

## アジア市民社会公開シンポジウム

アジア市民社会リサーチコア

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# Possibilities of Inter-local Networking: A Search of Peace from Below in Asia

Yuji Suzuki

#### Introduction\*

Just two years ago, faced with DPRK's missile tests, a few Japanese ministers of Abe Cabinet suggested a possibility of Japan's nuclear armament even though the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe himself quickly denied it. Yet, Abe pushed forward the process toward the revision of Japan's peace constitution as he envisioned when he contested to the governing party's president, the position of which automatically meant the premiership of Japan.

Indeed in the past 8 years, under the former Prime Ministers Koizumi, Abe, Fukuda, all come from the same faction within the LDP, Japan has greatly drifted toward the "right", namely a somewhat similar political stance to US's "neo-conservatism". Koizumi paid homage to Yasukuni Shrine every year despite strong objections expressed by leaders of both China and Korea. Also he was the first political leader of Japan since 1945 that sent Japan's military personnel to the outside Japan without UN resolutions. In addition, he made great efforts with no avail to elevate Japan to one of the additional permanent membership within the UN Security Council. And, one should not forget, he visited twice the capital of DPRK without much success in concluding a peace treaty with Kim Jong Il's government.

He could not put an end to the thorny issue of Japanese abductees either. Yet, among these, most salient is the rapid decline of Japan's relations with China, Korea and DPRK. Japan indeed has increasingly become isolated in the region of North East Asia.

Soon after Abe and Fukuda took office, they made their first overseas visits to China and Korea, not to the US, with the intension of improving the deteriorated relations to both. However, no major policy changes have followed since then. While maintaining the political style of their predecessor, Abe even accelerates the "drift toward the right" by setting up a series of research commissions including one which studies on Japan's right of collective self defense. Under the present constitution, it has been interpreted by the governmental legal arm, the right has been denied in the past five decades. Yet, Defense agency was elevated to Ministry of Defense, and sending troops to overseas has become more rule rather than exception. In addition, he earnestly sought to include the teaching of patriotism by revising the basic law of education, the backbone of post-war peace education in Japan. Last but not least, special attention should be paid to the legislation of procedure law for constitutional revision, by which in effect the revision can be adopted by simple majority rather than absolute majority.

These changes have been brought about in a relatively short period of time, with few resistances if not scant debates and attention. It might have been quite unthinkable if ten years ago. From these, some argue that Japanese political orientation has undergone somewhat a sea change in terms of their perception of self, of friends and foes, of near neighbors and distant neighbors, and so on. More drastically, it is argued, Japanese "world-view" has been transformed from peace-loving, low-key, economic giant rather than military might and so on. However, based on the same observations, the others interpret they reflect the weakening Japan. She has accelerated its aging trend with less and less children and started the decline of population since 2006. The anticipated "shrunk Japan", it argues, would put an upper-limit to the possibility of revival of Japan as a military power. In fact, Japan is not just unwilling to be a regional hegemony, but also incapable to be the one<sup>(4)</sup>. Disregarding which is more plausible than the other, there is a fairly widely accepted

view in which the recent “drift toward the right” is not an exception but an integral part of transformation Japan is undergoing at the moment.

Then what will Japan look like in the years to come? In this regard, one should pay more attention to a long-term change or the sea change mentioned in the above. Like in many European “affluent societies”, Japan is moving away from rapidly growing society toward stable, if not retard society, from fast life toward slow life, and so on. Amongst others, particular attention is to be paid here to the so-called decentralization trend, which has been underway over the last decade or more.<sup>(2)</sup>

Against this backdrop, it is quite interesting to note, Japan’s sub-national and societal relations with China and Korea have been developing rapidly and uninterruptedly. As we will see more in detail in the following, this undercurrent, I would argue, helps greatly to refrain Japan to precipitate her overall relations with our neighbors into open conflicts. Despite the paucity of political cooperation at the top echelon of leadership, the growing nexus of interdependence between the three countries cross the border tends to function as if the underpin of the mutual peaceful coexistence, if not the in-put from below to that direction. Indeed, even in the midst of severe inter-state relations today, there emerges a transnational, inter-civil society relationship beyond national borders.

In the following, I shall briefly look at the historical evolvement of sub-national and societal interactions as a new trend of Japan’s international or transnational activities. In this, I try to delimit my focus upon Japanese local governments’ variety of efforts. Then, I will discuss their impact upon the choices of Japan in building a regional process in a similar manner that has successfully bought about an “Europeanization of Europe”.

## Historical Background

As we will see, localization is an inevitable trend in a global age. Secondly, localization, at least in Japan, is in effect lowering the wall of nation-state. Of course we should not underestimate the impact of localization upon the rise of inter-local as well as intra-local conflicts. Yet, it does offer a room for peaceful

settlements in a very different manner than those at national, regional and global levels. Thirdly, the very manner that characterizes the settlements of sub-national, local and grass-root conflicts is consisted of by overwhelmingly non-military means. And finally, the interface between peace and development is very real. In other words, the participation to the process of peaceful settlement is wide open at this level so that decision-making process is not monopolized by a specific group of people, often the government sector concerned. I believe localization is offering a test stone for the coming era in Japan and also in our neighboring countries.

