



E

eye
magazine

The International,
Intercultural and
Interdisciplinary
Magazine of
the International
Academic Forum

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Cover image: "Wedding Gifts"
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Thank you for reading the first edition of IAFOR's magazine, "Eye"! We decided on naming the magazine "eye" in reference to the Japanese kanji, "目" (me). The meanings of "目" range from eye; eyesight; sight; vision; look; stare; glance; to encompass experience or viewpoint. "Eye" is our opportunity to focus, share and engage our own visions, perspectives, and insights with each other; to keep an eye on those things that interest and inspire us as they happen and evolve.

It has taken months in planning but we have finally launched our first issue to showcase and encourage inspiring and intellectual discussion. At IAFOR we felt that you, as a reader of Eye, should also have the opportunity to contribute to this new exciting magazine venture. Thus we hope that it can give you the opportunity to also creatively focus your own vision, perspective and insight as a contributor to future editions.

We trust that Eye magazine will be an informative, interesting and exciting way for us to communicate with you, and you in turn with us. In future editions we hope to bring you a wide range of articles and stories ranging from interviews and reviews, through to showcases of the newest, most innovative and thought provoking ideas from academia. We hope you enjoy the first edition!

Melissa Choi
Editor, "eye" magazine

From the
Editor

thinking

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scholarship

platform

contributors

Hazlina Shaik Md Noor Alam, SEGI University College

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投稿者

expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of IAFOR/"eye" magazine.

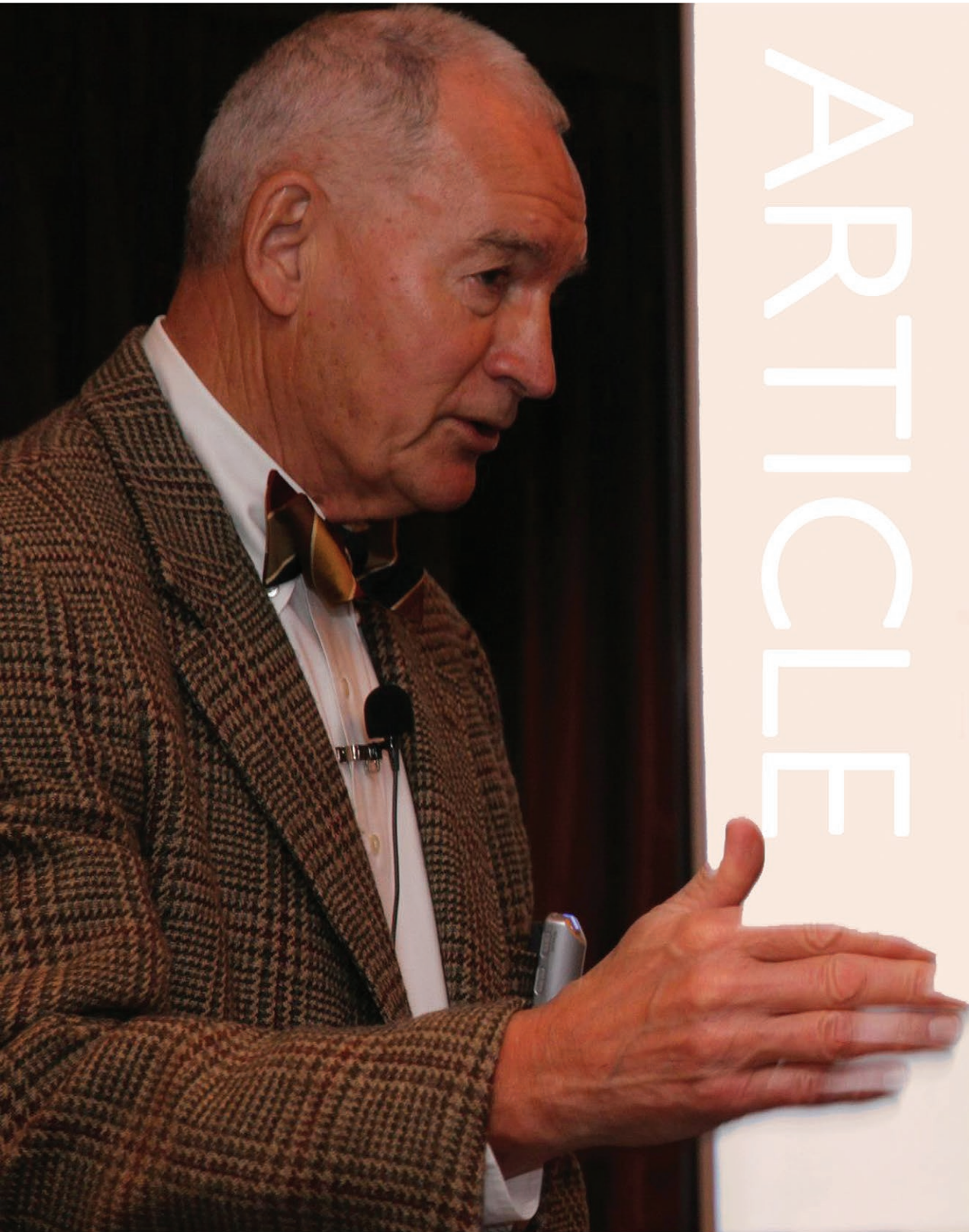
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on
Political Economy

討論
とうろん

邨田丹陵「大政奉還」
Murata Tanryou "Taiseihoukan"
The Forum for Presentations during the Meiji Restoration







ARTICLE

FEATURED

Bill Totten

K. K. Ashisuto, CEO

Formatted version taken from
The Asian Business and Management Conference
Osaka, Japan
Keynote Address, November 17, 2012

Featured

WHY I AM OPPOSED TO JAPAN JOINING TPP

The so-called "Trans-Pacific Partnership" is currently at the center of negotiations between the US and Japanese governments as a regional trade agreement. It is something to which I am resolutely opposed, because I believe it will have negative consequences on Japan, its economy, and its society, for a number of reasons, which I shall outline here.

I Secrecy

While the US Congress, the press, and the public have had to make do with leaked chapters of negotiations, Just Foreign Policy reports that 600 corporate lobbyists were granted access to the negotiated text.

The Motion Picture Association of America ("MPAA") and other industry groups can log into a website at their own convenience. They are even allowed to (with certain limitations) share parts of the text with others, supposedly for the sake of getting an "analysis" of what the text means. But when a Senator - who is the chair of the Senate subcommittee on International Trade - wants to take a look at the same document, he has to go to a "private room" where he will be shown the document, but not allowed to make copies, take notes or bring along his own staff expert on the matter.

“My biggest concern about the TPP is its secrecy.”

... the model confidentiality agreement that served as a base for the TPP negotiators is a public document, available at a page on the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade website. The model agreement lays out the rules of confidentiality for signatory countries over TPP draft texts, proposals, communications, and other documents relating to the negotiations over the agreement...While the confidentiality "model letter" itself is extremely vague, it does contain some interesting parts: ... It holds that "all participants plan to hold these documents in confidence for four years after entry into force

of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, or if no agreement enters into force, for four years after the last round of negotiations".

“The US government has already tried to create 52 so-called ‘Free-Trade’ Agreements.”

Why would the nation that advertises itself as the "bastion of democracy" insist on all of this secrecy if the TPP was something beneficial to the citizens of the United States and other nations joining the TPP?

And if members of the US Congress have such limited information about the TPP, can we assume that our nation's leaders have any more information about it?

Why should we support any agreement whose content is deliberately hidden from us?

But, even though our governments, and the corporate media, are trying to hide the contents of the TPP from us, there is plenty of information available to alert us to the poison in this TPP. The US government has already created, or tried to create, 52 so-called "Free-Trade" Agreements, including GATT, NAFTA, WTO, ACTA, SOPA, PIPA, and various bilateral "free-trade" agreements with other nations. These agreements have so much in common, and their provisions favoring US multinational corporations escalate in such a pattern, that makes it easy to see the potential dangers in the TPP even through the veil of secrecy the US government tries to impose.

