

Discussion

[Dr. Goto] I would like to start the discussion of this symposium by first saying that I appreciate our three guests from three Asian countries and our two commentators from Japan. I am a director of the Anthropological Institute. The reason we started this kind of project is, that anthropology is originally a western discipline, introduced to many countries in the colonized context. But innocent researchers share a kind of second or third generation with each country. However, when we talk about anthropology, we realize that there are some similarities to sympathize with each other within Asian anthropologists. I don't claim that we have a complete understanding of Asian countries' people, but I hope to share some things so that we have a mutual understanding – a better understanding of each other than western anthropologists do.

We would like to discuss a very practical aspect of anthropology for each country. I was doing field work in the Philippines for an internship. Filipino anthropologists have a very strong motivation to conduct anthropological research to help the people. That's one of the reasons why we start this kind of internationalization, promoting programs of this institute.

I would like to ask all three guests to speak again. I know that you are very specialized in tiny fishing communities. To talk about the revival or recovery of fishing communities, the recovery and subsistence of fishing are very important. In fishing and agriculture, and other subsistent communities, an individual cannot do anything. Usually, corporates cannot help either. So, what sort of anthropological study, what kind of association or organization is appropriate to revise? Like a fisherman's organization or company or any – what? Is there any idea of what to do in each case? We Japanese also need advice from each of your countries.

[Dr. Zayas] This is a day of so much learning and I am so happy to professor Goto and professor Kawashima, people I have read a lot and quoted a lot in my papers. I think we should also put into context professor Goto's idea of work on anthropology. The bigger concepts of anthropology are the crisis of the discipline. Is the system of policies of globalization, social sciences, and particularly anthropology being removed in the universities? We listened to professor Kawashima. We listened to professor Akimichi. How important anthropologists are in our disaster investigation! Who will find the story? Who will find the story and narratives? It is we, in the archives, listening to people. We, who have the patience to listen and collect. This is our big draw.

And I think we in Southeast Asia, especially maritime Asia, are connected because of sharing common disasters like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, cyclones, and what have you. I mean, these are the bigger concepts of having a network, our discipline, and of course, human wellbeing among our nations. Now, I think, specifically if you want a complete example, professor Kawashima mentioned fiberglass boats versus wooden boats. Of course, our traditional fishermen would like wooden boats, because plastic can never replace real wood. In the Philippines, we still have traditional boat builders, but it is an effort to find them there. You can still find them in Borneo.

Perhaps anthropologists can act as a link so people can relate. The carpenters, of course, our technology, our designs are different, but carpenters can learn from each other. And so, it's not just anthropologists, but also those people who have taught us about their lives. Thus, somehow, we are the connectors for these kinds of relationships. With regard to professor Akimichi and being an activist, of course we cannot refuse because we know the problem. And we can understand more or less the problem when we are in the field, and that is why we are forced to act on behalf of the people that are teaching us anthropology. We learn so much of the discipline this way.

So, anthropology is not only collecting data, but also taking action. Doing some difficult things. Through that, we are able to say to governments and international organizations that we know a lot, so you have to listen to us. We are never consulted in policies. It's always others - the engineers who are there - but never us. Maybe sociologists or psychologists, but never us. So, I think if we are together, you know, as a network, we can be stronger. Thank you.

[Dr. Adhuri] I would like to also thank the wisdom of the Nanzan University for our chances for collaborations - better networking between Asian anthropologists and a couple of you anthropologists. I think they mentioned that once we are collaborators, we can combine our different perspectives into a new reality, and with that information, we can come up not only with better knowledge, different knowledge, but also better implementation of concentration for the betterment of most of the people of pre- and post-disaster targets and implementation of relief.

We also learned that we have experienced similar cases, disaster cases, where we can also see lessons learned from each of them. Again, this is also an implementation that we can benefit from as a collaboration - a networking.

The second point is what the roles of anthropology are. Again, I would like to reflect on my own experience. Since my work on a tsunami simulator in my country that was founded in 2006, my work has been more directed toward inland populations. Therefore, it is more thinking of taking an approach from applied anthropology which is like fitting a soup pot into the activities.

Usually, there is community involvement as well as cost assessment management. Thus, it is important to apply to work not only with other anthropologists, but to also work with other disciplines as well, such as NGOs working on similar issues for basic implementation on the ground. For example, if you look at the approach for unprotected areas, we have been witnessing that up close. The approach to unprotected areas has been dominated by western scientific approaches. Where implemented with a direct community of people, it is considered X amount and we call it access to resources and there can be a threat to the system of resources. So, using only calculations, communities can be excluded from accessing the resources.

