

Dreaming of the South Seas: Representing Southeast Asia during the Showa Period

Karl Ian Uy Cheng Chua

Ph.D. Social Sciences, School of Social Science, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo

kchengchua@gmail.com

Under the Showa Emperor, Japan underwent a state of flux which involved the rise of ultra-nationalism in the country, her invasion of Manchuria and exit from the League of Nations, and her entry to and later defeat in World War II. In order to be successful in her actions, it was integral that the Japanese were of similar thought during this period. One of the means by which this was achieved was through instilling these ideas among the members of its population, especially the youth.

Shōnen Kurabu, was a monthly magazine geared towards young boys which had a relatively long publishing life, from the 1914 (Taisho 3) up to 1962 (Showa 37). During the peak of its popularity, the magazine published 750,000 copies per month and would have a readership which would extend to Japan's colonies overseas. Within its pages were published materials to educate and mold young minds, issue after issue, featuring educational articles ranging from animals of the world to the introduction of scientific discoveries, as well as news and current events. It was a young Japanese boy's window to the world.

During the 1930's, the political doctrine of *Nanshinron* or Southern Expansion, which focused on Japan's economic and territorial expansion to the "South Seas", came into vogue and inspired the Japanese to travel and seek adventure and their fortunes across the seas to the South of Japan. This doctrine also competed with various other political theories within Japan such as the doctrine of *Hokushinron* or Northern Expansion which focused on the same concept of expansion towards the Northeastern territories of Asia, namely Korea and Manchuria. Naturally, the magazine picked up these competing ideologies and published several articles within the pre-war and World War II period.

This research aims to study articles, illustrations and pictures published in the magazine *Shonen Kurabu* and see how the "South Seas" and Southeast Asia was represented during the aforementioned period. Among the popular representations of the period was illustrating the inhabitants of the South Seas in the *sambo*-mode which featured a backward people with jet black skin, large eyes, thick lips and wearing grass skirts. Vis-a-vis representations of Japanese during the period, these sambo illustrations featured an inferior race, thus uplifting the status of the Japanese. On the other hand, Japan had already a long standing relationship with Thai kingdom and featured articles showcasing the richness of the country and the sophistication of its culture. Through an observation and study the patterns and inconsistencies within the representations, the paper could see how Japan placed itself in terms of power relations and how the magazine shaped the ideas of its young readers concerning *Nanshinron*.

Mobility and Migration in Southeast Asia

Maria Elissa Jayme-Lao

Department of Political Science

Ateneo de Manila University

While ASEAN has provided some framework to increase the movement of peoples across Southeast Asia, this new openness has been met with the necessary tools to increase this mobility: for example, low cost carriers and tourism, as well as educational and job opportunities have buttressed this increased awareness. Of late, the global financial crisis may have served to further magnify this awareness, as ASEAN countries look towards each other rather than their traditional partners, such as the US and Europe, who are all central players in the crisis.

This paper will look at certain key trends, based on available data on (1) migration and job opportunities (and their accompanying limitations – visa, cultural factors etc) (2) air travel and tourism (3) student exchange to argue that due to such changes in the quality and quantity of such interface, there may be, in fact, a larger field of commonality and exchange between members states.

Using transnationalism as a framework, this paper will point to certain countries which, for different reasons altogether, may be primed for this kind of interaction and what this may mean to the overall landscape of the ASEAN region. Some attention will be paid to the current political situation of certain countries and how their (un)democratic inclinations and whether or not such differences make impact on ASEAN countries' ability to deal with one another, and further, how this may affect ASEAN relations with the rest of the world.

Together with such increased awareness comes an additional layer of issues that need to be addressed as these ties grow more complex: human trafficking, for example, surfaces as a negative by product of the long sought after goal of increasing interaction between ASEAN countries. How the ASEAN countries address such new challenges will define the strength and direction that the region will take in the forthcoming years as ASEAN attempts to strengthen its foundation as a regional organization.

Whether this means that these changes are towards the strengthening of ASEAN or towards a different regime that draws ASEAN countries and nearby states to more closely (and perhaps inextricably) deal with each other still remains to be seen, it definitely ups the ante for discussion and further study of new trends in the region.

Do these trends mean something new and something more for ASEAN or is it part of a slowly evolving regional dynamic that has nothing to do with the current set up?

