Introduction

This paper summarizes the discussions of “Southeast Asian Studies in Korea since the 1990s: Review and Reflection by Disciplines”, a special panel discussion at the biannual conference of the Han Kuk Dong Nam Ah Hak Hoi (韓國東南亞學會: Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies, KASEAS) on 27 October 2007. Eleven scholars had an unusual opportunity to discuss a single topic for about four hours from 10 am to 3 pm, excluding the lunch break. One of the reasons why such an occasion was organized was to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the publication of the Southeast Asian Review (Dong Nam Asia Yeon Gu). The launch of the Southeast Asian Review in October 1992 was a flare, signalling the launching of a serious research body devoted to Southeast Asian Studies in Korea. Since then, Southeast Asian Studies in Korea has achieved both quantitative and qualitative growth despite an unfavourable research environment. It was the idea of the Chairman and other members of the board that the best way of celebrating this event would be to have a conference, to seek a new direction of our studies by reviewing and reflecting on our past academic trajectories. The participants agreed to keep a record of the discussion in a summarised document format.

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The presenters of the panel were asked to submit a written summary of their fifteen-minute presentations. All the presentations were videotaped and audio recorded and then transcribed later. Presented papers that followed our guidelines closely were reproduced as they were written, whereas papers that were either too long or too short were edited by the presenters themselves, based on the transcription of the presentation and the discussion. Dr. JEON Je Seong, Director of Research of the KASEAS, summarized the discussion of each paper, wrote an introduction and edited the overall paper. The final draft was reviewed and approved by all the participants, as well as Dr. OH Myung Seok, Chairman of the KASEAS, and Dr. PARK Seung Woo, the Editor of the Southeast Asian Review.

We hope that this paper, which is a record of these voices, which have gone through a laborious process of hard work, will remain as a historical document of review and reflection not only for the development of Southeast Asian Studies in Korea but also for that of Area Studies in general. We also extend our comradeship and appreciation towards all the presenters, who wholeheartedly supported our idea and spared their time and efforts to contribute to this cause.

Southeast Asian Studies among Korean Anthropologists

1. Overview

OH Myung Seok (Seoul National University): I would like to give you an overview of the Southeast Asian studies conducted by anthropologists in Korea since the 1990s. There are two aspects that I would like to focus on. Firstly, who among Korean anthropologists studies Southeast Asia? Secondly, what are the major characteristics of the results of their research in terms of their themes and perspectives?

There would be no problem if I were to argue that research on Southeast Asia by Korean anthropologists began in the 1990s. There were few such studies before then. But this was not a unique trend which was limited to anthropological research in Southeast Asian studies in Korea. Until the 1980s, Korean anthropologists thought that choosing Korea as their field of study was the most natural choice that they could make. There were some scholars who worked on areas other than Korea before the 1980s, but there was a general stream of thought among Korean anthropologists that they should study Korea. However, there was a huge shift of research focus from Korean culture to foreign cultures. An increasing interest in Southeast Asia among Korean anthropologists has run parallel with this wider context.
Out of over 100 anthropologists with doctorate degrees in Korea, 59 of them, or nearly 60 percent, received their degrees for their research on other cultures. This phenomenon may be taken for granted but, in fact, it reflects the peculiarity of Korean anthropology. Studying foreign cultures among American and European anthropologists is not unusual, and this is also the case in Japan. However, most anthropologists from the Third World study their own cultures; not many of them study other cultures. In this regard, the fact that many Korean anthropologists work on foreign cultures is unique. If we narrow it down to those who have earned their degrees since the 1990s, those who worked on other cultures outnumber those who studied native Korean culture. Now, working on foreign cultures seems to be a general trend in Korean anthropology.

There are 14 scholars who worked on Japan, 11 on Southeast Asia, 10 on China and nine on the USA. About half of those whose area of study was the USA focused on Korean immigrants in the USA. In addition, several others worked on India, Africa, Latin America and Europe. The percentage of scholars who wrote their doctoral dissertations on Southeast Asia among the scholars who studied foreign cultures is about 20 percent, and this group is the second largest, following those who worked on Japan. But it is likely to be surpassed by the group of scholars who work on China for their doctoral dissertation, since its popularity is growing fast. Among 11 Southeast Asianists, six received their degrees in the 2000s. Therefore this is a quite recent phenomenon and, considering several others who are preparing their doctoral degrees with their work on Southeast Asia, the number is likely to increase. Looking at the countries where these eleven scholars earned their degrees is quite interesting and the result shows a degree of diversity. Four of them received their degrees from Korea, two from the USA, two from Australia, one from Britain and two from Southeast Asian countries. The fact that only two of them earned their degrees from the USA is exceptional, as a majority of Korean anthropologists working on other cultures (than Southeast Asia) study and receive their degrees in the USA. However, considering the current trends of overseas education of Korean doctoral students, there will be more U.S.-educated scholars in the future. In terms of the research area of doctoral dissertations, Indonesia had the largest number (four scholars, Kang Yoonhee, KIM Ye-Kyoum, KIM Hyung-Jun, CHO Youn-Mee), but it is fairly evenly distributed among other Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam (CHAE Suhong, CHOI Horim), Malaysia (OH Myung Seok, HONG Seok-Joon), Thailand (KIM Yi Seon, LEE Sang-kook), and the Philippines (KIM Min Jung). No one has yet written a doctoral dissertation on Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. Indonesia has a relatively greater number of specialists, but the depth of experts on all Southeast Asian countries still remains shallow.

These eleven scholars form a very homogeneous group. Most of these scholars are alumni of the Department of Anthropology at Seoul National University, at least for either their bachelor’s
or their graduate degrees. Also, many of them belong to the so-called ‘386 generation,’ who attended universities in the early 1980s and share the same Zeitgeist. This group characteristic helps them maintain a close intimacy with one another. However, precisely because of this, they tend to have similar ideas and sometimes show a problem of scholarly ‘inbreeding’; they may avoid harsh criticism of each others’ work, as they may think it inappropriate to do so since they know one another very well.

Next, I would like to discuss briefly the result of this research. My discussion is based on the publication data that these eleven scholars have uploaded on the website of the Korea Research Foundation. There are a total of 99 research papers that were published in academic journals or books. Among them, the combined number of publications on Indonesia and Malaysia make up the majority with 65 pieces, making up 65%. One of the reasons is that HONG Seok-Joon, a Malaysia specialist, and KIM Hyung-Jun, an Indonesian specialist, have been prolific scholars. These two scholars have published a total of 40 research papers. Another notable feature is that many scholars have published follow-up studies on the countries that they wrote their doctoral dissertations about. This shows that anthropologists try to adhere to their own area speciality. However, there were only five papers covering the whole Southeast Asian region. These works covering the whole region tended to be introductory works but there were not many such works. There have been only five papers covering the relationship between Korea and Southeast Asia. Taken as a whole, these characteristics show that Korean anthropologists tend to focus on their own area specialities and on follow-up studies.

In terms of research themes, religions and rituals make up the majority, with 28 papers on these themes; in particular, on religions and rituals in Indonesia and Malaysia. In contrast, there was no paper on Buddhism, which is one of the major religions in Southeast Asia. There were also many works on nations and on ethnic groups. What was characteristic was that anthropologists were interested in the political aspects of culture. Eleven papers were on civil movements or on local politics, and other papers on Islam dealt with its political aspect, as did the work on nations and ethnic groups. This may be because anthropologists were influenced by working with many of the political scientists of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies. However, there were, surprisingly, not many papers on kinship, the family and marriage, which are traditional research themes of anthropology. This was particularly so apart from research on kinship in the Philippines which is the speciality of KIM Min Jung. Even though several works are coming out on the themes of international marriage, migrant workers or the exchange of popular culture, which are themes which are closely related to globalization, research on these themes is generally lacking.
fact that there have been active exchanges between Korea and Southeast Asia, this has not been probed by Korean anthropologists, though they have some interests in this area.

It was interesting to note the publication types of the research papers. Where scholars publish their papers is closely related to those to whom their papers are targeted. A quarter of these works were published in either *Korean Cultural Anthropology* or *Cross-Cultural Studies*, the two major journals in anthropology in Korea. A considerable proportion of anthropologists target their fellow anthropologists as their audience. Next was *the Southeast Asian Review*. Area Study journals, such as *International Area Studies Review* and *East Asian Studies* followed. We can say that academic journals of anthropology or area studies were the main channels of publication.

Now I will switch to the context analysis. In terms of methodology, anthropological research generally requires long-term field research. All the eleven doctoral dissertations were based on long-term field research. In terms of their research subjects, nine out of the eleven studied rural areas, whereas one studied a city (CHOI Horim) and the other researched a factory (CHAE Suhong). That tells us that they followed the traditional way of selecting a research subject, i.e. mainly focusing on a community. But their follow-up studies, after their doctoral dissertations, show that they changed their research subjects. They tended to work on associations, organizations or cities for their research subjects and tend to have short field research. They did so as they had practical difficulties in conducting long-term field research after their doctoral dissertations. If this is inevitable, we need to discuss the methodological issue of how to find ways of taking advantage of field research.

In terms of research perspectives, I feel that many of us share similar views and a critical mindset. One thing that is for sure is that we are against the traditional concept of culture. Culture, in the traditional anthropological sense of the term, is the system of a peculiar way of life or set of ideas that is shared by a particular nation, which is consistent and is not easily changeable. Our shared understanding of culture is that it is not inherently well integrated but consists of divided and competing elements, and it is not normative but is malleable in relation to different social situations and contexts: therefore we should pay attention to the process of change. This perspective is a general trend in anthropology since the 1980s. We can say that the anthropologists of Southeast Asia have followed this trend.

I also agree with the study of Southeast Asia in terms of such a critical mindset in and that this approach has led to many research results. On the other hand, I feel that we are talking about the same thing and are reaching the same conclusions. Isn’t it a cliché to say that culture is heterogeneous, divided and competing or that culture is changing or that we should explain culture in terms of the situational context? Can we talk about new things only with this approach and isn’t
this kind of explanation rather out of date? Therefore it is time for us to go beyond accumulating empirical evidence and we should produce an agenda of theoretical discussion. And also I think that anthropologists, including me, are stingy in citing others. We do not cite others often enough and do not criticise others often enough. I feel that we are lacking in scholarly discussions and debates among us.

Lastly, I feel there is a general lack of comparative cultural research in anthropological Southeast Asian studies. There are few works that compare their areas with other areas or with other diverse cultures within Southeast Asia. Most of them work only on their own area and do not try to compare it with other areas. Once I thought that this was inevitable but now I feel that this may be a problem. Because of the strong emphasis on field research in our methodology, we feel that it is not appropriate to write about other areas where we have not conducted field research. This idea restricts our attempts to conduct comparative research. Anthropologists have a critical stance towards mega-discourses. Mega-discourses, such as those of modernization, globalization and capitalization, deal with a general phenomenon by comparing diverse societies, but anthropologists are critical about the appropriateness of these mega-discourses. We are more interested in the ways in which such general cultural phenomena are represented in a particular society. Therefore, we emphasize and carry out research on the characteristics of a specific area. Even though I think that this type of research is good for the purpose of criticizing the limits and the inappropriateness of mega-discourses, nonetheless other scholarly disciplines now acknowledge that a general phenomenon is represented in a particular way. Therefore, pointing out the existence of particularity and peculiarity is not enough. Instead, we should conduct comparative studies to discover cultural phenomenon, which looks peculiar in a specific area but which penetrates generally throughout cultures. One cultural characteristic of Southeast Asia is its diversity and this provides a very good and fertile environment for comparative studies. However, we have not utilized this well enough and instead we have stuck to our own research areas.

I came to think about this by reflecting upon the results of research in other areas. The anthropologists of Melanesia or Polynesia developed theories of gift exchange or magic by actively comparing and reviewing the research of others who had been researching on diverse societies within the region and therefore they were able to construct theoretically general principles or variations about gift exchange or sorcery. In this regard, we should aim to construct meaningful cultural theories by actively carrying out comparative studies of the cultural diversities of Southeast Asia.
2. Studies of Religion and Ethnic Groups

KIM Hyung-Jun (Kangwon National University): Professor OH has given us a lengthy discussion and, in fact, what I will discuss somewhat overlaps with his presentation. I would like to focus on anthropological studies of religion and ethnic groups in order to shed light on their orientation and trends. Among 10 anthropologists, eight of them have written on religion and ethnicity. Three of them received their doctoral degrees by writing on religion. They are HONG Seok-Joon, CHOI Horim and myself. They have continued to work on religion since the completion of their doctoral work and they have led the field. In other words, what one writes on for one’s doctoral thesis influences a great deal what one does after one’s doctoral work.

