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Thongbonh Siriphone (Bobo, Laos)
Jumina Anak Lasan (Jane, Malaysia)
Rashvinjeet Singh Bedi (Rashvin, Malaysia)
Kyaw Dewa (Kyaw, Myanmar)
Pyai Pyai Pwint (Pwint, Myanmar)
Ganela, Shena Faith Mateo (Shen, Philippines)
Kuan Ming Leong (Ming Leong, Singapore)
Lim Cher Ying (JY, Singapore)
Donavanik Wuttithon (Woody, Thailand)
Sudtho Jariya (Gate, Thailand)
Bui Tran Hieu (Hugh, Vietnam)
Tran The Vinh (Vinh, Vietnam)
Hideto Ushio (Hide, Japan)
Kohei Mizutani (Cafe, Japan)

14. Newsletter
Preface

Akira Haga
General Manager
IATSS Forum

Hello everyone I’m Akira Haga the general manager of the IATSS Forum and I would like to start this report off with a few of my thoughts about this year.

As you probably know we were only able to hold the Forum once in 2010 because of the 2008 world economic recession. It was our original intention to have 18 participants for the 47th IATSS Forum, but unfortunately, one of the Filipino participants was unable to join us bringing the total number of participants this year to 17.

In 1985, the first IATSS Forum was held and 25 years has passed since then. 818 people (1000 if you include Japanese participants) have completed the IATSS Forum program and now play an active role, not only in their own countries but also all over the world. The success of this forum is a great example of the old Japanese saying that “persevering through something difficult makes one stronger”. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the many lecturers, local volunteers, Forum Country Committees and Secretariats in 9 countries, and representatives of embassies who supported and cooperated with us for such a long time.

It is our duty to consider and shape the future role of the IATSS Forum. It is necessary for us to have a clear view of what parts of the Forum we would like to keep and what parts we need to change. This is applicable, not only to the members of the IATSS Forum Steering Committee and the Program Committee but also to the Forum Country Committee and Alumni members in each country.

In 2010, we were able to spend a lot of time on the preparation of the 47th IATSS Forum, because the Forum was not held in spring (the forum is usually held twice a year, in spring and autumn). Thanks to the spare time, we were able to prepare additional materials for each program as well as more detailed explanations about life in Suzuka which made things much easier for the participants. In addition, most of the Suzuka Secretariat staff including myself have been concerned with the IATSS Forum Program for more than 2 years. Therefore, everything went much smoother than we had expected.

The young and excellent participants who have high ambitions, individuality and endowments were elected for the 47th IATSS Forum. They respected a diverse section of society and were more conscious of sharing information, ways of thinking, and behavior. They achieved
high-level results on all programs with high motivation and concentration. I have noticed that because of the expansion of comfortable urban life and internet in the ASEAN countries, many participants are losing their distinctive national traits and cultures. However, I was overwhelmed by the energy, vitality and personality of the young people in the ASEAN countries at the presentations and performances which they held on various occasions during the 47th IATSS Forum. Particularly their ideas and techniques, presentations, group discussions at each seminar and Group Study, their dedication moved us all. It is always a great pleasure to meet new participants with talent every time.

For something completely different, in the preface of the 46th R & R, I said that we, Suzuka Secretariat, would work on the activation of the Alumni activities. Unfortunately, we have not met all of our stated goals in this area. However, we have not given up.

In recent years, social networking sites such as Facebook have been widespread. I myself have been using it since 2009. In the 47th IATSS Forum in 2010, I continued to set the pictures and comment of the day on Facebook everyday for the 55 days of the forum. I hope it reminded some alumni members of the IATSS Forum. I notice that, the alumni members of the 45th and the 46th IATSS Forum have been using it actively and the participants of the 47th Forum are still communicating with each other over the Web every day. We expect that alumni members will be forming social networks through Facebook, which will lead to information transmission and various activities.

We also expect that the websites for the IATSS Forum Alumni Associations in all 9 countries will be set up, allowing their recent news, small-group or volunteer-activity reports, and regular reports on the progress of Alumni projects to be transmitted over the Web. We understand that this may be difficult for some of IATSS Forum Alumni associations. Therefore, for the time being, the Suzuka Secretariat will transmit information about IATSS Forum and Alumni activities on their behalf.

We hope that our activities will encourage and help not only participants but also other people, to realize their dreams for a brighter future.
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<td>Orientation / Bicycle Training / Welcome Dinner</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>Gasshuku - Team Building Training</td>
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<td>Gasshuku - Team Building Training</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Gasshuku - Team Building Training / Preparation for Opening Ceremony</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Opening Ceremony / Get-together with local volunteers</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Self-Development Activity</td>
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<td>Seminar / OVOP (One Village One Product) Movement</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>Field Study: Honda Suzuka Factory</td>
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<td>Group Study: Introductory Training / Facilitation Skills</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>Group Study: Introductory Training / Facilitation Skills</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>Visit to Traffic Education Center / Suzuka City Hall (courtesy) / Suzuka Police Station (courtesy)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sat</td>
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<td>Visit to Ruin of Heijo-kyu Palace &amp; Todai-ji Temple / Japanese Traditional Stage Performance &quot;Noh&quot;</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Seminar / Budo <del>Japanese Warrior</del></td>
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<td>Seminar / Environment and Sustainable Asia</td>
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<td>Individual-Plan Day</td>
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<td>Individual-Plan Day</td>
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<td>Seminar / Political System</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Group Study /①</td>
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<td>Group Study /⑥</td>
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<td>Seminar /⑨ Education</td>
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<td>Seminar /⑩ Japanese Citizens’ Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries</td>
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<td>Self-Development Activity</td>
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<td>Move to Tokyo / Visit to Headquarter of IATSS</td>
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<td>Visit to Tokyo Traffic Control Center / Visit to Respective Embassies</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>Seminar /⑪ Logistic Strategies</td>
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<td>Individual-Plan Day</td>
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<td>Seminar /⑫ Enterprise Strategies <del>Convenience Stores &quot;FamilyMart&quot;</del></td>
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<td>Seminar /⑬ Technology Development <del>HONDA Humanoid Robot &quot;ASIMO&quot;</del> / Move to Suzuka</td>
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<td>Self-Development Activity</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Departure</td>
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*Honorific prefixes are omitted*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tomoko Seki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President, Seize the moment/Seeds/She's Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fumihiko Adachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor, College of Contemporary Society and Culture, Kinjo Gakuin University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiko Tsubaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Director, Global Network of Facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsutomu Mizota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor and Chair, Institute of Tropical Medicine/Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Nagasaki University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masakazu Ishihara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson, NPO Nara-Noh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Bennett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor, Division of International Affairs, Kansai University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazuo Matsushita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor, Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yoshiharu Tsuboi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor, School of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Fister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor, International Research Center for Japanese Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuto Kitamura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Human Sciences, Sophia University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michio Ito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President, Asia Community Center 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor, Graduate School of Social Design Studies and Faculty of Sociology, Rikkyo University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atsushi Fukuda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor &amp; Head of the Department, Department of Transportation Engineering &amp; Socio-Technology, College of Science and Technology, Nihon University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshiyuki Asahi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Manager, Business Support Department, Area Franchising Division, FamilyMart Co., Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masato Hirose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Chief Engineer, Fundamental Technology Research Center, Honda R&amp;D Co., Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenji Morii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Engineer, Fundamental Technology Research Center, Honda R&amp;D Co., Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hideaki Ono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Chief Engineer, Fundamental Technology Research Center, Honda R&amp;D Co., Ltd.</td>
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(*Honorific prefixes are omitted)
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nickname</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Ms. Kaing Sanary</td>
<td>Nary</td>
<td>Personal assistant (to executive director and executive team) International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Mr. Ly Senleap</td>
<td>Leap</td>
<td>Project Manager Kamworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Ms. Ajeng Ritzki Pitakasari</td>
<td>Ajeng</td>
<td>News Editor Editorial division, Republika.co.id PT Republika Media Mandiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Mr. Ponco Budisulistyo</td>
<td>Ponco</td>
<td>Lecturer / Head of Broadcasting Study Program Faculty of Communication Science Mercu Buana University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Mr. Srimuang Sihnnakohn</td>
<td>Kohn</td>
<td>Teacher and Leader of Youth Union Luangnamtha Teacher Training School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Ms. Thongbonh Siriphone</td>
<td>Bobo</td>
<td>Manager Manithong Child Care Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Ms. Jumina Anak Lasan</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Senior Administrative Executive International Division Badminton Association of Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Mr. Rashvinjeet Singh Bedi</td>
<td>Rashvin</td>
<td>Journalist Editorial Department The Star Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Mr. Kyaw Dewa</td>
<td>Kyaw</td>
<td>Managing Director UKD World Class International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Ms. Pyai Pyai Pwint</td>
<td>Pwint</td>
<td>Assistant Executive Officer Human Resource Development Department The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Ms. Ganela Shena Faith Mateo</td>
<td>Shen</td>
<td>Special Science Teacher III Humanities Department, Western Visayas Campus Philippine Science High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Mr. Kuan Ming Leong (Guan Mingliang)</td>
<td>Ming Leong</td>
<td>Senior Economist Macroeconomic Analysis Unit, Economics Division Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Ms. Lim Cher Ying (Lin Jiaying)</td>
<td>JY</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator OMF Singapore Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Mr. Donavanik Wuttithon</td>
<td>Woody</td>
<td>Middle-level Trade Officer Office of Trade Policy, Department of Export promotion Ministry of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Ms. Sudtho Jariya</td>
<td>Gate</td>
<td>Instructor English Program Satree Siriket School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Mr. Bui Tran Hieu</td>
<td>Hugh</td>
<td>Chief of the Dept. Academic Department VPBox, Vietnam Education Development JSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Mr. Tran The Vinh</td>
<td>Vinh</td>
<td>Chairman DHV Construction And Verification Joint Stock Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Mr. Hideto Ushio</td>
<td>Hide</td>
<td>IT Strategy Management Office IT Division Honda Motor Co., Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Mr. Kohei Mizutani</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>Staff, Paint &amp; Plastic Department, Suzuka Factory Honda Motor Co., Ltd.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mikio KOGANEI (Mikio)  
Coursemaster

Noriyoshi KIKUCHI (Charlie)  
Coursemaster

Akira HAGA (Akira)  
General Manager

Mikio KOGANEI (Mikio)  
Coursemaster

Yumiko TANAKA (Yumi)  
Coordinator

Orie KITAMURA (Orie)  
Coordinator

Nanae SAKAKURA (Nanae)  
Coordinator

Yumi HASEGAWA (Hassy)  
Coordinator

IATSS Forum Staff Members

Midori KISHI (Midori)  
Coordinator

Masumi SAKA (Masumi)  
Coordinator

(On maternal leave)
Hi, this is Leap writing from Phnom Penh. I hope everyone is doing well. For me, it is very difficult to concentrate on my work and study because fantastic IATSS Forum is coming soon. So far, so good, I keep receiving a lot of important detail information about the forum as well as a life in Japan. I am very curious to learn more about Japanese people, culture, society, technology, traffic, etc. Additionally, all the topic of Group Study, Seminar, Field Study, Team Building are all designed in very attractive ways which are relevant to nowadays issues in Asia. Due to the contribution of experienced lecturers, knowledgeable candidates, and helpful staff of IATSS, I strongly believe that this forum will be very productive to generate a dynamic learning atmosphere which will benefit to everyone. I am looking forward to meeting you all soon. Sunny Regards from Phnom Penh,

Leap (Cambodia)

Chum Reap Sour Everyone!!! Warm Greeting from Cambodia!!! How do you feel when you think and talk about the IATSS Forum? Are you feeling excited mixing with nervousness? We just had final interview with country committees and IATSS staffs in the late of April. Now, it is nearly the late of July that we all have received and read the 2nd kits of IATSS information. It will not be taking longer time.

Soon the date of IATSS Forum for 47th Batch will be approaching!!! Yeah-------!!! I have always been over the moon and in the big smiling face when thinking of it. I am longing for seeing all of you, taking part in every program activities and learning and working cross culture among participants from different experiences, educational backgrounds, and nationalities. How interesting and challenging will it be? IATSS Forum is not the forum that I just applied for my first time or the second time.

I think it must be the forth time for me. What always inspiring me to keep my attempt and motivation up are theme of the forum “Thinking and Learning together” and its interesting and useful activities in the program. I have never ever given up and been tired of applying again and again. Finally, I have successfully been selected for the program and must try my best to make use of every single minute during the program to share and learn new insight, experiences, knowledge among the co participants, professors and IATSS staffs as much as I can for my future career development. See you all so soon on the 20th of September!!!!

With loves

Nary (Cambodia)

Before the 17 participants of the 47th IATSS Forum from 9 countries came to Japan, the IATSS Forum secretariat Suzuka asked them to write about their enthusiasm, passion, expectation, etc. for the coming 55-day Forum. Their messages were posted on the IATSS Forum website.

Looking back at these articles, we can clearly see how much the participants have changed as a direct result of their time at the IATSS Forum.
It's always a blessing to have an opportunity to learn and experience new things. That's what I have been feeling since the day the IATSS Forum Committee chose me as one of the participants of the batch 47. I will stay in Japan, one of the modern countries I wanted so bad to visit, and learning many things from the first hands of the Japanese experts. The great things are, first, I will meet fellows from ASEAN countries and share great experiences together. Discovering Japan and having a chance to deepen my understanding about ASEAN issues mean a grand prize with extra bling. Second, well because of limited space, so I can only mention two, the main course won't be just traffic and safety science. Learning about other culture, Japanese values, developing personal skills such as respecting others, building team works with others, will be the other nutritious meal in the Forum, which I believe aren't less challenging to be chewed. I hope I can gain valuable things and contribute optimally to the Forum. Can’t wait to really see, touch, smell, hear and even taste the experiences.

Ajeng (Indonesia)

Am I dreaming…? Such a common question for everyone who got what they really want. But, it didn’t apply for me. Joining the IATSS Forum is not just what I want, but it’s such my obsession. Since the first time I read the IATSS Forum advertisement on the newspaper in 2007, I have been having a strong spirit to join it. I believe, by joining this program, I could upgrade my individual quality in many aspect, not only in term of individual aspects, but I’m very sure that through IATSS Forum can also escalating all of the participant’s social aspects quality. As its very valuable motto “Thinking and Learning Together”, it makes possibility for us to have a great opportunity to formulate the most properly solution for every problem that faced by each participant’s countries, especially the ASEAN countries. As we may know, that Japan is a very inspiring country with its advanced technology and a very unique culture. I’m quite sure that I can learn and experience many things during my stay in Japan. All those things that made me apply to join the IATSS Forum for three times since 2007. Thanks God in this third time (which is my last chance, concerning my age), I was selected as one of the participants from my lovely country, Indonesia. Can’t wait to see you in Japan…

Ponco (Indonesia)

To live under the sky peacefully and to join hands in development are people’s hope all over the world. To be selected as a representative of Laos to participate the 47th IATSS Forum in Japan is my first opportunity to visit abroad, particularly the country I have been aspiring for visiting for a long time. I hope to gain a lot of profound experience, knowledge and capacity from this program. The participants are from different countries in a region. Therefore, it’s auspicious opportunity to us being open-minded from knowing the current issues and successes from each country, then brainstorming and discussing will find out the better ways. Stepping forwards and overcoming the issues together sounds glamorous and successful. At the same time we can exchange not only the various cultures but also other interesting activities from ASEAN countries and Japan as well.

Kohn (Laos)
Hello, my name is Siriphone Thongbonh, you can call me for short as “Bobo”. I am from Laos and I am very delighted to be in Japan again. I heard so much about the IATSS Forum activities and intensive discussions from my senior, that I promised myself to apply for this forum once I am qualified, and here I come. I believe that IATSS Forum is a great training and exchanging program for working people who would like to experience another angle of their professional lives. I hope that I would learn as much as I could while making the best use out of this trip. Thank you,

I am very excited to have been selected as one of the participants of the 47th Forum. Dealing with logistic affairs in international operations of BAM with no background qualification in such field, I think IATSS Forum is a chance in my life to get a formal and certified foundation to move up further in my career. I admired Japanese culture since I was a kid, TV shows such as Gyaban and Ultraman made me impressed. And in reality, it shows that Japan is the best role model in the world for its high technology and rich culture. I also look forward to having the cross-cultural cooperation experience with fellow participants and IATSS staff. About two months ahead of the forum, but I am already excited doing research and preparing the materials for the Seminar 1. I hope I can learn something from every lesson, enjoy every journey and seize every moment spending in the forum.

Jane (Malaysia)

Bobo (Laos)

Konichiwa! After watching Japan excel but losing narrowly in the World Cup, I am counting down the days to the IATSS Forum. I hope I can learn the Japanese secret in excelling in football and other sports. I am also interested in how Japanese can excel in the fields of technology, preservation of the environment and economy among others.

I have been to Japan before but that was for a very short duration two years ago. I hope to make full use of my two months in Japan this coming September. I have bought books for Japanese and hope that I can communicate in the language when I am there. I am trying my best! Hope to see you soon.

Rashvin (Malaysia)

Mingalarbar! Having a strong wish to visit Japan one day, my wish will come true soon. I am so grateful to the founders and IATSS Forum for nurturing youth from ASEAN countries to become young leaders in the region. Of course, we are jealous of the country like Japan for its modernization and would like to explore how Japanese people have surmounted the process of it. In the era of globalization, “Thinking and Learning Together” with mutual understanding is important to all of us. I am also keen to take part with enthusiasm in IATSS Forum by learning various perspectives and sharing different experiences from Japan and ASEAN youth participants. Moreover, it is worth to embrace better understanding and broader view concerning current issues in ASEAN and Japan. Last but not least, hopefully, Home Stay in Japan shall give us a chance to know more about interesting Japanese culture, custom and tradition.

Kyaw (Myanmar)
Good-day to everyone! I am very excited to participate in the IATSS Forum in Suzuka. Participating in IATSS Forum is one of my dreams and it will come true now. I cannot find enough words to express how happy I am for being granted of this great opportunity. The waiting period to attend this forum is very long for me and because I am very eager to meet all my new friends. I am very keen to have the opportunity to “think and learn together” with my new Japanese and ASEAN friends and also to share our knowledge and experiences together. I do believe that this forum would help us in broadening and deepening our knowledge with the social, cultural, economical and political perspectives of Japan, other ASEAN countries and the world. I am looking forward to seeing you all in September in Suzuka.

**Pwint (Myanmar)**

Every day that passes is a day close to my most-awaited time- the IATSS Forum this September 2010. Since May of this year, immediately after I knew that I made it as one of the Philippine participants for this prestigious program, I have already started getting some necessary things ready for another Japan experience. I’m blessed to be given the opportunity to be back in Japan after my last visit in the year 2006. I am so grateful of the privilege to be part of the 47th IATSS Forum. As I get to receive now and then, emails and information kits about the details and preparations for the program, I get to become more excited of going and experience the best of what the program has in store for us, participants. I’m looking forward to an enriching learning moments with my co-participants, as well as from the seminar lecturers, and my host family. I also hope to understand more of the Japanese culture; likewise, those of other ASEAN nations. My participation to this program is also hoped to broaden my perspectives regarding different issues and concerns of our respective countries and the world as a whole. I hope to harmoniously work and learn with the other participants, and together contribute to the success of the 47th IATSS Forum. With bated breath, I’ve been waiting for this one exhilarating and meaningful experience, and very soon…I’ll be there.

**Shen (Philippines)**

Keen anticipation, mixed with a tinge of unbridled excitement These are the feelings I have prior to the upcoming IATSS Forum. The IATSS Forum offers an excellent opportunity to interact with and learn from the participants in the region. ASEAN is an important trade and investment market in the global community, and as we move towards greater regional integration, the shared communal ties that bind us become even more important. I’m looking forward to deepening my knowledge and broadening my perspective of socio-economic issues in the region. With the diverse representation among the participants and lecturers from Japanese academia and industry, the discussions promise to be rich and interesting. Last but certainly not least, I am excited to visit and learn from Japan – a country known for her history, culture and beauty. Japan offers a remarkable economic model of technological development and innovation over the past few decades, and I’m looking forward to learning more from Japan’s experience at the IATSS Forum.

**Ming Leong (Singapore)**
For most Singaporeans, the highlight of 2010 may be the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) since it is going to be held in Singapore. In fact, we are having publicity boards everywhere now, counting down to 14 August 2010. For me, my personal highlight of 2010 is to be able to participate in IATSS Forum and I'm counting down too! Between YOG and IATSS, I think there is one key similarity – people from different countries coming together to work together, understanding one another and build strong relations that will carry on even after official programmes end. I am very excited about IATSS Forum and really looking forward to the seminar topics, as well as getting to know every IATSS participant and staff member. Also especially grateful to spend nearly 2 months in beautiful Japan, learning more about the culture and people. What a privilege! See you all really soon!

JY (Singapore)

First of all I would like to say “Ohayo gozaimasu, Konnichiwa and Konbanwa” to every members of IATSS Forum family. Or in case some of you could understand Thai, “Sawasdee krub” which mean hello to all of you. My name is Wuttithon Donavanik or you can call me Woody. I’m one of the 2 participants from Thailand for this upcoming 47th IATSS Forum.

To formally introduce myself; I’m working as Trader Officer at Department of Export Promotion, Ministry of Commerce Thailand. Since I aware that I’ve qualified for IATSS Forum, I’ve been really looking forward to it. I hope that by attending this valuable Forum, I would be able to learn and exchange my knowledge and experience with all ASEAN participants along with various lecturers and staff members from Japan. See all of you in September!

Woody (Thailand)

Hi there, I have been waiting to meet all of IATSS Forum’s participants in Japan. I’m sure that we will have a lot of fantastic time together as there are so many activities for us to join within 55 days. I know that this forum will allow me tremendously to gain knowledge rewarding because it’s virtually a real-life study on a country’s cultural traditions, language, etiquette, and history. Not to mention, participating IATSS Forum can enhance our transnational competencies, a redeeming quality in future opportunities. As an educator, I have learnt that Japanese intellectual is one of the prestigious fields of study which are highly recognized all over the world. Therefore, I keenly follow with great interest this program. I can positively claim that this Forum will improve my cultural perspective and show me the practical ways to cope with ASEAN and Japanese ways, together with constructively deal with differences. Aside from the academic advantages and personal empowerment, I wish to maintain relationship with new friends in the future.

Gate (Thailand)
Some fifteen or twenty years ago, a number of Vietnamese kids knew about Japan and Japanese had increased greatly thanked to many cultural tidal waves from Japan spread over Vietnam. Among those, I was so impressed and excited to read plenty of comic books such as Doraemon, 7 Dragon Balls, Conan Detective, etc. They had influenced profoundly the childhood characteristics and imagination of many Vietnamese youth and kids. We had also learned a lot of humanity and the learning spirit from these tiny simulated worlds of Japan. When I was in a business school, my final thesis was about Corporate Culture, one of my most favourite subjects at school from which I knew more about Japanese economy and enterprises. The last project I was working on was one by FPT University, FPT Corporation, whom biggest partners are Nipponese corporations. That is not much but enough for me to understand and build strong admiration and respect toward Japan. IATSS 47th forum is, therefore, beyond a chance to study abroad but to come and visit a wonderful country. Also, I am so eager to meet and share my vision and experience with brothers and sisters coming from our big community, the ASEAN. Cannot wait. Au kikai wo motto matte imasu.

Hugh (Vietnam)

Vietnamese people say “Seeing is Believing”. It’s right that IATSS Forum is a good opportunity for me to see the reality of Japanese people and country by my eyes. IATSS with the motto “Thinking and Learning Together” is not only the forum to make me further understand Japanese history, culture, society and economy, but also the multinational forum to make ASEAN and Japanese participants mutual understand to promote their cooperative relations for Asian development, prosperity and peace. “Travelling forms a young man” is useful for me as a highway engineer to get well at Japanese on infrastructure, especially system of traffic safety to apply into designing and constructing the highway system and infrastructure in Vietnam.

Vinh (Vietnam)
The 47th IATSS Forum
From September 20 to November 15, 2010

Objective of the 47th IATSS Forum:
To create and learn in a fun, friendly and diverse environment through collaboration and effective communication
Seminar Reports
OVOP (One Village One Product) Movement
Prof. Fumihiko Adachi

September 27th, 2010
Jariya Sudtho (Gate)
Thailand

Theme

One Village One Product practice in Oita prefecture, Japan which lead by Mr. Hiramatsu, Governor of Oita since 1979. His vision to start the simple but powerful idea in the prefecture in order to encourage local people to produce their unique product to be sold locally and internationally has been adopted by many countries, especially among ASEAN. Therefore, it is useful for us to take in to account the sensible way of harmoniously working between local, national officers and regional people since this model is considered to be successful in term of regional development policy.

In practice, on the other hand, many countries adopting OVOP notion are facing tremendous limitations due to several factors. It seems apparent that the organization chart, OVOP support system from government of each country, dramatically affects the success of this self-reliance project. One thing that all three countries’ presentations share in common is the top-heavy organization support. Political commitment of all three countries is higher than local initiatives. Technical assistance is only available in national sector which comes from different ministries. Those government officers tend to conduct research and make a decision for local people for what they should produce according to the analysis rather than emphasize on local wisdom and specialty. To be more specific, Oyama case where people make decision of their own without government support is not likely to occur in any other countries because the governments still centralize their power and resources. Moreover, the collaboration of national and local level is needed to be significantly enhanced to facilitate valid practice of self reliance.

The impressed points

The attempt to continuously promote their local product to potential customers in order to increase income per capita is remarkable. Only one effective leader could make it possible. It seems, according to the lecture, that Mr.Hiramatsu has tried so many ways to bring the success to people’ welfare. This ongoing process is considered to be great sample of a famous saying “Never give up”.

His creation of network that Oita people have done is the most impressive aspect. During the lecture, Prof. Adachi has mentioned that Oita OVOP has numerous number of distribution channel to maximize the sales. There are some sensible strategies such as promotion of their outstanding food in local hotel, business to business channel by selling to food processing factories in the area and local convenient store such as “Young Wives Shop”.
The determination to use domestic product also enhances their total sale, while local oriented awareness is also simultaneously occurred. The idea of ‘One marketable product for one village’ is also appealing. It may sounds simple; however, meaningful and understandable.

**Personal opinion**

The notion of togetherness and separation is brilliant to me as it reflects the real life decision making and human nature that sometimes we have to cooperate to achieve shared goal. On the other hand, individual initiative should be existed to allow each person or group do the certain thing as they wish.

In term of togetherness, I do like an idea of the Governor who stated that “let’s work together on what we can do in the present condition”. It implies that local people should try to use their potential resources by using their own wisdom and effort. Comparatively, all kinds of collaborated atmosphere need collaborative awareness to attain common objectives. However, sometimes, it is vital for people to up against the authority to protect their own right such as the case of Oyama’s farmers playing volleyball in the rice field to against national policy that vigorously encouraged the production of rice above other crops. Oyama’s farmers, in contrast, insisted to grow plum and chestnut or NPC initiative even if it made them lost the subsidies from the government. It implies clearly that individual or even certain group knows what it best for them without other’s command. It might be moderately to compare the case of Oita and Oyama where looser national control cannot overcome grassroots initiatives. The One Tambon One Product (OTOP) project was established in Thailand in 2001. Its main objectives are to create jobs and increase revenues to communities, also to strengthen the Thai citizens' society due to the government's study; it revealed that not only products, but also management perspectives, have the effects on the success of the project. The process, as a result, is top-down as it was the endeavor of former Prime Minister to foster coordination among governments sectors without operative regional or local subcommittee influences the success of OTOP Thailand since the quality of product is not consistence enough to compete in global market. That is the reason why OTOP in Thailand still have to “act and think locally” well before we could move to international market.

**Group Discussion**

Each group is assigned to select the outstanding product of one particular country expected to develop into OVOP. Each of us participates keenly in limited time. After presenting that ceramic from Vietnam, Silk from Cambodia and eco-tourism in Laos will be promoted. Prof. has pointed out that we have not involved competitive analysis because China can also produce ceramic and silk in cheaper price. It means we should consider whether the possible competition’s information can be gathered; thus, it reveals our style of working that we might not look thoroughly enough to prevent problems even if the notion of competitor is one of the severe aspects of conducting any business plan. Working under certain time misleads us with a reduction of focus in detail. I think we have realized that getting the work done might not count as the outcome, but getting it done properly and logically is more preferable.
Traditional Japanese Culture I ~An Introduction to the Martial Arts (Budo)~
Associate Prof. Alexander Bennett

About the lecturer
Prof. Bennett encountered Kendo at the age of 17 when he came to Japan as an exchange student at Inage High School in Chiba prefecture. Initially, he wanted to play soccer but changed his mind because the school’s grounds were not grassed. He tried Kendo instead and has not looked back since. He is now holds a seventh dan in Kendo, a fifth dan in Iaido and a fourth dan in Naginata. He obtained his Ph.D at Kyoto University in which he studied the philosophical and idealistic aspects of Bushido, or spirit of the samurai. He has written books on budo and bushido. Currently he lectures at the University of Kansai.

The Theme
Budo is the collective term of Japanese Martial arts; ranging from Karate-do, Judo and Kendo among many others. It is considered to be one of Japan’s most important cultural treasures and one of its most significant cultural exports. In fact it is one of the vestiges of the Samurai culture that lives on to this day. With differing ranges of popularity, the various martial arts such as Judo, Karate-do and Kendo have spread all over the world. These martial arts are important because they promote discipline, respect, etiquette, humility, composure and most importantly help establish a framework for life.

The Seminar
The Seminar was divided into two parts – theory and practical. In the lecture held in the morning Prof. Bennett talked about Budo, which is the term for Japanese martial arts. He started the lecture by talking about the popularity of the various Japanese martial arts such as Judo and Karate in Iran. At one of the dojo’s in Iran, Prof. Bennett explained that the pictures of the founders of many Japanese martial arts were next to that of Iran’s revered spiritual leader Ayatollah Khomeini. By doing so, he demonstrated how far Japanese martial arts has spread all over the world and is well-regarded, although Japanese themselves might not know of this fact.

Prof. Bennett then got into the history of martial arts in Japan. Prof. Bennett explained that distinct schools (ryu) of martial systems appeared around the 14th century. There were three main schools of thought namely the Tenshindo-den Katori Shinto-ryu, Nen-ryu and Kage-ryu schools respectively. Then participants learnt how the martial arts struggled for relevance during the peaceful Tokugawa period (1600-1868) when Japan was unified. The 5% of the warrior clan had a hard time looking for “work” and some were proud to work on the fields and would rather starve. But at the same time, there was a need for moral examples. This was where warriors with their discipline and code of ethics came into the picture. Martial arts in
this period were a source of intellectualization because it consisted of a highly structured holistic syllabus relevant to personal development and even political acumen. They were also infused with religion (Buddhism and Confucianism) where it was believed that rigorous training was a way to enlightenment. They then evolved to commercialization with the opening of specialist dojo and teaching licenses for example. There was also the sportification of martial arts and this led to the proliferation of new specialist martial arts schools. Prof. Bennett also explained that during the 1880s there was rekindled interest in the arts – they were considered an effective way to train police, to instill nationalism and even as education. Prof. Bennett then talked about how Budo was implemented in the education system. He then concluded the lecture by talking about Zanshin which is a state of awareness needed by all Budo practitioners and can be applied in our daily life.

After the lecture, the class was shown a 40-minute video on Kendo which was previously broadcasted on Japan’s NHK network. The video, which featured Prof. Bennett, was a comprehensive introduction to Kendo.

**Practical training – Kendo**

The participants were able to put theory into practice in the afternoon at the Kansai University’s dojo (gymnasium). With the assistance of Prof. Bennett’s younger brother Blake (who holds a fifth dan in Kendo), IATSS participants and one Japanese student learned the basics of Kendo. We were taught about the respect given to the dojo which is a sacred place for training one’s mind and body. Prof. Bennett explained that one must maintain discipline, proper etiquette, and formality. The training area must be a quiet, clean, safe and solemn environment. Then we got into the formalities where Prof. Bennett and his brother showed the participants the basic moves of kendo starting from the standing positions, the way to hold the shinai (bamboo sword) and the different scoring points (men, tsuki, do and kote). We then practiced the different ways of scoring points with a partner (not seriously). After this practice, we held a friendly match with our training partners, although we used a foam sword instead of the bamboo shinai.

**Conclusion**

This seminar was without doubt the most enjoyable one so far and it is safe to say that no one slept throughout all the sessions. The lecturer managed to keep everyone’s attention with ease because of his passion and interesting explanation about the subject. The video was enjoyable because it explained some concepts such as Zanshin, quoting examples from some of the best Kendo practitioners in the world. Some participants were even inspired to take up the sport when they return to their home countries.
Environment and Sustainable Asia
Prof. Kazuo Matsushita

October 8th, 2010
Ly Senleap (Leap)
Cambodia

Professor: Kazuo Matsushita

In 1976, professor Matsushita completed his post-graduate from Hopkins University in the United States.


Professor Kazuo Matsushita, has a broad interest and experience in global environmental issues, especially climate change policies, business and environment, international cooperation, and the role of non-governmental organization (NGO).

Beside being successful in terms of education and work, the professor also published several books such as “Environment Government”, by Iwanami Shoten in 2002; “Environment in the 21th century and New Development Pattern”, by Kluswer Academic Publishers in 2001; and Sustainable Social System.

After warming up by introducing each other, we have listened to 3 countries presentation, Laos, Thailand and Singapore with different topics. Laos’s participant talked about the preserve; Singapore’s has raise the issue of water pollution, and Thailand’s participant has presented about the traffic issues and air pollution.

It was is pretty sad to learn that in 1950 Laos is covered 70% by trees, but Laos’s forest remains only 49% in 1990. Lately, the government has decided to sell the forest in order to increase the GDP. The government expects to bring civilization to the country. However, we don’t know for sure whether it is a smart decision, because 80% of Laos people are living depending on the forest.

Industrial sector is a major economic driven in Singapore. If we look back 30 years, the water was contaminated very badly due to industry pollution, but the government has a long vision to keep the water clean. The government plans their land very smartly. For example, all
industries should be located in one place so that it’s easy to manage the waste water from the factories. In the end, the government manage to keep the water clean. This is very interesting to learn from about the balance between economic growth and environmental issues.

Thailand, especially Bangkok is facing a main issue of traffic jams. There are too many cars in the city, because everyone has a chance to own a car. As a result, there are 130 million people in Bangkok, yet there are 70 millions cars. The number of cars keeps increasing while the number of roads is still the same.

Following these 3 countries presentation, the professor gave a lecture on the topic of Environment and Sustainable Development in South-East Asia. To start with, professor showed us a lot of fact and statistic about the serious impacts of climate change such as the temperature is raising up, concentration of CO2, the earth de-glaciating, global CO2 Emissions which is becoming an international concern. Not only presenting the current climate change issues, but professor also explained about the countermeasure such as UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol, Policy under climate security concept. Moreover, it is very interesting to learn about the climate change policy.
- Keeping global temperature rise below 2 C
- Long – term target of EU
- Medium and Long – term targets by some countries.
- G8 Heiligendamm: globally 50% by 2050
- California: 80% from 1990 levels by 2050
- Germany: 40% by 2020
- Japan: 25% by 2020
- US: 4% by 2020, 83% by 2050
- China: 40 to 45% reduction of carbon intensity by 2020

At the end of the lecture, the professor concluded that we should come up with the win-win strategies and Eco-efficiencies of equitable and environmentally sustainable manner. We can’t only look at how to improve the economy. We should balance between economic and environmental issue. If we don’t pay a close attention now, we will face a bigger issue in the near future and it will cost much more than the current situation. There is still a big potential of the economic growth regarding to the green world such as the renewable energy, clean Hybrid car, etc.

After the lecture, all the participants were divided into 3 groups to discuss the current issues and solutions of forest preserve, water pollution, and traffic issues & air pollution. Each group had 2 hours to discuss and come with the solution of different assigned issues.
Due to the limited time, all groups can’t prepare a good presentation, but we do try our best. Group A talked about the current issue of deforestation in Laos caused by corruption, and government policy. The government decided to sell some of the forest in order to increase the GDP, however, this decision will effect the majority of Laos people because 80% of the population depend on the forest. Thus, the group come up with the solution that the government should find an other way to develop the country for example promote the eco-tourism, offering skilled training, improve the agriculture, etc.

Group B talked about the water pollution treatment by showing a detail budget of building a water plan. They use Singapore as an example and they wanted to set up the water saving campaign. They have a goal that in next 10 years, everybody will use 10 Liters less.

Group C demonstrated in a funny way by performing a dialogue from a TV talk show. They discussed the traffic issues in Indonesia. First, it was a complain from the Citizen that she couldn’t to work on time, traffic is bad, the road condition is poor, people driving in a bad manner. Then, Ming acted as a governor to solve the problem which he asked for support from NGO, Private sector. Ming need NGO to promote the idea of car-pool and setting up the campaign to educate people about driving in a good manor. Ming also need the cooperation from private sector. Later on, there were a speech from NGO representative, and the private sector agreed with the governor. The group shows about the perspective from the political point of view.

Highlight of what we have learned:
After the seminar, we can clearly understand about the serious impacts of climate change due to various human activities. The professor has shown a lot of facts and figures mainly about CO2 emissions which are of the main cause of climate change. Not only raising the issue, but the professor also explained about different countermeasures to cope with global warming. By introducing a win-win strategy. Economic growth doesn’t always had to effect to the environment.
**Political System**  
*Prof. Yoshiharu Tsuboi*

October 11th, 2010

Sihnnakohn Srimuang (Kohn)  
Laos

**Purpose**

Participants will deepen the general overview of politics, and national administration among ASEAN countries, the previous and current political system of Japan and the world political circumstances.

I. **Summary of Seminar (Political System).**

A Political System is composed of the members of a social organization (group) who are in power, and also one the measures the maintaining of order cohesion in the society and at the same time makes it possible for some other institutions to also have their grievances and complaints put across to the course of society existence. ASEAN countries is a region that consists of diverse political systems such as: Single-political party and multi-political parties, but the perspectives of the political policies of each country focus on one way direction, creating cohesion to people and sustainable solidarity internal and external.

The Seminar (Political System) was held on Monday October 11th, 2010, at the Aranvert in Hotel Kyoto. There were total of 17 IATSS Forum participants, two coordinators from IATSS and a professor. The seminar was divided into two main sessions: the morning session was designed for the participants from Myanmar, Vietnam and Singapore to present the political system in their countries. The afternoon session was designed for Prof’s lecture and group discussion.

In seminar 4: Political System, the participants from Singapore, Myanmar and Vietnam were requested to present the political system of their countries which emphasized on the principles, the present condition of politics, people’s attitudes toward politics and national administration, and also the view on how Obama’s America may influence politics in these counties. The participants were interested in the seminar. They had opportunities to ask the different questions after each presentation and got detailed useful responses from the presenters.

In the real seminar procedure, the participants from Myanmar presented by an introduction of Myanmar politics; Myanmar took independence from Britain in 1948; in 1962, the Military Government ruled under Revolutionary Council (RC) and in 1988, the country was controlled by State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). It changed the name of the country to Myanmar, to represent minorities, non-Burman segments of the country’s population, but 1997, SLORC was dissolved reformed and replaced by the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Now, four political objectives are laid down by the government of Union of Myanmar there are:

1. Stability of the state, peaceful and tranquil community.
3. Emergence of a new enduring state Constitution.
4. Building of a modern developed nation in accord with the new state constitution.

Next were the participants from Singapore. Singapore is a small, clean and modernized country in Asia. It had independence in 1965. It is a sovereign republic. The legal system is based on English common law. The constitution lays down the fundamental principles and basic framework for the three organs of state - the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. On the other hand, the citizens of Singapore pledge themselves as one united people, even though, they are diverse tribes; to build a Democratic Society based on Justice and Equality to achieve happiness, prosperity and progress for their nation.

And before the end of the morning session, the participants from Vietnam presented their political system. Vietnam is a Socialist Republic Single-Party State. The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) was established since 1930. It plays the central role in the political system. The political system of Vietnam comprises of the CPV, political/socio-political organizations and economic entities and all activities are regulated under the constitution and laws.

In the afternoon session, the seminar was started with the Prof's lecture. The Prof mentioned several detailed points among political systems in ASEAN countries and Japan. Firstly he talked about the personal histories of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, Akihito the eldest son of Emperor Showa and Her Majesty the Empress, Michiko the eldest daughter of the late Hidesaburo Shoda; Personal Histories of Their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, Naruhito the eldest son of his Majesty the Emperor and Her imperial highness the Crown Princess, Masako the eldest daughter of Mr. Hisashi Owada, then he pointed out the expense for the Imperial Family, personal expense, palace related expenses and allowance for imperial family members.