Sustaining ASEAN-Japan Relations

By: Pilar Preciousa P. Berse
Department of Political Science
Ateneo de Manila University
pilarberse@yahoo.com

ASEAN's long history of socio-political and economic partnership with Japan is being put to test with the onset of major developments in and outside of the region. The current challenges posed by the uncertainty of how the region will be re-directed with a newly ratified ASEAN charter and the pressure of maintaining the economic leverage most ASEAN countries are enjoying today vis-a-vis western economies add to the more pressing need of analyzing how ASEAN-Japan relations can be strengthened further.

Seen as the crux of an emerging East Asian community, ASEAN-Japan relations need to be revisited and evaluated to see whether it is still adept with the changing economic and political environment where Southeast Asian nations are deemed as the major stakeholders. This paper tries to look into the current status of ASEAN-Japan relations, institutional support for both of its priorities in the 21st century, the challenges that lie ahead for both parties, and how either plans to engage the world for a more sustained and viable partnership. In doing so, the paper focuses on initiatives and concrete actions from the Japanese government that help foster good relations in the region, even if these actions are not directed exclusively to ASEAN.

One major area that the paper tries to look into is Japan's five-year Future Leaders' Program for Regional Integration and Cooperation in Asia. Although it is not exclusive to Southeast Asia, the program initiative manifests the importance Japan places on the region by supporting scholarly works that help cultivate a deeper understanding between and among the countries in the whole of Asia, ASEAN included. Highly academic and research-oriented in nature, the initiative offers institutional support from the Japanese government to researchers and scholars from within and outside the region with the purpose of raising awareness about anything Asian, with the end goal of eventually developing research interests in relevant areas. This paper looks at the Future Leader's program as a tangible effort to sustain not only Japan's relations with Asia, but more specifically with ASEAN.

What other measures from Japan and the ASEAN nations can be seen as mechanisms to sustain their relations? What is the nature of relationship being sustained at present? Will Japan's current endeavor to deepen understanding of the Asian region lead to a more meaningful partnership, and in what particular fields?

Unified and Diversified: An Examination of ASEAN Discourse on Culture

Manuel Enverga III

European Studies Program

Ateneo de Manila University

menverga@ateneo.edu

This paper examines ASEAN's discourse on culture, as evidenced in various documents and publications. It argues that in the field of culture, ASEAN appears to have two priorities. First, there is the need to recognize that there is cultural diversity among the Member States. Second, there is the need to find commonalities in cultural heritage, which could serve as a cultural springboard upon which to build a regional cultural identity. The two aspirations are reflected in the 2000 ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage, which states, on the one hand: "To guarantee the protection, preservation, and promotion of each Member Country's cultural heritages, each Country shall formulate and adopt policies, programmes, and services and develop appropriate technical, scientific, legal, administrative and financial measures for this purpose". On the other hand, one of its perambulatory clauses reads: "AFFIRMING the importance of cultural discourse, awareness and literacy in enhancing intra-cultural and intercultural understanding and deeper appreciation of ASEAN cultural heritage, as essential for peaceful coexistence and harmony in ASEAN".

Each of the two priorities will be elaborated on and their consequences and assumptions examined. ASEAN's discourse on cultural diversity relies greatly on a concept called the theme based approach, whereby a theme, usually a cultural form, is selected, and Member States present an aspect of their national cultures in accordance with the theme. The theme-based approach is problematic, however, in that it emphasizes diversity so much, that differences are highlighted, and the goal of emphasizing cultural commonalities in Southeast Asia is marginalized. Second, the priority to recognize diversity privileges both national cultural discourses, as well as high culture forms, thereby marginalizing other cultural forms that could contribute to ASEAN's discourse on a common regional culture. The effect of having two such opposing priorities is that ASEAN's work in the cultural field is detrimental to one of the priorities no matter what direction is taken.

With regard to cultural commonalities, ASEAN's discourse may be divided in terms of common material culture practices and common values. The basic assumption of the organization's discourse on common culture is that present-day nation-states are culturally linked to one another due to common pre-colonial cultural practices. Discourse on common material culture practices rely on archaeological evidence to insinuate that commonalities once existed, and perhaps still exist, in the region. The same is assumed for common Southeast Asian values. Both aspects of ASEAN's discourse on common culture contribute to legitimizing the coming together of dissimilar nation-states, but they may be critiqued in two ways.

First, ASEAN and its discourse on common culture are hegemonic since they have both achieved a status of assumed truth. Second, the discourse on common culture privileges a romanticized idea of untouched precolonial cultural practices, thereby marginalizing cultural forms borne from colonialism and globalization, both of which could serve as sources for other common Southeast Asian cultural practices.