

## The 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Future Conference Report

It was on the afternoon of January 12<sup>th</sup> 2020, a Sunday and the final day of the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Future Conference, that the Taal volcano started erupting. Located approximately 70 kilometers to the south of Manila, one of the study tours was just in the middle of enjoying their tour of Tagaytay as it occurred. An eruption of this scale was the first since 1911. At one point, the volcanic smoke reached a height of 15,000 meters with volcanic ash even reaching Alabang in the south of Manila, where the first day of the conference was held. On January 13<sup>th</sup>, the following day, numerous flights departing from Manila International Airport were cancelled or delayed, affecting the over 200 conference participants out of whom over 70 were forced to extend their stay.

From January 9<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) to January 13<sup>th</sup> (Monday), the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Future Conference (AFC#5) was held at the Bellevue Hotel in the Alabang region of Manila and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in the province of Laguna. 294 registered participants from 21 countries attended, and the overall theme for the conference was “Sustainable Shared Growth: Our Common Home and Happiness.” Today, the world is experiencing economic growth as never before, but this growth has in turn led to an increase in the wealth gap as well as to the destruction of the environment. With these issues in mind we discussed the ideal of “sustainable shared growth” and explored the possibilities for its realization from a multitude of perspectives. Aiming for the actualization of this goal, we expanded the discussion of these issues to a multidisciplinary and international academic sphere by holding and hosting a keynote lecture, symposium, roundtables with invited speakers as well as hundreds of research presentations.

From 9 AM on January 9<sup>th</sup> (Thursday), owing to logistical matters pertaining to simultaneous interpretation, the activities started with Roundtable A, under the theme of “Dialogue of National Histories between Japan, China and Korea.” This roundtable sought to bring about historical reconciliation and rebuild mutual trust in East Asia by establishing a stable and cooperative relationship through dialogue based around Japan’s “Japanese history,” China’s “Chinese history,” and Korea’s “Korean history.” At this fourth meeting the spotlight was shone on the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the theme of “the birth of East Asia,” which brought about a lively and fruitful discussion. (Simultaneous interpretation: Japanese-Chinese-Korean)

The opening ceremony started at 9.30 AM on January 10<sup>th</sup> (Friday). Following the hymns by the UP Rural high school choir, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Conference Chairperson, gave the opening address for the AFC#5. This was followed by the welcome remarks of Dr. Fernando



C. Sanchez, Jr. the Chancellor of UPLB, the co-host of the symposium, and congratulatory remarks of H.E. Koji Haneda (Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines) and Atty. Danilo L. Conception (President of the University of the Philippines).



Next was the keynote speech by H.E. Jose C. Laurel V (Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Japan), entitled “Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in the Age of Social Media.” This was followed by a symposium on the theme of “Sustainable Shared Growth” featuring five speakers who have contributed to SGRA’s projects in the Philippines and facilitated by Dr. Ferdinand C. Maquito (UPLB/SGRA), who is also from the first batch of Atsumi scholars.



In the afternoon, Roundtables A and B as well as the parallel panel sessions were held.

The theme for Roundtable B was “Can Religion Stop the Tyranny of the Market Economy?” Despite the economic progress and reduction in poverty in Southeast Asian countries achieved under the current global economy, there continues to be a spread in inequality and with it a growing social division. There is a sense of fatigue amongst local communities, and with this context in mind this roundtable invited theologians and economists from the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand to discuss the successes and failures of economic thought and religious systems in Southeast Asia in an increasingly culturally “scrambled” economy. (Language: English)



The program for the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Future Conference can be accessed from the link below:

<http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2020/conference-program/>

At 8 AM on January 11<sup>th</sup> (Saturday), all of the participants were boarded onto seven buses to depart on the one-hour journey to UPLB, which is located at the foot of Mt. Makiling in Laguna province. The sprawling campus is home to the College of Forestry and Natural Resources, the main venue for the second day of the conference. In its participants were liberated from the steel and concrete jungle of the hotel venue of the day before into the nature filled environ of UPLB. Roundtable B and 40 sessions were held, and lunch was served in the botanical gardens where participants enjoyed packed lunches in the middle of the forest.



In total over the two days, 50 sessions were held, and 173 presentations given. With an international and inter-disciplinary academic approach in mind, each session was arranged according to themes which presenters selected at the time of submission such as “shared growth,” “peace,” “environment,” and “innovation,” thus allowing for these issues to be discussed from multiple perspectives.