When looking into this localization in the regional context, we would see much the similar transformation is underway in East Asia despite many differences in scope and range. Since the 1980's, the region of Asia in general and East Asia in particular has been undergoing rapid transformation, viz. globalization, and localization and democratization. Globalization, with its all connotations and denotations, has attracted much attention throughout the region as a tendency that would bring about tremendous changes in economic, social and political life. One of the most salient effects of globalization, except few societies in the whole region, seems to be an irrevocable trend towards the practice of democracy with "people's power", whatever that may mean. In the relatively short period of time, the state's supremacy over "people's power", which dominated political scene in the region, began to become replaced by democratic governments. However, the transformation in political landscape could not have been achieved without a company of the second trend, namely localization. Only when, I would argue, the conception of power transformed and power distribution changed within the given societies, democratization could not have won such a victory without any serious casualties. In this regard, I believe, the combination of globalization and localization has given the birth to democratization.<sup>(3)</sup>

Localization, despite its significant role in political change in the region, has attracted little attention, however. In the case of Japan, localization has at best been seen a complementary function of central government, if not a substitute to the failure of central government. However, it is a far more complex process of transformation. One aspect of this change is the transfer of power and resources

from central government to local government units. One can explain this as an outcome of globalization in the sense that a top heavy and often ineffective state control onto socio-economic management does not enhance, if not only decrease, the competitive edge in a globalizing era. It is simply a “failure of state”. Having seen the tremendous impacts of the “failure of state” in coping with the recent economic crisis, the countries in the region including Japan have been taking such steps as de-centralization, de-concentration, de-regulation and so on, the changes of which are important components of localization. For this, one would argue, globalization does not seem to allow them to take such “reverse course” as re-centralization, re-concentration and further regulation. As we shall see in the following, however, more important is an irreversible domestic transformation in which newly born regimes in the region almost unanimously seek to promote democratic reforms, or dismantling the centralized regimes.

In fact, as in many countries in the region including Japan, the power and resources, hitherto nearly monopolized by central government, have been transferred to local government units or even non-governmental organizations or NGOs. Of course the extent to which the power and resources have been transferred differs from a country to another. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that this tendency of localization will certainly bring about significant changes over the economic, social and political life of the region.

At this stage, it may be too early to assess the impact of localization. Yet, a number of questions arise. What changes it will bring about in the relationship between central and local governments? Is it merely the transfer of power and resources from the central government to local government units? As seen in the experiences in the Philippines which embarked onto localization much earlier than other nations in the whole region, it also brings about a fundamental transformation in the relationship between state and society. The “culture of dependence”, according to a drafter of Filipino “Local Government Code of 1991”, had characterized her relationship between state and society. In that, salient was state’s concentration of power and society’s search of patronage. With the local government code put in place, he claims, the vertically organized relationship has been transformed dramati-

cally toward one of horizontal partnership between governments, central as well as local, on one had and NGOs, peoples organizations or POs on the other.<sup>(4)</sup> Then, is it the case that localization put an end to authoritarian regime? Or, conversely, does the end of authoritarian regime set localization into motion? Whichever it may be, one cannot deny the fact that localization is closely related to a search of post-authoritarian regime in the region. At least in the long run, I would argue, it will bring about a multiplex changes in political, social and economic, even cultural life in the region. Then, first, let us begin to look back the economic evolvments in Japan leading to localization.

### Economic Process toward Localization in Japan

Throughout the 1950's and the 1960's, Japan had sought to develop the so-called export-oriented industries with an aim to catch up with the developed economies. However, the domestic market was limited, and human resources in terms of entrepreneurship as well as technical expertise inadequate. With no firm domestic economic foundations, thus, such policy required them to rely on official aid, public investments in particular from the government funds or their affiliate financial institutions, which had been crucial to private banking sector to invest. Conveniently, domestic political conditions were stable and conducive to the policy of "dependence" on government intervention. In addition, the global and regional tensions of Cold War, superimposed on domestic and regional disputes, prohibited a healthy economic dependence upon neighboring countries as markets for Japanese products. Only possible instead was to make sure of a stable flow of goods, cash and personnel with developed countries especially the US. In short, the export-oriented industrialization of Japan did not produce a positive linkage building with neighboring countries.<sup>(5)</sup>

Having achieved a rapid economic development in terms of export-oriented industrialization in the 1950's and the 1960's, Japan came to the turning point in that the more developed, the more exported, and thus the more trade conflicts with the developed markets, especially those in the US and Europe. At this juncture, Japan

accepted a mechanism of voluntary restraining of her export, an up-valuing Japanese Yen, and the promotion of Japanese industry's overseas investment. This adoption of the set of policies indeed greatly assisted Japan's extended investment activities in Asia on one hand and at the same time brought about an undesired outcome, namely "hollow-ization" of domestic industry on the other. Many firms relocated their factories to East and Southeast Asia to the extent the former industrial cities began to suffer of serious job problems, decrease in tax revenue in local government, and even the outflow of residents. Very little had been done by the central government due mainly it was certainly behind the promotion of capital relocation.