Then he indicated the history of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in power since 1955; why LDP has stayed in power so long time!, and also focused on the victory in the General Election of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on the August 30th 2009. He indicated clearly the factors that DPJ won the General Election and what kind of new policies DPJ will do!

Next he added a little bit about the purpose of DPJ. It Changes of the style of government and governance:

- From Bureaucratic government to civil government (led by political persons elected by people), high-officers of government should be administrator not engaged in political affairs.
- Saving the poorer and weaker people (reinforced social-welfare policy)
- Become independent state of USA
- Asia-oriented diplomatic policy

After, the Prof suggested that the participants get awareness the diverse political systems, cultures and society of each country and attempt to make strengthened solidarity by exchanging knowledge, capacity and experience in politics, national administration, cultural and social activities etc to sustain ASEAN region. On the other hand, to visit among ASEAN countries is a significant fact or because we will touch the situations of each country and understand them easier.

II. The impressive points

Personally, I appreciate politics and would like to be a politician in the future; therefore, it was a great opportunity for me to participate in this Seminar (Political System) in Kyoto that mentioned about the political system in ASEAN countries. As everyone knows that ASEAN is a region that abounds with diverse lifestyles, political systems, cultures and societies. To me I gained several things from the seminar and comprehend deeply the political systems of
Japan and ASEAN countries. The Prof knew a lot about politics. I am so proud and appreciate listening to his lecture. I think this experience will help me to develop my country.

In my opinion, it is crucial for all IATSS Forum participants to learn and comprehend deeply the political systems of ASEAN countries to develop their countries; they have to coordinate with neighboring counties. Once again, I would like to thank to the director and all IATSS Forum officers for offering us this wonderful chance to join.

I think it would be more detailed for the diverse participants if IATSS gave the chance to participants from every country to present their political systems because all of them are young leaders. To exchange political system with each other will help them to gain more knowledge, capacity and experience in the diverse politics in the region and also it would be a significant factor in making relationships between national administrations.

III. Group Discussion

After the Prof’s speech the participants were separated in to three groups, A, B, C. Each group was assigned to discuss the theme “The super powers of America and China” in politics, economic, culture and etc. Each group took 50 minutes to discuss and created a presentation. Then 50 minutes past, every group came up with power point presentation. After that the Prof got feedback from the group work and summarized the seminar briefly by pointing out the current political systems in America and China. Which one will be super a power, how, what, why… and finally, the seminar was closed by a thank you speech and group photo.
**Theme**

The Japan Aesthetics seminar was about exploring Japanese traditional and historical artworks, such as traditional paintings, poetry, temples, shrines, gardens including the landscape, houses including the interior such as traditional tea ceremony room.

It was such an interesting theme, because we didn’t just discuss the artwork itself, but we also discovered the philosophy behind it. For example, when we were discussing the Sakura flower, why it was chosen as a national flower of Japan. The cherry blossom describes perish-ability, it blooms only for a few days (approximately is 10 to 20 days).

In case of screen painting, the color is about limiting (irregularity), and we can find some empty spaces that offer us a suggestion (encourages of our imagination). Traditional tea room (in Kyoto) provides suggestion and simplicity. In general, Japanese aesthetics avoid the regularity, symmetry. They prefer irregularity and asymmetry. More about Japanese aesthetics philosophy can be found in Donald Keene’s “Japan Aesthetics” which it deals with suggestion, irregularity, simplicity and perish ability.

**A Briefly Summary**

The seminar started with the short presentation by all participants regarding what the most interesting thing relating to Japanese aesthetics was that we had discovered during our time in Japan. I was very impressed by Fushimi Inary Shrine in Kyoto. Where Gate was impressed by Philosophers Park, Shen was impressed by the traditional Japanese Kimono, Naru was impressed by Japanese traditional food, gardens and Japanese martial arts, Budo, Bobo was impressed by the way of Japanese having their meals, Jane was impressed by the packaging of traditional Japanese beverage, Sake, Vinh was impressed by Japanese people’s discipline and respect, Woody was impressed by Fushimi Inary Shrine in Kyoto, Pwint was impressed by Todai-ji Temple, in Nara, Kyaw was impressed by the Imperial Garden, and the museum near the palace and origami, Hugh was impressed by Japanese hot springs, Onsen, Japanese traditional martial arts, Kendo, and Japanese traditional musical instruments Taisho-Koto, Kohn was impressed by the beach in Japan and the pillars in temple a and shrines, Ajeng was impressed by Japanese traditional musical instruments, Koto, JY was impressed by Japanese traditional cloth, Kimono, Ming was impressed by walking a robot that he saw in Toyota Museum and Leap was impressed by an exclusive taxi.

Prof. Patricia also showed us several kinds of Japanese poetry. Then, she asked our opinion about the poetries. Which poetry did we like most, and why we liked it. Japanese Aesthetics seminar was completed by visiting Tenryu-ji Temple and Okochi-Sanso Villa. Tenryu-ji temple is a world heritage site and one of the most historic sites in Kyoto. Tenryu-ji
Temple is the most important Zen Temple in Kyoto. The temple was founded by Ashikaga Takauji, primarily to venerate Gautama Buddha, and its first chief priest was Musō Soshke. As a temple related to both the Ashikaga family and Emperor Go-daigo, the temple is held in high esteem, and is ranked as the most important (Rinzai) Zen temple in Kyoto. In 1994, it was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as one of the "Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto". Meanwhile, Okochi-sanso Villa is famous for its meticulously laid-out garden, taking advantage of the surrounding vistas, particularly of Mount Hiei and the Hozu River gorge. Along the way enjoying the sites, we had an active discussion with the professor.

The Impressive Points

The philosophy behind the artworks is very impressive. I just realized according to Prof. Patricia presentation. She showed all the evidences, that all of the artworks deal with the aspect of suggestion, irregularity, simplicity, perish-ability and playfulness. Another example is about Japanese ceramics and dishes, it has a different shape, design and texture instead a match sets. The detail of the images in the painting is just amazing, it was performed intentionally.

From the first time I saw the bamboo trees on the way to Okochi-Sanso Villa through the internet, I have been impressed by the harmony rows of the bamboo trees. It gives me a distinct impression. Also the composition of the trees around the temple, it looked like had been designed in that particular way, it was just wonderful.

Personal Opinion

This seminar provided me an opportunity to gain a deeper information of Japanese aesthetics. Even thought it has a similarity and being influenced by Chinese, but still, it has its own strong character and containing a very unique philosophy in any meaning.

The combination of indoor and outdoor discussions by visiting some sites that related to the seminar theme, was just a perfect idea. Information given by the professor was just complete and comprehensive, including the interactive discussion and objects observation.

In terms of the indoor seminar, one thing that needs to be improved is the method of the professor delivering the materials or subject. We need a hand out or seminar outline, so we have a kind of guidance to follow the discussion instead we listen and watch the presentation in the dark room. It could be potential cause the participant’s drowsiness.

Group Discussion

No group discussion.
Everyone has the right to education. That is one of the human right's basic principles that we've learned during seminar education in IATSS Forum, on October 29th. But do all countries really implement that value and protect that right for the people particularly in South East Asia countries? There are so many factors that could impact the education system, the development level and political situation in each country are some of them. Discussion regarding this topic is really intriguing and the young professor from Sophia University, Yuto Kitamura conducted the seminar in a lively way.

As most other seminars, the education one was started by the countries's presentation and the designated countries for this seminar were Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines. This presentation gave us a big picture of how the situation regarding education system and how the country effort's to cope with their problems.

To understand the state of education in Cambodia today for instance, it’s necessary to know the history of the country. Traditionally, education was available only in the Buddhist temples, thus, providing education exclusively for the male population. Since the instruction was given by monks, it was mostly limited to learning Buddhist chants.

In 1917, during the French colonization, a Law on Education was passed by the government introducing a basic primary and secondary education system. At that time, the system was elitist. It reached only a very small per cent of the indigenous population and functioned mainly as a means of training civil servants for colonial service throughout French Indochina.

When the Khmer Rouge had come to power in 1975, they abolished education. They were systematically destroying teaching materials, textbooks and publishing houses. It was quite shocking history that we’ve found during seminars. Schools and universities were closed and their buildings put to other uses. During this period large numbers of qualified teachers, researchers and technicians either fled the country or died.

When the Cambodia government came into power in 1979, they revived the suffered-education system in the state. Based on the constitution, Cambodia announced free compulsory education for nine years. The development of the education system of Cambodia is in progress. Still, many difficulties are faced by the country.

According to the 2005 UNDP update on Cambodia’s MDG progress, the literacy rate for 15-24 year olds has remained largely unchanged in recent years. In 2005 the rate was 83 percent compared with 82 percent in 1999 Cambodia now has a low participation rate in higher education, with just 1.2 per cent of the population enrolled, compared with an average of 20.7 per cent in all the ASEAN countries.
How about Indonesia? As mentioned previously, every country has different challenges. Indonesia with its bigger population—the biggest among ASEAN countries—and its vast variety of ethnics, cultures and languages provides particular issue. Government as state representation has a lot of homework. Government has to provide equal opportunity for all people to access education while at the same time government has to recognize the presence of the diversity of ethnic and culture in the country.

Today, there are three basic compulsory curriculums for schools, namely religious education, civic (right and obligation) education and language. Contrary to countries that employ integrity principles in education system—such as French that prohibit all pupils to express their belief by using particular attribute in the school and exclude religion from the curriculum—those subject are crucial as Indonesia adopted acculturation and separation principles in their education system.

The curriculum can bee seen as the state’s effort to respect multiculturalism, freedom of religion, and human right in Indonesia. There is an exception, however, in religion based-schools, such as Islamic Schools or Christian Schools. They have no obligation to provide other religious subjects if there are non-Islamic or non-Christian pupils studying in their school.

Multiculturalism relatively is not a major challenge in Indonesia’s education system. Gap and unequal opportunity for the people to access education is the main issue. Seems like an old movie for Indonesia citizen, but the facts tell so.

The percentage of children not attending school is quite high (11.47%) particularly in rural area. The absence of teachers in such areas is one of the causes. Many teachers hesitate to teach in remote area since they commonly get a little salary. Another cause is poor facilities of the school. Today, even school buildings with leaky roofs still can be found. A such sad fact.

Compared to its other neighbours, the Philippines, might be the only country with a most distinctive education system in South Asian region. While the others were influenced by Dutch and French, the education system of Philippines mostly adopts American style and use English as the first school language.

Philippines education is considered an advanced level as the country has one of the highest literacy rates in Asia and in the world. As of 2006, its literacy rate is 93 %. As a result, Filipinos are highly demanded in many parts of the world because of their professional skills, proficiency in English and ability to learn other foreign languages and adapt new cultures and traditions.

However, there is a developing plans regarding government plan to replace English with the native language of Filipino. Apparently, the government and several educator have a deep concern about national identity, particularly in employing native language. The Filipino youths now tend to be proud of their English speaking ability. The more fluent they are, the smarter and more prestigious they are. Even, some youth can speak English better than their native language.

On the other hand, the discourse is considered an ironic movement. When the growing trend is to act globally by using foreign language as introduction, the government of Philippines thinks the opposite. But an ironic movement does not always mean a setback, since national identity is a serious matter to be resolved.

We were also lucky to have Professor Kitamura, a handsome, smart and open minded educator as our lecturer on that day. He is an expert in his field, yet he gave the biggest portion of the seminar for the participants to speak their mind than his. He was so kind to offer us to chose whether continue the afternoon session in group discussion or in plenary discussion.
In a little lunch conversation with the professor, some interesting topics were brought up such as how developed countries put education as one of national highest priorities. Even Japan has never taken lightly on education. During Meiji restoration era, Japan changed its education system dramatically to be more progressive. Even after the World War II, despite its failure and position as a defeated country, Japan didn't stop developing its education sector.

Japan eventually reformed its education system and adopted more modern one, now the country along with other developed countries has become a destination to gain knowledge. Japan believes that education plays a key role in a nation development.

Not surprisingly, in final report of the National Council Reform Policies, Japan put three fundamental principles in educational reform, namely the principle of individuality, transition to a system of lifelong learning and responding to internationalization and information systems. All those strong principles are not without cost. Japan allocated 5.3 trillion Yen or 64,7978 billion US dollar for 2007 and 2008 annually national budget plan.

Another good lesson should be taken from the case of China. As 'the dragon' planned to get into higher-quality goods and services, the Chinese government has realized and clearly identified that for the next phase of its economic development would requires a huge investment in human capital. According to Times, (volume 16, October 18, 2010) since 1998, Beijing has undertaken a massive expansion of education.

China is nearly tripling the share of GDP devoted to it. Still according to Times, the number of colleges has doubled and the number or students quintupled, from 1 million in 1997 to 5.5 million in 2007. At the time when Europe and state universities in the US are crumbling for the massive budget cut, China is moving in diametral position.

What does the investment in education mean for China? Robert Fogel, the Nobel Prize-winning economist of the University Chicago has estimated—as quoted by Times—that China will gain a great economic impact from these well-trained workers. A college graduate is three times as productive as someone with a ninth grade education. By his estimates, in 2040, China will be the largest economy in the world.

Whether or not that number is correct, I am not sure, but elsewhere in every developed countries, such as Japan, Germany and the USA and also countries with a big ambitions like China, we will come to the same conclusion. Education is inevitably a crucial factor in national strength and identity. Government that realized it ready to taken pain in education to develop their countries. How about members of ASEAN, have they taken painful steps in education, if they haven't are they ready to take those steps for a long term yet a lot better result? Hopefully we will receive a good news.
The professor began with an explanation regarding Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that the terminology came from the United Nations Charter in 1945. The difference between NGOs and NPOs was clarified by the professor; an NGO is concerned with matters within its competence and not controlled by a government and NPO stands for Non-Profit Organization ie. which does not return profits generated to their own owners or directors. Furthermore, he highlighted Citizens Voluntary Organizations (CVOs). The professor said International CVOs are engaged in issues beyond national boundaries and nationalities. Such issues may include poverty, hunger, basic education, health, rural development, environment, gender and human rights among others. Moreover, the professor added such group as Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), People Organizations (POs), etc.

According to the content of the lecture, there were three country presentations. Firstly, Cambodian participants presented the history of NGOs in Cambodia and the periods were divided into six. From 1954 to 1970 (Independence), only few NGOs activated and most concentrated on religious activities only. During 1970 to 1975 (War period), INGOs provided emergency relief. For the duration of 1975 to 1979 (Khmer Rouge period), as all international humanitarian aid was forbidden, there were no more NGOs at all that time. For the period of Emergency Aid, 1979 to 1982, a few NGOs reestablished for emergency relief program, funding, and humanitarian assitances. In the period of 1982 to 1990, less than fifteen INGOs and UN agencies in the country encountered many difficulties in achieving objectives due to the government restrictions. During Liberalization period of 1990 to the present, 45% of 1,500 local NGOs and 93% of 316 international NGO registered with the government are active.

In Cambodia, many sectors like Rural Development, HIV/AIDS, Environment and Conservation, Community and Social Welfare are widely done by NGOs. Among local and international NGOs implementing programs, Agriculture, Health and Education are the top three sectors. But the work of Human Rights NGOs is not fully convinced by their society as it is perceived as being in opposition to the government.

Regarding MDGs in Cambodia, some points were highlighted as follows;
- Per capita GDP is estimated at USD 792 in 2010 and inflation contains at 6% and the exchanged rate remains stable.
- Female participation in local governance increased as the population of female commune councilors increased from 8.7% in 2002 to 14.64% in 2007.
HIV prevalence among adults aged 15 to 49 decreased to 0.9% in 2006 from 1.2% in 2003.

Secondly, Myanmar participants gave the explanation that the Myanmar government was concerned with many changes to collaborate with other nations, international organizations and civil society after becoming a member of ASEAN. In Myanmar, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supports grants for infrastructural development, material, equipment assistance and services of experts. Moreover, four Japanese NGOs connected with forestry are especially active in the Dry Zone Greening Districts with reforestation activities. Other Japanese NGOs are also providing aid and relief, health care, basic human needs, family planning, education, environment and social economic services.

In 2008, there was the Nargis Cyclone hit in the delta area of Myanmar. The Japan Platform Foundation and its affiliated associations participated in the emergency, medical support, rehabilitation and reconstruction programs. They implemented those programs in cooperation with local NGOs such as the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) which is the apex body of local NGOs.

In Myanmar, the progress made to meet MDGs was as follows;
- 98.37% of children in primary education for the education year 2010~2011.
- The child mortality rate has been reducing.
- UNDP, many NGOs and INGOs are providing more and better development programs for environmental sustainability especially in the delta area eg. Replanting of 300,000 tidal trees along the coastal.

Thirdly, the Filipino participant expressed that there were about 50,000 NGOs in the Philippines since 1995. NGOs focus on specialized target sectors like agricultural development, forestry, environment, agrarian reform, credit, poverty and governance, alternative practices and paradigms of the development visions, etc. Primary target groups are fisher folk, farmer, children, women, etc and levels of operation are barangay, municipal, provincial and national. In their NGO network, there are two basic types: associations having formal membership and coalitions building around common issues and agendas.

The following are some indicators of improvement that have been made upon MDGs.
- The poverty incidence declined from 24.3% in 1991 to 13.5% in 2003.
- In the school year 2005~2006, the enrolment rate of girls exceeded that of boys showing that achievement rates by sex generally favored girls.
- The infant mortality rate showed a decline from 57 to 24 deaths between 1990 and 2006.
- HIV/AIDS has been kept below the national target of 1% of the population.
- The number of protected areas under the National Integrated Protected Area System has been expanded from 83 proclaimed areas in 2000 to 103 in 2006.

Some interesting discussions were had after the country presentations. There are Japanese NGOs providing the planting projects in the region of Asia and some projects are for stopping logging there. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is implemented by companies; some are with good attitudes ie. they do not expect for any return from what they have done but some do for the purposes of tax reduction, advertising their products, compensation because they feel guilty for example, their business causes harm to the environment, etc.
Before INGOs send their officials to foreign assignments, they have to learn the respective local languages, cultures, traditions, etc. In some countries, there are anti-corruption INGOs and they monitor there. Once, there was one anti-corruption INGO in Cambodia but it was rejected because of some problem that happened there.

In Myanmar, once NGOs or INGOs are registered, they can do their activities in the country by cooperation or collaboration with local authorities. Just after the Nargis Cyclone hit especially in the delta area of Myanmar, NGOs and INGOs cooperated with the government by giving assistances for emergency relief, food, shelter, health care, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Other new coming INGOs from overseas came to Myanmar for necessary assistances.

Although the Philippines has a very large number of NGOs, there is no big problem for the government to supervise till now. On the other hand, there is no legal declaration about NGO corruption cases; it means no corruption.
Visiting “Tokyo Big Bay Distribution Center” of Sagawa Express Co., Ltd gave us the idea that logistics simply pertains to the variety of procedures involved in a supply chain. The supply chain can either be private or public. Businesses can either benefit from a good supply chain or this can lead to its demise. That is why companies have installed sensible procedures and policies to help them to achieve success. This notion of development can be found in Sagawa Company because all the work they had done represented their “selectability for the convenience of customers” by implementing both high technology machine and skillful workers to ensure that their customers get the best delivering service as “Just one night deliver”. It was very impressive to see the procedure of combining several techniques to complete the tasks for win-win business result.

Cost saving method that Sagawa has implemented to ensure the maximum benefit of time and cost by using grouping system has been used to classify the mails according to each location. Tokyo Big Bay Distribution Center (TBB) is one of nine center under Sagawa Co., which is similar size with TBB. Outline of main information of TBB are presented as follows:

**Distribution Center: Tokyo Big Bay (TBB)**

- Lot Area: 30,283 sq.m (building coverage 60% as 18,091 sq.m);
- Floor number: 5 stories building;
- Gross floor space: 51,836 sq.m;
- Workshop length/width: 187m/30m;
- Vehicle parking lots: 02 lots
  - 1st floor lot’s capacity: 8 veh. (for visitors)
  - Rooftop lot’s capacity: 271 veh.
- Service:
  - Number of staff: 308 employees;
  - Number of Veh.: 210 veh. (includes: 3 trucks (7 tons), 9 trucks (4 tons), 103 trucks (3 tons), and 95 trucks (2 tons);
  - Number of shipping pcs: about 63,000 pcs
  - Number of coming pcs: about 38,000 pcs

Many of high tech and IT has been applied in “Relay Center” and “Postal Mail Center”. In this way, the customers can ensure that they will receive their parcels on time as advertising
that “Sagawa Express's mailing service includes the following two types, selectability for the convenience of customers. Both types handle one or more pieces of magazines, catalogues, etc. that do not require receipt stamps, at low prices.”

It can be seen clearly from the chart above that Sagawa has systematic system to arrange all kinds of services by consistently monitoring standards of quality.

Afterwards, we had an opportunity to learn more about logistics systems in ASEAN with Prof. who enlighten us about different advantages and limitations of each country in relation to the logistics activities. Some countries in the region have problems about physical infrastructure (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia..), land use, and national policy affecting directly to logistic activities.

Gained knowledge

It was the first time we fully understand how important of logistics for the economic development as well when is logistic business can start? The lowest cost of transportation becomes the main concern of JICA leading to the contribution to the “supply network or distribution centers” in ASEAN to operate both retail distribution for boosting regional economic development because single facility location is always used to cut the cost since a single location can stock a lot of products allowing sharing space, tools and labor resources.

Impressive point

Personally, I appreciate the way that Sagawa maintains the good relationship with their customers because there are so many logistics company within Japan to compete. However, the potential customers of Sagawa still prefer using their service since the company represents their concern by systematically responses to customers’ requests, offer new information to customer and review customers’ opinion leading to service improvement. One of my friends had raised the question about the key to the success of Sagawa, the answer was “because our company maintain the good relationship with our customers”. It can be seen as the lifetime value marketing directing to loyalty of customers which seems very smart because in current business situation, finding new client is a lot more difficult than to keep and do business with the old ones. Sagawa shows apparent way to maintain customer loyalty by building trust by delivering the parcels on time. It becomes a great experience to remind me that customer loyalty is helpful to develop better ways to market and sell products or services.
I. Overview

FamilyMart is a convenience store franchise chain that first opened in Japan on September 1, 1981. FamilyMart is Japan's third largest convenience store chain, behind 7-Eleven and Lawson, and the largest chain store in South Korea. FamilyMart is owned and overseen by FamilyMart Company, Limited. The main shareholder is Itochu with a stake of 35.55% (September, 2010). Its headquarters is on the 17th floor of the Sunshine60 Building in Ikebukuro, Tokyo.

All of the usual Japanese convenience store goods such as basic grocery items, magazines, manga, soft drinks, fried chicken, and bento are available.

FamilyMart's motto: "FamilyMart, Where You Are One of the Family"

II. Logistic

FamilyMart has its own system of controlling goods and services. In familyMart, there are various kinds of products available. Some products are from other brands, but some of it is their own brand. In the store, customers could find FamilyMart’s branding products from stationary such as note books, pencils, pens, color pencils, food such as rice balls, bentos, chips, snacks, and drinks such as coffee, tea, and many other soft drinks.
Throughout the seminar, participants had a chance to visit the Toda Logistic Center. This is where the bentos are made and passed on through the logistic chain. However, the process of making bentos is not as simple as many think, as FamilyMart is concerned with providing customers a high quality product at an affordable price.

The following pictures will show the process and how the Toda Logistic Center works in producing one of their famous products, known as bento.

From the factory, the finished products are sent to a distribution centre which receives finished products from different brands. Here the different products are consolidated and sent to each of the FamilyMart’s franchises around the city.

The point that may count as a support for FamilyMart’s success is the identity of products they sale as some of these are not commonly sold at other places. Moreover, by outsourcing production of their house brands, they gain some bargaining power which can be useful in terms of their product quality control. This intern makes their customers happy as it is the customer who enjoys the quality products available at the stores.

Personally, FamilyMart has built their own brand to appeal customers’ taste and provide a choice of purchasing such as bakery items, drinks etc. For this reason, their customers are loyal and often come to purchase at their stores only. Differentiation from other competitors leads to indirectly increase sales. Impulse products, similarly, can attract more customers when entering the stores to buy particular items because the customers enter their stores at a
quick pace (around 2-3 minutes). From our observation, it was interesting to note how the company goes out of its way to understand customer behavior in order to provide a service that is both customer friendly and focused. This made me realize that, for a business to succeed, it had to know the details of its products and the needs of the customer. This should never be neglected.

After hearing that FamilyMart had plans to open ASEAN market, I would like to state that localized adaptation of FamilyMart to local people is also vital for generating revenue for company. People need to eat on a daily basis with the choice of food to be eaten is influenced by both familiarization with locally available food and cost of the locally available food, which means the convenience stores providing a variety of food items tend to achieve good sales returns. In other words, it is assumed that if FamilyMart can localize their selling strategy to match the typical habits of each potential customer within their target market in various countries, it should then have more market share in the convenient store business. In our point of view, I think FamilyMart can use their uniqueness of being a Japanese franchise by including several Japanese chilled food or ready to eat meal in Japanese style. ASEAN people nowadays fancy Japanese taste, so bringing Japanese recipe to attract ASEAN customer should be beneficial for FamilyMart.

III. Conclusion

Retail business success requires multiple attempts to reduce the cost, control quality of products and enhance customers’ loyalty. FamilyMart has presented a great example of sensible business strategies dealing with current global market since it utilizes various techniques to attract customers’ interest. From studying the FamilyMart way of doing business, I have learnt that in order to succeed, we have to try all possible strategies that can bring us to our goals. The process of development should never stop at one success since the business, together with people, still have to jointly progress.
Technology Development
Mr. Masato Hirose

November 9th, 2010

Kuan Ming Leong (Ming Leong)
Singapore

1. This year marked the tenth anniversary of Honda’s humanoid robot ASIMO (Exhibit 1). It was also the 24th year since Honda’s first self-supporting biped robot. During the 47th IATSS Forum’s visit to Honda Motor Company in Tokyo in November 2010, we took the opportunity to discuss ASIMO’s technological development history and potential uses with Mr. Masato Hirose, Executive Chief Engineer at Honda R&D Co. Ltd1. Mr. Hirose was one of the original developers of ASIMO.

What is ASIMO?

2. ASIMO (Advanced Step in Innovation Mobility2) was the current model in Honda’s humanoid robot series. Standing 130cm and weighing 54kg, ASIMO carried a backpack that housed its computer and battery. Although it only had a continuous operating time of one hour, it was capable of finding its own power socket to recharge itself. Since 1986 when humanoid robots took five seconds for each simple and straight step, ASIMO was now capable of running over 8 meters over the same time frame (or 6 km per hour). Presently, ASIMO is not mass produced and is largely used for publicity, rather than tangible real-world applications. Mr. Hirose shared that outside of Japan, ASIMO had been “exported” to countries including America, Europe and Thailand for promotional events. It presently cost 20 million yen to lease ASIMO for a year.

3. What made ASIMO different from other mechanical robots was its resemblance to the human form and non-threatening robotic appearance. Honda sought a balance between operational capability and the size of ASIMO. A large robot would have more processing power, but may pose an intimidating presence to humans. A small robot would be more acceptable by society but would not have sufficient capabilities. With the average Japanese female’s height at 160cm, 130cm was found to be the optimal height for ASIMO.

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1 The discussions also involved Kenji Morii (Chief Engineer), Hideaki Ono (Assistant Chief Engineer), Shoko Takahashi (Senior Staff) and Akiko Kikuchi (Interpreter).

2 During the seminar, Mr. Hirose shared that ASIMO’s name original came from the Japanese word for feet, アシ (ashi).
4. ASIMO’s multiple degrees of freedom\(^3\) in its head, hip, fingers and joints have also enhanced its range of movement and is more similar to that of humans. This allows ASIMO to dance, shake or clasp a person’s hand, climb stairs and tilt its head.

**History of Honda’s Development in Humanoid Robotics**

5. Honda’s technological development in humanoid robots and ASIMO ([Exhibit 2](#)) reflected the importance of dreaming, persevering and thinking out of the box.

**Exhibit 2: Evolution of Honda’s humanoid robots over the years**

![Evolution of Honda's humanoid robots over the years](image)

a. **Daring to Dream.** The research in humanoid robots exemplified Honda’s spirit of “Challenging The Impossible”. Intense R&D began in the 1970s even when bipedal humanoid robots were merely a figment of human imagination.

b. **Perseverance and Patience.** In researching an area that was unprecedented, results were not forthcoming. Technology in the past was costly and less developed. The older models ([Exhibit 3](#)) did not have the dexterity to maintain balance when walking. Even the more recent models were bulky, clumsy and slow. For instance, the P2 and P3 models in the 1990s weighed 210kg and 130kg respectively and could only walk at 2km per hour (similar to a slow-walking person).

c. **Thinking Out of the Box.** Honda explored unconventional avenues to improve the design and functionality of its humanoid robots. These included studying the balance of flamingos in zoos and the human mobility of gymnasts. Another breakthrough also came in the late 1980s when there was a change in mindset

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\(^3\) The human joint has one degree of freedom (DOF) for each range of movement. ASIMO has DOFs in its head (3), arm (7 for each arm), hands (2 for each hand), hip (1) and legs (6 for each leg).
from preventing the robots from falling to ensuring that the robot was able to shift its weight to another foot when it was about to lose balance.

Utilization of ASIMO

6. ASIMO’s human form allowed it to serve in functions previously carried out by humans. ASIMO conducted an orchestra in 2008 (Exhibit 4) and starred in its own stage show in Disneyland California (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 4: ASIMO conducts for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Exhibit 5: ASIMO in Disneyland California


7. In general, participants were keen to utilize ASIMO in functions that were perceived to be tedious or mundane, to be dangerous, to require information storage or to have some degree of “human presence”. We were reminded that the efficiency objectives of robotic technology may be better served by non-bipedal robots.

a. **Tedious or mundane work.** Suggestions were made for ASIMO to undertake household chores (e.g., cleaning, ironing, cooking) in homes and administrative work (e.g., photocopying, serving coffee, taking meeting notes, welcoming visitors as a receptionist) in offices.

b. **Dangerous work.** Robots could be used in place of humans for dangerous work such as hostage situations, natural disaster recovery, fires and underground mishaps as well as the construction industry or welding activities in factories.

c. **Information storage work.** It was also proposed for ASIMO to have encyclopedic functions or translation capabilities. ASIMO’s database of knowledge could also allow it to work in the service industries as a tour guide or retail assistant, or be involved as a presenter in public events and campaigns. CCTV capabilities through ASIMO’s “eyes” could also allow it to serve a security function in homes.

d. **“Human presence” work.** Because of ASIMO’s body form, it was seen to be capable of fulfilling roles that typically required a human touch. This included being a companion to talk to and interact with, a bodyguard or escort, a traffic controller to direct traffic flow or to aid individuals across the road, a running or...
exercise companion, an entertainer who could host, sing and dance, or as a caregiver for the young, elderly and people with disabilities.

8. Honda’s main area of interest focused on hearing views on whether the public could feel for and would attempt to communicate with a humanoid robot like ASIMO. To ensure that ASIMO was capable of undertaking higher-order work like disaster recovery, Mr. Hirose shared that it needed more artificial intelligence, an area that Honda was studying in greater detail. Additional plans were underway to develop ASIMO’s capabilities in the entertainment and hospitality fields.

**Food For Thought**

9. Humanoid robotics may bring with it possible costs. First, if found to be effective, it could replace human jobs and contribute to unemployment in countries. Second, it could lead to overdependence if humans rely on them too much to do all the basic functions of human living. Third, human interaction could be minimized if they eventually become better companions. Fourth, it could lead to greater congestion in dense cities if mass-produced ASIMOs become more ubiquitous.

10. Nonetheless, ASIMO offers tremendous potential to shape the daily lives of people. Countries such as Japan are facing an ageing population that may require more caregivers in future – a role that ASIMO can potentially fulfill. The low birth rates and declining work force in Japan may also necessitate the usage of humanoid robots in more labor intensive industries such as retail to stimulate economic growth and raise labor productivity. It could also be potentially useful to augment the strength of firefighting, police and medical response forces.

11. In many ways, the challenge associated with developing humanoid robotics is a clear reminder of how remarkable human beings are. We unconsciously learn to move, unknowingly develop feelings and cognitive thoughts, instinctively react to different situations and circumstances, and naturally rejuvenate and recharge ourselves each day through sustenance and rest.

12. Humanoid robots such as ASIMO will continue to improve with time. With Honda’s drive and ingenuity, there may come a day when the ASIMO of the future can match our human mobility, intelligence and abilities of today. By that day, humans should also have evolved to a new level of capabilities. With inexorable technological development, this will demonstrate the resilience of the human spirit.
Field Study & Visit Reports
Field Study: Honda Suzuka Factory  
Mr. Hidetomo MORI

September 28th, 2010

Kaing Sanary (Nary)  
Cambodian

I. Summary of the field study:

On Tuesday, September 28th, 2010, 17 of the 47th IATSS Forum participants had a good opportunity to do on field study at the HONDA SUZUKA Factory, a world famous automobile factory. Upon arrival at HONDA factory, everyone was very excited to see and take pictures of the products in the Honda show room.

In the morning session, Mr. Hidetomo MORI, the Manager of the Business Administration Division, presented us with the background of the HONDA factory, the main products of HONDA, HONDA’s target global markets and the working system in the HONDA SUZUKA Factory. Mr. Tomohiro NAMIKAWA who is in charge of the Business Department explained about the meaning of NH circle, the factory structure and all of the slogans of HONDA. Mr. Yoshiyuki SAWAKI in charge of the painting department in the factory showed us about QC activity, the importance of QC activity and its implementation, and the key tips of QC activities.

In the afternoon session, Mr. Watanabe gave a presentation about Environment Measures at the HONDA SUZUKA Factory, how the HONDA factory has taken part in Social Activities in order to protect the environment. Later, all 17 participants were guided to visit field sites such as the renew wastewater treatment plant, the layout department in Line 3 (for producing cars) and the assembly shop for layout and production models. It was very interesting and useful knowledge for all the participants to open the eyes to learn from the HONDA factory about the advance technology and their environmental protection strategies.

II. The learning points from the field study

From the presentations, we learnt that the HONDA automobile factory, had been established in September 1948 with the capital ¥ 86,000 million. Approximately 7200 employees are now employed in the SUZUKA factory. There are three main HONDA products (Motor cycles, Automobiles, and Power Products). Those product brands are CIVIC, INSIGHT, FIT, CR-Z and HYBRID. There are two production lines (Line1: the daily output 550 units with the line speed 48seconds and Line3: the daily output 1100units with line speed 47seconds) Until now, the HONDA factory has been expanding its business to 26 countries with 66 bases worldwide. HONDA has had more than 23 million customers worldwide. The slogan of HONDA is “The power of dreams”. Moreover, we discovered the word NH standing for (Now-Understanding,
Next- Pursuing the challenges, New HONDA-Continuing to develop), especially the most powerful HONDA slogan “everyone challenge with dreams, high spirited and future minded.” QC Activity method came from America to Japan in April 1962. QC activity associates form small groups, utilize statistical methods to analyze problems and to sort out challenges for solving various problems and achieving higher goals and identifying appropriate problem solving methods to proceed. In addition, the useful tips of QC activities taught by Matsumoto are communication, taking action, sitting in front of desk is not the way to change, listen to people find out what they are saying, talk to yourself and conduct improvement activities. Concerning protecting the environment, we encountered that in 1992 HONDA announced the public environment statement declared on 4 items related to HONDA in order to contribute to health of people and the global of everybody. HONDA has built recycling wastewater treatment plants, taken part in supporting and organizing social events relating environment protection and preservation with primary school students.

From visiting field sites, we learnt that HONDA tries not to pollute the environment especially the sea and the ocean. HONDA has built water a treatment area (garden) in order to purify the polluted/ unclean water as much as it can before flowing out the water to the sea and ocean. Moreover, in the Layout welding department and the assembly shop for layout and production models, the working structures are very systematic. HONDA is using three kinds of robots to operate and install the car instead of using human labor.

III. New Discoveries Points

During the entire field study day in the HONDA SUZUKA Factory, there were three new points that we discovered. First of all, in terms of having good communication, getting the information accurately and working effectively and efficiency, HONDA is practicing the QC Activity method which is trying to get people in all the levels (from the top level positions to the low level positions) involved in identifying the problems and finding the solution together. From my own point of view, this has been one of the important strategies that every organization not only the business sector but also the NGO and Government Sector should try to implement this method to collect the real data/ information/ idea from other people. Through the QC activity’s presentation, I discovered that Japanese people have a high commitment and responsibility to the work, never ever give up. Once having problems, they all sit together, try to identify the problems and try to think of the possible solutions as many as they can in order to solve the problem. Secondly, regarding eco- social and environmental security contribution in the globe, being a famous automobile factory, keeping the environment green and clean is a must. HONDA is striving to become a company that society wants to exist by sharing joys with people throughout the world with innovating products that maximize the joy of the customers with speed, affordability and low CO2. Last but not least, we enjoyed seeing and observing how the robots in HONDA SUZUKA factory has been functioned in the assembly shop. It was interesting to learn about the new method of reducing the cost of labor force efficiency and getting effective productivity by using robots instead.

IV. The most impressive point in the field study

All information / presentation in the field study in the HONDA SUZUKA factory enriched us the new knowledge and experiences, told us how the factory is functioning in society to protect green environment and provided the opportunity for us to see how high technology is
used and functions in Japan. Personally, it is no surprise that why Japan is a hi-tech developed country now. Through the field study it is clear enough to show that Japan is full of qualified, valuable human resources with high commitment. They never give up, always challenging to the problems. They always come together to identify the problem precisely and think of the possible solutions as much as they can and put them into action. We all have been inspired by this action.
Visits to Suzuka Circuit Traffic Education Center (STEC) / Suzuka City Hall / Suzuka Police Station

October 1st, 2010

Pyai Pyai Pwint (Pwint)
Myanmar

Suzuka Circuit Traffic Education Center (STEC)
Mr. Akifumi Hisada

On the 1st October, 2010, we visited some important places in Suzuka and all of us were very excited to visit these places. Firstly, our study tour started at the Suzuka Circuit Traffic Education Center and we were curious to learn about the traffic safety systems in Japan and most of the participants were excited about the “test drive”. Personally, I was curious to learn about traffic safety system and training programs of STEC. We arrived at 9:15 am and Mr.Hisada gave a welcome speech and presentation to us in the training room.

Mr.Hisada, Director of STEC, gave us a very concise and informative presentation covering the following areas;

(1) Honda’s Driving Safety Promotion Activities
(2) Fundamental Principles and History of STEC
(3) Aims of the new STEC
(4) Outline of the new STEC Facility and
(5) Outline of the new STEC Programs.

Honda’s basic principle is “Respect for the Individual”. These words represent a concept that “each and every person in all positions is individual,” and form the starting point of Honda’s safety efforts. The safety efforts are based on this basic concept. At Honda, they believe that safety is achieved by efforts through hardware such as developing safer products and through software such as correct handling, pursuit of knowledge and assistance to improve riding and driving techniques. They are working to expand the circle of safety activities towards “realizing a richer mobile society”.

In 1964, Suzuka Circuit Traffic Education Center was opened as the first facility to offer safe driving education in Japan. And then, building on the various efforts of Honda to promote safe driving activities, STEC was recently updated in 2007.
Honda has 8 traffic education centers in Japan and they also promote safe driving training abroad. They introduce new safety programs every year and the new programs of STEC are as follows;

(1) Frequently Occurring Accident (Rear-end/intersection collisions) Response Program
(2) Driving Habit Check Program
(3) Night-time Accident Response Program;
(4) Safety Device Experience Program.

We learned about the Night-time Accident Response Program. It provides an understanding of the effectiveness and limits of safety devices. By watching the video presentation, I learned which colors are distinct at night time and that we should choose white or light colors for night time for our safety. We also should use a reflector at night-time for our safety.

After the presentation, Mr.Hisada demonstrated an Eco-Driving Machine and our participants, JY from Singapore, Hugh and Vinh from Vietnam tried to it. Among these participants, only Vinh could actually drive a car and had a license. It was exciting and fun experience for us. And then we moved to the test driving place. Mr.Aarakawa, Instructor of STEC, explained about Antilog Breaking System (ABS) and some of my friends got a chance to drive the car using ABS. Although I cannot drive a car, I really enjoyed being the passenger of Jane and Rashvin from Malaysia. After test driving, we took group photos with Mr.Hisada and Mr.Aarakawa. Finally, I said words of thanks at STEC on behalf of 47th IATSS participants.