The Best Presentation from each session was selected by the two chairpersons of the session. The list of Best Presentations can be viewed at the link below:

<http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2020/files/2020/01/List-of-AFC-2020-BEST-PRESENTATION-PRIZE-.pdf>

Best Papers were selected by the Academic Committee before the conference. Papers for which abstracts were uploaded to the AFC online system by January 20, 2019 were eligible provided that a full paper was uploaded by July 31, 2019. 127 papers were divided into 13 groups and evaluated by 65 reviewers, and papers in each group were reviewed by five reviewers who judged them based on the evaluation criteria. Papers that did not abide by submission guidelines received negative points. The guidelines are as follows: 1) Is the theme of the paper in accordance with theme of “Sustainable Shared Growth: Our Common Home and Happiness”?; 2) Is this paper perspicuous and persuasive?; 3) Is this paper original and innovative?; 4) Does the paper hold international aspects in some points?; 5) Does this paper have an interdisciplinary approach? Reviewers recommended 2 papers from each group, and after tallying the scores the following 20 papers were selected. The list of the Best Papers can be viewed at the link below:

<http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2020/files/2019/10/AFC5-Best-paper20191028.pdf>

Following the sessions, participants once again boarded a bus to go to the National Arts Center at a higher level of Mt. Makiling, where the closing party started at 6:30 PM. We were treated to song and dance performances by the university students, and awards for the Best Papers and Presentations were given. In the awards ceremony, the Conference Chair Mr. Yasushi Akashi presented awards to the 20 recipients of the Best Paper as well as the 50 Best Presentation awardees. Towards the end of the party there was a presentation about the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Future Conference (AFC#6) that will be held in August 2021 in Taipei. Greetings were given by the President of Chinese Cultural University, the co-host of AFC#6, and a video introducing the venue was shown.

On January 12<sup>th</sup> (Sunday), participants went on various study tours such as the tour of Manila, the Quezon City tour, and the above-mentioned tour of the Tagaytay area during which the Taal volcano erupted.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Future Conference “Sustainable Shared Growth: Our Common Home and Happiness” was hosted by the Atsumi International Foundation Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA) and co-hosted by the University of the Philippines Los Baños College of Public Affairs and Development (CPAf) and supported by



Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines, and the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, Tokyo, Japan. It was also supported by over 50 organizations and individuals including the University of the Philippines System. The list of collaborators and supporters can be viewed from the link below:

[http://www.aisf.or.jp/sgra/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/AFC5\\_Host\\_Colloaborators\\_Sponsors.pdf](http://www.aisf.or.jp/sgra/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/AFC5_Host_Colloaborators_Sponsors.pdf)

Special thanks to the Philippines Plaza Holdings for making it possible to hold this festive event.

The Organizing Committee and Academic Committee for this conference were organized by Atsumi Foundation scholars who voluntarily took part in almost all aspects of the conference such as planning the sessions, maintaining the homepages, selecting the awardees, and taking photos. The sole 2 Atsumi Foundation fellows from the Philippines played a particularly large part in the event from its planning stages until its completion.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the 300 participants who joined us, as well as to those who supported the holding of the conference and all of the volunteers who provided assistance in many ways and helped lead to the success of the AFC#5.

The Asia Future Conference is interdisciplinary at its core and encourages diverse approaches to global issues that are both mindful of the advancement of science, technology and business, and also take into consideration issues pertaining to the environment, politics, education, the arts, and culture. This conference is organized together with likeminded institutions in order to provide a venue for the exchange of knowledge, information, ideas and culture. It is not only for SGRA members, but also for former international students of Japan from educational institutions around the world and their students and collaborators as well as for anyone interested in Japan.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Future Conference (AFC#6) will be held from August 27 (Friday) to August 31 (Tuesday) 2021 at the Chinese Cultural University in Taiwan. We would like to ask for your continued support and cooperation, and especially your participation,

Flyer for AFC#6:

[http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2020/files/2020/01/AFC\\_6\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2020/files/2020/01/AFC_6_flyer.pdf)

Photo highlights from AFC#5:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ou5v2w1vx4g7gko/AABAQ6jivEmEnA0hxGqRnGFHa?dl=0>



Feedbacks for AFC#5

<http://www.aisf.or.jp/sgra/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/AFC5feedback.pdf>

Junko Imanishi

SGRA Chief Representative