

Laying the Foundations for Asia Pacific Studies at APU: Possibilities offered by ARISE 2000

Monte Cassim

*Professor, Faculty of Policy Science and Executive Director, Centre for Global
Education and Research, Ritsumeikan University*

*Sound, sound the clarion fife...
One glorious hour of life
Is worth an age without a name... (Alexander Pope)*

Asia Pacific Studies: Introducing the Context

(1) Diversity in the Asia Pacific

Diversity is perhaps the most stunning feature of the Asia Pacific region. Its topography ranges from the heady heights of the Himalayas to the low-lying island nations of the Pacific. Its climate and ecological habitats vary from the icy wastes of the tundra to the teeming life in the humid rainforests. Linguistically and ethnically too there is an incredible richness in the region. It has the greatest variety of faces one can find anywhere in the world – including Aryan, Oriental, Semitic and even Negroid features – and one only has to look around this room to see proof of this. There have been views that diversity is detrimental to development and growth, and in many of our societies we have attempted to favor the universal over the specific. The “modern” nation state, seeking order and clarity, has been particularly guilty of this. But is this the way things should be? *This is the first question that the emerging discipline of Asia Pacific studies should address, namely, how do we reconcile the universal and the specific?*

(2) Peoples, cultures and civilizations

Given the diversity of its peoples, the region is home to a potpourri of cultures.¹ It has been the cradle of some of the largest civilizations that human history has known.² All the major religions and innumerable minor faiths are represented in the region, resulting in a multiplicity of value systems. It is not easy to validate a loose but powerful claim that there is an “Asian way” of doing things, based on our own, rather

¹ A “culture” is seen as an ordered system that nurtures and cares for a society and which ascribes meanings and values to the symbols of that society. Culture is viewed here as a “process”, which flows and can change with time.

² A “civilization” is seen as a set of symbols and objects, which represents a culture through the meanings and values ascribed to it. Civilization is a product of culture and is often viewed in a set time-frame.

than an imposed, tradition.³ Yet, beneath all the apparent chaos there could be a hidden order, which we should attempt to seek. *This is the second question that the discipline of Asia Pacific studies needs to address, namely, clarifying this underlying order, which we might term as the “Asia Pacific culture,” and the conditions that have to prevail for it to lead to just and humane exchanges among the peoples of the region.* For example, it is said that “ambiguity opens space for the different view” (Sadria 2000).⁴ Is ambiguity a key component of the “Asia Pacific culture”?

(3) Globalization, integration and exclusion

Globalization is a powerful force, but it is also paradoxical (Sadria *ibid.*). On the one hand, it is a process of integration driven by the free flow of finance, goods, labor and information, with the pace accelerated by the twin revolutions in logistics and IT. On the other, it can be a process of violent exclusion. It appears to integrate what is similar (homogeneous, universal) and exclude what is different (heterogeneous, specific). *What are the implications of this process, which simultaneously integrates and excludes, for the broad “Asia Pacific culture” as well as the more “localized cultures” of the region? This is the third question which the discipline of Asia Pacific studies needs to address.* Also, does globalization have to lead to exclusion? Sadria (*ibid.*) stresses the beauty underlying the powerful forces of globalization. He sees it as an intelligent human desire to see people connected, sharing their destinies, seeking commonalities but respecting differences. Could it be that many of the prevailing structures of integration are vertically ordered? With the IT revolution, and with broader exchanges in cultural activities such as the arts and sports, as well as in common concerns such as the global environment and human welfare, are more egalitarian, horizontally-integrated, inclusive processes emerging?

(4) Building trust by working towards shared ideals

Given the heterogeneity of the Asia Pacific region, trust is the key to integrative and inclusive exchanges. Shared ideals and a variety of opportunities where the peoples of the Asia Pacific region can work, live and laugh together, share their joys and console each other's grief is the key to building trust and deepening our appreciation of each other. I suspect that we will be successful in our quest for trust and understanding if we accept the importance of an ethical position ... a position born from within the human heart, rather than a moral prescription, which is often an imposition of a dominant system of values. *Human development is the key to this and how we achieve this with an ethical core to it is perhaps the fourth question that the discipline of Asia Pacific studies has to address.* Ritsumeikan's Asia Pacific University (APU) is an initiative which aims to address this question. ARISE 2000, Ritsumeikan's policy blueprint for working with the international community, is also an attempt to create a platform for human development and cross-cultural exchange. ARISE 2000 is described in greater detail later on in this paper.