Before leaving STEC, we visited Suzuka Circuit racing place and we observed their preparation for the F1 Car Racing Competition which will be held in this month. We wanted to watch this racing competition, but unfortunately we will be in Kyoto on those days.

Suzuka City Hall
Mr. Mitsuo Kawagishi

We got a chance to meet the Deputy Mayor of Suzuka City during the Opening Ceremony. When we heard that Mr.Kawagishi, the Mayor of Suzuka City would meet us during our visit at Suzuka City Hall, all of us were very excited and we felt that the appreciation and warm welcome of the people from Suzuka. It was a great opportunity for us to meet and interact with the Mayor himself. Actually it was really a memorable day for us because the Mayor, though has a busy schedule, made time to meet the IATSS Forum participants and get to know us better.
Upon arrival we saw the City Hall it was a clean and tidy place and people from this building welcomed us. We tried to introduce ourselves in Japanese and the Mayor explained to us about Suzuka City briefly. From his speech, we learned that Suzuka City is one of the largest inland industrial cities with many automobile factories and abounding of farming products such as tea, rice and flowers. Suzuka City arranges facilities for foreign residents and some ASEAN people are residing in the City. Among them, 30 people from Myanmar are also residing in Suzuka.

The Mayor asked us our impression of Suzuka City and Ms. Gate from Thailand answered. I, personally also appreciate the hospitality of Suzuka people to us because of the warm welcome of the IATSS Forum staff on our arrival day, the warm welcome of IATSS Forum Committee members and volunteers at our opening ceremony and today and the courtesy call with the Mayor.

The participants also had a chance to visit the “Chamber”, the meeting place where the municipal government decides on policies pertaining to Suzuka City. I believe that, we gained a better understanding of Suzuka City from this visit.

**Suzuka Police Station**  
**Mr. Humio Nishiyama**

The last visit of our program was to the Suzuka Police Station and we arrived at 3:20 pm. Although most of us were tired because of today’s trip, we wanted to learn about the police station of a well disciplined City. The Chief of the Police Station gave welcoming speech, the police officer made presentation and it covered the following points;

- a) Situation of Police Station
- b) Outline of Suzuka City and
- c) Arrest Technique for Criminals

From this presentation, we noted that the head police station of Mie prefecture is situated in Tsu City and there are 18 police stations in the entire Prefecture. 233 police officers serve the needs of Suzuka City at the Suzuka Police Station under the motto “Motivation creates by effort”. The priorities of the Station’s are to prevent child delinquency, traffic accidents and try to protect the victims.

There were 2240 cases and accidents recorded accidents in Suzuka in 2010 from January to end of August. Out of these cases 80% were street criminals. The police officers roam around the city in ordinary dress and they are always alert to protect the people. Based on the report there are 1275 traffic accident cases this year and 5 died by these accidents.
After the presentation, we had a chance to view the demonstration of the Arrest Technique on a Criminal and we saw the energetic movement of policemen in their practical room. The young policemen are strong, brave and eager to protect the Suzuka people. In this group, we appreciated the lady’s spirit to become a police officer.

I believe that this is an effective field study for the participants and we know more about Suzuka City as one of the clean, safe, discipline and industrious cities in Japan.
Visit to “Moku-Moku Farm
Mr. Shigeru Matsunaga

October 5th, 2010

Wuttithon Donavanik (Woody)
Thailand

I. Summary of the field study:

Moku-Moku Farm provides us the notion of systematic thinking for building certain brand which differentiates its product from other competitors. The main philosophy of Moku-Moku farm is to generate their own uniqueness by consistency promoting their way of doing both organic and non-organic farming, together with creating community where both producer and potential customers can interact and exchange ideas. In other words, Moku Moku farm shed the light onto our thinking about Philosophy lead revenues, this attempt brings success and sense of ownership increases sales.

The morning session, the information about agricultural and food operation was conveyed by Mr. Shigeru MATSUNAGA who has been working at this farm over 16 years. Clearly, there have been a lot of obstacles to overcome before they could achieve their success. Besides selling their agricultural products like others, Moku-Moku introduces their customers, to the idea of hands-on real farm experience such as bread and sausage making. According to this idea, all the participants had chance to make our own breads provided instruction and ingredients by Moku-Moku staff. This procedure of learning by doing created a positive feeling between the visitors like us and the farm strategies to attract public attention.

Visitors also had opportunities to taste products produced by the farm during the meal since there is also lunch buffet campaign to allow visitors to experience the fresh food of Moku-Moku.

II. The learning points from the field study

One important thing we have learned is the local branding establishment. If the product itself is not competitive in terms of outstanding uniqueness, the relationship between producer and customers should be deepened as has been shown in Moku-Moku farm.

At the early period of Moku-Moku establishment around the year 1983, the idea of pure farming business that used only the local resources in term of human and agricultural resources had been introduced to create the delicious, safe and fresh products to earn income
to both farm and local community farmer. But after a few years, they realized that farming alone could not earn enough revenue for their business. That is why the idea of “value added” was introduced. Moku-Moku started to come up with a new campaign to turn their farming business into an agricultural theme park to spread their idea and philosophy of their way of doing agricultural business using community charm and characteristics for the customers. The programs and activities such as bread and sausage making, demonstration of handmade processing of ham, beer and other dairy products are the process of value-adding to of the farm, does not only create income but also generates more job opportunities among the local community.

On top of that, through engaging in the process of production, customers can ensure that their food is safe. So that customers are enhanced and are willing willingness to pay more for the extra price from value-added because they are impressed by the presentation of brand knowledge formation model in their memory.

III. New Discoveries Points

It is the first time to me to discover that farm business can be fun and educating at the same time. According to Moku-Moku slogan “from agriculture also springs education”, which means that younger generation can gain more knowledge about farming in an interactive way. Moreover, Moku-Moku is also working with many local schools to develop farming demonstrations for young Japanese school kids to learn and experience the real life of complete entire farming business. Educating young people to realize the importance of agricultural activity since they are young tends to provide the accurate perspective of farming lives in creative scenarios which can be used in real life when they have grown up because it directly deals with everybody lives. Food production should be considered as fun and fruitful to provide a valid guide for future generations preparing to develop the national agricultural productions.

IV. The most impression point in the field study

Beside the value-added idea of Moku-Moku’s farming process, I was so impressed that they also considered CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) as one of their main priorities. Moku-Moku use the “kurukuru coin” to motivate customer to do good deed such as put the plates back to the cleaning area in the restaurant. They have given each customer one “kurukuru coin” and by doing one good deed; customers will be able to donate the “kurukuru coin” which represents 10 Yen to the local community. It is very impressive because it show me that the organization takes serious action to improve social standards by motivating the positive manners of citizens.
**Study Tour: Japanese Traditional Stage Performance “Noh”, Todai-ji Temple and Ruin of Heijyo-kyu Palace**

*Mr. Masakazu Ishihara*

October 6th, 2010

Jumina Anak Lasan (Jane)
Malaysia

The group tour to Nara Prefectural New Public Hall, Todai-ji Temple, and Heijyo-kyu Palace was held on October 6th, 2010. We started our journey at the Hotel Asyl Annex at 8.30am by bus and arrived on time at Nara Park where the Public Hall and Todai-ji Temple are located.

There were two volunteer translators for the day, Ms. Matsumura and Mr. Tominaga. They were very friendly, helpful and informative. Both of them are Nara’s residents and they were very experience with meeting with foreigners and guide tourists for tour around Nara.

There was also deers everywhere and they were very tame and free to walk around the Park. We were amazed by their large numbers and according to Matsumura san, the deers are Nara’s natural monument that they need to protect and look after.

Ms. Matsumura

Mr. Tominaga

A visitor feeding the deer in Nara Park
1. Nara Noh

We started our tour with the introduction of Noh performance art by Mr. Masakazu Ishihara, the President of Nara Noh in the Noh Theater located inside the Nara Prefectural New Public Hall. Nara Noh is a non-profit organization for Noh play in Nara.

The theater has a very impressive stage, with a complete frame of four thick pillars, roof and a corridor that is use by the actors to appear on the stage. Such design is to compliment the original stage. There are audience seats with a capacity of 500 persons and pebble stones are placed along the stage, which is similar to a sumo ring.

Although there is no gorgeous decoration or prop on the stage, only a painting of a pine tree at the back end of the stage as a background, we were still amazed by the effort of Nara’s government to preserve this ancient performing art and to keep it alive for future generations. The Nara Noh also has a number of Noh masks aged more than hundred years in their possession.

There were a few performances played by three male Noh actors. They are very talented and passionate about the art because when they performed, they were intense and deeply connected with the characters. We were informed that the characters are not human and there are spiritual elements in Noh play so the performances were quite bizarre and uncommon to us. We also learned that it is a tradition that only male actors can perform in Noh play.

We were also grateful that Mr. Ishihara gave every participant a chance to try on the Noh mask called Ko-omote, a young lady mask. We hardly understood the plot or the story line of the performances but we learned and felt ourselves the actors sight through the mask and why they dragged their feet on the stage floor.
Usually during the performance, the actors will only appear once the costumes were on. However, we were very fortunate that we were also shown on how the ‘Hagoromo’ costume is worn by the actor. ‘Hagoromo’ is the most beautiful lady character in Noh play, therefore she has the most beautiful, colorful dress and golden head decoration.

The costume presentation was the closing of our visit to Noh Theater in the Public Hall before we went for a lunch break in the nearby restaurant, the Miyama restaurant.

2. Todai-ji Temple
After lunch at 12.30 pm we proceeded to the Todai-ji Temple that is within walking distance from the Hall. The temple ground cover the northern part of Nara Park, and hence the deers can also be seen along the way. There were many tourists and visitors, as well as groups of school children visiting the temple for their school program.

Upon approaching the temple, there is a huge wooden middle gate called Nandaimon gate where two fierce-looking statues are stand representing guardian kings. It is no wonder
that the statues along with the gate are designated as Japan’s national treasures because the structures are well preserved although the temple has been burned twice during war.

During the visit, there was mild construction in progress in the compound area to build a stage and set-up of audience seats in front of the temple. As one of the most famous and historical temple in Japan, Todai-ji Temple has been scheduled to host a concert in commemoration of 1250 years anniversary of the death of Emperor Shomu’s wife. The temple was built in behest of Emperor Shomu.

We could witness clearly how the construction was handled in careful and delicate measure to protect the grass, ground, floor tiles and the surrounding environment of the temple.

The temple houses Japan's largest bronze Buddha statue called Daibutsu. Some of us including myself have had a chance to squeeze through the hole in the base of a pillar inside the temple. This hole is famous among visitors as it is said that those who can squeezed through will be granted enlightenment in their next reincarnation.
We were then guided to a nearby hall called Nigatsu-do Hall which is one of the important structures of Todai-ji Temple. From the balcony’s hall we could see a beautiful view of Nara’s city and Mount Ikoma-san that separated Nara and Osaka.

3. Heijyo-kyu Palace
We ended our tour in Todai-ji Temple around 2.30 pm and we arrived at Heijyo-kyu Palace site parking lot by bus about 20 minutes later.

Site area which was formerly surrounded by bureaucratic offices and aristocrats residents during 8th century

Suzaku Gate

The palace site is so vast that the distance of 1.5km had taken us almost half an hour walk from the entrance of Suzaku Gate towards the Imperial Audience Hall. The gate and the hall that is also called ‘Daigokuden’ were reconstructed very beautifully. The hall is exhibit some of the graphical pictures and photos about the reconstruction of the hall and its exterior and interior decoration.

Imperial Audience Hall of Heijyo-kyu Palace

It is a very unique historical site as there is also a train rail constructed passing the site in 1914. The train rail gave an advantage to the site as no people would reside in the area and this has eased the excavation work. We were informed that all discoveries and articles remains are displayed at the Heijo Palace Site Museum, located at the northeast section of the site.
The hall is also in preparation to welcome the Emperor’s visit to celebrate the 1300th anniversary of the Heijo-kyo Capital so the visitors were guided very carefully in entering and exiting the hall as well as the site area. There were a lot of security guards in the hall and around the site area. There were also many workers and volunteers who were always ready to help and serve the visitors.

The whole area of Heijo-kyu-seki (the ruins of Heijo Palace) was the first historical site in Japan to be inscribed as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage. Therefore the original soil cannot be dug up or disturbed and contractors have to transport soil from another place to install a rest area, rail for small train to mobilize disabled visitors and other new structures.

Such efforts have impressed me so much especially how Japan’s government and city authorities are doing their best to preserve their historical sites or buildings and at the same time educating visitors and younger generations to treasure and appreciate. We ended our tour that day around 5.00 p.m. and headed to Kyoto. Thank you IATSS Forum.
Event Reports

Japanese Culture Introduction

Gasshuku

Cultural Exchange Day
The 47th IATSS Forum- GASSHUKU (Team Building Training)

September 22nd-24th, 2010
Shena Faith M. Ganela (Shen)
Philippines

I. Purpose:
For every participant to have necessary mind-set to make the 57 days at IATSS Forum productive by understanding oneself / each other and producing mutual trust/ improvement

II. Venue:
Mie Prefecture Suzuka Youth Center (Large Training Room/ Outdoor Square)

III. Resource Person/ Facilitator:
Ms. Tomo (Tomoko) Seki
Director of Seize the Moment, Seeds, She’s Japan
Educational Consultant/ Trainer for Project Adventure Japan (PAJ)

IV. Specific Team Building Session Activities and its Implications/ Insights Learned

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/ Name of Activity</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Personal Insights Learned/ Reflections/ Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 a.m.: “Trust Walk”</td>
<td>Each participant was asked to form one line with eyes either closed or covered with a blindfold while holding the right shoulder of the person in front with his or her right hand. Guided by the facilitator, all had to move together towards the venue for the next outdoor activity.</td>
<td>I believe this was an activity for more than just simply having fun, but also an opportunity to practice being honest and trusting each other, and to show the facilitator that we have nothing to worry about even though we can’t see anything. We could be confident that we were being led by someone competent, and that we were all in this together moving in one direction with one goal.</td>
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<td>“Windmill Stretching”</td>
<td>With a partner, participants had to stretch from one side to another by holding each other back-to-back.</td>
<td>This activity is more of a warm-up, to start getting comfortable with each other emotionally/ mentally and physically as well.</td>
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<td>“Mirroring”</td>
<td>In a pair, one participant had to act as the image and the other as the mirror who followed everything the image did.</td>
<td>This gave us opportunity to comfortably face each other, and share something we had in common before going on to find another partner and repeating the same process.</td>
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<td>Activity</td>
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<td>“Dinosaur Game”</td>
<td>With “Catherine” (piglet-stuffed toy), we were told to aim at becoming a dinosaur as soon as Catherine touched the lower part of our body. All dinosaurs had to hold each other and run after everybody within a designated area, until all have become dinosaurs.</td>
<td>It was a fun game that made us try to catch our breath running away from Catherine, but it was kind of confusing. Since our goal was to all become dinosaurs, what was the point of running away from it? (For fun’s sake, I guess, or maybe simply to show our tendencies to save ourselves from something we don’t want to become?)</td>
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<td>“Great Wall of China”</td>
<td>It is like “longest line “game where in a given time, each group tries to arrange everything they have on their body (belt, shoes, etc.) to form the longest line possible.</td>
<td>My group was male dominated so it was more of an advantage, so our group won in this game. Gender issues come in, in this kind of situation.</td>
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<td>“Balloon Transportation”</td>
<td>Each group had to be connected to each other in one line by a balloon in between them. Keeping the connection, the group raced with the other groups.</td>
<td>I realized that I kind of panicked in this process of the game since I was not able to lead the group successfully; I therefore learned that staying calm will make things get done faster and be more successful.</td>
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<td>IQ Test</td>
<td>A list of questions was given for each team to answer. Each answer corresponded to certain points.</td>
<td>I discovered a lot of great things about my teammates in this game. And it just made me feel proud to have known all these great guys who are “achievers” in their own respective fields.</td>
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<td>Day 1, p.m. “Picture Story”</td>
<td>For a starter, each participant got to pick a picture from several choices laid on the floor. This picture was used to explain each participant’s goal to achieve in Gasshuku.</td>
<td>It revealed the different perspectives and vantage points of each participant in a very creative way. It was amazing to discover how differently varied persons could see through seemingly simple pictures to communicate their thoughts and perceptions.</td>
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<td>“Yes-No Mixer Game”</td>
<td>Everybody formed a big circle. To start the game, someone stayed in the middle, and asked any question that started with either “Have you ever…? Or Do you…? If the answer was yes, these participants moved around and found another place that was vacated by another participant.</td>
<td>This was a nice game to test the alertness of everyone, and at the same time it gave us opportunities to discover a lot of interesting things about each other. I just personally discovered that many if not all of the participants are interested in “love” because most questions asked were on this idea.</td>
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<td>“Bumpty Bum Bum Bum”</td>
<td>Someone (the “it”) had to stand in front of somebody and say either left, right you or me. That person gave the name of the corresponding person referred to, before the “it” had finished saying “ Bumpty Bum Bum Bum.</td>
<td>It was a fun and exciting way of remembering everybody’s name. I’m actually not good at remembering names. It’s one of my weak-points, and this activity just served to be very helpful for me. It also encouraged us to accept the fact</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>“Paint me a Picture”</strong></td>
<td>Someone (the “it”) pointed to any one and said either rabbit, cow, flight attendant or Elvis Presley. Anyone who wasn’t able to perform the corresponding action right and well became the next “it”. It was fun and hilarious, and gave us chances to bring out the child in each other, and just wear our hair down or do some “silly” acts and moves which eventually brought a lot of laughing moments that set a fun mood for everyone.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>“Loop Activity”</strong></td>
<td>In a big circle, with everyone holding hands, the goal was to pass around two “hoola-hoop rings” coming from two opposite directions. The challenge was to complete the entire process in the shortest time possible. We ended up accepting that there were limitations individually, and also as a group that may cause failure in achieving the goal, but the attitude of being realistic should be embraced, rather than dwelled long on frustrations and on blaming someone for the failure.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>“Ball Throwing”</strong></td>
<td>The goal was to pass as many balls/ items as possible from one to another in a big circle in the shortest time possible. There was acceptance of our “shortcomings” as being too aggressive or insisting, while others showed willingness to listen and learn from the others, and eventually resolved to try to improve.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal-Setting</strong></td>
<td>Quiet time was given for each to answer certain questions about personal goals for Gasshuku. Sharing time in triad followed, and a creative “contract signing”. Common responses of participants to this activity were goals for active participation, cooperation, respect, friendship and solidarity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Day 2 A.M.: 7-11 &amp; “Look Down &amp; UP”</strong></td>
<td>7-11 is a “Jan Ken Pon” game with one partner to another. Look Down &amp; Up is a game in big circle where all have to look down all together and look up to stare at one in the group. The two warm-up games were lively ways of setting up an alert mood in the afternoon, as they also encouraged mastery of the names of all the participants.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>“Draw the Picture”</strong></td>
<td>In a triad where all are against each other’s back, the leader is changed from one round to another. The L draws a picture and verbally gives instruction to the other members with a goal to let them draw exactly the same as his, without showing it to them. First round requires no feedback, 2nd and 3rd allowed feedback. The game showed the importance of feedback in the communication process as a means of achieving a goal. But I think that the process would have been more meaningful, if the 3rd allowed the leader to see the drawing of his members in the process because it clearly shows him whether he is leading them in the right direction or not. It would be too late to show or give the correction when the task has already been done.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Day 2, p.m.: “This is…”</strong></td>
<td>Two items were passed at the same time in the opposite direction in a big circle using the This was a good game in keeping focus in the midst of doing multi-tasks. Certain skills have to be developed in</td>
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</table>
What?...I see!”  
expressions: This is… What?... I see!  
order to survive this usual situation in accomplishing group goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comfort Zone, Stretch zone, panic zone,</th>
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<tr>
<td>A circle in the playing area is divided into three zones: comfort, stretch and panic. For every given situation, participants have to get inside response zone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It was a good opportunity to see what caused panic or stress to each one. Seeing similarities and differences was interesting and a learning point in dealing with each other in the group.</td>
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<tr>
<th>“Group Pulling-up”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Starting with small groups of three until a big group for all, participants had to discover ways to pull each other up at the same time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It typically described the real working group scenario when all in the group have to share ideas, and decide on best ways, yet could many times fail, but still not give up until the glory of victory is achieved.</td>
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<tr>
<th>“Ball-shooting: Collaboration Game”</th>
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<tr>
<td>The participants were divided into three groups and had to shoot as many balls possible to their designated bins. Each leader of the team were together given the &quot;power&quot; to stop the game at any time for any reason that could help achieve the goal.</td>
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<td>It reminded me that collaboration is a higher level of mere cooperation when the negative spirit of competition within a big group is set aside to attain a greater goal in the group. As one of the leaders, I failed to realize that we should have used the &quot;power&quot; given to us to make decisions that could have strengthened collaboration in the big group, rather than mere competition. As a result, we failed to achieve our goal.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Day 3 a.m.: Making Group Objective, Motto &amp; Logo</th>
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<tr>
<td>In small groups, we shared ideas for the batch objectives, and then shared in the big group to create the motto and decide on the logo. (Please see objective, motto and logo of the 47th batch of the IATSS Forum given below.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The entire process was a little “shaky” in having to cater to so many suggestions raised. The half day set for the activity turned out to be not enough to finish the final product, which eventually lasted until almost 2:00 a.m. the next day. Despite differences, I still appreciated efforts of everybody to finish the output even though it meant staying up so late.</td>
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<tr>
<th>P.m.: Venue Visit and Idea-Sharing for CED</th>
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<tr>
<td>In the presence of two CIR representatives, Lisa and Jaime, the group identified coordinators and brainstormed on some plans for CED.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The initial planning session may not have been entirely great for a start, but was good enough as a starting point.</td>
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V. My General Impression about the Gasshuku

Personally, I gained a lot of insights from Gasshuku. It gave me opportunities to know each of my co-participants beyond simply their names, and I felt proud to be part of this bunch of wonderful people who are “experts” and “achievers” in their own respective fields. Gasshuku enabled me understand their peculiar ways, and appreciate their differences. All the activities were more than just simply fun; they were also avenues for meaningful learning on how to effectively work with each other as members of the 47th batch of the IATSS Forum Program. It also reminded us to value every minute that is spent for the entire IATSS Forum.
Program. Gasshuku is the first main event, and it was conducted in a very orderly and systematic way. I am confident that Gasshuku has prepared us all for the challenging tasks that are ahead of us. The success of Gasshuku is a clear evidence of the hard work put into by the IATSS Forum Staff whose unwavering commitment to their work serves as our inspiration to give our best in achieving the program’s goals.

**47th IATSS Forum Batch Objective:** To create and learn in a fun, friendly and diverse environment through collaboration and effective communication  
**Motto:** Diverse- Borderless- United  
**Logo:** It shows the diversity of the 9 ASEAN countries (represented by the flags) united (human icons holding each other) for a common goal in their participation in the IATSS Forum (represented by its symbol in the middle of the logo.)
Japanese Cultural Introduction Day

October 3rd 2010

Ajeng Ritzki Pitakasari (Ajeng)
Indonesia

What does a person think of Japan when the word comes across his or her mind? A well-known American writer, William Scott Wilson, once wrote that his first encounter with Japan, back in 1966,—beautifully documented in National Geographic—fascinated him and made him deciding to devote himself to learn about Japanese culture. That is, perhaps, the meaning of Japan for Williams.

Seventeen young professionals from nine ASEAN countries, which stayed in Japan, might have experienced an eye opening journey as well, even though they have nothing to do with William and not as famous as the author of the famed book “The Lone Samurai”. They, however, have gotten valuable things—which aren't less precious than William's, experiencing Japanese culture and learning first hands from Japanese people—the IATSS Forum's volunteers.

On October 3rd, 2010, in the morning, all the participants were starting the special day by wearing Yukata. This is the name for casual summer kimonos. Unlike formal kimono, which are made of silk, yukata are typically made of cotton. Sometimes they are made of synthetic fabric and are unlined.

While green, red, blue, yellow, pink—all in vibrant tones—were colouring the yukata female participants of 47th IATSS Forum, the gentlemen were wearing quiet, yet elegant colours. The colours variety of men’s yukatas is limited, but there are a wide variety of patterns.

It is much easier for a man to wear yukata than women. We cannot say it is as easy as slipping into a gown, but it is not so difficult. Wrap yukata around the body to fit, tie and 'obi' tightly. Women tie and obi at the waist, but men tie and obi under the navel. And definitely, all the gentlemen on that day look dignified by tying an obi under the navel!

The ladies? It could be said that all of them acted like princess of the day. The vivid colours of the yukata might have evoked their vibrant spirit.

The volunteers helped the ladies tightening up the obis and they weren't just trying it around the body. They were interweaving the obi and making beautiful knots at the back of ladies costumes.

One of the participants, Sanary Kaing, from Cambodia said she very
was very pleased and enjoyed wearing a yukata during that day. “I like the vivid colours of this cloth and I chose the pink one for myself,” she said cheerfully.

The ladies had no chance to wear a formal kimono. However, they volunteers showed us what a real formal kimono looked like and how to use it—which we discover that it was more complicated than wearing a yukata. But Kimonos have a more elegant style and bring a luxurious impact to those who wear it. If only the ladies wore the formal kimono, they would behave more gracefully, perhaps.

Wrapped in yukata, all of the participants enjoyed many things including Japanese traditional music performances. A huge drum is one of them.

There are many large Japanese drums, or Taiko. The most dramatic is the Odaiko (big drum). A volunteer was kind enough by bringing the Odaiko for us and he beat it in beautiful rhythm. That day we could feel the physical energy and sheer excitement of an Odaiko performance. Aside from Odaiko, we enjoyed and learned a little bit about the hourglass-shaped drum called tsuzumi.

In string section, Koto playing performance wasn’t—and awkward if it was—absent on that day, as the instrument is one of a few which have remained unchanged and yet stays as vibrantly relevant to Japanese culture.

The Koto is a 13-string zither, about 2 meters long and made of Paulownia wood. The instrument is plucked using picks on the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand, while the left hand can be used to modify the pitch and the tone. The koto usually is used in an ensemble or as a solo instrument.

Never imagined that playing Koto would be simple. It's more than plucking the strings. The sitting position for playing the KOTO is directly in front of, and on the right of the instrument. The player leans forward and plucks the strings about 3-5 cm from the right. The traditional way of playing the koto is by resting the right end on a small pillow, so that the instrument is balanced about 8 cm above a tatami-mat flooring. In this case, the player kneels on the tatami. Nowadays some players prefer to rest the Koto on a stand and sit in a chair to play it.

Koto is not the only string instrument. The volunteers introduced us as well with the shamisen and taishogoto. The sound of the last even made Bui Tran Hieu—the most talented person in music among 47th IATSS Forum's participants—feel in love with!

The story didn’t end here. After having lunch together, it was time for us to learn Shodo or brush writing and experiencing Chado or the tea ceremony. Shodo means the way of writing. It is the art of writing beautifully. Most children learn calligraphy in elementary school. However, it's a popular hobby among adult as well.

To experience Shodo, one should have a particular set of equipment. A calligraphy set consists of:
* **Shitajiki**: Black, soft mat. It provides a comfortable, soft surface.

* **Bunchin**: Metal stick to weight down the paper during writing.

* **Hanshi**: Special, thin calligraphy paper.

* **Fude**: Brush. There is a larger brush for writing the main characters and a smaller one for writing the artist's name. The small brush, however, can be used for the characters, too.

* **Suzuri**: Heavy black container for the ink.

* **Sumi**: Solid black material that must be rubbed in water in the suzuri to produce the black ink which is then used for writing. Of course, "instant ink" in bottles are also available.

Calligraphy takes time. It is suggested to use a quiet and uncluttered room if any want to practice this skill. One should bear in mind that one approaches the tables to begin writing; one should set aside the matters of the day, relax, leave one’s mind free and enjoy one’s hand moving to create calligraphy.

It is not easy for every of us to do the task since to create beautiful Shodo requires a lot of practice. But on that day most of participants were enjoying moving their hand on the white paper, again and again to write their name in Japanese characters.

As the way of writing, Chado or 'the way of tea' is also about work of art. This is a Japanese tradition involving the preparation and presentation of green tea powder called matcha.

Actually Japanese Tea is divided into two, Matcha and Sencha. However if Japanese think of tea, they usually think of Matcha.

The equipment for conducting Chado is called *chadōgu*.

A wide range of chadōgu is available in different styles and motifs. Those are used for different events and in different seasons. These are the basic equipment for performing Sado.

- **Chakin**. The "chakin" is a small rectangular white linen or hemp cloth mainly used to wipe the tea bowl.

- **Tea bowl (chawan)**. Tea bowls are available in many sizes and styles. Some bowls are extremely valuable. Irregularities and imperfections are prized: they are often featured prominently as the "front" of the bowl.

- **Tea caddy (chaki)**. This is small container where the powdered tea is placed for use in the tea-making procedure.

- **Tea scoop (chashaku)**. Tea scoops generally are carved from a single piece of bamboo, although they may also be made of ivory or wood. They are used to scoop tea from the tea caddy into the tea bowl.
- **Tea whisk (chasen).** This is the equipment used to mix the powdered tea with the hot water. Tea whisks are carved from a single piece of bamboo.

For Japanese, Chado is not only about tea and how to drink it. It is more than that. According to Sen Soshitsu, Ura Senke Grand Tea Master XV, there are four principles in Chado; harmony, respect, purity and tranquility, which are codified almost four hundred years ago.

Here is part of a message from Sen Soshitsu, which I believe was learnt and sensed by the participants

"Chado, the Way Of Tea, is based upon the simple act of boiling water, making tea, offering it to others, and drinking of it ourselves. Served with a respectful heart and received with gratitude, a bowl of tea satisfies both physical and spiritual thirst.

The frenzied world and our myriad dilemmas leave our bodies and minds exhausted. It is then that we seek out a place where we can have a moment of peace and tranquility. In the discipline of Chado such a place can be found."

Learning and experiencing Japanese culture is very intriguing. One of the lessons is that there is always a deeper meaning beneath. This is closely related to the Japanese people themselves—who according to Edward T Hall in his preface in “The Unspoken Way—have been brought up to avoid coming to the point quickly.

In fact, the point may only be alluded to indirectly, which in Japanese tradition is called haragei. A Japanese who uses haragei is a person who says one thing but means another. Westerner, or people who growing up in a western-style thinking society is just the opposite. They tend to get anxious when they do not know what someone else is driving at. That is the reason why people acknowledge Japanese as past master in reading between the line.

Along with reading between the lines, the tranquil atmosphere is something that can be sensed in Japanese culture and tradition. There is always a space or intervals. Even this can be found in the sense of a pause in conversation. An interval or 'Ma' is part of the Japanese non verbal communication and it is sublime in Japanese aesthetic as well..

The tranquility, a space or interval, apparently is part of Japanese tradition which uphold the Tao and Zen principles. The Tao ('do' in Japanese) literally means a path of life. When Japanese put 'do' in the word means the activity related to it is also part of their path of life. That gave a clear idea of Japanese people always putting great respect to their culture, their daily activity and even their food.

Regarding that, we, all the participants and IATSS volunteers were very happy closing that day by enjoying the beauty of yin-yang principles in our dinner meal!
I. Introduction:
The Cultural Exchange Day (CED) is a major event in the IATSS Forum programme, enabling participants to showcase various cultural perspectives and bringing together a Japanese audience to interact with these participants. The 47th IATSS participants started to prepare for the CED during our Gasshuku (Team Building) where responsibilities were explained and roles for each participant were confirmed. The theme for the 47th CED was “Birthday Celebrations Around the World”.

The CED was jointly presented by IATSS Forum and MIEF, with 17 ASEAN participants, 2 Japanese participants from Honda and 4 Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) from America, Brazil, China and New Zealand.

II. Preparation:
The preparation period for CED was about 1 month and participants had different roles in the following segments:

- a) Self-Introduction
- b) Birthday Celebration Skit
- c) Country Booth Interaction
- d) Charity Auction
- e) Quiz and Prize
- f) Bhangra Dance
- g) Publicity (Poster / Brochure)

Practices took place about 4 times per week after the official programme, usually lasting 2.5 hours after dinner. In addition, participants also had 8 extra practices with the CIRs lasting about 2 hours per session.
A substantial part of the CED practices went to the performances, namely Self-Introduction, Birthday Celebrations and Bhangra Dance. This was so as these performances involved much initial discussions to reach a consensus on the respective concepts and direction, as well as the time it took to practice them. However, the practices were also a time of fun with one another and getting to know the 4 CIRs better.

III. Quick Facts about the 47th IATSS Forum CED:

**Venue:** Suzuka Media Park, Voice Hall  
**Time:** 1330 to 1700  
**No. of Guests:** 60 (Free Admission)  
**Opening Address:** Mr Akira Haga, IATSS Forum General Manager  
**Closing Address:** Mr Yasuo Kagami, MIEF Director  
**Total Amount for Charity Auction:** 30,000 JPY for 9 items  
**Recipient of Charity Auction Amount:** Luang-Nam-Tha Province, Laos

IV. CED Programme Highlights

**Self-Introduction** – Participants and CIRs were introduced by country, accompanied by a modern Indonesian Jazz song “Take Off to Padang”, and ending with a short Singapore dance and Japanese bow.

**Birthday Celebration** – A 40 minute skit with 7 scenes that showcased the similarities and unique ways that birthdays are celebrated around the world. The skit ended with an actual birthday celebration for guests born in October. A birthday song was sung in 9 languages and the celebrants joined the participants for a short Cambodian dance.

**Country Booth** – There were a total of 9 country booths and 1 CIR booth, showcasing pictures, brochures, crafts, gifts and food from these countries. This segment allowed the most interaction between guests and participants.

**Charity Auction & Quiz and Prize** – These 2 segments gave guests a chance to be more involved in the programme through bidding and answering questions about signs and gestures in ASEAN, America and Brazil.
Bhangra Dance – Using the popular song “Panjabi MC – Mundian To Back Ke”, participants performed an energetic Bhangra dance which has its origins from North India. This was an effective closing item as it ended the programme on a high note.

V. Challenges and How They Were Resolved

Every major event has its own challenges and difficulties. For the 47th CED, there were 3 key challenges that seemed to be prevalent in the preparation.

*Reaching a Consensus* was a challenge faced in the initial stage of preparation as 17 participants and 4 CIRs all had different ideas of how each performance, layout, usage of props and positioning should be done. These discussions were sometimes lengthy and at times inconclusive as it was everyone’s first time and there was no direct yardstick for comparison since each CED programme is unique.

However, as the preparation moved along, the respective coordinators had more time to think through the details, and everyone was eventually able to agree collectively to the ideas. There was also common understanding that the coordinators would make the final decisions after consultation with all. In addition, IATSS staff also played an advisory role on what was feasible.
The *Birthday Celebration Theme* was a challenge because most participants do not practise unique and traditional birthday celebrations at all or anymore. It was therefore difficult to find something really interesting or substantial to present.

Nevertheless, the performance coordinators successfully put together a skit that combined similarities with smooth transitions in between. While it was not a very long or dramatic performance, it maximised what we had, was simple to understand and was heartwarming throughout, especially in getting the birthday guests up on stage.

*Practices within a Tight Schedule* – This was an unavoidable challenge as the daily schedules were already filled with seminars or field visits, leaving only the nights for practices. This was when many found that there was little time to rest or to complete their respective reports and presentation deadlines. Yet, all participants gave their full support and attendance, despite their own limitations or weariness.

My personal opinion of how we overcame the above challenges was that we had really excellent teamwork, trust and respect for one another. This was largely attributed to the success of the Gasshuku and Facilitation Training that IATSS equipped us with right in the beginning of the Forum. Due to these necessary platforms, we already had a good foundation of understanding one another and working well together. Therefore, while there were differences in opinions, there were no hard feelings and everyone did not stop practising to make the event a success. In addition, we were all aware that CED is a major IATSS event and all the staff had put in a lot of hard work for it. Everyone subconsciously knew that it was our responsibility to do our best as well.

VI. **Positive Experiences**

Apart from challenges, major events also present many benefits, learning points and positive experiences. Some of them were:

*Strengthened Teamwork* – in the course of preparation, participants including Hide and Café, had many opportunities to work together and strengthen our existing teamwork.

*Support from IATSS Staff* – the event would not have been possible without the IATSS staff who were the brains behind, setting deadlines and giving advice and detailed logistical support.

*Friendship with the CIRs* – all participants enjoyed working with the 4 CIRs and building genuine friendships with them. After the official event, they also stayed back to sing, play table tennis and watch a movie together with us. In fact, one of the CIRs – Ana, remarked that this was the best CED she had experienced in the 3 CEDs she participated in. This was truly an encouragement for all.

*Interaction with Japanese People & Appreciation of Our Culture* – the CED enabled participants to interact more with the Japanese and to share about their respective cultures.
Back at home, everyone would usually be too busy with daily work. The CED therefore, gave many participants a kind of reconnection to our culture and practices.

VII. Concluding Remarks

The CED was definitely a very special and important part of the IATSS Forum as it gave a cultural aspect to balance the cognitive side of seminars and group studies. The CED is an essential connecting bridge to enable Japanese people to understand more about the ASEAN people and way of life, just as the Japanese Cultural Introduction Event helped us to appreciate Japanese culture in greater depth.

Personally, as one of the CED Coordinators, it has been a privilege to be involved and to see everyone maturing in terms of teamwork and communication. It is also encouraging to see some using their talents and others moving out of their comfort zones into unfamiliar tasks. There were a few people with major roles, and a few with more minor roles. This was not important as we all play different roles in different degrees, in different projects in the Forum. The significant thing was, we all played our roles, big and small, as one body. The true elegance was that together, we saw the importance of the big picture, and were responsible in the small details.

Apart from the teamwork, I also experienced a great sense of satisfaction in seeing the end products of our work – for example, the amount raised from the auction to benefit students in northern Laos, and the energy and huge improvement of our Bhangra dance. Most importantly, it was great to hear from the guests themselves that they had enjoyed the programme.

I am sure that many more IATSS participants from the coming years will benefit from the CED programme and I hope that many more Japanese will come to know about it and participate so as to keep the cross cultural connection and friendships stronger and deeper.
Group Study
Introductory Training Report
Group Study Introductory Training: Facilitation Skills  
Ms. Keiko TSUBAKI

September 29th & 30th, 2010

Bui Tran Hieu (Hugh)  
Vietnam

Two things participants might forget during or after the two day 29 & 30 of September are, first, Ms. Keiko Tsubaki’s current title & position and, second, the main role of the Facilitation Skills Training session. The reason is that they might have got lost in her attractive, helpful and unforgettable training activities. I am not an exception, either.

Let’s start the revision by reminding that Ms. Keiko Tsubaki (hereafter called Ms. Tsubaki) is currently the Managing Director of the Global Network of Facilitators, Japan, and mainly working as a trainer on facilitation skills frequently for enterprises and less usually for colleges and universities.

About the position of Facilitation Skills Training, this is an introductory module in preparation for group study which is the ‘heart’ of the program. As in IATSS Forum program, participant meetings, discussions and group working are all around. This training is, however, far beyond just a preparatory session for group study, but serves as an essential and crucial tool to higher group performance on the next-coming days. The following report will partly demonstrate how the training is meaningful & valuable for us.

Lecture Summary

Several key points to be highlighted and summarized for the session are as followed:

First, the class was divided into 3 sub-groups (each had 5 or 6 members). This model was kept throughout the session and had a great influence on most learning activities afterward. The idea was to bring about opportunities for participants to experience, learn and practice facilitation skills in a close-to-reality simulated environment. Almost all of the activities had been designed for small groups, from games to group discussion, similarly to what the group-study groups would experience then. In addition, a slight but useful competitive atmosphere naturally created by 3 groups did encourage every participant to actively take part in and effectively contribute to the class learning outcomes.

Second, the method of training was experiential, a type of learning in which people had learned from their own concrete experiences and from others. By being involved in group or
pair games and group discussions and having to accomplish designated tasks, learners thought, took actions and interacted with each other. Next, they shared their thoughts, feelings and personal lessons they drew for themselves. This would be followed by comments and lecture from Ms. Tsubaki who provided knowledge and experience on facilitation skills.