2 Plutocracy

I believe the major reason for this secrecy is that the United States is a plutocracy representing the interests of its largest corporations and richest citizens, not a democracy representing the vast majority of its citizens. In fact, the short-term profitability goals of the largest corporations are so opposed to the much longer-term goals of most citizens that, by catering to the interests of giant corporations, the US government actively works against the interests of most American citizens.

The original US Constitution was written in 1781 by a few rich men, largely to protect their own interests from the interests of the vast majority of US citizens.

The first amendment of the US Constitution says "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech."

In 1886, the US Supreme Court gave corporations the same rights as human citizens. In 2010, the US Supreme Court, in its "Citizens United" decision, ruled that political

campaign contributions are a form of free speech, so Congress shall make no law abridging political campaign contributions.

So now, more than ever, political office in the United States is bought and paid for by rich citizens and giant corporations, not by the votes of ordinary citizens.

In this year's US presidential election campaign, each candidate received about one billion dollars:
 Democrats (Obama): \$932,061,583
 Republicans (Romney): \$1,028,447,681

For Obama, small individual contributions comprised one-third, while large individual contributions comprised two-thirds, of monies collected.

For Romney, small individual contributions comprised less than one-fifth, while large individual contributions comprised more than four-fifths, of monies collected.

3 Bilateral Pact

The TPP is clearly a bilateral, not a multilateral, agreement.

"... the TPP would essentially be a Japan-US economic partnership because they will account for about 90 percent of the members' total GDP"

The TPP is clearly not a multi-national trade pact. The United States currently is playing South Korea and Japan off against one another, trying to lure either of them into bilateral trade pact or both into a trilateral trade pact with the United States.

Please see the table of TPP countries.

1. US GDP is 88% of the GDP of all current TPP members (USA, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Chile, and Peru).

2. If South Korea is added to the current TPP, its and the United States' GDP would comprise 88% of the entire TPP GDP.

3. If Japan is added to the current TPP, its and the United States GDP comprise 91% of the entire TPP GDP.

4. And if both South Korea and Japan are added to the current TPP, theirs and the United States' GDP would still comprise 91% of the entire TPP's GDP.

TPP Countries	Population	Nominal GDP	Current TPP Members GDP	Current TPP Members + South Korea GDP	Current TPP Members + Japan GDP	Current TPP Members + South Korea & Japan GDP
	in millions	in US billion dollars				
USA	310	14,527	88%	88%	91%	91%
Australia	22	1,237				
New Zealand	4	141				
Vietnam	88	104				
Singapore	5	223				
Malaysia	28	237.96				
Brunei	0	12				
Chile	17	203				
Peru	30	154				
			16,600			
Japan	128	5,459			22,059	
South Korea	49	1,014		17,615		23,073
Brazil	193	2,090				
Russia	143	1,480				
India	1,191	1,632				
China	1,341	5,878				

4 TPP vs China

“The US government is using the TPP as a weapon against China”

*During the recent Leesburg round of TPP negotiations Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney reportedly complained that Obama has not been tough enough with China. Romney endorsed the TPP, which he described as a “dramatic geopolitical and economic bulwark against China”.

* Barack Obama took an equally aggressive position on China in the presidential debate, stating “we believe China can be a partner, but we’re also sending a very clear signal that America is a Pacific power; that we are going to have a presence there”. In a coded reference to the TPP he said “we’re organizing trade relations with countries other than China so that China starts feeling more pressure about meeting basic international standards. That’s the kind of leadership we’ve shown in the region. That’s the kind of leadership that we’ll continue to show.”

* This follows repeated speeches from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last year that positioned the TPP as the economic limb of a two-pronged US offensive dubbed ‘America’s Pacific Century’. The second limb was the reassignment of US military presence from Iraq and Afghanistan to strategic allies throughout the region.



* Since 2005, Japan exports to China have grown by 46% while Japan exports to the US have shrunk by 32% and to the TPP have shrunk by 20%.

* Since 2000 Japan exports to China have tripled (295%) while Japan exports to the US have shrunk by 35% and to all TPP nations have shrunk by a fifth (20%).

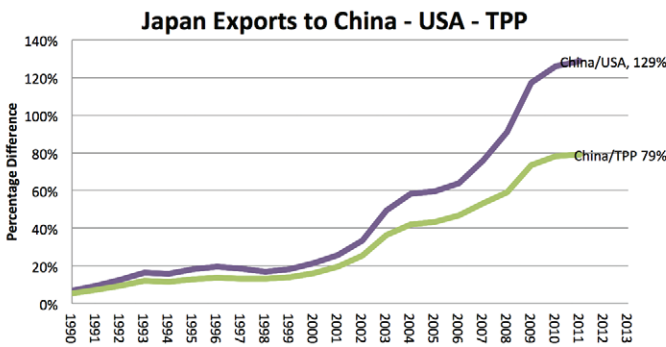
* Since 1995 Japan exports to China have grown by 525% (fivefold) while Japan exports to the US have shrunk by 12%, but to all TPP nations have grown by 1%.

* And since 1990 Japan exports to China have grown by 1360% (fourteenfold) while Japan exports to the US have shrunk by 23% and to all TPP nations have shrunk by 2%.

This is further evidence that Japan should NOT join the shrinking US and its TPP dwarfs but, instead, should either (1) stay with the WTO and other existing trade agreements or (2) if we want a regional trade union, we should work with China, Korea and perhaps India to build a regional Free Trade Agreement one instead of helping the weakening US try to “contain” China via the TPP.

In fact China, Japan, and South Korea are reported on the verge of launching three-way free trade talks. Such a three-way FTA would be much more attractive to Japan than one with the US and its eight TPP dwarfs.

Finally, has Mr Noda (Former Prime Minister of Japan), Keidanren (Japanese Business Federation) or anyone else explained why we need the TPP or any other Free Trade Agreement when we already have WTO? All of this TPP talk by Japan’s so-called “leaders” sounds like sycophant slaves meekly kowtowing to their haughty master. We seem to be doomed by the stupidity, venality, and meekness of Japan’s so-called “leaders” and their mass (propaganda) media.



But China is a much larger customer for Japanese exports than the US and its exports are growing explosively to China while they are shrinking to the US. Moreover, Japan’s exports to China alone are 79% as large and growing as its exports to all of the TPP nations which are decreasing.

Please refer to the above graph for the following notes.

5 Intellectual Monopoly (aka Property)



All recent trade pacts promoted by the US have advocated stronger and more lengthy protection of "intellectual property" such as patents and copyrights.

But the Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis found that patents retard rather than increase innovation.

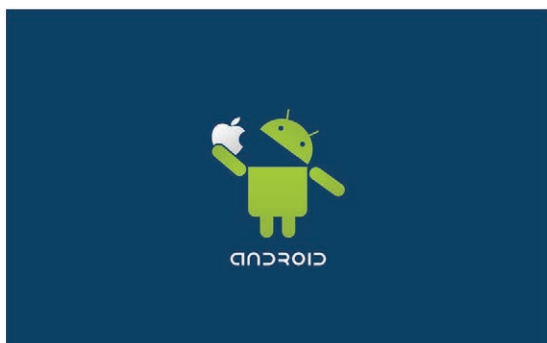
Patents primarily benefit (1) lawyers who make money on lawsuits and (2) old established companies that use them to keep new players out of their markets.

The costs associated with copyright and patent protection dwarf the costs associated with the tariffs or quotas that usually concern free traders. While the latter rarely raise the price of a product by more than twenty to thirty percent, patent protection for prescription drugs can allow drugs to sell for hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars per prescription when they would sell for five to ten dollars as a generic in a free market. Patent protection increases what patients pay for drugs in the United States by close to \$270 billion a year (1.8% of GDP).