KIM Min Jung and KANG Yoonhee in Singapore partially dealt with religion for their doctoral theses. A commonality among these two and the previous three scholars is that they have a deep interest in rituals. Traditionally, anthropologists have done much work on rituals and Korean anthropologists’ interest in ritual can be understood in this context. There are some trends in studies of rituals. A core concern is that attention is paid to the contextual or situational meanings of rituals rather than the ahistorical or unchangeable meanings that are inherent in all rituals. That is, attempts to find out the contextual meanings of rituals make up the mainstream. This kind of research has the advantage of reviewing the multiple meanings and multi-dimensional characteristics of rituals in different places and contexts but at the same time it has problems. That is, by emphasizing situational interpretations, it neglects the importance of data accumulation about rituals at a basic level. For example, there are many studies of how people from different backgrounds interpret and practice a particular ritual. However, there are few studies that deal with how Southeast Asian people carry out rites of passage while they are growing up and what characteristics these rituals have at the basic level. Because of this research trend, current anthropological studies are not sufficiently appealing to students of anthropology who initially developed academic interests in the religion or rituals of Southeast Asia. Therefore, the consumption of the resulting research is extremely limited, being confined to a very small number of specialists. I have sometimes experienced this problem. I feel it is difficult to ask my students to read what I have written because my work deals with a phenomenon that is so specific that it does not satisfy the general interests of students.

In contrast to studies of religion, studies of ethnic groups show discussion at the general level more clearly. That may be because of the fact that there is no scholar who has written his own doctoral thesis on ethnic groups. As a result, the data that is used for most of the research on ethnic groups is based on historical data or on secondary sources. OH Myung Seok and CHO Youn-Mee,
who uses case study sources, primarily use interview data collected during short-term field research. In this regard, we may consider the dilemma that faces anthropologists. That is, using data that scholars are happy with greatly limits the range of their readership. However, if they want to write for the wider audience, anthropologists tend to use data that they are not wholly satisfied with.

Here are the summaries of the trends in the research on religion and ethnic groups in Southeast Asia that has been conducted by Korean anthropologists. Firstly, their doctoral thesis topics have had a tremendous influence on the future research directions of these scholars. We can note this from the fact that there has been a sizable amount of research produced on religion since many scholars have written their doctoral theses on religion.

Secondly, research on religion tends to be conducted at the specialist level. However, studies which cover the whole of Southeast Asia or the whole religious configuration of an individual country have been neglected. This seems to be related to the developmental path of international area studies in Korean academia. When Southeast Asia was first taken as a research subject, in the late 1980s, international area studies in general in Korea was in its infancy, and there were few studies that attempted to conduct research on religion in Southeast Asia by reviewing the literature or by conducting primary research. However, there was a topographical change in the academic field of international area studies in the mid and late-1990s; and academic activities have increased since then. Within this contextual change, scholars have published their studies on religion for the specialist audience. In inverse proportion to this change, introductory research on religion has failed to receive much attention. This resulted in a positive change, that is, in the accumulation of specialist research outcomes. However, this also resulted in a lack of studies which might provide useful information for those who are interested in an introductory or holistic picture of the situation of religion in Southeast Asia. In this regard, this excessively specialist-oriented research trend seems to have played a negative role in garnering general interest from the public.

Thirdly, it seems that research on ethnicity has not been very active in comparison with that on religion. In contrast, introductory and holistic studies on issues of ethnicity have been conducted. In the light of this, research on ethnicity may need to incorporate more in-depth research data for its research. When this has been done, then more balanced research may be achieved.

3. Globalization

CHOI Horim (Korean Institute of Southeast Asian Studies): I have prepared the presentation on research on globalization by anthropologists from Southeast Asian Studies in Korea. The concept of
globalization refers to phenomena that are related to the global spread of the capitalist market economy or transborder mobility and the exchange of people, commodity and capital, which lead to people having transnational and multi-cultural experiences in their everyday lives. Anthropological research themes that are related to this include tourism, migrant labor, foreign direct investment, international marriage, cultural exchange, diasporas, multicultural societies, cultural hybridity, ethnic(national) identity reinforcement in response to or in resistance to global processes, the reinvention of tradition, localization and glocalization.

The globalization process is now evident in Southeast Asian countries. Therefore, research on this topic is becoming increasingly important. When I first prepared this presentation, I aimed to focus on anthropological research on globalization based on data gained at the local level in Southeast Asia. This type of research was, to my surprise, quite rare. Therefore my initial aim of conducting a critical review of such studies – overcoming academic inbreeding – could not be carried out. Instead, I will review the meanings of such studies rather than conceptually categorizing and discussing the problems of these works, in the way that OH Myung Seok and KIM Hyung-Jun have done today. My presentation may give a narrow view of the trees rather than of the woods. In spite of this, my presentation may provide some overview of such works, as these works are representative of this kind of research, which may provide a glimpse of the woods. Please refer to my presentation paper for more detailed information.

Firstly, I would like to give an overview of anthropologists’ work on globalization. Among eleven anthropologists who had received their doctoral degrees by September 2007, seven have produced research which is related to the globalization of Southeast Asian societies or people. Their topics include, for instance, international marriage (KIM Min Jung, KIM Yi Seon), international labor and investment (CHAE Suhong), tourism (KIM Yi Seon, OH Myung Seok, HONG Seok-Joon), continuity, change and re-adaptation of tradition (KIM Ye-Kyoum, KIM Yi Seon, CHOI Horim, HONG Seok-Joon), and cultural responses to global economic crises (OH Myung Seok, HONG Seok-Joon), and multi-cultural society (HONG Seok-Joon, KIM Min Jung). However, none of these works used ‘globalization’ as a title word and there is no anthropologist who specialises in globalization in Southeast Asia.

There were about 10 papers that focused on observation at a local level. OH Myung Seok’s work on the Chinese community in Malaysia (1999) and on the response of Islam to the economic crisis in Malaysia (2001), CHAE Suhong’s work on Vietnamese workers who returned from overseas migrant work (2007), on a factory of a multinational company in Ho Chi Minh City (2003), the Korean community in Vietnam (2005), and HONG Seok-Joon’s work on a tourist event in Malaysia (1998), on the economic crisis in Malaysia (1999), the adaptation of foreign cultures and

Anthropological works on the perception of Southeast Asian people or societies within Korea were also noticeable. Some exemplary cases include discussions of Southeast Asian migrants in Korea and tourism in Southeast Asia. Take OH Myung Seok’s work on the image of Southeast Asia reflected in Koreans’ travel to Southeast Asia (2006). This work focused on Koreans’ construction of an image of Southeast Asia (tourism) rather than an analysis of the context and path of tourism within Southeast Asia. Therefore, it is a study of the attitudes and ideas of Koreans. In the case of international marriages and international migrant labor, KIM Min Jung has produced several works on Filipino migrant workers married to Korean wives (2003), the dilemmas and choices of Vietnamese and Filipino international marriage migrants, focusing on the ‘feminization of migration’ (KIM Min Jung et al. 2006), and “International Marriage Migrant Women’s Experience of Cultural Conflicts and Policy Implications for Better Communication” a project initiated by the Korea Women’s Development Institute (KIM Yi Seon et al. 2006). These studies reflect the social need for academic and policy alternatives on the issues of cultural conflicts and social problems related to the increase of migrants from Southeast Asia to Korea who came there for work or marriage. Even though the discourse of ‘multicultural society’ is expanding in Korea, not many Korean scholars of Southeast Asian studies have participated in this kind of research. In the case of KIM Yi Seon’s policy project work, I also took part in interviews with the families of Vietnamese-Korean international marriage couples. My experience shows that it is essential to have a local language capacity and an understanding of the local culture for the conducting of in-depth interviews with international marriage families from Southeast Asia. Even though these works point out the importance of in-depth understanding of the cultures of Southeast Asian countries, my belief is that these are also a study of present and future Korean society.

I chose to look at the ‘Korean Wave’ as this is deemed to be a very appropriate topic for Korean scholars who study globalization in Southeast Asia. As has been previously noted, the Korean Wave has become a fashionable research topic and has been dealt with in many disciplines, including political science, economics, media studies, cultural studies, cultural critiques and the arts. Among these, many works by political scientists, economists or linguists have been published. An exemplary work on the Korean Wave in a particular country conducted by an anthropologist is a
study of the Korean Wave in China (JANG Soo Hyun 2004). Works on other areas or works by non-anthropologists are numerous, which means that we may need to have a separate publication list. What is interesting is that there is no work on the Korean Wave in Southeast Asia conducted by Korean anthropologists of Southeast Asian studies. This provides implications for our review of the status of anthropology on the Korean Wave and on globalization.

In relation to this, the work of SHIN Yoon Hwan, a political scientist, called “The ‘Wave of Korean Cultures’ in East Asia: A Comparative Analysis” (2002) made an interesting point. We may pay attention to the typologies of the perspectives of Korean academia on the Korean Wave, which has occurred simultaneously in East Asian countries, including China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore and Mongolia. According to him, views of Korean Waves are diverse and contrasting, from a very positive one to a very negative and contemptuous one. Among them, pejorative keywords such as “cheap price”, “outlet”, “shallowly B-rated”, “vulgar”, “desire” are used by cultural anthropologists and cultural critics who have the most critical stance towards the Korean Wave. In other words, cultural anthropologists have expressed their contempt for the discourse of the Korean Wave most strongly.

I understand that these points, paradoxically, can be understood as being a call for more qualitative research on the consumption of foreign culture and cultural products in each Southeast Asian country, the receivers of the Korean Wave. This implies that we need more empirical research on how the Korean Wave is perceived in Southeast Asia by anthropologists. There are already several studies by anthropologists on the Korean Wave (for example, KIM Hyun Mee 2002; CHO-HAN Hae Jung 2002), and these studies can be categorized as ‘meta-studies of the Korean Wave,’ either highlighting the response of the sending country (Korea) or the receiving countries (in Southeast Asia) of the Korean Wave, or critically assessing the discourse surrounding the phenomenon. Anthropologists still conceptualize the “Korean Wave” with quotation marks, treating it and signalling it as a debatable concept. In particular, some perspectives – such as those that worship it, by focusing on its effect of maximizing the national interest, enhancing the national image and status, and increasing economic interests, and those that highlight the cultural affinity shared between Korea and Southeast Asia – are especially at odds with that of anthropology. Also, the concept of culture that is used in these perspectives is not in harmony with the traditional conceptualization of culture by anthropologists.

Anthropological studies on Southeast Asia are concentrated on ‘traditional’ research fields in countries like Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines and Myanmar where the Korean Wave phenomenon is noticeable. That is to say, anthropologists pay more attention to specific issues of cultural identity, adaptation and conflict in the process of social and socioeconomic change, and the
reinforcement or modification of traditional culture in the process of globalization. For anthropologists who are familiar with local cultures, the influx of Korean popular culture into Southeast Asian countries can be seen as just one part of the whole process of interaction between the native culture of a Southeast Asian country and foreign cultures on a larger scale. Despite all this, I believe that we need more anthropological studies of the Korean Wave. Qualitative research on the universality and particularity of the Korean Wave in a Southeast Asian context seems to be a niche market for anthropologists studying the Korean Wave.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by making a few points. First, even though the number of studies on Southeast Asia by anthropologists has been rapidly increasing and we now have a sizeable set of distinguished works, we still have a relatively scant amount of studies on globalization. I reviewed a number of works on international labor migration, international marriage, tourism – all of which take globalization as a keyword – but most of them were studies of Korean society rather than that of the Southeast Asia. For example, there is no work dealing with Southeast Asian sociocultural background among studies of international marriage migrants from Southeast Asia. For anthropological work on international marriage migrants from Southeast Asia to be well grounded in Southeast Asian studies, we need to study not only the experiences of these families in Korea but also those of their in-law families in Southeast Asia. Analysis of the economic and social expectations of the sending families needs to be carried out. Anthropological work has merit in furthering our in-depth understanding of cultural aspects of the globalization practised by Southeast Asians through specific empirical case studies.

Second, we should pay attention to the fact that the problems that our society has undergone through the globalization process are similarly important in Southeast Asian societies. What do foreigners and foreign cultures mean to Southeast Asians as their contact with the outside world becomes increasingly frequent? How is this foreignness imagined, experienced and consumed by Southeast Asians? How does such contact influence the traditional worldviews, identities and ways of life of Southeast Asians? Furthermore, whether increased experiences of foreign cultures deepen Southeast Asians’ understanding of other people and whether that contributes to ‘better cultural communication between cultures’ could be the foci of our future research. The “Korean Wave” in this context could be an imminent research topic for anthropology.

