



Wishing You the Best for the New Year!

Reiji MATSUURA, Director of IATSS Forum

With the first month of 2007 already behind us, we send you our belated greetings on behalf of the staff at IATSS Forum and ask for your continued support.

The IATSS Secretariat is currently busy preparing to receive the first batch of participants for this year. Growing numbers of highly educated participants with degrees from graduate schools and business schools now attend the forum, which accepts practicing professionals from real-life workplaces, and more and more participants have MBAs. However, the MBA has recently been ridiculed as “Much Below Average” by some people. We often hear people say that MBAs have the knowledge, the logic and the ability to analyze and provide advice but are found to be lacking where management on site is concerned.

From the very outset, the IATSS Forum has aimed to provide programs for real-life work situations. The lecturers are from various academic fields and industries, involved not only in academic activities but also in activities related to real-life business. The program focuses more on nurturing the ability to tackle actual challenges at work, rather than on merely instilling logic and knowledge. In order to promote this concept further and to offer participants more opportunities to learn for themselves, improvements were made last year to the structure of seminars and Group Study.

Also, Tommy-san (Mr. Ashizawa), Blackie-san (Mr. Kuroki) and Sunny-san (Ms. Iwase), who had been with the IATSS Forum Secretariat for many years, passed the torch on to their successors after playing lead roles in the 20th Anniversary events.

Furthermore, we have also renovated the exterior of the building to seal holes that have appeared over the past 20 years so that rain and insects would not come through, and we have repainted the outside walls. This year, we plan to renovate the interior and install additional fittings; and work on this has already begun.

The newly revised program will basically stay as is for this year, apart from a few refinements, but new initiatives will be implemented to widen the scope of voluntary participant activities, to liven up alumni activities and to drive forward with exchanges, such as international alumni activities and volunteer study tours. In this regard, the support of our alumni, country committees and volunteers is much appreciated.

Please look forward to hearing more from us as we also intend to enhance our website contents to provide you with timely information.

It is well known that IATSS Forum has participants from 9 ASEAN countries. However, did you know that there are also Japanese participants in the Forums?

In this issue, we will introduce some of the Japanese people who participated in the IATSS Forum program last year, as well as homestay experiences and the Japanese Culture Introduction event held for the Forum participants.

IATSS Forum Japanese Participants

Japanese participants take part in the program, the same as the other participants. As for 2006, we had 7 of them in total with the participants from Southeast Asian countries. Although the duration of their participation was 2 weeks each, we are sure that they experienced and learned something different from their daily lives or work. Let's see what they discovered and learned after their participation in the Forums.



Ms. Misako SAKA (The 39th alumna)

I felt that the 2 weeks I spent with IATSS Forum participants was like being in college again, and it was an important opportunity for me to improve myself outside of work. It was the first time I had communicated with ASEAN people in private, but I could enjoy the cultural differences among us and seriously consider and study about population and political issues etc., which are difficult to concentrate on when I'm at work. Most importantly, I came to feel that South East Asia has a familiar existence, because of having friends in ASEAN, and I want to pay more attention to the South-East

Asian situation. I have only been to Vietnam and the Philippines, so I would like to visit other ASEAN countries to see my friends in the near future.

IATSS Forum Japanese Participants (Continued)

Mr. Shingo TOMIYA (The 39th alumnus)

As I had limited views of Asian countries, I hardly knew how I could communicate with the participants from 9 ASEAN countries. How to deal with and express my thoughts was also my major concern before joining IATSS Forum.

However, as the time passed, I realized that the most important thing is the first impression in greeting each other. This is the difference I've learned between Japanese and ASEAN people.

After our completion ceremony, although we all said good-by promising to have a future reunion with each other, I secretly thought that I would never meet them again.

But in reality, it happened! Afterward, I was assigned to go to Thailand on business for 2 months. Then, I made a contact with the Thai women who were participants of our 39th batch with a little hope of meeting them there. They both welcomed me with a warm and cheerful reception. I was very touched and delighted to know that I still had such stable friendships with them, even if I could not speak English or Thai well.

I don't know what will happen to me in the future, but I'll keep on thinking a great deal about first greetings with those I'll meet and friendships with the people I've met.

I really want to express my appreciation for the chance to have joined this IATSS Forum!



With the 39th alumni in Thailand
(Buay: Left, Beau: Middle, Shingo: Right)

Mr. Naoki FUJIHARA (The 40th alumnus)

The IATSS Forum program is high level and covers a variety of fields. Its schedule is very tight with systematic seminars, Group Study and field study, etc.. As a Japanese participant, I joined it for 2 weeks, and went through the topics related to Southeast Asia or global issues. It required me to pre-study about these topics; however, I came to know in the lectures, that it is more necessary to actively participate in discussion by structuring and expressing what I thought accurately than to get knowledge beforehand. I didn't have time to stop and think back to English grammar or composition which I learned in school, but I had to put myself directly in the active discussion. But then, I'm sure that a lot of Japanese people, who are not good at speaking English, need to get into such a situation.

What I was impressed with was the friendly stance of the participants from ASEAN countries. They tried hard to understand what I wanted to tell them with my poor English. They also asked for my comments and opinions without reluctance, even if I sometimes disturbed the smooth discussions.

Throughout the official program and private time with the other participants, I realized that I came to speak English so fluently. Their lighthearted smiles took my fatigue away. I can confidently say that I had a wonderful experience of different cultures with a good memory of "The Cultural Exchange Day."

