAN is so important, why we need to contribute from different perspectives to play different roles but to commit to the same vision. That is to create a cohesive integrated one ASEAN community.

First of all, the awareness of ASEAN has to be established and created all across the boundaries, across generations, across linguistic lines and across cultures. I think ASEAN needs a lot of public relations campaigns, and an institution like the Japan Foundation can help contribute to that awareness creation, which will lead to a sense of common identity. In the end, we want every ASEAN citizen to think of himself or herself as a national of a member country and as a citizen of ASEAN at the same time. When you say I'm a Thai, I'm also an ASEAN citizen. I am a Singaporean and also an ASEAN. I'm a Laotian and also an ASEAN. That is not here yet, we need to work on that.

A Socio-Cultural Community is the Most Challenging

There are three communities: Security Community, Economic Community, and then Socio-Cultural Community. Now security community has its own vehicle which is called the "ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)." Economic community has many initiatives such as ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and many other schemes. It has its own momentum that the private sector gets involved in and benefits from and plays a very constructive role. It is the socio-cultural community that is the youngest and newest, and needs a lot of attention. It is the most critical in many ways because it can help or undermine the other two communities. If there is no sense of community or identity, it is difficult to create a political security community. It is also difficult to create an economic community if people do not feel a part of the whole. You can give and take, you can share, you can cooperate better and more effectively when you feel that this is your community and we belong to the same community, the same organization and the same region. To me, the socio-cultural community is the most challenging and most decisive in our success or failure of community building.

JF For addressing the regional common issues, various symposiums and workshops have been held, with intellectual and educational approaches. So, what kind of new initiatives are to be dealt with?

Surin There is not enough emphasis on ASEAN as a framework, for example, education within ASEAN, education reform within ASEAN, educational development for ASEAN, curriculum integration within ASEAN, recognition and accreditation across the region of ASEAN. It is because this will contribute to free flow of labor and human resources. It is because

even if I'm an accountant in Singapore, I'm accredited in Thailand, I can move to Thailand. If I am an architect in Thailand and accredited in Malaysia, I can move to Malaysia. From now on, we have to think of every activity as part of the ASEAN framework and community building. In spite of our lip service for ASEAN, we have not consciously done enough of everything to contribute to ASEAN. There are various projects and programs that each government is implementing as a result of an agreement within the ASEAN community but those government agencies rarely mention to the people or the beneficiaries that this is an ASEAN project supported by ASEAN funding or supported by dialogue partners who want to help ASEAN. From now on, we have to do more of that. And that is the only way that we can achieve an ASEAN community.

JF We are facing serious problems on the widening gaps between the haves and the have-nots domestically and regionally, including gaps between the original ASEAN and the new ASEAN countries. What are your views on these matters?

Surin There are gaps within each country, there are gaps between the countries in the region, that's for sure. Some are talking about how to find productive good seedlings for their farms, others are already talking about the latest advance in computer technology, the topics are so far apart. So we cannot talk about the same thing, we cannot communicate on the same level. The figures that are very revealing are the per capita income of the poorest among us which is about 209 US dollars, while the per capita income of the most advanced among us is about 35,000 US dollars. Between 209 and 35,000 US dollars is a very big gap and not healthy. It is a defect that could undermine the entire structure. So that is exactly what I think ASEAN is committed to, how to narrow the gaps, and needs support from the dialogue partners. Japan has been working on what to do with the infrastructure in the new members of ASEAN, especially the Mekong basin countries through the various mechanisms and institutions for economic development, the enhancement of the role of various financial institutions, and capital market developments. All these things need to be developed. Otherwise, you will be divided forever.

Private Sector to Drive the Process of Integration

JF How about the networking with the business sector in terms of the socio-cultural aspects? How do we let them increase participation in ASEAN community building?