The US pharmaceutical industry spends almost twice as much on advertising as it does on research and development, contrary to the industry's claim.

The majority of global pharmaceutical research and development (R&D) money is used to produce minor variations, leading not only to high prices but a lack of genuinely new drugs. About 85 percent of all new drugs are proven to be little or no better, clinically, than existing drugs. They are all better than placebo but they are not better than last year's drug that was better than placebo.

This process is called "evergreening".





In my company's field, Information Technology, we have a recent and rapidly growing concept called "open source software". Any person or organization can use and modify open source software free of charge. Their only basic obligation is that when they modify or enhance open source software in any way, they must make those modifications or enhancements readily available to everyone else. So instead of one company building and enhancing software in secret with its own limited resources, the entire world is free to collaborate in developing and enhancing Open Source software.

The results are amazing: Many of these free Open Source products are proving to be of equal or better quality than many of the most famous and most expensive "proprietary" software products. For example, Linux versus Microsoft Windows, Libre Office versus Microsoft Office, Postgres and MySQL versus various proprietary database managers, and so on. Apple invented (or at least popularized) the "smart phone" that runs only on Apple's proprietary software, but the open-source Android now has 75% of the "smart phone" market. Apple also invented (or at least popularized) the tablet computer that runs only on Apple's proprietary software, but Android already is driving Apple's near-100% market share in this area down to nearer fifty percent.



In conclusion, I feel that it would be very much against Japan's interests to join the secretive, ill-conceived TPP. This agreement would undermine our nation's sovereignty and security, as well as its ability to develop strong bilateral relationships with China, Korea and other neighboring nations and deal with the myriad economic and social challenges of the 21st century.

Spotlight on Humanties





Kenji Azuma (Japan) at Moshi, Tanzania

Moshi is a Tanzanian Municipality that is in the Kilimanjaro Region of Africa. In this area, the taste of rice is similar to Japanese rice. Actually, Japan supports the rice production here. These children are very adventurous because they know how to play in the jungle. They explore the rice plantation and swim in the river.

A Step Change for Human Rights?: The Burgeoning Regional Human Rights Infrastructure of Asia



*Dr. Silvia Croydon
Kyoto University*

One of the most notable aspects of today's international human rights regime is the unique absence in Asia of an inter-governmental regional human rights mechanism – that is, an arrangement between states whereby an independent court or commission delivers verdicts, which are made binding through a ratified treaty, on cases filed against them by citizens and citizen groups. Indeed, Asia remains the only geographical area where such a structure lacks – a state of affairs which is significant not only because it is an interesting anomaly, but also because it affects as large a proportion of the world's population as sixty percent, for it is roughly this many people that inhabit this region.

Regional human rights mechanisms can be most potent machines for realizing human rights norms. Placed at a level that is beyond the state, but still local enough for them to be approachable by ordinary individuals, regional human rights mechanisms represent an indispensable part of the institutional infrastructure that helps to bridge the gap between international and domestic human rights law. An example of how effective they can be is found in the May 22, 2012 ultimatum, issued by the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights with regards to the United Kingdom's reluctance to follow the Court's earlier ruling on former manslaughter-convict John Hirst's appeal for British prisoners' voting rights in national elections. The ultimatum states that fines running into millions of pounds would be incurred, if, within the time period of six months, Westminster fails to fulfill its responsibility as a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights and change its statutes to comply with the verdict.

As the contribution these regional human rights mechanisms were making to the human rights cause became more apparent, efforts began to be made within the United Nations to encourage the governments of Asia, which had become the sole region uncovered, to establish a similar set of institutions. Numerous local workshops, seminars and symposiums were organized, with technical advice being offered.

Although, in the eyes of many, the reference to the legal triumph of an evidently unrepentant villain might do little in the way of persuading of the virtues of regional human rights mechanisms, Hirst's case nonetheless offers a most apt illustration of the instrumental role these can play in harmonizing domestic practices with international human rights standards. It highlights how, even in those cases where individuals have their rights most begrudged by an overwhelming majority in both the public and the parliament, regional human rights mechanisms can be relied on to not only bring human rights relief to the concerned, but also to produce systemic policy changes.



Signing of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration at Phnom Penh, November 18, 2012

Whilst the European mechanism is arguably the most highly-evolved, currently in existence – an achievement which is probably a reflection of its having the longest history – it is by no means the only one. A parallel framework was set up in America, for example, almost concurrently with that of Europe only, in the American case, an intermediary procedure was created that requires communications alleging violation of rights affirmed in the American Convention on Human Rights be screened by the Washington-situated Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, with merely the ones deemed “appropriate” being passed onto the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica. Furthermore, in the 1970s and the 1980s structures similar to those of Europe and America, albeit with much more limited power, were established on the African continent and in the Arab Peninsula as well.

Despite this growing pressure on Asia to follow suit, however, until as late as the mid-1990s there was not even a sign of any regional mechanism emerging, which prompted scholars and practitioners to advance arguments echoing the so-called “Asian values” debate. In particular, the resistance of Asia to the idea of a mechanism for the promotion and protection of individuals’ rights was linked to the famous argument of Mahathir bin Mohamad and Lee Kuan Yew, made whilst they were Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore, respectively, that Asians are preconditioned to favour more community right and social peace and order. The fact that the biggest challenge ever made to the universality of human rights had emanated from within Asia appeared to lend substance to the theory that the existence there of a divergent approach to human rights was the reason why this region was the only one still devoid of a human rights mechanism.

Most recently, however, the institutional human rights landscape of Asia has seen some important changes. More specifically, in 1993, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced its momentous decision to create within the Southeast Asian sub-region a human rights mechanism comparable to those found in other parts of the world. Admittedly, for the nineteen years since the announcement of this plan, the Association’s output has been only a commission with the smallest of remits – that is, the ASEAN Inter-governmental Commission on Human Rights. That the capacity of the commission in question is limited to human rights promotion, as opposed to protection, is a most disappointing aspect for many observers. Nonetheless, the simultaneous emergence of another institution going by the name of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, which is a network of legislated for but independent national-level human rights bodies, seems to offer the promise to enhance through its interactions with ASEAN, the quality of its initiative. Although it is still uncertain to what extent these developments will ultimately impact the human rights of Asian citizens, there is no question that this is a space that is now worth watching.



Insight

Think Globally, But Act Locally

Dr. Vineet Kaul
DA-ICT University



According to one slogan, we should think globally, but act locally. Such thinking obviously has significant appeal, but it is highly misleading. Typically, this slogan pertains to environmental issues. However, it represents a particular worldview that is hostile to free markets and friendly towards governmental intervention.

The appeal of this slogan and the ideas it represents derives from legitimate issues. The persons who promote governmental control of the economy and environment do so because they see great potential for conflict in a free society based on the pursuit of self-interest. After all, how can individuals pursue their interests without coming into conflict with each other? The simplest and most-obvious answer to this question is we cannot avoid conflict in a society of free individuals. It might therefore seem to be the case that the interests of individuals can only be reconciled through coercion. However this dismal conclusion is not true. Reconciliation of divergences of interests between individuals comes through social cooperation within the market system. To see this point we must understand how the pursuit of individual interests leads to conflict, and what markets do to harmonize individual interests. The most obvious reasons for conflicts between individuals are due to scarcity and the idea of rational self-interest. If we each pursue our selfish use of scarce resources aggressively, conflict might seem inevitable. There are a few dreamers who speak of a post scarcity society. While the idea of abundance has a certain emotional appeal, there are obvious reasons to reject such an idea, such as human mortality and the finite nature of natural resources. Others reject the idea of self-interest. After all, some people do undertake seemingly selfless actions, such as charity and occasionally martyrdom. And some believe that though there is no natural harmony of interest, we can instead harmonize social life by making human nature altruistic.