³ “Tradition” is seen as habits or customs, which have gained an accumulated value by being repeated over time. It is a behavioural pattern which has a historical context.

⁴ Sadria, Mojtaba: “Dialogue of Civilizations,” UNU Global Seminar, Kobe Session, United Nations University, 2000.

Asia Pacific Studies: A Paradigm for Social Transformation

In addition to defining the context in which it is set, it is also important for the discipline of Asia Pacific studies to address the issue of social transformation, explain it, and prescribe for it. The founding principles of APU and the objectives of ARISE 2000 converge in this regard too. In this section, we will try briefly to see the factors that shape social transformation in the Asia Pacific and their inter-relationships. A paradigm appears to be emerging. The argument in support of this paradigm rests on the premise that the destiny of the Asia Pacific region rests on how the twin pillars of international relations and cross-cultural exchange affect the rights of access to resources, which are essential to fulfill human need. It also questions whether the market mechanism is the best means of allocating these resources under all conditions.

(1) International relations and cross-cultural exchange

The perspective in which international relations are viewed, in the paradigm suggested, is broad. It includes the formal legal framework on which the region's nation states are founded, those aspects of international law governing relationships between these states, and the more informal codes and practices rooted in the respective cultures of the region, some of which shape common law – in short, what may be described in Hegelian terms as “systems of rule.” Cross-cultural exchange, on the other hand, is seen as a much more informal process of interaction – people-to-people exchanges which could be explained as (Hegelian) “systems of association.” These exchanges may range from the legally sanctified to the blatantly extra-legal. Nevertheless, viewing the long history of the region, one might argue that it is the latter which has been more influential in shaping it. *APU's emphasis on tourism, civil society exchanges and other such people-to-people links, including cyber-links, in its graduate school concept for Asia Pacific studies acknowledges this.* With increasing calls for formalizing cross-border exchanges, how will the Asia Pacific region respond? *Verifying the validity of this paradigm is another challenge for this new discipline.*

(2) Human rights, democratic governance and the market mechanism

Rights of access to resources are invariably tied to more fundamental human rights and democratic systems of governance. The region is still uncomfortable in dealing with such issues, although a broad and perhaps irreversible trend towards recognizing human rights appears to have been set into motion. The region appears to be buying time by embracing the market mechanism to provide for resource access – a trend lauded by many western powers – but in the end, the day of reckoning is bound to come. Fundamental respect for human rights and democratic systems of governance, although they may not follow a western democratic model, is inevitable. How the Asia Pacific region prepares for this eventuality, without massive social disruption and loss of life, is the primary challenge for the development paradigm we prescribe. Clarifying the role of the market mechanism in this regard, defining the conditions

under which it best operates and a clear understanding of its limitations are important areas of research for the Asia Pacific studies. *The sustainable environment and IT emphasis in APU's planned graduate school concept for Asia Pacific studies could well determine these boundary conditions for what is acceptable and what is not.* With its multicultural ethos, APU is well placed to strive for excellence in these areas of pioneering research, upon the outcome of which, it is no exaggeration to say, the region's future rests.

ARISE 2000: Introduction

ARISE 2000 is the acronym for Advancing Research through International Student and Staff Exchange. It is the policy blueprint of Ritsumeikan Trust, initiated in the year 2000, for working with the international community. The Center for Global Education and Research (CGER) is the division responsible for policy formulation and coordinating execution. ARISE 2000 covers Ritsumeikan University (RU) and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) as well as the five secondary schools managed by the Trust. In this paper, however, we will look primarily at university level programs.

ARISE 2000 rests on four pillars: (1) creating a multicultural campus environment; (2) nurturing internationalized students; (3) setting global standards in research and education; and (4) initiating organizational restructuring and reform. At present, the time frame is open-ended, but a 5-year period has been largely used for setting targets.