The whole content of the session was a glance at facilitation and its related concepts, such as facilitator, facilitation tools and techniques. These contents were introduced here and there within the 2-day session, regularly after each experiential activity, rather than a continuous lecture. At the 1st day session, we were introduced to and discussed essential facilitation concepts and the role and characteristics of a facilitator. The lecturer also mentioned some helpful facilitation tools all of which were derived from the characteristics & competencies of the facilitators themselves. Mindmap and brainstorming were presented and practiced as problem solving techniques in facilitation. Day 2nd covered communication and group consensus. Among all the given and discussed ideas, I was interested the most in the following meaningful and insightful viewpoints by Ms. Tsubaki:

- The facilitator needs to be brave enough to do anything for the meeting (as long as it is appropriate and contributes to the final outcomes of the meeting).
- Each individual has their own style, characteristics & strengths. Therefore, there are different styles of facilitation.
- As a facilitator, facilitating a meeting means we are occupying others’ time. So, be punctual and effective by all means.

All the games were appealing and earned high appreciation from learners. The first game was implemented outdoor, naming Blind Game. In this game, we learned about the importance of trust and how it would affect the facilitation process. We also enjoyed it very much when there was a part of an academic session conducted outside the Seminar Hall. The Lego Game brought us back to our childhood. We all, however, were excitedly playing the game and we learned about the process of conveying and receiving messages, and how crucial communication was to guarantee better facilitation and group working performance. The logic-based Game NASA challenged us on how to reach group consensus within a short (limited amount of) time.

Group discussions were also interesting and indeed were very useful opportunities for practicing facilitation skills. The topics included Japan, Dream Car, One-day Program in Kyoto and a free-choice topic, which were familiar and motivating for IATSS participants. Particularly, in each topic, one participant was appointed to be the facilitator for the discussion and he/she could get comments or feedback from other group members on his facilitation skills comprising ability to: bring the group to discussion, use body language and intonation, define the problem, know when to stop, manage time & stay on track, manage conflict, stay neutral, be positive and optimistic, listen actively, collect & summarize ideas,
continuously paraphrase, etc. Based on these criteria, participants could analyze and give feedback to others’ facilitation performance or their self-performance.

Another interesting point is the rule of a 10-minute break every one hour learning. This is beyond just to satisfy the participants as they tend to be bored and tired of long lectures, but to create an effective and highly concentrative learning environment psychologically.

During the training, each participant had several chances to practice facilitating and receive feedback from other participants. Starting with different levels and experiences of facilitation, learning by doing and doing basing on learning had helped generate remarkable improvement in each individual’s facilitating skills as well as effectiveness of communication and group working.

In general, we (as I think all of the participants would agree with me) did enjoy most of the activities facilitated by Ms. Tsubaki and considered this will probably be one of the most memorable and enjoyable academic training modules of IATSS 47th program. From group discussions, presentations and lectures, to experiential games, all were reasonable and well-organized so that we could understand everything in the class and we did not have to listen or read too much.

Although, two days were too short for such a big topic like facilitation skills, Ms. Tsubaki helped us build a background knowledge in the field to continue developing in the next stage. She also left a great impression for not only her lecture but her professional training styles and open-minded, friendly and insightful characteristic as well. Hopefully, we will meet and have a chance to learn and cooperate with her in a near future.

Thanks & best regards.

Note: For more details of the knowledge of facilitation skills, some handouts & reference books are available at IATSS data center and library. Also, reports on Facilitation Skills Training from previous batches (e.g. the 46th IATSS Forum Program) might be of good to revise following the sequence of activities and lectures of the 2-day sessions.
Group Study Reports

Let's handle garbage wisely...!

GARBAGE AWARENESS PROMOTION (GAP) IN VIENTIANE

G&G “Grow It, Get It” Community Garden in Jakarta, Indonesia

‘SAVE EVERY DROP’ A Water-Saving Educational Campaign in Iloilo City, Philippines

Kankyo-San
GARBAGE AWARENESS PROMOTION IN VIENTIANE (GAP VIENTIANE)

GROUP STUDY FINAL REPORT

GROUP A – “BUSY BIN COMMUNITY”
Café (Japan), JY (Singapore), Kohn (Laos), Nary (Cambodia), Ponco (Indonesia), Pwint (Myanmar), Woody (Thailand)

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Issues concerning global warming have increasingly affected individuals and countries. Over the past 50 years, global temperature rise has been largely due to the emission of greenhouse gas, mainly contributed by human activities. This has also resulted in the rise of sea level and more disasters such as tropical cyclones, flooding and destruction of marine species and ecosystems.

Some common environmental problems in Asia are deforestation, air and water pollution, garbage mismanagement as well as lack of awareness and efforts in recycling. Out of these problems, power stations and industrial sectors are the main contributors of greenhouse gas emissions, taking up 38%, while waste disposal and treatment contributes 3.4%. However, greenhouse gas produced by waste disposal and treatment give out more methane, which is more potent and stays in the atmosphere longer than carbon dioxide. Since the mid-70s, carbon dioxide has risen by 35%, while methane, largely caused by human activities, has risen by 60%. In addition, as all 7 countries representing the group study team face garbage mismanagement problems, a community project addressing public awareness on proper garbage management was chosen.

As a result of the group’s research, it was found that the root causes of improper garbage disposal and low recycling rate in Asia were bad habits amongst the community and the lack of good role models. Therefore, a project to educate the public on good garbage awareness was decided. Laos was chosen as the targeted community because the amount of garbage produced per day was one of the highest amongst the country, with household waste contributing 75%. Its capital Vientiane, has a lack of capacity in garbage management and low public awareness on the individual’s responsibility on proper garbage disposal.

For the 3-year period, the team designed GAP Vientiane, a project with 4 action plans targeting district and village chiefs, teachers, students and housewives in 4 districts in Vientiane. The project aims to raise awareness about negative effects of mismanaged garbage to the human health, living environment and climate; promote Reducing, Reusing and Recycling; and create better alternative resources.

GAP Vientiane’s 4 action plans include seminars and workshops, public awareness campaigns, educational resources and networking with government and environmental stakeholders. Under the public awareness campaign, special features include design competitions for effective recycling bins, a mobile bus that distributes resources to households, radio talk shows on good garbage practices and even a short jingle.

It is expected that after 3 years, the environment in the 4 districts will have lesser garbage that is disposed haphazardly in public spaces, and there would be new creative designs of recycled bins in schools and community spaces. The potential after 3 years would be a an increase in ground-up eco-initiatives, as well as more sustainable partnerships with the government and industries on Research & Development for better technologies in garbage management. Even though 3 years is a short period to completely raise public awareness, GAP Vientiane is a positive initiative in building a strong foundation in better garbage practices amongst the communities and developing Vientiane into a model city for good garbage management.
I. Introduction:

1.1 Macro Analysis

1.1.1 Fact Finding Environment Problems Among Seven Countries

This fact finding process is the result of the identification of seven countries’ environmental problem through a brainstorming session. We found that all countries facing environmental problem especially in term of water and air pollution. The more details regarding the problems are as follow;

Cambodia
- Poor drainage/sewage system in urban area
- Garbage mis-management
- Air/noise pollution and traffic problem (no public transportation)
- Landslides, floods and drought

Indonesia
- Deforestation (illegal logging)
- Drainage/sewage system in urban area
- Not enough green space area (now only 9% instead of 30% of green space area that should provided by the government)

Lao
- Deforestation
- Water pollution
- Garbage mis-management

Japan
- Water pollution especially in small rivers
- Traffic Problem

Myanmar
- Not enough green space area in Urban area
- Noise pollution from car, trains and generator
- Water pollution cause by garbage mis-management

Singapore
- lack of public consciousness of resource and energy conservation
- No major recycling/separation of garbage by the public

Thailand
- Air pollution from heavy traffic in urban area
- Heavy flood in sub-urban due to deforestation
1.1.2 Mind Mapping on Global Environmental Issues

These issues are all affected by Global warming and Climate Change.

1.1.3 Phenomenon of Global Warming

Over the last 50 years, almost 100% of the observed temperature raising has been due to the increase in the atmosphere of greenhouse gas concentrations. Evidence of observed climate change includes the instrumental temperature record, rising sea levels, and decreased snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere. According to IPCC (2007), "most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in human greenhouse gas concentrations". It is predicted that future climate changes will include further global warming (an upward trend in global mean temperature: Increase of temperature on the earth by about 3° to 5° C by the year 2100), sea level rise (by at least 25 meters by the year 2100), and a probable increase in the frequency of some extreme weather events. The effects or impacts of climate change may be

- Physical (by drought, tropical cyclone and increased incidences of extreme high sea level)
- Social (lack of food supply, human health condition and etc.)
- Ecological (affecting species and ecosystems around the world; Terrestrial, biodiversity, Marine and Freshwater ecosystems)
- Economic (agriculture and food production around the world)
Greenhouse gases (GHGs) is a gas in an atmosphere that absorbs and emits radiation within the thermal infrared range. (Source: Wikipedia) The three most important gases are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). Greenhouse gases greatly affect the temperature of the Earth; without them, Earth's surface would be on average about 33 °C colder than at present.

**1.1.4 Climate Change and Waste - Gas Emissions from Waste Disposal**

After the fact finding and mind mapping process among our group members, we found that **garbage mis-management is a common problem**. We also came across one conclusion that nowadays global warming issues come from 2 main factors which is Natural related and Human related. But the most significant affect come from human part through industrials and households. It is becoming more and more difficult to just run faster, catch up and solve the problem. Long-term, viable solutions require action at every level – personal, corporate and government. However, in order to make strong and effective grass root project/campaign regarding **“Eco & creative life in urban area”**, household part can play an important role through their garbage management to create sustainable Eco-friendly community.

The disposal and treatment of waste can produce emissions of several greenhouse gases (GHGs), which contribute to global climate change. The most significant GHGs produced from waste is **methane**. It is released during the breakdown of organic matter in landfills. Other forms of waste disposal also produce GHGs but these are mainly in the form of carbon dioxide (a less powerful GHG). Even the recycling of waste produces some emissions (although these are offset by the reduction in fossil fuels that would be required to obtain new raw materials). **Waste prevention and recycling help address global climate change by decreasing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and saving energy.** (Source: Vital Waste Graphic/UNEP, 2004)
1.2 Micro Analysis

Cause and effect method has been used to identify garbage mismanagement issue and its affects. The detail can be seen as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness / consciousness / behavior / role model</td>
<td>CO₂, CH₄ and other danger GHG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Government control / strong leadership</td>
<td>New generation don’t care proper practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost cutting on better technology / method</td>
<td>Attract scavengers (rat, cockroaches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of infrastructure / system / equipments</td>
<td>Dirty and unhygienic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No better option / alternative</td>
<td>Disappointment to neighborhood</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Danger for marine life</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To make sure which causes that most fit to our project, the scoring method with multiple DA (scoring) table has been used. In this table, more important part we use multiple to evaluate. The multiple numbers of 5 is most important part or a section. So we put 5 as a scale of the project, 4 as an environmental impact, 3 as Cost and Human resource, 2 as Sustainability, 1 as Period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A : Sustainability</th>
<th>longer 5 4 3 2 1</th>
<th>shorter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B : Cost</td>
<td>expensive 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>cheaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C : Scale</td>
<td>grass root 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D : Environment impact</td>
<td>big 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>mini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E : Period</td>
<td>shorter 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F : Human resource</td>
<td>need less 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>need more people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>A X 2</th>
<th>B X 3</th>
<th>C X 5</th>
<th>D X 4</th>
<th>E X 1</th>
<th>F X 3</th>
<th>Sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness / consciousness / behavior / role model</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Government control / strong leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost cutting on better technology / method</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of infrastructure / system / equipments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No better option / alternative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table is used to analyze which causes should be chosen and prioritized. Regarding to the scoring results, the first priority is **Lack of awareness / consciousness / behavior / role model** and the second is **No better option / alternative**.
In order to find the roots of the problems, the two priorities causes from above table has been analyzed.

1) Why is there a lack of awareness or consciousness to the environment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because#1</td>
<td>Public education is not organized</td>
<td>Less community awareness</td>
<td>No actual punishment / Bad habit</td>
<td>No role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because#2</td>
<td>People think it is not important</td>
<td>Less information</td>
<td>Lack of community center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because#3</td>
<td>People think it’s only Government’s duties</td>
<td>They pay the tax.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Why is there a lack of better options or better alternatives?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because#1</td>
<td>People think it’s not important to use</td>
<td>Less information</td>
<td>No actual punishment / Bad habit</td>
<td>No role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because#2</td>
<td>Lack of new technology</td>
<td>Limited funding</td>
<td>Business Sectors think that it is not profitable</td>
<td>Low demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because#3</td>
<td>Only get plastic bag easily</td>
<td>Convenient / cheap / popular</td>
<td>New alternatives are more expensive</td>
<td>Lack of government support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To sum up, poor garbage management come from bad habits in handling the garbage and lack of role model. Therefore, in order to solve the problem, having good role models and educating people about good practices in handling the garbage need to be addressed.

Bad habit in handling the garbage Lack of good role models \to educate people with good practices

II. Sub-Theme, Vision, Goal and Objectives

2.1 Sub-Theme
“Let’s Handle Our Garbage Wisely!”

2.2 Vision
“Creating a Sustainable Eco-Friendly Lifestyle among Urban Communities.”

2.3 Goal
“Empowering the community to take up the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) concept.”

2.4 Objectives
i) Increasing the community’s awareness and action in handling the garbage wisely in
urban areas.

ii) Sustaining a clean, green and healthy environment with effective eco-friendly resources.

III. Action Plan

3.1 Target Area/Group

Garbage has been a common problem amongst ASEAN countries. According to the finding in 7 countries including Japan, every country produces a significant number of garbage. As the following table shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City (Country)</th>
<th>Population (million)</th>
<th>Garbage (ton/day)</th>
<th>Recycle rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vientiane (Laos)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>10-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangon (Myanmar)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakarta (Indonesia)</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (Singapore)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16,750</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phnom Penh (Cambodia)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangkok (Thailand)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo (Japan)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to the above table, the ratio of garbage disposal in Vientiane is more than Phnom Penh in term of the number of each city population. Vientiane produces 500 tones per day among 600,000 people while Phnom Penh produces 1100 tones per day among 2 millions.

The target area of this project is Vientiane Municipality of Laos People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Laos PDR is a land locked country in South East Asia with total area of 236,800 square kilometer and 6.5 million people. Population density is 24 people per 1 square kilometer. Lao PDR consists of 3 main minority groups: 80% Lao Loum, 10% Lao Theung and 10% Lao Soung. It shares borders with 5 countries: Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. The capital city is Vientiane Municipality. Official language is Lao (English and French is widely used). There are two seasons in Laos: dry and rainy seasons.

Vientiane Municipality is divided into nine districts: five are rural (Sangthong, Naxaithong, Xaithany, Pak Ngum, and Hatxaifong) and four are urban (Sikhottabong, Chanthabauly, Sisathanak, and Xaysettha). The population of Vientiane is about 600,000 with an annual growth rate of 4.3% which is much higher than the national level (2.5%).
Vientiane covers an area of 180 kilometers along the banks of the Mekong River. Its population has been growing rapidly, causing strains on the environment and on the quality of urban environmental services. As the heart of the country’s economic, educational, industrial, and business activities, it is confronted by many environmental problems in general and by garbage problems in particular. Although it has a slower industrial growth rate than other cities, household garbage is becoming a big environmental concern. Open and dispersed depositing of garbage in dumpsites is a widely practiced method of disposal in Vientiane. This has contributed to water and air pollution and to the spread of diseases carried by insects, rodents, and other vectors that come into contact with open dumpsites. Vientiane Municipality charges flat monthly fees for waste collection, a practice that does not encourage people to minimize its volume.

The effective implementation of environmental management measures is necessary to improve the financial base of the municipality, but economic and policy instruments do not seem to function well. Very low revenues generated from households and from commercial institutions as well as small and irregular subsidies from local and national governments hinder the effective management of garbage in Vientiane.

According to the report of the Vientiane Urban Development Administration Authority (VUDAA), the volume of garbage produced by the capital residents has amounted to about 500 tons per day and this trend is expected to keep rising, compared to the previous years’ figures at only 100-150 tons a day and most of the garbage produced by household sectors, as we can see on the pie chart below.
bage disposal conducted by the Capital garbage collection service in the seven districts of the capital accounts for 32 per cent only, amounting to 22,819 households, of the total number of 70,000 households in 266 villages. However, the waste disposal in Vientiane Capital poses a chronic problem to the VUDAA. According to the report of Mr. Khamphone KEODALAVONG, the Deputy of Industrial Environment Division, Department of Industrial (MIC) in 2007, the garbage in Vientiane is reused and recycled only 10-15%.

On the other hand, the garbage disposal does not receive good co-operation from local residents due to their misunderstanding that the task was the sole responsibility of the Government; therefore, we can say that Vientiane has lack of capacity in planning and management, insufficient technical knowledge, fund and equipment and low awareness of public on the impact of garbage.

Referring to the explanation above, the target group of this project are housewives, members of the women union, teachers and students. Teachers and junior high school students are selected because they are belonging to the educational institution where they can share the knowledge each other. Teachers can be a model and the junior high school student can absorb the knowledge easily. Since the project aim to encourage the good habit in term of garbage handling, young generations are easier to be encourage.

3.2 Name of the Project

Garbage Awareness Promotion in Vientiane (GAP Vientiane)

3.2 Duration of Project – 3 Years (Pilot Project)

-Stage 1: 3 Month Project

-Stage 2: 2 years and 9 months

3.4 Project Target Area: 2 Urban Districts

i) Xaysettha  ii) Chanthabauly

3.5 Activities

There will be four main activities in the proposal: training, educational materials, campaigns and networking.

3.5.1 Training

Training is a learning process that involved the acquisition of knowledge, sharpening of skill, concepts, rules or changing of attitude and behavior to enhance the performance of community (Source: Training and Development: Naukrihub.Com). In this project, training program will have 2 activities: seminars and workshops.
The specific objectives of the seminars and workshops are:

a. To raise the awareness and consciousness of the community in handling the garbage wisely by telling them about the negative effects of mismanaged garbage to the human health, living environment and climate.

b. To promote the 3Rs concepts in handling the garbage.

c. To create a better alternative resource instead of non eco-friendly sources, e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam.

The seminar topic will be on basic awareness of garbage and how bad management of garbage affects health, the living environment and the climate. The seminar will also have 2 workshops with the following topics:

- How the women’s union and teachers can teach about garbage issues and management in their respective areas of influence / How students can share about the knowledge on garbage management to their families
- Using the 3Rs to address garbage problems

Each training program targets 100 participants, made up of representatives from the women’s union, teachers and students from the 2 districts. In each program, there will be 1 seminar and 2 workshops. In 3 years, a total of 400 participants will benefit and bring the good practices back to impact their communities.

On the third year, there will be one showcase and field visit on this project and it will be at the third quarter. The showcase will be on the winning project and design from the competition (details under “Campaign” below) and the field visit will be selected from and conducted in the best practicing community or winning project.

3.5.2 Educational and Promotional Materials

Educational and Promotional Materials include the books, periodical maps, piece of music, TV, radio, newspapers, internet, mobile phones, posters and brochures to enable people to learn (source: Wikipedia, free encyclopedia). In this project, the educational materials consist of posters, brochures, audiovisual, rap and mascot.

500 copies of posters and brochures will be printed out twice for the whole project and distributed to district/village chiefs, teachers, students, housewives and others in the communities.

200 eco bags will be produced in the first quarter of the first year and distributed in the mobile tricycle campaign. In the second quarter of first year, 600 eco bags more will be produced. Another 1200 eco bags will continue to be produced in the second and the third year.

Two versions of the audiovisual (1 short video clip and 1 long video presentation), and a mascot will be produced and used in the training programs and the public awareness campaigns.
3.5.3 Public Awareness Campaign

A Public Awareness Campaign refers to a structured approach to transmitting and disseminating information, knowledge and understanding to the populace in general or specific interest groups using a variety of communications media (source: www.compass-malawi.com/cglossary.htm).

The campaign activities in GAP Vientiane consist of a mobile campaign, competitions, exhibition and quiz, and radio talk show.

a. Mobile Campaign (Tricycle and Mini Bus)

The Tricycle and Mini Bus will be designed according to the sub theme “Let’s Handle Our Garbage Wisely with 3 Rs” with the picture of the project logo (elephant picture).

In the first quarter of the first year, a 3-wheel vehicle (Samlork) will be driven around the 2 districts to raise awareness specifically amongst housewives about the ill effects of improper garbage disposal on the human health, living environment and climate. Project staff, volunteers and members from the women’s union will also share techniques on the 3Rs.

The mobile mini bus campaign will be started on the third quarter of the first year. It will be driven around household areas in the 2 targeted districts 6 times per quarter like the tricycle (Samlork).

During the mobile tricycle and bus campaign, brochures and posters will be distributed. The elephant mascot will be used to attract the people and a video presentation will be shown as well. Moreover, there will be an eco-bag exchange program where housewives can exchange for an attractive eco-bag with any 20 used plastic bags, bottles and Styrofoam boxes. The housewives can then use their new eco-bag to make daily purchases in the market.

b. Competitions

Competitions are another component of the Public Awareness Campaign. There will be 3 kinds of competitions - mascot design competition, recycling bin design competition and housewives composting project competition.

- Mascot Design Competition (1st Year, 1st Quarter)
  As the elephant is a valued animal in Laos, the mascot for the project will be the elephant. There will be a competition open to the public to design the mascot and the winning design will be made into a life size mascot. This mascot will be used in the other campaign activities such as exhibitions and the mini bus.

- Recycling Bin Design Competition (2nd Year, 2nd Quarter)
  This competition encourages the design of creative and effective recycling bins to encourage the public to recycle, and to offer better options than existing ones. There will be a public survey done in the 2 districts to gather people’s
views on what they think are effective designs and materials for recycling bins in community spaces. This data will be shared with the design competitors, who will then submit their proposed designs. The competition is inspired by a Singapore design programme called 10Touchpoints (more information in Annex 1).

- **Housewives Composting Project Competition (3rd Year, 2nd Quarter)**
  By the third year, many housewives would have learnt how to do their own composting in their own homes. This means that they would have separated and composted their unwanted vegetables and wood, reducing the total household waste. This competition brings together good efforts of housewives, rewarding the most successful composting project.

c. **Exhibition and quiz**

GAP Vientiane will have one participation annually on 22nd April during The Earth Day Exhibition to promote how to handle garbage wisely, especially in using the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle) concept. During the exhibition, there will be some eco-related quiz with practical prizes.

d. **Radio talk show**

2 kinds of talk show in a local radio station in Vientiane will be organized. The first talk show, which takes once every year in the 1st quarter, is with a celebrity or/and environmental specialist. They will talk about basic awareness on health and environment, and promote good practices on proper garbage management as well as the 3Rs.

The second kind of talk show will take place 3 times every year, involving interviews with a member of women union, a teacher, a student and a housewife who have attended the project seminars and workshops. They will share how they have benefited from the training and how it has positively impacted their daily garbage management.

3.5.4 **Networking**

GAP Vientiane will also have networking with relevant partners and stakeholders, and there will be 2 kinds of networking meetings. The first one is joining meetings with other NGOs and the Department of Environment, Laos in order to build network for future contacts, to get updated information related to environmental issues, and sharing resources and best practices. The second one is organizing GAP’s own networking meetings with project stakeholders and partners. This will be organized every quarterly for the purpose of updating project activities and result sharing.
### 3.6 Activities Scheduling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
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<th>Year 2</th>
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<th>Year 3</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1st Qr</td>
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<td>3rd Qr</td>
<td>4th Qr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showcase &amp; Field Visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>(Bin)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Mobile Campaign</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(2distri cts)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition and Quiz</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Talk Show</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Celebr ity &amp;/or Expert)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(W, H, T, S)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(W, H, T, S)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Celebrity &amp; Expert)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational &amp; Publication Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters and Brochures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500pcs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500pcs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>600pcs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1200pc</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2 versio ns)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingle Song</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mascot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Project Evaluation</td>
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<td>Final Project Evaluation</td>
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</table>
### 3.7 Budgeting

(Currency in US dollars)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activities/Items</th>
<th>Year1</th>
<th>Year2</th>
<th>Year3</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Donor</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars/Workshops</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>11,400</td>
<td>JICA, UNEP, IGES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Show Case/Field Visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,600</td>
<td>4,600</td>
<td>JICA, UNEP, IGES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Awareness Campaign</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>Beer Laos, M Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Campaign: Busy Bin Bus &amp; tricycle</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>Car Companies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition and Quiz</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Laos Development Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Talk Show</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>Uniliver, Radio Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational &amp; Publication Materials</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters and Brochures</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Lao Telecom, Lao Tobacco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco Bags</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
<td>Beer Laos, M Phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Beer Laos, M Phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingle Song and Mascot</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Beer Laos, M Phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking: Foods and Venue</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Equipment</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>JICA, UNEP, IGES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Panel, Digital Camera, Stationery, Motorbike</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration Cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Printer, 4 PCs, Furniture</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental, Internet, Electricity, Gas, Telephone</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>10,500</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man Power (Staff Salary)</td>
<td>7,750</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>25,750</td>
<td>JICA, UNEP, IGES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation &amp; Financial Audit</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78,950</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.8 Organization Structure

3.9 Partners and Stakeholders

In this project we manage to develop a networking with some stakeholders and partners. The networking plan as follow:

- **Donors:** UNEP, JICA, IGES, WWF
- **Garbage Awareness Promotion (GAP) Vientiane Stakeholders**
- **Sponsors:** M Phone, Unilever, Bank, Car Comp. Lao Beer
- **Beneficiaries:** Women Union, Housewives, Teachers, Students
- **NGO/Private companies:** Lao Garbage Comp., The Vientiane Dev. Comp., Dept. of Environment, Participatory Dev. Training Center, 4 target districts in Vientiane
### 3.10 Risk Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Risk Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar &amp; workshop /</td>
<td>1. Low attendance / low interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>showcase &amp; field visit</td>
<td>2. Weak publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Lack of experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Bad location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Awareness Campaign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>1. No attractive prizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Weak publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Bad location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. The participant too shy / not confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Bus Campaign</td>
<td>ECONOMIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NATURAL DISASTERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WEATHER CONDITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition and quiz</td>
<td>1. The participant too shy / not confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Low attendance / low interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Weak publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Difficult to get permission from local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk show (Local Radio)</td>
<td>CRISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Not attractive topic or format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Difficulty to get celebrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Technical problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational &amp; Publication Materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>1. Not attractive design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Become a waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual (video clip and presentation)</td>
<td>1. Not attractive story / talent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Take time (in production process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingle</td>
<td>1. High price of composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Copyrights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mascot</td>
<td>1. Kids afraid of the mascot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking (2 types)</td>
<td>1. No response from other NGOs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Different Vision, Missions, Goals, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>target working area &amp; target group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Low interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.11 Evaluation and Report

Ongoing evaluation report will be conduct on monthly basis by monitoring ongoing process during the implementation of the project. For mid-term and final evaluations, all donors and stakeholders will be invited to the project review and evaluation meeting. The mid-term and
final report will consist of project outcomes from every activity. The Project Manager will also submit this report to the Department of Environment.

IV. Concluding Remarks

Benefits of the GAP Vientiane

As a 3-year pilot project, the GAP Vientiane was very specific in its target group of housewives, the women union, teachers and students in 2 urban districts in Vientiane (Chanthabauly and Xaysettha). The project, with its various training platforms and campaigns, aims to level up the eco-awareness and healthy living environment in these communities. The benefits of this project are in:

a) **Raising basic awareness** of the impacts of garbage mismanagement amongst 2 communities which may otherwise have remained ignorant and indifferent to the negative consequences on health and environment;

b) **Educating good practices** on proper garbage disposal and kick starting a positive lifestyle to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, which will carry on for future generations;

c) **Developing the potential for Vientiane to be a model city** for good garbage management, as a positive example for Laos and even neighboring regions;

d) **Aligning with the UN Millennium Development Goals** which include environment protection, as well as **aligning with the Kyoto Protocol**, both of which Laos is a supporter of.

Sustainability of the GAP Vientiane

Garbage management is a lifelong learning journey, whether for the individual, a small community or a city.

As 3 years is a short period for GAP Vientiane, existing bad habits or practices cannot be completely changed overnight. However, it is hoped that the project is a good starting point to build a strong foundation in awareness, good practices, positive attitudes and capacity building, so as to empower the 2 districts in Vientiane Municipality in garbage disposal and management. In this 3-year period, the introduction on the 3Rs concept is also at a foundational level with much potential to go deeper at the next phase.

It is expected that after 3 years, the environment in the 2 districts will be much cleaner, with lesser garbage that is disposed haphazardly in public spaces. More people in the communities will be seen using eco bags instead of plastic bags, and there would be new creative designs of recycled bins in schools and community spaces.

The potential after 3 years would be a more matured and streamlined approach to deepen 3Rs within the communities. In addition, efforts should go into nurturing an increase in ground-up eco-initiatives, and garbage related projects coming from the communities.
Another aspect for the long-term sustainability of the project would be to partner with industries and the local government on Research & Development for better technologies (equipment and systems), eco policies, garbage management studies in other countries and even exploring the possibility of turning organic waste into energy.

**Learning Points for the Busy Bin Community**

Through the Group Study process, there were many opportunities for research, discussion and facilitation as an individual or group. There were 7 of us coming from different countries, backgrounds and professions. Therefore our experiences, perceptions and even methodologies would differ 7 folds. Despite these differences, there were common learning points for us in the following ways:

a) *Subject Matter* – we learnt about the issues and impacts of bad garbage management; how it affects the climate and the different ways to address it. If not for the group study, many of us would actually not be very familiar with this subject as it is something dealt with by the government or experts in our countries;

b) *Different Situations in Different Countries* – we learnt that while the subject matter of garbage is common, the situations in different countries really differ widely. For example, even though Singapore’s 5 million population is about 3 million less than Tokyo, the garbage disposal figure per day double Tokyo’s. This may mean that Singapore is not reducing, reusing or recycling enough.

On the other hand, Vientiane’s official figure is low and this is likely that it only refers to garbage collected as many people throw the garbage into unaccounted public or private areas.

c) *New Methods and Better Teamwork* – as we all came from different backgrounds and had varied experiences, we were able to learn new methods from each other, such as preparing storyboards for powerpoint presentation. We also learnt better teamwork through a balance of specialization and working collectively.

**Challenges and How They Were Solved**

All projects have their own challenges and the solutions are often very much dependent on good communication and positive team dynamics. These were some of our challenges and how we overcame them:

a) *Tight Timelines* – this was a challenge as group study sessions were limited and we were also preparing for other programs. Therefore, we had to set strict yet realistic deadlines, rotate our roles in the team, and prioritize different aspects of the report to keep ourselves moving.

b) *Justifying Decisions* – even though we decided on our sub-theme, we were not able to justify the process in a detailed way. We therefore adopted various decision, scoring and cause & effect methodologies.

c) *Different working styles and ways of thinking* – this was inevitable and at times, we took a longer time making decisions or conclusions. We had to learn how to find the common platform in the issues and come to an agreement by a specified time.
In general, our team worked very well with no arguments as we gave one another ample freedom to share our views. In addition, garbage is a topic common to all our countries so there was a common interest and direction.

We recognized that no country, whether developed or developing, is in a perfect situation. Every country has a responsibility towards the environment and we are all closely connected and always in the process of learning from one another. Recognising this has helped us to develop this paper with maturity and understanding as we journey in “Thinking and Learning Together”.

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ANNEX 1
10TouchPoints Design Initiative by Singapore

Best design and winner of 10TouchPoints Competition deploys specially designed recycling bins to encourage recycling

10TouchPoints is a nationwide programme by DesignSingapore Council to improve everyday living through better design. In September 2009, it brought 32 new recycling bins to the four terminals at Singapore Changi Airport. Singapore design firm, Chemistry, was commissioned to build customised recycling bins after winning the inaugural 10TouchPoints Design Competition in 2007.

The three distinct phases of 10TouchPoints seek to bring better design in the public space to fruition. Phase One called for members of the public to nominate and vote for items, services or types of places that they would like redesigned. Phase Two saw designers respond to an open competition to redesign the top 10 most voted items. Phase Three focused on the review and implementation of winning designs. The winner of the competition was recycling bins by Chemistry.

During the conceptualisation of the initial design, Chemistry sought to understand psychological motivations behind recycling and people’s perceptions towards trash. A key component of Chemistry’s award winning concept was the effective use of visual communication in the form of a newspaper, a can and a bottle to attract attention to the bins and remind users of the intrinsic value in recyclable materials. The surface of the recycling bins includes interesting recycling information provided by the National Environment Agency (NEA) to encourage people to recycle even more.

“Good design motivates the way people interact with our environment and the 10TouchPoints programme seeks to pique Singaporeans’ interest in improving the design of everyday objects. Through engaging Singaporeans, design producers and public agencies, we hope the 10TouchPoints initiative will continually improve the lives of Singaporeans and contribute to a better living environment,” said Dr Milton Tan, former Director, DesignSingapore Council.

Recycling Bins in the Changi Airport
Group Study Report:
SAVE EVERY DROP
A Water-Saving Educational Campaign in Iloilo City, Philippines

By Kankyo-san
47th IATSS Forum

Group Members:
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Japan - Hideto Ushio (Hide)
Laos - Siriphone Thongbonh (Bobo)
Malaysia - Rashvinjeet Singh Bedi (Rashvin)
Philippines - Shena Faith M. Ganela (Shen)
Vietnam - Bui Tran Hieu (Hugh)

Suzuka, Japan – Nov 2010
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Kankyo-san is group B’s name for the 47th IATSS FORUM group study. “Kankyo” in Japanese means environment and “-san” is a polite way of addressing people, equivalent to the title Mr. or Ms. Therefore, the concept of adopting Kankyo-san is to inform the public that the group members are concerned about environmental issues, and that the project was conceived in Japan.
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Executive Summary

In February 2010, the Congressional Commission of Science & Technology and Engineering of the Philippines identified Iloilo City as one of the nine urban areas that were likely to be affected by water shortage in the future as caused by climate change.

Despite this fact, most local residents have not yet seriously considered and understood the value of water, which is being wasted because of over-consumption. This water wastage can be reduced by raising awareness on the importance of saving water.

Even with limited resources, Kankyo-san hopes to raise the level of awareness of local residents in Iloilo City, on saving water by launching “Save Every Drop” - a water-saving campaign that primarily targets school students with ages 7-10. Children in this age group are impressionable and would be receptive to the ideas that we want to inculcate in them. It is hoped that these children will also be able to get the message across and influence their family members, especially their parents.

The water-saving campaign is to be implemented for three years, and will be divided into 3 main phases - the initial, pilot and implementation stages.

The major task for the initial stage is to get the campaign materials ready, such as educational kits, manpower, website, etc. Fund-raising to support the rest of the campaign period shall also be initiated at this stage. After the preparatory stage, eight pilot runs will be conducted. Pilot evaluation follows to have bases for improving the materials and get them ready before the start of the campaign proper.

The school campaigns will be run by teacher-volunteers and university students. The curriculum is designed in a way that is attractive to children with the use of videos, games, dramas, quizzes and competitions to send the campaign message. Off-campus campaigns include publicity in malls and other public areas, and making use of mass media, including various tools on the web to spread the message on saving this precious commodity.

At the end of the campaign, 50,000 kids are expected to be reached by the program, and are hoped to have been aware on the importance of water, have taken action and have brought the message to their respective homes.
I. Background of the Study

1.1. Macro-level Discussion

1.1.1. Environmental Issues in Urban Areas

Cities embody the diversity and energy of human pursuits. They are in many ways remarkable engines of economic and social progress. Cities offer employment opportunities, entertainment and other amenities and potential efficiencies not found elsewhere. Urban life offers advantages in the delivery of education, health, and other social services.

But cities also play a central role in degrading the physical environment. Dysfunctional urban environments have high costs, making more difficult the economic growth needed to improve living standards and helping to perpetuate inequities. The developed world is already largely urbanized. In the developing world, the rapid urbanization now under way will increasingly concentrate both population and economic growth in cities as much as 90% of future population growth and a major share of future economic growth intensifying the problems of the urban environment.

In recent decades, urban areas in developed countries have made major progress in cleaning up local environmental problems, but they remain significant contributors to regional and global environmental burdens. To this concern, Kankyo-san identified several environmental issues caused by urbanization, and trimmed them down into the main three problems namely: climate change, pollution and resource depletion.

**Climate change** is a change in the statistical distribution of weather over periods of time that range from decades to millions of years. It can be a change in the average weather or a change in the distribution of weather events around an average. Its global effect is terribly damaging as long droughts, glaciers melting and frequent typhoons hit the different parts of the world. This problem is basically a natural phenomenon, but human activities undeniably hasten and aggravate the problem as well. Improper waste disposal and CO2 emissions from vehicles and industries for example, contribute highly to pollution problem which damages the ozone layer, and in effect worsens the global warming phenomenon.

**Pollution** is the introduction of contaminants into a natural environment that cause instability, disorder, harm or discomfort to the ecosystem. Major causes of pollution (air, water, noise) are man-made, and these have direct effects to the physical system of living organisms.

**Resource Depletion** refers to the exhaustion of raw materials within a region. Depletion of natural resources such as marine life, forest and wildlife, are mainly caused by human activities as well. Over fishing and illegal logging are just two of the many irresponsible activities of man that contribute to resource depletion.

Interestingly, Kankyo-san has traced one common man-made cause of the three named environmental problems, and that is the idea of over-consumption.
1.1.2. Over-consumption in Focus

*Over-consumption* is a situation where resource-use has outpaced the sustainable capacity of the ecosystem. A prolonged pattern of over-consumption leads to inevitable environmental degradation and the eventual loss of resource bases. Generally the discussion of over-consumption parallels that of overpopulation; that is the more people, the more consumption of raw materials to sustain their lives. Such a scenario is definitely true in urban areas.

Since over-consumption is a wide and broad topic, Kankyo-san decided to zoom in on three topics which are the overuse of plastic bags, water and electricity respectively. (See Table 1, Score 1-3, 1: Low, 3: High)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focused topics for Overconsumption</th>
<th>Degree of Interest</th>
<th>Degree of Urgency</th>
<th>Commonality for Asian countries</th>
<th>Good effect</th>
<th>Meet 6 Criteria (%)*1</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumerism (Buying behavior)</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>9.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;enough-ism&quot;</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.1/</td>
<td>1.1/</td>
<td>1.1/</td>
<td>6.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conspicuous Consumption (Social Status)</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social norms &quot;status symbol&quot;</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overpopulation (Cultural beliefs)</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>8.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bags</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper wastes</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>12.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol/fuel consumption/Driving behavior</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>12.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth/Industrialisation/International trade</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste of food</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>11.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste of water</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>12.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Decision Analysis for Focused Topic of Over-consumption**

*a. Plastic Bag Overuse*

The plastic bag is considered to be one of the main scourges of the environment. Plastic bags are usually provided free when one purchases goods. People use it because it is sturdy, handy and convenient. Unfortunately, plastic bags end up in waste dumps and this is not good for the environment because most of them are not biodegradable. Plastic bags are also made of petroleum which can be used as fuel. Besides that, many plastic bags end up in the ocean, causing the death of many marine animals such as tortoises. Some environmentalists have estimated that approximately 1 billion seabirds and mammals die per year by ingesting plastic bags as they are mistaken for food.

*b. Electricity Wastage*

Electricity is usually generated by burning fossil fuels such as petroleum, natural gas and coal. The latter is bad for the environment because it pollutes the air. Faced with growing demand, some governments have built dams. This, however, causes the widespread destruction and flooding of forests – leading to the loss of biodiversity and the displacement of many communities. Some of the more developed countries have adopted nuclear systems. But it has been predicted that uranium, the fuel for nuclear reactors will also run out soon. People waste electricity – they leave electrical appliances such as televisions, lights, computers and air conditioning systems on all the time.
c. Water Scarcity

Along with oxygen, water is the most important substance needed for human survival. Humans can live for about a month without food but only a few days without water.

While 70 to 75 percent of the Earth’s surface is covered with water, only 0.5% of this water is available for drinking. According to the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), freshwater is used for agriculture (70%), industry (22%) and domestic use (8%). And as many parts of the world undergo urbanization, the demand for water is increasing all the time. But this growing demand especially for agriculture is making global water scarcity a perilous possibility.

![Figure 1. Distribution of Earth’s Water](image)

1.2. Micro-level Discussion

1.2.1 Overview of Water Crisis in the World

Water use has been growing at more than the rate twice of population increase in the last century according to FAO.

As the urban population increases, many major cities have had to draw freshwater from increasingly distant watersheds, as local surface and groundwater sources no longer meet the demand for water, or as they become depleted or polluted.

Over 1.4 billion people currently live in river basins where the use of water exceeds minimum recharge levels, leading to the desiccation of rivers and depletion of groundwater. By 2025, it is estimated that 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world population could be under stress conditions.