In the last ten years, I have been involved in a movement to include the community in the management design. I have worked in affected areas. For example, last year, we worked with governments, thus affecting government policies. I worked with NGOs who try and have started thinking of how to actually get into the communities in the protected areas and establish what we call a guideline for post-affected areas. Where the community has a right to accept and develop their own management, preserve management in my pointed area, others are acknowledged by government entities who are in charge of taking care of people living in the affected areas.

In Italy and in other areas, we are also trying to push for and influence the government to revise laws by acknowledging traditional wisdom and practices. Of course, there is risk management which is basically acknowledging the accounting for the problems in rural environments. There are also other accounts from other parts of Indonesia, things that we said that are practical, such as in Maluku. In this example, the places where we are losing, we are trying to make the government aware of a need to form a kind of business association, just like in Japan. We are trying to gain the government's sympathy to maintain this business association. Then, the petitioners usually hold protests because that used to be the mechanism used as a resistance to restricting fishing space. Such things can allow us to learn. I mean not only from Japan, but also from others. It is very important to solve our anthropological contribution for the betterment of the coastal association as well as the coastal communities. Thank you very much.

[Dr. Gopalan] Thank you. I have three observations. One is that through these presentations, we have been witnessing some universal ideas. In the case of the presentation by Dr. Zayas from the Philippines, she was always stressing one point: that we are missing out, that we are no longer in touch with traditional knowledge systems.

This is also true in the case of my experiences in India. In our times, fishermen are no longer aware of their ancestors' knowledge. In one interview last year in my city, Chennai, when I was recording the folksongs of the fishermen, one fisherman

was talking about at least 16 directions which could be grasped by fishermen of the past generations. The present day fisherman have no understanding of this traditional knowledge system that was known to their ancestors. Their ancestors were fishing without GPS navigation and other modern gadgets. They navigated according to natural proofs. This must be true of Japanese fishermen also, only some 60 or 70 years ago.

One area of interest for me personally is that we need to go for requesting the government agencies to help in the documentation of traditional knowledge systems, which are no longer in place as far as these communities are concerned. One way is to bring them in contact with how grandfathers and grandmothers were doing things and their ability to react to natural forces.

There is another aspect of anthropology that examines danger. Danger is a site of many of our academic enquiries and this site becomes an ally of another fascinating site of anthropologists and communication scholars, modernity. For instance, we tend to highlight the “danger potential” of natural disasters like Tsunamis. But the common man, particularly, the fisher folk go about their routine without trying to exaggerate the “danger potential”, even though they are the victims and very likely to be the future victims of Tsunamis.

Secondly, Professor Goto wanted to know from us suggestions regarding how we can improve the lot of fishermen. There are some universal facts. The problems of Indian fishermen may not be exactly the same as the problems of Japanese fishermen, but there are probably similarities. We need to study the universal problems of fishermen and the problems unique to a particular region.

In my state, Tamil Nadu, I find that fishing communities get into conflicts over their right to fish in “Others” territories. Every 100 kilometers on the coast, their conflicts, cultures and practices present a different picture. The disputes are traditional and age old, but are also caused by the laws of the modern state and its instruments of law and order such as the coast guard.

The third point I have written about is selling off of imported fish in other communities’ markets. Recently, in the city of Madras, the local corporation authority opened a very big fish market; a modern market which is supposed to sell only fish from other states. This was the cause for a huge outcry among local fishermen, because they think that the government is doing this against them making this a multilateral conflict. Yes, fishermen go to fish, live difficult lives, come back with their catch, but in spite of making lots of money, they are unable to live peacefully. Many of the respondents said that they have lost their peace of mind.

Professor Goto wanted to know how we can improve the lot of fishermen. It is not an economic improvement. It is something else, since they no longer have the means to live peacefully, at least in India. They have associations which have political affiliations, but this is another problem because these associations have their own

agenda. Political agendas, not the agenda of the fishermen. So, the higher the number of political associations, the higher the problems of the fishermen in the case of Tamil Nadu. I think, as everyone has argued, we need to get into collaboration mode about disciplinary practices so we can learn from each other about the disciplinary practices we encounter in different countries in Asia. We must come to, if not a consensus, at least an understanding about the practices of others, and explore possibilities of assimilating the best practices of fishermen of other parts of Asia and fuse them with our practices. In all three cases, the Philippines, Indonesia, and India, there are similar contexts. By establishing a larger context of collaboration, we may invite the attention of anthropologists and researchers in each of these cases to the possibilities mentioned above. Professor Zayas also mentioned after my presentation that the Philippine media are no different in their reporting on marginalized companies. Thus, marginalization is the same, be it in India, the Philippines, or Indonesia.