Indeed this historical and structural change in the late 60's marked the beginning of local initiatives towards a more independent search of economic survival. The first group of cities, towns and villages which turned their eyes to local initiatives is composed of by those units which suffered of "marginalization" from the rapid industrialization process. Many are small cities, towns and villages, remote from local major cities. And most of them had been from the very beginning excluded from Japan's industrialization. In addition, common to them were the lack of major industry. In this category, the leadership was taken not only by the concerned local governments, but more important role was played by the private sector, more correctly speaking concerned citizen's group, the civil society organization. Secondly, almost all of them went not to Tokyo but overseas in order to find out the prescription to their survival. They were serious to establish an "international linkage". Typical example to this category was an initiative of Ikeda town (as of 2005, its population is 8,467), Hokkaido, which already suffered the shortage of governmental assistance, losing of competitive edge in its industry viz. agriculture, and outflow of young population. The remaining youth of the Peasant Union or Nokyo, took initiative and pressed the town government to invest the town's limited resources for the promotion of a new industry, wine production. They made a number of research trip to German vineyards from which they learned basic knowledge, know-how and so on. Active participation of the town's youth in various sectors, government and non-government, marked the first local initiative which led the town to the palpable success in rebuilding its industry. Ikeda town is now widely



known for its Tokachi Wine. Similar examples can be found in many other parts of Japan, mainly those towns and villages whose population are below 50,000, where commonly seen is the so-called marginalization from the “internationalization” process which characterized medium and big cities in Japan.<sup>(6)</sup>

Yet, after the turn of the decade, one began to witness that not just those marginalized towns and villages alone but former industrial cities, small and medium scale cities of population less than 300,000<sup>(7)</sup> also joined much the same efforts for survival. Sometimes such big cities like those facing to Japan Sea joined this category. Indeed the more “internationalized” Japanese economy became, the more cities suffered the same destiny of the first category of cities. This time in the 1970’s quite a few cities which had enjoyed rapid industrialization and experienced affluence started to see the outgoing of their industry to overseas, this time not only to East and Southeast Asia but also elsewhere including the US and Europe. A typical example is an experience of Sakata City (98,863), Yamagata. The city had planned to build a petrochemical industrial complex far before the oil crisis of the 1970’s by inviting a major company with a tacit endorsement of the central government as well as local governments, Yamagata Prefecture Government and Yamagata city Government. Having almost completed its construction, it faced a severe series of “oil shocks” in the early 1980’s, and had to abandon its plan in toto. The major company moved its facilities to Indonesia. As Yamagata city is the capital city of the prefecture, the second category includes such major local cities in Japan like Niigata city(773,911), Niigata Prefecture, Toyama city(417,465), Toyama Prefecture, Sakaiminato city (37,392), Tottori Prefecture, Shimonoseki city(291,500), Yamaguchi Prefecture and so on. Even though local initiative had to be appreciated, needed was to find out a best mix of local initiative and dependence upon the “investment” from the central government. Apart from such differences between the two categories, commonly seen is the fact the second category cities also found direct collaboration with cities in overseas extremely useful. As we shall see in the following chapter, twin city relations expanded rapidly. This time, many chose to set up cooperative relations with those cities in East Asia. Within this frame of mind, one can see quite a few nexus offering and some remarked miracle success.

Some of them are listed in the following page.<sup>(8)</sup>

By the end of 1980's, a search of international connection had become so common among cities including medium scale cities and mega cities like Tokyo, Yokohama and so on.

In fact, out of 740 cities as of 2005, there are 35 "core cities" with the population more than 300,000 including Niigata city, Toyama city and so on. In addition, there are 14 mega cities of the population roughly over 1,000,000 which are called chartered cities. This last group of city governments enjoys much the same autonomy from superior governments, namely prefecture and national governments. Among those big cities too, "marginalization" took place within their own territory which began to demand the adoption of similar orientation toward local initiative.<sup>(9)</sup>