Third, research on Korean communities and the Korean diaspora in Southeast Asia needs to receive due scholarly attention, considering the growing size of the Korean communities in the major cities of Southeast Asia since the 1990s. The number of long-term residents in the region has increased fast relative to that of temporary sojourners. Also, research on Southeast Asia in Korean society, namely empirical research on ‘Southeast Asia within Korea’ needs to be conducted and
developed. In-depth research on diverse phenomena of globalization, such as overseas education, expatriate work, ‘Kirogi families’, overseas volunteer work, civil organizational activities and missionary activities, not to mention international marriage, international labor migration and tourism, needs to be conducted.

Lastly, I think that the strength of cultural anthropology in the field of globalization is inherent in the traditionally strong fields within anthropology. For example, the Southeast Asian response to the penetration of foreign cultures and the birth of hybrid culture in the process of cultural assimilation, the resistance to neoliberalism or globalization and the preservation of local culture or localization, the reinforcement of national (ethnic) identity, and the contemporary adaptation of traditional culture should be continuously conducted.

4. Discussion

JEON Je Seong (Chonbuk National University): I was surprised to hear the presentation of Professor OH Myung Seok who said that the number of Korean anthropologists engaged in Southeast Asian studies outnumbers those who study the anthropology of China, by eleven to ten. This is a great success in comparison with political science or history. What are the secrets of this success, which means that the number of Southeast Asia specialists could surpass that of China specialists? I guess that it may be because of the spirit of anthropology which takes even a small country seriously. In the Korean academia of Southeast Asian studies, there is no specialist on small countries, such as Laos or Brunei, and it is unlikely that political science will have any specialist on such countries in the near future. Does anthropology in Korea have any strategic plan to nurture specialists on small countries in Southeast Asia?

OH Myung Seok: One of the reasons why there are more Southeast Asia specialists than China specialists in Korea is that China has allowed fieldwork for foreign scholars only recently. It was nearly impossible to conduct anthropological fieldwork in China before. For that reason, the number of China specialists was small, but it has increased recently because carrying out fieldwork is now feasible. Another reason why the proportion of Southeast Asia specialists in anthropology is large is that anthropology recognizes the necessity of research even for areas where Korean society shows little interest. That alone is a sufficient condition. That provides a background in which specialists in ‘minority areas’ can be reproduced, not to mention ‘popular areas’. This is feasible that some more will specialize in new territories within Southeast Asia. It is because anthropologists
tend to select an area that others have not selected for their specialization. Even within Indonesia, there are many regions where research was not popularly done. I expect that many more research projects on such regions will be conducted.

CHOI Byung Wook; (Inha University): Probably anthropology is the discipline that has the largest portion of Southeast Asian specialists and of research among academic disciplines in Korea. Southeast Asian research takes up less than 0.1% of historical research in Korea. From what I have heard, Southeast Asian research in anthropology has achieved impressive results in comparison with that of the 1990s. However, Korean anthropologists seem to think too hard about to who should be the consumers of their work when they write their research, what topics they should pick. That suggests that they take the consumers of their research as being only a Korean audience, right? However, questions can be asked as to whether the same considerations are made even in international academia when they write their research. Also, what are the aims, status and international activities of Korean anthropology in Southeast Asian studies? What are the alternative plans? I would like to hear more about the international standing of Korean anthropologists in Southeast Asian studies, not just their standing within Korean anthropology.

KIM Hyung-Jun: When I think of the consumer issue, I think more seriously of the general public in Korea rather than international or Korean academia as I think that more works are needed for them. Numerous Koreans go on trips to Southeast Asia. But we should think about whether there are any books for those Korean tourists to take on their trips to Southeast Asia and whether there are any books that will satisfy those who are interested in Southeast Asia. I think this is the culture of everyday life. My presentation was based on the recognition that anthropologists, including me, have not thought much about this aspect. Prof Choi’s point about how we can promote the standing of Korean anthropologists among international academia requires a collective effort and the first step towards it also be very difficult.

CHO Hung-Guk (Pusan National University): I would like to raise one fundamental question about the planning of this conference. Southeast Asian studies, as an area study, aims to achieve interdisciplinary research and to overcome the limits of disciplinary subjects. However, this conference was planned to discuss the research conducted within specific disciplinary frameworks. Because of this, three of the presenters so far have discussed the results of the research of anthropologists only, not covering those in other disciplines. Planning the conference in an interdisciplinary area studies way, rather than dividing the research by themes and categories, may
be the approach that is needed. For example, analyzing and reflecting on the research in terms of themes of area studies, such as modernization, democratization or gender would be more meaningful.

OH Myung Seok: I think that both approaches are feasible and necessary. Although we conduct area studies and interdisciplinary research, we also need to have our own disciplinary methodology and tradition at the same time for our research. This conference was planned to review the results of research by academic disciplines. By doing so, we have discussed the stories of anthropologists only. I agree with Prof Cho that we need to have another opportunity for a discussion of how anthropologists, political scientists and historians, who are working on Southeast Asian studies, view and discuss the same themes in different ways in order for us to formulate a productive agenda as an association of area studies. By the way, even though we ended up with a discussion of anthropological works, while we were preparing the presentations, we realized that we did not know many of the details very well on subjects that we thought that we knew well. I felt that even inside anthropology I realized that I did not know very much about what other anthropologists were doing in their own research. Therefore, I felt strongly that we need to discuss our research with other anthropologists in order to seek new directions of research.

Southeast Asian Studies in history and linguistics and literature

1. History

CHO Hung-Guk (Pusan National University): Historical research on Southeast Asia by Korean historians was concentrated on Vietnam and Thailand until the 1980s. The first Korean historian who worked on Southeast Asian history was KIM Young-geon, who was active in the early twentieth century in Japan and worked on the regional connection between Japan and Indochina. Since the 1960s, most of the historical research on Vietnam by Korean scholars was conducted in the context of Vietnam War in the 1960s. Many of these scholars were Chinese specialists, who tried to understand Vietnamese culture through the lens of Chinese culture. This can be understood as an extension of Chinese historical research. Research on Thailand has been the product of scholars from the department of Thai studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies since the 1970s.
Most of the historical research on Southeast Asia until the 1980s, except for research based on Chinese primary documents, was not based on the primary documents. These scholars did not have the language capacity to read the local languages and they relied primarily on secondary documents written in English or Japanese, as it was also difficult to gain primary documents in Korea. As they did not pay much attention to an historiographical perspective, their arguments are sometimes imbued with colonialism and sometimes with anti-localism or nationalism, depending on the perspectives of their secondary documents. The most important reason why this situation occurred was the fact that most of the scholars who worked on Southeast Asia at the time, with the exception of those who were working on Vietnam, did not major in history. They did not seem to be capable of a critical analysis of primary documents or even acknowledging the importance of using primary documents. They also did not have the basic critical mindset rooted in empiricism and methodological rigor, which is needed in historical research.

Historical research on Southeast Asia since the 1990s has diversified, has increased quantitatively and developed qualitatively. Historical research, which was confined to Vietnam and Thailand until the 1980s, has been extended to Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and others. Some serious research on Thailand has appeared since 1992 and research on Vietnam, with the increase in the number of historians, has diversified in its themes and developed in its quality.

Despite this development, historical research on Southeast Asia still looks concentrated on Vietnam and Thailand. Historical research on Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Singapore has underachieved or has not been conducted. Historical research covering continental Southeast Asia or island Southeast Asia is very rare. Considering the fact that the results of historical research on the individual countries have not accumulated enough, the emergence of a scholar who could cover several countries in Southeast Asia will be delayed. Another problem of historical research on Southeast Asia is that most studies are concentrated in the modern or contemporary periods, i.e. after the nineteenth century. This may be for the technical reason that contemporary historical studies can be conducted without being restrained by the limits of historical documents or language issues. However, knowing the contemporary historical trends well, more research on the pre-modern periods, which can be the foundation research on for the subsequent periods, is needed. In addition, general problems of historical research on Southeast Asia, such as the use of primary documents and perspectives of historical understanding can also be pointed out.

Historical research on Southeast Asia in Korea since the 2000s has still concentrated on several countries, such as Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. That having been said, historical research on Thailand and Malaysia has been conducted by only a limited number of scholars. Much
of the historical research on Vietnam has been produced with the increase in the number of Vietnam specialist historians. In the case of historical research on Vietnam since the 2000s, most of the works have concentrated on political history and on social and economic history, in particular on rural villages and land institutions. Also, another new development of the 2000s is that work on intellectual history in Vietnam is being conducted.

When it is considered holistically, along with historical research on Southeast Asia, political history and social and economic history constitute the majority of this work. Within social history, studies of women’s status and roles are noticeable in terms of their number. That consciousness was reflected even in the 1970s in YU Insun’s studies on Vietnamese society, but it also reflects these scholarly interests that one of the keys to understanding traditional Southeast Asian societies is women. Within social and economic history, studies on the history of the ethnic Chinese began in the 1990s and continued in the 2000s, which has also diversified in terms of its subject countries and increased in numbers.

As for the history of cultural exchange, even though the research has been largely confined to Vietnam and Thailand, it has increased, and art historical research on steel craft in Myanmar has been conducted. It is an interesting development that criticisms of Korean history textbooks regarding their treatment of Southeast Asian history and an analysis of the descriptions of the Pacific War in history textbooks from Southeast Asia have been made. This reflects the influence of recent developments in Korea or else it was conducted as part of a re-evaluation of history textbooks in Korea.

Southeast Asian historical research since the 2000s shows a development of research standards with an accumulation of research work, an increase in the number of specialists and a diversification of the researched countries and themes. This development can also be viewed through the number of history-related monographs which have been published since the 2000s. Publications of versions of Southeast Asian history written by Western specialists and translated into Korean also reflect increasing research interest in Southeast Asian history.

There are still no historians specializing in histories of Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines. Also, historical research on Thailand and Malaysia relies on only one or two specialists. Therefore, I think that nurturing the next generation of scholars specializing in these countries is their most imminent problem. In particular, the colonial period and the nation-building period are very important. It is natural to have many works written on these periods. However, the periods before the eighteenth century and after the mid-twentieth century should also be the subjects of in-depth research. Also, it is encouraging that intellectual history in Vietnam has been published but I also hope that intellectual history or histories of ideas in other countries will
also be conducted. Art history and cultural history are also unclaimed territory. Within social history, there is some work on the history of women but the history of social classes such as slaves, commoners, the noble classes and the royal families will be important topics for future research.

CHOI Byung Wook (Inha University): Research on Southeast Asian history in Korea, if the standard is set by the establishment of an official course at a university, began in 1979, when the history department of Korea University began its first course on the history of Southeast Asia. That is also the beginning of Southeast Asian studies in general. In the following year, the Asian history department of Seoul National University opened one undergraduate course and two graduate courses. The contents of these classes were the same. In the two universities, under the course title of ‘Southeast Asian history’, Vietnamese history was taught for one semester and Southeast Asian history for the other semester. Vietnamese history and Southeast Asian history courses for graduate schools were established. From the mid-1980s, thanks to SONG In-Seo, Kangwon National University also established a Southeast Asian history course. In the 1990s, CHO Hung-Guk who specializes in Thai history and SOH Byungkuk, who specializes in Malaysian history, came back to Korea from Germany and the USA respectively and courses on Southeast Asian history were established in Sogang University and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Yonsei University, around the same time, established one Southeast Asian history course in each semester. When we review the trend up to the early 1990s, Kangwon National University was the exception, in that Southeast Asian history courses were established only in the top universities in Seoul.

Since the late 1990s, KIM Jong Ouk, SONG Jung Nam and others have come back to Korea and Youngsan University in Pusan and Chungwoon University in Hongseong have established Vietnamese history and, since the mid 2000s, CHO Hung-Guk and CHOI Byung Wook have established Southeast Asian history courses at Pusan National University and Inha Universities, which are located in the cities of ports. This shows the process of the spreading of Southeast Asian histories from Seoul to the regions. Considering that Pusan, Inchon and Hongseong are located along the seashores, the spreading of Southeast Asian history courses can be said to have occurred, not from Seoul to the regions, but from Seoul to the port cities or from the inland region to the seashores.

