

The Second Asia Future Conference Report

The Second Asia Future Conference was held from Friday, August 22nd to Sunday, August 24th in Bali, Indonesia, with 380 registered participants from 17 countries. The general theme of the conference was “Diversity and Harmony”, under which there were forums in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, and a large number of research paper presentations, promoting international and interdisciplinary discussions.

The Asia Future Conference aims to provide a platform for those who have studied in Japan and those who are interested in Japan to meet and discuss the future of Asia.

On Friday, August 22nd, the function room in front of the plenary room at the Inna Grand Bali Beach Hotel in Sanur, Bali, was colorfully decorated with 70 pieces of batik (Indonesian traditional textiles) from the collections of Professor Masakazu Tozu (Professor Emeritus, Kokushikan University), 20 pieces of Japanese “sometuke” ceramics by Professor Fumio Shimada (Tokyo University of Art) and other young artists, as well as a barong (Indonesian lion dance) costume.

At 10:00, the Opening Ceremony commenced with the Balinese welcome dance performed by four female dancers. Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Conference Chairman, proclaimed the opening of the conference, which was followed by the welcome speech by the Vice-Governor of Bali and congratulatory speech by the Ambassador of Japan to Indonesia, His Excellency Yoshinori Katori.

At 11:00, the keynote speech was given by His Excellency Bilahari Kausikan, Ambassador at Large of Singapore (Former Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary of Singapore) on the theme “Diversity and Harmony: ASEAN and East Asia in the Era of Global Reconstruction”. The speech started with the proclamation that “the world is undergoing a profound transition of power and ideas. The modern international system [that] was shaped by the West ... is now drawing to a close. No one can predict the future and we do not know what will replace the western dominated system.” The speech was very well-received, and proved to be thought-provoking for the participants who came from mostly Asian countries.

After the keynote speech, “shishi-mai” (Japanese lion dance) was performed by a group of performers from Soni village in the Nara Prefecture of Japan. After this all the participants moved to the terrace adjoining the beach for lunch.

At 14:00, three forums by invited speakers commenced.

Social Science Forum : ”New Order of East Asia in the Era of China’s



Emergence” - Researchers from China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia reported how their countries were influenced by China’s emergence, which evoked lively discussions.

Humanities: “Artistic Interconnections in Contemporary Asia” - Through the comparison between Japanese “shishi-mai” and Indonesian barong dance, ceramic technologies in East Asia, as well as Indonesian batik, common culture in Asia and its contemporary meanings were discussed.

Natural Science Forum: “Environmental Remote Sensing” - As the Second SOMIRES (Symposium on Microsatellite for Remote Sensing) was held at the same time, researchers from USA, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea and Japan reported their findings.

The details of the invited speeches can be found at the following link.
<http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/speeches.pdf>

At 18:00, the Welcome Party commenced in the hotel garden in front of the beach. After dinner came the main event of the day - a side-by-side performance of the Japanese “shishi-mai” and Balinese barong dance - performed in front of and mesmerizing the over 400 participants.

On Saturday, August 23, all the participants went to Udayana University, where 178 papers were presented in 41 panel sessions. As the Asia Future Conference is aspiring towards an international and interdisciplinary approach, each session was arranged by sub-themes, which the presenters selected during the submission process. As such, each session did not necessarily consist of specialists in a specific academic field. Although different from academic conference in specific fields, this approach helped foster many rich and diverse discussions.

The Best Presentation for each panel was chosen by two chairpersons in each of the 41 sessions. The list of Best Presentations can be found at the following link:
http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2014/files/2014/08/AFC2014Bali_BestPresentation.pdf

Three Best Posters were selected by the AFC Academic Committee from the 11 posters that were displayed in the Conference. The list of the best posters can be found at the following link:
http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2014/files/2014/08/AFC2014Bali_BestPoster.pdf

In addition, the Best Papers were chosen before the conference and the awards were presented during the Farewell Party on the last day of the conference. 71 full papers that were submitted online by February 28th, 2014, were screened by 42 judges in total according to the following criteria: 1) Is the theme of this paper in accordance with the AFC theme "Diversity and Harmony"? 2) Is this paper persuasive? 3) Is this paper original? 4) Does this paper have an interdisciplinary and international approach? Each reviewer recommended two papers out of nine or ten papers. After compiling the results, the papers that were recommended



by more than two reviewers were selected as one of the Best Papers. The list of best papers is available at the following link.
http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2014/files/2014/07/AFC2014Bali_BestPapers.pdf

The following three special sessions were also held in addition to the 41 panel sessions.