Surin The private sector is very vital and critical in the community building because in the end they will be driving the process of integration. Governments can only set their goals, frameworks, rules and regulations. The real drivers of integration would be the private sector and the business level, as they do bring foreign exchanges, trades, tourists, and investments. They have to be convinced that a 567 million people's community is possible, and they are willing to contribute in order to make that one single dynamic market. Major regional companies in Thailand like PTT, CP, and from outside like Toyota and many others in electronics, computers, trade, investment, energy, airlines, all benefit from an ASEAN single market. If it is more integrated, more solid, and if the purchasing power of this one single

market is higher than what it is today, everybody is going to benefit

As spokesman of ASEAN, I wish to go and appeal to these regional companies for cooperation and support, saying that we need to create this sense of identity, belonging and one community, which will eventually lead to one market. And that one market is going to be extremely interesting. In 30 years, if we can make one third of the ASEAN population middle class people, that would amount to something like 270-300 million, and that would be the same as the middle class in China and India now. It will mean a lot to those regional companies and multi-national companies, and encourage them to invest more, and to come and produce more here in the region, because it is one market. All these things have to be communicated to the private sector.

JF ASEAN awareness has not yet fully prevailed among people at the grassroots level. What kind of approaches would be desirable to put more emphasis on in order to improve awareness, especially among the younger generation?

Surin For the younger generation, life is going to be very different from now than before. It is no longer possible to earn a living and live a full life in a small country. I think we need a bigger identity in order to compete with, in order to face the pressure from the outside world and interact with larger entities out there. China, one country alone, is bigger than ASEAN together. India is also bigger than ASEAN. If I look at it from an economic standpoint, Japan is much bigger than all ten of us together. We cannot compete, we cannot even compare with the rest of the world, if we don't have our own larger identity. The younger generation must be convinced of that, it is good to be a member of a nation state, and it is no longer adequate to be just one national of one country. One needs to belong to a larger whole, a regional entity and a bigger market so that in ten to fifteen years from now your business can operate all across the region. You have the economy of scale.

Younger Generation, Go and Think Regional!

Surin The world is not going to be protective of your small interest anymore. It is going in the other direction, the direction of openness, competition, or exposure. Can you survive? In your small system with your small company, with your limited resources, you cannot. You have to go regional. Whoever is ready to go regional first will have a better chance of survival. The direction of the world is getting bigger and larger, not getting smaller and more protective. It is more open, more exposed, more competitive. It is not only the younger generation that has to be aware of this. Our generation has the duty to tell them, to educate, to inform them to be aware of the fact that they have a bigger identity and the bigger community. It is no longer a village in Thailand, but it is Thailand in ASEAN that we can benefit from and contribute to. Then, we will certainly benefit from the larger resources that come with the ASEAN organization, the ASEAN community.

This communication with the younger generation is very crucial through the

educational system, through curriculum and textbooks in primary and secondary schools as well as in universities and colleges. At this time, you are preparing them to compete between Songkhla and Chiang Mai to get into a medical school in Bangkok. But, in one or two decades you will have to prepare them to compete with the best medical practices from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, so they will have to be ready. They have to be aware of the challenges that are coming their ways.

JF Based on the Thai traditional spirit of tolerance, flexibility and diplomatic skillfulness, how do you think that Thailand should make new initiatives to address conflicts arising from the intolerance in diversities and civilizations as to construct a peaceful socio-cultural community in the region?

Surin Every society has been under tremendous pressure from this process of globalization. We in Thailand are also feeling the pressure of competition and a sense of uncertainty among ourselves because of the risk, the threats, and the challenges coming from outside. Lately, you have seen within us in Thailand becoming more closed, more insecure and more inflexible a bit in our dealing with outsiders. We may be losing some sense of tolerance, flexibility and accommodation. This is a rational development. However, we are not averse to something new, something foreign. We can still be an example of accommodating and flexibility, able to adjust and welcome new ideas and new initiatives. That has been our traditional perspective. I think being a traditional society, open and tolerant as we have been, has helped us to see and prepare for the future. I am talking about our own idea and perception about how to build and create a peaceful, productive, harmonious and sustainable society.