In terms of the characteristics of historical researchers, the spreading of specific specializations has been very slow. YU Insun and SONG In-Seo, who can be said to be first generational historians, specialized in Vietnam and Thailand respectively. Only two scholars existed in the 1980s but, in the 1990s, CHO Hung-Guk and SOH Byungkuk established new courses. From the late 1990s and 2000s onwards, SONG Jung Nam, KIM Jong Ouk, CHOI Byung
Wook, and NHO Young Soon came back from their overseas studies and began their lectures. However, except for CHO Hung-Guk and SOH Byungkuk, whose specialities were Thailand and Malaysia respectively, all the other four specialized in Vietnam. Recently, YOUN Dae Yeong came back from France and give lectures at Seoul National University, where YU Insun had retired and Yonesi University. His specialty is also Vietnam. The countries of specialization have increased from Vietnam and Thailand, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, to include only one more country, Malaysia, up to the present. As SOH Byungkuk’s specialization is modern and contemporary Malaysia, research on the traditional periods, utilizing classical and primary Malay materials, is still an unexplored area. The expansion of the scope of historical research on Thailand and Vietnam is also very limited. It is a miserable fact that, even thirty years after the first establishment of Southeast Asian history courses, the countries of specialization in Southeast Asian history are only three out of ten countries. Also, we should pay attention to the fact that all of the above scholars earned their doctoral degrees abroad. Even though it was inevitable that the first generational scholars had to earn their degrees abroad, how can we understand the fact that there have been none who have earned their doctoral degrees in Korea, even after thirty years of the first establishment of these courses? The infertility of the research environment may not be a reasonable answer, when we compare it with the examples of anthropology and political science. I expect to receive a diagnosis from the audience.

Next, I would like to discuss research activities. If someone is engaged in an academic field, covering both history and an area, there will be a natural desire and social responsibility on their part to show the books that are based on their specialized field and knowledge of the area. Especially, history books, as they provide the basic knowledge for diverse disciplines, are greatly anticipated by academia. YU Insun’s *History of Vietnam* (Minumsa, 1982) was published a long time ago, and this book has been newly published with the new title *Newly Written History of Vietnam* (Yeesan, 2002). This book, as the first book on Southeast Asian history in Korea, has the status of having been read by the widest audience and for a long period. SONG Jung Nam’s *History of Vietnam* (Pusan University of Foreign Studies Press, 2001) has the status of being the second book published on Vietnamese history or Southeast Asian history in Korea. Unlike these two books, there is no general history of Thailand or Malaysia. In terms of the publication of a general history, Vietnam is distinguished from the other countries. The fact that YU Insun and SONG Jung Nam wrote thick introductory books of history at a similar age may have acted, to some extent, as an imperative for other scholars. Whereas they have not written any translated books, CHO Hung-Guk, SOH Byungkuk and NHO Young Soon have translated Milton Osborne’s classical introductory history book on Southeast Asia, *Southeast Asia: an Introductory History* (Oruem, 2001), Abudul
Wahid’s *Glimpses of Malaysian History* (Oruem, 1998), Clive J. Christie’s *Southeast Asia in the Twentieth Century: A Reader* (Shimsan, 2004), which made a big contribution. Recently, I published *Southeast Asian History: Traditional Periods* (Korea Textbook Publication Co., 2006). This is the first Southeast Asian history book which has been published in Korea, although this book still requires some updates and revisions.

As a pioneer of Southeast Asian history, YU Insun, played an exemplary role in his research activities and in the diversification of the presenting of results of research. Southeast Asian historians in Korea think highly of what he has done: firstly, it is a matter of becoming a respectable scholar in the academia of the country of one’s own study; secondly, it is a matter of being able to present the results of our research in English, the lingua academia, in the English-speaking world; lastly, it is a matter of conducting research activities in Korea. If I take the example of YU Insun, the fact that he has publications which are evenly spread among the Vietnamese, English and Korean languages, even though there are only thin layers of scholars in Asia, helps the Korean academia of Southeast Asian history not to be disregarded by the international academic community. ‘Triple language publication’ is burdensome yet joyous. CHO Hung-Guk and SOH Byungkuk have continuously published the results of their research in English. SONG Jung Nam and KIM Jong Ouk have continued publishing their work in the Vietnamese language. Among the Korean scholars of Southeast Asia, HWANG In-Won, who has worked on Malaysian politics, was probably the first to publish his book in another country (ISEAS, 2003). In the subsequent year, the Central Asia history specialist, KIM Hodong’s book (*Holy War*, Stanford University) and the Vietnamese history specialist CHOI Byung Wook’s book (*Southern Vietnam*, Cornell University) were published abroad. Among the academia in Korea, particularly within the field of history, Southeast Asia is distinguished by two books published abroad (a Turkish historian, YI Eunjeong published her book in English in the Netherlands in 2003, but her publication is different in character). This is the fruit of the efforts of active internationalization which started with YU Insun.

Southeast Asian historians in Korea have diverse educational backgrounds. In terms of the countries where they gained their doctorates, they received their degrees from Britain (NHO Young Soon), France (YOUN Dae Yeong), Germany (CHO Hung-Guk), the USA (YU Insun, SOH Byungkuk), Australia (CHOI Byung Wook), Vietnam (SONG Jung Nam, KIM Jong Ouk), and Thailand (SONG In-Seo), which include many of the countries where Southeast Asian studies are actively conducted. While these diverse backgrounds and methodologies are being exchanged and mixed in Korea, the research themes of individual researchers are also diversifying and improving.

Meanwhile, we sometimes encounter the fact that one scholar’s research areas are expanding too much. I can take as examples the fact that the Thai specialist, CHO Hung-Guk, also
conducts research on Burma, the Vietnam specialist touches on China and Korea and has tried to expand into Cambodia, and the Malaysia specialist, SOH Byungkuk, conducts research on Irian Jaya, the Eastern end of Indonesia. The Vietnam specialist, YOUN Dae Yeong, is currently preparing research on Laos. This expansion of research areas has the merit of achieving a wider perspective through expanding the scope of research or making contributions to interdisciplinary research, but the real reason is that there are many unclaimed territories because of the thin layer of scholars of Southeast Asian studies in Korea. Nurturing history researchers for all ten Southeast Asian country specialists is very important task. It is necessary not only for established scholars to specialize in their own research areas and to conduct in-depth research but also for us (including me) not to perish as a result of touching upon too many diverse areas where are not our own specialties.

2. Language and literature

KIM Young Aih (Hankuk University of Foreign Studies): I hesitantly accepted the unexpected offer of reviewing the research on Southeast Asian language and literature in Korea over the past fifteen years. When I sat at my desk, it was difficult for me to sort out what to include and what not to include in my presentation in an orderly fashion. After much speculation, I decided to review the subject focusing on the articles in The Southeast Asian Review, published by the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies. I would like to start by recollecting my memories of the days before the Association was established.

More than fifteen years ago, I remember that I went somewhere, following Professor YANG Seung Yoon (Department of Malay-Indonesian, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies). I cannot remember for sure where it was, but I remember that I met about seven or eight young scholars from Southeast Asian studies. I was very shy at that time, so that I cannot remember who these younger scholars were. Since then, we have met regularly and exchanged opinions on systematically establishing area studies, scholarly exchanges and collaboration, so as to extend and deepen our scope of research and to think out our plans for nurturing the next generation of scholars. In retrospect, political scientists were the leading figures in the beginning, then economists joined them within one or two years, and linguists and humanities specialists joined much later.

Young scholars in social science who met regularly at the monthly meetings and were the core, together with other scholars who were interested in Southeast Asia, established the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies around the end of the first semester, in 1991. When I
attended the founding meeting held at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), I was surprised by the number of senior scholars who were interested in Southeast Asia, and also by others who were interested in Southeast Asia and were active in business and political circles in Korea. Through these events, the journal of the Association, the *Southeast Asian Review* was born. This journal was published annually at first and later, when the number of scholars in Southeast Asian studies increased in 1995, it published two issues a year. So far twenty-five volumes have been published. The color of the journal’s cover has changed four times. The Association now has about 320 members. *The Southeast Asian Review*, the face of and the venue for presenting the research of members of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies, is a comprehensive and interdisciplinary journal.

Although higher educational institutions teaching courses on Southeast Asian studies are not few, there are only a handful of universities that teach and conduct research on the languages of the region. In referring to Southeast Asian languages, we normally mean Vietnamese, Cambodian, Lao, Thai, Myanmarese (Burmese) and Malay-Indonesian. Among these, Vietnamese, Thai and Malay-Indonesian are taught as majors by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) and Pusan University of Foreign Studies (PUFS). Cambodian and Lao are not taught as majors but their introductory courses are irregularly taught at these two universities. Myanmarese is taught only by PUFS. As far as I know, Vietnamese and Malay-Indonesian are also taught by other universities than HUFS and PUFS but they are mainly taught by focusing on communication.

Therefore, professors who conduct research on language and literature are concentrated in HUFS and PUFS. Proficiency in the local language is a prerequisite of linguistic research on the Southeast Asian region. It is feasible to conduct such research through a third language, including English and French, but such an approach is rarely adopted, except for Vietnamese. Therefore it is no exaggeration to say that language and literature research is conducted mainly by HUFS and PUFS. This observation mirrors the state of language and literature education and research in Korea.

In case of HUFS, the Southeast Asian language departments include a Malay-Indonesian department, a Thai department and a Vietnamese department and overall fifteen Korean professors are affiliated with these departments. In terms of a department-level analysis, the Malay-Indonesian department has six full time professors and one is a linguist and two are literature specialists. The Thai department also has six faculty members; two are linguists and one is a literature specialist. The Vietnamese department, among its three full time faculty members, does not have a linguist and has only one literature specialist. As a whole, there are eight area specialists – in politics, economics and humanities, but there are only three full-time faculty members in linguistics and four
literature specialist faculty members; faculty members in language and literature make up less than half the faculty.

Foreign scholars are normally linguists, literature specialists or humanities specialists including political scientists and philosophers. While they lecture in Korea, they also present academic papers. In the case of the Thai department at HUFS, the department invites three (or four) Thai linguists and literature specialists annually. They present one or two papers while they are staying in Korea, but they do not take part in the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies. This is also the case for the other Southeast Asian language departments at HUFS, as far as I know. I guess this is also the case for PUFS.

PUFS is similar in its faculty composition. According to the websites of PUFS, the University has departments of Thai, Malay-Indonesian, Vietnamese and Myanmarese and thirteen Korean faculty members for these departments. In the Thai department, all the three faculty members are area specialists. The Malay-Indonesian department has, among three full-time faculty members, one linguist, one literature specialist, and one political scientist. The Vietnamese department, among four faculty members, has one literature specialist and three others who majored in politics, economics or humanities. The Myanmarese department has three faculty members, whose specialities are literature, language and politics respectively. As a whole, PUFS has two linguists, three literature specialists and eight area studies specialists. Therefore, these two universities, among twenty-eight full-time Korean faculty members, have twelve linguists and literature specialists and sixteen other scholars who are area studies specialists.

Meanwhile, in the twenty-five volumes of *the Southeast Asian Review* in the past fifteen years, about 140 research papers and research notes have been published. Among them, about fifteen papers in language and literature have been published in thirteen volumes, making up about 10 percent of the total papers. Among these fifteen papers, two were on Vietnamese language and literature, one on Indonesian language, two on Myanmarese literature, and five were on Thai literature and another five on Thai language. Thai language and literature, with ten pieces, take the lead. Among the fifteen language and literature papers, six were on languages and nine were on literatures. Most of these fifteen papers were mostly case studies, focusing on one language or work of literature.

These facts reveal that, even though education in Southeast Asian studies in Korea began with the establishment of the department of Malay-Indonesian at HUFS, in 1964, research on Southeast Asian language and literature has still got a long way to go and research on language and literature is still much weaker than that on social science or humanities. Then what are the reasons for and the background to this fact?
First of all, we can point that there are only a few higher educational institutions that teach Southeast Asia related subjects and there are even fewer universities that provide language and literature courses on Southeast Asia. Another reason is that the primary purpose of education in language and literature is less practical than that of other disciplines of education. Therefore, the departments of languages and literatures in universities have different characteristics from the departments of Korean language and literature. Curricula are organized not by educating students in the language and literature of one’s own country only, but by teaching language and literature as part of the area studies curriculum.

The small number of language and literature students corresponds to the fundamental dearth of language and literature specialists among Southeast Asian studies area specialists. The natural consequence is the limited number of research papers. The presence of few scholars also means that there are even fewer scholars who can review and evaluate these research papers. That also means that the reviewing and evaluating of submitted research papers often cannot be done properly.

So far, I have reviewed the current state of Southeast Asian language and literature research. My next question is how can the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies solve the problems that the departments of Southeast Asian language and literature studies are faced with? These problems are even more conspicuous when we consider the vast number of journals on the language and literature of other areas in Korea.