Round Table Discussion - “The Future of Japan Studies: Toward a Dream of an Academic Community of East Asia”: Supported by a grant from the Tokyo Club, several researchers of Japan Studies, mainly from China, but also from Korea and Taiwan, were invited. They reported on the current situation of Japan Studies and discussed how to move forward.

CFHRS Seminar “Korea's Precedent Role for Upgrading East Asia's Regional Dynamism” - Organized by the Center for Future Human Resources Studies (Korea). There were two lectures followed by the research reports by the undergraduate students.

SGRA Cafe “Fukushima and its Aftermath: Lessons From a Man-Made Disaster” - Exhibition of photos and documentary film made by the participants of the SGRA Study Tour to Fukushima. A talk session was also held.

After the sessions ended at 17:30, all the participants moved to the restaurant Hong Kong Garden by bus to participate in the Farewell Party. After a short report about the conference by the AFC Organizing Committee Chair Junko Imanishi, the Rector of Udayana University Dr. Ketut Suastika made a toast, which was followed by a Javanese dance by two Japanese performers and the presentation of awards. At the presentation ceremony, the 18 authors of the Best Papers went up to the stage and received their certificates from Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Conference Chairman. The certificates for the 41 Best Presentations and 3 Best Posters were given out by Mrs. Itsuko Atsumi, Executive Director of Atsumi International Foundation. Lastly, Dr. Saeko Urushibara, Vice Chairman of the University of Kitakyushu, announced that the Third Asia Future Conference would be held in Kitakyushu in 2016.

On Sunday, August 24th, participants took part in organized excursions, which included visiting the rice terrace at Jatilwih which is a World Cultural Heritage site, going to the Ubud area for sightseeing and shopping, or visiting the Uluwatu Temple to see the kecak dance and enjoying a sea food dinner.

The Second Asia Future Conference “Diversity and Harmony” was hosted by the Atsumi International Foundation (Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA)), co-hosted by Udayana University (Post Graduate Program); supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Embassy of Japan in Indonesia, and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA); in cooperation with the Center for Future Human Resources



JAFSA, and Global Voices from Japan; grants from the Japan Foundation Asia Center, Toshiba International Foundation, and Tokyo Club; sponsored by Garuda Indonesia, Tokyo Marine Indonesia, Airmas Asri, Hermitage, Taiyo Sinar, Mitsubishi Corporation Indonesia, Daiwa Securities, Chugai Pharmaceutical, Kokuyo, Ito-en and Kajima. In particular, we owe great thanks to the generous support from Kajima's local subsidiaries, which helped make the conference a festive event.

The Organizing Committee and Academic Committee for this conference were organized by former Atsumi scholars (known as "Raccoons"), and together with the SGRA Steering Committee members, they voluntarily took part in almost all aspects of the holding of the conference, from planning the forums, maintaining the home-pages, selecting the best awards, to taking charge of the reception. In addition, 82 people in total including invited guest speakers kindly agreed to act as the chairperson of the panel sessions.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the more than 400 participants, as well as to those who supported the holding of the conference and all of the volunteers who provided support in many ways and helped lead to the success of the Second Asia Future Conference.

The Asia Future Conference started in 2013 and we aim to host it five times within a span of ten years. The Third Asia Future Conference will be held in Kitakyushu, Japan, from September 29th to October 3rd, 2016.

We would like to ask for your continued support, cooperation and, most of all, your participation.

Junko Imanishi,
SGRA Representative

