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Visit by AEI to Wisma Putra Aidilfitri Open House at Putrajaya

*By AFIFI RASWAN DEAN
AEI Research Assistant*

3rd January, 2003 – It was a special day for AEI and students of the International Master degree programmes as a trip was arranged for the Institute's staff and students, led by the Executive Director, Prof. Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib, to Putrajaya on the occasion of the the Malaysian Foreign Ministry's Aidilfitri Open House. The party of 34 which also included Prof. Dr. Riordan Roett of John Hopkins University who was at AEI to lecture for the International Master programmes, were brimming with excitement as it gave them the opportunity for them to visit Malaysia's landmark; the new administrative capital, Putrajaya as well as Wisma Putra, the elegant and majestic complex of the Foreign Ministry. Many of the group were decked out in traditional Malay costumes while some of the graduate students were resplendent in their respective national outfits, a wonderful celebration of the cultural diversity of AEI students.

The AEI party was warmly welcomed by Y.B. Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar, the Malaysian Foreign Minister and the event's convivial host who graciously

Sharing a light moment with Y.B. Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar, the Malaysian Foreign Minister (far right) are (from left), Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib, Win Myat Aung May (Burma), Vu Ba Dat (Vietnam), Muhammad Zuhdi (Malaysia) and Sui Yongchao (China)



Putrajaya Aidilfitri Open House

Photos by FILIPPO GERVASINI & TIN HTOO NAING



personally greeted each and every one of the guests from the Institute. After the introductions to the Minister, the staff and students mingled with the other guests which included the Ministry's officers, the diplomatic and expatriate community as well as various distinguished personalities from the Malaysian political and business circles. All the guests hugely enjoyed the sumptuous spread of Malaysian cuisine and delicacies in the form of rows upon rows of food stalls, guaranteed to satisfy any palate. "We can see different types of food and meet the Honourable Minister as well as ambassadors of many countries so it's very nice", according to Hean Sophea, an AEI student from Cambodia. Kin Keonimol, also from Cambodia, agreed, "I am so happy as it is my first time here", herself an aspiring diplomat. Apart from the food and drink, the guests were also taken by the scenic, hillside view of Putrajaya provided by the commanding site of Wisma Putra.

Also present among the invited guests was YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh, AEI Distinguished Research Fellow and the former Secretary General of ASEAN. The AEI party took the opportunity to take pictures as mementos of this happy occasion, especially for the foreign students as they experience this unique and



quintessential Malaysian custom. The sense of novelty was shared even by the Malaysian side of the group as for many of them, this was the first time they attended the Foreign Ministry's official Aidilfitri Open House. "It's very exciting, this is the first time I've met a Minister", says Nik Nurzai Mohd Zainuddin, an AEI student from Malaysia.

By the time of departure, the AEI staff and students left with heavy hearts, full stomachs and the memories of an occasion that they'll treasure always. ■

ASEAN STUDIES STANDARISATION WORKSHOP

By AFIFI RASWAN DEAN, AEI Research Assistant



Guest of honour, YBhg. Professor Dato' Dr. Anuar Zaini Md. Zain, Vice-Chancellor, University of Malaya, delivering his welcome address and opening speech

On the 9th and 10th October, 2002, the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) and the International Relations Unit, Universiti Malaya jointly organized the ASEAN Studies Standardisation Workshop. This workshop, held at AEI, brought together prominent ASEAN academics and practitioners to discuss the proposed curriculum for an ASEAN Studies graduate program.

This academic program is an initiative by the ASEAN University Network (AUN), an association of leading Southeast Asian universities, as its contribution in promoting greater regional integration and cooperation among the ASEAN member states. Prior to this workshop, six core subjects had been identified and its contents prepared by six academics from various ASEAN universities and the purpose for this workshop was to



Associate Professor Dr. Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, Deputy Executive Director of AUN Board of Trustees

evaluate the proposed curricula, to ensure its intellectual rigour.

The opening ceremony for the ASEAN Studies Standardisation Workshop was held on 9th October, 2002 and the guest of honour was the Vice-Chancellor of University of Malaya, YBhg. Professor Dato' Dr. Anuar

Zaini Md. Zain who delivered the opening speech, in which he warmly welcomed the distinguished guests and wished them well in their deliberations over the coming days. This was followed by an address by Associate Professor Dr. Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, the Deputy Executive Director of the AUN Board of Trustees. AEI's Distinguished Research Fellow and former Secretary-General of ASEAN, YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh then presented a well-received keynote speech. Based on his long experience in ASEAN affairs, Tan Sri Ajit commended AUN on its efforts in fulfilling one of the

Keynote Address by YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh

I would like to thank the International Relations Unit of the University of Malaya and the Asia-Europe Institute for this honour to make the keynote presentation. Let me begin by expressing my thanks to Yang Berbahagia Professor Dato' Dr. Anuar Zaini Md Zain, Vice Chancellor of UM and Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib of the AEI for providing me with the opportunity to be associated with the AEI. This is an entirely new experience for me. As they say in life, learning never stops. So I hope I can impart as much as I will be learning through this new relationship with the AEI.

I would also like to join the others in extending a warm welcome to the educators associated with AUN, the paper presenters, the discussants and the participants involved in the workshop. You are embarking on an

important step in the further evolution of the AUN for it is hoped that from your dedication will emerge a finalised ASEAN studie programme.

If I may be permitted a personal note here, let me say how pleased I am to see the progress made in developing the concept of the AUN enunciated by the ASEAN Leaders at their Fourth Summit in Singapore in 1992. It then fell on me when I took over the

ASEAN Secretariat in January 1993 to see to its implementation. The process began with the Secretariat preparing the draft Charter of the AUN, the agreement on its establishment and its work programme. By the time I left the Secretariat five years later, not only had both the Charter and the agreement been signed but the Board of Trustees had also been established, the Permanent Secretariat of the AUN in Bangkok set up and the Executive



YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh, AEI Distinguished Research Fellow and former Secretary-General of ASEAN

Director, Dr. Supachai appointed to the office. He is still holding the post. So in a small modest way, I claim to have been part of the AUN process and privileged indeed to have helped it through its various stages. It is ironic that as I stand before you, I should still be involved in it though in a different capacity and in a different way. *C'est la vie*, as the French say.

In that, the needs of the AUN can be traced way back to the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 which saw the birth of ASEAN. The declaration is a simple and straightforward document of two pages which contains five preambular paragraphs and 5 operative paragraphs. Of the seven aims and purposes of the Association, 2 specifically mention education. Objective 4 states, "To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional and technical and administrative spheres" and objectives 6 states, "To promote South-East Asian Studies."

It may be justifiably asked as to why education and Southeast Asian Studies should be specifically mentioned in such a historic document as the Bangkok Declaration and why it that it took the AUN nearly 25 years to be established.

To take the first question it can be said that in doing so the ASEAN forefathers were only being realistic and practical. They were only too well aware that there was still mistrust and suspicion amongst the members especially as Konfrontasi had only recently ended, that there were bilateral issues and territorial claims which were complicating relations among them and that many of them had to contend with internal insurgencies. Coping this was the problem was that most of the region had been historically divided into spheres of influence of the British, Dutch and the French colonialists and that the people of these territories knew more about the metropolitan colonial powers than their neighbours. Hence the forefathers felt it important to emphasize education and promoting Southeast Asia studies so that, as a first step, we will begin to understand and appreciate each other better.

The second question as to why the AUN took 25 years to materialize, is more complicated. It has perhaps to do with ASEAN's immediate preoccupations and priorities, its structure and the decision-making process and equally important, the question of timing.

In the first ten years of ASEAN, the preoccupation was more in securing a peaceful and stable environment which would enable the member countries to undertake the important task of nation-building. It will be remembered that the region was embroiled in a fierce war in Vietnam,

the Cold War and the superpower rivalry in the region was at its height and the region was divided. Under such conditions the priority was to seek peace and stability in the region. That is why most of the initiatives taken by ASEAN in its first decade of existence were in this direction. This was the period which saw the agreement on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971, and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation together with the Declaration of ASEAN in 1976. All this was achieved even though there was no reference at all to political cooperation in the Declaration.

During the early phase, the ASEAN process was driven solely by the Foreign Ministers and their officials. The Leaders did not meet at all. Neither had they signed the Bangkok Declaration. Each country had its own national secretariat at the Foreign Ministry which served as a focal point for coordinating all ASEAN activities be it in trade, education, health, welfare, agriculture and information.

Economic issues came to the fore in ASEAN's second decade, after the end of the war in Vietnam. This was the time when the ASEAN Economic Ministers themselves began to meet regularly to discuss trade and investment issues. We began to hear about ASEAN Industrial Projects, the Preferential Tariff arrangements, the ASEAN Industrial Complementation Scheme and the ASEAN Industrial joint ventures.

The ASEAN Secretariat was established in 1976 but it served more as a post office because the Secretary General had only limited powers. He was not the SG of ASEAN but of the ASEAN Secretariat. As someone observed, he was neither a secretary nor a general. This was because the member countries were suspicious that the SG may usurp some of their sovereign powers.

ASEAN was now moving into its twentieth year. As a result of the numerous ASEAN meetings which used to take place in various parts of ASEAN, officials began to know one another better through the habit of consultation and developed trust and confidence in each other. No doubt, golf, karaoke and the durian also contributed a fair amount to the bonhomie and the camaraderie that was built up. Through all these evolved the famous ASEAN Way which defies proper definition.

However, from what I observed during my time in ASEAN, it had a number of important features apart from the ability to work and play together. There was the respect for each other's views and if we had to disagree then we would agree to disagree in an agreeable way. Decisions had to be taken by consensus so that no one felt left out. It

did not matter very much if it took a little longer to arrive at a decision so long as all concerned moved together. In addition to these considerations, there were other features such as the undertaking that no bilateral political problems or issues would be raised at meetings. These could of course be discussed in the corridors or lobbies or even behind closed doors. In this respect, I must say that it is to the credit of the member countries that they did not allow any of their bilateral issues from affecting their cooperation in ASEAN. This contrasts sharply with the practice in SAARC where most issues are highly politicized and openly discussed at the meetings thus hampering efforts at promoting regional cooperation. There was also the firm adherence to the principles of non-interference in each other's internal affairs and the non use of force or the threat to use force to settle disputes. This you might say is the secret formula for much of ASEAN's success.

As ASEAN entered its 25th year, it was a more confident ASEAN. Peace in the region had been established with the resolution of the Kampuchean problem and the end of the Cold War. ASEAN's international standing was very high. It had evolved a very unique system of engaging its main trading partners many of whom were the Permanent Members of the Security Council in an annual Dialogue which all sides found very useful. Economically, the region was developing at double digit figures and this was considered as the East Asian Miracle. We were the darling of the foreign investors. ASEAN was ready to embark on more serious ventures such as the AFTA for it had already seen the EEC turn into an EU, and NAFTA taking hold in North America with the talk of the Free Trade of the Americas being bandied about.