Before making some suggestions to help solve these problems, first I would like to ask whether language and literature research is effective for the development of Southeast Asian studies or not. My answer is that it surely is. Then, in which direction should we proceed? Should we maintain our research in the way it has been? Or should we disregard the publication of literature and language research papers in the journals so that these journals will focus on and specialize in social science journal papers as the majority of the members of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies are specialists in these fields?

If we want to maintain the current characteristics of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies, I would like to suggest that the Association should encourage research of language and literature so as that the articles in this area can be published more regularly. How about publishing one more issue, rather than the current two issues a year? How about publishing two issues that focus on the humanities and social sciences without language and literature articles, whereas another issue would focus on research in language and literature? How about publishing research papers on language and literature in the special issues on one theme, with case studies of individual countries and/or independent research papers? Planning special issue themes in advance
for the following year would also be a good idea, as it would give researchers enough time to prepare for them.

I know the recent trend that more students are getting interested in language and literature of Southeast Asian countries. Here I urge my dear next generational scholars. I hope you pay more attention on language and literature of Southeast Asia.

2. Discussion

PARK Sa-Myung (Kangwon National University): Research trends in history were reviewed by the country. Historical research can be categorized by historical periods or by research themes. I would like to open the table for discussion.

CHO Hung-Guk: I attempted to prepare the presentation by categorizing it by political history, social and economic history, cultural history and history of cultural interaction but I did not present it in this way. In the case of Vietnamese history, research has been concentrated mainly in political history or social and economic history. In the case of other countries, these issues are dealt with at only a superficial level or are rarely researched.

BAE Geung-Chan (Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security): Why do you think that there is no Korean researcher who majors in Indonesian history? Is it because the country is not an important research subject in terms of academic history academia or because it is not interesting as a subject of historical research? Or is it difficult to conduct research on Indonesia by thoroughly… I guess there are reasons for that.

JEON Je Seong: The future will not be so gloomy because there will be two Indonesia history specialists within two years from now. Miss SONG Seung-Won, a graduate of HUFS Malay-Indonesian studies department, is currently completing her doctoral dissertation on contemporary Indonesian history at Ohio University, USA. YEO Woonkyung, a graduate in Asian history and the Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University, is also currently conducting field research in Sumatra, Indonesia for his doctoral dissertation on contemporary Indonesian history at the University of Washington, USA.
CHO Hung-Guk: I think it was a result of coincidence that there has not been any researcher in Indonesian history. It is nothing but a mere coincidence. Everybody acknowledges the importance of Indonesian history.

PARK Sa-Myung: My idea is that the country has less direct relevance to Korea. Vietnam has had many relations with Korea and there have been many researchers on it but Indonesia has had less relations with it and that may explain why.

CHOI Byung Wook: I think that absence of any Indonesian historian is a natural result. Of course, Vietnam has received the most attention. Next comes Indonesia. When Professor YU Insun began his lectures on Southeast Asian history and started nurturing his students, most of the students wanted to pursue Vietnamese history, followed by those who wanted to do Indonesian history. Also, at the world level, there are many Indonesian history specialists. However, as Professor YU Insun moved from Korea University to Seoul National University, the student research group on Southeast Asian history that was formed at Korea University at the time was dissolved. Since his move, he has trained students again at Seoul National University and YEO Woonkyung whom JEON Je Seong mentioned earlier, has pursued Indonesian history research, YOUN Dae Yeong has returned from France after working on Vietnam. Also HUH Jiyae, who took my course at Korea University, went on to Seoul National University for his Master’s and is now studying at UCLA, specializing in Thai history. When all this is considered, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Thai histories are popular among students.

PARK Sa-Myung: The issue of Korea University has considerable symbolic importance. In the past, the Asiatic Research Institute of Korea University had produced many scholars. The Institute had considerable importance among the first generation scholars in Southeast Asian studies in Korea. However, the Institute left out Southeast Asian studies completely.

CHOI Byung Wook: That is what I meant to ask the opinions of the audience about when I presented my talk. This has a very much interesting aspect. In fact, if we confined ourselves to Southeast Asian history, Korea began to research on it together with the USA. That was thanks to the foresight of Professor KIM Jun Yop. He selected and trained students, already in the 1960s, and sent them to Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia to study abroad. Then, research on Malaysia and Indonesia, because of several unfortunate incidents, was discontinued. Professor YU Insun and Professor SONG In-Seo gained their positions in Korea, in the late 1970s and 1980s, and
research on Southeast Asian history began in Korea. However, this was also disrupted due to a series of unfortunate events that interrupted the process of producing the next generation of researchers. I recall these events with great disappointment. If that group of young students could have received consistent supervision, I believe we would have produced at least six more historians of Southeast Asia by now. What a pity it was.

OH Myung Seok: Professor KIM Young Ai told us that research papers on Southeast Asian language and literature number only fifteen, which is only one per year, even though the journal has lasted for fifteen years. As I was also the editor of the journal, I felt that it was a big problem that there were so few articles being published in the fields of Southeast Asian language and literature. I would like to listen to the opinions of the members of the Association, as a key issue for the Association, as she has rightly raised this issue.

YOON Young-Chon (Inha University): Even though I am a literature specialist, my speciality is not in Southeast Asian literature. However, the idea that publishing one more issue of the journal will solve the problem is questionable. I think we should think further about how to find out the reasons why research papers on Southeast Asian literature are published less.

KIM Young Aih: If I may add some more comments, Southeast Asian literature research has the merits of producing research in comparative literature, comparative culture and comparative linguistics. Also, since Southeast Asian languages can be typed using the MS Word program, important parts that are quoted in the articles can be included together with the original text, which will contribute to enhancing the status and prestige of the Southeast Asian Review.

OH Myung Seok: There are about forty research papers being published in the journals that cover Vietnam but there are few papers in the Southeast Asian Review. This may be because the results of the research are being published in other academic journals, rather than the journal of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies. I guess there must be reasons for that.

CHOI Horim: The fact that research on Southeast Asian language and literature is not published much in the Southeast Asian Review arouses curiosity. We should discuss, firstly, what is the position of Southeast Asian language and literature in the whole area studies of language and literature field, and what significance does this have. Secondly, so far a statistical survey has been delivered to us, but it might be better if an analysis of more of the details of the contents, such as
features and implications, were included. Also, I know that many specialists in languages and literatures take part in research on other societies or humanities topics. I think that such attempts can contribute to stimulating interdisciplinary research on Southeast Asian studies. But, first of all, such ideas need to be raised and shared among the scholars before anything else.

OH Myung Seok: I personally think that the journal of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies (i.e. the Southeast Asian Review) is the flagship journal, representing Southeast Asian Studies, so the scope of the journal should basically include research on language and literature. The current situation in which literature research is not well reflected in the journal is clearly a problem that we have. The reasons may be complicated. I will deliver the gist of what has been discussed today to the editor of the journal, and I will ask the editorial board to discuss in depth plans for improving the journal.

IV. Southeast Asian Studies in Political Science and Economics in Korea

1. Overview of Political Science

PARK Sa-Myung (Kangwon National University): The subtitle of my presentation is “From quantitative scarcity to qualitative enrichment,” and the motivation behind it was that I felt the realistic way to further develop research on Southeast Asian studies in Korea was to raise the level of the quality of research. The sad reality is that due to the scantiness of the researchers specializing in this region, the dearth in the volume of research cannot be overcome in a short period of time. Although the number of political scientists doing research on the region is not too small, nonetheless, we cannot say that we have enough. We do not have a constant influx of young Southeast Asian specialists, either. Taking account of this unfortunate situation, where does the solution lie? Enhancing the quality of research with the human resources that we have is an inevitable, but strategic, choice. Frankly speaking, the level of quality of current and existing research on Southeast Asia in Korea cannot be seen as satisfactory. We may not be held responsible for the scarcity of research in terms of its quantity, but the responsibility for the poor quality of the research fundamentally lies with ourselves, the researchers.

From what I have observed, most of the presenters have focused on discussing and criticizing the current state of research by pointing out how little research has been done on Southeast Asia in Korea. I, on the other hand, would like to address what might be effective ways to
enhance the quality of research in Southeast Asian studies in Korea. I jotted down some thoughts that came in to my mind as I listened to the presenters in my notes over there. I think there are some problems that we need to ponder at a fundamental level. I reckon these are problems that all scholars in comparative politics – or even political science in general – encounter, not only in Korea but all around the world, but the degree of these problems is much more serious in Korea, as we do not seem to possess the realistic capacity to solve such problems as much as others do.

First of all, I would like to mention the most fundamental issue of value orientation. It remains for us to seriously ponder why we conduct research on Southeast Asian politics. Is it a value-free or value-oriented study of politics that we need to pursue? To me, the question is not whether one is right and the other is wrong. What we need to do is to consider both aspects when doing research. In theory, a value-oriented approach involves a perspective coming from outside of the region, whereas value neutrality is achieved through a more internal and local approach within Southeast Asia. Then we can further divide the internal approach. Is it a perspective from the whole of Southeast Asia, or from each country or ethnic group? The answer is not so simple. Also, studying Southeast Asian politics through a Southeast Asian lens poses a great challenge to non-SouthEast Asians. Completely excluding any chance of our pre-existing values coming into play may be possible in an idealistic world, but its likelihood in reality is slim. Moreover, I question whether that should be our ultimate goal. There must have been certain values that we cherished individually that prompted us to study politics, and especially Southeast Asian politics. If we did not have any such values which are personal to us, we would not have chosen to study Southeast Asian politics in particular. The external approach tends to highlight universal aspects found in the politics in Southeast Asia, and given the current state of social science research, which is heavily influenced by Western academic tradition, our analytical lens will also be highly likely to resemble that of Western researchers. What we should not forget, however, is to reflect upon our identity and position as Korean social scientists, and what value issues we face when examining Southeast Asian politics from a Korean perspective.

Secondly, if we do decide to acknowledge our value orientation, then the next issue is which kind of concrete research method – or whatever terms researchers may use, such as paradigm, perspective or approach – we will take. There are many theoretical frameworks that are available in the existing literature, historicism, modernism and postmodernism, to name but a few. Due to the innate complexities of postmodernism, it is difficult to make a clear summary of recent trend in the literature of postmodernism, so I intentionally touched on historicism and modernism only in my presentation. This issue was also raised by Donald K. Emmerson on the problem of interpreting the history of Southeast Asia. An historicist viewpoint is more of an internal approach, as it focuses on
the historical context of Southeast Asia, thus emphasizing subjectivity, autonomy, uniqueness and continuity. The modernist perspective, on the other hand, is more external, and will highlight objectivity, dependence, universality and change.

Thirdly, I would like discuss the issue of interdisciplinarity. It is true that regional studies require an ongoing dialogue among different disciplines, but how well have we been doing this? Looking at academic societies and research institutes in Korea, it is easy to draw the conclusion that we have not been doing so well in this area. We could say we have developed more insight by listening to other academics over the years, but really all we have done interdisciplinarily is we have published an edited collection of essays written by scholars in different fields. Could we really call this an interdisciplinary academic endeavor? Would it not be more appropriate to say that it was done interdisciplinarily at a human resources level? It has stayed that way for over 20 years. To be able to conduct a truly interdisciplinary research, we would need to be able to employ different approaches and perspectives from different fields. Of course, one person cannot do everything, but we should at least be able to apply the accomplishments made in other similar academic fields to our own fields. Simply getting many people to come together does not necessarily mean that it is an interdisciplinary approach.

Fourthly, I will address the research topics that we have dealt with so far in particular. When the colonial regime was dismantled, the central topic in political science was nationalism including state formation and national integration. When Korea entered the modern sovereign state system, for the first time in its history, the issue of national security became a keyword in political academia. In order to sustain national security, economic development came to the fore, but quick economic development also produced side effects, such as developmentalism. During this period, the world was dominated by the Cold War ideology. But, with the demise of the Cold War, nationalism filled in the ideological vacuum. Other branches of thought such as regionalism also emerged, but I would say it was essentially nationalism that was at the core. The age of nationalism resurfaced. However, with the economic crisis that hit the country hard in the late 1990s, this led to a number of new topics for political research: a shift to the topics of state transition towards democracy, regional integration over national integration, human security over national security, human development beyond economic development, and sustainable development over accelerated development. Whether we, the researchers, have been actively dealing with these newly emerging themes remains questionable.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by stressing that it is crucial for us to overcome our predominant research practice of doing case studies. Most of the studies we have done so far are case studies. I am not saying that we should stop doing this, but we should not do this alone.
Southeast Asia consists of 10 countries and many more ethnic groups. Doing case studies alone for 100 years will not enable us to achieve universal validity in the region. What can we tease out from countless case studies at both an academic and a practical level? Here, we have a number of prominent anthropologists present, but if we indulge ourselves in doing case studies, we will have a plethora of topics to study, but we cannot just keep writing ethnographic accounts. We have reached a point where we need to seriously reconsider methodological issues. The status of Southeast Asian studies is much better than it was in the past, and we should move away from a subsistence research level and work hard to take a huge leap in our intellectual endeavor. Having had these issues raised in our mind, we will now move on to the presentations of other scholars.