While all Asia keeps growing faster and faster, we need to stop and reflect on the model of development and growth, a model we adopt wholeheartedly from the West. Will this kind of growth be sustainable? Can we just keep on producing more and consuming more indefinitely? Do we want to live and encourage our people to live by desires indefinitely? Or do we want to remind them of a more decent, more prudent and more intelligent way of living?

I think the people of ASEAN deserve the answers to those questions. And I think here in the ASEAN region we have enough collective wisdom from our diverse cultural background to help us respond to those questions. Sufficiency Economy propounded by His Majesty the King of Thailand is one such creative and powerful response, as an instrument to prepare ourselves for the future. The model of development in the past has been based on a purely market consumerism and exploitation of resources to the fullest. If you take the world as a small planet with finite resources, if we run out of carbon-based energy sources, where do we go? To the moon? To Mars? That is a long time to wait, so we have to take care of this. I think something like sufficiency economy points to a time when we need to think about sustainable development. Sustainability or sustainable development means you can prolong the environment and the natural resources; meanwhile, you can also share and make it equitable, so that you can have

a peaceful and harmonious community and society.

Thai Initiatives and the Japanese contribution

Surin When His Majesty the King talked about sustainable development and sufficiency economy, did he mean it for Thai people? Yes, but it is for Thai people to think in a wider framework. How should we deal with the rest of the world? I think it starts now we can convince everyone, beginning with Thailand every community in Thailand the Chinese, the Buddhists, the Muslims, the Christians, that look, we are here together, we need to involve a community that is sympathetic, understanding, accommodating, supportive, sharing with each other, then we can have a harmonious socio-community. And we can show that (sufficiency economy philosophy) to the world beginning with ASEAN. And if we can achieve it, that seems to be the guideline and the blueprints of our development plan.

JF Could you advise us concerning the socio-cultural aspects, how Japan could make a contribution to the regional community building as an equal partner or through Thailand-Japan collaborative initiatives towards the Southeast and East Asian people-oriented community?

Surin I think on socio-cultural community needs, a very strong pillar of it would be education and human resources development. It is because if you don't have the quality of human being, it is very difficult to create a successful community. Japan can help. I think there is also a need for the system support and help for the marginalized community, people and individuals who have had less access to opportunities or resources of the community. Human resource development will help. Human security, which concept has been propagated by the Government of Japan can help. Human security means protecting people under threats and dangers, and promoting people in order to achieve and attain their own full potentiality. It is such a waste to see children in the countryside dropping out of school and becoming unskilled labor, not being able to sustain and help their own families and communities, eventually the families will break down and the younger generation will suffer even more. The concept of human security can help because we are talking about building the individuals' opportunities to fulfill their own potential according to their own abilities.

Certainly, Japan can help. I hope that entity like the Japan Foundation will think seriously about how to help create the ASEAN identity among the ASEAN people. This is a soft but critical approach to the problem. How to make 567 million people feel ASEAN? You could say that is ASEAN's business, that is for the member countries to worry about. Well, what I'm saying is you can help, too.

JF Last, could you give a brief message for the younger intellectuals in the region?

Surin I think young intellectuals in ASEAN will have to think larger than their own national boundaries. If they are scientists, researchers, computer experts, political scientists, anthropologists, etc., they have to think larger than their own national identities. Their world is getting bigger. For any

society to survive, it has to be able to manage the competition and the pressure from the outside world, and you can only do that by having a larger state yourself, by having a larger form yourself, by having a larger identity yourself, in order to compete with the world. So "Think ASEAN Think Regional!" And be inspired by the vision of one integrated, one market, one Southeast Asia, one ASEAN. Be on the center stage of ASEAN and contribute to this very interesting drama that is unfolding on the stage of ASEAN, this is very exciting.



Dr. Surin Pitsuwan is the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand since 1997 - 2001. He was appointed Secretary General of ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations, in July 2007 and he will begin his 5-year term at ASEAN Secretariat Office in Jakarta, Indonesia, from January 2008.