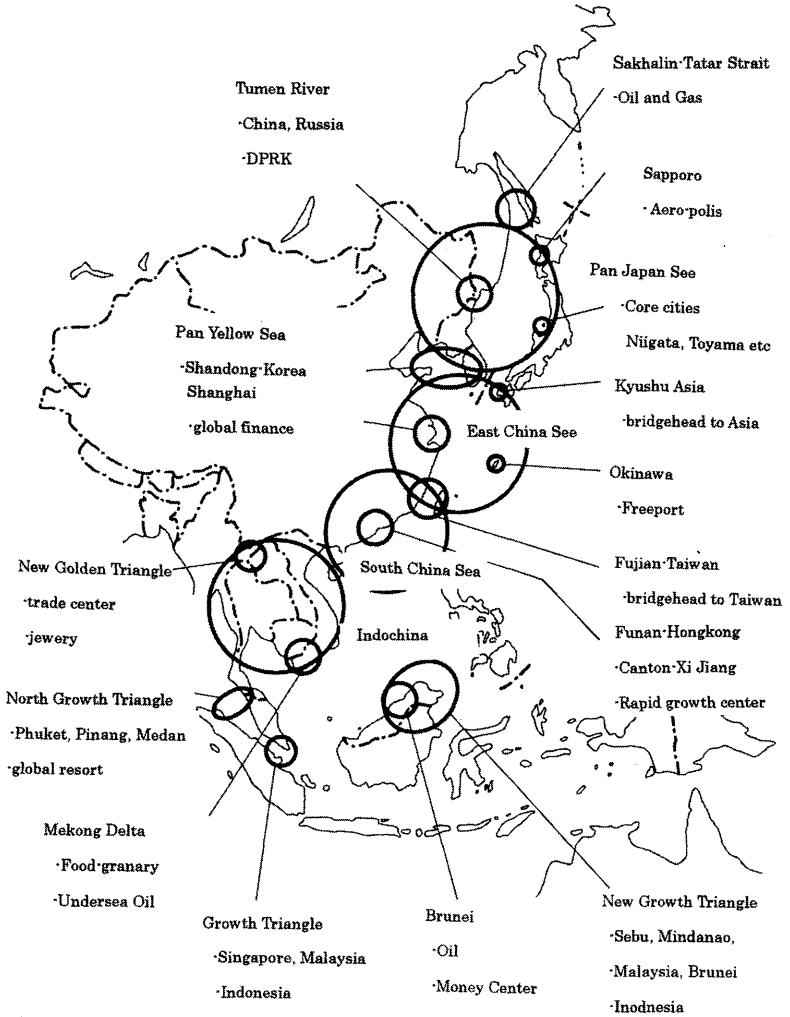
From the above, it is safe to say that, first of all, "local initiative" is a means for survival, not luxury. Secondly, it is one of few remaining policy agenda to mobilize local population, especially the young generation. Third but not the last is the fact that it was a catalyst to Japan's transnational collaboration at grass-root.

The previous page indicates the on-going plans, visions and concepts of sub-national cooperation in the Northeast and Southeast Asia. Indeed this shows amply that inter-local collaborations has just begun since the late 1980's, slowly but steadily enhancing mutual understanding from below, and transforming stereo-typed images among the region. It may be too early to judge their impact upon policy-making process at the central government. Nonetheless, it is gradually increasing its influence. Then, to what extent, the expanding nexus of sub-national collaboration, mainly in economic character, can contribute to the promotion of regional peace ?

### Peace from Below – An Attempt through Twin City Collaboration

The first twin sister relationship was concluded between St. Paul city, Minnesota, the US and Nagasaki city in December 1955. Initiative was taken by the then head of New York headquarters of UN Association of Japan who was an American. With both sides adopted city council's decision to establish the collaboration for the mutual understanding, it became the first case in the post-war time. One of the

Map 1 Regional Collaboration Plan Cross Border



interesting case was the agreement between Volgograd city of Russia and Hiroshima city which was concluded in September 1972. Volgograd was former Stalingrad and experienced a near total destruction as the result of World War II. Hiroshima, which suffered atom bob, agreed to cooperate with Volgograd to promote peace cross the border.

Since 1955, more than 1,800 agreements signed. With DPRK, Sakaiminato city, Tottori, has concluded with Wonsan city in 1992 after its 20 year long efforts in promoting friendship and good neighbor relation. This is the only twin city relation with DPRK so far. Also Sakaiminato city is well known for its fish trade with DPRK.

Today, as of September 2006, 1,546 are actively involved as twin sister relations. Out of the total, 123 are at the level of prefecture or province, 1,141 at city level, and remaining 282 are at town and village level. Compared to the year before, it was 1,515 at the end of 2005.

Fig. 1 Twin City Relations and The Number of Local Authority

|                | Twin city relations | authorities | Multiple relations per one authority |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| prefecture     | 123                 | 40          | 30                                   |
| city           | 1,204               | 526         | 291                                  |
| Component city | 37                  | 21          | 11                                   |
| town           | 249                 | 211         | 34                                   |
| village        | 33                  | 35          | 3                                    |
| total          | 1,546               | 833         | 369                                  |

Source: CLAIR, Data is as of September 30, 2006

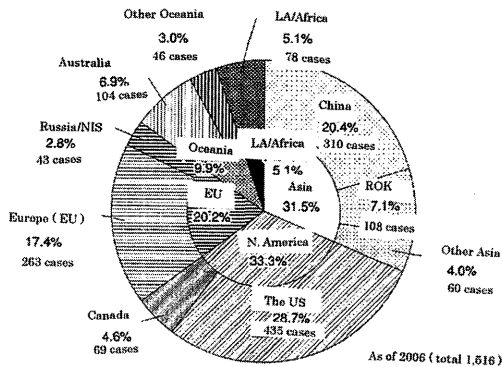
According to the recent research carried by CLAIR (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations), out of the total roughly one third were with Asian cities. China occupies 20.4 % whereas Korea 7.1%. Compared to this, the largest share is occupied by the US, 28.7%. Together with Canada, North America amounts up to

33.3%, Europe 20.2%, Australia 6.9% and so on. (See the following figure 2 below.)