To ensure that the ASEAN process was better coordinated and developed, the member countries felt confident enough to elect, instead of merely appoint, a SG of ASEAN of ministerial ranking with the mandate to initiate, coordinate and implement ASEAN activities. He was allowed to recruit his own staff. This was indeed a sea change in the attitude of the member countries towards the Secretariat and bode well for its future activities.

The situation was then conducive to thinking about

a caring society, about sharing the prosperity with the others, of developing a common identity and regional integration. The AUN was the vehicle to promote this. The timing was right for there was much talk of a more people-oriented ASEAN. While the top echelon in ASEAN, meaning the leaders, bureaucrats and some in the business and student communities had been exposed to ASEAN's activities, there was still much to be done to take ASEAN to the people.

Education was the key to this. That is why you can count on the support of the member countries in what you are doing.

The AUN itself has come a long way and is actively pursuing the four broad priorities relating to student and faculty exchange, the development of an ASEAN Studies programme, collaborative research and information networking. You have also taken a leaf from ASEAN's book by engaging some of our dialogue partners in your own networking. There are

also other initiatives such as the Business/Economics Graduate Programme with its cost-shared network which should produce good corporate citizens and the Task Force on Quality Assurance which should lead to the AUN to its long term goal of promoting mutual recognition of standards for university education. Not to be left out is the role you are playing to assist the newer members of ASEAN to strengthen their higher education management as part of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration. All this the AUN has been doing quietly without much fanfare or publicity.

As for this workshop, I know that AEI and Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil in particular have been working very hard to ensure its success. No effort has been spared to get the right mix of module writers, AUN staff, and representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN ISIS and the ARF. The ingredients are all there and that I hope will make it easier for you to reach agreement on the common syllabus, the recognition and accreditation of programme and the course implementation. If anything, the salubrious environment of the AEI and the warm hospitality accorded by the Vice Chancellor and Dr. Shaharil and his staff should spur you on to reaching a successful conclusion at this workshop. I thank you. ■



Professor Dato' Dr. Anuar Zaini Md Zain, Vice-Chancellor, University of Malaya (left) presenting a token to Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh during the opening

aims enunciated during the founding of ASEAN in 1967, that is 'to promote South-East Asian Studies' and noted that education is the vehicle best suited to foster a more people-oriented ASEAN.

The participants at this workshop reflected the intention to agree on a common ASEAN Studies syllabi based on feedback from both academic and practitioners of ASEAN. They included H.E. Prince Sisowath Sirirath, Co-Minister of Defence, Royal Government of Cambodia, Dato' Ahmad Mokhtar Selat, Deputy Secretary-General ASEAN, Dato' Mohamad Jawhar



Dr. V.N. Ghanathurai, Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines



Dr. Christopher Edmonds, Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines

Hassan of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia, Dr. V.N. Ghanathurai of Asian Development Bank (ADB), Dr. Wilfredo Villacorta of De la Salle University, Professor Lee Lai Too of National University of Singapore and Dr. Mohtar Mas'ood of Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia as well as representatives from regional institutions such as the ASEAN-EC Management Centre, Brunei.

Malaysian Education Ministry officials were also present as participants.

The Workshop was structured into six sessions during



Workshop 2: ASEAN International Structure and Decision Making

(From left) Dr. Mohtar Mas'ood, Associate Professor Dr. Chaiyanchoke Chulasiriwongs, Dato' Ahmad Mokhtar Selat and Dr. Cornelius P.F. Luhulima



Workshop 3: ASEAN External Relations

(From left) Professor Lee Lai Too, Dato' Ahmad Mokhtar Selat, Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh, Dr. Wilfredo Villacorta



Workshop 4: Political and Security Co-operation in ASEAN

(From left) H.E. Prince Sisowath Sirirath, Dr. Wilfredo Villacorta, Dato' Mohamad Jawhar Hassan and Pushpa Thambipillai



Workshop 6: Functional Co-operation

(From left) Mr. Nguyen Xuan Thuy, Professor Dato' Dr. Mohamad Abu Bakar, Dr. Mohtar Mas' oed and Associate Professor Dr. Chaiyanchoke Chulasiriwongs



The Way Forward

YBhg. Professor Dato' Dr. Anuar Zaini Md. Zain, Vice-Chancellor, University of Malaya (left), chairing the session with Professor Dr. Supachai Yavaprabhas, AUN Executive Director



Dinner Talk "ASEAN As I See It"

YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ghazali Shafie stressing a point



Dinner Talk "ASEAN As I See It"

YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ghazali Shafie (seated) with (from left) YBhg. Professor Dato Dr. Anuar Zaini Md. Zain, Dr. Wilfrido Villacorta, Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib and H.E. Prince Sisowath Sirirath

the two days, one session for each of the six courses of the proposed ASEAN Studies common syllabi. Each session included a paper presenter, the module writer and a discussant followed by a general discussion among the participants. This allowed a variety of opinions to be heard, facilitating an open and smooth flow of ideas and suggestions aimed at having a rigorous, credible and market-driven ASEAN Studies graduate program. At the end of the first day, a dinner talk was organized for the participants at the Subang Sheraton given by YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ghazali Shafie, the former Foreign Minister of Malaysia and a key player in the early years of ASEAN. Tan Sri Ghazali regaled the participants with vivid anecdotes from his vast experience in ASEAN affairs and gave his personal thoughts on the future development of the association.

The workshop came to an end in a short session chaired by the AUN Executive Director, Prof. Dr. Supachai Yavaprabhas with YBhg. Prof. Dato' Dr. Anuar Zaini Md. Zain entitled 'The Way Forward'. During this session, Prof. Dato' Dr. Anuar Zaini articulated the willingness of University of Malaya and AEI to be the host centre for the ASEAN Studies program. AEI, in particular, with the experience of running its International Master degree programmes with Universida Autonoma de Madrid and Leeds Metropolitan University, and with its multicultural emphasis, is uniquely positioned to take up the challenge of establishing an academic program demonstrating the diverse and distinct nature of the South-East Asian region. ■



Talk by Professor Jusuf Wanandi

By AFIFI RASWAN DEAN
AEI Research Assistant

On 8 October, 2002, students of AEI International Master Degree programmes attended a brief talk by Prof. Jusuf Wanandi of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, (CSIS), Jakarta, Indonesia. Prof. Wanandi is an internationally renowned expert on ASEAN and was in Kuala Lumpur attending the East Asia World Economic Forum. The talk was held at AEI's auditorium.

Prof. Wanandi was introduced by Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh, AEI Distinguished Research Fellow and former Secretary-General of ASEAN who had kindly arranged the talk. Prof. Wanandi then started his briefing, noting, as he was at AEI, that the ASEM process begun in 1996 had been somewhat derailed by the impact of the Asian financial crisis that affected the region in 1997. Yet, despite the slow pace of development in the interaction between the leaders and peoples of the two regions, events such as the "Young Leaders Symposium" has and will continue to contribute to fostering greater understanding and mutual respect, as well as in promoting inter-regional cooperation.

He then continued to sketch the development of ASEAN as a regional institution since its birth in 1967 where it was the crucial part played by both Indonesia and Malaysia that spurred its formation. The two countries, scarred by the Konfrontasi period, sought to normalize and achieve stable relations not only with each other but with other states in the region. Southeast Asia has often been tagged as the "Balkans of Asia" yet since the existence of ASEAN, the region has been largely free of interstate conflict and a main factor for the continuing stability of Southeast Asia has been the result of ASEAN's role as the instrument for preserving the peace. The security and prosperity of Southeast Asia can be regarded as the crowning success of ASEAN.

ASEAN manages the peace not through a military peacekeeping role or intervention in the internal affairs of its member countries, but by being an arena for the ASEAN states to come together in a largely informal setting and establish a pattern of interaction and consultation. By virtue of the region's colonial past, little or small opportunities existed for the countries in Southeast Asia to engage with their neighbours and therefore there was a gap. There was a greater degree of knowledge and awareness concerning the respective imperial metropolitan centers than information about the neighbouring states and people. ASEAN proved to be the institution for countries of Southeast Asia to come to know one another.

According to Prof. Wanandi, one of the main issues facing ASEAN countries at this point of time is managing the pressures arising from the rapid growth and development experienced in the 1990's. The onrush of globalisation precipitated an environment that considerably lessened the states' ability to manage its development unilaterally. Through ASEAN and regional initiatives such as the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA), the Southeast Asian countries possess enabling structures and mechanisms designed on the basis of regional cooperation, intended to secure and maintain peace and prosperity against the growing threats posed by the waves of globalisation. The rationale and benefits of regional cooperation also applies in combating the menace of global terrorism and transnational terrorist networks.

With regard to Indonesia, Prof. Wanandi noted that the gravest threat facing the country is not dangers posed by terrorist groups but in attempting to sustain the pace of economic growth and development. The administration would need to secure employment prospects for its huge population as the main instrument to preserve domestic stability, cohesion and state survival. It is within the context of achieving economic growth that ASEAN is a crucial and relevant aspect in Indonesian economic policy. Likewise, as its largest member, Indonesian support and backing of ASEAN is important in ensuring the organisation's success in its endeavours hence ASEAN will need to assist in the continuing viability of the Indonesian nation-state.

Turning to China, Prof. Wanandi is of the opinion that the main challenge facing ASEAN is the way to tackle the implication of China's remarkable economic development. Particularly vital is the need to manage the relationship with China to ensure that its defining characteristic is one that is mutually reinforcing and beneficial, and avoiding the path to fierce and damaging

competition. As with the ASEAN members, the pace and rapidity of growth has and will continue to produce repercussions for China, and the hope is that China will experience these changes without jeopardizing its current benign domestic and foreign policy.

Prof. Wanandi states that it is necessary for ASEAN to maintain a pro-active stance in engaging China as the country has a distinct geocentric history and mindset. One way to overcome this Middle Kingdom bias would be the links ASEAN had established since the end of the Cold War such as its Dialogue Partners where the focus has been in instituting mechanisms for fostering closer inter-regional interaction in economic, security and political arenas. He suggests ASEAN to proceed with caution in making links with China as the country is often wary and reluctant at the prospect of an institutionalized association. The need to maintain a reasonable pace in establishing relationships is also true for ASEAN with regard to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process where the prevailing vibrant economic environment in ASEM I has led to an enlarged sense of expectation untenable with the level of regional integration in East Asia and ASEAN. Nonetheless, ASEAN's move towards the European Union (EU) is a step forward in its journey to develop an increasingly multilateral outlook in conducting relations with the outside world, as the latter has taken the lead in establishing a multilateral form of governance. The shift in emphasis weighted towards multilateralism by ASEAN is necessary as the Southeast Asian region is a strategic area for the world's sole superpower, the United States as well as for China,

hence the region is vulnerable to challenges posed by these two states prone to unilateral actions in protecting their vital national interests.