(1) Creating a multicultural campus environment

The underlying aim of this component of ARISE 2000 is to create a body of students and staff who are capable of dealing with diversity, can appreciate values and customs different to their own, and who can then use these qualities for working with the international community.

In creating a multi-cultural campus environment, the situation at Ritsumeikan University (RU) and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) is in stark contrast. If we take the number of foreign students in RU and the number of RU students who go on study abroad programs, it currently amounts to around 2,500 students, approximately 8 percent of our total student population of approximately 29,000 students. The targets for RU over the next several years will be to achieve around 12-15 percent by 2003 and 20 percent by 2005. The full-time foreign staff percentage is very much smaller. At APU, approximately 50 percent of students and staff are non-Japanese nationals.

Thus the thrust of initial programs will be to see how RU's campuses in Kyoto (Kinugasa Campus, KIC) and Shiga (Biwako-Kusatsu Campus, BKC) can be transformed, using APU's innovative approach and the experience of our partner universities overseas, into a truly multicultural environment. This will require investment in a series of infrastructure and support systems, some of which we hope will serve not only RU, but APU and our overseas partners too. These support systems include improved student recruitment practices, housing support, financial support, pastoral care, faculty development, student activity support, language

support, IT skills support, and career development support. As for APU, the thrust will be, wherever possible, to develop additional support systems to consolidate its initiatives by using the economies of scale that come by developing programs in conjunction with the much larger RU. Action has already been initiated in some of these areas.

(2) Nurturing internationalized students

In this component of ARISE 2000, creative curriculum development is seen as a major vehicle for shaping the minds of both students and faculty. An ethical commitment to go beyond one's own needs and desires and serve others, especially those who are less fortunate, lies at the foundation of developing these curricula.

The starting point for nurturing internationalized students is undoubtedly strengthening Ritsumeikan's overseas collaborative programs. RU and APU have joint agreements with about 100 overseas partners at present. However, only about a third of these are active in terms of student exchange. This number can be increased to a certain extent by the infrastructure and support system improvements mentioned earlier, but some new initiatives are called for as well.

APU has several innovative curriculum initiatives, well documented in the booklet, "APU Crossroads." The Study-Abroad and Internships programs of the International Institute, a trans-disciplinary faculty, established this year at RU's Kinugasa campus in Kyoto, and the International Management and Technology program at master's level, soon to be offered in English at RU's Biwako-Kusatsu campus in neighboring Shiga, are two examples among a list of new initiatives. A discernible trend is towards integrating the human and social sciences with engineering and the natural sciences. The proposed graduate school center of excellence, focusing on areas such as core ethics, global civil rights and sustainable development, will experiment with new systems of pedagogy. All of this calls for innovative curriculum development, including more courses taught in an international language, and the targeting of a broader student market. Courses attractive to the international community need to be accompanied by an international credit transfer system. This is also currently under investigation.

(3) Setting global standards in research and education

ARISE 2000 proposes that one or two strategic R&D programs be initiated each year to achieve the aims of this component. These programs, which will be at the core of discussion in this paper, urge students and faculty to come out of the ivory tower. They actively urge participation in the drama of effecting social change. It is said that the Renaissance was a golden age because every citizen in those Italian city-states lived their day-to-day lives in the conviction that they were creating tomorrow's history. This is the frame of mind that these projects should aspire to create.

As a private university in Japan, around 65 percent of Ritsumeikan's annual operating revenues comes from student fees. Consequently, a rigorous commitment to education has been the mainstay of pedagogy at Ritsumeikan. Research has been acknowledged as important, but there has always been a sneaking suspicion, particularly in the human and social sciences, that it is a luxury that one indulges in

almost surreptitiously. The Faculty of Science and Engineering has shown that high-levels of research and development can bring in external finances from both government and the private sector, while strengthening the commitment to education. This belief needs to permeate into the human and social science faculties too. In laying the foundations for reshaping Asia Pacific studies, APU's fundamental research will also be thrust into the limelight.