However, one thing we need to look into is the fact that Japanese cities are increasingly choosing more functional form of collaboration, namely partnership rather than twin city relationship. Since the former has been tended to be more ceremonial rather than functional for certain purposes, many cities today are inclined to terminate twin city relations on one hand and to set up a more working partnership on the other. I do not have exact figures yet about the partnership. But according to the recent study carried out by the CLAIR (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations), the partnership is now reaching 406 at all levels as of 2005, and nearly half or 49.0% are with Asia, especially China 21.5%, Korea 16.7% and so on whereas the US is only 14.5%.<sup>(9)</sup> See the figure 3 below as well.

Regarding the activities, the twin sister relations tend to be, first of all, exchange of governmental officials as far as China (3.9%) and Korea (34.7%) are concerned.

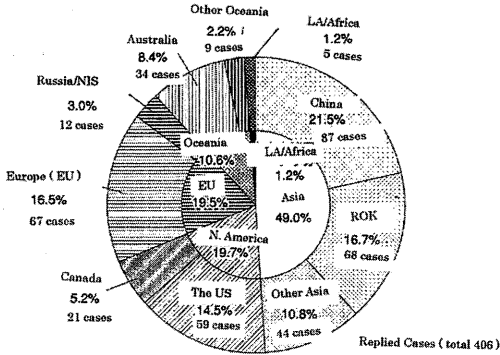
Figure 2 Counterparts of Twin City Relations



On the other hand, educational exchange including students and teachers are dominant with the US (50.6%) and Australia (47.3%). However, the partnership program does show very different picture. With China, top priority is given to economic

cooperation (30.4%), educational exchange (20.9%), cultural cooperation (20.4%). With Korea, it is also interesting to see the similar trend, viz. educational exchange (30.3%), cultural cooperation (29.4%), and economic cooperation (15.1%). These figures are much similar to those with the US and Australia.

Fig 3 Counterparts of Partnership Relations



In addition, twin sister relations have been of course dominated by government officials, but partnership tends to share their participants between government officials, private sectors, or the mix of both.<sup>(10)</sup>

From the above, one may safely reach the following conclusions. First of all, Japanese cities are increasing their partnership activities with Asian neighbors, especially with cities in China and Korea. Secondly, even though economic cooperation is still high in agenda setting, however, Japanese cities are seeking more cultural and educational exchange with partnership cities in both countries. Thirdly, increasingly citizens and civil society organizations, if not NGOs, are taking initiatives for the part of Japan. The last analysis might reflect a similar trend in the counterparts of both countries as well. If these assumptions are correct, then one can see an open possibility toward a more pro-active agenda setting such as the mutual declaration of peace and nuclear free city. Indeed, such declaration has been quite popular in Japan.

When these pro-active agenda setting done, programs implemented, partners

enhanced mutual understandings, then what would be their political implication upon inter-state relations which tend to strengthen the so-called “securitization” in not just military sector but also non-military sectors? To what extent these inter-societal citizen’s activities at grass-root can play positive role in the promotion of common peace among the region? Can they put an upper-limit to the “securitization”?<sup>(11)</sup>

You can not expect clear-cut effect upon the difficult political question of building a regional “nuclear free zone” in facing with the US presence in Japan, China’s nuclear power, and DPRK’s attempt toward nuclear armament. In this regard, Northeast Asia is utterly different from Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia chose to set up its regional cooperative organization, ASEAN, with its clear intention to make the whole region nuclear free. In other words, ASEAN expressed its strong will to be free from the extra regional nuclear powers’ influence. Quite contrary to Southeast Asia, first of all, this region has a great diversity in nuclear policy. Hence it would be not entrance agreement but rather exit agreement that enables the whole region nuclear free. In addition, secondly, this sub-region, Northeast Asia, has so big stakes at global security and peace due mainly to the sheer size of economic power. And thirdly, the US has vital interests in maintaining its presence.

All in all, what can be done now is to design a long-term road map similar to what European civil societies envisioned, to enhance inter-societal collaboration to this end, and to encourage national governments of the region to reach such agreements like what is called Helsinki Accord. One big difference with Europe is the fact that this region has far longer mutual understandings, cultural similarities, and dynamic economic developments. Thanks to these historical, cultural and economic assets, most urgently needed is to build a firm infra-structure for the regional integration which would follow later. For this purpose, it is utterly important to promote the on-going localization, and inter-societal collaboration, and mutual trust at the level of city governments. Amongst other, therefore, vital is to encourage reform of administrative structure toward de-centralization on one hand and to promote more participation of non-governmental organizations into the process of pan-regional collaboration.