Apart from multilateralism, ASEAN is also putting the emphasis on so-called 'second track' initiatives to encourage greater cooperation among its ten member states as these organisations possess the capacity to advocate policies that are politically inconvenient for governments beholden to a domestic constituent. The presence of numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil societies within the region could also facilitate a 'third track', a path that has the potential to guide ASEAN intra-regional integration and cooperation in previously untapped, fertile directions.

In answering a question from one of the AEI graduate students, Prof. Wanandi remarked that it was essential that ASEAN remain and continue to develop as a strong, dynamic association prior to embarking on an active engagement with China. Its rules and norms will have to evolve from a strictly consensus basis enabling it to make complex economic as well as political decisions. It is only when ASEAN is at this stage that it can move beyond its current state and retain its relevance as the pressures of globalisation would require ASEAN to confront and manage a myriad of difficult issues.

The event ended with the AEI Executive Director, Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib expressing the Institute's gratitude to Prof. Wanandi for making the time to visit AEI and give a short talk to the AEI graduate students. ■

INTERVIEWS *Lecturers and Researchers*

By AFIFI RASWAN DEAN
AEI Research Assistant

**Have you been to Malaysia before this visit?
What is your impression of the country?**

No, not to Malaysia. Unfortunately I haven't had the chance to travel out of Kuala Lumpur which I had been able to do but two weeks is a very short period of time, very hectic as well given the program at the Institute so I'm hoping to come back at some other point to visit Malaysia as well as Singapore which I don't know either.



Professor Dr. Riordan Roett
Sarita & Don Johnstan,
Professor & Director, Western
Hemisphere Programme,
Johns Hopkins University

It's certainly a very dynamic city with a tremendous amount of interesting modern architecture. Bad traffic but that's no worse than New York City or Bangkok which

where I was before I came here and certainly appears to be a very efficient and well-run capital city as well.

What were your expectations of teaching the International Master students? What are the similarities and differences that you have found, compared with the students that you have taught prior to this?

Not really, I've been teaching for so many decades and so many different places that I expected that this would be a challenge given the fact that it's the first year of the program, trying to pull together people with different language skills, none of whom are learning in their own native language as English has become the language, is always a challenge but so far that has not proven to be a difficulty and I think as the small problems of the program are worked out over the next year or two,

there shouldn't be any problems, major problems in the future.

I think it's always very difficult to mix different cultures and I think Asian institutions have a somewhat more passive way of teaching. Europeans institutions are somewhat more like the United States with a more active participation between the student and the professor so I found both of those to be quite true here at the Institute as well.

How would your course contribute to the two International Master degree programmes?

Well, I think the theme of the seminar 'Democratization and Market Reforms' have been a very important one in terms of international financial institutions, in terms of talking about emerging markets so the degree to which the students in these two programs are going to be involved in dealing with those kinds of policy questions in the future, it hopefully will be useful. The Latin American component of the course is totally new to the students here but quite clearly if this is going to become an international, global institution, Latin America needs to be at least part of the discussion. It need not be the major emphasis but given the kind of issues that we're looking at, the whole democratization and market reform question Latin America played a very important role in the 1990s in defining those issues.

What is your view of the development of the ASEM process as well as the ASEAN + 3 concept?

Well, Asia is not my area so I think the search for appropriate integration mechanisms whether it's MERCOSUR or the Common Market of the South and South America, whether it be the Central American Common Market, whether it be ASEAN, any of these entities are quite clearly all looking for the ways and policies that they can better complement each other in achieving higher levels of exports, higher GDP. So there is a great deal to be learned there from comparing different development and integration schemes, whether it be Europe, the MERCOSUR, ASEAN and the various international institutions that support these efforts.

What do you consider to be the main benefits of a multicultural learning environment such as AEI and what role can it play in the ASEM process?

Well, certainly I do believe that in the 21st century we're going to need different kinds of public sector as well as private sector leaders. And it is precisely the role, I think, and the function of an institute like this that bring together the next generation of people who will be making decision in both public and private sectors across the region but then opening up the contacts of Asia with other parts of the world as globalization proceeds to be the dominant factor in the 21st century.

Considering the multicultural setting of AEI, do you consider cultural diversity as an inhibitor or catalyst in fostering educational and intellectual exchanges?

I think over time it certainly is going to be a catalyst in that this is the first group European students that are really exposed to Asia in this way and the first group of Asian students, I think, with one or two exceptions, that really have had this kind of year-long contact with students from Europe there are very different political, economic, social backgrounds so the

exchange of ideas, opinions seems to me, very healthy and very worthwhile.

Have you been to Malaysia before this visit? What is your impression of the country?



Professor Amitav Acharya
*Deputy Director & Head of
Research, Institute of Defence
& Strategic Studies, Nanyang
Technological University,
Singapore*

I have been to Malaysia many times and I really enjoy coming here. I've seen a lot of changes over the last decade and a half, the first time I came here in 1987 and I think Malaysia is an interesting, vibrant, dynamic country growing very rapidly. I really like the multicultural environment and its natural beauty, scenery and landscape and also, I should definitely add, the diversity of its food and cuisine. I think Malaysia is one of the nicest places to live in Southeast Asia.

What were your expectations of teaching the International Master students? What are the similarities and differences that you have found, compared with the students that you have taught prior to this?

I didn't have any expectations. I didn't know very much about this program when I came here. I knew that it was set up very recently. I liked the idea of a masters program in regional integration, it's a topic that I think is very important. And I am glad that University of Malaya has taken the initiative to set it up in Southeast Asia. I think it will give a lot of profile to the kind of regional integration and regional cooperation that is taking place in Southeast Asia. Well, I have taught in Canada, US, Australia and Singapore and most of these have multicultural, multiethnic environment student bodies and in that sense, it is quite similar. Of course, there is a very strong European component to this program which I think is an advantage and I haven't previously taught in an European program so this is something new for me. Other than that, I think that the program is designed well, reflecting the diversity of students and I think what it needs is more and further institutionalisation after the first year. Of course it is a new program but I think it could probably broaden the range of courses offered, have more regular faculty in-house and have a more structured system for offering consultations because I understand that most of the faculty teaching this course come from outside, only spend a short period of time. That actually makes the course interesting and gives the students diversity for faculty but it can also create problems because students might feel there's too high a turnover of professors so I think it would be good to balance that with some in-house faculty who are directly involved in research and writing on regional integration.

How would your course contribute to the two International Master degree programmes?

I hope it will make an important contribution because the course is designed on regionalism and ASEAN so I covered theories of regionalism which is very important for any understanding of integration in Southeast Asia. I also gave a detailed case study of ASEAN, both historical and contemporary and given the fact that this is based in Malaysia, ASEAN would be an important topic. Many students from

within the region and outside come here to study and know more about ASEAN. At the same time, those coming from Europe and those coming from other parts of Southeast Asia would be interested in knowing theories of regional integration and trends in regional integration and that's part of what I'm teaching as well so I hope it will be very useful.

What is your view of the development of the ASEM process as well as the ASEAN + 3 concept?

I think ASEM has proved to be particularly useful in developing educational and people-to-people contacts, also it has proved to be very useful in terms of meetings between senior policymakers and developing greater, better understanding of European and Asian political and institutional dynamics. So I think ASEM is a very important institution in that sense. The ASEAN+3 is relatively new and it's too early to really say how far it will go in promoting regional cooperation but I think it's important in the sense that China is deeply engaged in developing ASEAN+3 and given the fact that China and Japan are the two key powers of East Asia, their involvement in developing a regional institution is quite critical and I think ASEAN+3 is a new and important development in East Asian regionalism. If it can continue to engage in real issues such as South China Sea conflict, trade and investment linkages, I think it will make a significant contribution to regional stability.

What do you consider to be the main benefits of a multicultural learning environment such as AEI and what role can it play in the ASEM process?

Multicultural learning environment is always more preferable to a monocultural learning environment. Students learn more from each other than from their teacher and being part of a multicultural environment is itself a learning experience. You can learn a lot of things from the textbook but you can't learn really enough, you can't get a sense of what another culture, tradition is unless you actually meet the people, individuals and this kind of classroom here gives students an opportunity to actually physically interact with each other and develop a better understanding of each other's views, habits and ways of doing things, in this light of education. I think AEI makes a contribution to the ASEM process especially its people-to-people contacts, its educational programs. Actually, it's unique in one sense. I haven't heard of an ARF institute, or Apec institute which is equally transnational. There are Apec institutes in individual countries but none is as multinational and or as educational, broadly educational as ASEM and AEI. So AEI is definitely a plus for University of Malaya and ASEM member countries.

Considering the multicultural setting of AEI, do you consider cultural diversity as an inhibitor or catalyst in fostering educational and intellectual exchanges?

I think cultural diversity, as I said earlier, is always a plus and in fact, in today's world when we have so much globalization of ideas, globalization of economies and globalization of knowledge, it is imperative for universities to have a multicultural environment. You cannot simply do without it. Students will not learn, will not develop an understanding of the world they live in unless they interact in a multicultural setting, that's the world we live in today. Everybody has a multicultural

side to him or her. So AEI is providing that in a very admirable way and it will make a significant contribution to the quality of education and intellectual exchange in Malaysia and in the region.

Have you been to Malaysia before this visit? What is your impression of the country?



Dr. Enrique J. Rueda-Sabater
Senior Manager, Integrated Risk Management and Secretary to the Management Committee, The World Bank, Washington DC, USA

This is the second leg of my visit to AEI. When I came here in December, it was my first time in Malaysia. I have been to the region many times as I used to come to Thailand very frequently. I have been to other countries but I never had the chance to come to Malaysia before.

I find it a fascinating place of contrast. For instance, I had the chance over the weekend to visit a natural reserve in Kuala Selangor with water monitor lizards and all kinds of birds. In the afternoon I went to a concert by the Malaysian Symphony Orchestra in a beautiful new symphony hall in KLCC. In between I had a great lunch of very nice Malaysian food.

It's certainly very impressive how many interesting, well-educated people there are and how many good conversations you can have. In fact, one thing I could say for the institute is that it would make sense to organize more interaction between the visiting professors and the professors at the university, because I found that whenever I run into people even for short conversations, it was useful for everybody.

What were your expectations of teaching the International Master students?

I had the expectation of participating in an experiment. I have never heard of a programme as ambitious as this before, bringing students from different places and for long enough period that they can interact with the visiting professors as they come. I found the group of students with very different levels of knowledge and also with different expectations of the programme. I also happen to have both groups, the RI and IM and this adds to the variety. Generally I found them very well disposed and obviously the institute provides a very interesting setting for them to explore all these issues.

How would your course contribute to the two International Masters degree programmes?