Dr. Surin studied at Thammasat University in Thailand and earned his Masters and Doctoral degrees in political science at Harvard University, USA. Dr. Surin was a lecturer at Thammasat University from 1975 - 1986 and served as assistant vice-rector for academic affairs for some time. He has also been a columnist for the Australian weekly Nation Review and the English language newspaper the Bangkok Post, and a correspondent and analyst for the monthly ASEAN Forecast. Currently, he is a member of the UN Commission on Human Security, the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, the International Advisory Board of the Council on Foreign Relations, etc.

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JF Last, could you give a brief message for the younger intellectuals in the region?

ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)

(stakeholders)

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(dialogue partners)

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(ASEAN Security Community-ASC)

Economic Community(AEC)

SocioCultural Community(ASCC)

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

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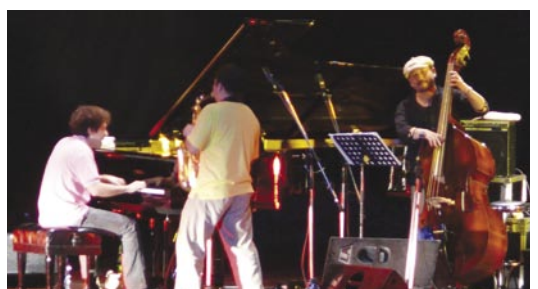
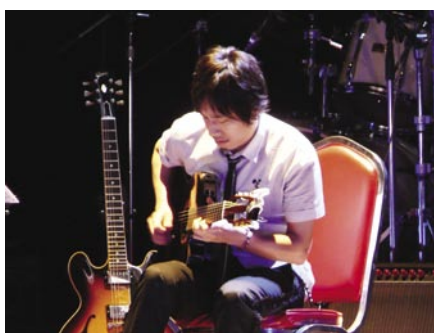
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"Nation Review",
"ASEAN Forecast"

JF

activity report



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14 November 2007, 7.30pm
Satoru Shionoya Group Jazz Concert 2007 in Bangkok, with Koh Mr.Saxman
At Thammasat University Main Auditorium, Tha Pira Chan

activity report

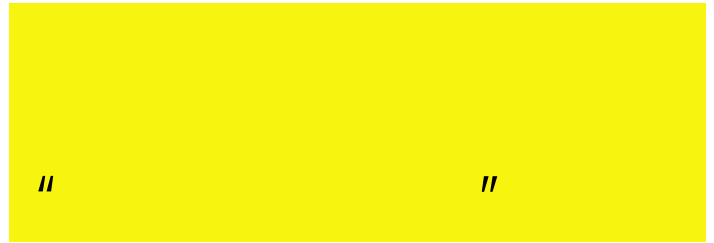


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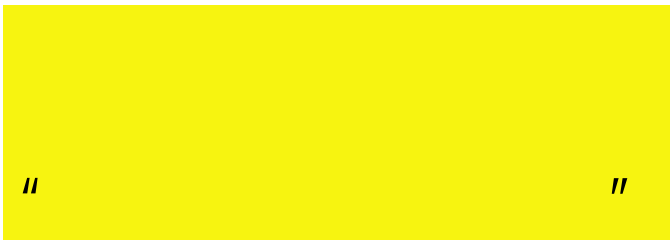
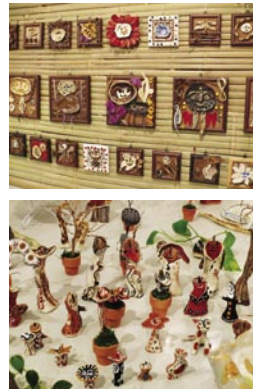
28 November 2007, 7:30pm
Japanese Koto Music - 350 Years of Traditional Flows toward the Future -
by Savai Hkaru, Savai Kazue, Motonaga Hiromu & Savai Koto Orchestra
Thailand Cultural Center, Small Hall

activity report



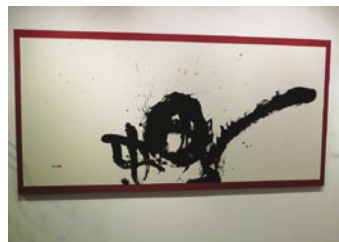
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6 October - 1 November 2007
"The Country that I love : Thailand"
Art exhibition by Kyoko Abe
At The Japan Foundation Bangkok Art Space C



