

## Notes by the Round Table Participants

# The Round Table Report: A Miraculous Communiqué

By Yutaka Kosai

**A**t the concluding meeting of the Round Table Discussion on Japan in the Global Community, Chairman Professor Yasutaka Murakami of the University of Tokyo jokingly stated that it was a near miracle that such a large number of people from such different backgrounds could have agreed on such a plethora of issues. He could not have been more correct. Just taking the language barrier as an example, it can easily be imagined how difficult it would be to sum up the opinions of members representing so many different nationalities. In addition, the round table participants were asked to look into the future to the 21st century, keeping within their perspective as they did so the global community as a whole. It would not have been at all strange if they had

clashed head-on during the discussions.

Yet despite this, something of a miracle was attained. We owe the success of the round table discussion to the way in which the meetings were conducted. First, for each meeting several members were selected to prepare reports, and their detailed papers were distributed beforehand. Two or three preselected commentators then gave their views on the papers. This method was very effective in concentrating discussions on specific topics.

Secondly, as much time as possible was taken for each meeting to give the maximum number of members an opportunity to express their views.

Thirdly, closed discussions were held separately on each topic to stimulate the free exchange of ideas. I think it was be-

cause of this approach to the talks that we were able to compile a unified report. Of course, all this made the work of the secretariat staff more strenuous, not to mention voluminous.

Needless to say, not all the opinions expressed at the meetings are contained in the report. Some points brought up could not be included because they were so unique and pregnant with implications that there was no time to adequately explore them. However, the members should continue to consider them in the future.

I sincerely hope that this report will be read by many, and will serve as a valuable reference when people ponder the future of Japan. ●

# Economic Cooperation in The Asia-Pacific Region

By Anwar Nasution

**R**ecent developments in international trade and monetary systems indicate that the non-communist Asia-Pacific countries must increase intraregional economic cooperation to keep up with the rapid economic growth they have enjoyed since the early 1960s. The increasing protectionism since the Tokyo Round of GATT negotiations in 1973 is unlikely to recede or be dismantled, at least in the foreseeable future. The present "new protectionism" differs from the old protectionism in many respects: It involves non-price or non-tariff measures, it is discriminatory, less transparent and much more complex

to contend with. The ill effects of protectionism are magnified by exchange rate variability in the present floating system. Short-run volatility of exchange rates and their long-term misalignments render planning difficult.

Increasing protectionism of the industrial countries and instability in exchange rates are directly hurting the non-communist Asia-Pacific economies. All of these economies are market economies honoring private enterprise and private property. Trying to realize the dynamic comparative advantage, peoples in these countries believe religiously in: "Do what you can do best and trade for the rest."

They allocate economic resources efficiently by way of rational prices. The role of non-communist governments in the Asia-Pacific region is to preserve market competition by correcting market distortions, and not to create new ones as has been widely practiced in many parts of the world. This makes saving and investment ratios considerably higher in the Asia-Pacific than in other regions. Because they concentrate on producing commodities in which they have comparative advantages, these economies are more specialized in what they can produce best. Through specialization these countries can increase production