Altruism alone does not harmonize social interaction. On the contrary, a world of altruistic people could easily be more rancorous than the world we know. It is not enough for people to want to promote the interests of others. We must also comprehend the interests of others, and this is impossible. One of the great insights of 20th-century economics was the "knowledge problem" examined by F.A. Hayek. The modern global economy is shaped by the individual interests and local circumstances of billions of people, each of whom is unique. We each have our own scale of values concerning the end uses of scarce resources, and these values are personal and subjective. Moreover, we individually develop our values through time and through experience. We also have our unique skills or talents in producing the things of value for ourselves or others.

Adam Smith illustrated the productivity advantages of specialized and divided labor. The ability to divide productive tasks among individuals enables groups to improve productivity and raise living standards far beyond what is possible under autarky. Finally, modern means of production use advanced technology arranged in complicated chains of production. Capital goods exist in enormous variety, and are arranged in very complicated ways. The unique nature of wants combines with the advantages of global division of labor and modern technology to pose a problem. How can anyone comprehend such complexity? How can we harmonize so many different actions in the pursuit of self-interest?

It should be fairly obvious that nobody can "think globally", but this is not the only problem with the aforementioned slogan. It might seem inevitable that we must "act locally", but this is not true either. Our inability to think globally poses a problem. How can a global economy work if nobody comprehends its working? The knowledge problem renders the idea of an altruistic solution impossible. Of course, self-interested people will want to achieve global order, if such an order delivers higher living standards for them.

In any case, seemingly selfless acts usually have a hidden payoff. People who perform volunteer work or donate to charities often speak of how much they enjoy these acts. Also, leaders and martyrs can secure prestige and a place in history for themselves when they commit seemingly selfless acts. Consequently, there is no reason to believe that altruism exists or will ever exist, and there is no need for it anyway. The real problem of attaining social cooperation lies not in the nature of human intentions, but in the limits of human cognition.

Since we can only think locally, global coordination of production requires some means by which we can "extend our span of the use of resources beyond the span of conscious control of any one mind" (Hayek 1948, p. 88). Markets solve the knowledge problem of mutual coordination of the use of scarce resources in the face of the knowledge problem. Prices in markets reach out across the world as signals to coordinate production.

Increased demand for oil in Asia has sent a signal to the West to conserve this resource. Americans recently cut their consumption of oil by 800,000 barrels a day, not because of any altruistic sentiments regarding Asians. We have economized on our use of oil because we are thinking locally, in terms of our own budgets, our own interests. Yet without intending to, we have acted globally to coordinate with others in the use of this and all other scarce resources. The price system enables us to "think locally and act globally" through markets. This is how we solve the knowledge problem, to arrive at some degree of global harmonization of many selfish interests.

While the debate in question is lengthy, and the sum of all the ideas within this debate is considerable, it can all be reduced to a simple form: The idea that we can think globally is absurd, not only when it comes to environmental issues, but perhaps even more so when it comes to economics. The idea that we should act locally is timid and small minded. The market system globalizes human action in a way that makes global thinking unnecessary, if not pernicious. The idea that we should "think globally and act locally" has superficial appeal, but careful examination of this proposition reveals that it derives from thinking that is both utopian and mediocre or unimaginative. The idea that we should think locally or selfishly and act globally might seem counterintuitive — in some sense small minded and greedy and in another sense absurd. However, competition in the market system does result in the unintended consequence of promoting general interests through individual actions, whether they appear greedy or altruistic.

To put it simply, those who truly want social progress should promote the idea that we should all think locally as individuals and act globally through the capitalist system. This is the creed of the true progressive.



From Kampong to city and back again

Dr. Hugh Byrd
University of Auckland

Industrialisation in western countries grew and declined over a period of about one century. In Asian countries, this process is taking only a few decades. Industrialisation has been the pull factor for urbanisation and cities have been described as 'engines of economic growth'. There is a general assumption that urbanisation will continue and that compact cities are the appropriate form for the future. This assumes that economies will continue to grow and resources will not deplete. It also begs the question: what proportion of a population can continue to be urbanised?

Each country will have its own specific push and pull factors based on their resources, culture and policies. In this short commentary I focus on Malaysia, one of the earlier Southeast Asian countries to industrialise.

In the last 50 years the Malay population has shifted from about 75% of the population living in rural areas to 75% living in urban areas. Unlike other developing countries where war, eviction and poverty have driven rural-to-urban migration, Malaysia's migration was largely planned by a government that was trying to address the imbalance in the ethnic income distribution. By industrialising the country and employing Malays, the plan was that they could share the economic benefits of the country instead of being entrenched in subsistence farming.

The problem with the plan was the lack of a skilled workforce and the lack of industry. The lack of a skilled workforce was overcome by tapping into the potential of the underemployed and unmarried women in rural families. Government agents actively went into the countryside to seek young women who could be trained to work in the electronics industry. Docile, obedient and dextrous, these young women were an ideal workforce for the foreign companies looking to invest in a country where labour was cheap and unions were banned.

Industrialisation was achieved by attracting foreign companies not only by a cheap, and now trained, labour force, but also by an infrastructure that allowed rapid global trade. Airports, ports, roads, electrification and other services were put in place to induce foreign direct investment. The infrastructure was largely funded by revenue from the now growing gas and oil supplies from the South China Sea. The income from Petronas, the state-owned oil company, was used not only to fund infrastructure but also to subsidise the price of petrol, electricity, certain foods as well as benefits for the Malays that included, amongst other things, cheaper homes and preferential savings rates. These benefits were intended to be for a short term only in order to raise the economic prospects of the Malays.

The 'tiger' economy boomed and the Malay population prospered under a preferentially subsidised economy. In the two generations since independence from the British, the Malays have a new middle class that is largely urban and westernised in its views of ownership and prosperity. However, links with the rural life continue both culturally and economically. 'Balek kampong' (return to your village) remains one of the most important phrases in the Malay tradition. It is not just the action of going home for festivities; it is also the call to return to one's roots and moralities.

The most important economical link, that makes Malaysia unique amongst developing countries, is that Malays cannot sell their land to non- Bumiputra(ii). Although they have migrated to the city, they remain in ownership of their lands. The evidence of this is very plain when visiting a kampong. Derelict houses and untended land are a common sight and testimony to the speed at which industrialisation took the country.

But the future of industrialisation in Malaysia is also rapidly changing. De-industrialisation is occurring, there is fierce competition from neighbouring countries and the resource that built the infrastructure has peaked. The oil and gas in the South China Sea could also deplete faster than expected if ownership of these resources is not resolved. The 'South China Sea conflict' could result in extraction of the oil and gas reserves by China as well as Malaysia thereby accelerating both the decline of the resource as well as the price of the diminishing products.

Subsidies are now gradually being removed and the consequent price rises are a political issue.

A 'goods and services tax' is about to be introduced (strategically after the forthcoming election) and food prices are escalating. While Malaysia has some economic resilience due to its other resources such as tin, rubber and palm oil products, the decline in industry raises the issue, once again, of ethnic economic equity and the risk of an increase in urban unemployment and poverty.



The future challenge of poverty in Malaysia is no longer the rural poor. Electrification, health services and investment in agriculture(iii) have resulted in a reasonably high standard of living in rural areas. The future problem will be the urban poor who lack any form of resilience, having been removed from their tradition of subsistence farming. De-urbanisation is one of the possibilities that could face those urban Malays that cannot adapt to a new order of an unsubsidised failing urban economy.

There is emerging evidence of de-urbanisation in other developing countries but the pull and push factors vary. The pull factors that led to urban migration in Malaysia are unique to the country and so also are the push factors that may end up reversing this process. Returning to the land is not a return to poverty, it is a reversal but the question for the future of many will be: is it better to live in urban poverty or better to have a resilient kampong life?



Notes

- i. The Malays are approximately 60% the population of Malaysia. The Indian and Chinese Malaysian communities constitute about 20% of the population each.
- ii. Bumiputra. Literally 'Sons of the Soil', the indigenous Malays.
- iii. The FELDA and FELCRA initiatives have supported Malay agriculture.