2. Research on political culture

JEONG Yeonsik (Changwon National University): Although the disputes over political culture are not over, at least among political scientists specializing in Southeast Asian area studies, the importance of political culture seems to be unchallenged. The problem is, however, whether Korean researchers on Southeast Asia have carried out research on the political culture of the region that corresponds to its significance. I reviewed the articles on political culture which have been published in *The Southeast Asian Review* since 2001 to analyze the contribution that Korean researches have made so far.

From the Vol. 11, No. 1 edition published in 2001 up to the Vol. 17, No. 2 issued in 2007, *The Southeast Asian Review* featured a total of 118 articles, of which 63 were on Southeast Asian politics. Within the political science field, the topics were evenly varied. Fifty of them were written by political scientists, and the remaining 13 were produced by scholars in adjacent fields. Unfortunately, no article on political culture was written by a political scientist. The opposite was equally true, as almost all the articles on politics partially dealt with political culture to a varying degree. Let’s look at in what way and at what level political culture is analyzed and explained in these articles.

The reason why research on political culture is not easy is because it is essentially complex and variable. It is complex because a multiplicity of different political cultures can exist among the members of one society. For instance, political cultures can vary according to social class, generation and region. Therefore, the target group of a study should be clearly demarcated when embarking on a political cultural study. But the problems do not end there. When the target group expands, it becomes crucial to position multiple political cultures in appropriate relationships. When
this attempt fails, it is likely that the conclusion of the study will boil down to totalitarianism, and it will miss out essential traits of the political culture taking place during the regime change that normally clashes with the political culture of the dominant class. Also, political culture is variable and changes just like any other form of culture. If we fail to capture these changes, political culture will exist only as an independent variable and this will subsequently end up producing deterministic explanations only. Thus, we need to do research that consistently traces back the dynamics of political culture, especially focusing on the changes in political culture that precede regime change, and the tensions between political regime and political culture created by the difference in the speed of change.

Speaking of the complexity of political culture, I believe that our research on the political culture of Southeast Asia has produced a considerable achievement. The studied groups have widened to include people from diverse social classes and regions. Recent researches have showed a departure from focusing only on the dominant elitist and male-centered central political culture, and have encompassed the dominated, marginalized class, the feminine, and provincial political culture. Although the elite political culture is still regarded as the major variable, considering its position as still the most influential variable and it is also something that rightfully deserves scholarly attention, I would favorably review the progress that we have made in this realm so far.

However, I would say that simply assembling a number of different political cultures in one analytical framework is problematic. For example, some studies maintain rational choice theory as the grand analytical tool, but when something that does not get explained well by rational choice theory emerges, these writers strategically employ a political cultural explanation as a makeshift. This method might in fact be the most accurate reflection of reality, because political culture is complex, even at an individual level, and there is no one single political culture dominating the others perfectly. However, when more than one political culture, especially those that are conflicting, are operating simultaneously, they operate in a certain systematic relationship. Therefore, we must understand that relationship.

In this sense, what has been most lacking in studies of Southeast Asian politics in Korea seems to be a dialectical analysis of the confrontation of contradictory political cultures. If the dominant political culture – the ideological state apparatus in Louis Althusser’s words and hegemony in Antonio Gramsci’s term – operates in order to maintain the current regime, we need to investigate how such dominant political cultures are reproduced, and how opposing political cultures or forms of counter-hegemony are formed and pitted against the hegemony. Without such an analysis, researchers will take the dominant political culture as a constant.
This is something that we need to be very cautious about in terms of the variability of political culture. When a hegemonic political culture stays in power for a long time, people begin to fall under the illusion that it will never change. However, just as no culture is static, the dominant political culture cannot be an exception and we should be aware of the possibility of change. Political culture can be both an independent and a dependent variable at the same time. Changes made in socio-economic structures as a result of the sweeping influence of globalization, and the quick spread of information stemming from the development of communication technology have increased the variability of political cultures more than at any other point in the history of mankind. This is the very reason why we need to conduct research tracing the transformation of political cultures in Southeast Asia.

Changes in political culture are essential in research on political and regime changes because changes in political culture normally precede regime changes. This becomes more evident when we take a look at the recent trend in the study of democratization and the consolidation of democracy that has restored civil culture, which had once been completely discarded from the context, as one of the major variables. This trend is of course not without its flaws and it deserves critical assessment at some point – how much civil culture differs from participatory political culture in the past, and how free it is from the Western-centered, deterministic analysis derived from the modern-and-tradition dichotomy. But, today, I will only point out caveats in the study of civil culture and regime change that are relevant to today’s topic. Civil culture as the foundation of the solidification of democracy or, in other words, as the driving force that sustains a democratic regime, is often characterized in terms of value-oriented terms like compromise, tolerance, trust, rationality, and political utility. We can think of it as the most suitable political culture under a democratic regime. What we need to be careful about, however, is that such value orientation is likely to be formed not simultaneously, but with certain time intervals, and not before the transition to democracy but during the democratization period. In order to grasp the formation of the political culture that drives regime change, we will need to observe the variability of political culture created by its diversity.

In this context, we need to be critical of the fad of the study of the Korean Wave, or Hallyu. With the explosive popularity of Korean films, pop music and TV soap operas overseas in recent years, a lot of scholars – political scientists being no exception – have embarked on researching this phenomenon. The research has mainly focused on describing the consumption of Korean cultural products and probing the underlying causes of the phenomenon. I am not trying to say that such attempts were of no merit. Investigating commonalities among East Asian cultures deserves recognition in itself, especially with regard to the formation of a greater East Asian regional
community. Nevertheless, it is disappointing that these researches on the Korean Wave conducted by Southeast Asian politics specialists did not go as far as exploring the impact of the Korean Wave on the political cultures of each Southeast Asian country. Let me give an example. In my opinion, such researches needed to address how Korea’s political culture, as portrayed in Korean TV soap opera, is accepted or rejected by Southeast Asian consumers and how this affects their political value orientation. The legitimacy of studying the Korean Wave phenomenon lies in the fact that it is an external political culture that penetrates and affects the livelihood of a huge population, not in the fact that it is a Korean political culture.

In order not to miss out the issue of the variability of political culture, political culture should be analyzed as not only an independent variable, but also as a dependent variable. Taking political culture as a dependent variable is not a familiar task for political scientists, and it is in no way an easy project. It requires long years of training to be equipped with the insight needed to understand the meanings that signs, texts, and images symbolize, and grasp the production mechanism of such meanings. That is why most political scientists have predominantly treated the literature produced in adjacent fields such as anthropology as an independent variable. However, it becomes evident that political culture is something that Southeast Asian politics specialists in Korea cannot turn away from if we remind ourselves of the fact that the puzzles of Southeast Asian politics, which could not be satisfactorily explained by grand theories developed in the West, were solved by understanding the political culture of the region, and if we acknowledge that political culture is a culture of politics.

3. Research on political change and political economy.

PARK Eunhong (Sungkonghoe University): It is indeed a taxing job to write a grand overview of the researches that have been made in the field of political change and political economy in the Southeast Asian region. I personally feel that the senior scholars who have initiated and led the study of Southeast Asian politics in Korea are more suitable people to do this. So I plan to limit my role to that of a reporter briefly presenting the review of the relevant literature published thus far.

First of all, I would like to speak about the general trends in the study of political change and the political economy of Southeast Asia taking place outside of Korea. Some of the most influential books in these fields which have been published in recent years are “Contemporary Southeast Asia: Regional Dynamics, National Differences” (2004), “Southeast Asian Responses to Globalization: Restructuring Governance and Deepening Democracy” (2005), and “The Political
Economy of South-East Asia: Markets, Power and Contestation” (2006). Based on these books, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand – widely dubbed the “ASEAN 4” – have witnessed their citizens enjoying greater freedom and their political regimes changing through elections on a regular basis. In sum, a transition from pseudo democracy to mature democracy is taking place in these countries. However, the elites are still craftily avoiding policy reforms that would disrupt conventional political practices and infringe upon their self-interest from strong government-corporate ties. Democratization in Southeast Asia is transitional rather than stable, and it is limited to nominal changes rather than fundamental reforms. However, there is a snowballing effect of democratization spilling over geographical boundaries. The trend of political change in Southeast Asia can therefore be summarized as the “3 Ts” – Transitional, Transformational, and Transnational – and this is how overseas Southeast Asian political scientists generally view the political situation in Southeast Asia. We can also witness the growing emphasis on political culture in researches on political change and political economy, as was mentioned by Professor JEONG in the previous presentation. This may be because political change and political economy cannot be completely separated from cultural variables. Whether it be a strategic choice or a rational choice, neither of them can be free from the binding influence of culture. Some argue that, even after the democratization, clientelism still prevails in Southeast Asian political culture, and this hinders political and economic reforms.

In the International Symposium on Democracy in East Asia held in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the 1987 June Democratic Struggle (June 29, 2007), hosted by the Korea Democracy Foundation and the Democracy & Social Movements Institute at Sungkonghoe University, there were presenters who highlighted the importance of political leadership and the role of political elites. Aung Moe Zaw, General Secretary of the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB), presented his article on the importance of social movements for the democratization in Burma. He asserted that Burma had failed to achieve a “democratic breakthrough” at the “critical juncture” in 1988 due to the lack of leadership and negotiating skills of the democracy activists. Francisco Nemenzo, former president of the University of the Philippines, shared his thoughts on democracy and democratization. He viewed Antonio F. Trillanes’s coup d’etat attempt against the current President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the first sign of Hugo Chávezian leadership in the Philippines that could bring about the subsequent breakdown of oligarchic democracy. Nemenzo concluded by indirectly stating that the role of progressive elite military figures is indispensable in dismantling representative democracy that reproduces oligarchic practices. His remark reflected elite-centered transitology, and it surprised many Korean intellectuals present at the talk, because Nemenzo is one of the leading progressive
figures in the Philippines. Of course, Korean political academia had already started paying attention to the cause rather than cause of democratization in the discourse of transitology from the 1990s, focusing on the role of elites in accelerating, delaying or retarding democratization.

Regarding the oligarchic practices of the political elites in Southeast Asia, terms like godfathers, bigmen, cacique, bossism, patrimonialism and patron-clientelism have been used. In the book published in 2007, “Political Leadership in Coping with the Crisis in Southeast Asia” (Park et al), the authors compared the leadership style of the political leaders of four countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand – in their transition to democracy. This is a very well organized book, and it is in line with the current trend in Korea’s political academia which focuses on political leadership. From this book, I discovered one important point to bear in mind. Even though we may acknowledge the validity of the leadership-oriented political change theory, not only leaders’ own “virtu”, but also their objective “fortuna” matters. In the book, Park discusses this issue using a balanced approach employing both voluntarism and determinism.

It is true that the political sphere of the political elites in Southeast Asia has expanded as the countries in the region have slowly begun to move away from authoritarian regimes at varying speeds over the last 10 to 20 years. But the problem here is whether a Southeast Asian politics heavily based on clientelism is being transforming into a rule-based political system that guarantees transparent and fair competition. In other words, with regard to the “transformational” issue – one of the 3Ts mentioned earlier – I am asking if it would be possible for Southeast Asian politics to be fundamentally transformed rather than ending with nominal and superficial changes. In this context, a series of Southeast Asian studies books published by the Korean Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and the Institute for East Asian Studies at Sogang University are large-scale academic accomplishments that have engaged a large number of Korean specialists on Southeast Asian political change theory and political economy. But there are some things that have left much to be desired, especially leaving some room for better writing of thick descriptions under a coherent theoretical and analytical framework. However, we should give due credit to their attempts to empirically test the “global-local nexus” in an effort to prove that Asian exceptionalism is no longer valid under the pan-global wave of democratization which has been dubbed the “Third Wave,” and the pressure of neo-liberal globalization that has engulfed East Asian developmental states.

What is interesting is the way that interest in Southeast Asian politics intensified among Korean political scientists after the economic crisis, and Southeast Asia was increasingly frequently mentioned when discussing the pan-East Asian community. As the currency crisis that started in Thailand had a contagious effect and produced resounding repercussions in Korea through Malaysia and Indonesia, Korea’s political scientists began to take note of Southeast Asia from the political
economic perspective. This might be an expression of interest in comparative politics within the political context of the East Asian economic crisis prompted by the global economic recession.

