

Preface

The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA) is an international non-government organization, formed in 1960 in the Philippines. Since its inauguration, the major objective of the group has been to advance both social and economic development through the study and improvement of public administration in the Asia and Pacific region. In order to accomplish this agenda, the EROPA maintains three training centers in different regions of the area: in New Delhi, Seoul, and Tokyo.

1998 marks the twenty-eighth year since EROPA's inauguration. State, group and individual members of this international organization are extremely proud of the fact that it is the only non-profit and global association devoted to the study of public administration in the Asia and Pacific region. EROPA has been able to continue operating mainly because of the friendship and understanding among these different members of the organization. Without their cooperation and dedication, EROPA would not have been able to remain as active and viable as it has.

In Japan, the Local Autonomy College, which is a research and training arm of the Ministry of Home Affairs, has been responsible for various EROPA activities. For example, the College houses the EROPA Local Government Center, finances and promotes various seminars, and publishes monographs on public sector management issues primarily for the benefit of the EROPA affiliates. The current sixth issue of *Comparative Studies of Public Administration* testifies to the high academic profile and achievement of both the Local Autonomy College and the EROPA Local Government Center in Japan.

Since its inception, *Comparative Studies of Public Administration* has customarily dealt with specific issues of global significance. The first volume, in 1984, focused on a study of local public administration; the second, in 1986, dealt with the professional training of public administrators especially in the political context of development. The third volume appeared in 1990, and centered on the role of local government in depopulated areas of developing countries. Similarly, the fourth issue in 1992 analyzed interactions among residents, non-governmental organizations and quasi-public agencies in the Asia-Pacific configuration. Finally, in 1994, the fifth edition addressed the problem of human resource development in different states of the region.

As in the past, the current sixth issue considers an issue of topical significance by exploring local government reform in different parts of the world. Not only have industrialized countries felt a strong need to reform government, but many developing nations also have made a start on public management reform. This state of affairs suggests that reforming government has become a universal agenda and phenomenon. The current volume of *Comparative Studies of Public Administration*

echoes this trend, as it involves contributions from such industrialized countries as Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, but also includes reports from Iran, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Although the contributions vary, a single message seems powerfully clear: the common need for effective, efficient and economical operations of local government.

The current issue of *Comparative Studies of Public Administration* reflects several positive changes in format, from an enlargement in size compared with previous issues or with other English publications, to the introduction of a professional touch to the cover. On behalf of both the Local Autonomy College and the EROPA Local Government Center, I hope that this issue will help to improve our understanding of local government reform, while it also sheds some important light on the advancement of quality government management in the Asia-Pacific region.

In closing, I would like to make two notes of appreciation. As in the past, this publication has been made possible by the considerate financial assistance from the General Center for Local Autonomy (*Jichi Sogo Senta*) of Japan. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Center. Likewise, I would also like to note our special thanks to Professor Akira Nakamura of Meiji University. He kindly took painstaking jobs of editing the volume.

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