## Administrative Reform and Conceptual Transformation

I have argued in the above that localization is a multiple process from which resulting is not merely administrative reforms but also fundamental changes in economic, social and political life. Yet, at this stage at least, the central issue is administrative reforms. As an increasingly globalizing market makes the state-led development more difficult to maintain its competence, the over-concentration of power and resources to state, or more correctly speaking central government, no longer secures a kind of development that is required today, one that is equitable, sustainable and competitive. Quite contrary, the top-heavy system of administration now becomes impediments to the transformation of development itself. Unavoidable is the reform of state. In addition, one should not overlook, no government is free from the pressure to deliver a wide range of goods and services more efficiently and more equitably. How can such burgeoning demands be met and by whom?

Indeed almost throughout the region, administrative reforms become very much the order of days. Under such circumstances, then, what is localization in the field of public administration? The term of localization in the language of public administration usually means the three different but, more often than not, combined changes. The first is the so-called de-concentration in terms of power and resources of state more locally distributed without devolving them to local government units. The second is the de-centralization in terms of devolution of central government's power and resources to local government units, and the third the de-regulation in terms of privatization of central and local governments' power and resources.

Among the three in the above, the latter two are significant here in the sense that they are more likely to bring about fundamental changes in administrative structure and at the same time in the concept of "public", the concept that has been almost totally monopolized by state, not by nation. The first type has been put into practice for some time. But the de-concentration worked against its original purpose to promote local development by local initiatives, and instead often resulted in a further domination of central government over local development due mainly to



the failure of local governments to meet the needs. After Koizumi “reform”, indeed true to say that local governments are now complaining about the shortage of subsidy from the central government. Most likely, Abe government, different from the predecessor, would allocate more fund to such end with the clear intention to win the coming upper-house election in July 2007.

Regarding the de-centralization, there are a number of issues involved here. First of all, one of the main issues related to de-centralization is how much power and resources should be devolved to local government units. Disregarding the existence of different levels of local government units to which we will refer shortly, this is surely more political rather than logical a question. Yet, the following two areas are most important. One is the redistribution of civil servants who have hitherto been “national” rather than “local”. “National” here means that those who serve at locality, either at local branches of line agencies or local government units are those employed by state or the central government, and paid by it. Thus their sense of belonging is not to specific local government units, even less to locality to which they are attached, but always to the central government.

However, the redistribution of civil servants is closely related to the redistribution of tax collected. It is true that local taxes are legislated for long, but never effectively collected. The revenues of local government units have been overwhelmingly dependent upon the central government’s grants and other transfers. As is well known, local government unit’s finance is truly small not only in terms of its share in GDP but also in terms of its absolute amount. This fact amply tells how little could be done by local government units in initiating their local development without depending on their central government. High percentage in terms of local government revenues and their expenditure as of GDP indicate that although her relationship between the central government and local government units is still vertical in nature, the power and capability of the latter to raise their own revenues are almost equal to those in federal system. In this regard, I might argue one of the biggest difference between the Japanese prewar development and that of post-war, among others, lies in the empowered local government units vis-à-vis the central government. The relationship between central and local government units must

have been changed even though the purpose was “demilitarization” of Japan, or more concretely not to let Japan reemerge as an authoritarian state. Indeed the central government’s substantial power and capabilities were devolved to the local government units during the time of the Allied Occupation, 1945–52.<sup>(12)</sup> It is hence surprising to see that even in the postwar period, Japan is still seen as an authoritarian state.

From this, it is encouraging to see the present tendency to transfer the central government’s power and resources to local government units. Yet, another issue serious enough is the question of which level of local government units that should play a pivotal role in decentralization. Here we would see a rather astonishing picture. For example, as of the end of 2005 Japan has the total of 1,820 local government units out of which 47 governments are at prefecture (equivalent to province) and another 14 are the chartered. Historically speaking, in addition, the provincial governments have played their more political roles as the agent of central government rather than as the administrative agent of local government units in their provinces. Against such a background, as many are afraid of, the promotion of autonomy at this level would soon encounter with the sudden rise of independence movements. Apart from these political connotations and denotations, the administrative de-centralization is an enormous task and all kinds of troubles are anticipated in the process for some time to come. Nonetheless, one thing is certain that the relationship between central government and local government units is going to be changed dramatically in favor of the latter.

In terms of de-regulation and transfer of government power and resources to non-governmental organizations, since the mid 1980’s, there had been a number of attempts put into practice. Well known were those efforts by almost all states in the region to cope with “liberalization” promises, regional and global. Here, however, I am not going to touch upon these “liberalization” issues, since there is another set of issues which are extremely significant but grossly underestimated until today. These issues are related to what I call the conceptual transformation of “public”.

