

Preface

EROPA (The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration) was founded in December 1960 as an international non-governmental organization. Its major objective has been to promote economic and social developments of various countries in the Asia and Pacific region. The central secretariat is located in the Philippines. It operates three regional centers: New Delhi, Seoul, and Tokyo. These centers function as either a training ground or a research hub for the member states of the organization.

In October, 2008, EROPA held the 48th conference since its inauguration in Manila, The Philippines. State, group and individual members of this international organization assembled together and discussed many facets of social and political issues relative to the region. The problem of immigration and crime was one of them, while the sustainability of the environment was another issue the participants all thought immensely important.

All of us who have been involved in EROPA activities are extremely proud of the fact that it remains one of the most active and robust associations devoted to the study of public administration in the Asia Pacific region. EROPA has been able to continue working as a viable group essentially thanks to the ever-lasting friendship and cooperation among different members of the organization. Needless to point out, without their support and dedication, EROPA would not have been able to function as an innovative and practical association in this region.

Japan is one of the original members of EROPA. Ever since its foundation, the country has been involved in many activities of the organization. Local Autonomy College of Japan is the research and training institution of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. This college houses the EROPA Local Government Center and provides training courses, research activities, and the publications of different materials on local government and governance germane to the EROPA area.

An important segment of EROPA Local Government Center in Tokyo is publication of the Comparative Public Administration series. Every three years, the Center has made available an important volume dealing with various administrative issues of importance. To date, the Center has published a total of nine different volumes under the same overall title of *Comparative Public Administration*. The topic of Volume Nine, for instance, was *Civil Society and Local Governance*. In this publication, seven different cases were presented. Each examined the role and function of civil society components of different countries in the EROPA region. The volume has been well received and contributed much to the understanding of both roles and problems of non-profit and non-government organizations in the area.

The current tenth volume focuses on *Local Government Finance*. For the first

time, EROPA Local Government Center has decided to study local governments in the region from the perspective of local financial stresses. As the year 2008 came to an end, an unexpected financial *tsunami* crashed ashore in various states of the Asia and Pacific region. As a result of this tremendous problem, already fragile local finances in many Asian countries have further eroded, resulting in a declining quality of various services for local residents. It is for this reason that the current volume has decided to focus on the issue of local monetary problems.

A total of ten essays are included in this volume. Each author has elaborated on the local financial problems from his/her respective country's unique perspectives. The EROPA Local Government Center as well as Local Autonomy College hopes the latest publication will help improve our understanding of immense problems that both national and local governments in the region have currently been facing. As President of Local Autonomy College, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those contributors for their deep insights and analyses, in addition to their dedicated works to this volume.

In closing, I would like to make two further notes of appreciation. This publication is made possible by the financial support from the General Center for Local Autonomy (Jichi Sōgō Center). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Center. Likewise, I would also like to express special thanks to Professor Akira Nakamura of Meiji University, Tokyo. His support in editing the volume has enriched the quality immensely.

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