It has been predicted that future conflicts could be waged between nations that share trans-boundary freshwater reserves.
Poor irrigation practices, leakage in water delivery systems, inefficient use by industry and excessive consumption by individuals can all contribute to water stress.

Based on the above-given facts, Kankyo-san decided to focus on Waste of Water as the core topic for our proposed project plan. (See Table 2, Rank 1-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focused topics for Overconsumption</th>
<th>link to RD &amp; OC</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Clientele receptiveness</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bags</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste of Water</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Decision Analysis in Selecting Topic for Project Proposal

1.2.2. Domestic Use of Water

While domestic use only accounts for 8% of freshwater use, a lot of wastage goes on. Long showers, water that is left running while lathering and taps that are not properly closed, contribute to waste. Wastage also happens because of leaks.

The recommended daily water requirement for sanitation, bathing, cooking and consumption is approximately 50 litres per person per day but over 1 billion people use less than 6 litres of water per day. The average toilet uses 8 litres of clean water in a single flush. Of the water used for domestic purposes, only 2% is for drinking and cooking. The vast majority of our fresh water is flushed down the lavatory.

The key to water efficiency is reducing waste, not restricting use. About one third of the water each person uses on a daily basis is wasted – it runs straight down the plughole or down the toilet without being used. It is this kind of wastage that has to be cut down.

Conserving water helps not only to preserve irreplaceable natural resources, but also to reduce the strain on urban wastewater management systems. Wastewater is costly to treat, and requires continuous investment to ensure that the water we return to our waterways is as clean as possible.

1.2.3. Problem Analysis

Considering the seriousness of water wastage problem, Kankyo-san identified its root causes and possible solutions which led us to come up with our project proposal. (Refer to Figure 2)
II. Project Proposal

2.1. Project Considerations

This project proposal is designed to operate for three years, and is limited to work on a $2,000 budget for the initial stage, and for a total of 30,000 USD until the completion of the project. The planning of this project considered concreteness in action, feasibility, sustainability, size-manageability, grass-root and community based approach.

2.2. Goal and Objectives

2.2.1. Project Goal

The goal of the project is to reduce water wastage through educational campaigns where children are trained & encouraged to use water appropriately, and thereby involving and promoting community action to save water.

2.2.2. Project Objectives

By the end of 2013, the project shall have:
- Provided at least 90% of primary schools with educational programs on saving water.
- Implemented successfully 3 educational campaigns, one for each year.
- Raised a fund of approximately $20,000 for follow-up activities within at least 2 succeeding years.

Aiming at and providing educational activities for school children, the project is believed to receive advocacy from and to attract involvement and contribution of stakeholders of the local community to action toward water conservation.

2.3. Background of the Target Area: Iloilo City, Philippines

2.3.1. Geographical Location of the Target Area

Iloilo City is a highly urbanized city, with a land area of 70.3 sq. km., and is the capital city of Iloilo province located in Panay Island of the Western Visayas Region of the Philippines (Refer to the maps in Figure 3). Its population as of 2007 census is 418,710 with an annual growth rate of 1.8%.

Figure 3: Location Maps of Iloilo City
2.3.2. Water Shortage Crisis in the Philippines

Based on 2007 Asian Development Bank (ADB) study, rapid urbanization has contaminated surface and groundwater resources in the Philippines, causing a looming shortage in drinking water. This study claimed that only about a third of the Philippine river systems can be used as suitable sources of clean water, and more than half or 58 percent of groundwater resources are now contaminated. ADB findings coincide with a separate United Nations study which predicts that by 2025 about 66 percent of the world population will experience moderate to severe water shortage.

2.3.3. Iloilo under the State of Imminent Danger

In February of this year 2010, the Congressional Commission of Science & Technology and Engineering of the Philippines identified nine (9) urban areas which were to be affected by this problem. One of these was Iloilo City which was declared by the Iloilo City Disaster Coordinating Council (ICDCC) to be under a State of Imminent Danger as it reeled from acute potable water shortage.

The Metro Iloilo Water District (MIWD), a semi-private water utility, is responsible for water supply to Iloilo city, but currently only 35% of the household water requirements of Iloilo City are met by its water source- the Maasin watershed, with the remaining water requirements sourced from nearby districts.

2.3.4. Causes of Water Shortage Problem

The water crisis was reported by the local government to be due to climate change which brought the onslaughts of the El Niño phenomenon. The province of Iloilo including the city was placed as the hardest hit of El Niño in Western Visayas and the water situation was worsened by the long hot summer months, with no rain to offset the critical water level.

2.3.5. Effects of the Problem

Reports from the Department of Agriculture and Metro Iloilo Water District (MIWD) showed the worst situation in the city highlighting critical problems on potable water supply for the poor residents. The whole city population was placed in danger of disease outbreaks due to the rapid decline of available clean and potable water supply and more residents succumbed to environmental injuries such as heat stroke, dehydration and others.

2.3.6. Countermeasures Undertaken

Several countermeasures were raised by the national and local government, including many NGO’s (AUSAID, Greenpeace, etc.) to address the problem. Projects were mainly focused on cloud-seeding operations, river and watershed rehabilitation, rainwater harvesting, construction of shallow tube wells in the barangays, and the use of water tankers to bring potable water to city areas not covered by MIWD which resorted to water rationing in different parts of the city.

None of the aforementioned countermeasures however, gave emphasis to the value of education campaign to raise level of awareness and conscientious participation of residents to save water. Consequently, the idea and practice of water conservation has not yet been consciously observed in the daily domestic activities of residents, which eventually worsens the water shortage problem in the city.
On the basis of the aforementioned water crisis situation, Kankyo-san chose Iloilo City as its target area to implement its water-saving education campaign project.

2.3.7. The Target Beneficiaries / Clientele

Direct target group of this study are school children from ages 7-10. It is believed that children of this age are in their formative years, so it is the stage when they are most receptive to instruction. These children are also seen to be able to influence other household members.

Values, habits or behavior of adults are basically formed in their younger years, so we would like to capture this teachable moment of growing children who are believed to shape the world of the generations to come.

Through the activities directly conducted to school children, other members of the community like the parents and teachers will also be reached by involving them in the various activities with the children.

2.4. Project Plan

2.4.1. Main Activities

The project as a whole is a big campaign including various educational programs and sub-campaigns focusing on providing knowledge, motivating attitudes and training practical skills regarding water usage.

Contents:
- The contents for educational programs & project campaigns will focus on water usage and wastage in daily life at home, schools and public services.
- Among various daily life activities regarding using water, the focal points will be: flushing, shower and bathing, cleaning (laundry, dishes, and vehicles), gardening & water leakage. (Please see the table 3 as the basis of this decision.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic use of Water</th>
<th>Score: 1 Low - 5 High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water Waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toilet</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shower</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flushing</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing Face</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing Hands</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushing Teeth</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cleaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laundry</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vehicles</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dishing</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiping</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drinking</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cooking</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardening</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water Maintenance</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recreation</strong></td>
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<td>swimming pool</td>
<td>3.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>spa</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Decision Analysis on Focus Topics of the Campaign Materials
Detailed Activities:

a. **Educational Programs**
   - ‘Water@Event.Schools’ (events on water held at schools) is a school-based program which comprises various educational activities that help provide primary school students with basic and practical knowledge and awareness of water, its current situation and the know-how on the proper use of water in their daily activities at home and school.
   
   - The project officers will try to cooperate closely with school staff to maximize the number of students, aiming at a rate of 100%, participating in the events and seminars.
   
   - For each school, the project will conduct the water-saving campaign as programmed in a module (see Appendix A).

b. **Competitions**
   - Various types of competitions will be held involving schools within a district or city-wide.
   
   Some typical and practical competitions are:
   
   - Drawing/ Painting
   - Photography
   - Quiz Bees
   - Exhibits...
   
   - Competitions, contests or arts displays are creative and inspiring way to engage people in thinking and acting upon a certain issue. By this way, children easily acquire the knowledge and skills in dealing with water issues as well as internalizing practical ways of saving water.
   
   - Competitions can be organized sequentially from school- to district- and finally city-level.

c. **World Water Days in Iloilo**
   - The International World Water Day (WWD) is held annually on 22 March as a means of focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. WWD as an international day to celebrate freshwater was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating 22 March 1993 as the first WWD.
   
   - The project will cooperate with the United Nations for Environment Program (UNEP), the local government of Iloilo, Division of Iloilo City of the Department of Education and concerned parties to host this annual event in Iloilo.
   
   - Activities for this event may include:
     - Arts variety shows (music concerts, dance performance, musical instruments…)
     - Competitions (drawing, singing, photograph, creative designing…)
- Exhibitions (paintings, photos, creative ideas…)
- Rallies (walking, running, swimming or a day not using water…)

- This event will play as the final round for some competitions which are occurring throughout the year at school- or district-level.

d. **Marino Campaign**

- Marino is the name of a water-drop which is an imaginary figure playing as the symbol for the project purpose – saving water. Marino will be present in all of promotional materials as well as educational kits and serve as a guide accompanying with the learning of students.

- Marino Campaign is more likely a promotion program that is: before appearing as the official icon of the project campaigns, Marino will be gradually incorporated into the life of children through some child-friendly media material; e.g. animated cartoon, comic strips, drama…

- Some examples of Marino campaign could possibly be:
  - Comic Strips: ‘Marino's Adventure’,
  - Game-board: ‘Marino's Secrets’,
  - Promotion materials: posters, banners, mascots, jingles/songs…

2.4.2. **Project Timeline**

Within the time-frame of three years, the project will be divided into 4 main phases with tentative timeline as followed:
- Phase 1: **Initial Stage**
- Phase 2: **Action Campaign 1**
- Phase 3: **Action Campaign 2**
- Phase 4: **Action Campaign 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Setting up</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/2011-7/2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot Program (8 schools)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8/2011 (1 month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Action Camp. 1 (32 schools)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/2011-4/2012 (8 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Action Camp. 2 (48 schools)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/2012-4/2013 (12 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Action Camp. 3 (48 schools)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/2013-4/2014 (12 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Follow-up Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>2014-2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Project Activities & Timeline Chart
- The 136 primary schools in Iloilo City comprise 48 public schools and 88 private schools. During the first year, after setting up the project which is scheduled within a 3-month period, the project will run a pilot program in one month. The 1st action campaign will succeed to the pilot program. The next 2 years will be focusing on action campaign (number 2, 3) inheriting the experience of the previous campaign.

- Tentatively, the project would start from May 2011. When the project is completed, the project is expected to be followed up for at least two more years with reinforcing programs and activities to ensure its efficiency and sustainability.

2.4.3. Fund-raising Campaign

Kankyo-san’s Network Contribution:
- Before we start the fund raising campaign, Kankyo-san has to start with the group themselves first. Kankyo-san’s main contribution is expertise, knowledge and time. The project however needs funding and we aim to raise funds from our network.

- Possible fund-raising schemes:
  o Scenario 1: Send e-mails to all of our friends and relatives. Kankyo-san consists of 6 members who approximately have a network of 300 people. So if each member donates $1, then we can raise $300
  o Scenario 2: We can ask 47th batch participants, so 19 x 50 = $950
  o Scenario 3: We can talk to 6 country alumni associations to support the idea, so 6 x 47 x 50 = $14,100
  o Scenario 4: We can ask all alumni to do the fund raising, so 47 x 18 x 50 = $42,300

Businesses
We can research on companies in the Philippines that might have budgets on Corporate-Social Responsibility (CSR) projects that benefit the society and community. We can list out the big companies first (Coca-Cola, Telecoms, etc.), and then aim to collect funds from businesses that deal with water as their primary business. (Water supplier in Iloilo, drinking water companies, mineral water companies, etc.)

Charitable foundations
We will spend time to research local and international charity foundations such as churches or corporate foundations, e.g. Honda Foundation, JICA, etc.

Government Agencies
The government usually provides grants supporting community projects especially those concerning the environment like the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

NGOs that Share a Similar Advocacy
Since the project is small, Kankyo-san has decided to focus on collaborating with local NGOs which have links with possible donors.

Product Selling
During big events like Dinagyang Festival, Water World Day, etc., we can sell our project products such as board games, T-shirts, badges, etc.
If Kankyo-san manages to have a workable and feasible campaign project proposal followed by a successful pilot, there will be a chance to convince potential donors to sponsor our project.

2.4.4. Marketing and Promotions

Campaigns at Public Places
There will be two months when school is not in session and this time will be spent by organizing campaigns about saving water. These campaigns will be targeted at the public and will be held at malls and during various festivals or holidays.

Internet promotions
In this digital age, the Internet is a very effective way of spreading the message for a relatively low cost. Besides building a website, we are planning on using social networking tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Friendster and YouTube to educate people on the importance of conserving and saving water. We also plan on creating simple games that children can access on the Internet.

Media engagement
Since we are a non-profit organization with a social cause, we believe that the media will lend us space to air our opinions. We will invite the media to all our events and regularly send press releases to them on the importance of conserving water. We will also ask the broadcast media such as television and radio for interview slots. We also plan to have tie-ups with the media on campaigns and competitions. Before that, we will build a strong relationship by meeting with the editors and journalists.

Creation of a character/mascot that can be identified with the campaign
We believe that we need to put a face to the message/campaign and this could be done with the creation of a mascot. This mascot could be in the shape of a water drop for example. Children are easily attracted to these kinds of character and they will gradually perceive the message of the program.

Special competitions
Once we are stable and known, we will organize various competitions for the school kids. These include colouring, drawing, slogan making and story-telling. For the adults, we can have photo competitions (e.g., a photo that tells the importance of water and why we need to cut down on its waste).

Rallies
We believe that by having a big rally we will be able to capture the attention of the public. We hope to organize rally involving all the school children and other concerned members of the public in the city once a year. Similarly, we can organize a walk or run.

Link up with celebrities
These days celebrities must be seen embracing a social cause. A celebrity face will enhance our presence while boosting their image. We believe that we will be able to get media coverage with the backing of a local celebrity. It is a win-win situation for both parties.
2.5. Management Structure

The project’s operations will follow the given management structure shown in Figure 4.

![Diagram of Project Management Structure]

2.6. Project Financing

*Estimated Budget Allocation*

- Over a three year-period, Kankyo San will have to work with a budget of $30,000, with a preliminary $2,000. This $2,000 will be used for design of the educational kit and as wages for an administrator. It would not be enough to cover all our starting expenses and we will therefore get donations in kind from diverse sources. We are hoping to get office space and facilities from the Philippines IATSS Alumni and other networks.

- The remaining $28,000 will be sought from sponsors continuously through various fund raising activities. We are confident of meeting the fund-raising objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Estimated Cost (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Setting up (Year 1)</td>
<td>Sub Total 1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Set up facilities &amp; working conditions</td>
<td>Initial facilities -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Recruit Administration officer</td>
<td>Salary ($200/m) 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Plan &amp; Prepare for Fund Raising</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Design &amp; make an Educational KIT</td>
<td>Educational KIT 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Create &amp; run Website/Blogs/Social Network</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Plan &amp; Prepare for the Pilot Program</td>
<td>Contingency 200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Budget Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II</th>
<th>Pilot (Year 1)</th>
<th>Sub Total</th>
<th>400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Run the pilot programs at 8 schools</td>
<td>Pilot Programs</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III</th>
<th>Main Campaign</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>30,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Implement Action Campaign 1 (Year 1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Implement Action Campaign 2 (Year 2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Implement Action Campaign 3 (Year 3)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Follow-up Program</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>20,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Finance Sources**

- In order to start up a project, a $2,000 budget is not possible to cover all the expenses. Therefore, finance should be mobilized from various sources.

- Some items of the setting up (office, facilities, website & design payment) are voluntarily contributed by Philippine IATSS Alumni, Kankyo-san and their networks. Or fund raising can be started at the beginning of the project.

- During the main campaign, various fund raising activities will also contribute to the budget of $30,000 as above-mentioned in the fund-raising part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Estimated budget (US$)</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Initial Stage</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Phil. IATSS Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Setting up*</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>Phil. IATSS Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Phil. IATSS Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Main Campaign**</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Implement Action Campaign 1 (Year 1)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Implement Action Campaign 2 (Year 2)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Implement Action Campaign 3 (Year 3)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Follow-up Program</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Sponsors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6: Finance Sources**

2.7. **Risk Management**

Kankyo-san identified four possible risks that the project might face, and proposed corresponding action for each as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Proposed Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance from school heads to cooperate and be involved in the</td>
<td>Keep effort to make them understand that saving water contributes to the children’s future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tight schedule in school to accommodate the campaign program.</td>
<td>Prepare an alternative short-period campaign module (e.g. 15min) which can be presented during class breaks (lunch time, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence or lack of teacher-volunteers.</td>
<td>Coordinate with student organizations and cause-oriented groups or hire paid teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient fund</td>
<td>Focus project on school-based campaigns; give up some costly campaigns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Risk Management

III. Postscript

After 11 sessions of endless discussions that also included two presentations (macro- and micro-level discussions), the group study came to an end. The sessions were fast and furious, and everyone gained valuable experiences that can be applied to the real world. The following are each group member’s individual thoughts on the difficulties they faced and the lessons they learned during the group study.

Leap
- I believe the group is a very powerful entity because the members have diverse skills. The diverse ideas everyone has during brainstorming is essential for the setting up of a project. However, it is also a barrier because there are some who don’t accept thing easily and want the group to follow their ideas all the time.
- At the end of the group discussion however, I learned to work with them by compromising. If I disagreed with them, I spoke nicely to them and had constructive arguments.

Bobo
- We are all from different backgrounds and it is impossible for everyone to be on the same page. During the discussions, disagreements and misunderstandings were common. Language barrier was one of the main reasons that contributed to poor time management. From my observation, some people spoke more than others while others kept their opinions to themselves to avoid conflict.
- In the end, we managed to overcome the problems by compromising and adapting ourselves so that we could reach the goal.

Shena
- Group study for me is the most challenging part of the IATSS Forum Program. Each member of the group just had a different way of thinking and working style, and it was not just easy to blend in altogether. I believe each one took efforts to keep the patience and respect for individual’s opinions, thoughts and ideas, no matter how difficult it may have been to some of us in the group. Putting that effort after all, taught us to set aside individual differences, focus on a goal, and strive to do our part in reaching that goal.
**Hide**
- Our group sometimes wasted session time because of our different backgrounds. We often lost discussion points. On that situation, we tried to visualize the discussion points and process. Visualization of discussion process was helpful to group work.
- It was difficult for our group to decide topic because of our different way of thinking. We tried to make decision table. At first, it took time to make the table. Gradually, we got used to make our decision with those matrixes. We learned to the decision making way by group.

**Hugh**
- The key problem for our group study is ineffective communication that led to misunderstanding, unconstructive arguments and waste of time. The main reason is the diversity among group members. Different languages, different background and experiences are big obstacles in dealing with the pressures of deadlines. Another aspect is that our group leadership was not clear and we encountered several issues when it came to decision making. These problems really challenged our group study process as sometimes we felt stressed and confused.
- However, the more challenges we encountered, the more we learned. I have learned a lot from others’ way of thinking and experiences from projects in their countries.
- My personal lesson is goal setting and how to adapt and harmonize in a multicultural studying and working environment. I also learned from Hide, our Japanese group member, for his way of sharing vision and well-structured problem solving skills.

**Rashvin**
- Although the project looked relatively simple from the outset, working in a group made it a challenging and time-consuming task. Everyone has their own opinions and I realize that it is hard to budge from them at times. This led to never-ending and petty discussions which could have been avoided. I feel that it was tougher at the beginning stages as everyone had to adapt to each other’s working style. But as time went by, the decision making process was smoother, although not perfect. I learned that everyone looks and understands things differently.

All said and done, going through the difficulties made us appreciate and see the value of teamwork, open-mindedness, cooperation and patience which are essential in achieving a common goal. We managed to overcome our differences by respecting one another opinions and coming to compromises on certain decisions.
References
Key terms are Iloilo City, World population, Climate change, Over-consumption, Pollution, Resource Depletion

World Resources Institute
http://archive.wri.org/page.cfm?id=1614&z=?

Soquel Creek Water District
www.soquelcreekwater.org

US Geological Survey
http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/waterdistribution.html

UN Water, UN
www.unwater.org/
www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/

Others
www.greenfacts.org/en/water-resources/index.htm
www.pwf.co.im/watershortage.htm
IV. Appendix

“Save Every Drop”
A Water-Saving Educational Program Module-outline

*Introduction*
- This module is designed as a community and/or school-based educational campaign program to address water shortage problem in an urban area, particularly in Iloilo City, Philippines. When effectively operationalized, the module should ensure that participants are given adequate knowledge and opportunities to raise their level of awareness and participation in conscientiously saving water in their daily domestic activities.
- This project was undertaken by the Kankyo-san Group of the 47th IATSS Forum Program, sponsored by Honda Motors Corporation in Suzuka, Japan.

*Methodologies*
- Video Presentation
- Puppet Show / Skit
- Games and Competitions

*Participants*
- This module is designed ideally for 50-100 primary school pupils (Grades 1-4), with ages 7-10 years old.

*Duration/Time Frame*
- Four hours: 8:30-11:30 a.m./1:30-4:30 p.m.

*Program of Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Resources Needed (Human &amp; Materials)</th>
<th>Time (min)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Registration of Participants</td>
<td>2-3 volunteers, name cards, pens, markers, registration sheets</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Opening Program &amp; Program Introduction</td>
<td>National Anthem, Welcome Remarks, Participants Introduction, Staff and Program Presentation (Video)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plenary Session 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Skit/ Puppet Show</td>
<td>Emcee, video material (logo, jingle, campaign character, goal, objective, staff, present water shortage and wastage crisis, need for action, role of children)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Quiz and Prize</td>
<td>Actors, puppets, tables and other necessary props</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz items, prize items (pen, toy, key chain w/ project logo and/ or tagline)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4. Break-out Session

**a. For Grades 1-2**

i. **Story-telling** (about some common household practices that wastes water, and their practical consequences)

ii. **Interactive Computer-assisted Games** (on differentiating/grouping domestic water usage practices that conserve water from those which waste water)

iii. **Playtime** (Introduce Board games, coloring books and comic strips materials, etc.)

Break-out session rooms (number will vary on number of participants, ideally with a maximum of 30 pupils in each break-out session group)

- Animated story-telling materials
- Computer-Aided material
- Educational materials (promoting water conservation) for children to freely play with

**b. For Grades 3-4**

i. **Creativity Challenge- Competitions** (Individual or by pair)

ii. **Poster & Slogan**

iii. **Poetry Writing**

iv. **Essay Writing** (This is based on a given theme concerning water-saving domestic practices)

Competition Materials:

- Cartolina, coloring materials, markers
- Bond paper, pens, pencils

### Break Time

a. Plenary Session 2

b. Paint-me-a- Picture/ Charade

c. **Parlor Game(s)**
   
   Relay on Putting puzzle pieces together

Charade scenarios showing good water usage practice

Puzzle picture revealing the 5 short & catchy tagline-bearer of the project campaign

### 5. Closing and Awarding Ceremonies

a. summarizing key points with the project’s catchy tagline

b. awarding of prizes to winners to different competitions

c. giving out of brochures and other campaign materials

d. Announcement of existing and/or other future campaign activities (photography contest, Search for Model School/ Barangay, mall tour/concert, son writing contest, etc.)

e. Closing Remarks

f. **Singing of Campaign Jingle**

Campaign posters with logo, tagline

Prizes for winners

Campaign materials (brochures, pamphlets, comic strips, etc.)

Event Poster, invitation, communication, etc.

One volunteer-facilitator

Music (Jingle)
Creating Green Space in Urban Areas

Community Garden Project in Jakarta, Indonesia

2 November 2010

Prepared by:

“Team Hatten”
Ajeng Ritzki Pitakasari (Indonesia), Jumina Anak Lasan (Malaysia),
Kuan Ming Leong (Singapore), Kyaw Dewa (Myanmar),
Sudtho Jariya (Thailand), Tran The Vinh (Vietnam)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Urbanization has profound effects on the build-up of a city, intensification of energy consumption and the decline in greenery. As nature becomes more eroded, people are increasingly living in a less balanced ecological system.

- Greater environmental awareness and societal pressures have necessitated the adoption of countermeasures in the areas of green buildings, vertical greenery and tree planting campaigns.

- A community garden project was chosen because it contributes to greenery and has greater potential to closely engage the local community on a sustained basis.

- The G&G (Grow It, Get It) community garden in Setu Babakan, Jakarta aims to create a sustainable and environmentally-friendly green space for the local community. It seeks to strengthen the foundations for growth through tangible (growth of plants and flowers) and intangible (growth of interpersonal relationship in the community) aspects.

- In addition to encouraging the planting of healthy food through collaborative activities, the G&G garden also seeks to promote environmental awareness and a healthy gardening lifestyle. It will also revitalize a sense of green community among neighbors and serve as a communal space for the local community to socialize.

BACKGROUND

1. Urbanization has profound effects on the build-up of a city, intensification of energy consumption and the decline in greenery. However, as nature becomes more eroded, people are increasingly living in a less balanced ecological system. This paper highlights the impact of urbanization and presents a community-level G&G (Grow It, Get It) community garden project proposal to alleviate its negative effects.

MACRO-LEVEL DISCUSSION

CHALLENGES

2. Urbanization is an inevitable part of the modern development of cities. Population growth, urban development and technological advances have been key drivers. Between 2000 and 2009, the population in Southeast Asia grew by 74 million people, particularly in Indonesia (26 million), Philippines (15 million) and Myanmar (9.9 million) (Exhibit 1). The pace of increase is expected to quicken, with the total population in Southeast Asia growing by 45 million in the next five years (2010–2015). In 2009, the world’s population in urban areas exceeded 50% for the first time in history. By 2050, it is estimated that 70% of the world’s population will be urban. A similar trend of urban growth is expected within Southeast Asia (Exhibit 2).

---

1 The selection process for the Macro-level topic can be found in Annex A.
3. The fast-growing population has implications on the concentrated urban area. A more built-up urban environment leads to two negative effects:

   a. **Intensified energy consumption.** Urbanization has led to the development of industries, transportation networks and buildings. Together, they contribute about 73% of energy demand in urban areas\(^3\). By 2030, the global energy needs are expected to increase by more than 50% compared to today (Exhibit 3).

   **Exhibit 3: Energy needs are growing exponentially**

   Of the energy used in buildings, only a small proportion\(^4\) is consumed by appliances, with the majority used to heat and cool rooms. In tropical Southeast Asia, air conditioning remains one of the largest energy consumers in urban cities. More densely-packed buildings contribute to the “urban heat island effect” with people (body heat) and computer equipment (waste heat) resulting in greater demands for air conditioning. For instance, the built-up urban center of Singapore

---


\(^4\) 18% in the EU and 24% in the US.
has been found to have higher temperatures of 4.5°C compared to the less dense areas (Exhibit 4).

b. **Declining green space.** To meet the residential, commercial and industrial needs of the growing population, urban development has taken place over formerly green areas. For instance, 35% of Jakarta was green space in 1965. In 2010, this proportion fell to 9.6%⁵.

Green spaces serve ecological and social functions. Greenery is important to maintain ecological sustainability and a balanced ecosystem between flora and fauna. The affinity with nature also has a soothing effect on humans whereby greenery beautifies and provides a more serene environment.

**COUNTERMEASURES**

4. Greater environmental awareness and societal pressures have necessitated the adoption of green solutions by governments and companies. To alleviate the challenges of urbanization, various countermeasures have been undertaken to increase energy efficiency and greenery in urban areas.

**ENERGY**

a. **Increasing energy efficiency.** Governments have implemented green standards for buildings⁶, enhanced transport network integration, and promoted or enforced environmentally-friendly practices in industries (through incentives and regulations). Between 2000 and 2006, there was almost a six-fold increase in the number of commercial buildings awarded the Energy Star label by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Over the past decade, the world has become 14% more energy efficient (Figure 5).

---

b. Reducing energy demands. Trees have been planted in urban areas to cool the surrounding environment. The planting of shade trees in urban areas has been found to save energy and reduce the carbon footprint.\(^7\)

**GREEN SPACE**

c. Increasing greenery. Countries are actively encouraging tree-planting campaigns to preserve a green environment in dense cities. For example, under Malaysia’s “One Tree, One Malaysia” campaign, the government aims to plant 26 million trees by 2014.

To complement the built-up urban environment and green initiatives, countries have also explored the use of sky terraces, rooftop gardens and other vertical greening approaches. Green roofs and vertical gardens are well-established features in many European countries where they are installed for environmental and ecological reasons, and to improve the urban landscape (Exhibit 6). Other examples of vertical greenery in the world can be found in Annex B.

**MICRO-LEVEL DISCUSSION**

**IDENTIFYING THE PROJECT**

5. Greenery was identified as a potential project theme as it offers the opportunity to address challenges in the areas of energy and declining green space. In deciding a suitable micro-level project, the team shortlisted two possible options (Tree Planting and Community Gardens), and highlighted the associated strengths and weaknesses (Exhibit 7). The community garden project was chosen because it had greater potential for more sustained involvement by the local community.

Exhibit 7: Community garden projects allow more sustained involvement by the local community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Tree Planting</th>
<th>Community Gardens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trees have longer life-spans</td>
<td>Potentially more economically self-sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trees trap carbon dioxide more</td>
<td>Provides a communal space to facilitate interaction and gatherings by the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convenient for urban dwellers as it is mostly a one-off event</td>
<td>More sustained involvement by the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involves group participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beautifies the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has government support across participants' countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Tree Planting</th>
<th>Community Gardens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More costly</td>
<td>Less established as it is a newer concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short term involvement by the local community</td>
<td>More complicated because of the diversity of flora that can be planted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hatten

CHOOSING THE PROJECT LOCATION

6. To select the project location, dense cities from team members’ countries were identified. Three criteria were used to select the project location.
   
a. **Build-up of the city.** To keep to our theme on urban areas, the population densities (number of people per km$^2$) of the cities were compared to highlight cities that were more built-up.

b. **Less greenery.** To maximise the value of the community garden, it should preferably be in a city with less greenery.

c. **Government support.** To ensure that the garden project can be smoothly set up, the project location should also have government support for green initiatives.

7. Based on these criteria, Jakarta was the unanimous city of choice for the project location (Exhibit 8). Its population density is two to four times that of the other cities. It is also an urban area where greenery has declined and government support for green projects is available.

Exhibit 8: Jakarta was the unanimous project location choice based on our criteria for population density, less greenery and government support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Jakarta</th>
<th>Kuala Lumpur</th>
<th>Yangon</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Bangkok</th>
<th>Ho Chi Minh City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Density (people/km$^2$)</td>
<td>14,464</td>
<td>7,388</td>
<td>7,262</td>
<td>7,022</td>
<td>5,801</td>
<td>3,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Greenery</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Support</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Various official statistical agencies, Hatten

CONCRETE ACTION PLAN

PROJECT GOAL

8. Our goal is to create a sustainable and environmentally-friendly green space for the local community.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

9. Our project seeks to serve five broad objectives:

a. **Contributions to the community.** The project aims to beautify the surrounding environment and provide edible plants, herbs and flowers for the local community.
b. **Sustainability.** The project must be able to be cared for by the local community. Money could also be generated from the harvested greens to raise funds to maintain the community garden.

c. **Social Capital.** The project aims to bring people together and to provide a community space for local residents.

d. **Raising Environmental Awareness.** The project aims to improve knowledge in the local community about environmental issues.

e. **Planning for the Future Generation.** The project should allow and facilitate the participation of children and youths.

**BACKGROUND OF JAKARTA, INDONESIA**

10. “Jakarta is committing ecological suicide”, according to urban designer Nirwono Yoga. Within Southeast Asia, Jakarta’s air quality ranked the poorest. In a year of living, Jakarta's citizens enjoy clean air for only 22 days. 244 days have medium-quality air, 95 days have unhealthy air, while the remaining 4 days have very unhealthy air.

11. The environmental situation is worsening due to urbanization. Jakarta population has expanded strongly over the past three years. In 2007, there were 7.6 million inhabitants (population density of 11,403/km²). In 2010, the population jumped to 9.6 million (population density of 14,464/km²).

12. Without proper urban planning, the high rate of urbanization would impact Jakarta’s living environment and quality of life. 60% of citizens did not think there was a good direction for Jakarta’s urban development. Green, open space is underestimated by the government despite its vital role. 44% did not see the benefits of urban spatial development by the government, particularly in providing green zones and public spaces.

**PROBLEMS, CAUSES AND EFFECTS**

*What happened in Jakarta?*

13. One major cause of Jakarta's environmental degradation is the decline of vast green, open spaces. In 1965, 37 % of the city was dedicated to greenery (Djakarta Masterplan, 1965-1987). The target was subsequently reduced to 26% (Jakarta General Masterplan, 1985-2005) and 14% (Jakarta Masterplan, 2000-2010). This pales in comparison with other major cities such as New York (25% by 2020), Tokyo (32% by 2015) and London (39% by 2034).

---

9 At 104 μg/m³, Jakarta is the 8th most polluted world city by particulate matter, behind cities in Egypt (Cairo), India (Kolkata, Kanpur, Lucknow) and China (Tianjin, Chongqing). (Source: 2007 World Development Indicators)
10 Source: Library of Drinking Water and Environment Sanitation (Digilab AMPL) of Indonesia (2008)
According to Indonesian environmental analyst M. Setyadi, the biggest constraint of green open spaces is the unbalanced urban policy regarding the city’s development.12

**Developing greenery in Setu Babakan**

14. Setu (Lake) Babakan (Exhibit 9) was selected as it represented an area with a small community where a feasible and manageable project could be implemented. Setu Babakan is located in Srengseng Sawah, Jagakarsa in South Jakarta. There are now about 3,000 middle, working class people living in the 165 km² area. In 2000, Setu Babakan was devoted to the preservation of the indigenous Betawi culture. Since then, denizens have pioneered and developed the site as an attractive tourist destination. As a cultural heritage site, Setu Babakan offers tourist many attractions including traditional performances and local culinary art.

15. Setu Babakan is also one of the precious green areas in Jakarta which has been kept and maintained by the local people. While the government provides policy, support and protection, most of the management and area maintenance are carried out independently by local residents. Residents have used part of 8.9ha of urban forest surrounding the lake to plant trees and vegetables, and to harvest the crops for local food.

16. Thus far, the Indonesian government and citizens have sought to develop self-reliance within Setu Babakan. Nonetheless, third-party support and funding remain important to preserve the area as a cultural heritage site and green urban space. Sustainable development requires a combination of government policies, local activism and individual action. Through a community garden in Setu Babakan, we aim to support communal activities by the local residents and enhance greenery in the surrounding area.

---

12 According to Setyadi, the Government has escalated the physical development of Jakarta to support its role as an economic and trading centre by consuming massive plots of land and wiping out the existing green zone. Today, less than 10% of Jakarta is devoted to green spaces, with many of these areas in a state of neglect. Nonetheless, the government is taking active measures to raise the greenery in Jakarta. Under the healthy city concept, 30% green area has been adopted as the city’s official regulations. The local government is also encouraging individuals, the private sector and non-government organizations to be more involved in green activities.

13 The Condet area in east Jakarta was the former area for Betawi Heritage.
INTRODUCTION TO THE G&G COMMUNITY GARDEN

17. G&G stands for ‘Grow It, Get It’. In choosing a name, we sought to have something that was meaningful and tangible for the local community. With time, the garden could also be affectionately known to local residents as the “Gee Gee” garden.

   a. **Grow It.** Growth here depicts not just the growth of plants in the community garden, but also the growth of the community spirit. The local community can grow plants and flowers, and grow their interpersonal relationships with one another by participating in common gardening activities.

   b. **Get It.** As the local residents are the middle and working class, we wanted to incorporate a tangible aspect that they could relate to and work for. The growing plants can beautify the place and supply extra food for the community’s consumption and sale.

18. The garden’s logo portrays the concept of preserving a green environment in an urban community (Exhibit 10). The circular shape of the logo represents the circular and continuous interaction between humans and the living environment. The abstract palm holding the garden’s name and the leaf also symbolizes community support towards the community garden and its objectives.

METHODOLOGY

19. To set up the community garden, the broad framework was established for the project preparation (Exhibit 11) and project implementation (Exhibit 12) stages.

**Exhibit 11: Project Preparation Stage**

- **(1) Project Screening**
  - Collecting data to estimate project’s feasibility by surveying residents on their areas of interest
  - Informing local citizens of potential advantages (e.g., healthy food, green space and community connection, etc.)

- **(2) Site Assessment**
  - Listing all potential resources: human, infrastructure and land
  - Assessing available resources

- **(3) Organising Meeting & Forming Committee**
  - Organizing a meeting with interested people
  - Forming committees to accomplish certain tasks such as funding & resource development, youth activities, construction, communication, etc.
  - Collecting members’ communication channels such as emails or telephone numbers
20. Under the detailed design stage, the community garden’s layout is considered (Exhibit 13). A possible garden design concept of G&G garden is shown in Exhibit 14. Due to limitations in the plot size\textsuperscript{14}, it is important to maximise the use of space through creative exterior landscape design. Best practices from other countries (e.g., the lawn-free concept for

\textsuperscript{14} The initial G&G community garden is planned for a 20m\textsuperscript{2} area given the budget constraint.
open spaces and the use of trellis) such as the United States can also be adopted (Exhibit 15 and 16).

Exhibit 13: Proposed layout of the G&G community garden

Exhibit 14: Possible garden design concept of G&G Garden

Exhibit 15: The G&G garden can maximise the use of space through trellises

Exhibit 16: Best practices can be adopted from other countries

PROJECT SCHEDULE

21. The G&G community garden project is targeted to last 27 weeks. 21 weeks will be devoted to the preparation stage and 6 weeks to the implementation stage (Exhibit 17).
Exhibit 17: The G&G community garden project is expected to last 27 weeks to prepare and implement.

Source: Hatten

Note: The project schedule begins in January 2011 for simplicity, but can be adapted to any 27-week time period.

DETAILED ACTIVITIES

22. Our proposed garden activities aim to fulfill our project objectives. In addition to encouraging the planting of a wide range of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers, the project also seeks to be financially sustainable, serve as a communal space for the local community and provide activities for children and youths to enjoy (Exhibit 18). The initial three-month timelines for the detailed activities are highlighted in Exhibit 19.

Exhibit 18: Proposed activities at the G&G Community Garden are planned in line with our project objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Objective 1: Contributions to Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Planting edible plants and herbs for community's own use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Planting flowers to beautify and add color to the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Encouraging healthy and active lifestyles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Running interactive activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Project Objective 2: Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Activities</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Harvesting the crops together twice or monthly and selling to local market or bazaar</td>
<td>Profits can be used to maintain the garden (e.g., buying new tools, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Inviting prospective and interested gardeners and researchers</td>
<td>To assist on expanding to a new plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Becoming a role model to other community gardens</td>
<td>To systemize the activities and get a certification from government agencies and established NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Increasing food sources and choices</td>
<td>Crops can be harvested for the community's consumption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project Objective 3: Social Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Activities</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Having a communal space for the community to meet, talk, chit chat and relax</td>
<td>Common activities include watering plants, cleaning, and tidying up the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Working with city council, local and faith-based communities to enhance gardening network</td>
<td>E.g., The Committee of Living and Culture and Mosque Committee to ease garden's expansion process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Building a permanent structure or place to gather</td>
<td>Construct a small gazebo, install garden decoration, small fountain, scarecrow, dwarf replica, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project Objective 4: Raising Environmental Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Activities</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Educating households to produce organic composites</td>
<td>Mixing leftovers with liquid bacteria to fertilize the soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Holding monthly gatherings and invite members from other communities</td>
<td>To share gardening experiences and best practices, organize environmental quizzes, run creative planting campaign like vertical planting etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Publicizing the garden to local and foreign communities</td>
<td>To publish newsletter, brochures and website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Exhibit 19: Three-month timelines for proposed detailed activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructing 5 raised beds garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shovel, stirrup hoe, rake, glove, wheelbarrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting cucumber and long bean on the raised beds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeds, small shovel, stirrup hoe, glove, pail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting Japanese fine bamboo, hibiscus (garden's boundary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saplings, shovel, gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing organic composite or fertilizer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food leftovers, rotten fruits, pail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting rose, dahlia and tropical flowers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saplings, shovel, gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watering the plants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Water hose, water wand, pail, water scoop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installing bamboo sticks for cucumber to crawl up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bamboo sticks, glove, string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Month 1 Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer with knowledge in journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing newsletter on website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer with web designing knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>MONTH 2</td>
<td>Resources needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watering the plants</td>
<td>Week 1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Water hose, water wand, pail, watering can</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing newsletter in website</td>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Volunteer with web designing knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting herbs: mints, ginger, sage</td>
<td>Week 2, 3</td>
<td>Seeds, pots, gloves, small shovel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the local committee - agenda: to</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Volunteers, local committee members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase size of garden’s plot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting a school to come to the garden</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with school staff - agenda: to</td>
<td>Week 2, 4</td>
<td>Volunteers, teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schedule outdoor activities in the garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Month 2 Newsletter and publishing</td>
<td>Week 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>Volunteer with knowledge in journalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and publishing on the website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>MONTH 3</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watering the plants</td>
<td>Week 1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Water hose, water wand, pail, watering can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with local committee and city</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Volunteers, local committee members, city council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>council – agenda: to obtain official</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approval to increase the plot sizes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting cucumber and long bean</td>
<td>Week 2, 3</td>
<td>Basket, cutter, glove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School activity: exploring and painting</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Pots, coloring items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing the existing raised beds and</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Shovel, stirrup hoe, rake, glove, wheelbarrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constructing 3 more raised beds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Month 3 Newsletter and publishing</td>
<td>Week 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and publishing on the website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT BUDGET

23. The G&G community garden project is estimated to cost US$30,000 which is staged over seven months. The bulk of the costs will take place in the sixth month for the construction of the garden. The more detailed breakdown of the project budget can be found in Exhibit 20. In terms of funding, US$2,000 will come from the International Association of Traffic and Social Sciences (IATSS) in Japan, while non-governmental organizations (NGOs)\(^\text{15}\) and the private sector\(^\text{16}\) will be approached for the remaining US$28,000.