The changes in Southeast Asian politics since the economic crisis are two-fold. As we can see in the case of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, the economic crisis served as an impetus for political reform and democratization. But when we take a closer look at what is happening in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, they are not taking the road that leads to stable democratization, but the one that leads to considerably unstable democratization. Thailand, in particular, was an exemplary case in Southeast Asia that had been taking the democratization process step by step in a fairly stable manner. However, less than 10 years after the country became the origin of the worst byproduct of the “global-local nexus,” the currency crisis, the country witnessed a military coup d’état and slipped into the chaotic state of de-democratization. A string of destabilizing events in Thailand highlighted the rise and fall of Thaksinocracy that initially started as a populist measure, in favour of communitarianism, and the socio-economic background that made the anti-Thaksin military coup d’état possible. The coup d’état was the first event in the history of modern Thai politics that received support from the civil society. The scholars realized the need to make a shift from focusing on “the political context behind the Southeast Asian economic crisis” to the “socio-economic context behind the Southeast Asian political crisis.”

If we could define the progress of humankind as the spread of democracy and the accumulation of material wealth, Korea and Southeast Asia are both experiencing political and economic turmoil in the process. In that sense, I would say that it is a positive sign that more and more Korean political scientists are taking an interest in Southeast Asian politics, especially in a comparative perspective. Southeast Asian specialists in Korea should react more proactively to this trend by developing and supplying diverse resources such as those associated with theory, policy and organization that can contribute to the enhancement of communication between Korea and Southeast Asia. It normally works the other way round, but I do believe that supply could bring out demand too.

For that reason, I would like to speak highly of the Asian Politics Forum created as a sub section of the annual summer conference of the Korean Political Science Association on June 24 and 25, 2004 under the initiative taken by the Southeast Asian studies specialists in Korea. It was significant in that Korean political scientists on Southeast Asian region took a central role in creating a platform for communication between the Korean and Southeast Asian political circles. If we continue to maintain and develop such an arena for communication, I believe that intellectual interest and research in Southeast Asian politics among Korean political academia will expand.
4. Research on international relations

BAE Geung-Chan (Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security): When I was asked to do a presentation today, at first I thought, ‘What is the need for doing this?’ I wondered if a critical assessment of research on Southeast Asian international relations was really necessary, when there are such a small number of scholars specializing in the field. I could count one or two, if I were narrowing down the field, and perhaps a few at most if I were considering it more broadly. More strictly speaking, there might be none at all. I gave a rather childish title to my presentation, “The debate on East Asian community: a small flower that blossomed in a barren land.” I would say it is more of a piece of grumbling than a scholarly article.

Reviewing the literature on Southeast Asian international relations published in Korea over the last 15 years does not seem to be a very difficult job. The only difficulty is the sense of perplexity, embarrassment and even shame that the few researchers who have pursued the field for a long time might feel. The reason is very simple. There are just a handful of political scientists on Southeast Asia who have specialized in the international relations of the region since the 1990s. I would say it is even less than one out of 10 researchers who have received their doctorate degrees in Southeast Asian politics, both in Korea and abroad. Therefore, it is not surprising to see a sub-par research output, both in quantity and quality. Again, it is no exaggeration to say that Korea as a barren land for studies of international relations in Southeast Asia. This is especially true when we compare our situation with that of Japan, Australia, the United States, and even some of the European countries, which boast much longer traditions of research, as they took a strategic interest in the region much earlier than Korea. In spite of all these shortcomings, I nevertheless believe that reviewing the research trends and the progress that has been made by the few existing scholars in the field would be worthwhile for the future.

There are two types of scholars who have dealt with Southeast Asian international relations in Korea since the 1990s. The first group is those who majored in general international relations, who maintained exchange with state-sponsored scholars from the U.S., Japan, China, and Southeast Asian countries through international conference. For example, they are academics who participate in international conference, such as the Council on Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific and the Asia-Pacific Round Table, to discuss security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. However, you could never call them specialists in Southeast Asian international relations. They mainly give lectures on Northeast Asian international relations or on the situation of the Korean Peninsula in these meetings, or they spoke unconventional multilateral security issues in the Asia-Pacific region that encompasses Southeast Asia, such as maritime safety, terrorism, pirates, drugs, smuggling, and the
destruction of the environment, on behalf of the Korean government. They have never produced any form of research that deals with major themes in the study of Southeast Asian international relations, so they also do not consider themselves as specialists on the region. They must, however, have a certain level of knowledge of Southeast Asian international relations obtained during discussion of general international relations issues with scholars from Southeast Asia.

The second group is made up of scholars who have pursued professional research devoted to Southeast Asian international relations in universities and research institutes in Korea. The problem is that the number of such researchers is miniscule, and their research interest is concentrated on the ASEAN countries only. We must candidly accept the fact that the quality of their work is not very high. There are books on ASEAN written by professors in some universities, and research on ASEAN and Southeast Asian international relations is being continuously carried out by researchers in state-funded research bodies. But it is not comparable to the researches being done in Japan and Australia, both in quantity and quality, and it merely introduces what ASEAN is and offers a smattering of recent changes that are taking place in ASEAN. Of course, there is no dispute that ASEAN is the central organization in Southeast Asian international relations, but there is nearly no volume of professional research in existence on the foreign policy of each of the Southeast Asian states, or the bilateral or multilateral relations between and among the countries in the region. There is an absolute dearth of research on relations between Southeast Asia and regional superpowers, such as the U.S., Japan, China and India. In-depth investigation on Korea-ASEAN relations, which I would say is Korea’s main concern, is still insufficient.

There is a clear reason why research on Southeast Asian international relations in Korea has been so slight. First, there has been extremely limited demand for research in the field at both a social and a national level. In other words, because there is no urgent need for specialists in this field in Korean universities or research organizations, it is extremely difficult to get a job in Korean academia with such a specialty.

Also, since the end of the Vietnam War, there have been no conspicuous events in the international relations in Southeast Asia that have had a direct, visible impact on Korea. That explains the general lack of scholarly interest in this field among Korean academics. To most Korean international political scientists who are familiar with the superpower-centered perspective, Southeast Asian international politics, which involves numerous small and middle-power states, has never seemed very appealing. The scantiness of the readily available information on this region in Korea has also made it difficult for scholars to observe and analyze international relations in Southeast Asia in depth. The Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade may be the only exception to this, as its job is to analyze Korea’s
relationship not only with the global superpowers but also with countries in other regions. As a matter of fact, that is how I was able to pursue my interest in this region all along. The bottom line is that, without demand, there cannot be supply, and where there is no interest, there will be no people.

But we need to be aware of the signs of change that have been taking place in recent years. A small flower has begun to blossom in the barren field of Southeast Asian international relations in Korea. This is the debate on creating the East Asian regional bloc, which was spurred by the ASEAN+3 Summit which was launched in 1997 and the East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2005. This debate was appealing enough to stimulate the intellectual curiosity of many Korean political scientists. The reason why international relations in Southeast Asia is receiving renewed attention in the East Asian community debate is because the process of the regional integration of East Asia is being carried out under the cooperative framework of ASEAN+3 and is virtually being led by it. Moreover, the fact that Korea also played a central role in drafting the vision and the action plan of the regional cooperation in East Asia has also led to heightened interest in Southeast Asia among Korean researchers. International relations in Southeast Asia, the political and economic ties between Northeast and Southeast Asia, has begun to attract more attention from Korean scholars, and has emerged as a popular potential topic for study.

As this is the case, there is now a rapid increase of demand for research on the issue of the integration of the East Asian region. Various joint research projects related to ASEAN+3, research bodies such as the Network of East Asia Think-Tanks (NEAT) and the East Asia Forum (EAF), and other regional studies projects on East Asia have encouraged the continued participation of Korean scholars, and Korea’s Foreign Ministry now indirectly assists the East Asian Community Study Group formed by academics interested in the region in order to react efficiently to growing regional academic cooperation. These recent developments are naturally enhancing the status of Southeast Asian international relations among Korean researchers. Though the future outlook is brighter, research on Southeast Asian international relations still has long way to go. Although many scholars are becoming aware of the importance of this field through the debate over the East Asian regional bloc, the number of professional researchers in this field has not increased much. The research output is still very limited. It is impossible to produce meaningful research results only on the basis of intellectual curiosity and interest, and the making of professional researchers requires a long period of training.

However, we can end this discussion on a high note, as there are indications that the recent debate on the East Asian community will encourage research on Southeast Asian international relations and produce a greater number of new researchers in the field in Korea. We will see a
growing number of future Southeast Asian specialists writing their masters’ and doctoral dissertations on Southeast Asian international relations and East Asian regional integration in both domestic and overseas universities. Also, if academics who have recently developed their interest in this field continue to remind their students of the significance of the study of Southeast Asia, I would say that there will be more specialists on this region in the next generation. With the intensification of cooperative ties and exchanges between Korea and ASEAN at political, diplomatic, economic, social, and cultural levels, universities, research institutes and the government will be in need of more regional specialists, and hopefully, this will lead more young students who aspire to be academics to pursue their career in Southeast Asian studies.

5. Economics

PARK Bun-Soon (Samsung Economic Research Institute): We have the presidential election coming up in just two days now, and it seems to me that the keyword in this year’s election is reviving the slumping national economy. According to Marx, the economy rules everything, but economics is the last item in today’s program. I am a bit unhappy that I get to give my presentation last, because normally I tend to be the first one to give a presentation. However, it is hard for me to complain because, as I was preparing for today’s presentation, I felt that the order of the program accurately reflected the reality.

As I got a request to do a literature review on research on Southeast Asia by Korean economists, I started reading the existing literature on the region in mainstream economics and business studies in Korea. I wanted to find out how the Southeast Asian economy has been treated in mainstream economics and business studies, rather than reviewing the work done by regional specialists in the country. So I focused on the official presses and bulletins of Korea’s economics and management studies academia since 1990. The result was rather miserable. The academic journal issued by the Korean Economic Association is The Korean Economic Review. This journal had no article on the Southeast Asian economy. Instead, in 2005, AHN Byung-soo presented an article reviewing the regulations regarding the country of origin in the free trade agreement between Japan and Singapore in a joint conference hosted by the Korean Economic Association. But it is hard to call it a study of the Southeast Asian economy. I looked at the International Economic Journal published by the Korea International Economic Association, and there was nothing on the Southeast Asian economy. In the book of the collection of articles presented in the 1998 conference,
there was an entry titled ‘AFTA, Is it Sufficient for ASEAN’s Further Economic Growth?’ by PARK Innwon at Korea University.

The Korean Association of Trade and Industry Studies publishes the *Journal of International Trade and Industry Studies*. In the 1999 edition, WON Yongkul, who currently teaches at the University of Seoul, published an article entitled, “A Study on Trade and FDI Relations between Korea and ASEAN.” At that time, Won was a researcher at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), and the article was published since it contained policies on the relationship between Korea and ASEAN, but it does not contain much of any significance, content wise. Then there is a 2003 article, “An International Comparison of Organizational Commitment during 1997-2002: Among Indonesian, Chinese and Korean Employees” written by SIN Man-su with some others. *The Journal of Korean Trade* of the Korea Trade Research Association featured “A Case Study of the Korean Firm's Investment in Vietnam” by and LEE Jang-rho and KIM Yong-sig at Korea University in 1997.

So far, I have briefed you about the situation of Southeast Asian studies in economics, and now I will move on to what it is like in management studies. According to my own research, there are two journals which are published by the Korean Academic Society of Business Administration (KASBA). One is the *Management Education Review*, and here I found several articles on the localizing strategy of Korean firms in Southeast Asia. A rare study entirely devoted to Southeast Asia was published in the *Korean Management Review* in 2001. “Strategy and Structure of Ethnic Chinese Business Organizations: Environmental Changes and the New Breed” by JUNG Ku-hyun, YON Kang-heum and SON Yong-min seems to be the only article focusing on Southeast Asia as its main study target.

While studies on the Southeast Asian economy suffer from the scant amount of the existing literature, the Korean Economic Association seems to have a great interest in China. In the fourth international conference, held in 1990, it had a special feature on the Chinese economy, and again it paid special attention to China in the fifth international conference two years later. In business and management studies, China is a popular country to study, especially with regard to the direct investment of Korean firms.

