

# Prospects of Democracy in East Asia for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Issues, Threats, and Challenges

Jakarta, Indonesia  
November 28-29, 2008

## Rationale

For the past two decades, two trends have characterized the state of democracy in the East Asian region: the economic growth of non-democratic regimes; and the democratization of formerly non-democratic regimes. The first trend continues to be articulated through the notion of 'Asian Values' – a conflicting, albeit simplistic, discourse of development versus democracy popular among non-democratic and semi-democratic regimes. The second trend is interpreted within the 'Third Wave of Democratization' that has swept the world since 1974. The current democratic wave reached East Asia with a succession of democratic transitions in the Philippines (1986), South Korea (1987), Taiwan (1988), Mongolia (1990), Thailand (1992), and Indonesia (1998).<sup>1</sup> Currently, there are approximately 1.5 billion people living in democratic societies in the region. This represents a remarkable political transformation since the early part of the 'Third Wave.'<sup>2</sup>

More recently, an emergent and alarming trend threatens to erode the gains of democracy in the region. The failure to consolidate democratic gains in some of these countries have given rise to a trend variably labeled as "democratic deficit," "democracies-at-risk," and "democratic rollback."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, democratization in Asia is stagnating and being challenged from within. According to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* the number of "free" countries in Asia has remained unchanged since 2000<sup>4</sup>. These trends reflect democratic regression in Thailand and the Philippines, political uncertainty in

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<sup>1</sup> Chu, Yun-han (2006), "Third Wave Democratization in East Asia: Challenges and Prospects" *Asien* 100, 11-17.

<sup>2</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. (1991), *The Third Wave: Democratization in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century*.

<sup>3</sup> Diamond, Larry (2008), "The Democratic Rollback," *Foreign Affairs* 87(2). Accessed at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080301faessay87204/larry-diamond/the-democratic-rollback.html> on April 9, 2008

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org>: accessed March 20, 2008.

Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, state responses to protests in Burma and Tibet and perennial oppression in North Korea. During the same period, the rapid rise of China has drawn attention to an alternative, albeit undemocratic model of economic development. Furthermore, democracy promotion in general has been “discredited” by the unwillingness of the US to challenge undemocratic measures taken by governments in Asia in the name of the so-called “War on Terror”<sup>5</sup>.

## **Objectives**

Given the trends and challenges for democracy in the region, it is therefore an opportune time for scholars, institutes, and organization to assess the prospects of democracy in the region in the new century. This workshop is envisioned to be the first in a series of research and networking activities related to democracy in Asia. It aims to pursue the following:

1. Assess the state of democracy in East Asia two decades since the ‘Third Wave of Democratization’;
2. Identify the issues, threats, and challenges to democratic consolidation;
3. Evaluate the prospects of democracy and democracy promotion in the region;

## **Workshop Sub-themes**

### **1. Democratization in Asia: Two Decades Since the Third Wave**

Despite a general trend towards democratization in many parts of the world, Asia remains a region where human rights and democratic values continue to be contested amidst the resilience and emergence of authoritarian models that present themselves as an alternative to the incipient democratic consensus.

### **2. State of Democracy in Asia: Issues, Threats and Challenges**

The democratic challenge is particularly acute among the developing countries in the region (which comprise the bulk of the continent) as neither economic

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<sup>5</sup> Carothers, Thomas. (2007), *US Democracy Promotion During and After Bush*, (p. v).

growth nor stagnation has sufficiently spurred political processes towards greater people's participation, transparency and accountability, respect for personal freedoms, and the guarantees for substantive equality.

### **3. Democracy Promotion in Asia: The Challenges Ahead**

Democracy promotion activities aim to help establish sustainable and deep-rooted democratic norms in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes by strengthening institutions and civil societies. International efforts to promote democracy are most commonly associated with efforts to establish peace in post-conflict societies. However, they also overlap significantly with non-conflict development assistance aimed at alleviating poverty and injustice in underdeveloped nations. Democracy promotion includes assistance in the areas of the rule of law, human rights, civic education, institutional governance, elections, political parties, free media and freedom of expression, NGOs and labor unions.

#### **Workshop Schedule**

<b>November 27</b>	<b>Arrival of Participants</b>
7:00 pm	Welcome Dinner
<b>November 28</b>	<b>Day One</b>
8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 – 9:30 am	Welcome Remarks and Preliminaries
	Dr. Julio C. Teehankee Chair, International Studies Department, De La Salle University, Philippines Workshop Convenor
	Dr. Hari Singh (confirmed) Executive Secretary, APISA
9:30 – 12:30 pm	<b>Panel One: Democratization in Asia: Two Decades since the Third Wave</b>

Chair: Dr. J.R. Nereus Acosta

*Asian Democracy between Consolidation and Crisis*

Dr. Nathan Gilbert Quimpo (confirmed)

Associate Professor, Tsukuba University, Japan

*From Democratic Revolutions to Uncivil Society in Asia*

Dr. Mark R. Thompson (confirmed)

Professor, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany

Visiting Scholar, National University of Singapore

*Asian Democracy-at-risk*

Dr. Paul Hutchcroft (confirmed)

Professor, Australian National University

12:30 pm

Lunch

2:00 – 4:00 pm

**Panel Two: State of Democracy in East Asia**

Chair: Dr. Narayanan Ganesan

*Japan*

Dr. Ryota Natori (to be invited)

Associate Professor, Kansai University, Japan

*South Korea*

Dr. Brendan Howe (confirmed)

Associate Professor, Ewha Women's University, South Korea

*Taiwan*

Dr. Christian Schafferrer (to be invited)

Associate Professor, Overseas Chinese Institute of  
Technology, Taiwan

4:30 – 5:00 pm

Coffee Break

7:30 pm

Dinner

**November 29**

**Day Two**

8:30 – 12:30 am

**Panel Three: State of Democracy in Southeast Asia**

Chair: Dr. Mark Thompson

*Philippines*

Dr. J.R. Nereus Acosta (confirmed)

Professor, Asian Institute of Management, Philippines

Secretary General, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

*Thailand*

Dr. Pitch Pongsawat (to be invited)

Lecturer, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

*Indonesia*

Dr. Bob S. Hadiwinata (to be invited)

Head, International Relations Department, University of

Parahyangan, Bandung, Indonesia

*Malaysia*

Dr. Lim Hong-Hai (to be invited)

Associate Professor, Universiti Sains Malaysia

12:30 pm

Lunch

2:00 – 4:00 pm

**Panel Four: Democracy Promotion in Asia: The Challenges Ahead**

Chair: Dr. Paul Hutchcroft

*Democracy Promotion in Asia*

Dr. James Gomez (confirmed)

Visiting Scholar, Keio University, Japan

Coordinator, Asian Democracy Initiative

*Building a 'Network of Networks' for Asian Democracy*

Jose Luis Martin Gascon (confirmed)

Professorial Lecturer, Political Science Department, De La

Salle University, Philippines

4:30 – 5:00 pm	<b>Synthesis</b>  Dr. Narayanan Ganesan (to be invited) Professor Hiroshima Peace Centre, Japan
5:00 – 5:30 pm	Closing
7:30 pm	Dinner and Socials
November 30	<b>Departure of Participants</b>