8- 29 2550

8- 29 November 2007
Universe, Mind and Color
Art Exhibition by Suisen Nakatani
At The Japan Foundation Bangkok Art Space C



activity report



22-28 November 2007 Nong Khai Bangkok Thailand

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**The 3rd International Conference on Gross National Happiness
“Towards Global Transformation – World Views Make a Difference.”**

Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation and the Center for Bhutan Studies, in partnership with Ministry of Social Development & Human Security, and “Well-being Index Network”, Government of Thailand organized the third large-scale conference on “Gross National Happiness” between 22 – 28 November 2007 in Nong Khai and at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. The conference was partially supported by the Japan Foundation Grant Program for fiscal 2007 – 2008.

The conference attracted more than 800 registered participants from 36 countries. More than 400 participants attended the first two days at Wat Hin Mak Peng, Nong Khai province which increased to nearly over 500 participants on the last day at Nong Khai provincial town hall.

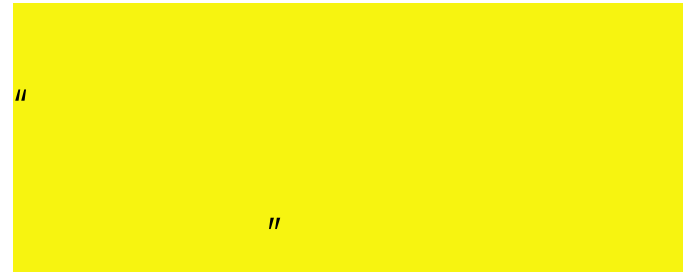
The Bangkok conference part was officially opened on 26th November at Chulalongkorn University Main Auditorium by the two prime ministers, H.E. General Surayud Chulanont (Ret.), Prime Minister of Thailand and H.E. PM. Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji from Bhutan.

More than 200 participants continued to the second part in Bangkok and were joined by other more than 200 local and international participants from 35 countries making a crowd of about 400 people in Bangkok conference. Among them were more than 100 speakers, 70 staff and organizers and 15 press and media representatives. ©

activity report



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The Joint Seminar on the Occasion of 120th Anniversary of Japan – Thailand Diplomatic Relations 2007 JSN - Thailand together with Japan Watch Project (JWP) under support of Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Institute of Developing Economy - JETRO and the Japan Foundation organized a joint seminar between Thai and Japanese scholars on the occasion of 120th Anniversary of Japan – Thailand Diplomatic Relations 2007 entitled "Japan-Thailand Relations Toward the True Partnership?" on 30th November 2007 (Fri.) at Wanwathayakorn Meeting Hall, Thammasat University. The seminar aims to provide a platform for discussion between academicians and officials about the future of beyond economic partnerships and to provide an opportunity for scholars of Japanese Studies in Thailand to strengthen their networks. It was attended by nearly 80 people who mostly come from public policy planning agencies, diplomatic corps and research institutes.

JF and JSN - Thailand Special Seminar "The Japanese Changing Politics and its Impacts on the East Asian Integration" JFBKK and JSN - Thailand organized a special lecture entitled "The Japanese Changing Politics and its Impacts on the East Asian Integration" by Prof. Emeritus Dr. Takashi Inoguchi, University of Tokyo and Professor of Political Science, Chuo University, on 8th November 2007 (Thu) from 9:00 – 11:30 at Royal Princess Lan Luang Hotel. In addition to this, King Prajachitpok's Institute invited Prof. Inoguchi to deliver his talks at KPI Congress IX entitled "Political Culture, Ethics and Governance" at UNCC in the afternoon on the same day.

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