Although the Southeast Asian economy has been seriously neglected in mainstream academia, there has been a copious amount of research on policies. For example, there is the Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET), a state-funded research body that no longer does regional studies. It originally started out as the Korea Foundation for Middle East Studies in 1976, and then it was changed to the Korea International Economic Institute in 1979. It was again changed to the Korea Institute for Economics and Technology (KIET) before it acquired its current...
name in 1991. Since then, it has been the leading organization for research on the regional economy around the world in Korea. But when CHO Soon, formerly an economics professor at Seoul National University, became a finance minister in the 1990s, he established the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), and the regional studies unit in the KIET was entirely transferred to the KIEP. The KIET had a highly qualified body of well-trained regional studies researchers but, for the job’s sake, they stayed at KIET and continued doing other researches. This was a huge blow to regional studies.

KIEP is another research institute that conducts regional studies. During the ROH Tae-woo Administration in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a research body that was devoted to investigating the economy of communist countries. It was later absorbed by KIEP, and KIEP has been producing good stock of policy reports on different regions around the world. As you all know, regional studies usually make a contribution to the policy-making process. But the researches produced by state-funded think tanks are not purely academic, but were initiated by utilitarian motivations, such as what would be the most effective way for Korea to make use of Southeast Asia. The Southeast Asian Review, published by the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies (KASEAS), has a quite large volume of research on the Southeast Asian economy, but there is a clear limit to its producing a positive analysis and generating a profound discussion on the Southeast Asian economy, as there are only a handful of researchers in the field.

Then what is the reason for this scarcity of existing research on the Southeast Asian economy? As you all know, the currency crisis in Southeast Asia in the late 1990s had an enormous impact on the Korean economy. Thus, it is rather surprising that so little research has been done on the Southeast Asian economy by Korean economists or business academics. There may be several background factors, and one of these would be a distinctive attribute of the Korean economic academia, which is heavily dominated by the neoclassical economic tradition from the United States. In the past, the nationalist economics advocated by PARK Hyeon-chae and CHU Chong-hwan appealed to some non-mainstream factions, but it never appealed to the mainstream economists who were either teaching or had been trained at prestigious universities like Seoul National, Yonsei, and Korea Universities. Most of them were later educated in the United States, where economics textbooks begin with a chapter on the demand and supply mechanism of the market economy. The premise is that this demand and supply theory is a universal concept that works anywhere in the world. That is why economics does not deal with troubled areas where conventional economic principles lose their explanatory power. In fact, economists in Southeast Asia, too, study the economy of their countries and region within a western economic framework. So, as long as there is
nothing unique about the Southeast Asian economy, since the local researchers are not doing it, it
seems that there is no need for us to study the Southeast Asian economy.

Given this background of the academic tradition of Korean economics, there is no one to
teach the Southeast Asian economy. I am not sure if you remember this but, if I recall correctly, the
Graduate School of International Studies at Seoul National University here first started out as a
regional studies center with a particular focus on studying developing countries during the KIM
Young-sam Administration. But under the government’s plan to globalize the universities, most of
the universities in Korea set up graduate schools of international studies. I heard that the person
who played a key role in drafting the globalization plan was an economics professor at Seoul
National University, and he is the one who devised the current format of graduate schools of
international studies. There is a rumor among the economics academia that jokingly says that he had
so many unemployed students who had obtained a PhD in economics in the United States, so he
created the graduate school of international studies to give them jobs. If you refer to page 116 of the
booklet of this conference, you will see the list of the curriculum of the graduate schools of
international studies that were granted government funding. You can see that the curriculum does
not differ much from the general graduate schools, and there is no special program on regional
studies. There were no people who could teach regional economies, but the professors did not think
about teaching students with a regional studies curriculum, they just directly transferred the
knowledge that they had learned in the United States to their students. You all know how Korean
professors do not work hard, except for the members of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian
Studies. Their laziness made many professors simply repeat what they had learned in the United
States in the class rooms in Korea, and this is what happened as a consequence.

Secondly, the Southeast Asian economy itself is not very an attractive topic to study. When
we talk about Southeast Asia, we normally refer to 10 countries. In economics, there must be one
coherent theory that can explain the economies of all these 10 countries. However, this is indeed a
difficult task. We can apply the East Asian economic development model to some of the more
developed economies in the region, but it is hard to find any similarity with the less developed
Indochina region. This disparity is what makes Southeast Asian economics difficult. In addition,
whereas economic research requires an analysis of empirical data, it is not easy to get a hold of a
systematic data set and statistical database on the Southeast Asian economy. To speak of my own
experience, the Samsung Economic Research Institute, where I work, has started working on
writing a report on the outlook of the Southeast Asian economy every autumn. The work requires
gathering, cleaning and analyzing data. Because some countries do not have any systematic data, it
is extremely difficult to produce an economic outlook on countries like Laos, Cambodia and
Myanmar. That is why we usually write reports on just six of the Southeast Asian countries. As for Indonesia, although this country does have a data set, due to logistic problems, like slow Internet connection and low quality of centrally administered government data, problems still exist. Because people consider the United States, Japan, China and the European Union as important entities, there are two to three people working on a single country. But because of the relatively less importance placed on Southeast Asia, there is just one person who is allotted to cover the whole region. Those in charge of the advanced countries only have to deal with a single country and they have a very well organized data set to work with. The European Central Bank keeps very a systematic statistical database. If I need 12 hours to conduct research on six countries, a researcher in charge of Japan needs only half an hour because there are two doing one country. This is what I mean by saying that doing research on Southeast Asia is much harder than doing research on other regions. As this is the reality, who would volunteer to study Southeast Asia?

As Professor BAE Geung-Chan said earlier, the lack of demand has a huge impact on the study of the Southeast Asian economy. I had a strong conviction that future generations would need to look back at what went wrong with the Southeast Asian economy in the late 1990s in order to understand the Asian economic crisis. I devoted all my energy and passion to writing a 500-page book entitled “The Crisis and Restructuring of Southeast Asian Corporations” which came out in 2000. After a few years, I asked the publisher how many copies had been sold, and the answer that I got was 600. This book which I had poured all of my energy into only sold 600 copies. Later, I omitted Southeast Asia and published two books on East Asia, and those books sold around 2,000 copies. I got to publish a little book at the end of November this year and, this time, I even excluded East Asia and included sections on India and China only. I have shared my experience with you for fun, but this example shows how much demand matters in encouraging or discouraging research on a particular region.

The third problem is that there is virtually no one studying Southeast Asia. This is linked to the first problem that I addressed. Southeast Asia is not included as the part of the university education curriculum. While I was preparing for this presentation, I looked at the curriculum of the economics department in a number of universities in Korea to see if there are any classes on the Southeast Asian economy. There was none in the so-called prestigious influential universities like Seoul National, Yonsei, Korea, Sogang and Sungkyunkwan Universities. For example, the Department of Economics at Seoul National has classes on the Chinese economy, the Japanese economy, international trade, international finance and economic integration, but no class on the Southeast Asian economy. It was likewise in Yonsei. What was interesting was Pusan National University, where classes on economic history – not economy – of China and Japan were offered. I
found two universities that provided courses on the Southeast Asian economy, and they were the Department of International Economics and Law at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Sangmyung University. I have lectured in both places, and I personally know the professors who teach these classes. The classes were created largely because of the personal interests of those professors, not because it was part of the original curriculum.

On a final note, I would like to ask if the Southeast Asian economy is really not all that popular. Is it not popular when it is actually taught to students? I do not think so at all. In fact the business department at Korea University offers a research course on Asia, except for China, and I taught that course for five years. Because there is a separate course on China, and the only criterion is that the course needs to teach about the regions where Korean companies are present, determining which Asian region to study is largely at the lecturer’s discretion. I chose to teach the Southeast Asian economy, and the course drew a huge number of students. There were times when 125 students took the class, and it was recognized as one of the most popular courses, so that I had to limit the number of students in one class. That led me to think that the Southeast Asian economy would make a very good and also popular addition to the curriculum.

So what do we need to do? My belief is that economics, business, or trade departments at so-called prestigious universities should offer classes on the Southeast Asian economy so that students can get an opportunity to get a taste of the region at an undergraduate level. Reflecting on my personal experience of working in the private sector, those who majored in economics as undergraduates have a better understanding and chance to produce quality output in the fields of regional economics. Therefore, if economic or business major undergraduates get some exposure to the Southeast Asian economy at an early stage, I feel that it will help induce more people to study it more seriously.

6. Discussion.

CHO Hung-Guk: I would like to point out that there is a course on the Southeast Asian economy at Pusan National University. Because I teach the course at the graduate school of international studies, Dr. Park must have missed it.

PARK Bun-Soon: Oh, is that right? On a side note, I did my PhD at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. So if HUFS decides to offer a course on the Southeast Asian economy for first year
undergraduate students majoring in the language and literature of Southeast Asian countries, I would be willing to teach the course for free. But there is no such request.

CHOI Byung Wook: What is it like in other countries? Is it especially bad in Korea?

PARK Bun-Soon: When I asked Dr. RA Hee Ryang, who studied in the United States, during lunchtime, she said there is a difficulty in offering a course on the Southeast Asian economy because there is no coherent pattern found in the whole of the region. Because it is difficult to give lectures, I reckon that it would be harder to find courses on the Southeast Asian economy than on the Chinese or Japanese economies in the United States. But if you go to Southeast Asia, things become totally different. The National University of Singapore offers many such courses. Japan also has many courses on the Southeast Asian economy. There are many Japanese scholars who study it.

PARK Sa-Myung: I just heard that there is someone who studied the Southeast Asian economy in the United States. Where is he? As I listened to the speakers today, I realized that he is a rare addition to the pool of scholars in Southeast Asian studies.

RA Hee Ryang (POSCO Research Institute): How do you do? My name is RA Hee Ryang. I came back to Korea in June this year, after having studied at the University of Hawaiii for five years. Luckily, I am in the Southeast Asia research team at the POSCO Research Institute. After listening to Dr. PARK Bun-Soon today, I feel more determined to do better. I will try to do both survey research and academic research from now on.

PARK Sa-Myung: We just welcomed a real gem into our community. Anyone else who would like to speak?

JEON Je Seong: I once met some Australian economists, and they carried out field work like anthropologists and wrote their articles on Asia’s informal economy based on data they collected through interviews and field observation. So not all economists in the world only do econometrics.

PARK Eunhong: I must say I slightly disagree with Dr. PARK Bun-soon. When I visited the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University, I saw a number of prominent Japanese scholars in Southeast Asian studies. The head of the center, Kosuke Mizuno, specialises in the agricultural
economy of Indonesia. Akira Suehiro is an economist specializing in Thailand. Even within Southeast Asia, there are leading local economists, like Jomo Kwame Sundaram and Terence Gomez from Malaysia and Pasuk Phongpaichit from Thailand. That is why I think there is still a possibility for Korean economists to be charmed by Southeast Asian studies.

PARK Bun-soon: That is not what I meant, really. In fact, I began to take an interest in Southeast Asian studies after reading Akira Suehiro’s work on the overseas Chinese economy. Japan has a long history of study of the Southeast Asian economy, ever since the concept of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was promulgated during the Showa Period of Imperial Japan, especially in Osaka, the Kansai region and Kyoto University. Akira Suehiro’s seminal work on Chinese capitalists in Thailand became a classic that is frequently consulted by Thai sociologists and economists. Japan has a long tradition of research on other Asian regions. The work by Tamio Hattori at Japan’s Institute of Developing Economics on the economy of Korea’s Joseon Dynasty serves as the foundation even for Korean scholars who study the Korean economy during that period. What I was talking about was the Korean situation, that doing research on the Southeast Asian economy in Korea is not an attractive option here.

PARK Sa-Myung: Allright, that’s good. But we are running out of time. To sum up the many points addressed by a number of speakers today, you all must have realized how serious the problems of improving quantitative scarcity and achieving qualitative richness are. The problem is that there is no demand for Southeast Asian studies. But, as has been pointed out by Prof. BAE Gung-chan and Dr. PARK Bun-soon, the number of courses on Southeast Asia can be increased by the proactive initiative and effort by some individuals. Because it is difficult to transform the reality in a short period of time, we will need to take proactive measures at an individual level for the time being. In that sense, I would like to reiterate the beautiful phrase that Prof. BAE used – “a small flower that blossomed in a barren land.” What flower would that be? If it is a flamboyant flower like a rose, it will die soon. The life of a rose bush ends when the flower dies. But if it is a dandelion, the more you step on it, the stronger it becomes. I would say that Southeast Asian studies in Korea is like a dandelion. It is not showy, but it has strong vitality. I think that today’s session was valuable in that it reminded us of the rigorous vitality of the discipline that we love and study. I would like to wrap up today’s discussion on that positive note. Thank you very much.