What I have discovered is that there a lot of issues that I was bringing to the students that they were interested in. It has particularly led different students to discover areas that they could explore on their own. Maybe implicitly my course has also brought to the discussion the interaction between public policy and economic development, including the role of international organisations like the World Bank. For instance today we had a lot of discussion on FDI and the role of the government, the relationship between potential foreign investors and countries, and how can governments influence it.

By the way, it may be interesting to note the way we've done this course. The first week was essentially fairly intensive lecturing on my part with some q & a sessions. The students were then asked to prepare a proposal for a course

paper. Through e-mail, every single one of them has sent me a proposal and I have sent comments on the proposal. They have now prepared a presentation and we're organising the second week as a series of seminars on the papers which roughly fall into three groups of issues.

What is your view of the development of the ASEM process as well as the ASEAN+3 process?

I don't have a particularly new perspective to add to this. I know the World Bank has been quite supportive of this process and in fact the World Bank manages a trust fund, an ASEM trust fund, that was developed to support a number of activities in the region. Obviously we think it is an excellent idea and I think the logic behind this course is very relevant to the ASEM concept. This is to facilitate a dialogue and ensuring Asia take into account the European perspective as it considers options for regional integration.

What do you consider to be the main benefits of a multicultural learning environment such as AEI and what role can it play in the ASEM process?

Obviously, I think that everybody benefits here. Not only will the students be fantastic spokespersons for the benefits of working in very different cultures and with people who have different backgrounds, the professors will also benefit a lot from being exposed to this perspective and adapting their lectures to the environment. It's always good to try and understand how other people see similar things. Again, if there had been more interaction with the rest of the university, maybe even more good would have been gained.

Considering the multicultural setting of AEI, do you consider cultural diversity as an inhibitor or catalyst in fostering educational and intellectual exchanges?

As I was saying, I would be very surprised if anybody says it's an inhibitor. There is no question that diversity at all levels is a catalyst as a source of ideas, new insights, dynamism. This particular one between Europe and this region in Asia has tremendous potential because both are rich in background and there is a lot exchange. It is a promising catalyst.



Professor Luk Van Lagenhove
*United Nations University,
Director, UNU Comparative
Regional Integration Studies
(UNU/CRIS), Belgium*

Have you been to Malaysia before this visit? What is your impression of the country?

I've been here once, about ten years ago when I was teaching a course at INTAN (training institute for Malaysian civil servants) on environmental impact assessments. I also took a short holiday break in Langkawi, it was very nice. I guess my impression, even then and it has been strengthened now, is this is a very dynamic country. It gives the impression that the economy is doing well and people can benefit from that. I like being here and very much appreciate the variety of foods that you can try. Also it's not surprising that it's a much more pleasant climate than Belgium where it rains nearly all the time.

What were your expectations of teaching the International Master students? What are the similarities and differences that you have found compared with the students you have taught prior to this?

I wasn't sure what to expect so I did not have any pre-set expectations. I've noticed that within the group of students, they were all very motivated but some of them are really very motivated and hard-working so in that sense it was really a pleasure for me to be here and to be given this opportunity to tell them a little bit about the research going on at my centre in Belgium. This was the main subject at my classes, which was to explain what the United Nations University is doing in the field of regional integration studies and the research and training activities being developed in Bruges.

How would your course contribute to the two International Master degree programmes?

I guess my hope is that by explaining a little bit what we're doing in Belgium, I can give students a feel of the complexity of studying regional integration. We should understand that regional integration is a thing that happens in the real world but in the meantime it also needs to be studied in order to understand what are the driving forces that push countries to regional integration, what are the stumbling blocks and especially the two main problems to be studied. One is the relationship between globalization and regional integration, this is a very complex issue. On the one hand, you could see that regional integration schemes can be seen as a consequence of the globalizing economy. On the other hand you can also think of them as ways to combat what sometimes is called the 'dark side' of globalization and in this sense, regional integration can be something that protects the peoples and especially less developed countries from the negative impacts of globalization. But it these two things happening at the same time which brings me to the second major aspect. We think that for developing countries, regional integration can really be something to better integrate the local economies into the world economy, this is surely needed for helping those countries and the very first requisite is that you need more South-South trade between developing countries.

What is your view of the development of the ASEM process as well as the ASEAN + 3 concept?

Let me begin by referring to what's happening in Europe although of course we must say that every regional integration process is unique and you cannot simply copy what's happening in one region to another. Nevertheless, we see that in Europe what has happened is the original economic-driven regional integration has now become much more complex. It involves many institutions, many different regional integration schemes that broadly overlap each other. For instance, everyone knows about the European Union but there are other things going on such as three small countries of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg have for a long time their own cooperation scheme which is called the Benelux. As a result of this complexity of regional integration, it is no longer only about the economy and trade, it's also about political integration, security issues, cooperation at the level of higher education, research for instance the EU now tries to create a single European research area to be more competitive

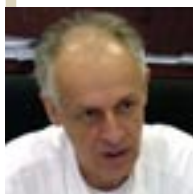
in the level of research and technology in the world.

It has become a very complex, multilayered process and I hope that this what will happen to the ASEM and ASEAN+ 3 concept is not only more and more countries will be associated to the core economic regional integration process but gradually it will become a process that incorporates many collaborative aspects. This is important because regional integration, if you frame it in the context of globalization, is not only about economy it's also about, for instance, combating the global problems like the environment. We do know that single nations are no longer able to act alone at that level. They have to act as a group and I think there is still a lot of room for deepening the integration process. I read this week about the water dispute between Malaysia and Singapore. This is typically something that could be settled in the framework of deepened regional integration process.

The history of regional integration in Europe also shows that this does not mean the loss of diversity. It is perfectly possible to keep your cultural diversity and as a matter of fact, we now see that within the EU, the so-called micro-regions or sometimes called constitutional regions within the countries, are becoming more and more important and they are organized in what has been called the Europe of the regions. So there is room in regional integration for cultural diversity.

What do you consider to be the main benefits of a multicultural learning environment such as AEI and what role can it play in the ASEM process?

Multicultural learning is extremely important in the globalized world because we need to train our students in working together with people from all over the world. This can only happen by bringing people together, you can also have contacts with people through the internet etc but at the end of the day people need to meet, study, eat, have parties together. This is as important as the studying process and in that sense institutes like AEI have a tremendous role to play and I am sure it will continue to play an important role in the ASEM process.



Dr. J. Thomas Lindblad
*Research Fellow, International
Institute for Asian Studies,
Leiden, The Netherlands*

Have you been to Malaysia before this visit? What is your impression of the country?

Yes, several times. I was here for the first time in 1990 but this is the first time that I'm visiting University Malaya and AEI. There has been a quite spectacular economic progress and there is a big difference between 1990 and the 1990s. Some things have improved substantially like the public transport sector. As one or two examples, when I was here for the first time, there was no LRT or when I first arrived, it was at Subang airport whereas now you arrive at a very modern airport though very far away from the city. The recent addition to the KLIA, the KLIA Express is very good. In fact, I know that it is an exact copy of the airport express in Stockholm, the trains look exactly the same and travel at the same speed.

What were your expectations of collaborating with the AEI 'Historical Statistical Database on National Accounting' project. How has that expectation been altered since your arrival?

That's quite difficult to say because I haven't had any experience or exposure to AEI though the institute itself looks well organized and probably well-endowed with financial resources compared to other institutes both in UM and other universities. I think that's very fortunate and so I think that AEI has a real chance to develop further, and to make accomplishments in terms of its institutional objectives not only through organizing conferences but also in building an institution.

I had rather vague ideas about the collaboration. I've heard about it but there have been few publications from the project. The only one has been the paper which Raja Nazrin presented in Buenos Aires in July. That was very instructive and gave me a good insight. I was fortunate, however, to visit the institute briefly on a previous occasion in early November last year. I also met with some of the professors involved and they told me a lot about the project. But before that, I had really vague notions of what was going on in this institute.

The experience have been very good. It is a very stimulating climate and the research assistants are very hard-working and there are a lot of expertise here. It is a very ambitious project but I think it's making very good progress. One of the valuable things is that there is wide and immediate access to primary source materials. This is different from other institutes, here it is not necessary to go to libraries and archives, so the project is working in a very efficient way.

It might benefit from a bit more exposure to the outside world. The chosen format of a single conference paper is also too narrow as when you read the condensed paper, a lot of questions arise. To take all this into account, it could result in a book or a series of separate publications rather than one single paper.

How would your input contribute to the research project?

My input derive primarily from my experience with Indonesian economic history in general. There has been a similar project in the Netherlands with the intention of reconstructing the national account of the Netherlands but I was not personally involved in the project. In fact, I know very little about it because my specialization is Indonesian economic history. I think there is some complementary aspect with my Dutch colleagues who come here as they know a lot about national accounts but very little about Southeast Asia whereas I, hopefully, know something about Southeast Asia and do not have much first-hand experience with national accounts.

I was trained as an economist in the United States and the Netherlands, and have been a teacher in economic history for more than a quarter of a century. I specialize on a quantitative type of economic history and have a great affinity for this kind of work, and which I've had some experience with. I started with the economic history of northern Europe especially with regard to trade but in the course of the 1980s I gradually switched my focus to the economic history of Southeast Asia in particular Indonesia in the late 19th and throughout the

20th century. In recent years I have focused exclusively on Indonesian economic history. One of my recent works was the collective enterprise of writing textbooks on Indonesian economic history together with a couple of colleagues. To my great pleasure, I saw that it was on sale in the bookstore here.

What, in your opinion, is the main contribution of the AEI research project to the field of economic history?

It can contribute in at least two ways. One is to give more depth to the discussion on the economic history of Malaysia, through a more solid quantitative foundation. This will mean there is evidence when you are considering, for instance, how much did Malaya benefit from the economic expansion which took place in the late colonial period, how much of the profits ended up overseas and in considering other indications of social welfare and prosperity, as well as discussing the Western and non-Western sector of the economy. These are topics which are very relevant to economic historians elsewhere in the region. It could have a spin-over effect to other economic historians by offering new data with which to re-open a number of discussions and in that sense, I think it could be very useful if the results of the AEI project could be presented at a conference here which could also include participants from other Southeast Asian countries.

The second way this project could make a substantial contribution is as a source of inspiration for similar work in other Southeast Asian countries. I know that this region are lagging behind with regard to the construction of national accounts. There has been some very interesting work on Vietnam but primarily by French economic historians. I am not aware of much work in this field by economic historians in Thailand which, I think, would be extremely interesting. In Indonesia the documentation is quite good but there is a lack of both funding and expertise in quantitative methods that has impaired the development of historical national accounting. There is a small-scale project which is being run by a Dutch economic historian working in Australia who is an Indonesian specialist, and has been at AEI, he has done some pioneering work on Indonesia. If you compare the resources which he has at his disposal and the resources here, it's like day and night.

What do you consider to be the part played by the research project within the overall role as a developing academic institution as well as an agency in fostering greater Asia-Europe interaction?