Energy

India's electricity scenario - Today and Tomorrow

*Dr. Deepankar Panda
Manipal Institute of Technology*

Energy has been universally recognized as one of the most important inputs for economic growth and human development. There is a strong two-way relationship between economic development and energy consumption. On one hand, growth of an economy, with its global competitiveness, hinges on the availability of cost-effective and environmentally benign energy sources, and on the other hand, the level of economic development has been observed to be reliant on the energy demand.

India's economy is growing at the rate of 8% or 9% every year for the past few years, and a high growth rate is projected for the years ahead. This implies an increased growth rate in the consumption of commercial energy, which includes electrical energy. The issue of the security of supply is the main driving factor for the current debate in the electricity sector in India. An important aspect of this debate is the growing awareness of the scarcity of widely used non-renewable resources.

Now the question that arises is can renewable energy sources eventually supply India's electricity needs in the future? The estimates made based on the system dynamics models prepared for the energy scenario of India indicate that even with a frugal per capita electricity need of 2000 kWh/annum and a stabilized population of 1500 million by 2025, India would need to generate 3000 TWh/yr. A systematic analysis of the information available on all the renewable energy sources indicates that the current potential is only around 130 TWh/yr.

With the advancement in the field of extraction of energy from these renewable resources this figure can go up to 380 TWh/year by 2025 which still doesn't match the actual total potential of 1212 TWh/year that is available for extraction. Hence, an increase of 200% is needed to reach the maximum potential of renewable sources of energy.

A wide gap can be observed between the supply and demand in the present scenario which can further increase if we rely mainly on depleting non-renewable resources. This gap is seen constant with the expected use of renewable energy sources but can be reduced if the renewable sources of energy are used to its maximum potential.

It can be concluded that in the future as fossil fuels are exhausted, renewable sources alone will not suffice for meeting India's needs. Also, it is highly unlikely that the maximum potential of renewable sources of energy will be harnessed according to the expected growth rate of each resource by the year 2025.

One of the possible solutions to the problem discussed can be identifying the existing and proposing new governmental policies to harness the maximum potential of the renewable resources. Also further development of the nuclear power scheme along with the reduction of power leakage generated from other sources during transmission and distribution can be taken care of. Implementation of new technologies providing high efficiency during power generation can again contribute to the solution. Along with this, cost analysis of each resource can be done to make the research practical, cost effective as well as ready to implement.

Corporate

Modern Corporations: Pathological

*Dr. Steven L. Rosen**Prefectural University of Hiroshima*

Many sociologists and historians have taken it as orthodoxy that the modern industrial corporation, which rose in the latter part of the 19th century and which has evolved into the modern multinational corporation, is, on balance, a fundamentally destructive force. It was Keynesian economics and the Keynesian New Deal government policy (along with organized labor), which countered the rapacious greed of the robber barons running the big oligarchies.

Yet, are leftist or other critiques of the corporation and free market capitalism correct? Is helping the “investor class” (supply-side economics) really so bad for society? If corporate profits are up, isn't that really good for everyone in the end? There is a conflict between the macro- sociological view that says the corporation is fundamentally dangerous, and the view of not only neoliberals but many others as well, that it is big business which will save the world.

The Canadian law scholar Joel Bakan lays out the case for there being something very pathological (sick) about the modern corporation, which is the most dominant institution of our time. Others have argued that, on balance, it has been a force for good that the multinational corporation has brought great wealth to the furthest corners of the globe, provided us with a fantastic range of goods and services, and been involved in numerous charitable activities.

Monster or Savior of Civilization?

Furthermore, many of these multinationals are on the cutting edge of developing new "green" technologies, founded on the new gospel of "sustainable development." Let us also not forget companies like Unilever, which as far back as the turn of the last century, provided free schools and clinics to the native people of the Belgian Congo.

One may even ponder the proposition, ---dare I say it?---- that this dominant institution of the past century, may end up saving the world. Is the corporation, the dominant institution of our time, a force for evil or good?

One easy way out of this dilemma is to simply say, "It depends on the people running the corporation," but this sort of begs the question.

Of course we understand that (the late) Anita Broderick of The Body Shop is a different creature than (the late) Ken Lay or (incarcerated) Jeff Skilling, and that the differing business outcomes reflect their differing "corporate philosophies." Of course it always comes down to people, but this formulation still skirts the issue--- is the corporation, by its very nature, a greed machine, gobbling up people and the planet?

Indeed, The Body Shop has been bought by L'Oreal (which does animals testing). Boeing is a great company

producing great aircraft but also the second largest defense contractor after Lockheed Martin (involved in various procurement related scandals). IBM is a great company with a long history that includes helping the Nazi's exterminate Jews and the Hitler war machine. The Gap makes nice clothes but was recently found to be buying from slave labor shops in India.

Is the corporation as an institution to blame? Or does the question need to be answered more holistically, that is, not focus merely on the corporation but on market society as a whole--- after all, greed and corruption are hardly new to the history of capitalism.... a system which seems to have divided the world into have and have nots--- those who can afford to live in clean places and those who live in garbage dumps.

So I ask again, throwing the question out to the void (or the World Wide Web). Do you believe that (a) the corporation is inherently a dehumanizing and destructive force, (b) the modern corporation has, on the whole, benefited human society, or (c) Other (e.g., the question is framed wrong, or needs to be answered in the context of an understanding of modern capitalism).

Corporate

Reward in Whistleblowing: Leading the Donkey to the Carrot?

Dr. Hazlina Shaik Md Noor Alam
SEGI University College

The issue of whistleblowing has now become a very significant issue, as it plays a very important role in enhancing and improving corporate liability in corporations. Corporations all around the world now strive to practice good corporate governance, as it promotes excellent business relationships, as well as to avoid any future liability that could arise from any negligent governing in the corporation. However, it is now no longer enough to talk about whistleblowing in relation to good corporate governance; whistleblowing must be used to promote a wider social good as well. The recent introduction of the Whistleblower Act 2010 in Malaysia is a very significant step in the right direction, but more needs to be done in order to follow in the established footsteps of such whistleblowing acts, such as the US SOX 2002 and UK PIDA 1998.

Malaysia seems to have taken a page from the US False Claims Act, which contains qui tam provisions. The False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729 et seq., first passed in 1863, includes an ancient legal device called a "qui tam" provision (from a Latin phrase meaning "he who brings a case on behalf of our lord the King, as well as for himself"). This provision

allows a private person, known as a "relator", to bring a lawsuit on behalf of the United States, where the private person has information that the named defendant has knowingly submitted or caused the submission of false or fraudulent claims to the United States. The relator need not have been personally harmed by the defendant's conduct and the relator is then given a share of any money recovered. In April 2011, it was reported that the IRS paid CPA \$4.5 million, the first-ever whistleblower reward where an in-house corporate accountant, at one of the largest financial services firms in the US, discovered a \$20-plus-million tax misconduct that went unreported.

In respect to this, the Malaysian Internal Revenue Board has stated that they will reward whistleblowers if they can provide information which would lead them to tax dodgers. The whistleblowers' identities would also be kept secret. However, although the IRB in Malaysia has made a vast inroad in the battle to fight crime against the government, this concept needs further work. More awareness should be formed among Malaysians that everyone has to be involved in fighting corruption against the government.

However, it must be noted once more that the path of whistleblowing must be treaded upon with caution, for both the whistleblowers as well as the policy makers. If whistleblowers are to be protected, the level of protection must be both adequate and sufficient, and not merely something that is seen to be as lip service. This is due to the fact that despite the laws that have been put in place to protect and shield whistleblowers from repercussions, cruel and nasty reprisals still happen. In order for whistleblowing to work, there must be a collaborative effort from both the whistleblowers and the lawmakers themselves. The whistleblowers will provide the moral fortitude, which is the act of whistleblowing itself, while the law offers the legal backing needed to ensure that correct steps are taken to rectify said wrongdoings and misconducts.

