



# ASIAN ALTERNATIVES FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD: Transborder Engagements in Knowledge Formation

The Work of the 2007/2008 API Fellows

2007/2008

The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals



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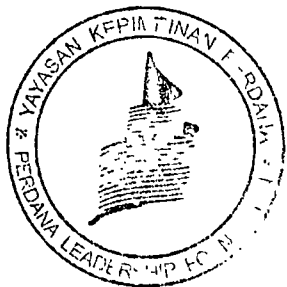
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Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowships  
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Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia



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The Work of the 2007/2008 API Fellows

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

*ASIAN ALTERNATIVES FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD: Transborder Engagements in Knowledge Formation*, is a collection of papers by the 2007/2008 Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellows. The twenty-seven papers that comprise the book cover key areas such as heritage, identity, change and conflict; engaging modernity; religion, gender, and art; changing lifestyles and health; the state, development and globalization; empowering the poor and the vulnerable; and social justice, human rights, and civil society. API publications can be downloaded at <http://www.api-fellowships.org>.

### The API Fellowships Program

As Asia enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it faces political, economic, and social challenges that transcend national boundaries. To meet these challenges, the region needs a pool of intellectuals willing to be active in the public sphere who can articulate common concerns and propose creative solutions. Recognizing that opportunities for intellectual exchange are currently limited by institutional, linguistic, and cultural parameters, The Nippon Foundation (TNF) launched the Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowships Program in July 2000. The Program's primary aim is to promote mutual learning among Asian public intellectuals and contribute to the growth of wider public spaces in which effective responses to regional needs can be generated.

The API Fellowships Program is open to academics, researchers, media professionals, artists, creative writers, non-governmental organization (NGO) activists, social workers, public servants and others with moral authority who are committed to working for the betterment of society by applying their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience. The Program is designed to stimulate the creation of a pool of such intellectuals in the region.

The API Fellowships Program set three main themes as follows:

- Changing identities and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
- Reflections on the human condition and the quest for social justice; and
- The current structure of globalization and possible alternatives.

Within these themes, the Fellows are required to:

- Propose and carry out research and/or professional activities in a participating country or countries other than their native country or country of residence;
- Conduct research and/or professional activities in compliance with a schedule accepted by the Selection Committee;
- Attend the API Workshop to exchange results of their research and/or professional activities with other fellows;
- Disseminate their findings and results to a wider audience; and
- Pursue a deeper knowledge of each other, and hence of the region.

### Post Fellowship Program/Activities

In its tenth year since its inception, the API Fellowships Program nowadays stresses the continuing commitment of API Fellows who have completed their initial fellowship activities. Through furthering collaboration between Fellows, the Program hopes to build and promote the API Community, which is comprised of over 250 API Fellows. The following initiatives are now being carried out through the Post Fellowship Programs:

### 1) Regional Committee and Regional Project

The API Community has selected ten Fellows as representatives to the Regional Committee (RC) to promote activities which are critical for the region, cross-disciplinary in nature, trans-border in scope, and multi-level in approach, recognizing the inter-linkages of locality, nation, and region. The RC aims to foster a greater regional consciousness by promoting relationships among cultures, societies, traditions and so forth by initiating or endorsing collaborative activities, and by confronting public issues with discernment, integrity and commitment. The RC initially focused on the launch of the Regional Project.

The Regional Project, entitled “Community-Based Initiatives toward Human-Ecological Balance,” was launched in November 2008 as a joint effort that mobilized the entire API Community. The project will last three years, involving five sites in the region: Biwako (Japan), Batanes (Philippines), Khiriwong (Thailand), Tasik Chini (Malaysia) and Kalicode (Indonesia). In conducting the Regional Project, the API Community is guided by the values of social relevance, public-policy advocacy, network building, creativity, transparency and accountability.

### 2) API-Salzburg Global Seminar Collaboration

The Salzburg Global Seminar was founded in 1947 by three graduate students at Harvard University as a means to bringing together young Europeans and Americans from countries recently at war to engage in intellectual dialogue.

In the 60 years since its establishment, the Salzburg Global Seminar has evolved and expanded both the breadth of countries from which its participants come as well as the issues that serve as the focus of its programs. To date, more than 25,000 individuals from more than 150 countries have attended Seminar sessions.

In an effort to flow with the tide of globalization, the Salzburg Global Seminar decided to reach out beyond Europe and the US, to Asia, the Middle East and Africa. In so doing, the Seminar found the API Fellowships Program to be a good quality pool of intellectuals in Asia and began planning a new partnership. As a result, a new scheme whereby selected API Fellows (up to ten Fellows per year) attend the Seminar was created. This collaborative scheme provides opportunities for API Fellows to expand their intellectual capacity by exposing themselves to world intellectual leaders and to convey to a wider audience the messages and voices of Asia.

## **The Nippon Foundation**

The Nippon Foundation (TNF) is an independent, non-profit, grant making organization that was founded in 1962. It supports projects both in Japan and overseas. It funds activities in three areas: domestic social welfare and volunteer support; maritime research and development; and overseas cooperative assistance. It works with other non-profit organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

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