I think there can be some spin-off to the extent that the results and outcomes of the project can be used as inputs into a discourse. Some economic historians are not so fond of figures and do not want to get bogged down in the technical details of the reconstruction of historical national accounts. Those who do will gladly come to the institute but others will easily find it getting a bit too far. There is a general tendency in economic history to move away from this kind of quantitative economic history which I find most unfortunate as I am very at ease with

it. The tendency now is to move into the direction of what has come to be known as 'political economy' which often means that you forget the numbers and focus on qualitative and other intangible evidence. I think it is a real challenge in selling a project like this, which would probably need to be linked with broader issues to interest people who do not have great affinity with the quantitative aspect of the project. A spillover effect can materialise but it will take some effort on the part of AEI economic historians to beyond the sheer reconstruction.

What is AEI's potential contribution in the construction of global knowledge and for capacity building in the context of Asia-Europe interregional academic cooperation?

The Institute can play a key role in the further integration of research and advanced education. This is one aspect which has not strongly developed in Southeast Asia, of Southeast Asians working together or an integration of Southeast Asian economic histories. An Indonesian economic historian is likely to know a lot about Indonesia and may know something about the Netherlands, the Vietnamese about France but the knowledge and exposure of Southeast Asian historians to other countries in the region are usually not that strong. I think there is room for intensive courses on Southeast Asian economics and history with participants from all over the region. There have been some attempt at this in the past, such as by the Toyota Foundation but that is more on an individual basis and not institution building. This has been more of a way



Dr. Thomas Lindblad with staff at AEI

of sending students from one Southeast Asian country to the other so I have had Philippine students attending my classes in Indonesia. AEI is a good place to continue this initiative. It is centrally located, the facilities are good and is internationally-oriented as the teaching is done in English. AEI does have an advantage even if the activities would

not have so much to do about Asia and Europe but more on integration within Southeast Asia.

The experience on cooperation between universities is that it is often a very tedious and drawn out process. It takes a lot of time and negotiations before you can begin on common programmes and joint projects. In that sense, Southeast Asia has suffered from a lack of an institutional framework for regional as compared with, for instance, Europe. In Europe, educational integration across borders has been much facilitated by far-reaching economic integration and the strong, powerful political apparatus. This Institute can play a role in this region's educational integration process, though the one essential thing is funding, and I understand that most of the funding for AEI comes from the Malaysian government. So it would be the task of the Executive Director to sell the mission of AEI to those providing the funds. Many similar institutes in Southeast Asia do not have access to sufficient funding or they may not have well-established networks so AEI is a good place for furthering integration within the region in the field of economic, historical research and in advanced teaching. ■

Movies at AEI

The 40th Anniversary of "The Elysée Treaty"

By RAHAYU KIRANA AHMAT ADAM
AEI Research Assistant

January 22nd is a significant day for France and Germany as they celebrate the Franco-German Treaty (Elysée Treaty). The Elysée Treaty, signed on the 22nd of January in 1963 by General Charles de Gaulle, President of the French Republic and Dr. Konrad Adenauer, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany set the seal of reconciliation between the two nations. "The Elysée Treaty marks the beginning of a special political partnership, as well as of very close economic and civil society ties"¹. In commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of The Elysée Treaty, the Embassy of the Republic of France and the GOETHE Institute, on behalf of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of

Germany together with the Asia-Europe Institute jointly organised a double film feature; screening of movies from both countries on the same day.

The event started at six in the evening with the screening of "Amelie" (France), a delightful comedy by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, which was nominated for five Academy Awards, and has won a few other European film awards, courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of France. Mr. Nicolas Moniez a lecturer at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya, representing the Embassy of the French Republic, talked about the Franco-German treaty as well as the movie. The movie "Amelie" lasted for 2 hours and the audience was served with refreshments such as typical German pastries and snacks, generously provided by the GOETHE Institute.

The film screening continued with the German movie "The Campaign", at half past eight. This movie was taken off a famous television crime series in Germany; "Tatort", which had just celebrated its 30th year run on German television, making it to be the longest running TV show in Germany. Mr Stefan Erber from the German Malaysian Institute (GMI) / GOETHE Institute gave an interesting introduction, with his trademark routine of throwing chocolates to the audience. The event was a success as the audience, made up of the local and international community, gave positive responses. This occasion was a truly enriching experience for all, especially the Malaysians as they were able to participate and be part of a great historical event.

¹ http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/laenderinfos/elysee/index_html

Treasures from the Middle East

Egypt is the offspring of the River Nile, whose waters and rich silts provided the substance for the development of one of the world's first great civilizations, that of ancient Egypt, with a recorded history dating back to about 3200 BC.¹ Egypt is famous for its historical monuments and wealth of culture. The Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) was dubbed the first in the list of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and remains one of the most remarkable structures in the history of architecture"² making Egypt a remarkable historic plateau celebrating religion, mythology, art, science and power. The artistic endeavour in Egypt has developed in various aspects,

and filmmaking has become one of them. Egypt's film industry enjoys an outstanding reputation in the Middle East and worldwide. From the mid 1940s to the late 1950s, Egyptian films competed in international film festivals and gained international recognition and popularity. Actors and actresses from Egypt have acclaimed incredible fame amongst the international audience. Two names that come to mind include the captivating 'Omar Sharif', and the legendary oriental dancer, 'Tahia Karioka'.

To celebrate the uniqueness of Egypt's film industry, the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Malaysia and the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) jointly organized an Egyptian Film Festival, featuring film screenings for two consecutive days on the 18th and 19th of March 2003, as well as holding an exhibition of posters on modern Egyptian paintings. The Ambassador

of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Malaysia, His Excellency Mohamed Ali Afifi, officially launched the festival and also gave an introductory talk on the film "Stakoza" (Lobsters), a rather amusing and comedic film by the well-known female Egyptian director, Inas El-Deghedey, which was screened after the launch. The audience, which included the diplomatic community and Malaysian public, were then served with delicious Egyptian cuisine as well as some local dishes during the reception, held after the show.

On the second day, 19th of March, we had a double film feature with the screening of two Egyptian movies. The first movie was "Ehna Al-Talamza" (We Are The Students), produced in the 1950s and co-written by Mohamed and Naguib Mahfouz (Nobel prize laureate, 1988), with a full star studded cast like

¹"Egypt," Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

²"Khufu," Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

(Continued on page 24)



Interviews: AEI Alumni Network

By MAMIKO HADA, former AEI Senior Research Assistant currently residing in the U.S.

Since its inception in 1997 as the Asia-Europe Centre (AEC), AEI has accepted, trained and produced numerous young, aspiring graduates, who worked as Research Assistants. In addition to contributing to the development and enrichment of AEI, these alumnae have now carried on the AEI legacy to their subsequent positions in various parts of the world.

From this Issue, the *AEI News* starts the interview series of these alumnae. We feature three AEI alumnae who are now furthering their education in Western European countries.

Q: Please tell us what you did before joining AEI

Nazli: After finishing my BA at the University of Malaya, I worked as a Client Officer at a resort in Terengganu. But I always knew I wanted to return to Kuala Lumpur. After one year at the resort, I decided to return to KL. But I didn't join AEI right away; I worked temporarily at one of the art production houses for a while.

Then, I became a part-time tutor in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at UM, later moving to the Institute as a Research Assistant. I still have a vivid memory of the first day when the Executive Director, Prof. Dato' Shaharil Talib introduced me to the UMESP* Fellow-in-Residence, Dr. Giovanni Capannelli.

Prof. Shaharil tutored me in my third and final years of my undergraduate studies and I got acquainted quite well with searching, collecting, collating and compiling the British Colonial records of the Strait Settlements, Malaya and Borneo collections. I think Prof. Shaharil hired me as an RA because of my 'fast fingers' and 'fussiness'! The team was relatively small at that time but we worked quite well considering the heavy workload. Though the office was small and facilities were not as great as what AEI has today, we always worked in good team spirit with lots of motivation. We had good laughs, too.

Q: What projects were you involved in at AEI?

Nazli: I had various kinds of tasks at AEI but all were directly under the supervision of the Executive Director or the UMESP Fellow-in-Residence. I learnt a lot from them especially on how to be decisive but at the same time remain flexible to react appropriately to the unforeseen



Nazli Aziz, currently pursuing his MA in Political Science at Leiden University in the Netherlands, hails from Terengganu. After finishing his BA in Southeast Asian Studies at UM, Nazli joined AEI in 1999 when it was still AEC. After acquiring an MA in the same discipline, he worked as a Senior Research Assistant, until he left for his studies in August 2002. As one of the 'founding members' of AEI, he has worked on virtually every project that AEI had offered. He is expecting to graduate from Leiden in August 2004, and plans to return to Malaysia to keep contributing to producing and developing knowledge at UM.

the patronage of YTM Tuanku Raja Nazrin. The tasks were far from being 'glamorous', but we worked well from the limited resources we had back then.

My tasks under Dr. Capannelli were mostly administrative. My basic responsibility was to make sure things went smoothly, especially when coordinating and organizing seminars, workshops, and conferences. I was also his assistant for UMESP.

It is not easy to say which particular project was the most memorable. Each project required different levels of skills and I always had to have a matrix of these skills ready. For example, I did things that were so 'trivial' for certain projects, like deciding which colour to use for the seminar file, and things that were quite complex in nature, such as a big research project, directly related to the national interest. Certain tasks required me to work alone till midnight, certain projects I did in a team. Though durian and mangosteen always come into the market at about the same time, still you can't compare them on the same ground. It doesn't work because you can't judge the value of satisfaction objectively. Whatever the projects were, they enriched and brought different aspects of values, knowledge, experiences and memories to my life, and I appreciate the opportunities AEI has given to me.

circumstances that might occur at work

My main task under Prof. Dato' Shaharil was to search and compile the British Colonial records from various archives and libraries in order to establish a 'One Stop Centre' for the Historical Statistical Database on National Accounting. I would say it wasn't an easy task, as we had to start it from numero zero. It was the first project that the Institute worked on under

* UMESP - University of Malaya European Studies Programme (1999-2002)

**Q: What do you think are the strengths of AEI?
What do you hope AEI to be in the next 5 years?**

Nazli: Firstly, I would say that AEI and UM, for that matter is far more excellent than Leiden University in terms of university administration. I think many non-Dutch would agree with me that dealing with the government administration in Holland can be a very unpleasant, frustrating and confusing experience. Go to Holland; Malaysians will definitely stop complaining about any of our civil department services back home!

Academically, AEI has already achieved a lot. I witnessed how AEI was and is transforming itself from a Centre to an Institute within one year. But unlike Cinderella, AEI is a *reality*. I hope in the next 5 years, AEI's mission to foster and nourish international and cross-cultural understanding through equal opportunities and unlimited exploration of ideas and creativity will be achieved firmly. AEI should set a target to become a benchmark as an institution that is able to bridge the educational and cultural links in the region under one roof and be a model to many other higher educational institutions in Southeast Asia.