We estimate that the number of graduate students coming into RU from overseas will increase quite rapidly. This parallels a general shift in emphasis in most leading universities in Japan, both public and private, to graduate school programs, which are necessarily founded on sound research and close links with international professional associations. With the propensity to integrate the human and social sciences with the natural sciences and engineering on the increase, attractive trans-disciplinary research and development projects are likely to be at the core of this transformation. Synergies between APU and RU, and also with partner institutions overseas, could make this a very exciting and dynamic exercise.

(4) Initiating organizational restructuring and reform

All large organizations harden their arteries over time. The centenarian, Ritsumeikan University, is no exception. There is a danger of ending up with a passive and conservative administrative structure – a lethal combination. In every possible instance, “doing” must be stressed over “being,” but it must be “doing” with a clear and laudable purpose and not just a rationale for justifying one’s existence. A caveat needs to be sounded, though. In throwing out what are perceived as old ideas, one must take care not to throw out the baby with the bath water. These are the challenges facing administrative reform under ARISE 2000.

If ARISE 2000 is to achieve its objectives, administrative and logistical support is of paramount importance. In order to support the new initiatives, faculty and administrative staff time needs to be freed. Also, new resources need to be secured and managed. The Center for Global Education and Research, the prime initiator and executor of ARISE 2000, has already started a program of reform and restructuring. The first sacred cow to be sacrificed is likely to be CGER’s current decision-making practices. In pursuing these reforms, however, a careful balance needs to be struck between academic faculty autonomy and organizational efficiency. The enhanced use of IT in day-to-day administration, data filing and retrieval, as well as multi-lingual web-based communication are being investigated. This last is imperative to bring Ritsumeikan closer to the international community. APU has pioneered several initiatives in this regard.

The internationalization of Ritsumeikan’s staff is a personnel management challenge, particularly for university administration. Although the number of foreign nationals in the academic faculty has steadily increased over the last several years, neither RU nor APU have non-Japanese staff in tenured administrative positions. CGER has two multi-lingual foreign administrative staff members, whose services are absolutely invaluable, on contract assignments at present. If the international student body increases to 15 percent of RU’s total student body, such staff recruitment considerations would not seem radical. If this figure increases to 20 percent, they would seem absolutely normal.

ARISE 2000: The Strategic Research and Development Programs

The Strategic Research and Development Programs of ARISE 2000, designed to set global standards in research and education, will hopefully become Ritsumeikan's main vehicle for working with and contributing to the international community. The overall theme of this framework for international cooperation can be broadly described as ethics and development. Specific programs are to be designed around major research domains, and may straddle more than one. These domains describe major concerns facing the international community, and examples of three domains currently under discussion are: (a) environment and development; (b) peace and governance; and (c) science, art and society. In dealing with the issues in any of these domains, ethical judgments are often called for. Consequently, a fourth overarching domain will be that of core and applied ethics.

The strategic research and development programs aim to meet the challenges of the 21st century and serve humanity in the creation of a just and caring society, where the richness of the human spirit and creativity can blossom. They are to be developed as and when opportunities permit. Their results are to be consolidated in a knowledge bank and used to achieve the ideals described above. Towards this end, three R&D support domains, for linking academic research with the real world, are also proposed: (a) digital archiving of knowledge; (b) development of innovative pedagogic systems; and (c) promotion of industrial innovation and incubation.

Two programs are currently being designed for implementation in 2001. One of these is on the development of distance learning systems (DLS), to bring the intellectual properties of the Ritsumeikan universities, RU and APU, to the wider international community. The other attempts to link design, disability, aging and information technology access (DAITS) in order to bridge the digital divide. They are both related to information technology applications, and share the common goal of leveling opportunities in society.

(1) Distance Learning Systems: DLS

The DLS development programs are seen as vehicles for building and sharing knowledge with the wider international community through the development of an innovative IT-based pedagogic system. The global environment has been chosen as the focus of the first stage of experiments. Four programs have been conceived:

(a) Cleaning and Greening of Production and Consumption Systems

This program consists of two projects at present. One project looks at life cycle assessment (LCA) as a tool for cleaning and greening production systems and as an influence in the transformation to more environmentally friendly consumption patterns in the future. Investigations are currently centered in Japan, focusing on small and medium sized businesses, local producer organizations, and their consumer markets. Another project relates to global warming, with particular emphasis on the possibilities offered by the clean development mechanism (CDM) and the cross-national transfer of emission rights proposed under it. This project focuses on China,

whose rapid growth is likely to discharge large volumes of emissions which would accelerate global warming. Both projects are in-house projects at Ritsumeikan. Their underlying principles are universal and they lend themselves to replication in other countries and contexts. Host country governments, given international pressure in these areas, may be persuaded to contribute to such projects.