De-regulation of course does not automatically bring about more functional and effective “small government” as Thatcherists might argue. More often than not,

such attempts did discourage or even choke off a “big government function” like social welfare program waged by local government units. The big cut of public spending in these areas brought about serious social and economic gap again, the gap with which local government units alone cannot tackle in a satisfactory manner. In addition, it is peculiar enough to say that such type of de-regulation did promote a re-concentration and re-centralization of power and resources onto the central government, albeit in a relative term. This teaches us the fact that de-regulation per se would work either way, de-centralization or re-centralization, depending upon specific conditions, over-all policy, and amongst others political will.

The conceptual transformation of “public”, then, is more likely becoming a pivotal factor for the changing relationship between the ruler and the ruled. More concretely, I would imagine, de-regulation opens possibilities of the popular participation in policy-making process, enhances the political will for reform from the bottom, and promotes public scrutiny as well as popular participation to central and local administrative processes. All these are important components of localization indeed. Even though this sudden opening for popular participation may create a situation where submerged disputes deeply embedded in local communities, like religious or ethnic rivalries, turn to be open conflicts, it is clear that the re-installment of centralized rule would not be the answer. Quite contrary, a search of new rule is the only way left in order to settle local disputes by local initiatives in a peaceful manner. In this regard, due to the limitation of space, I cannot discuss in detail on the important role NGOs and Peoples Organizations (POs) will play. Only suffice to say at this moment is the fact that these non-governmental organizations will be significant partner not just in the delivery of public goods and services but also in the making of the new rule especially at local level.

### Governance and Capacity-Building at Locality

As we have seen, administrative de-centralization and de-regulation in terms of conceptual transformation of “public” are the two extremely important factors for the search of pro-active peace agenda making in this region. Yet, one should not

forget to mention the fact that, first of all, the legacy of centralized administration is still strong, secondly the relationship between central government and local government units is not yet mutually cooperative, and thirdly popular participation into political and administrative processes has not yet been formulated. On the contrary, traditional or even feudalistic practices are still intact in many parts of rural communities in the region. Those local "bosses" have succeeded to survive by incorporating themselves into the authoritarian rule as the "bridge-heads" of centralized administration.

In such a transitional period, crucial is to upgrade the capability of local officials in performing governmental functions from raising revenue to policy making and its implementation. Facing with increasing demands for equitable delivery of goods and services, they no longer can rely on the central government but on themselves. What then can be done is, firstly, to establish cooperative relations with local NGOs, POs and other community organizations as partner of local administration. In short, the promotion of popular participation is basic and essential to the re-establishment of local autonomy.

Secondly, it will be increasingly important to set up a horizontal network among local government units across the country. This is clearly seen in the case of the Japan in the post-reform period. Together with such alliances like a league of mayors, governors and so on which had once been functioning as a clientele nexus to the central authority, an emerging alliance like the league of cities, provinces is providing a common board on which local government units are enabled to lead favorable negotiations with the central government, especially the national parliament. This is mainly because the cooperative relations with local executive chiefs as well as local administration are increasingly important to those elected officials, national and local. At the same time, as the cases in Japan amply indicate, this horizontal network provides a multiple opportunity of exchanging such information unavailable to certain localities, and also promote mutual cooperation and competition among them. The latter effect is extremely significant in the sense that the mutual cooperation and competition among them tend to enhance incentives of local officials to upgrade their capabilities.

Thirdly, it goes without saying, how important it is to build a vertical but mutual dependent relationship between the different level's government units. Among others, for the time being at least, crucial is a mutual interdependence with the central government. This is not merely because local government units rely heavily on financial, personnel, and even policy supports from the central government, but also they increasingly need to coordinate their efforts with the central government in a period of "division of labor". It may be too early to talk about a possibility to install such a principle like "subsidiarity" in EU, which sets a rule for burden sharing between governments at different level. But in the long run, the burden sharing may become the serious issue between government units at different level. And finally, also indicated in the case of Korea, China and Japan, local government units are in need of cooperating with their counterparts in different countries in such areas as social welfare, hygiene including garbage collections, public health, environmental protection, job security, human rights protection and so on, all of which are increasingly devolved to the responsibility of local government units.

### Tentative Conclusion

In conclusion, localization today requires not just the institution building of local government units but also capability building of local officials as well as local NGOs and POs. Indeed, question is how to establish "local governance".<sup>(13)</sup> And as long as "local governance" is concerned, one should remember, the main issues are closely related to "human development" and "human security". In addition, one should also bear in mind that these issues have already been put into practice by a number of agencies, international, national and even non-governmental. However, my point here is that those practices have seldom been "localized" in a way necessary, mainly due to the lack of "local governance". This is a vicious circle. I believe this vicious circle makes the peaceful settlement of local conflicts difficult. Even more often, local conflicts tend to be escalated to national conflicts, if not regional ones. In order to make a breakthrough, back to the beginning of this paper, the urgent task in the region today is to set up a working interface with city governments and their

citizen's organizations at the very locality concerned on one hand and to encourage a linkage building among city governments cross the border with the participation of citizen's organization. In this regard, Japanese city governments, with of course some exception, are well ready to move toward this direction.