Q: How do you describe your host country and institution?

Nazli: What strikes me the most about the Department of Political Science at Leiden University is the wide variety of research interests and activities that the Department encompasses. From its foundation, Leiden University stimulated the study of government and politics.

On the cultural side, I personally believe, in attempting to understand the host country, there are many areas where we need to pause and bear in mind how our own country and the host country differ. Whatever has contributed to our background, we all come into this new experience with some predetermined notions and expectations. My reactions vary when confronted with new places and unfamiliar experiences and it is not always easy to keep an open mind. In fact, it can be a real challenge. We may be frustrated to realize that we don't understand many things in the new environment.

I would advise anyone going to an unknown place to try to understand it gradually and not to be so hypercritical toward the local people and their culture. Trust me, your patience will be rewarded. It will paint your life beautifully. And it also helps to be aware of the stages of your adjustment to the new environment. Although culture shock can be emotionally painful, you will find the way to handle the stress, to cope with the many frustrations and will learn to appreciate a culturally enriching life in your host country gradually.

Q: What experiences at AEI have helped you with your current studies and life?

Nazli: My experiences at AEI have contributed to reshaping my personality and self-confidence. I learned a lot and gained experience handling various programmes and events for people from different countries and backgrounds.

**Q: What are your plans after finishing your degree?
What lessons do you wish to bring back to Malaysia?**

Nazli: Well, firstly, I am bonded with UM. Even if I were not, I would definitely go back to Malaysia. Malaysia is always in my heart. The idea of 'immigrating' to any so-called developed foreign land just doesn't appeal to me. Malaysia is not the best place on earth but I feel that I belong to it. That means a lot. So my plan is to return to UM. I want to produce knowledge, not just to consume it. We have an obligation to think deeply.

Q: Your message to the current AEI students and friends.

Nazli: The world will be a much better place when we can accept that one civilization does *not* represent the only universal civilization.



Although **Nur Rafeeda Daut** is from Malaysia, she is no stranger to the wintery weather; she is a graduate from Syracuse University in upstate New York, and is now studying for her MA in Political Science at Leiden University, Netherlands. Although she has a wide-ranging international experience, she says 'yes, definitely' to our question, 'do you plan to return to Malaysia after completing your degree?' Since her expected graduation is in December 2003, you may see her on campus soon.

Q: Please tell us what you did before joining AEI

Feeda: I have always been interested in research and expanding knowledge, therefore after graduating from Syracuse, AEI really seemed like a good place to start my career. What also attracted me to AEI was the fact that it is a postgraduate research institution and also its international setting.

So I began work at AEI in April 2001 and left in August 2002 to pursue a Master's Degree at Leiden University under the SBA (Skim Biasiswa AEI) scholarship.

Q: What projects were you involved in at AEI?

Feeda: I started my tenure at AEI working on a research project called "*Survey on the Presence and Strategy of European Firms in Asia*" led by Dr. Giovanni Capannelli and later I was transferred to assist in the International Office. There, I worked closely with my colleagues, Ms. Maimuna Merican and Ms. Veronika Kutikova and we mainly organized conferences, seminars and workshops. Maimuna's interview article is in this issue, and Veronika's was in the last issue. Apart from that, I was also in charge of administering the placement of interns at AEI, busy especially when European universities are off session.

I would say that the most memorable project for me was the organization of the *International Law Conference*. It was co-organized by the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta and the Law Faculty of the University of Malaya and was

held at AEI in September 2001. At that time I had just started working at AEI and did not have any experience in organizing conferences. So it was a big challenge for me. My colleagues and I had to look into everything right from the start until the end of the Conference; from inviting the guest speakers, sending out invitations, arranging transportation and accommodation, to all the other arrangements until the very day of the Conference itself. It was a lot of work, but very rewarding and I learned a lot.

**Q: What do you think are the strengths of AEI?
What do you hope AEI to be in the next 5 years?**

Feeda: AEI is unique compared to other academic institutions in Malaysia in the sense that its setting is very international. The students, researchers and faculty members are from all over the world. The cultural diversity helps promote the exchange of ideas at AEI.

Q: How do you describe your host country and institution?

Feeda: Leiden University is well known in the Netherlands for its strong Political Science Department, therefore I am glad and honored to have been given this opportunity to further my studies here. Because we belong to the same Department, I see Nazli sometimes. Since we are taking different classes and also because classes are really demanding, it is quite hard to find time to hang out with him too often. We are in the same programme, so we share the same friends, and once in a while, all of us will try to organize something, a dinner or a get-together, so that all the Political Science masters students can catch up on each other's news. The class is quite small; only 14 of us in the programme. So we are pretty close to each other. There are many Indonesians here at Leiden, but none in my programme. My classmates are from countries such as Argentina, Britain, France, Taiwan, Turkey and of course from here, Holland.

I am graduating earlier than Nazli because my undergraduate degree was in International Relations and I minored in Political Science. So I don't have to repeat the same basic courses here at Leiden.

Q: What experiences at AEI have helped you with your current studies and life?

Feeda: First of all, I must say that I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with many wonderful people at AEI and my experience there has been a truly rewarding one. I have learned that teamwork is important especially in a professional work environment. Misunderstandings and differences of opinions are bound to occur in any workplace, even more so in an international workplace, but it is important to have that "teamwork spirit" and to learn from each other. I think this understanding helps me a lot in my student life at Leiden, too.

Q: What are your plans after finishing your degree?

Feeda: I am definitely returning to Malaysia and I am looking forward to it.

Q: Your message to the current AEI students and friends.

Feeda: I wish the current AEI students all the best in their studies. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at AEI---my AEI family!---and also a big thank-you to Prof. Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib for making my work experience at AEI a valuable one. Take care, happy working and I look forward to seeing all of you soon.



Maimuna Hamid Merican hails from Penang, which she visits often on holidays. She has had her higher education in the United Kingdom, is a former corporate lawyer, and now is further exploring her passion for legal studies and economics at Utrecht University, Netherlands. She was one of the 'AEI originals', and when she left AEI, she also left a wonderful and indispensable contribution: AEI's legal statute. She plans to return to Malaysia in August this year and hopes to share her knowledge and experience with students at UM.

Muna: Firstly, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to pen down a couple of thoughts and experiences for AEI's *Newsletter*. This interview article may be brief, but I hope it gives you some insights. I would also like to extend my apologies in advance if what I said here is in anyway offensive to any reader.

Q: Please tell us what you did before joining AEI

Muna: After finishing my degrees, a BA and subsequently an MBA (Master of Business Administration), at University of Glamorgan, Wales in UK. I returned to Malaysia and received my professional legal training at University of Malaya and the Qualifying Board of Legal Profession, Malaysia. With my law license, I started working as a practicing corporate lawyer. However, I realized soon after that the practice of law was not my cup of tea and I wanted to spread my wings, moving into something more "human" and where my voice would be heard. It required of me to have the courage to take a great step to move away from law practice to something completely different. I took up this challenge though it was hard to convince my family who financed my law and professional education, but I am glad I did!

It was completely by chance that I came to know AEI. One day while I was still working as a lawyer, I came to the local bank on UM campus to pay my bills and came across this yer that said that AEI was looking for a junior researcher. What caught my eyes immediately was the fact that it was the first institutional setup that attempted to converge two vast areas of the world, i.e. Asia and Europe. Instantly, I was interested to know more about AEI. When I finally landed at the building, the structure was inspiring and I felt it spoke a voice of new education in the 21st century. I met Noeline, the assistant to Prof. Shaharil, who was very

informative in providing the relevant brochures and helped me set up an appointment with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Shamsul. I was like a child very curious about everything 'AEI'. I read and re-read its background and wanted so much to be a part of it. It may be coincidental, but I felt this is where I belonged, and I know this feeling of 'belonging' is hard to come across especially in your career path. So I felt quite lucky to find AEI so early in my career! I met the whole AEI management team, i.e. Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Shamsul and Dr. Giovanni Capannelli. A very informal interview with a touch of humour and the spirit of teamwork told me that it was worth giving a try; AEI is an academic environment which gives me the opportunity to keep actively pursuing my passion for research in the field of law.

So I joined AEI in April 2001 and left in September 2002 to pursue a postgraduate degree with a UM scholarship in the Netherlands.

Q: What projects were you involved in at AEI?

Muna: Aha...well...though I have been at AEI for only one and a half years, I have to reminisce in order to list the projects undertaken

One would be trained at AEI to be an all-rounded individual, from research, administration, organization of conferences to even being an amateur "interior decorator". Nevertheless, the most memorable project that I undertook and will never forget was the task given to me on my first day of work at AEI to be responsible for drafting AEI's statute. It was unbelievable the trust and confidence Prof. Shaharil and Dr. Shamsul had placed on me. Although I do have legal background, frankly speaking, it was a challenge especially knowing that the statute was to be the backbone of AEI's legal entity. When I took on the file, it was at an infant stage, so I got to see it through from the beginning till when it was approved in July 2002. It was such an invaluable experience to me. I cannot thank both Prof. Shaharil and Dr. Shamsul enough, for giving me this golden learning opportunity. Working with the Legal Unit at UM, Legal Advisor at the Ministry of Education and at the Attorney-General's Office inspired me to grow professionally and to instill values of confidence, courage, and diligence. I was drafting and re-drafting, attending meeting after meeting. This also helped me to experience the different levels of working mechanisms that are involved within the ambit of the legal profession.

Also on my first day at AEI, Dr. Capannelli tried to tune me into becoming a technical wizard and showed me the mechanisms of AEI's auditorium with all sizes of switches, wires and plugs, where AEI's *Cultural Showcase* was held. This technical area is not my strongest, but eventually I was roped in like a "professional" with the help of my colleague, Veronika. We were the "mini Cultural team"! Since then, we had more people at AEI involved in the Cultural team. In this capacity, I have amassed invaluable experience especially dealing with embassies, checking on the Intellectual Property Rights (i.e. copyright issues) and the censorship issues that AEI has to be sensitive about regarding the screening of international commercial movies.

The list can go on, but perhaps besides numerous conferences, seminars, workshops and dialogues, the one which nearly made me a wreck and sleepless nights was the *ASEAN Legal Systems and Regional Integration*, held in September 2001. You would never imagine the level of coordination involved in making this international conference a success. It was worth all the effort and gave me a great networking experience.

Q: What do you think are the strengths of AEI? What do you hope AEI to be in the next 5 years?

Muna: There is no denial that AEI possess a great deal of institutional strength, acknowledging that it is still a young institution. I can almost envision AEI to be a hub that brings Asians and Europeans together academically, culturally and socially. This pertinent integration that AEI aspires to achieve for global growth and education seems to be lacking here in Netherlands or in any other higher educational institutions in Malaysia. I also think that AEI's future effort to virtually importing and exporting lecturers, researchers and students from these two continents *on line* may become a dominant learning pattern in the future.