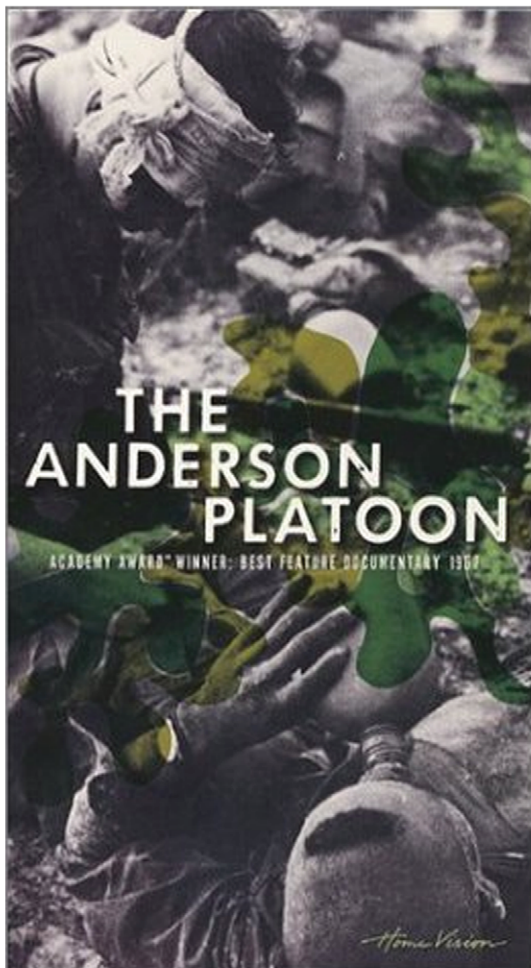




Cinéma-vérité at War: Schoendoerffer, Vietnam and The Anderson Platoon

Ms. Wajiha Raza Rizvi
University of the Punjab

The Anderson Platoon (1967), directed by the French Director Pierre Schoendoerffer, is a black and white cinéma vérité film that offers the realism of the Vietnam War: a deeper truth that cannot be seen with the naked eye. The film makes a direct reference to the French defeat in the First Indochina War (1947-1954) by the nationalist Vietnamese with military and financial support from China and the Soviet Union. The Americans took up the French interests and faults in Vietnam that shaped the Second Indochina War (1954-1975) between the National Liberation Front and the Communist North because of the deep-rooted American fear of Communism.



President, Lyndon B. Johnson, in the torrent of American "militarily invincible muscle," escalated the Vietnam War from 16,000 American soldiers in 1963 to 550,000 in early 1968 in the defense of the freedom of South Vietnam under the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 1964. The first US troops were thrown into a complete alien environment where they could hardly identify the enemy or the animosity. Schoendorffer chronicles the six week experience of an American, racially-integrated 1st Cavalry infantry platoon combat unit, led by a black West Pointer, Lt. Joseph B. Anderson in South Vietnam. The cinéma vérité, a fly-on-the-wall, unobtrusive filming technique is used to avoid the fabrication of a subjective spectacle of war. The Anderson Platoon reflects real experiences of the real soldiers without making a political comment on war, which challenges the paradox of the ideology of war.



Lt. Joseph B. Anderson

The Anderson Platoon combines naturalistic documentary film techniques with storytelling methods of a fiction film to shoot anxieties of the American GIs in an alien environment. It is nonepisodic, and follows the chronology of historical events. It uses genuine locations and natural lighting to capture scriptless and unrehearsed actualities of the Vietnam War. The movements of the subjects carry the sense of atmospheric light and shade, and changes that give an insight in the world of war. The film deals with the rhythm of the movement without getting into the complexities of individual stories.

The sync-sound technique is used primarily for capturing real conversations of the soldiers, the interviews and statements of the suspects, the soldier soliloquies in the form of songs, and the ambiance, and the original and natural sound effects of the real locations. The birds' chirping sounds juxtapose with the shots of the soldiers trotting through streams in the jungle. The sounds of the chopper's churning fans while landing or taking off are juxtaposed with the impact shots of the gust blown through the crops in the fields. The sound of children crying is juxtaposed with shots of the soldiers taking away their parents following an investigation. Guns firing and the sounds of launchers being loaded are juxtaposed with a luncheon, a game, or a sermon or communion by the priest as he reminds each soldier 'the body of Christ.' Classic tunes are laid over the very few shots of the South Vietnamese people in the film during investigations, the opening as well as the ogling shots of the wandering souls of prostitutes and beggars, but not over the enemy, the unburied dead from North Vietnam. The era music as well as the songs made by the soldiers are part of life in the combat zone, in the bush and bunkers. Original sound, little music, narration, realism and extreme naturalism, and the absence of substantial postproduction techniques—unnatural sound effects or special effects—draw a complex picture of the war.



The film opens with a backdrop of an intellectual sequence: a Polyphonic montage revealing the inverted reflection of a lone farmer plowing rice paddies, people traveling in the gondolas, the static images of the gods in a lifeless shrine, a tree reaching the sky, and the smoke, and the clouds above green mountains. The inverted image of the lone farmer signifies a multidimensional inversion or the subversion of life in Vietnam. It also signifies a desire for production and growth while the shot of the bulls from the back signifies obstruction of fertility, strength, and stamina. The gondolas signify motion of life caught between dark, sharp edges, and pointed vertices. The gods in the lifeless shrine signify an overarching observance of lifeless lands. The lone tree signifies a drive for production and growth despite its loneliness. The green symbolizes creation, but the smoke and the clouds float above and mourn the vigor of the green mountains.

This Polyphonic montage offers abstract ideas mirroring a disturbing disparity in the visual content to draw a conceptually complex picture of the war.

The pure intellectual abstraction is juxtaposed with the imaginative romanticism, which is in turn juxtaposed against the horror of the war. This sequence juxtaposes the powerful narration desiring "to appease all the souls of the unburied dead, the wandering souls of the beggars, prostitutes, and soldiers" and desires the viewer to transition from optimistic innocence to the experiential reality of war.

The Anderson Platoon draws a complex picture of the uncertainties of the American GIs. The unobtrusive, repetitive sequences expose close-ups that freeze and transition into wide-shots to reveal a compassionate picture of the American jungle-ridden soldiers. The 'freeze frames' of their close-ups assert the significance of their names, origins, and ages (18 to 24 years) to mirror the perpetual tension, anger, and pathos of war on their young faces. In this alien environment, the soldiers eat, sleep, drink, smoke, fight the uncertainties of the small group wars with the Viet Cong of the North-based National Liberation Front, and die. The realism of their circumstances challenges the legitimacy of war. Robert McConnell says the *cinéma vérité* tradition revolts against the classic conventions of seeing life as rational and orderly and the romantic traditions of seeing life emotionally more satisfying than it really is. The Anderson Platoon deals "with the general folly and daily grind of [war]" (Salamon). The film amalgamates the imaginative beauty of symbols, landscapes, and humans with danger, horror, and tension: the experiential reality of the American militarily invincible muscle in Vietnam.