Exhibit 20: Project Budget for G&G Community Garden Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Project Preparation Stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project Screening</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site Assessment</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizing Meeting &amp; Forming Committee</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding Sponsor</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choosing Site</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detailed Design</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Project Implementation Stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site Preparation</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garden Construction (20m² → 400/m²)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Operational Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication (mail, phones)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Logistic &amp; Local expenses (1)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printing, reporting</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{15}\) Some potential NGOs identified include WALHI Institute, GEF-SGP Indonesia, Yayasan Pelangi, Forest Watch Indonesia, Indecon and Green Hill.

\(^{16}\) Some potential donors from the private sector include PT ASTRA Honda, PT Adaro and PT Riau Pulp & Paper.
## Human Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>450</th>
<th>450</th>
<th>450</th>
<th>450</th>
<th>450</th>
<th>450</th>
<th>450</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>3,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project coordinator</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Volunteers</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration staff</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8,150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Monitoring and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>300</th>
<th>300</th>
<th>200</th>
<th>200</th>
<th>1,000</th>
<th>1,000</th>
<th>2,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing Evaluation Procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting and Analyzing data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Campaign and Public Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1,650</th>
<th>1,250</th>
<th>2,250</th>
<th>2,750</th>
<th>1,650</th>
<th>12,250</th>
<th>3,250</th>
<th>27,273</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies (10% x EC)</td>
<td>2,727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value-Added Tax (10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Project Cost ($US)</strong></td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hatten

Note (1): Expenses for vehicles, food, drinks and stationeries.

### POSTSCRIPT

**Photo 1: Team Hatten**

**Exhibit 21: Hatten’s Group Logo**

### TEAM NAME

24. **Hatten** was chosen as our team name. Hatten means growth in Japanese and represents our personal and team growth during the group study process. As all team members come from different countries (**Photo 1**), the group study process has allowed us to
learn from each other’s diverse experiences. Additionally, toshi hatten means urban development, which is appropriate in highlighting the importance of achieving a good balance between development and the environment.

**TEAM LOGO**

25. Our team logo ([Exhibit 21](#)) represents our shared learning experiences in Japan. Each “growing leaf” represents each of our six group members learning as part of the IATSS Forum. The plants on top of each building symbolize our community gardens that are aimed at uniting people of all generations. The green buildings denote urbanization in line with a sustainable green environment, represented by the buildings’ plants. The sun reminds us of the importance of natural resources and also signifies Japan, the land of the rising sun. Without the IATSS Forum in Japan, we would not have the opportunity to come together to work on a common nature-related group project.

**LEARNING LESSONS**

26. The group discussions have been an invaluable learning experience for the team. Like the team’s name of “Hatten”, the group study process has led to the growth of each individual and the collective team. Nonetheless, because of our diverse backgrounds, there were initial challenges during the process:

   a. **Different systems in different countries.** For instance, participants from countries such as Japan, Malaysia and Singapore were more familiar with tools such as decision matrices in project evaluation.

   b. **Misinterpretation because of cultural differences.** English was used as the common language during the group study. As English was the foreign language for most of the participants, more time was needed to avoid misinterpreting each others’ intended meanings.

   c. **Differences in professional backgrounds.** Team members had different opinions on how issues should be covered because of the different professional backgrounds. Some preferred to analyze issues from a more holistic top-down perspective, while others preferred to explore issues in more detail from a more bottom-up approach.

27. To address the challenges, team members maintained respect and understanding towards one another, while emphasizing positive thinking, cooperation and team work. Decisions were made through candid and robust discussions. Our different backgrounds and ability to study issues from different lenses were leveraged on to incorporate different knowledge and skills into the project. Additionally, to build team spirit and creative thinking, our team encouraged team outings outside the “classroom environment”. Such bonding opportunities created a less stressful group study environment and led to greater team efficiencies.
28. Urbanization poses challenges, but it is inevitable to the modern development of cities. Community gardens provide an opportunity to increase greenery and contribute to the local community. The G&G (Grow It, Get It) community garden in Setu Babakan aims to grow not just plants and flowers, but also the community spirit and interpersonal relationships within the local community.

29. In a similar way, the group study process has been a wonderful sharing and learning experience for the team. Through this project, we have strengthened our teamwork and have forged stronger friendships and bonds. This epitomizes the spirit of “Hatten” and the G&G community garden as both foster unity through working together as a team.
Annex A

Selection Process For Macro-Level Topic

METHODOLOGY

1. To select the macro-level topic of urbanization, the team undertook the process in Exhibit A-1.

Exhibit A-1: Process to Select the Macro-level Topic

DEFINING THE CONCEPT

2. The team set out to define the group study’s theme of “Eco and Creative Life in Urban Area”.
   a. **Eco** – Connected to the environment
   b. **Creative Life** – Use of imagination to produce something new
   c. **Urban Area** – Built-up and populated area that includes a municipality, and generally of a population of 5,000 or more

BRAINSTORMING

3. Based on the definitions, the team brainstormed on macro-level issues that could be selected. Exhibit A-2 presents the mind-map from the brainstorming session and the six themes that arose from the discussions:

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17 Source: Cambridge Dictionary
18 Source: Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary
19 Source: www.businessdictionary.com
a. Quality of Life  
b. Resource Depletion  
c. Waste Management  
d. Water Pollution  
e. Air Pollution  
f. Public Facilities

Exhibit A-2: Process to Select the Macro-level Issue

SETTING CRITERIA

4. Three criteria were set for choosing the macro-level theme.

   a. Importance of Macro-level issue. This criterion considers how important each environmental issue is in each team member’s country.

   b. Availability of related Micro-level project. As the macro-level theme had to be associated with a tangible micro-level project, this criterion scores the ease of finding a suitable project that has (a) US$30,000 budget, (b) Community-level involvement, (c) Duration of three years, and (d) Size that is manageable by the local people.

   c. Different theme from other groups. To ensure richer discussions by the three 47th IATSS Forum teams, this criterion sought to avoid a duplicated theme from the other teams.
INITIAL FACT FINDING

5. Importance of Macro-level Issues. Participants’ views were sought on the macro-level issues that impacted their countries. Based on the feedback, “Resource Depletion” and “Public Facilities” had the highest scores across the countries (Exhibit A-3).

Exhibit A-3: “Resource Depletion” and “Public Facilities” were highlighted as more important macro-level issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Depletion</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Pollution</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Pollution</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hatten
Note: Two Japanese participants (Mr. Hideto Ushio and Mr. Kohei Mizutani) joined the macro-level discussions.

6. Availability of related Micro-level project. From the discussions, “Waste Management” was assessed to have the greatest potential for micro-level projects, while “Quality of Life” was assessed to have the least potential (Exhibit A-4).

Exhibit A-4: “Waste Management” offered the greatest potential for micro-level projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Potential Micro-level projects</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Depletion</td>
<td>Publicity campaigns, Tree planting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>Recycling, reusing projects, Publicity campaigns</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Pollution</td>
<td>Publicity campaigns, River clean-up, Water treatment/purification techniques</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Pollution</td>
<td>Publicity campaigns, Tree planting</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Facilities</td>
<td>Tree planting, Communal spaces by local communities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hatten
7. Putting them together in a decision matrix, the issue of “Public Facilities” had the highest score (Exhibit A-5). Urbanization and more built-up cities pose environmental challenges, and was selected as the macro-level theme.

**Exhibit A-5: “Public Facilities” was selected as the macro-level theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Issue</th>
<th>Importance of Macro-issue</th>
<th>Availability of related Micro-level project</th>
<th>Different theme from other groups</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Depletion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 (Group B)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 (Group A)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Pollution</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Pollution</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Facilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hatten
Annex B

Vertical Greenery in the World

1. Many countries have embarked on initiatives to encourage vertical greenery:

   a. In North America, there was a 30% increase in the implementation of rooftop greenery implementation between 2006 and 2007. In 2007, 24ha of green roofs was installed.

   b. In China, 50ha of skyrise greenery has been installed since 2003, and there is an annual target to install 10ha per year.

   c. Germany is the leading country in skyrise greenery technology and implementation, with 1,300ha of green roofs installed annually.

   d. In Japan, there was a ten-fold increase in vertical greening between 2000 and 2005.

Exhibit B-1: Vertical greenery in the United Kingdom...

Exhibit B-2: ... and Pont Juvenal, France

Exhibit B-3: Vertical greenery Fukuoka, Japan

Exhibit B-4: Green Symphony installation at the Taipei Concert Hall
MAP OF INDONESIA AND JAKARTA

1. Indonesia was selected as the project location for the G&G Community Garden (Exhibit C-1). As part of the location assessment phase, various plots of land in Jakarta were identified and assessed (Exhibit C-2).

Exhibit C-1: Project Location Map of Indonesia
Exhibit C-2: Project Location Selection Map of Jakarta
REFERENCES


Accomplishment Reports

DIVERSE - BORDERLESS - UNITED
MY 55 DAY JOURNEY IN IATSS FORUM

Kaing Sanary (Nary)
Cambodia

55 days in IATSS Forum had been a golden opportunity that allows the participants from 9 ASEAN countries to learn Thinking and Learning Together. It was an intersectional platform to build up the capacity of young people in leadership and to strength friendship among ASEAN countries more strongly in the future.

Pre-Departure & Departure Day for IATSS Forum

One month before the departure day, I had been very hectic. I was very busy with assisting my boss to prepare the 10 year conference at my working place, delegating my job to my colleagues, clearing all my project reports, preparing my school application form, pre studying and researching the seminar topics of IATSS Forum, preparing my own stuff and country booth for forum.

I started to count down 2 weeks before my departure day for IATSS forum on facebook. Most of my friends wondered why I counted down. They thought that there must be my special day or I am waiting for someone special. They kept commenting, searching for the reasons and keeping viewing my status. Finally, the day, 19 September, I was waiting for it arrived. It was my happiest and busiest day among my previous overseas trip’s day. In the morning, I attended my sister’s graduation ceremony and in the afternoon, I worked on NGO assignment reports before I left Cambodia. Although it seemed an exhausting day, I did never feel exhausted. On the contrast, I felt full of energy, eager to meet, learn from my ASEAN friends and IATSS staffs, and visit Japan again.

Arrival Day

While transiting at SUVARNABHUMI airport, Bangkok, Leap (my co participant) and I tried to look for IATSS fellows. We talked to each other these people might be IATSS participants, those might be also IATSS participants. Luckily, we were pleased to meet and talked to Kyaw and Pwint from Myanmar for a short while before the plane left for Nagoya airport.
The plane landed down and touched the land of Nagoya Airport, I kept telling myself that I was not in the dream. Surely, I arrived at Nagoya. My first impression looked from the airplane was seeing the airport is surrounded by the sea.

Getting out from the airport gate, the first person I saw was Akira san. He only the IATSS staff came to pick us up. I was also pleased to meet and had conversation with new ASEAN friends. I felt like reunion with my old folks rather than meeting new friends. They are very nice and friendly. The time of self introduction began unofficially amongst the participants.

What had been surprising me more were the well organized welcoming and orientation. I was so impressed with the cheery blossom smiles, wholeheartedly warm welcome from the IATSS staffs standing in front of office building and the beautiful welcomed drawing on the whiteboard near the seminar hall. I felt that I was treated as the honorable guest rather than the IATSS Forum Participant. It made me feel wonder it was the guest greeting in Japanese style?

**Gasshuku (Teambuilding) and Facilitation Skills Training**

I really enjoyed all the meaningful and fun activities in three days and 2 nights of Gasshuku program at the Youth Center. I got to know the co participants more closely, was able to explore more about their unique personality, working attitudes, the team work, the challenges in the teamwork and how to solve the problem and challenges together. Moreover, I was able to discover my strength and improvement point and how to build up my self confidence in working with the team. It was also the first time learn how to prepared and sleep on Futon, the Japanese Mattress.

All the games and ice breaks introduced by Tomo san were really interesting, useful and fun. I will try to apply all the games I learnt from Gasshuku into my working place once I am back to Cambodia. Among those games, Building the Great Wall, Throwing the ball into the basket, Blindfolding and Lifting up are my favorite games. Through the four games, It broadened my understanding about the importance of the team player and the resources surrounded, the teamwork, the challenges of being the leader and the follower, and doing together ( using each other ‘s strength) to achieve a goal.
Keiko san was a facilitator of Facilitation Skills Training. I liked her facilitation skills. She created friendly safe environment for us to get involve in her activities. I learnt about differences between facilitator and coordinator, the roles and responsibilities of facilitator, and the four basic communication of the facilitator. The facilitator plays very important role to control everything running smoothly according to the plan set. The facilitator talks less and listens more.

Opening Ceremony Day

A night from the Gasshuku, before opening ceremony day, everyone was very tired and stayed very late in order to design the 47th batch logo and the motto. Our 47th batch motto is “Diverse, Borderless and United”.

However, on the opening ceremony day, everyone dressed up very nicely in their own traditional costume. They looked handsome, beautiful and smart. Before the ceremony started, Everyone kept attentively practicing on how to introduce themselves in Japanese in front of distinguish guests from embassies, company, university and about hundred audiences. At first I was very concerned and was not sure that I was able to present myself in Japanese in front of many people. In fact, I could make it. I was pleased that I was able to remove my concern and shyness.

Seminars

Seminar is a fantastic platform to allow the participants from ASEAN countries and Japan to learn and share the best practices in different public and private sectors.

Amongst 10 seminars, seminars on OVOP, Environment, Education, and Japanese NGO/CVO in ASEAN countries were my main interest since I am working in NGO sector. In OVOP seminar, I learnt the general business concept related to OVOP, where the original idea of OVOP came from, how it contributes into national economic growth. Moreover, the three principle of OVOP: Thinking Globally Act Locally, Independence and Creativity, Fostering Human Resource. Environment Seminar informed me about the common environmental problems in ASEAN countries such as Deforestation (in Laos), Traffic Pollution and Air pollution (in Thailand) and Water Safety Management (in Singapore). In addition, from three country presentations and the lecture given related to Basic Education I learnt the different education system adopted in each country (Cambodia, Philippines, and Indonesia), the different educational policy implementation and its challenges. In Japanese CVO Seminar, I was surprised to encounter many different terms using instead of NGO such as NPO (Non Profit Organization), CVO (Citizen Volunteer Organization), PVO (Private
Volunteer Organization), CBO (Community Based Organization), PO (People Organization), and a number of Japanese CVO actively functioning in ASEAN countries.

The seminar on Japanese aesthetics appealed to me for the obvious reason that I’m passionate about arts and culture. I was enlightened by the fact that Japanese aesthetics and art/culture appreciation are often characterized by suggestion, simplicity, irregularity, perish ability and playfulness.

Field Visits

During the field visit in Honda Factory, it was unbelievable to hear that Honda Company spends only 47 seconds to produce one car. There are around 1100 cars have been produced daily. I was wondering how come the car is produced with a very short time? I trust that if you do not see with your own eye you will not agree with it. I, one of IATSS participants, was lucky to have a chance to visit production sites to see how the cars are produced and assembled. The processes of assemble the car is very fast. The robots have been employed instead of human in the Assemble Lines. Furthermore, I encountered that Honda uses Quality Control (QC) Method engaging all the levels of people to indentify the problems and find the solution together is the best way of communication and getting the information accurately. I also learnt that Japanese people have a high commitment and responsibility to the work, never ever give up.

Once in my life I experienced in driving a car at Safety Traffic Education Center (STEC) in Japan. After there were many instructions given, I hesitated to drive even though in my country, I drive to work everyday. I felt so scared of driving because Japan car is right hand based and the speed is higher (60km/hour) than Cambodia. More importantly, I was asked to drive on the slippery road and icy road. Yet, I challenged myself to drive a car. It was very fun and interesting to find out the feeling and the techniques of driving fast speed in the slippery road and icy road.

Japanese Introduction Day

Hearing 100 times is not equal seeing 1 time, and Seeing 10 time is not equal experiencing and touching 1 time. Likely, I heard and learnt about Japanese Culture 9 years ago but I had never experienced with Japanese Culture at all. Japanese Introduction Day gave me an opportunity to have first hand experiences to discover more about Japanese Culture. Wearing Kimono or Yukata and Serving Tea Ceremony are my old age attempts to put on and discover. I was so excited that I had a chance to put Pink Yukata on and transformed myself for a while into Japanese girl. Tea Ceremony was very interesting. I discovered that there are some norms for serving the tea and sweets (Mochi). The Green Tea had been used to serve during The Tea Ceremony. When the people were served the tea, they bowed the tea maker in order to show gratitude for making the tea and politeness. Moreover, they asked the tea maker if they could have tea and Mochi first. What more interesting is before drinking tea, the drinker needed to turn the
cup two times around to avoid drinking the most beautiful part of the art on the cup. Moreover, I did also enjoy other Japanese Culture introduced by Japanese Volunteer such as music, toy, games, folk dances, wishing tree, calligraphy and so on. I was so impressed and appreciated the volunteer’s commitment and active participation in making this event happened successfully for us, 17 of 47th IATSS participants. Last but not least, other new Japanese food, Okonomiyaki, had been introduced, 17 IATSS participants and volunteers cooked together and at the same interacted with each other. It had been one of unforgettable, meaningful, fun experience for me.

Home Stay

I was matched to stay with a warm lovely Kondo Family. They are Mr. and Mrs. Kondo, their children (Keito and Rinna) and a lovely puppy named Mou Mou chan. 2 days and a night home stay was a short time; however, It was a good chance for me once in my life in experiencing and discovering the daily Japanese lifestyle with Japanese family. I learnt to make Onigiri (triangle rice), cook sukiyaki, and especially how the Japanese Children are brought up here. Moreover, I was surprised when Keito showed me about his own railway map draw. It was such an amazing drawing at his 10 age. I am really admired his talent.

Cultural Exchange Day (CED)

The Cultural Exchange Day Preparation had been planed one month ahead. Planning, Discussing, Discussing, Practicing, Practicing and Justifying together are the words that I could use to describe how the whole CED preparation was. I was so proud and appreciated of all my fellow friends and IATSS staffs for their cooperation and supports in practicing and working together to make the event succeed.

For my point of view, CED was not only organized for the Japanese people to learn and enjoyed ASEAN Culture and Culture of China, United States, New Zealand, and Brazil but also for the participants to learn from one other culture. It was my great experience in my life that I was able to share Cambodian Culture, learn and accept other culture, and perform on the stage. I have never ever imagined that I was able to dance and sing on the stage. I always keep smiling when thinking of every single preparation of CED and the real CED especially Bhangra dance performance on the stage. The performance was very great more that what we had expected. Everyone did their best to make CED running smoothly and successfully.

CED helped me to remove my shy barrier and build up collaborating working skills across diversity team.

My Individual Plan Day in Kyoto

When planning my individual plan day in Kyoto, I prepared my trip with taking the subway because I am familiar with subway so far. After Charlie san and Akira san taught us (17 participants) how to buy the subway tickets, and take the subway on the way to attend the
BUDO seminar in Osaka I changed my mind to use the bus for my individual trip instead of using the subway. Taking the bus in Kyoto is cheaper and more convenient. Moreover, the bus system is not complicated as Subway system.

During my two day individual trip in Kyoto, I did not feel lonely and tired because two Myanmar friends (Kyaw and Pwint), Philliphine friend (Shena) joined the journey with me. We were interested in visiting the same places. The trip was very cheerful even though it was the entire raining on the first day.

The first day, we visited 5 places in a row. Leap, my co-participant, joint the trip with us visiting two places (Shosei-en Garden and Higashi Honganji Temple) nearby the hotel. Firstly, we went to visit Shosei-en Garden to explore the beauty of nature in garden and continued visiting Higashi Honganji Temple to learn about the Japanese architectures in the temple and the religious homage. Secondly, we jumped in the bus at the Kyoto station and headed to visit Nijo Castle, one of Kyoto’s UNESCO world heritage sites. I learnt and admired the Japanese painting on the paper wall and royal life in the empirical period. Our next destination was supposed to visit Manga museum but we got lost in walking till we reached Kyoto Imperial Palace/Park. It was a bit disappointed from us. We were not able to visit the palace. The Imperial palace was closed at 2:00pm and we reached there around 3:00pm. Instead of missing visiting the palace, we got a chance to see Japanese Aesthetics, the nature beauty of 4 seasons drawing and photographs, origami in the show rooms of palace office and walking in the Imperial Palace Garden. The garden is very huge consisting of green grass patches and pine trees. There is hardly any flower. I cannot imagine how beautiful it is during the spring. I wish I can come back and visit there again one more day in the future. The final destination of our first day finished with Nishiki Street Market. It was our favorite market where we could afford to shop more souvenirs for family, relatives, and friends.

The second day, Singaporean friend (JY) and her friend joint us to visit Kiyomizudera temple, Yasaka Shrine, Maruyama Koen, Gion area to see Geisha. It was a bit tiring trip since we walked up on the high hill slope to Kiyomizudera temple; however, it was interesting to explore the beauty, the belief and the uniqueness of the Kiyomizudera temple. I enjoyed viewing the entire beautiful landscape of Kyoto, discovering the beliefs and superstition on big bell ringing, the love-fortune-telling stone, and the pure holistic water. In Gion area, we spent around half an hour to seek for Geisha. Unfortunately, we did not see Geisha. Then, we were back to Nishiki Market to shop again.
Group Discussion

Group Discussion was a program that I like and admire the most among other IATSS Forum Programs. It had reflected the theme of IATSS Forum “Thinking and Learning Together” and responding to my objectives set before attending the forum how to develop good proposal writing, work well within cross cultural team and a good team player.

My Group Discussion Team called Busy Bin Community Team. There were 7 members from 7 Different Countries in ASEAN plus Japan such as Café (Japan), JY (Singapore), Ponco (Indonesia), Pwint (Myanmar), Kohn (Laos), Woody (Thailand) and me.

Through the group discussion, I had a great opportunity to share my country’s current situation related to assigned topic, my knowledge, working experiences and learn from my ASEAN friends about their current situation, their perceptions, creative solutions or the best practice in their countries on the issues, their working experiences, especially their leadership and facilitation styles.

Gasshuku and Facilitation Skills Training had been very important and helpful tools to assisting and reminding me how to facilitate and work well and smooth with the team during my group discussion. Using other people’s strength to lift you up, Thinking out of the box but acting locally, and Taking turn to be meeting facilitator were the effective techniques I used with Busy Bin Community’s group discussion.

Effective time management, Respecting, More Listening, Giving and Taking, Keeping Asking questions with Why, Sharing responsibilities and always Outlining/making storyboard are what I have learnt from Busy Bin Community Team.

Thank you very much all the team members of Busy Bin Community for hard working, strong team spirits, motivation, and cooperation. I am so proud of myself to be one of the members and have the opportunity to learn and work with all of you under the very short time constraint. The new discovery and experiences I gained from all of you during the group discussion will be sharpen my management and leadership in the future.
My Self Development Day

What did you do during your self development day? Some might answer that I stayed in the room, did my laundry and completed my report and so on. Others might answer that I cycled around Suzuka and went to Seven Eleven.

The first self development day, I went to Bell City with my walking team (Ponco, Jane, Shena, and Pwint) on foot. Due to the reason that my Philippine friend (Shena) and Myanmar friend (Pwint) are not able to cycle. It was a fun time to walk with the team and take pictures on the way to the Bell City.

My second self development day, I spent my time with some friends at Nagoya. I visited TOYOTA museum, and Nagoya Castle. I really admired the advancement of technology in TOYOTA museum. Nagoya trip was very wonderful and unforgettable trip for me. I made lots of helpful and friendly Japanese friends, the students of Professor Adachi. They spent the whole day with us. What I could not forget was I pressed the emergency button rather than the flush button in the toilet. The alarm sounded loudly in the toilet. I was very scared of making chaos. Everyone was looking at me and tried to calm me down with the word “Daijobudesu”. When the security guard came, everyone helped me to explain the alarming reason to the security guard. I told myself that next time I need to be more careful when flushing the toilet. On the way back, other coincidence problems happened friends got lost and friend forgot his GPS at the station.

The third development day, I went to the beach with my Lao friend (Bobo) by cycling. It was very adventure trip. I found that it was not easy and safe to cycle in Japan. Because of exciting nearly reach the beach I was careless and fell down from the bicycle. It was my other memory in Japan.

The forth development day, I spent time with Kyaw’s host brother, Kyaw and Pwint at the Ninja Castle and the market. I am so fascinated with Ninja’s history, the life of Ninja in the past and Ninja’s show.
My fifth development day, I went to Nandemoichiba (Whatever market) in Yokkaichi with friends and had dinner at my Japanese friend (Café) house. It was really good time for us to cook Japanese foods together and had fun together.

What I am going to miss?

The first come to my mind is very intensive schedule in the IATSS Forum. I did not have time to think of and miss my family at all. Through this packed program, I acquired that time is very valuable and try to make the best use of the time. Do not waste time.

Second is IATSS staffs. Everyone is very easy going, friendly, helpful, encouraging, caring, fast information updated, hard working and committed to the work.

Third is the laughter and teasing interaction among the folks. There will not be such a cheerful environment anymore when I am going back to Cambodia.

Third is PC room. Everyday after seminar I always come to PC room to fill the questionnaire and view the pictures taken by IATSS Forum. I still remember days I stayed so late in the PC room to work with my brother (Vinh from Vietnam) were the day we designed the logo of 47th IATSS Forum and CED poster and brochures. I will miss PC room more than my own room.

Foods come to the forth position. All the lunch and dinner prepared by Hirata san at the cafeteria always very oishii and healthy. In addition, I love all the Japanese foods especially Miso Soup.

Last but not least, whenever I use the whiteboard, the multi functional whiteboard at the Piano Lounge will be thought. It is very fantastic whiteboard.

To sum up, The IATSS Forum is painting my life with the very meaningful experiences even though the program is very intensive. I realized the self discipline in punctuality, respect, politeness, high commitment, and responsibilities are important parts to improve my future leadership skills. Moreover, IATSS Form also plays important platform to bring us (17 participants from 9 ASEAN countries) to learn from each other, to build friendship, and strengthen solidarity in the future.
Remarkable Memory Participating in IATSS Forum

Senleap Ly (Leap)
Cambodia

**My first Arrival:**

This is the first time for me to be away from my family for such a long period. I was worried a lot that I would be sad and homesick when I was in Cambodia, but it was not really true because I am having a wonderful time in Japan.

It was my honor to meet Akira-san at the airport with a warm welcome. When the bus came closer and closer to the IATSS’s building, I somehow felt that it was my new home. I was very happy to see all the IATSS, and Hotel staffs waiting to welcome us with a beautiful smile. I got a good impression about IATSS forum since on the first day I’ve arrived. They spent 1 full day just to do the orientation and explained us every detail of basic life in Suzuka Circuit, even teaching us how to use toilet as everything is so advanced.

**Opening Ceremony**

One of my objectives coming to Japan was to improve my presentation skill. Luckily, I had an opportunity to give a “thank you speech” in the opening ceremony of the 47th Forum. I’ve done some public speeches before, but I don’t know why I still felt nervous this time. After the speech, I now learn how to control my fear, and to be confident. The trick is to just take a deep breath, and pretend the audience members are my friends. There are no ambassador
representatives, professors, or VIP people; I just think that they are also human beings so they will not kill me if I make a stupid mistake. That does not mean I don’t respect to all of them; of course, it’s my honor to represent of all the participants to thank them for all their valuable time joining the ceremony. Beside improving my presentation skill, I also felt that I had a warm treatment from IATSS staff. I don’t expect that all the ambassador representatives are coming to welcoming us.
Study Tour at Honda Factory

Learning about Japanese people and why they were able to reach the second largest world economy; is always in my mind. The reason why Japanese people are very successful in building their country because they work hard and never give up easily. It was quite interesting to listen to the presentations from the group of engineers trying to explain how they solve the problem of programming the robot. They took more than 1 hour which made some people feel sleepy including myself. There had so many failures before they solved the problem. In my opinion, the key success of their team is “never give up”.

It was unbelievable to hear that one car made in 45 seconds during the presentation of Honda General Manager in Suzuka before we visited factory. The answer was very clear when I saw the production operation. Most of the production line run by robots. More interestingly, it is incredible when tens of big armed robots weld together. It was very exciting to see how they fit welding one car at the same time.

Honda is not only concerned about producing a car to make money, but they do care about people, environment and workers. They do care about their drivers so for the last 5 years, Honda put effort in to designing and developing a safe car.

Based on my observation, the Honda factory has a very high standard of working safety conditions. For example, when we walked past the welding assembling line, we were asked to put on our caps, wear a long sleeve, and protective glasses. In addition, a big green wood to block the noise and absorb the CO2 emission from factory surrounds Honda factory. The contaminated water from the factory is treated very well which we could drink afterward.

Facilitation Skill Training:

I was happy and enjoyed learning for the entire 2 days with professor K. Tsubaki. The program was designed with various activities to make all the participants learning all the techniques to be a good facilitator. After Professor K. Tsubaki explained us the meaning as well as the foundation of facilitation skill, everyone had a chance to be a facilitator. Then, everybody gave feedback of what he or she can improve. In this way, we all could see our weaknesses and strengths.

One lesson that I would like to highlight of being a good facilitator is being punctual, and a good listener. If she says that the meeting will start at 2:00 p.m., she will start exactly at 2:00 regardless of her boss being there or not. A lot of facilitators often confuse to their roles to facilitate. It should be clear that the facilitator’s job is to encourage everyone to participate
and encourage them to speak out. A facilitator should avoid giving any ideas about the discussed topic and being biased.

I can see myself improving a lot when I lead the group discussion or working in the group. I tend to listen more and welcome for new ideas. I can create a comfortable atmosphere so people are encouraged to speak up and are very open for feedback.
Gasshuku (Team Building)

This is one of the best programs that I like the most. We mainly played various games but all the games were designed in the spirit of group work. We can say that they are just a game that we play for fun but to me those games were very challenging and required cooperation from everyone. If one member in the team is not cooperative, it will effect to the result of the whole group.

All the participants felt the same that we all seem to know each other very long during Gasshuku since we just met each other only 3 days. We live, learn, stay, and have fun together.

The reason that we all felt it was a new family because we have a successful team building that we get to know each other through different games such as asking each other birthday, occupation, hometown, etc.

The picture shows how we came up with our combination of goal and objectives while we were staying in Japan. This was very effective way to share goals and objectives so that we all can learn and help each other to reach the goal. We also could use this for the rest of the time that we are staying at the IATSS forum. We always can check whether we are going in the right way to reach our goals or not.
Group Study:

Before we started our group work, IATSS organized “Team Building (Gasshuku), and facilitation skill training” to sharpen our knowledge to work effectively and efficiently producing a good outcome of project proposal.

I believe the group is a very powerful entity because the members have diverse skills. The diverse ideas which everyone has during brainstorming are essential for the setting up of a project. However, it is also a barrier because there are some who don’t accept thing easily and want the group to follows their ideas all the time.

At the end of the group discussion however, I learned to work with them by compromising. If I disagreed with them, I spoke nicely to them and had constructive arguments.

The lesson that I learn the most is the spirit of united work. Even though, we have some conflict in the beginning, but we all believe that we fought for the good result, and no one takes it as a personal. Everybody works hard and very helpfully. For example, Shen has a computer problem, so she calls for help. One minute later, everybody shows up in her room.

I will use this experience when I go back home to apply at my workplace. I am very confident that it will work well in my workplace to build the team spirit of reaching the same goal.
This was my first time to stay with people that I don’t know before. I was a little bit concern about how am I going to stay with a person that I didn’t know before. What kind of person are they? I started asking a lot of questions about my host family.

It turned out that they were completely the opposite of what I was thinking of. I had a great time with them, we like each other very much. Now we became a family after spending 2 days together. First day, we went to Nagoya which is a beautiful and cleaned city. Even though, the city is very developed, but there are still a lot of trees and green nature along the way. Japanese also never forget their tradition and culture. I am surprise to see a group of people dressing up the traditional clothes and performing a very wonderful classic Japanese song in the middle of civilized city.

Second day, we went to Nara to see the deer, temple, and beautiful pond and nature. I really enjoyed seeing the deer, historical building, and mountains. It’s unbelievable that a wild deer gets along very well people. They don’t scare at all to human beings.

Moreover, I was very happy to see the daily life of Japanese people. Roy, my host brother told me that “I am happy to stay in the small house so that the whole family is being together all the time and we will not be separated”. I like this idea very much and I will apply this idea to my family when I go back home.

It was my pleasure to have a warm welcome from them by bringing me around for the whole two days with a lot of fun. I feel very reluctant because at the end of the day, they gave me a lot of gifts for my wife, and my son.

Through this experience of staying with them, I have enriched my knowledge about Japanese people of how polite and friendly they are. More interestingly, I also learned a lot about Japanese people and Japan through conversation. I asked them a lot, and I hope that they were not bored due to my questions.

When I go back home, I will try to promote home stay in Cambodia for all the foreigners who wish to learn about Cambodia culture. I strongly believe that HOME STAY is the greatest way to learn quickly about country’s culture and daily life.
Seminar:

There are 10 seminars in total, and most of them are very interesting, especially the last 2 seminars about Logistics and Technology, because we were not sitting down the whole day to listen to a professor but we do have tour study and seeing the show.

Logistic Seminar: I thought FamilyMart is just a distribution channel, but that was not true; they do have their own factory to produce their own food. We had a great opportunity to visit the food factory. The factory has a very high standard of hygiene. Before we entered the factory, everybody had to wear the spaceship uniform which I felt like I was a doctor to get ready to do the operation. In addition, we had a chance to experience using e-card in Family Mart convenience store. It was fun to do the presentation of what we have bought and why it will sell best in our countries.

Technology Seminar: It was hard to believe how smart ASIMO is, especially when he gave a presentation about himself. It was my honor to talk to listen to the history of ASIMO, especially asking a lot of questions to Mr. Masato Hirose, ASIMO’s designer.

Networking:

Beside the programs are arranged by IATSS forum, I was very lucky to meet one of my Japanese friends in Tokyo. We met each other only one time in Cambodia about 10 minutes last year, but I appreciated her kindness to bring me around in Tokyo. Saki brought me to the BBQ, which arranged by her company, so that I had an opportunity to talk to Japanese people who has the same believe in NPO. Furthermore, I volunteer to be a key person in South East Asia involving with the concept of "Design to change the world exhibition" which I strongly believe this will benefit to all Asian countries due to my experience participating in this exhibition last year.

The concept behind the exhibition is to involve Japanese designers to design something that will benefit Asian society like making an instant camera thinner or lighter.

Moreover, most of the IATSS participants support the concept, and they are willing to promote the concept so they will become a key person for their countries.

I believe that this network will be very cooperative looking toward for the better world.

Entertainment:

All friends over here are very nice and funny as well. We don’t care about how busy we are, but we have to make ourselves available for entertainment and sport. We are playing Ping Pong almost every evening. I sometimes join with them to go swimming or Onsen. First of all, I didn’t like the Onsen at all, and I told myself that I will never go to an Onsen as I am too shy to be naked. However, when I tried it one time, I started to like it. Now I very often go to Onsen with friends so that we can enjoy both the hot spring and talking. Beside sport, we also have a movie day that we watch together and laugh together. I do like watching movies with them so much, because they always bring some snack, tea, juice, or even SAKE. Our favorite movies are THE LAST SAMURAI and 7 SAMURAI.
Conclusion:

Time is flying so fast, but I am very satisfied with my 55 days. I am a success with all of my objectives and expectations of coming to Japan to learn about Japanese culture, people, technology, and diverse activities such as seminar, study tour, and, group study. All the participants are very knowledgeable, and I also think they are one of my professors who I can absorb a lot of knowledge from them.

I realize myself that I become a new person being even more socialize and outbox thinking. My presentation skill has been improved. I don’t feel nervous any more, and very confident on myself.

Even though, there are some challenges during my stay, I always try my best to overcome by thinking of Japanese concept “never give up”. Additionally, I am very welcome for feedback and seeing feedback and critics as a gift.

IATSS forum is a wonder and remarkable program. I would like to give a billion thanks to all IATSS staffs who are working very hard, and being nice to me. Every time I need help, they are always there. And I also would like to say sorry that I disturb their time and being late for 2 times.

Lastly, It’s my honor to be one of the 47th participants, and I promise that your effort would be worth wide in a long run, since the knowledge gained from the program will be implemented to Cambodia.
“Try and be a sheet of paper with nothing on it. Be a spot of ground where nothing is growing, where something might be planted, a seed, possibly, from the Absolute”. That is the remarkable Jalal ad-din Rumi's quote that I always bear in mind as I consider myself a never ending learner. I am a believer. The life lessons that I've gotten has brought me to my knees. It made me aware that I am nothing without The Creator.

Of flesh and blood, I am made. I can die and perish at any time. How could I think of myself as “Somebody”? My experience taught me that I wasn't the centre of my life anymore and when the knowledge sublimes I found the Divine's values in everything, in every person.

However to really bear such thought everyday is not as easy as to think of it. When the destiny brought me to The Land of Rising Sun, as I had been chosen as the 47th IATSS Forum participant, I realized, it was the time for the self-examination. Can I really put myself as genuine learner with a spot of ground where something new might be planted and growth that can enrich myself and widen my horizon. Or will I put another thick wall brick—which made me get nothing and learn nothing at the end.

Exploring and Experiencing Knowledge

I never take lightly on a journey. Visiting places is not merely going to see the places, to enjoy sightseeing, local food, to experience the neighborhood and to hunt many taking home mementos. I do love them all but it is more than that. I count every journey as a solemn part of life, including this time, when I finally stepped my foot again on Japan's soil on Sept 20th 2010. Here, in the strange land with strange people, I would spend 55 days and I believed I would get many lessons.

Japan was fascinated me so much back in 2006, and in my second visit this year, it is still and even more. If I may say, this country offers wide-ranging of possibilities for the visitors to explore. I had discovered so many things only less than a week. Now I have to admit, that I am not just fascinated by the places, the art, the people, the culture of Japan. I am absorbed.

I tried to use the opportunity to explore all the unique sides, the modern side, the must visited places until off-beaten path of Japan. It was quite exciting to find other ways to enjoy Japan.
Shitamachi in Shibamata for example, was a nice place to escape from the crowded situation in Tokyo that identic with its tall building. Shitamachi can be translated as “Downtown” and in this downtown area of Japan’s capital city, I can find old Edo culture still alive. In Shitamachi, I could sense the personalities of the local people living there.

The intimate atmosphere I’ve felt in Shitamachi disappeared when I was strolling around in Shibuya. Suddenly I found myself a totally stranger in the middle of the busiest crossing walks in the world. As the people tend to move quickly and be in a rush, I start making myself blend. I felt like an alien but solid inside. A good exercise for the soul!

Speaking about blending, staying with Japanese family is my another precious experience in Japan. I stayed in Tsutomu Tanaka-san house, a teacher family. Tom-san and his wife, Kyoko-san, both are very energetic couples. They are over 60 years old but they still have spirit and eagerness to learn something new and even create uselful things every day! The mother of Tanaka-san, Tsuruko-san also was the person who amazed me. In her age, 98 years old, she still does gardening every day. Can I do the same thing when my age come to that number?