#### Note

- \* This is a revised edition of the paper originally presented in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hangyoreh-Busan International Symposium, Busan, November 24-25, 2006
- (1) Masaru Tamamoto, "Ambiguous Japan : Japanese National Identity at Century' End", G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno ed., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003, pp.191-212
- (2) One of the excellent theoretical works on civil society and its impact on Japanese politics is Keiichi Matsushita, *Seisakugatashikou to Seiji* (Policy Oriented Thinking and Politics), Tokyo University Press, 1991. I learned a lot from his earlier works as well including *Toshigatashakai no Jichi* (Local Autonomy in Urbanized Society), Nippon Hyoron Sha, 1987. Regarding "decentralization", see a number of reports by government organized commission on the promotion of decentralization, especially the first report. Chihobunken Suishin Iinkai, *Daiichiji Kankoku - Bunkenngatashakai no Souzo* (The First Recommendation-Creation of Decentralized Society), Gyosei, 1997. Upon the 4 recommendations, Prime Minister Hashimoto drafted 400 odds legislations to implement them.
- (3) As to the localization in Southeast Asia, see Yuji Suzuki, "Localization and Post-Authoritarian Regimes," in Ng Chee Yuen and Charla Griffy-Brown ed., *Trends and Issues in East Asia 2000*, International Development Research Institute/ Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development, Tokyo, 2000, pp.53-68
- (4) Paul P. de Guzman, "Decentralization as a Strategy for Re-democratization in the Philippine Political System", *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, VOL. XXXII, No.3 and 4, July - October 1988, p.219 Also it should be interesting to look at a book written by one of the authors of the local government code of 1991, A. Q. Pimentel Jr., *The Barangay and the Local Government Code*, Rex Book Store, Manila, 1994
- (5) Among many references, I learned from Shinji Kasuya ed., *Higashi Ajia Kougyou-ka Dainamizumu* (Dyanamism of East Asian Industrialization), Hosei University Press, 1997
- (6) Yuji Suzuki, "Jichitai no Kokusaikoryu - Shinmaitoshikouryu no Gennjyo to Mondaiten (International Relations of Japanese Local Authority - Twin Sister

- Relations and their Problems), "*Jichitaigaku Kenkyu* (Studies of Local Authority), VOL.16, Spring 1983, pp.13-18. This was a report of the research on twin sister relations conducted by Kanagawa Prefecture Government in 1982-83. Out of 664 local governments replied to the questionnaires, 113 were deliberately purposed to promote mutual peace. The breakdown along the level of authority is as follows: 8 prefecture governments, 6 chartered cities, 78 cities, 21 towns and villages. Of course the largest group was aiming at friendship (174), and the second largest was for educational and cultural exchange (153). See, *Ibid*, p.16
- (7) Yuji Suzuki, *Ajia Taiheiyō ni okeru Chiho no Kokusaika* (Globalization at Locality in Asia and the Pacific), Hosei University Press, 2000, p.28
- (8) 300,000 and above is one of the conditions upon which the former Ministry of Interior, now Ministry of General Affairs, recognized as core city, only next to chartered city. It was put into practice in April 1996, and initially 12 cities were listed. As of April 2006, there are 36 cities.
- (9) Regarding detailed data on cities, towns and villages, see *Asahi Shinbun, Minryoku 2006* (Civil Society's Power), *Asahi Shinbun*, 2006, and also Yano Tsuneta Kinenkai ed., *Kensei* (Local Power), 15<sup>th</sup> Edition, Tokyo, 2006.
- (10) Jichitai Kokusaika Kyokai (CLAIR), *Shimai Koryu Igai no Koryukeitai ni yoru Kokusai Koryu no Jittai Chosa Hokokusho 2005* (Report on International Relations other than Twin City Relations 2005), Tokyo, 2006. CLAIR collected 382 answers to its questionnaire from local authorities which put into practice of what CLAIR called "international relations other than twin city relations", or simply "partnership relations."
- (11) On "securitization", I owe much to Barry Buzan's paper presented at Oslo Workshop, 2-4 February 2006, "The 'War on Terrorism' as the new 'Macro-Securitization'?" See also Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Religions and Powers*, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- (12) More information on Japan's local government, see M. Nishio and M. Muramatsu eds., *Gyosei Sarbisu* (Administrative Services), 5 vols., Yuhikaku, Tokyo, 1994
- (13) "Local governance" here certainly is not identical with local government. Regarding the distinction between the two, see JICA, *Local Development and the Role of Government, Report of the Issue-wise Study Committee for Development Assistance*, March 1997, p.52