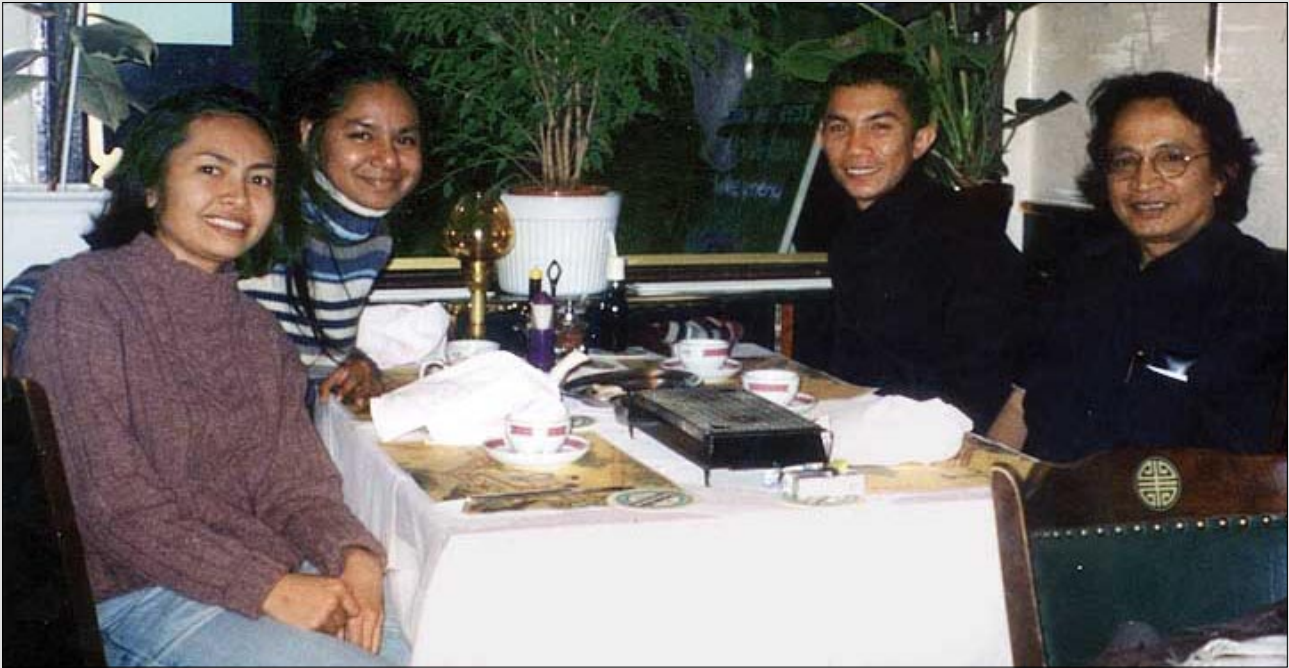
I am certain and confident that AEI would bloom into a University in the next 5 years; after all, it is the brainchild project of our Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir.

Q: How do you describe your host country and institution?

Muna: When you hear "Netherlands", you can almost visualize an abundance of tulips, windmills, and cheeses, etc; i.e. typical Dutch clichés. But the reality is different from all these stereotypical, almost picturesque Dutch. I have learnt a great deal about this country since I came here.

I had known all along that this is a developed nation, so I had high expectations of its social and governmental systems and administration, compared to those in developing countries. Regrettably, I have seen that people here are forced to have a high level of tolerance to the at-best mediocre bureaucracy, because it does not function as effectively as I had imagined. And people here have a low level of development in terms of their work ethics and humility to learn from others. It seems as if the concept of openness and liberalization in this country would only spring in areas of drugs and prostitution. However, I have to admit that the integration of its transportation system is impressive; I believe Malaysia can learn a lot from them in this area and develop an effective transportation system for our development and social welfare in the new era.

As for Utrecht University, it is the oldest university in the Netherlands, and it has a very impressive library with its on-line system, connecting every library in the country. It has a huge collection of books in almost every discipline, which is very helpful for a research student like me. Zooming into my specialisation, Law & Economics, it is relatively a new area for Malaysians. But it has found its way with the Americans and Europeans. I believe that these two important areas, law and economics, are worth more research and exploration in higher education. In terms of lecturers at the University, the majority of them



Professor Shaharil meeting up with the three AEI alumnae in the Netherlands

are well versed in their area of specialisation and they are exible. The composition of the lecturers is a good mix of practitioners and academicians, which makes it interesting and gives me a good exposure of both fields. I also enjoy their very helpful International Office, and their student bodies helped ease my transition into the Dutch education system and culture. I have had opportunities to attend interesting seminars delivered by specialists from across Europe and this is enriching and important at the postgraduate level.

Though, many Dutch speak English, I cannot deny the fact that being able to understand the language will ease the feeling of alienation, as everything is written in Dutch, so I wish I knew the language better.

Q: What experiences at AEI have helped you with your current studies and life?

Muna: AEI gave me this new window of opportunity to pursue my postgraduate education here in the Netherlands, and this itself is a gift, which I would cherish forever. AEI also gave me the opportunity to mingle and work in a team of individuals from various cultures and countries, which helped me a lot in transitioning to the international atmosphere here in Netherlands. Working at AEI also gave me the opportunity to build my academic and research networks with respective bodies and individuals. I was also able to speak my own opinions and thoughts without feeling undermined by my bosses. I have had to encounter a specific lecturer here, who would not tolerate opinions or critical thoughts especially coming from a person from a developing nation, and this is very disturbing to me, since I believe we need to be able to accept criticisms and opinions in the academia and that it is a part of learning. So I appreciate AEI's atmosphere of openness.

Q: What are your plans after finishing your degree? What lessons do you wish to bring back to Malaysia?

Muna: I am returning to Malaysia as soon as I complete the degree. I can never imagine living anywhere else besides Malaysia, with its full array of colours, rigour and vibrance. I am hoping to be given the opportunity to be back working at AEI or UM and would like to share my knowledge that I gained here with students and faculty of UM.

One important area that I wish to highlight is the fact that many people especially in Europe are not aware of Malaysia and its development, and in many instances, I have had to answer certain irritating and ridiculous questions. I may sound a bit judgmental but I think that Asians are more knowledgeable of Europe compared to the Europeans' understanding about us. Perhaps, it is time that we import researchers and lecturers from Europe to visit us and learn about us rather than exporting us, Malaysians, to learn from them!

Q: Your message to the current AEI students and friends.

Muna: I am impressed with the new series of *Newsletter*. I have always wanted to see this happen and now I can see that the Research Assistants at AEI have put in tons of work to make it a reality, and not forgetting Charlie's amazing and dynamic layout. I bid all of you 'bon courage'! When I left, AEI was launching its International Master Programmes, and now they are alive and kicking! All I can say is that, teamwork has always been a proof of the impossibility transformed into just possibilities!!!!

Keep up the great work and I hope to see all of the team upon my return in August and to join you all in continuing this journey of learning and paving our way to make AEI an educational vessel in the 21st century!

Dank u wel. (Thank you in Dutch)

Niets te danken (You are welcome, also in Dutch). ■

An Intellectual Exchange

INTERVIEWS

By AFIFI RASWAN DEAN, AEI Research Assistant



Caroline Couronne
French, former triathlete and a contributor to magazines on expatriate life in Malaysia (IMRI)



Hean Sophea
Cambodian, a graduate of the National Institute of Management of Management



Kin Keonimol
Cambodian, recently graduated and plans to be a diplomat in the future



Nik Nurzai bt. Mohd Zainuddin
Malaysian, attached to Standard Chartered Bank



Park Youn Young
South Korean, he and his wife, Hwang Sun Hee are the proud parents of a baby daughter, Park Da Hae born on 10th October, 2002



Raket Eleana Dressel
Danish, graduate in International Business



Ronald Kleverlaan
Dutch, has started two IT companies with plans for expansion in Asia

1. First and foremost, what made you decide to enroll in the International Master degree programmes?

Park: The main reason for me enrolling in the International Master degree is to improve myself and add to my experience. These days, you need specialists in the workplace and without this type of experience, it would be difficult to adjust. It was a very difficult decision for me to come here as I have a wife and a newborn baby but my wife agreed that coming here was essential in improving myself, and to improve our future.

Ronald: The reason why I wanted to join the AEI program was because I wanted to expand my business internationally. I want to expand in Asia and Malaysia is one of the best places for a base for expansion in the region. The Information Management course is also of interest as I am operating a hotel's internet system, and in the past few months I've learned so much. This course is directly useful for me, a combination of getting a theoretical background and practical information that I can apply direct into my business. The joint courses with the IMRI students are also very interesting as I am learning about international relations, Malaysian and Asian policies, free trade areas.

Raket: I decide to enroll in the International Master degree at AEI, first and foremost, because of the course structure as I liked the mix of politics and economics. Also, AEI seemed the perfect environment for one year of

studying as it was welcoming, organized and international, which I was what I was basically looking for.

2. What is your view of AEI and the University of Malaya?

Caroline: I think University of Malaya, especially AEI is opening up on the international perspective and this is a great opportunity for us students. Malaysia, in general, is trying to play a role in Southeast Asia and I think UM represents the best opportunity in gaining the knowledge for that.

Park: I was not aware of AEI and UM prior to coming here but since I've been in the country, I've come to realise the importance of AEI's position. I see AEI as the bridge between Asia and Europe. In Korea, we know a lot about USA but we have not experienced either European or Asian culture. Since coming to AEI, I have met many

Asians and Europeans who are my colleagues and learn about their culture, thinking and philosophy. For me, AEI is a very good place to study. I also consider UM to be the knowledge vessel of Asian countries and I hope that UM will be the best university in the region.

Hean: AEI is a mix of Asian and European students, enabling an

exchange of cultures which is both a learning experience for me as well as being very interesting. My view of University of Malaya is that it is very exciting because of the diverse faculties and facilities available.

Ronald: When I entered UM for the first time, everything was looking so nice, clean and green. It's like you're entering a park. When it's not busy, it's very nice and totally different from my previous experience when I studied in Amsterdam.

When I entered UM for the first time, everything was looking so nice, clean and green. It's like you're entering a park - Ronald

3. What have been your impression of Malaysia, and Kuala Lumpur, so far? What was your view on living in Malaysia prior to your arrival and how has that perception been altered since then?

Park: My impression of Malaysia is that it is a peaceful country. I was also very surprised by Kuala Lumpur, by the big buildings and it's very modern, so I think KL has the potential to be one of the top business centres in Asia. I would like to recommend Koreans to visit Malaysia, they are already used to going to Bangkok but not this country. The best thing about KL is KLCC, which was partly constructed by a Korean company, Samsung. Through this experience, I think that Korea and Malaysia are very close with one

another. Malaysia is a Muslim country but there are also Chinese, Indians which creates a new culture of mutual understanding. I think all of us needs to

I am being taught by different people from various backgrounds and this is very valuable to me - Nik

Malaysia is a Muslim country but there are also Chinese, Indians which create a new culture of mutual understanding. I think all of us need to learn from this type of culture - Park

learn from this type of culture.