I will treasure for a lifetime the fruits of my experience and the "Best Friends" I've made in this Forum. I will not only keep them in my memory but also employ them in my future international communications and negotiations in my work. I couldn't have gotten to know the characters of ASEAN people unless I had joined IATSS Forum. I'm really lucky to have had such a good opportunity as this!



**With the fellow participants
on the Cultural Exchange Day**
(Naoki: Second from the left in the back)

Homestay Experience

It is in the homestay that participants can enhance their firsthand experience of Japanese life and culture. In this event, each participant stays with a family of Japanese volunteers for 2-day and 1-night. Although the time is limited, both participants and their host families can enjoy talking, cooking, and interacting with each other. This experience becomes one page of unforgettable memories for many of the participants. There are many alumni and host families still communicating via e-mail, and even some of the families visit ASEAN countries to meet them!

Host Families' Impressions

All the participants we met were so nice. We enjoyed having a dinner party, a tea ceremony, and going to a shrine together. Moreover, they tried to wear Japanese Kimono. We also had a very good opportunity to learn about their cultures, lifestyles and languages from them. 1 night and 2 days passed by so quickly.

Now we are interested in the participant's country, because she explained with photos. We would all love to keep in touch with her all of our lives!

Being a host family was a good opportunity to know the life styles and real nature of participants' countries through communication with them, which we could not experience in our daily lives.

Participant's Impression

All my host family was friendly. My host mother asked me what my hobbies were and where I wanted to visit in advance. I told her that I am fond of natural beauty and I like to see mountains, rivers, water-falls and flowers. According to my request, we visited the Suzuka Mountains. On the way, we stopped for a lunch at a Japanese-style restaurant. They introduced me to a traditional food called "Tororo." I faced a little difficulty having it because the taste and nature of the food is different from my own. I was very excited and enjoyed going up the mountain, as it was my first experience on a gondola.

My host father could not speak English. Even though, we could communicate with each other using a dictionary. I told them about my country and culture. They were all interested and they also explained Japan in return. Although 2 days were really short, we've built a strong friendship among us. I was extremely satisfied with my homestay.

Japanese Culture Introduction by the Japanese Volunteers

On the 24th of September, 2006, Japanese volunteers held an event called "Japanese Culture Introduction" for the 40th IATSS Forum participants who had just arrived in Japan almost a week before. In this event, each participant had a chance to wear colorful traditional Japanese "Yukata" and had firsthand experience of Japanese culture, such as the tea ceremony, calligraphy, bon-odori (a kind of Japanese dance), etc. An "impromptu" theatrical group of volunteers played a skit with quizzes to show Japanese customs and manners which were useful for their stay in Japan, especially for the homestay program. All the participants and the volunteers cooked and had "Okonomiyaki" & "Temaki-sushi" for dinner, and they fully enjoyed Japanese culture on that day!



The 40th Participants wearing colorful "Yukata"

Participant's Impression

Excellent! This is how I would describe the short play that the IATSS Forum volunteers presented during Japanese Culture Introduction. It was almost comprehensive for us to know the basis of Japanese culture, especially when staying in a Japanese home. Only then did I learn that it's quite ill-mannered to enter a house with shoes, and that you have to place them pointing outside.

I can not forget myself in a "yukata". At first, I thought it was too long for me to wear, but thanks to the volunteers, it was adjusted to fit my size.

Doing calligraphy and making tiny accessories (Shippo-yaki) were rare experiences; more so having played games with high school students. Although we could hardly understand each other using our languages, still, we were able to play and exchange pleasures.

Japanese Culture Introduction

- Experience of wearing "Yukata"
- Introduction skit about Japanese culture and manners
- Booths
(Tea ceremony, calligraphy, Shippo-yaki, games, etc.)
- Bon-odori
(Japanese dance)
- Japanese food experience
(Temaki-sushi & Okonomiyaki)

Alumni's Weddings & Engagements

The IATSS Forum secretariat has received a lot of news of weddings & engagements from alumni members. These are some of their photos. May you have happy lives together forever!!



Tammie (Right)
(The 40th alumna from Vietnam)
Got married on January 14, 2007



Tong (Right)
(The 40th alumna from Thailand)
Got engaged in 2006



Emily (Right)
(The 39th alumna from Cambodia)
Got married on January 14, 2007

IATSS Forum Schedule 2007

[The 41st Forum]

Opening Ceremony: Saturday, April 14
Completion Ceremony: Saturday, June 2

[The 42nd Forum]

Opening Ceremony: Saturday, September 22
Completion Ceremony: Saturday, November 10

Alumni Revisits IATSS Forum

The IATSS Forum secretariat had 2 alumni visits in November 2006.

Monivann: Second from the right
(The 37th alumnus from Cambodia)
Visited on November 17, 2006

Ho: Second from the right
(The 36th alumnus from Singapore)
Visited on November 27, 2006



IATSS Forum

Address: 7992 Ino-cho, Suzuka, Mie,
510-0201 JAPAN

Tel: +81-59-370-0511

Fax: +81-59-370-0505

E-mail: mail@iatssforum.jp

URL: <http://www.iatssforum.jp>

[Publisher] Reiji Matsuura
[Executive Editor] Oriie Kitamura

IATSS Forum Quarterlies (including back issues of Japanese/English versions) can be browsed on our website.
[URL: <http://www.iatssforum.jp>]

2007. 02