I learned also unusual thing during my stay, such as how to peel persimmon in Japanese style, which is something that I’ve never done before. After trying a couple of times, I finally did it. I made a clean peeled persimmon, at least according to what I’ve seen.

Deep in my heart I really thank to IATSS Forum staffs, who had organized such compact and fruitfull activities for participants. The schedule was very tight, but it made my gray cells in my head always work. They keep transmitting signals and only stop when I was sleeping. Sometimes I found myself too lazy to think. But here, it almost never happened.

**Thinking and learning Together Part 1: Coming together is a beginning.**

A folk proverb said, as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. I would not say it is true, instead I would say it’s proven, at least to me. Tomoko Seki—one of inspiring lecturers in IATSS Forum—said one person is a mirror to another. By looking my reflection on the 'mirror' I could learn many things from another.

Here I require myself to write a little bit about Tomoko Seki, or just Tomo—means friends--as she wish to be called, her character has inspire me so much. She is a very dynamic and energetic lady. Never without vibrant spirit with Tomo-san around, is a simple sentence that
comes out every time I think of her. She has taken me to many angle of views through the Gasshuku training.

This Gasshuku training is one of my most favorite activities during my stay in IATSS Forum. The training is about how to build successful work teams. As the participants would stay together in 55 days and do activities together, then knowing and learning each other, I believe, is must. I never knew any of them but my co-participant. How could a stranger work together and even collaborate on something with other strangers? Here comes the challenges.

This training is a very meaningful program, which has well-prepared by the IATSS Staff (One of the reasons I put my respect for them). I never thought that it would be very interesting, since I never follow any kind of this before. I was amazed how games could really impact my way of thinking directly.

Using others’ strength to raise you up was one of the interesting games. The steps were also simple, sitting together on the floor, hands and feet sticking together and then standing or lifting our body by using our friend’s strength. I learned a lot from this simple game, trusting each other, embracing my weakness and at the same time admitting another strength and making use of it to aim the goals. The striking part of this game was when I did that, my pair or other fellows in the groups simultaneously did that as well, trusting me and admitting my strength to lift up their bodies.

However, when the group members were becoming larger, the challenges were getting bigger as well. Group of a pair is totally different from a group consisting of many members. With the same rule—hands and feet sticking together—what is a possible way to lift all the bodies at the same time?

I have never imagined that our group way was done in different sitting position from doing in a pair or smaller group. We'd been trying so hard—about 45 minutes according to Tomo san—to lift our body by doing the very same way we did in pairs or small group, yet we kept failing. Once we tried in another way, namely sequentially one after another, every of us sitting facing the opposite direction, voila, we did it less than 5 minutes. My fellows and I managed to lift our body together at the same time!

We keep thinking to find possible solution in every game and encouraging each others and we did that in almost every occasion, even after Gasshuku. I found teambuilding games are a fun way to develop cohesiveness. They tear down walls in communications, provide avenues that encourage discussion and increase productivity. Team building takes time, but the end results are well worth the extra time. It is an ongoing process that boosts commitment.
Greater challenges need more effort, more creative ways of thinking and need more different angles explorations to solve the task. I had to thank to my Laos fellows, Srimuang Sihnakhon, for this. He was the one who came up with the idea of sequentially sitting in different direction one after another. He is a quiet guy and he expresses his thought rarely. He is a kind of person that would not make up himself to be acknowledged. But once he speaks his mind, he comes up with some thing and that is why he deserves our respect. Suddenly I saw myself in the mirror and found another part of myself that need to be sharpened.

The story did not end after finishing the Gasshuku training. The challenges were more to come. During our stay, we start to sharpen each other in many activities, seminar, group discussion, Cultural Exchange Day, and particularly Group Study, the main course in the IATSS Forum.

**Thinking and Learning Together II: Keeping Together is Progress, Working Together is Success**

In Group Study activity, I am a member of the adorable Group C which consisted of six people including me. Five of them are incredibly smart people, Tran The Vinh, a tactical, well-experienced and yet witty engineer from Vietnam, Ming Leong Kuan, an intelligent structured-economist form Singapore, Jariya “Gate” Sudtho, an extraordinary English teacher with firm and fair personality from Thailand and then Kyaw Dewa from Myanmar, one of the most patient members with a great sense of empathy, particularly in embracing the differences of the group. His forbearance manner obviously became group's balancing factor.

Last but not least, Jumina Anak Lasan, another most patience member of the group. We— Gate and I—call her 'little Jane', a quiet lady with a strong determination who quite often comes up with amazing ideas, including our group logo. Since in my humble opinion I'm nothing compare to them, then I prefer to call myself just a little journalist.

I always have a thought that I would be enjoying this group and definitely learning so many things from my group fellows. I didn't put my concern on gaining academic or literal knowledge. I would automatically get it for sure. IATSS Forum had prepared all the activities and there would be full of knowledge. What I concerned most was would I give equal contribution to my group?

However, after recalling myself as a spot of ground for new plant to grow, my worry disappeared. Once I accept my limits, I believe I can go beyond them. It's time to listen more, learn more, absorb more, respect more, do self-restriction more, value others more, challenges myself more and contemplate more.
We began our first group discussion on day 14th. The first meeting was great. Nonetheless my group has its potential risk of challenges since it is a cross-cultural team. Quite often such teams run into problems and are unable to work to their full potential because of inherent relationship issues.

Individual perspectives on certain topics could be so far that a consensus becomes illusive. Multiple solutions and options were suggested but many alternatives could cause another constraint as well, for instance, the group was unable to come up with a definite recommendation.

All my five fellows are experts in their own right and may have set views that cannot be easily changed. With strong backgrounds I have mentioned on my brief introduction, each individual likely believes that his or her viewpoint is the ‘right’ one.

The quality of communication is a key concern in cross cultural teams--like my group. Everybody can speak English, but certain forms of slang or colloquialisms may not be clearly understood leading to misinterpretations. The good news is, my fellows have the same perspective that teamwork is a collective effort and all the players have to fully understand the direction that the discussion is taking.

I could observe that every member try to keep misinterpretations to a minimum level by aiming for clarity. I am happy with my teammates otherwise I would found that team effectiveness is bound to suffer. To prevent miscommunication, some of us encouraged check with each other for clarity either through paraphrasing or by asking questions. We basically involve restating a point and then asking - "Is that what you meant?"

In a team with cross cultural mix of people, it should be expected that some amount of ambiguity is very possible to happen. Care has to be taken with wordings especially when there is disagreement on an issue. Even mildly sarcastic comments meant as a joke can be misinterpreted by a team member in another country and it causes a conflict.

It was so amazing that the potential risk and challenges in my group could be kept to a minimum level. To my point of view, we managed to maintain the conducive working atmosphere in order to make real progress. A little collision between members here and there is unavoidable as we came from different backgrounds, perspective and way of thinking. Nonetheless, we were able to settle it in mature manners.

There was another variable thing that bounded us together. Sounds peculiar, we were adopting 'whatever' mental state for particular occasion. It is true, ‘whatever’ is a strong and even a rude word, especially when someone is using it in a serious situation. But in my group context, the 'whatever' word became a magic word that creating less-tense environment. If I may say, we all are human beings after all. “In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful, so is my group.
Coming together is a beginning, Keeping Together is Progress, Working Together is successes, are not my words. Those are Henry Ford's. He was a prominent American industrialist and the founder of the Ford Motor Company.

Henry Ford was an extremely hardworking man. He was very curious in his early life because he liked to take things apart and ask many questions. He designed and manufactured many cars, including the Model T which was the second largest selling car totaling over 15,000,000. In addition to doing this, he managed an enormous company with the help of very few people.

He respected workers very much, and based on that he created a system of Fordism that promised modernity, high wages, and consumer goods. In 1914, Ford surprised the world by offering $5 per day wage, which more than double the rate of most of his works.

In his memoir, “My Life and Work” (1922), Ford wrote, “What we want is a better recognition of the human element in the business. And surely it can be achieved without dislocation, without loss to any one, indeed with an increase of benefit to every human being. And the secret of it all is in a recognition human partnership”. For him an idealist is a person who helps other people to be prosperous. If I may elaborate the meaning of prosperous, which is wider than material, then plus my elaboration, I do agree with Ford.

Discovering Myself

My journey to Japan this time as a 47th IATSS Forum participant literally means staying in Suzuka, visiting some cities, gaining new knowledge and experiences, working and collaborating together with my fellow participants. Beyond that, this journey has a spiritual meaning to me.

I can deny that I am a typically serious person. Everything matters. All the things in this world, I believe, are created with their own purpose. I should praise every things in this world even a tiny ant on the ground and treated them in appropriate way.

Do you love your creator? Love your fellow-beings first. Thus, I never consider any act of kindness insignificant, even meeting with my sister and my friends with a cheerful face. It is not about putting a mask in my face or about being a fake person. It's about the right thing to do.

There is Divine Entity in every human being as they created with love. I have no right on earth to treat any living creatures with no love and kindness. That is the reason why I try to use my heart more than my brain when I deal with people.

When I tried to put my commitment on that value, the challenges suddenly emerges. Apparently, I am not as open-minded as I thought of myself. I have a preference. It is a human thing, but it becomes serious matters when my preference begins to claim and judge
others when no one, including me, has any right, nor any preference to claim over another. But I did that.

Some of the participant characters are just the opposite of mine. And it was ashamed finding myself very difficult to embrace those differences easily. The worst thing was, I kept a distance with a fellow just because that person's characters didn't fit mine, even before I try to understand the one to observe the one in different point of view.

The hard fact suddenly gave a slap on to my face, when the person whom I kept a distance with gave a genuine comment on my seemingly difficult to be accepted-idea of wearing mask in Cultural Exchange Day. She said she understood my point of view and defense my idea in front of others! The universe seems to work in a funny way indeed. The Creator had sent me a message.

At that moment, my heart and my brain was temporarily paused. I took a deep breath after realizing my shallowness. I felt my eyes glazing for couple minutes. “Is this really me, what happened with your heart?” I kept asking that question again and again. After my short contemplation I decided to hug her, the only participant whom I found my heart was difficult to accept and say a simple word, “Thanks”. Suddenly all barriers were gone. And from that moment I learned that human task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find the all barriers within themselves that they have built against it.

It is very inappropriate to get anxious when I do not know what someone else is driving at or why someone characters doesn't suit me. The issue, perhaps, is not about that person, but me. I may have not enough knowledge to understand others. As God gave two tools to human beings, their brain and their heart, I might have used them unequally and that's why I slipped many meaning to be understood.

It was the second day of Gasshuku. I finally embraced all my fellows, friends, my new family on the strange land. I am the luckiest person on the earth. I am blessed and proud to be chosen as the participant of 47th IATSS Forum, not of the other batches. In my state of nothingness I see a little glimpse of grand plan from this destiny. Now I have 16 more brothers and sisters. These are my best gifts in this year!

**Eating and No Eating**

Why didn't you have your breakfast? Are you fasting? Seriously, no eating no drinking at all? You should eat a lot! Are you on diet? Those are just some questions regarding my eating habit. Well, it is not about food. In fact I do love food and I appreciate food by chewing and swallowing it.

Since I appreciate food so much I also tried as hard as possible to never throw away food and waste it. Many unfortunate people out there are still struggling for food. There are 36,000 people dying every day because of hunger. According to UNICEF, 29,160 children under five died of hunger in 2003.
But I will not discuss about hunger and poverty in this section. It is simply about my eating habit in IATSS Forum. Everything is matter to me, including eating food. When I learn about myself I also learn about my body system, both physically and mentally and how they affect each others. I learned when I really need to eat and when I do not need to eat.

Sometimes I don't eat because my body gave a signal that I've eaten too much. Too much food can block my blood circulation, particularly to my brain. I’m becoming lazy and slow. I even cannot think clearly, a condition that I don't like to have it. I need to think clearly every time. I need my command centre at least always in good condition—if I cannot say in maximum performance.

After all, too much is never good. To avoid that I often do fasting in my home country. If my body gives a signal should I ignore it? No, I shouldn't. I skipped breakfast many times in IATSS Forum because of that reason. My body gave me a signal that I don't need to eat, simple as that. I shall listen to my body, respect it and take care of it.

I need healthy body to do many things. If I do fasting in my home country, why should not I do in Japan? Do we have to compromise every aspect of our live when we stay on another place? The answer could be different for every people.

But if someone ask me regarding my eating habit, I would simply answer, I don't eat because I'm not hungry and I will eat when I'm hungry. I believe this is a clear sentence with no ambiguous, which is very easy to understand.

**Asking Forgiveness, Forgiving, Waiting and Patience**

A human can never be apart from mistakes, conflict or friction. All of them are part of our lives. Sometimes, the most valuable thing we can make is a mistake as we can't learn anything from being perfect. When we made a mistake or hurt someone’s feelings, we learned also how to deal with particular characters.

Asking for apology, however, for some people are just difficult thing to do. Self-esteem is one of the reasons. But forgiving is even harder. It took more than strength. Instead it took a lot of power.

Having through many experiences, I discovered many different responses regarding dealing with mistake. It is ranging from the simple one to the complicated one. As small frictions also happened during my stay in IATSS Forum since It was unavoidable, I am glad I met no complicated person in this forum. Most of my fellows have a great willingness to be frank, open their mind and listen to others.

The simple response is small conversation directly or email after the friction, which will settle the matter quickly. One day after conflict everything will be okay as if nothing is happened.
Sometime it took only hours. But for some, it takes longer time to have a peaceful agreement with someone else mistake or even with one-self mistake. Some people tend to avoid another after a happened conflict between them, even after process of asking for apology.

Here I learn how complicated a human heart can be. When dealing with people let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bustling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity, even though some people tend to be left-brain sided or right brain-sided.

That's why providing exactly the same warmness and acceptances to those who make a mistake need not only strength but also a great power. This power can release and free another. It takes one person to forgive, it takes two people to be reunited. Sometime we have to wait for those who avoid us. I just want to be a friend that knowing my friends as they are, understanding where they have been to, accepting what they have become and still be, gently allow them to grow, so I have to wait for them patiently.

If some still doubt the power of waiting and patience, then she or he shall read the story of three very different Japanese war lord emerged seeking to control and unify Japan. Those men were Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Their divergent leadership styles are express in the answer to this question. “What if the bird does will not sing? Oda Nobunaga answered, “Kill it if does not want to”. Toyotomi Hideyoshi answered, “Make it want to”, and Ieyasu answered, “Wait until it sings”. Those answers, surely, have their own advantages and disadvantages. But the fact told that only Tokugawa Shogunate that lasted for almost three hundred years, from 1603 to 1868, something that Nobunaga and Hideyoshi was not able to achieve.

And for sure, as a never ending learner I always try to be patience to be a better person. My journey as IATSS Forum participant might end here, but another journey will begin soon, and I might not be able to write and come up with these all without IATSS Forum.
It’s Wonderful, Meaningful, and Fruitful!

Ponco Budisulistyo (Ponco)
Indonesia

Why IATSS Forum?

Since the first time I saw the advertisement on the newspaper in 2007 about ITASS Forum, I had been impressed and interested to join this forum. I was very eager to know more about the program looks like. Then, I checked the website to know more detail about it. It was just a wonderful program, where I can improve myself in many aspects, not just as individual or personal, but as a part of the group of community as well.

IATSS Forum has a lot of useful activities, in my opinion we can learn and get a knowledge from each of the activity. So, I think it was not just in vain at all if I join this program, even I get more than I have expected before.

My Briefly Opinion About the Program

From the first day, I just can feel that I will enjoy this program. The combination between seminars and visits provide me a balance combination between theory and practical experience. The series of activities that had been designed provides a systematic sequence for us to follow.

By joining the Gassuku, each participant can get the provision to join the next activities. The facilitation skill training, provides us a knowledge and experience how to be a good facilitator, since we have some opportunities to be the facilitator in our group study and discussion. Individual plan day program provides us an opportunity to explore and discover the place that we interest most and by joining the home stay program we can find more real daily Japanese culture and their daily ordinary day.

Myself and Japan

It has been more than a month since I arrived in Japan. I had already heard some information about Japan before I came here, one of developed countries in Asia. I knew that Japan has very advance in term of technology, transportation, auto mobile and electronic, those are the most I realized.

I am sure that the success that had been reached cannot be separated from the background of history and philosophy that applied by the Japanese people. Punctuality and
hardworking are the most common things that so familiar to me about Japanese people. I think it because how they take their task as a responsibility instead of an obligation. If we talk about the awareness and self-consciousness, we will deal with something called personality, it means we deal with the environment and culture where the personality itself has being growth.

From the first time I arrived in Japan and until now, I can feel that I live in different circumstance and culture. Where those different circumstance and culture have been influenced more positively. Most of the times, people do not care about their environment because they do not have a role model or because all the people do not care as well about their environment.

Personally, I feel “save” here. The word “save” can also have a meaning convenience. It is not only because of the people but also because of the system and public facilities that provided. I also learn and feel to become part of this country where I can implement the good habit in term of daily activities.

The simple example, but has a significant effect, is just like in the picture above. There’s a rule that we have to walk on the sidewalk. There’s no reason not to do that. The sidewalk is just convenient and safe. This kind of facilities can create people good habit and finally they realize that it brings a significant effect to their life.

My personal achievement by joining this program in Japan is communicating to people from other countries including in Japan and increasing my personal knowledge. In this case “communication” has a very broad meaning. It is not only just communicated, but how to know more about other country’s culture and their ordinary life, especially Japan. In term of IATSS formal program, I like to make a good and harmony relationship with other country’s participants, and so far, I made it. Honestly, during my daily communication, even it formally or informally, I got a lot of knowledge. It is not only in term of discussion about the given topic, but also about the other country’s culture.

Through the group discussion, I try to understand other and manage my interaction. I think it is important for me, since I know that sometimes it’s so hard for me to listen rather than to talk. Nowadays, I can feel that I start to learn how to be a good listener. Perhaps I had
already mentioned in my objective that I like to communicate and make a relationship to people. During my stay in Japan I have made a lot of new relationship. Not only with all participants and IATSS staff member, but also with other Japanese people who have inspiring me how to respect each other. I can found that how sincere they are. It’s not only during Japanese Cultural Introduction where I could interact with some Japanese volunteers, but also with common people.

**Learn and Discover About the Other Side of Life**

As IATSS Forum motto is “Thinking and Learning Together”, I just have learned and discovered a lot of new things since I have been here for 30 days. To be honest, this is my first experience joining this kind of program. I know that all of my colleges have a high qualification in many aspects, such as intelligence, experience and personality aspect. I learn how to manage my interaction with all of them. From that interaction, I can learn about others as well. I found that everyone has different characteristics, experience and educational backgrounds, so that, I should understand about those differences. I try to be wiser, since I found myself-sometimes-can be so emotional. But now, I just realized that the other people just need to be respected and appreciated. We cannot be selfish, since we also need the other’s people respect and appreciation.

I just enjoy every time I spend together with all participants and IATSS staff members. We have the same intension and orientation regarding this forum. We all try to improve ourselves in any kind of good aspects. I learn about myself especially through the communication and interaction. I discover that everyone has their strengths and weaknesses as well, so nobody is perfect, but actually we, especially me, I can make myself better.

I cannot deny that we are born to the world with the differences, but through those differences we can learn and discover each other and find who exactly we are.
IATSS Forum is a very positive program that consist many activities such as seminars, field study, group study and cultural exchange. This forum can be the receptacle for Indonesia as member of ASEAN and part of the world – of course, to encourage the country in several issues that relate with the organization visions and missions. Through IATSS Forum, I learn about the other country’s (especially ASEAN countries and Japan) experiences and visions in developing every important aspects in particular countries that focused on the public weightiness, share our good and bad experiences that can be the consideration to other country’s participants, to build and maintain a good relationship and to provide some recommendations to our own country based on the issues that have been discussed on the forum.

This program is just not only a media for the participants to share about their own experience, bust also can be a media to relate among ASEAN countries and Japan-of course-relationship in different way, besides the diplomatic relationship. This program is very important since it provides many opportunities for all the participants to learn and discovery regarding many things, especially Japan. IATSS Forum has-and certainly will continue-become a unifier among ASEAN countries and Japan through its own way. Personally, IATSS Forum become the most inspiring and impressive program for me. As I have mentioned before, I believe that through this forum I can escalate and improve myself. That’s why, I never give up in applying this program from year 2007.

Regardless the reason why, I was finally selected in my third year, I just has convinced myself that I was selected to join a prestigious program. It was not only for my own pride, but I can feel how valuable this program is.

Besides the program itself, I can also learn many things from IATSS Forum staff members. I learn a lot about their hospitality, friendly, humble and the way of their work. It just really impressing and inspiring me. Even though, our concern is the main goals, but do not ever underestimate the process. There is no expected goals, without a good process. Try to
utility the time maximally, estimate and anticipate all the possibility, work sincerely and seriously and full of responsibility.

**My Objectives in Joining IATSS Forum**

As I mentioned in my objective sheets, I have some objectives regarding my participation in IATSS Forum, those are, (1) to establish a sustainable harmonious relationships among the participants, (2) to know how the other country’s participants deal with and solve problems according to their cultural, social and political perspective of thinking, and (3) to share each other in formulating our country’s main problem and think for the best solution to solve it.

To be honest, it’s just 30 days from my 55 days in Japan, but I have just achieved all of my objectives. I have many very nice and kind friends here. I think that was just good starting. Hopefully, I still can maintain my relationship with all of them, even till we have come back to our country.

**Interaction during the Program**

From the first time I came and until this time, I feel there is no significant conflict between me and other participants. Honestly, even the disappointment happened only a very few times. But, again, I try to think positively. There must be a reason, why sometimes some people are disappointed.

Regarding the conflict, in my own opinion conflict can be a small or even big scale. But, actually, both kind of conflict are not to be avoided, because we cannot avoid the conflict itself since we are different in some particular aspects. Even conflict can be a part of group dynamism as long as we can manage the conflict proportionally. Means, manage the conflict without subjectivity, priori, and negative intention. But, otherwise conflict should be managed by focusing on the common good.

Personally, I try not to exaggerate the conflict to become a big problem, it just wastes the time. So, if all of us are always insisted on the establishment of our own, it just makes the situation become worse. One important thing that I have learned from this particular situation is how to be able to control myself. I learned how to observe the situation first before I decide my stance and opinion. I learned how to be a good listener, even though mostly it was difficult to do.

Another thing that made me realize that the other people attitude and appreciation towards us are very dependent on how we treat them. So if, you want to be respected or appreciated, please, do it first to the others. In short, other people behavior to us can be the reflection of our behavior as well. So, it seems clearer for me that it is nice to be an important person, but it is much more important to be a nice person. Hopefully, I can reach that idealism.

**IATSS Forum Program**

In my opinion, all of the IATSS Forum programs were designed to achieve the objectives and the goals that had been formulated before, and all of the programs have their own impression. The group discussion provides us a very wide opportunity to express our opinion and argumentation. We are trained how to manage, again, ourselves and our interaction. For myself, just like I have mentioned before, I try to learn and observe the situation, including to observer each character in the group, so that, I can manage my attitude and behavior according to that situation.

Among all the IATSS Forum programs, Gassuku and group study program that had a big impact for me. Gassuku, just like I have mentioned above, taught us how to build a good cooperation, collaboration and network. Those are very important for me. I’m very sure that it
can be very useful for all of us. We don’t live alone in this world; we should realize that we need somebody else to keep us alive. So that, a good communication, cooperation and collaboration are very important aspects to support our daily activities. In term of the 47th IATSS Forum, Gassuku had thought us, how formulate the most suitable and proper motto, Diverse, Borderless, United.

Gassuku had thought me how to do the effective way to achieve a good mutual relations. In term of myself development, Gassuku had thought me to become a motivated and optimistic person. Do not be afraid to fail, because from our failure we learn.

Another program that also has a big impact for me is group study where we have enough time to express and share our opinion. But the most valuable lesson that I got from this program is how to know our self and other people self deeper. From the others opinion and expression I can notice how their appraise me. So that, I know how is myself actually. Because, the most objective assessment about myself is not from my own perspective, but it should come from the other people appraisal and opinion. It’s just interesting for me. That’s why I always enjoy my group study discussion session. The spirit in the group dynamic has an influence as well. I enjoy working together with all group members until over 4 pm or on our self development day.

Because we work base on our same spirit and orientation, I felt that we’re trying to fulfill not only the deadline, but also we’re trying hard to manage the quality of our project proposal.
My Future Plans

I think we should have our future plan regarding to increase our self quality. I have some short term future plans and some long term future plans. In the next short time, I will focus to my study. I am registered in School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia as a Ph.D student since July 2010. So, it has been my responsibility to obey my role as a student. In term of personal target, I should finish my study – at least – by next three years. Even though I got a scholarship from my university, but it doesn’t mean that I can do whatever I want. I have another life that I should be lived. Another short term plan, I plan to join one international seminar as one of the speaker or I manage to write an article in international journals. It is another challenge for me.

Those short term future plans, surely, as part of my long term plans. They are the important supporting part of my long term future plans. By the next ten years, I wish I could reach my professor. I know it's not an easy plan, but it is my plan. For me, that is the highest goal that should be reached by me as a lecturer.

I got a lot – not just in quantity meaning, but quality as well – experiences during joining IATSS Forum. Most of the experience are very valuable and sure, unforgettable experiences. The most valuable experience is regarding my English skill, since English is not my second languages in my country. I learn much about this from the other participants, lecturer and IATSS Forum staff members as well. For the information, not to many people in my country have an adequate English skill, that why it is another challenge for me. It sure, can be an advantage for me. The second thing is regarding the way of acting and thinking. I meet with a very high qualification people here, in term of acting and thinking. I learn a lot from them, how to communicate and handle some problems.

Personal Unforgettable Experiences

I felt a lot of impressive experiences during joining this program. Even some of the experiences are totally my first experience. First, this is my first experience travelling abroad except ASEAN countries (I’ve been to Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). This is the longest flight that I’ve been taken in my life, totally almost 8 hours. Second, this is my longest stay in a hotel with all the facilities. Another one is, having a bowling practice, I never done it before, even in my own country. It was the first time I feel how weight the bowling ball. It was just wonderful. I’m sure it was not just because of the physically experiences themselves, but I think beyond of them.

The other my first experiences that happened during joining IATSS Forum are as a talent of television commercial. It was a very valuable experience for me. I’ve never been as
an endorser of TV commercial before, but here I can feel it real. Another one is, as I have mentioned before about home stay. It was my first time as well had a home stay experience where I spent two days in a family that I’ve never met before. It was such a good challenge for me. But I was very fortunate because all my host family members are so kind since they have a long experience become it. They know well how to treat me, not as a guest, but as part of the family member. Thanks a lot Maeda-San, Koki-San and Shogo-San for the hospitality and your sincere.

I’m just still wondering, how they could be so kind like that. Maeda-San told me that it has been 20 year for her family becomes a host family for home stay program. She added that they enjoy welcoming all the home stay participants to stay in their house. As they enjoy being a host family, it made me feel the enjoyable too. I could easily join them in the kitchen to cook our lunch. It was just wonderful.

Later I just remember what Akira-San said to us at the beginning, we will spend a quite long time in Japan with new circumstances, culture and friends other new things. So, please be serious, learn a lot, experience the good thing and enjoy your stay. What a very useful keyword, for me especially. Now, 15 days left from 55 days of our program. 15 days now become a very short time for me since I enjoy every single day of my stay in Japan. Hopefully, I can utilize my 15 days as much as possible to get more knowledge and experience.

Some Simple Suggestions

Since I am a part of this IATSS Forum family, I feel that it has become my responsibility as well to escalating the quality of this program. With all of my humility allow me to address my simple suggestions. First, I believe that seminar program bring a lot of benefits for all of us, especially myself, but considering that we have quite a lot of seminar programs and almost all the seminars are a full day seminar, in my opinion the method in some seminars need to be improved. For me, it will be more interesting if we can have more interactive discussion. Some lecturers had been successful to make us enjoy the seminar, in the sense of we can follow the seminar and we got all the points, but there are some of the lecturers (not as many as the successful lecturers, the number of these lectures are less) still using a conventional way of lecturing, tend to one way communication.

Second suggestion is very simple and subjective, in opinion; the dinner time is too early for me. I usually start dinner at 19:30pm. Perhaps, if the dinner time start by 19:00pm it can be more suitable. We can stand till the bed time.

Acknowledgement

If I pull back my memory of the distant rear, I can feel that I have been through a very long way till now. Become an IATSS Forum participant not only become a personal pride for me, but through this program I can convince myself more that there is no waste efforts. If you believe that you can do it just do it and if you fail, make this failure a lesson to be better. I got this entire valuable lesson particularly in joining IATSS Forum.

In this great opportunity, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for all off the persons who has become a good inspiration, motivator, tutor, reminder, partner, colleague and partner. First of all I will thanks to Mr. Akira HAGA, General Manager of IATSS Forum, all of IATSS forum members, Mr. Mikio KOGANAEI, Mr. Noriyoshi KIKUCHI (Charlie-San).
Ms. Orie KITAMURA, Ms. Yumiko TANAKA, Ms. Nanae SAKAKURA, Ms. Yumi HASEGAWA (Hassy-san) and Mrs. Toshiyo HIRATA (for the oishi foods) for all your support and good effort to make this all possible. Also for all the lecturers, Maeda-San and family and all the Japanese volunteers, thank you very much for all knowledge and experience, may all your efforts, may God always bless you all.

The last but not least, my lovely fellow participants, Ajeng (Indonesia), Nary and Leap (Cambodia), Kohn and Bobo (Laos), Jane and Rashvin (Malaysia), Kyaw and Pwint (Myanmar), Shen (Philippines), Ming and JY (Singapore), Woody and Gate (Thailand), Hugh and Vinh (Vietnam), Café and Hide (Japan), Jaime (USA), Lisa (New Zealand), Anna (Brazil) and Kyow (China). Thank you very much for all experience, a fruitful friendship, … for good times and bad times. I'll be on your side forever more… That's what friends are for… (Dionne Warwick). Thanks for being a part of my life… Through this wonderful, meaningful and fruitful experience in thinking and learning together…
Once in Japan

Sihnnakohn Srimuang (Kohn)
Laos

Introduction

Japan is a modernized, technological and aesthetic cultural country which most people prefer to visit. I, myself is a person who have dreamed for a long time. I was struggling quite long time to find out Training Event or Educational Scholarship from Japan. I was so glad when I got the IATSS Forum application form from Luangnamtha Provincial Youth Office, but when I applied the application form, I didn’t know even what IATSS Forum was! One day I was called to interview by IATSS Forum secretary of Laos. I was surprised to receive the phone call because it has been quite long time since the day that I applied. Anyway, after the phone call, I attempted to read and collected the information until I comprehended deeply about IATSS Forum and I realized that it was significant for me because the most programs were related to my responsibility such as: Seminar, group study, field study, home stay, study tour, cultural exchange etc. And also I got a big surprise after the interview I was selected as a participant of the 47th IATSS Forum. I was excited and proud of that my dream came true. I called to my wife, colleagues to inform them the good news. I did not expect that I would be selected. I kept thinking it was just a dream, but it was real. It was the first time for me to be far away from my home country. 55 days being away from home might not seem to be a long time for a lot of people, except me. When the plane approached Japan airport, I was very excited, I looked down the island. I saw many beautiful things, such as the town, big buildings, and lots of mountains, and then I took picture to show my two sons. Finally I arrived to Japan after long hours from sitting on the airplane. While I was walking to the airport terminal, I met two participants from Cambodia, Nary and Leap and we greeted for a short time, then met the whole participants at the passenger hall.
We all participants were welcomed warmly from Mr. Akira HAGA, the General Manager of IATSS Forum who is waiting there quite long time. He greeted us friendly and happily. After that, we got on the bus heading to the IATSS Forum Suzuka Hotel. When we arrived to the hotel, I saw many IATSS Forum staff members welcoming us happily. We shook our hands and talked each other on the enjoyable atmosphere. To me, I felt warm even though it was the first met, everyone talked with a big smile. It seemed they met the cousins who had separated for a long time. I think the image of that day will belong to the bottom of my heart evermore. My room was 14504, I was very surprised when I enter the room, because it seemed everything in the room which was new for me particularly bathroom. It was the first time for me to see the Hi-Tec toilet! And the hotel’s yard was very clean. It was so different from my home town.

The objective of mine coming to Japan in this time, I intended not only to exchange capacity, knowledge and experience of leadership and culture with the participants that coming from different countries and Japanese people but also attempt to comprehend deeply about the issues that occurring around ASEAN region and campaign Lao PDR. And I participated many great events and activities during living in Japan, there were:

**Self Introduction**

Self introduction in front of the Recreation Room was one thing that I was interested in because there were some activities in the self introduction such as: throwing the ball with telling someone’s name, trap finger etc. I think it was great self introduction. Actually I introduced myself to my new students every year but I have never introducing myself by taking activities like those. It was new experience and useful activities for me to bring them to the next introduced activities. And also it was the first step for me to come close and learn to know other participants. I was aware of those activities to reflect on, like I was a college or high school student once again. I think it was the first activity that participants and IATSS Forum officers had a great time together.
Gasshuku Activities

Gasshuku was my favorite because the trainer was friendly, active, funny and professional. I think it was one of the big lessons for me to possess an opportunity to participate many activities because in my workplace, I usually took some activities to awake my students to involve the lessons. Three days and two nights that I spent there with all participants were rewarding because we thought and learnt together not only the happy, funny moment and so on but also we created motto and team building as well. At first, I did not understand exactly about meaning of team building training. I wondered why we have to through a Team Building. During running at the Gasshuku I met a professional trainer; her name was Ms. Tomo. She gave us the clear meaning of the team building and taught us many impressive games such as: Wind Meal Stretch. All participants covered their eyes by using the napkin while touching each other’s shoulders, and then walked to the yard and played games there. We learned a lot of things from these games in pair or group. I think that was one of the most important lessons that we had to learn. It taught me how to work in a team, communicate with the group members, discuss, share ideas, get to know each other closely and enjoy all the good times together. This was a great opportunity for me to learn from others, learn how to trust each other, and how to become success as a team. After the Gasshuku activities, we enjoyed BBQ together before returning.
Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony was held on September 25th, 2010. It was an occasion for participants to meet the embassies and the prestigious Japanese guests. When that day came, I was a little bit excited and very happy because it was the first time for me to introduce myself in Japanese in front of the honorable guests. During opening ceremony I met and talked with Japanese volunteer friendly. They asked me many things about Laos. Many Japanese did not know where Laos is but I got a big surprise to meet two Japanese who had been to Laos particularly they visited my home province. They said that they were much enjoyed trekking in the huge jungle, rafting along Namtha River and also biking tour around the province.

Seminars

Firstly I would like to thank to the IATSS officers who were in charge of the greatest arranging the entire seminars in diverse places. To me all the themes of the seminars were so significant because I seldom had opportunity to attend seminars in my workplace. I just taught students in my college, therefore to participate diverse seminars that providing by IATSS Forum was my initial point and helped me gain a lot of the new knowledge, capacity and experience of diverse perspective. I met the expert professor in every seminar. One seminar that I was proud of and excited the most was Political System because I love politics. I dream to be a politician one day in the future; therefore, to be in charge of a coordinator and to have a chance closed to Prof. TSUBOI was great time for me. I spent the precious time with him by asking him several questions not only about the political circumstance in ASEAN countries but also in Western ones. Besides that, I wrote a report about the procedure of the seminar and submitted to IATSS officer.

And another seminar that I was impressed and appreciated was Environment and Sustainable Asia. In the seminar, I presented the Forest Conservation in Laos. In my presentation I mentioned the abundance of Laos’s forest, deforestation and the current issues to people’s lifestyle and resident. I was so happy to talk about the forest in my country and every participant was interested in it. They asked me several questions and also suggested how to protect the sustainable forest.
Home stay

Home stay was an event that all participants had the opportunities learning from the real Japanese tradition and especially spending great time with Japanese family. Firstly I would like to thank to the general manager and the whole IATSS Forum staff that provided the suitable host family for me. Even we spent just short time together but we realized that we have known each other for a long time. They took care of me as their family member. I think they had created plans quite long time before I arrived in Japan. It was just two days and a night that I stayed with them but I was taken to visit many places. The first day, they took me to the harbor and the beach to buy fresh fish. I enjoyed very much and was surprised to see many kinds of fresh fish there. In the evening, we cooked Japanese food together but I was just an assistant. My host parents were very good at cooking. The second day they took me to visit Ise Shrine. The shrine was very interesting because it was quiet, clean and covered by the huge trees. We had lunch there and I tried many kinds of delicious food and local Beer.

After that we went to Toba aquarium. It was the first time for me to see the sea animals close. My host mother was very cute. She attempted to explain everything we met: the kinds of food, which one is delicious! And also types of fish, the important places in the shrine. Even though it was short time that I spent with them, I realized that I learned a lot from them: life style, traveling, cooking etc. One thing that I was impressed the most was their happy life. Even both of them are over 60 but it seemed they are in twenties couple. Anyway, I will keep their kindness, merit and all the things that they did for me in the depths of my heart. I also hope that they will visit my home town one day.
Group Study

The main MOTTO of the IATSS Forum is “Thinking and Learning together,” and our 47th batch’s is “Diverse, Borderless and United.” According to the mottoes, Group Study is the central heart of the 47th IATSS Forum batch because we spent long time to work together about 8 days for discussing the theme: “Eco- Creative Life in Urban Area”. There were 7 members in my group: Ponco from Indonesia, Woody from Thailand, Café from Japan, Nary from Cambodia, JY from Singapore, Pwint from Myanmar and I, Kohn from Laos. I think I was so lucky to be a member of this group because everyone was professional in team work and writing project proposal. To me it was the first time to write it therefore I learned a lot from the group study. One thing that I was impressed the most was the technique of conducting the Group Study: First of all, we separated task that would be facilitator, secretary and time keeper of the day. To experience and comprehension, Group Study was gathering group of people for sharing ideas, discuss the difficult issue. If we did not think about who was the facilitator, secretary and time keeper, the outcome was not good enough. I think this group study taught me several things. The period of the group study, sometimes it seemed quite serious discussion because we have to finish on time but most time of conducting the group study, we were fun, happy and had wonderful time together. We can finish our duty on time which was limited. Our project name was “GAP Vientiane”
Cultural Exchange Day

Cultural Exchange Day was an exciting, fantastic and enjoyable occasion in IATSS Forum. All participants prepared quite long time before the real performance. Sometimes we were tired from seminar or other activities all day but we practiced dancing, self introduction and birthday celebration performance happily. I respected everyone’s spirit. Firstly it was hard work for us to make decision about what type of dance to perform. We would take on some performances because every participant came from different areas and countries which had own styles of dancing. Because of more and more discussion, finally, we had consensus to take Bhangra Dance, Cambodian Dance and Singaporean Dance. I was glad and proud of being a part of the event particularly dancers. One thing that I appreciated the most was Charity Auction. It was the first time for me to walk on the stage like a Super Model. Anyway, it was the huge outcome to IATSS Forum officers and all participants. Once again special thanks to the participants and IATSS Forum coordinators of the event that worked so hard and could lead to the achievement. I think this event helped me much because normally I take place the semester event in my college: Ethnic Minority Fashion Show, cultural exchange between college and college.

One thing that I appreciated the most was the money from auction item donating to Laos, particularly to assist English teaching-learning in my college. I promise that I will use every Yen you donated in the valuable way to help my students’ English better and better.
Field Study and Visit

Field Study and Visit was an activity that attracted all participants, particularly me. I was impressed every place to visit because they were fantastic places:

**Moku-Moku farm**: It was the first time of my life to see “Pig Show”. I almost did not believe my eyes when I see the show. As everyone knows pigs are very naughty, but the staff in Moku-Moku farm can teach them that was the great job. On the other hand, I tasted the delicious food there but most food was pork.

**Nara City**: It is a place that people all over the world prefer to visit because there are many wonderful places to see: temple, shrine, Nohgakudo Hall etc. I was interested in the deer and temples. It was the first time for me to see the biggest Buddha like that and another one was deer. It was too surprising to see so many deer walking along with people in the public place. We also visited Nohgakudo Hall to see Noh Performance.

**Kyoto**: It is an aesthetic cultural city in Japan. There are many wooden temples. I was so surprised to see huge pillars of the temple. I think in the former time, Japan was abundance of large thick jungle and also I was very excited to see that was crowded with people at the subway station because my country does not have subway station and it was the first time for me to get on the train. It was like a dream but it was truth.
Conclusion

Before I came to Japan, I had heard people said that Japan was like the paradise! At that time I felt so-so because I could not imagine what Japan was like! Until today I realize that it is true because everything is modernized. Machine can respond to what people need, even it makes tea, coffee etc.