Kin: I like being in Malaysia as this is the first time I've been out of Cambodia, and I'm very interested in learning about the country. The landscape is very beautiful and I'm also very interested in the Malaysian infrastructure as it is a developing country.

Rakel: I think that the people are very pleasant and it's very easy living. It's much more international that you would expect and more open as well as you can actually find information that you want.

4. What, in your opinion, is the distinguishing feature of the International Master degree programmes, in the way that it is taught, structured etc, as compared with your previous academic programmes?

Nik: I would say the subject itself, with more emphasis on the political and economics aspect, and on a deeper level as well. You also get a dual certificate and the professors are from abroad, so I am being taught by different people from various backgrounds and this is very valuable to me.

Rakel: What distinguishes AEI is the international lecturers that are own in every two weeks. I've been very happy and quite surprised with the quality of the lecturers. It's also very inspiring studying with people from all over the world. It broadens your horizon and it gives team spirit, we all feel that we're in this boat together as we're away from home.

Caroline: The IMRI course is the only masters in the world in regional integration. So if you want to specialize in this area as well as having an Asian perspective, this is the best place.

Hean: I think that AEI has done much to provide for the students here, from the hostel to the lecturers who hail from different countries. These lecturers are highly experienced and this is very helpful to us.

Park: I recommend this course for anyone interested in acquiring an international perspective.

It's the people who make it, really. The environment is fantastic, my fellow students are wonderful, the lecturers are great and I'm very happy here
- Rakel

I think University of Malaya, especially AEI is opening up on the international perspective and this is a great opportunity for us students
- Caroline

My dream is to one day open my own small business because I would like to be my own boss
- Hean

5. What have been the advantages in studying in a multicultural setting such as AEI?

Hean: It's very rare to find a program like the one at AEI. If you go to the United States, you'll likely to meet mostly Americans and it's the same if you go to a country like Thailand, where the students are predominantly Thais. However, here at AEI, you'll find people who come from different parts of the world and it's wonderful to be able to learn about the way they live, their culture and so on.

Park: If I studied in Korea, I would only make Korean friends but studying at AEI gives me a multicultural perspective as I meet both Asian and European students. Before I came here, I did not know about Europe but now that I'm here, I meet students from Netherlands, Denmark, Italy and the United Kingdom. The same is true for Asians, as I've come to know Indonesians, Chinese, Thais, Vietnamese and Cambodians so I am able to learn about their countries, cultures by being at AEI.

Ronald: Being at AEI allows me to have an exchange of views with the Asian students whose opinion on issues are totally different with those of Europeans. The students from the different countries bring their own varied backgrounds here and it is so great to get a unique mixture of not only the Asian views but also views from these different backgrounds, from law, economics to informatics. It's a very good mix and we can find completely new solutions for problems and issues you're dealing with. Furthermore, I think one of the best things about this course would be in the long-term. If this course continues to grow, continues to get more students and courses, the alumni will be produced and if the alumni keep in contact, then you can get a really good international network of contacts. If you want to know something about about other countries, you would then have contacts in Asian and European countries and they can help you further. I think this is

I like being in Malaysia as this is the first time I've been out of Cambodia, and I'm very interested in learning about the country
- Kin

also one of the main advantages of this course.

6. What are your future plans, and how does the course of study that you are doing benefit your career path?

Ronald: Yes, this course of study will really benefit my career path as I can use the knowledge I get here about Information Management in my own company. For my future plans, I want to enlarge my company though I'm not sure whether I'm staying in Asia. If I return to Holland, I'll continue there but perhaps start a joint venture with a Malaysian company or open a branch here.

Nik: It will be of benefit to me. I can't say what it is going to be for the future and in terms of job prospects, I would try to be in the government sector

Park: After graduation, I would like to return to Korea. Before coming here, I was employed with the National Statistical Office. In Korea, we are compiling a number of statistics and this requires development into new areas such as statistics in information technology. Studying at AEI will prepare to work in this field and enhancing my career prospects. A further benefit of enrolling in the International Master degree programme is that I would become a specialist in the area of information management. If given the opportunity, I would like to pursue a PhD in this field.

Hean: My dream is to one day open my own small business because I would like to be my own boss.

7. In one sentence, how would you define AEI?

Park: I define AEI as the bridge to resource and knowledge. AEI is the place of a dream, where you can get to learn about Asian and European cultures.

Rakel: It's the people who make it, really. The environment is fantastic, my fellow students are wonderful, the lecturers are great and I'm very happy here.

Caroline: Challenging. I think AEI is one step forward to the rest of Malaysia in the way that it is attempting to open up the country.

Ronald: Very inspiring and challenging place.

Hean: I would recommend people to study here as I love this place.

Kin: AEI is very nice.

Nik: Wonderful. ■

Quote, Unquote

Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib, Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) at the University of Malaya was in Bangkok recently. Here he talks about the work of the Institute and relations between the EU and Asia.

What do people in Malaysia think of the EU?

Europe to Malaysians is still a blank page. If you mean just the UK then they know. They also know the Commonwealth countries and ASEAN. The idea of creating ASEM is really to bridge the gap that exists in knowledge between Asia and Europe. Remember that in the last half of the last century Europe walked out of Asia. During the Cold War Europe formed its own fortress, and then when the Cold War ended and the wall came down we had a new Europe, which is a global player. During those 50 years the French, Brits and Dutch left and in walked the Americans. So now the presence of the US is very strong. The return of Europe is now a new phenomenon. It's a unified Europe, a confident Europe, a pluralistic Europe. For example on Iraq there's the Irish view, the British view, the French view etc. These are all heard and eventually a decision is taken and you are comfortable with that decision, as all considerations have been taken into account rather than just one voice from one powerful country. In that sense the presence of Europe on the world stage is a comforting and has a sobering effect.

The activities of the AEI will help bridge the gap between East and West, what's the current situation?

We opened shop this year in October when we launched the first two Masters degrees but behind that launch has been a lot of work. Europe and Asia in this sense have, through

education, met a unity of purpose. We have mutual recognition, accreditation, and validation of the courses. An idea is only an idea until it works. This is now a working idea.

How many students are there?

On this course we have 24, roughly half and half from Europe and Asia. Interestingly, most of the Europeans are first timers. They've never been to Asia before and that's nice. All the usual worries come up just like when Asians go to study in Europe. As host, we understand their concerns and do our best to make them comfortable. Unless you have had the experience you will never know and therefore getting them out here is the key thing. Getting them to interact is the next step. In a normal situation European students will join with other Europeans and the Asian students will stick together. There is some gentle persuasion to get people to mix and it works.

“We would like to see more regional co-operation and initiatives rather than those that take place on a bilateral basis. That's the European hallmark on the world stage.”

Is there a gulf between European and Asian values?

We have to go back to your legal documents. One of the documents on the world stage is the Charter of Human Rights from 1948. In 1948 look around Asia. It had just been decolonised. Try and read the preamble to the Charter.



Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib

The Charter evokes the American War of Independence, the Magna Carta, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution. It evokes Karl Marx, Hobbes, Locke, all of these great thinkers. Where's Confucius? Where's Buddha? Where's Hinduism? Where are all the Eastern Philosophers and their values? They are not there. Also many of the institutions we live with today in the 21st century are really 20th century Cold War creations. The IMF and the World Bank are Bretton Woods the WTO is GATT. In all of these, Asia was never an active participant in their formation.

How do you hope to see EU-Malaysia relations evolve?

We are looking forward to the opening of the Delegation in Kuala Lumpur as I think that will be the lightning rod to charge things up and move them forward at a more accelerated pace. But eventually one would hope Europe, which represents the ideal of integration, would integrate itself more in the region. We would like to see the collective Europe operating in a collective ASEAN. We would like to see more regional cooperation and initiatives rather than those that take place on a bilateral basis. That's the European hallmark on the world stage. You must express that. Then we will take a big step forward. ■

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International Masters in Malaysia

The University of Malaya,
in conjunction with
Leeds Metropolitan University (UK),
and Universidad Autonoma
de Madrid (Spain)
has developed two International
Masters Programmes.

1. **Information Management (IMIM)**
2. **Regional Integration (IMRI)**

The programmes will be delivered at the
Asia Europe Institute,
University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur,
starting in September 2003.

There are a number of financial support
available. These cover partially or totally,
rights, tuition, accommodation
and living expenses - approximate value
18000 Euros.

**Details of the programmes, application
procedures, etc can be found at**
[http://www.asia-europe-institute.org/
International-Master-Program/](http://www.asia-europe-institute.org/International-Master-Program/)

If you wish to be considered for
financial support please register on the
website and then email a full CV
plus a letter of intent - to the
Executive Director, Asia-Europe Institute,
University of Malaya - explaining what
you think you will gain
from studying
on the specific programme
(1000-1500 words).

The closing date for registration is
Thursday, 1st May 2003.

Programme Co-ordinators

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Youssef Fakhreddin, Shukri Sarhan, Tahiya Karioka and Omar Sharif. Refreshments were then served. The second screening started at eight-thirty in the evening with “Zawget Ragol Mohim” (Wife of an Important Man). This movie was set on actual political events in Egypt during the 1970s. Actual footages were included in this film, making it more realistic and unique. The plot revolved around how a married couple, the husband being a high-ranking officer in the Egyptian Secret Police, cope with life amidst the insurgencies of the political movements in the 1970s. The movie had a tragic end, which caught the audience by surprise.

In brief, being a part of the Egyptian Film Festival has been a wonderful experience for all. It was also a unique experience for the usual AEI crowd as this was the first time that the films were screened using a different form of mechanism to run the films, using the authentic and unique thirty-five-millimetre film projector. It was an exceptional event for the local and international community as they were able to enjoy films from that could not be easily obtained otherwise. The Egyptian Film Festival – film screenings, poster exhibition as well as the opportunity to enjoy some Egyptian cuisine has been a wonderful and unique occasion. ■

Movies during the last quarter

JANUARY

- KWAN-RIAM – *Thailand*
- AMELIE – *France*
- THE CAMPAIGN – *Germany*
- AYNEH (THE MIRROR) – *Iran*

FEBRUARY

- THE MAGNETISTS’S FIFTH WINTER
Denmark/Norway/Sweden
- YI YI – *Taiwan*
- BUTTERFLY – *Spain*

MARCH

- MURO-AMI – *Philippines*
- THE COMMITMENTS – *Ireland*
- Egyptian Film Fest 18 & 19 March
- DER SCHUH DES MANITU – *Germany*

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