(b) Decentralized Alternatives to Resource Mobilization:

This program questions the wisdom of the large-scale centralized resource mobilization systems we currently promote and proposes small-scale decentralized options. Two projects are again being considered. One looks at decentralized energy options (DEO), focusing on renewable sources of energy, and the other at decentralized water options (DWO) for domestic and agricultural use, and includes consideration of techniques for combating drought as well. Both these projects have field project sites in Sri Lanka and a training component which aims at their replication in other developing economies. They have been initiated by a Japanese NGO, Tools for Self Reliance Japan, whose Kyoto chapter is at Ritsumeikan University. The university has contributed by sending student monitoring teams for assessing post-implementation performance assessment. A more pro-active role in these projects is envisaged for the university under ARISE 2000, with greater use of the university's technological R&D capacity for the greater good of the international community.

(c) Regeneration and Sustainable Use of Tropical Ecosystem Resources

Given the rapid loss of tropical habitats where most of the earth's biodiversity lies, and the importance of these habitats for sustaining human life on earth, two projects are being planned. One of these relates to rainforest regeneration and the other to coral reef regeneration. They are linked to the sustainable use of forest and marine resources. Both have environmental degradation mitigation components and an eco-tourism development component, which can be replicated in other contexts as well. The projects are to be designed in consultation with partner institutions in the State of Sabah, Malaysia. They were conceived as a result of a study abroad program, where second-year students from Ritsumeikan have been looking at tropical ecosystems in Sabah for the past five years. Some of these students have gone on to graduate school and are likely to form the nucleus of this program. A student association formed by these students called Action for Tropical Ecosystems (ATE) has prepared a series of introductory texts for raising interest in these issues among their younger colleagues and the general public as well.

(d) Sustainable Interactions for Living with Nature

This program looks at human needs and activities, such as food, clothing, shelter and recreation, and how they impinge on the natural environment. Two projects are being conceived. One of these involves learning through parks. It looks at how parks can be transformed into holistic learning environments, teaching us about our interactions with nature, becoming places for inter-generational social exchange, and acting as a

learning environment for instilling a sense of caring for others, including humans and other life forms. In the first phase, this project will focus on urban children's parks. The other project is concerned with sustainable resource recycling. It is a program for recycling household wastes through the introduction of innovative technologies which, in the process, lead to the enhancement of livelihoods at the local level. The project is expected to stimulate the agriculture and forestry sectors and has been initiated by a not-for-profit organization. Ritsumeikan's involvement is in providing technological support for these projects, both of which will involve working closely with local governments and communities. These projects could be replicated elsewhere, both within and outside Japan.

The above projects are illustrative of the kind of sources from which DLS contents can be developed. Although environment and development has been taken up in the first phase, it can be extended to cover the other areas mentioned: peace and governance, as well as science, art and society in the coming years.

(2) Design, Disability, Aging and Access to IT Systems: DAITS

The DAITS development programs are seen as a means of enhancing IT access for the disadvantaged segments of society, and in so doing, learning how to bridge the digital divide. In this program, the aged and disabled in our communities will be the focus of research and development. Two programs have been conceived:

(a) DAITS-Home

In this project, all the products and services centering around the homes of the disabled and the aged will be taken up for consideration as vehicles for enhancing their access to information technology. It could involve developing the interfaces and end-user products to enhance access to PCs and the internet, as in the Archimedes Project initiated at CSLI in Stanford University. It could go beyond to cover a host of products used in the home, such as safer hot water pots, appliance control and warning systems, etc., such as those developed by the Royal National Institute for the Blind in the UK. The type of initiative taken at Reading University to tailor environmental conditions, such as heating, lighting, audio-visual signs, etc. to an individual's disability or need through the use of "smart cards" is yet another example. At Brunel University, the Millennium Home Project is one where a creative combination of electronic sensors, an intelligent but cheap computer control and warning system, and a network of volunteers from a charity organization, enable the elderly to live alone longer in their own familiar home environments. The aim of the Rits DAITS-Home project is to consolidate on these initiatives, working with these institutions where necessary, to create a nucleus around which many small and medium sized firms involved in building and maintaining homes can be brought in to make creative contributions. Applying the principles of inclusive (universal) design, as for example in the Royal College of Art's program on Caring for Our Future Selves, to see the possibility of extending these products and services to a larger market will be at the core of this R&D program. Discussions to commence this project, which has implications for the social sciences and humanities as well as natural sciences and engineering, have begun in western Japan.

(b) DAITS-Mobility

In this program, in a manner similar to the DAITS-Home program, all the products and services centering around the mobility of the disabled and the aged, and their interaction with information technology will be the focus of research. The considerations could range from personal mobility, which involves prosthetic support, vehicular solutions and other mobility aids, to personal and public transport. It would involve developing the interfaces, end-user products, and services which would enhance the mobility of these disadvantaged groups. With mobility and transport mechanisms being at the core of this project, it also lends itself to the participation of a wide range of firms, including small and medium sized businesses. Covering a broad range of scientific study and application, this program too has the possibility of becoming the propulsive core of a new generation of industry. Ritsumeikan plans to work with overseas partner institutions and the business community in Japan and abroad, in order to bring this program to fruition. Preliminary discussions to explore the prospects for such a program have commenced in central Japan, the heart of the nation's motor industry.

(3) International liaison and the e-laboratory

The DLS and DAITS programs are likely to become large and complex, involving many actors in both Japan and overseas. For Ritsumeikan, as initiator of these programs, success will depend on the strength of its international liaison abilities. The challenge here will be to extend a successful formula for building partnerships with business, government, and civil society at the national level, for which Ritsumeikan is well known, into the international arena.

Experiments are soon to commence on devising an e-liaison (electronic liaison) system to achieve this more cost-effectively and to provide real-time on-line support. They will be carried out through the establishment of an e-laboratory for this purpose in cyberspace. The aim of this laboratory is to serve as a knowledge bank, consolidating the intellectual assets of the university (and its partners with their understanding) and facilitating their use for the greater good of society. Innovative pedagogic systems, likely to evolve from the DLS programs, and new dimensions in industrial incubation and the support of innovation, expected of the DAITS programs, are seen as the means to achieving this end.

For the DLS and DAITS programs to come of age, a 3-5 year period of careful nurturing is likely to be needed. This is the immediate mandate for ARISE 2000. We need all the help we can from our overseas partners to make this possible. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a request to our partner universities present here to see how we can work together on these programs over the coming years for our mutual benefit as well as for society at large.

A Ten-Point Action Program

To be is to do...Sartre

To do is to be...Kant

Do be do be do...Sinatra

- (1) Making an ethical commitment to working with the international community.
- (2) Working with the disadvantaged for the greater good of all
- (3) Learning to deal with diversity and change
- (4) Coming out of the ivory tower and working with a diverse range of communities
- (5) Creating new “systems of association” to support social transformation
- (6) Consolidating the above by transforming “systems of rule”
- (7) Seeing pilot projects as instruments of change in leading to peace and prosperity
- (8) Ensuring project replication by linking it to the socioeconomic system
- (9) Providing continuing intellectual and technological support to these projects
- (10) Managing the knowledge derived from these projects for posterity wisely

I would like to conclude by requesting your cooperation in developing and executing ARISE 2000. As the acronym suggests, it favors “doing” over “being” and urges us all to act. Sartre’s existentialist credo was “To be is to do”...which I think we should avoid, but I have unfortunately subjected you to this while I spoke. I believe it was Kant, who felt strongly that “To do is to be,” which I hope will be reflected in your questions and advice to us at Ritsumeikan. But I must confess though, considering your feelings at the end of this presentation, Frank Sinatra’s melodic contribution to philosophical thought, is much more appropriate...and I shall conclude with it. “Do be do be do...do be do...do be do...do be do be do be do”. Remember – there are more “do’s” than “be’s” there! Thank you.