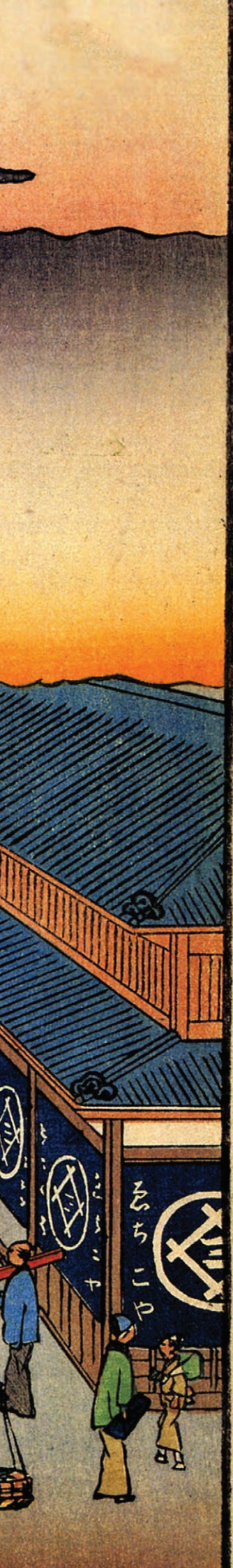
The Anderson Platoon is Schoendorffer's political comment on the world's most fundamental issues. Its complex subject matter offers a chance to understand war culture, and soldiers' positions within it, and their feelings about it. The Anderson Platoon is concerned with reality rather than ideology of war in the name of peace, and the perfection of actions that condemn the American dream.



江戸屋



Spotlight on historical monies



歌川 広重「する賀てふ」
Hiroshige Utagawa "Surugacho"

One Hundred Famous Views of Edo-Surugacho
Lively Commerce Market with Mt Fuji backdrop in
the Edo period.

G. Arbuthnot's "Reports on Japanese Currency, 1862-1863"

Dr. Marina Kovalchuk
Vladivostok University

The "Reports on Japanese currency" (1862-1863) is an important document for the understanding of Japanese monetary policy during the bakumatsu period, as it includes significant information concerning the value of gold and silver, exchange rates, the circulation in Japan of Japanese and foreign coins and other currency problems that Japan faced in the years 1850-60. The request to investigate the Japanese monetary system was made in 1862 after discussions on the currency question held between officials of the British Foreign Office and the members of the Japanese Embassy to Europe, known as "Takenouchi Mission".

"Takenouchi Mission" was the first official Japanese mission sent to Europe by Tokugawa shogunate government. Since the beginning of the 17th century, Japan had followed a policy of isolation. Japan only abandoned this policy in 1854. The beginning of international relations brought with it many internal problems, one of the most serious of these being the problem of national currency.

Japanese representatives in London requested that the British government address the Japanese currency situation and take steps to improve this matter. To prepare these instructions, the British Foreign Office asked the Treasury to investigate the currency problems of Japan. This task was conducted by George Arbuthnot (1802-1865) on the basis of reports submitted by British diplomats and merchants in Japan during the period 1854-1863.



The Japanese currency system in the bakumatsu period (1853-1867) was very complicated and it was difficult for foreigners to understand it. As a result the exchange rate in the first Convention signed between Japan and USA, also known as the Treaty of Kanagawa (1854), was fixed as one Mexican dollar (which had been used in Asia since the sixteenth century as a trade dollar) for 1600 momme copper coins, which would have made one Mexican dollar closely equivalent to one ichibugin (Japanese silver coin).



The Mexican dollar, however, weighed three times more than one ichibugin. So, in spite of the fact that the percentage of silver in ichibugin was higher, this exchange rate was undoubtedly more profitable to the Japanese than to the Americans.

In July 1858, however, the exchange rate was reconsidered. The Treaty of Kanagawa (1854) was not in fact a commercial treaty. It settled the question of foreign consulate authorities but it did not discuss how commercial activities would be carried out between the United States and Japan.

The commercial treaty establishing the framework of foreign trade in Japan became the main task of the first American Consul General to Japan - Townsend Harris.

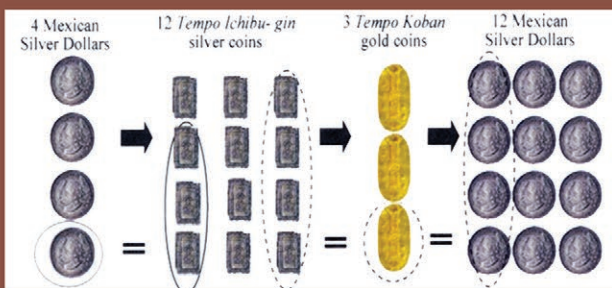
Townsend Harris, who acted before his arrival in Japan as the American vice-consul in China, immediately realized that exchange rates fixed in the Kanagawa Treaty was not favorable to foreigners. Harris asserted that, since the Mexican dollar had the weight of three ichibugin, the proper exchange rate should be three ichibugin for one Mexican dollar; in other words, he insisted that the value of the Mexican dollar in Japan should be determined by the "weight for weight" method. The debate between Harris and the bakufu on the currency question lasted for several months, but did not bring any success.

These negotiations revealed another factor; that the bakufu was trying to avoid the “weight to weight” exchange rate not only for profit, but more importantly, to maintain control over its monetary system.

Seeing that diplomatic negotiation did not bring any results, Harris decided to take a more aggressive approach.

In Arbuthnot's opinion, Article V of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce signed between Japan and USA in 1858 had sealed the fate of the Tokugawa currency system. This Treaty officially allowed the “weight to weight” exchange rate method and, what was more important, permitted the foreign export of gold and silver coins of all description from Japan.

For a long period of isolation, the intrinsic value of precious metals in Japan was controlled by the bakufu and not by the market. In 1858 the parity of gold and silver in Japan was 1:5, which made Japanese gold cheap compared to what existed at that time in the world market, as the world market set the parity between gold and silver at 1:15.



Foreigners were therefore able to purchase Japanese gold at one-third the cost of the market value by simply exchanging silver for gold. Since Article V permitted them to export the gold they purchased in Japan, the draining of gold from the country was inevitable.

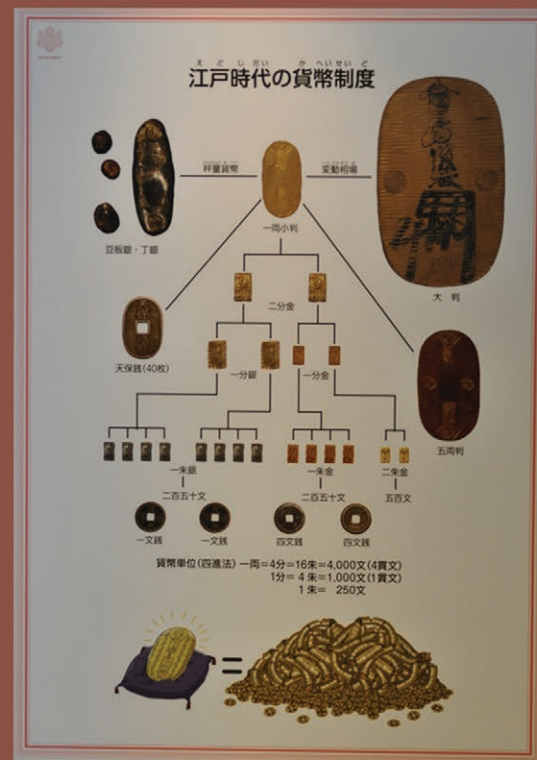
In the “Report of Japanese Currency”, Arbuthnot very strongly criticized the way in which the currency issue was settled in the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which was signed first by the USA, and then by four more Western countries including Britain. He also pointed out that the agreements currently existing with Japan on the currency question were not profitable, not only for Japan but also for Great Britain.

The bakumatsu period in Japan, with its chaotic monetary system, could not become a stable trade partner for Britain, or an active consumer of British industrial products, and yet the transformation of Japan into an active trading partner was one of the main aims of British foreign policy in the second part of the 19th century.

As a solution to the Japanese currency problems, Arbuthnot proposed:

- To modify the existing treaties
- To abolish the circulation of foreign coins in Japan
- To establish a currency system that conformed to international standards
- To establish a Mint for coinage from bullion

The Japanese authorities were informed of Arbuthnot's recommendations. The implementation of these recommendations, however, only became possible after the Meiji restoration (1868) when the new Imperial government carried out the modernization of the Japanese currency system. This modernization was based on international standards by issuing a new Japanese currency (yen) and establishing the Mint in Osaka, where the new Japanese coins were produced from bullion.