The state of the media, the state of government, and the household morals are present everywhere. We need to engage in collaborating more, so that we can better understand the qualities of life that are universal. Universal qualities come from the kind of multi-national qualities of some organizations which are not present only in Asia. Something like the European Union may have something to offer our fishermen. Pan Asian fishing rights for Asian fishermen in Asia, for instance.

In the Indian case, it is because of the gap in minds of the policy makers of the fishermen. There is a landlocked city and the people living in the city cannot understand the issues of the fisherman in peninsular India because there is no possibility to bridge the divide in the mindsets of people/policy makers living in landlocked cities and the coastal cities, which I mentioned yesterday. Many of my respondents from the coastal areas said openly that land-based people cannot understand fishermen's issues.

So, as an academic, I need to address this. How I can address this? I will close with this: at least in India, last year, I started this experimental project, because we academics need to facilitate change. We should not only publish papers and attend conferences. We should help our fellow people, in this case, fishermen, to improve their lot. At the end of the day, I won't be satisfied with just presenting a paper at a conference. I will be happier when I see actual change in the field that I work in. So, how do we bring about real change? What I am doing is: I take my students and faculty to the fishing community and try to tell them, "Yes, I think, you said land-based people cannot understand you. So, we will train your children to be journalists. We will train your children to be advisors. We will train your children to be government policy makers." I think this is the best to bring about change.

[Dr. Akimichi] In Indonesia, there is a local governor's association. In the northern part of Japan, in Miyagi, the governor of Miyagi Prefecture claimed we should make a new

organization.

The Miyagi governor proposed the new idea of a fishing cooperative after a tsunami that has co-sharing. A public organization, a cooperative, but the boss and most of the fishermen's association, the FCL (official cooperative solution) were against the project. But finally, last year, one oyster culture group successfully launched such a program. So, maybe, this is the first case. Maybe professor Kawashima will explain later. I think this is a very powerful message from Japan to Indonesian companies which also suffer from tsunamis. New ideas were already being implemented in parallel with Japanese law. Everyone wins with that. Maybe in the future, several years from now, maybe you should study about Japan's transformation process.

[Dr.Kawashima] Dr. Akimichi told of an example of beginning to run a certain company in the fishing village by establishing a special fishery zone in the Miyagi Prefecture. First of all, the fishery has an aspect of group work, but in case of a disaster like a tsunami, if people gather and work on rehabilitation together, recovery can be faster and successful, like the OMOE-Fishery Cooperative Association in Miyagi city. According to the association's activities, people fished as a group for a while. But basically, fishing for abalone or spearing fishing depend on each person's technique, so some fishermen who could not accept the way of fishing with a group left the association. Similarly, when wholesalers of skipjack tuna or feed fish sardines for skipjack tuna were told to work cooperatively, they could not maintain good relationships, therefore, those two wholesalers could not compromise. We have to be aware of those sensitive incidents and watch those areas as special fishery zones.

Aid ships came soon after the rehabilitation began, but those ships came from the Japanese seaside and were not ideal for those areas. This incident made people study the features of those ships and improve them. The Sanriku coastal area shows the features of the occurrence of disasters like tsunamis. Seeing that stirs people, creates movements and culture, and changes them dramatically.

[Dr. Goto] Thank you very much. I think there are still some questions from the audience, but we have another scheduled event after this conference. I would like to wind up while we continue discussions.

This symposium is the biggest event of the Promoting Globalization Project, but we have finished only half of it. As Dr. Akimichi mentioned, we will go to the Miyagi Prefecture for research tomorrow. We would like for the presenters from Asia who are facing natural disasters to see the current situation in Japan where a catastrophic natural disaster occurred. The area is my hometown, so I will drive to show them areas like Yuriage and Arahama and Higashi Matsushima, Ishinomaki, etc. Just after the disaster, there was a lot of debris. It was collected and now, we can see a lot of

pyramid-like mounds of soil. Between those pyramids, there are memorials and monuments. Anyway, I would like them to see those areas and give us their impressions.

Today's symposium will be published next year as an English thesis paper from the Institute of Anthropology.

Many thanks to our three presenters and two commentators for today's International Symposium.