Silver Depreciation and International Relations: An Outline of the DAMIN Programme

*Dr Georges Depeyrot
École Normale Supérieure*



I am a French historian, and my field of research is monetary and economic history. Some years ago, I began documenting coins from excavations and hoards of the Roman period (3rd c. BC – 5th c. AD), before slowly expanding to include not only Roman but also medieval and modern coinages. I also engaged increasingly in international research programmes in cooperation with other countries, and I have lead research projects in countries across Europe, including Armenia, Georgia, Poland, Romania, Moldavia, and Slovenia.

Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to take part in several conferences in Japan, mainly concentrating on the question of comparative history between western and eastern coinage and monetary systems. At this point, my attention began to focus on the question of the development of the western monetary system in Japan at the very beginning of the Meiji era (1868-1912).

The creation of the yen and the opening of the Imperial mint was the result of the Japanese government's decision to adopt a western way of trade. To do this, the Government bought the Hong Kong mint at that point, and transferred the machine to Osaka. Some of the mint's English directors and specialists also came to Osaka to help set up the presses.

The Meiji era was a period characterized by a long trend of depreciation of the value of silver. The depreciation began in the years 1871-1873, after the French were



defeated during the Franco-Prussian war. France was treaty-bound to pay a large indemnity to Berlin over the next few years. With this money, Germany decided to shift from a bimetallic monetary system to a monometallic gold system, bringing it into line with the system in the United Kingdom at the time. To buy enough gold, Germans sold their stock of silver (composed of the indemnity, old coins, etc.). The arrival on the market of this silver in large quantities corresponded with the discovery of new silver mines in the USA, creating a glut in the supply of the metal. After 1873, the relation between gold and silver that was for many centuries around 1 to 15.5, gradually fell to 1/30 at the end of the Meiji period (1912).

The resultant monetary crisis effectively killed the bimetallic system that was in use throughout [much of] continental Europe, but also changed the balance of power in the economic relations between silver-using countries and gold-using countries. For example, to pay 1 gram's worth of gold to the United Kingdom (a gold standard country), India (a silver standard country) would have had to give 15.5 g of silver in 1870, but 30 grams by 1910. The cost of the merchandise bought in gold in India decreased whereas the price of merchandise bought by Indians from the United Kingdom increased.

Until this point, most research has concentrated on the impact of this crisis in the USA and Europe. However, the question of the integration of Japan and of China in the world economy has not yet been very well studied. China continued to use silver, but Japan shifted from silver to gold with the adoption of the gold standard in 1897. Exactly as Germany did with France, Japan extracted reparations from the Chinese after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 to facilitate the change to the gold standard.

The Silver Monetary Depreciation and International Relations or DAMIN programme (Dépréciation de l'Argent Monétaire et relations Internationales), which I head, is now analysing the creation of the modern monetary system in Japan during the 1870's so as to try to understand the first global financial crisis in the period 1870-1900, and will also include analyses of Chinese and Indian economies of the same period. This program is a four-year one, funded in the main by the following French agencies: the National Agency for Research (Agence Nationale de la recherche), the National Center for Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), and the Laboratories of excellency fund (LabEx TransferS).

The plan is to make available the basic documentation through a programme of republishing at the main International Monetary Conferences held in Europe over the period, as well as the main documents for India, China, Korea, etc.

For Japan, we decided to publish the complete series of the Reports of the Director of the Imperial Mint for the Meiji period. These give a fascinating view of the production of coins with a lot of details concerning the monetary situation in Japan by year. It will be the first time that the complete series will have been made available. The works and books of Matsukata Masayoshi, Minister of Finance and Prime Minister during this period are also essential to understand the monetary situation and these volumes have been translated into English. The plan is to understand the consequences of the silver crisis in Eastern Asia, and the reaction to the first real global monetary crisis.



Matsukata Masayoshi



The first DAMIN conference took place in January 2012 at the École Normale Supérieure, in Paris. Delegates came from several different countries, as the videos of all presentations are available on the website of the program: <http://www.anr-damin.net>. The next conferences will be in Madrid in May 2013, followed by Osaka in April 2014, in cooperation with IAFOR, Copenhagen in September 2014, and Taormina in September 2015.

At present (December 2012) 15 volumes of documents, including the proceedings of the Paris Conference are available. DAMIN will publish another batch of 15 volumes in 2013, and the videos of the Madrid conference will be made available online. By maintaining this publication timetable, we aim to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge of the monetary history of the last decades of the 19th century, and with inclusion of India, Japan and China in our field of research, give a global approach to the question, at the precise point in time when the worldwide network of banks first linked all nations.

By the end of the program in December 2015, I hope that the awareness of monetary history will be greatly raised, especially concerning the countries that have until now, been largely overlooked by researchers.



Discover Japan



Wagasa (和傘)

Chris Willson (England)

The wagasa, a traditional Japanese umbrella, epitomizes elegant design. A craftsman uses the simplest of natural materials: bamboo, washi paper, wood and linseed oil, to produce an object of intricate construction. Function and beauty in perfect harmony.





Kintsugi (金継ぎ: golden joinery) is the Japanese art of fixing broken pottery with a lacquer resin sprinkled with powdered gold.



Wagashi (和菓子 wa-gashi) is a traditional Japanese confectionery which is often served with tea. The typical types are made of mochi, azuki bean paste, and fruits. Wagashi is typically made from plant ingredients.



Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾 北斎) was a Japanese artist, ukiyo-e painter and printmaker of the Edo period.



Yuino (結納) is the ceremonial exchange of betrothal gifts. A collection of objects, symbols of happiness, is exchanged between the two families.



Mizuhiki (水引) is an ancient Japanese art form that uses a special cord. The traditional decoration, given away at Japanese occasions, such as weddings, births, and funerals take the forms of animals or boats.



feel
kyoto:
iyuki
ryokan



Wearing my yukata with a nice cup of matcha tea
in hand, I sit and contemplate in haiku:

Oasis in the
Middle of an oasis
Must be lyuki.

Elise Gee (Canada)
at Kyoto, Japan

Three generations of the same family have tended to guests at lyuki, an exclusive three-room abode based upon sukiya-zukuri architecture, a popular style in the Edo period (1600-1868). Sukiya-zukuri focuses on the art of culture and refinement with teahouses as its ideological and structural foundation. The inn is just behind Yasaka Shrine and is a mere ten minute walk to Kiyomizu-dera Temple, the 1200-year-old Buddhist site, and popular destination for tourists and pilgrims alike.

The surrounding park is lush with beautiful cherry trees, a sight to behold during the springtime when the blossoms are in bloom. The Japanese government declared the park, a national "meisho", meaning "Place of Scenic Beauty". The walk up old stone steps to the inn is where I came to appreciate the reason for Maruyama's meisho designation. lyuki's ryokan breakfast is renowned as one of the best in Kyoto. I think it is the best.

With its forest-like backdrop and proximity to key Kyoto sights, lyuki provides a delicate balance between city and nature, a respite from the hustle and bustle, a taste of old Japan in its most exquisite and refined for the modern palate.





NARA

The Sprit of Japan

The origins of Kohfukuji date to the eighth year of the reign of Emperor Tenji (669 AD) when Kagami-no-Okimi, consort of the statesman Fujiwara-no-Kamatari, established a temple at the family estate in Yamashina Suehara (modern-day Kyoto prefecture) to pray for the recovery of Kamatari's illness.

Kofukuji

法相宗大本山 興福寺

ライプランテーション探検

Exploring the Rice Plantations

Kenji Azuma (Japan) at Moshi, Tanzania







Vera Wong (Canada) at
British Columbia, Canada



Autumn stroll
on the South Coast



Yi Kwon (France)
at Suncheon Bay, South Korea

Clear Skies at Chateau Beach Resort

Vera Wong (Canada)
at Kenting, Taiwan



夏





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