As I mentioned earlier, my objective to come to Japan in this time for:

Exchange capacity, knowledge, experience of leadership and culture with the participants coming from different countries and Japanese people.

Attempt to comprehend deeply about political system, culture, society and the issues that occurring around ASEAN region.

Campaign Lao PDR culture, economic, political system etc.

The period of 55 days that I have stayed as a participant in IATSS Forum, I learned several profound experience, knowledge and ability from seminar, group study, cultural exchange, field visit-study etc. To me most of the activities that I have attended were new things so I noted everything. I will bring most new knowledge that gained this time to help my students in my college, and local community especially in Teaching- Learning.

Once again, on behalf of Lao Youth Union Members and personally, I would like to say thanks to the relevant authorities: sponsors, volunteers and others, particularly the IATSS Forum members that providing the great opportunity for me and other participants. I promise that I will take the profound knowledge, capacity and experience here to broaden to the Youth Union Members in my country.

Lastly, I have nothing to respond your merit just the best wishes. I bless all of you to have a good health, be happy in your family life and attain what you have thought for a long time!

<<<NIHON GA DAISUKI DESU>>>
The Greatest Thing That Ever Happen in IATSS Forum!

Siriphone Thongbonh (Bobo)
Laos

Introduction
Being the youngest participant in the 47th IATSS FORUM (IF) was one of the greatest challenges I found in Japan. However, with a year of IF preparation including screening test, final interview and then departure, the information gathered proved to be very useful in that it helped my preparation and participation in the IF group discussions and seminars.

At the start of the Forum, I was a bit stressed as I knew I was the youngest participant, and thought that I may not be able to blend into the environment. I managed to overcome the age barrier thanks to the kindness and friendliness of fellow participants as well as organizers. With this acquired sense of belonging and being the youngest participant, allowed me to become the small sister to everyone in this new family, which I may call the “IATSS FAMILY”.

At Nagoya International Airport (Sep 20th, 2010)
**Week 1 in Japan**
The first week was definitely the most challenging in my view as this is the time where everyone is new to each other and tries to get to know each other. This is when the “Gasshuku” were introduced to us.

During the Gasshuku, I can still remember that many of us were trying to maintain ourselves with this **professionalism** and **self-esteem** even during the self-introduction time. However, as the Gasshuku’s activities were progressed, the ice was eventually broken and finally everyone started to know each other better. So I guess because of the activities and time spent, this allowed some of us to know and become very close to one another. For myself, after Gasshuku I become very good friends with Gate, the Thai participant who went to Onsen on the first night we arrived at Suzuka.

**Week 2 in Japan**
In the second week, the first main activity was the seminar. In the seminar, the participants had a chance to observe the other country’s presentation on certain topics, follow by Q&A session, and this made up the morning session. In the afternoon was a group discussion where participants were required to discuss and increase their knowledge of the situations faced by the other ASEAN countries. During the group discussion, the members were required to come up with some countermeasures for the issues raised by brainstorming and proposing possible solutions to the professor and the other members in the hall.
Aside from the seminar, we also had a field study trip to the Honda Factory. In getting a chance to visit such kind of factory of a well-known motor company, the members were very excited. We were amazed at how advanced their technology has become. As the robot were functioning to place each and every part together, it was just enough to remind me of the movie “Transformer”. In my opinion, any visitor to the Honda Motor Company including even those who do not have any interest in machines would be fascinated and drawn by the advances in technology at the Honda Motor Company and Japan in general to be at this stage now.

Though the second week was filled with many interesting activities, I found the Introductory Training of Facilitation Skills by Ms. Keiko Tsubaki very useful and memorable. Part of the interest comes from the material support in her teaching technique which could definitely be adopted to our system back home. As an example of the after lunch activities where people tend to be very sleepy, some stretch or light activities would solve this problem. In addition, one thing that I like most about this session is the problem solving tips, just in case there happens to be a personal issue which leads into a fight or an argument.

**Week 3 in Japan**

**NARA**

This period is the first time that IF members would get a chance to explore themselves beyond the Suzuka city to a bigger city like Nara, Osaka and Kyoto. Along the journey, I noticed that many people were very excited to see this historical city. But right before the Kyoto, we got a chance to visit Nara and some other places which were magnificently done. The cultural and architectural style in Nara, have interestingly managed to create this fusion of the old and new, we seemed to blend ourselves in as if we were in the old centuries. When mentioning about tourist attraction in Nara prefecture, of course it is unavoidable to mention about the Nara Park. This park is one of many unique parks in Japan, and as we walked along the gate way, we noticed the many deer, welcoming us.

With the information provide from our Japanese volunteers, there are approximately 1,200 deer located in this area.
At Nara Park, there is a hall for where people conducted cultural exchange and other events. And besides that, there is a theater for the Japanese Mask performance which is known as Noh performance. In this hall, the participants were honored to experience the culture throughout the show from the “Sensei” before wearing the mask and walking around the stage. At that time, once the mask was on and the movement on stage is required according to Sensei instruction, I realized that what we had seen was not as easy as to do in practical terms. Thus, the lesson in Nara was one of the greatest experiences which I believe many of us enjoyed it since not many people would receive such privilege including the Japanese people.

**OSAKA**

Though we did not spend much in Osaka town, only Kansai University, it was still a great time because there was an active activity during the seminar called Budo (Kendo). Kendo is a form of art, but significantly appears as a term of martial art. The morning session was spent listening to its description and history, then in the afternoon it was the practical session which many of us enjoyed. Due to time limitation, at 4 o’clock we reluctantly had to say goodbye to the professor and his assistant for a great Kendo lesson.

Apart from the seminars and activities, when people come to Japan, it is often mentioned that once in a life time in Osaka, you must try the Takoyaki because it is best done here. However, as I mentioned earlier that we had limited time, so unfortunately I was not able to find the Takoyaki shop. In the end, I guess that is probably the saddest part about our visit in Osaka.

**KYOTO**

Here comes Kyoto, a city of history which I most wanted to visit in Japan. Even though this is not my first time visiting Japan, this is my first time in Kyoto. To be honest, I was very excited and I believed that many of us had this same feeling. In Kyoto, we had 2 days for our individual plan day and so I planned to visit temples, castles and many other historical places. Unfortunately, due to the unfavorable weather condition, most of us were not able to follow our plan resulting in a new plan - going shopping. For me, my schedule was a bit different from the others because on the day before I came to Japan I knew that one of my friends was also flying off to come to study for his masters in Japan, but at that time did not know yet where he was. Fortunately, after contacting him via Facebook, he managed to know my location, and interestingly his university is Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. Therefore, instead of going to shop I decided to meet up with him for lunch and dinner. We had a great time wandering around Kyoto city and trying out many local food, and of course my beloved Ramen.
This friend of mine is one of my friends who first came to Japan with me, thus during the conversation we mostly talked about the past. Although we both live Laos, which would have been very easy for us to meet up but with time constraints and busy schedules, we were not able to meet up, until now in Japan. This is why it is so funny that we both could not stop laughing.

According to my plan, I was supposed to explore Kyoto alone but because of my friend and his school that having this Kyoto orientation so he asked if I would like to join his team. I decided to join them, and not even a single regret, the new friends I met were very active about photo session just like our IATSS Family.

Although we did not visit all the places as we’d have liked, the most important thing along the trip is not how many places a person could visit, but what the kind of friendship a person had made along the trip.

At the end of my individual day in Kyoto, I was very tired and hungry. However, one thing I was very happy about was that I had a chance to meet up with my Lao friend while exploring this Kyoto city. Together with these special gifts, I do not think I could be happier than this already.

**Week 4 in Japan**

**HOME STAY**
I think it would not be wrong if I said that this week was one of the most enjoyable weeks in the whole entire schedule in IF. This is because on the October 16\(^{th}\) ~ 17\(^{th}\), we all had the chance to attend the Home Stay with the IF Volunteers. Frankly speaking, I count myself one of the luckiest members whose host family is so understandable, kind and lovely.

During my stay with Junko’s family, one of the most impressive gift I ever had was the sleeping suits. It was a brand one, which even made me feel guilty for troubling them as they are just volunteers. However, the impression was not there, it was something about that gift itself, which is my name that was gently sign on that suit as if I am one of their real family members.
The first day together only Junko was available to take care of me because her husband had a homecoming at his university and her daughters – one is in Tokyo and the other one is working in a nearby city; however both of their daughters are enrolling in medication and treatment. Part of that had created in me this new impression on how wonderfully they could raise this twin to be so wonderful and obedient.

On that day, Junko and I decided to visit the Harbor Port where Honda cars are exported to other countries. We took many pictures and enjoyed the scenery around that area, and suddenly I happened to see these people lining along the edge of the harbor. With my curious attitude, I decided to approach that area and looked at what they were doing and noticed that they were actually fishing. As my experience while growing up, I took the opportunity to ask one of the gentlemen if I could give a try to fish for him, and with my poor Japanese language skills, he was generous enough to respond to my request. Thus, that afternoon I spent almost an hour talking to the gentleman while Junko San who stood in as my private translator. During the time of conversation, I succeeded in reeling in my first FISH from that sea, for which I was obviously over-excited and very delighted. As I succeeded with what I aimed for, Junko and I decided to go back home and rest, so that in the evening we can cook for the family and some of her friends who may come and join us.

On the way back home, we had a great conversation about Japanese lifestyle and general question about local Japanese life, which I found very interesting as I was eager to know more and more. As a result of that in the night we spent most of our time talking while having dinner before her friends invited us to go to Hanashobu Onsen (next to Bell city)

The next day we spent our morning relaxing and chilling out at home, having a late breakfast before moving to Gozaisho and back to IF.
**Week 5 in Japan**

**GROUP STUDY (GS)**

I must say that this is the week when most of us were feeling exhausted because it was our halfway journey in IATSS, Japan. The next chapter had started with the Group Study. In my group, there were 6 members including one Japanese Participant from Honda Motor in Tokyo named Hide, followed by Shen (Philippines), Leap (Cambodia), Hugh (Vietnam) and Rashvin (Malaysia).

For this batch, the theme for the GS was on “Eco and Creative Life in Urban Area”, and based on this, our group decided to choose over-consumption of water, after a long process of brainstorming and evaluation. Further, the group needed to complete the first intermediate presentation on its Macro Level which was presented on the 19th of October, followed by the Final Check presentation last November 1st. GS rehearsal would be on the 11th and the GS Final Presentation & Completion Ceremony on the 13th.

**CULTURAL EXCHANGE DAY (CED)**

For the CED, there were many of us who felt as if we had this marathon week running around with CED performance preparation schedule after the whole day discussion for GS.

I remembered back in those days, when we kept practicing for our self-introduction, Singapore dance, birthday celebration presentation with the Cambodian folk dance, and the Bhangra dance (Malaysia) as the highlight of the event. The preparation time was quite stressful that not many were able to appreciate the time spent together for practice. but after the successful CED presentation, everyone started talking about Bhangra dance and other exciting things that happened during the CED.

Every piece of the puzzle in the preparation of CED has finally found its meaning after placing them all together in one beautiful picture- the entire CED performance.
Week 6 in Japan

TOKYO

I have to admit that the trip to Tokyo was the best and probably one of the top lists that every participants were looking forward in this program because of many reasons. Firstly, there were many interesting seminars such as: Logistic Strategies which included a visit to Sagawa Express; Enterprise Strategies which included a visit in FamilyMart Convenience Store; and Technology Development- Honda Humanoid Robot “ASIMO”.

Secondly, we had the chance to visit IATSS Headquarter. The rest of the program is like a “Scarventure Hunt”, where we had to challenge ourselves to live a life as the Tokyo people do.

The individual plan day helped us experience and explore urban life especially in taking subway and train in Tokyo. It was quite challenging to survive the transportation system with many subway lines and companies to change to before going to one’s destination. One wrong choice of station and/ or transfer could mean being lost somewhere.

For me, I am very happy that I had a chance to meet some old Lao and Japanese friends in Tokyo. I spent most of my free day with my friends in Harajuku, Asakusa, Akihabara and Shinjuku. If I have to compare myself with other participants, I may have not reached as many other places like the others, but I do not have any regrets at all. Having been in Tokyo and
visited old friends while exploring more about Japanese behavior in a bigger city like Tokyo was a pleasant experience that when I go home, I could tell my friends and families that I managed to survive in Tokyo subway alone.

**Week 7 in Japan**

Time flies! I could not believe myself that this is the last week that we all would be together. After the Tokyo trip, I noticed that many of us were trying to come up with night activities to spend more time together. I could still remember on the first day when we first met. I said “We don’t need to introduce ourselves yet, since we still have another 50 more days to know about one another”. I could not believe that it has come so soon and “unexpected”. I do not think I am ready to say goodbye yet.

Even though we wanted to spend more time together, forum requirements like all these reports just do not seem to allow us. We still have to finish our questionnaires, reports as a coordinator for seminars, final draft on the accomplishment report, newsletters, preparation of closing ceremony, and final report for the discussion group and more.

Hopefully with this tight schedule, we would still have some more of the fun time together because I am sure that after we have gone back to our respective home countries, we will start to miss the small details which we never noticed or appreciated before like the seminar hall, the breakfast, the night walk path, the flag hosting, the cafeteria, the bedroom, the toilet, the working table, the Onsen, the bicycle, the 100 Yen shop, the staff in IATSS and many more.

While I write this report, I can already imagine how it would be like on November 15th before everyone’s departure. The Nagoya airport would be flooded with all of our tears and this is just sad enough for me to think of.

With all the things that happened around IATSS, I hope it would stay with us in our memories and maybe one day, we will meet each other again.
Thank You IATSS Forum

Jumina Anak Lasan (Jane)
Malaysia

I come to Japan!
Writing an accomplishment report may not be the easiest thing to do for me. I do not have a writing skills and my English literature at the age of 33 is still a mess. Two months spent in Japan, I have wrote a number of reports and done three official presentations which was more than I did when I spent the first five years working in BAM (Badminton Association of Malaysia).

Since it is a free writing style, let me start my accomplishment report with how I get to know about IATSS Forum, getting through the application and getting a leave from BAM. They are my baby steps to begin this journey in IATSS Forum.

IATSS Forum was first introduced to me when I read an article about 45th IATSS Forum in the Star newspaper on April 21st, 2009. I started to look for more information about IATSS Forum on the very day itself. The application forms however was a hassle for me to fill-up especially the subjective section of the form. I took a half an hour just to answer a question which now I think I can answer within five minutes. I submitted my application form to IATSS Forum Malaysia two weeks after I came across the article.

I did not put much hope about getting accepted as I was not sure if my application was good enough. And I still skeptical about it even after the interview as other applicants was all highly professionals and have better education background compared to mine.

I stop job hunting only after three years of working in BAM. I do like the job I have. Working in BAM taught me a lot about life but there is always a curiosity and eager inside me that I can always do better and contribute more. That I can still discover and enjoy many new things which I may not find if I just sit there in my comfort zone.
None of my friend or colleague knew that I have applied for this Forum except two of my superiors namely Mr. Kenny Goh, BAM General Manager the former Honorary Secretary of BAM, Mr. Ganga Rao. They only knew about the good news of me getting accepted to go to Japan a day after I receive the reply letter from IATSS Forum Malaysia.

I was so happy that time that I felt like Lee Chong Wei just winning a Thomas Cup for Malaysian team after beating his powerful opponent Lin Dan. For a typical Malaysian who came from rural part of Malaysia like me, going to Japan is like a day dream to us.

It was not easy to convince my superiors to release me though. If I take a long leave, my office will be lacking of labour force to execute incoming tournaments, nevertheless our existing office routine that always piling up. It was quite a challenge for Mr. Kenny Goh to give unrecorded leave (with full-paid of course) to me because BAM has never give an unrecorded leave to its permanent staff before.

For years I was hoping that BAM will give chance to its office staff to attend training or assign to further foreign countries like Japan, Korea and western countries. This way we will understand better about our job responsibility, able to learn from other association, improve our working style, appreciate our job and many other knowledge and experience. Therefore in addition to request a certificate of intent to reinstate employment (that was requested by IATSS Forum), I have submitted a new staff leave report proposal to BAM Administration in June 2010 which also mentioned about IATSS Forum.

Fortunately I was granted a full-paid leave with a new leave implementation program called BAM Staff Development Program. My proposal was discussed in BAM Staff Meeting and eventually approved in BAM Exco Meeting held on July 2010. The program allows BAM permanent staff to officiate in participating international tournament, or attending a career development course and of course with paid leave.

**Beautiful Place Beautiful People**

Sep. 20th, 2010 was a historic day for most participants of 47th IATSS Forum including myself. I said a little prayer thanking God the moment I stepped in Nagoya Airport. Having had a little problem with visa at the Custom counter never erases my excitement to encounter
everything about the land of the rising sun, and meeting participants from other countries. The panoramic view along the way from the airport to IATSS Forum Suzuka kept my sleepy eyes open.

Like a big welcome smile from the IATSS Forum General Manager, Mr. Akira Haga at the airport, we received the same warm smile from the staff when we reached the entrance of IATSS Forum. Until the day that I wrote this report, none of them had ever gave a fade smile or frown to us even though there were times we disappointed them. This is just how much it shows to me that they are the best people to deliver the job. I honestly proud and grateful to know them.

My job in BAM also deals with many kind of people locally and internationally. In this context I deal with players from all over the world when organizing international tournament in Malaysia and I did show my emotional reaction when facing a tough time with them. I realized I gave a bad impression to them and what made it worse is that I could not fix it because I possibly have no chance to see them again.

In BAM office also we sometimes forgot simple thing like smiling because we are seriously carried away with our own tasks and always end up frowning when facing at each other.
After receiving the keys off on the arrival day, all the participants were touring around the Flower Garden Hotel. How eager I was to look at our new home for the two-month stay in Japan and so was every other participant of course. It was one of my happiest days.

**Gasshuku and Facilitation skills**
The programs in this Forum were designed and prepared in most perfect way. The daily program was scheduled very detailed from the breakfast to the dinner time. Every seminar was also lectured by top lectures in Japan.

Every moment spent here in IATSS Forum was very precious and valuable to me that I do not want to do anything useless for example wake up late on individual plan day.

Three days Gasshuku program were among the memorable days in my IATSS Forum’s diary. IATSS Forum is a first training course I attended whereby the fist program introduced can really benefits all participants because within the short days I got to know other participants quickly well, started to interact with them, having fun playing the games, learned to use futon, and etc. Like other participants, I am thankful to Ms. Tomo because she facilitated the program effectively in fun and enjoyable approach.
I have difficulties to get along with some of the participants initially. Sometimes it was so annoying to me that I tried not to bump or speak with those participants who are rude and unconsidered towards others. It took me almost a month to adjust with them and I give the credit to Gasshuku and Facilitation Skills Training because such programs did work for me.

In Facilitation Skills Training, we have tried a different approach on how to make the discussion more interesting while maintaining our objectives that everyone has to throw ideas and suggestions. We choose to discuss a very interesting and sensational topic “Genders Stereotype” and every single person in the room was laughing hysterically when our group presenting the result of our discussion. It was one of my happiest days in this Forum and I actually started to get along and blending in well with all participants after this two-day training.

Diversity
My first presentation in a seminar is OVOP, which is also the first seminar for 47th IATSS Forum. I felt a little bit nervous because I had not done a presentation in front of many people for quite some time. My co-participant, Rashvin had helped me a lot in answering some of the questions after the presentation.
I had met Rashvin three times before we came to Japan and I briefly knew him that time. When we spent our two months here in Japan we were working together and help each other a lot. Rashvin is an easy going and ‘cool’ person while I am a typical and conservative person.

I also saw a similar situation to other participants for example one participant is a loud person but the co-participant is observative. Another participant is very show-oriented but the co-participant is more reserve. These were a few examples of how diverse and varieties of personalities we are as individuals.

In the Forum, I put aside all our individual differences and personal issues and look at ourselves as a whole. I like the idea of our batch logo because it is our image of diversity and we are united in IATSS Forum.

The Group Study has somehow had shown our “true colours”. We were arguing and confronting each other sometimes because of different opinion, disagreement and tension. I took these as challenges and so any negative situation that I had face during the group study had not affected me personally.

I would usually be snappy to people who rude, impolite and offensive to me as I believed this one phrase “you get what you give”. However I have made a personal pledge for myself before getting into this Forum that I must act rationally and be patient as much as possible in whatever situation and with whoever I deal with. I also represent my country and it is a responsibility for me to keep a good reputation.

**Communicate Communicate Communicate**

There were many interactive programs in the Forum where we need speak and voice out our mind, idea, comment, suggestion and etc. There were individual presentations, question and answer sessions, group discussions during seminars and group study for the final project. I tried my best to utilize these opportunities to improve my communication skill vocally and vocabulary.
In Facilitation Skills Training, I learned more about how to communicate better with other people in order to get their positive feedback. We start to evaluate ourselves and make a healthy comment about others.

During the Q&A session in seminars and group discussion, I will ask question, telling my ideas or suggestion, or simply sharing something that I think can benefit others.

When became group’s coordinator, I tried to imply what we have learned from Facilitation Skills Training. The effective communication is very essential in order to have a good group discussion. I prefer to talk with someone face to face rather than using internet social networking because I personally felt that it would be more effective and reliable. The term reliable here referred to the sincerity and honestly of the person that I am talking with.

Within this two-month time I have interact with more people compared to the previous two-month I spent in my home country. I also speak English more because it is the only language understandable by all participant of IATSS Forum.

My sisters once called me not-a-people-person which in my own understanding I hardly live among people but I can live better with animal instead. I was a quiet girl come to think of it, having not so many close friends, stay alone and my only companion in my house is my pet, a cat.

I cannot deny the fact that I need to live with others in a community as part of human social need. This Forum has enlightened me so much about how human relationships can be grown by communication.

I am now willing to compromise with individual’s attitude, accept and respect them for who they, what they believed and etc. In fact it was a pretty a simple lesson, I do not want others to judge me so I should not judge them either.

**Improvements**

I have not spoken in Bahasa Malaysia ever since I came to Japan. I speak English with everyone here including Rashvin. I may not be as fluent as English speaking people but my
pronunciation and vocabulary are better than before. My grammars and phrases have also improved tremendously because I use English both speaking and writing.

I will continue to speak English with my colleagues back to BAM office. Even though English is a second language in Malaysia, I always had a tendency to speak Bahasa Malaysia particularly when talking to my Malay colleagues because they are more comfortable with their mother tongue. Well, it may not be easy but will worth an effort. I also found it difficult to write a four-page report during my study days in university, but it only took less than three hours to write the six-page report of our study tour in Nara. It was an amazing feeling for me.

Presenting in front of many people is my greatest challenge in the Forum. When I was in school and university, public speaking was the subject that I will avoid most because I am not comfortable with people’s attention, and fear of doing mistake in front of people. I always thought that it was the information that matters most, not the presenter. As a result, I was mostly reading the slides when giving my first presentation in OVOP seminar.

In IATSS Forum individual presentation is very essential so I was pulled into a “crisis zone”. Somehow I managed to overcome the weakness when I noticed that in the Forum some presenters do lack of public speaking skill but still succeed in their career or their field of expertise.

I gradually learnt how to present clearly and effectively. I was more relaxed and confident during the few last presentations. It had just taken a lot of practice and courage for me to develop the skill and be able to deliver presentation successfully.

The Cultural Exchange Day (CED) was also a memorable day for me. Despite seminars and group study, CED had created a faster and easier way for me to be friendlier and get closer with other participants.

I am also more conscious and punctual of time now. It showed what I always known that Japanese work effectively because of their punctuality. I used to come late for work, and sometime settled my task after deadline. Perhaps it is also a Malaysian attitude to be submissive and it is okay to be late a little bit.

Looking back on how detailed and packed the Forum schedule is, every minute and moment is crucial and counted. I am glad that because of punctuality on completing the reports and etc., I have time to get enough rest and time to spend for myself.

**Discover Strength and Potential**
The Budo seminar was among the best seminars that I like most. I like every part of the seminar, the first part of the lecturer’s information, the lecturer himself Prof. Alexander Bennet, to the second part of the lecture, Kendo training introduction.

I really enjoy the training as I simply thought that it would be the best time for me to scream my lungs out. By the end of the training session I was exhausted by satisfied with Prof. Bennet’s positive comments about the skill that I had shown throughout the training.
I appreciate it so much that the martial art expertise like him has saw me “physically and mentally strong” as what I have quoted from his statement. The lecturer’s brother who is also a Kendo master himself had approached me to mention that he wish to see me again, in Kendo competition. This had truly surprised me because for someone who never attends any martial art class, it is such a bizarre compliment for me.

The Budo seminar has affected me a lot that I started to do my own research on Kendo and am actually considering to join Kendo class upon my return to Malaysia. I will not pursuing up to competition level though, only opt for a healthy exercise and stress therapy.

Knowing that I was selected to participate in IATSS Forum because I came from a minority ethnic in a rural state of Malaysia had made me feel pleased and frustrated, both in the same time. Pleased because such reason is a concerned to IATSS Forum, frustrated because I was not selected based on my capability, talent or professional skill as other participants were chosen for.

Having to be chosen due to ethnic or rural issue did not mean that I was not in the mainstream of things. I have my own strength, skill and talent that I can utilities, contribute and share with in every program of the Forum.

The project’s logo in the Group Study is one of the idea that I had come out with and every members in the group were favorably agreed with the logo as it was perfectly portrayed our project title and precisely represent the project’s objectives.

I would also have not known that I am the most emotionally stable member in the group study until a few of them informed me so. I always calm and act rationally when argument and tense discussion happen, which I think it is a common sense that we must know our own limitation and how to manage crisis properly. In this Forum, I do not want to push myself too hard because I also wanted to enjoy and having fun while having to go through all the programs successfully.
It was the same sense that I use during the individual plan day in Kyoto and Tokyo. Independent skill is my biggest advantage whenever I travel alone but I still careful and need to be alert all the time. I was lost in Kyoto on second day of the individual plan day there but I stayed calm and I asked people to get a correct direction and back to the hotel safely.

**Last But Not Least**

I love the weather here, the scenery, the aesthetic culture, convenient public transportation, many shopping malls to shop and places to walk around. Friendly and helpful peoples, the flowers, the warm toilet seat, the drier machine, the vending machines, and Onsen of course.

The foods however a bit tasteless to me but I still love to walk for breakfast to Sora Tabeyo, watching the kids having breakfast with their parents. I already craving for Malaysian food and missing my cat, Mr. IBM. It is in Pet Hotel for the time being and I wonder how it would react after not seeing me for two months.

I will also miss my host family, the Mizue. From next year onwards I will exchange birthday gift with my host sister since we share our birthday together. We also love having pet in the family. Our topic of the day will not be completed without news update of our respective cat and rabbit.

I like Kyoto very much. I like walking and wandering around in Kyoto. Kyoto is not so hustle and bustle compared to Tokyo. I like the temples, shrines and their garden are beautiful and serene. I will fondly remember our visit to Tenryu-ji Temple and Oukouchi Sansou. I can just sit there enjoying the view the whole day.
By the time I submitted this report on Nov. 11, 2010, it will be four days left before I leave Japan and return to Kuala Lumpur. Some participants had mentioned that we will be back to reality soon, back to family and to normal life.

Well, this is a two-month reality that I will never forget for the rest of my life. I have seized the opportunity and I will value and practice what I have learned from here. All participants, IATSS Forum staff, the lectures, all of them are special to me. I wish to welcome them to Malaysia as much as I am here.

Dear Japan, until we meet again.
My Tassei in Japan

Rashvinjeet Singh Bedi (Rashvin)
Malaysia

How time has flown by from the time I sent in my application to IATSS to the actual interview to arriving in Suzuka and now to the ending of the programme. It has been one hell of a ride. It just feels like yesterday when I asked a friend to help me check my application essay. And now this report signals the ending of an unforgettable experience in Japan. These two months in Japan has been the longest period I have been out of Malaysia. So maybe I can consider it my second home.

It was not a good start in Japan because my co-participant and I were stuck at the customs for a while. There was a problem with our visas, and after a six hour flight, I was tired, sleepy and cranky. The problem was sorted out and we were officially allowed into Japan. It didn’t take long to find the others with IATSS Forum General Manager Akira-san.

New friends

When we arrived at the IATSS Forum in Suzuka, all the staff was waiting to greet us. That was a sight to behold – and before I go on, I have to thank all the staff – Akira, Charlie, Hassy, Nanae, Mikio, Orie and Yumi. The forum would not have been great without your dedication and your warm smiles.

In a short time, I managed to ramp up the number of my friends on Facebook from about 390 to about 440. These new friends were made in Japan. I was closer to some compared to the others, but nonetheless each one is a new friend. Besides Japanese friends, I now have friends in each ASEAN country. And that means a place to stay when I go on a tour of ASEAN in the near future. I still have yet to get my passport stamped in Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos. I also want to explore Indonesia (have only been to Bali)

I guess we bonded during Gasshuku – the first few days of our Japan stint. We learned the meaning of teamwork and personally it was good to get lessons like this. The best activity for me was where everyone had to be linked and get themselves up. It was the start of things to come.
Seminars
One of the main ways information was disseminated to us. Some of the seminars were excellent, especially Budo which was held at the Kansai University in Osaka (plenty of pretty girls here!) I was thankful that I was coordinator for the seminar and I had no problems writing the report. It was so much fun as we were able to practice what we had seen on video. Other seminars were not as fun, but I learned a lot about Japan and the ASEAN countries – their political systems and so on. I was surprised to learn that many countries have only one political party such as Laos and Vietnam. The last seminar about ASIMO was also an eye-opener to say the least and very interesting.

Group Study
One of the things I didn’t look forward to. It is tough working with others even though the topic could be simple. They say that two heads are better than one but I think one head is better than six…or maybe too many cooks spoil the pot. I would have been able to finish everything much earlier if I did it by myself. There was a lot of arguing over petty matters I felt. But I think the IATSS Forum guys purposely have this item to teach everyone the importance of team work. I learned that everyone has a point of view and it has to be respected even though it sounds ridiculous and requires a lot more work. I also realized that some people are more meticulous and thorough about minor details. All in all, it was a good experience and I can laugh over it when it’s done with. Love you guys!

Japanese culture
Japanese culture is so fascinating – from its anime to fashion and the people. We were exposed to the culture one day when volunteers took time off their busy schedules to teach us about kimono, musical instruments, traditional games, tea ceremony, calligraphy and so on. It is so heartening that despite this digital age, there are those who still hold on tightly to their culture.
Onsen
Why do Japanese like the onsen so much? I guess it’s a kind of bonding things. That is probably evident from the many children who go to the onsen with their parents or even friends who hang out with one another in the nude.
Anyway, since there is one onsen (Kur Garden) next to the hotel in Suzuka, I took the opportunity to go there every night (almost). And it’s kind of weird at first, because I felt very self conscious. Are people looking at me? Are you allowed to make eye contact with anyone or are you supposed to keep your vision above the belts?
I still don’t know the answers to my own questions, but after a while, I got used to it and learned not to be so conscious. More importantly I think the onsen is really relaxing and is one of the best things a person can ask for on a cold night. It will be one of the things I miss the most.

Kyoto and Nara
During the F1, a trip to Kyoto and Nara was one of our study trips. I really loved Nara where we were able to experience the Nara Noh theatre and to go to the different places such as the Todaiji temple. I liked the surrounding areas with all the deer and one of the funniest moments for me was when Vietnamese participant Vinh was harassed by deer when he was buying them food! As for Kyoto, we were there for a week with different seminars and two individual days where we got the chance to explore the ancient capital of Japan. I had been to Kyoto two years before, so I was kind of familiar with the transportation systems and the landmarks such as Kiyomizu.

Fushimi Inari is one of my favorite places in the whole of Japan! I had been there two years ago and it was a place that I had to go again and recommend to everyone else. The thousands of orange torii gates lined up one after another is just an amazing sight. Too bad that it was raining that day, but still managed to complete the 4km walk around the place. I recommended this place to anyone who goes to Kyoto.
Kayabuki-No-Sato

It’s nice getting lost sometimes and since I had been around Kyoto before, I decided to make a detour to a quaint little village called Kayabuki No Sato or known as Thatched House Village. It’s really confusing because there was not much information about how to get to this place, or at least not much information in English. This is where Charlie-san stepped in and guided me— he printed out everything from which track to go. All I had to do was to follow the instructions. After two trains and one bus later, I got there. It was worth the two hour journey as the village is really beautiful. When I got there it was raining, but the weather cleared up in the afternoon. It’s a small place and became a bit crowded when tons of visitors came streaming in.

Food

I have mixed feelings about Japanese food. I like it very much – sashimi, sushi, okonomiyaki and takoyaki. I don’t think I can eat it everyday though. I loved the cafeteria food (thanks Hirata-san!) because it was fusion between Japanese and other styles. I observe that the food is very healthy, with salad at almost every meal and there are not many obese Japanese people around.

Language

One of my regrets is I didn’t really pick up much of the Japanese language. It’s really tough communicating with people in Japan because not many of them speak English. It’s frustrating especially when you’re in a rush looking for the train platform. The most you can do is showing your ticket to someone and hope they know where the train is supposed to stop. Anyway, when you ask people something they keep on talking Japanese like as if you understand it. Even when you gesture that you don’t understand what they are saying, they keep on talking. I know they’re trying their best. Anyway, I plan on learning Japanese when I am back home.

The Last Samurai

One of the things synonymous with Japan is the Samurai. I had watched the Last Samurai a number of times, but watching it in Japan was a totally different experience. I watched it with Leap in the recreation room. It was his third time while it was probably my fifth time. I have seriously lost count. The movie was more meaningful cause we understood several things about Japanese culture such as the tea ceremony, the torii gates and kendo. A few others watched it the next day at the same venue, but I just joined in twice: coincidentally both at my favorite parts of the movie. A few weeks later, I watched on VHS the Seven Samurai, a classic black and white movie set in 16th century Japan. It was a cool movie, although it had to be consumed in two sessions because of its 3hours and 20mins length.
Bhangra dance and Cultural Exchange Day

I am really proud of that Bhangra was chosen for the closing performance of the CED. The not very good part was that I had to come up with the moves. What did I know about dancing really? Took to YouTube and got some moves from there, combining it somehow and making up a half baked dance. Luckily I had a lot of help from Ming and JY who coordinated the girl’s part. The girls really looked after their part which compared to us boys, but I can claim quite a lot of responsibility for that because my sense of choreography is quite out. We danced to Mundian to Bach Ke (Beware of the Boys) by Punjabi MC. First it was the boy’s part before we were pushed out by the girls. It was then boys and girls dance altogether, so I had to fight with Hide over the gorgeous Anna. The whole thing was fun and I managed to learn something about my own culture.

The cultural exchange day was quite a lot of work with everyone being involved one way or another. Performances meant that we had practice quite often, especially for Bhangra, birthday celebrations and self-introduction. Setting up the country booth was pretty straightforward. I found that it is quite a good feeling trying to promote my country to others. It was a really good day overall and a lot of credit goes to the 4 CIRs.
Forza Nagoya!
Japan did really well at the World Cup, playing good football on the way. I thought their performances were a real surprise. So it was one of my goals to watch a J-League football game. And thanks to Mikio-San I was able to watch Nagoya Grampus Eight beat Vegalta Sendai 2-1 at the Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya. It was surreal standing with the NG8 faithful behind the goal. Decked with red, the supporters consisted of old and young. I mean young about 3 years old. And old means probably 70s. Both women and men are there. I arrived at the stadium about 45 minutes before kickoff and it was already packed. That meant I had to stand right behind, but that wasn’t such a bad thing, I could observe the fans. From the moment I stepped inside the stadium to the moment I left about 3 hours later, everybody was standing and cheering. Some of the salutes looking could be mistaken for the infamous Nazi salute. NG8 went down just before half time, but their fans kept on cheering for them. They went on to score two goals, including a last minute winning goal. The biggest lesson I learnt from this game was that you have to keep on backing your team even if they are down. Malaysian fans should adopt this attitude if they want the team to rise. Malaysia was once on par with Japan.

Baseball
This was one sport that I never really bothered to learn before. And when I played catch with the members of my host family, I was hooked to it. It was the first time I wore a baseball glove in my life. I managed to get the basic concepts of the game and I think I understand how points are scored now. It is similar to cricket in a lot of ways. Even the level of support in Japan can be compared to how Indians love their cricket. The Japanese are really passionate and crazy about their games. It’s just too bad that I missed watching a game because the season was just over.
Home stay experience
This was the best way for us to get immersed into Japanese culture, mainly to learn how Japanese go about their everyday life. I stayed with the Yada family in Ise Bay, who are fisher folk. They stay right in front of the sea, really peaceful and beautiful. I got to see their operations and meet many of their friends. They were really nice and treated me as part of the family. They took me around and overall it was a truly unforgettable experience.

Why is everything so expensive?
The one thing I’m not really fond of Japan is the prices – everything is expensive! There is no such thing as cheap souvenirs in Japan. The cheapest would be from the 100yen shop and even all those things are made in China.

Cycling
It has been a really long time since I rode a bicycle. In Japan, I rediscovered the joys of cycling. One of the nice things of cycling was the cool breeze you feel on your face, especially when you are going downhill. I’m not sure if I will cycle in Malaysia because the road conditions are not as conducive as Japan. The people in Japan are more courteous on the road too.

Tokyo: Fast and Furious
I had been to Tokyo for only one night two years ago, so that doesn’t really count as having visited Tokyo. Anyway, Tokyo has been a real eye-opener after the relative quietness of Suzuka. I guess you are able to see the real Japan just by experiencing a subway ride during the rush hour. Although every train is packed to the brim, people are zombie like and do not speak much to one another. I think it’s quite a stressful life in Tokyo and I don’t think I could stay in a place like this for more than two weeks. Overall, I enjoyed experiences in Tokyo from being hustled my pimps in Roppongi and Kabukicho, to experiencing the mad scramble on the Shibuya crossing, to squeezing in the trains, to sitting down in front of Shibuya 109 (the guys will know what I mean) and just walking around.
Yoyogi Park
With the hustle and bustle of Tokyo, Yoyogi Park is the perfect place to distress. It’s a beautiful place and in autumn the sight of leaves turning colour was just breathtaking. More significant thing was the hive of people who are here to entertain people – both young and old. Coming here on that Sunday made my day and my stay in Tokyo richer because of this experience.

What I learnt from the whole IATSS FORUM experience???
I did not regret any moment in Japan because the whole two months was a learning experience. I believe that I might have become mature in certain things such as understanding other people’s point of view and being more tolerant towards others. I also realized that I am fortunate and should not take certain things for granted - a beach for example. Until arriving in Japan, Laotian Kohn had never been to a beach and never seen a ship. I could never have imagined such a thing. Another important thing is that I learned respect for other cultures and countries. A simple thing such as raising and taking down the flag taught me the importance of respecting flags that your own country’s or another’s. More importantly, it instilled a sense of pride of being Malaysian.
My Breathtaking NIHON

Kyaw Dewa (Kyaw)
Myanmar

Introduction

I had submitted my application form for IATSS Forum program just before I took the assigned duty given by Myanmar Chamber of Commerce to jointly take the responsibility with another Central Executive Committee member for arranging Myanmar Booth in Jeju Island, South Korea in 2009.

When I learned about IATSS Forum program, I came to know that the forum is providing ASEAN youth participants a place where they are able to brighten their individual characters and to deepen their understanding by thinking and learning together on the basis of experience, knowledge and information. Moreover, it is to build up the liberal arts skills, creativity, and perspective thinking required for talented young leaders to shoulder Asia’s future. It also aims for nurturing young leaders to possess high emotional quotient by sharing culture, knowledge, experience, thoughts and idea with participants from various Asian countries, native Japanese successful business leaders and Japanese top lecturers from academic and industries. Scholars from noted universities and business leaders from major Japanese companies offer stimulating lectures upon a variety to topics, providing participants with a valuable opportunity to learn about the latest trends in research and business. During the forum, participants can embrace a lot of opportunities to think and discuss issues in meeting their ASEAN neighbors and Japanese people. Based on one of the most developed countries in the world, Japan as a focal point, people from many countries are nurtured in IATSS to gain the high perspective ideas which can assist them in planning the development and modernization of their countries and businesses. The forum is providing participants to have thinking and sharing not only in business and industries but also in terms of politics, economics, environment and even pandemic diseases.

After getting the message that I was chosen to take part in The 47th IATSS Forum in Japan from IATSS Forum Secretariat (Myanmar), I felt very excited by embracing an opportunity to do thinking and learning together with our ASEAN brothers and sisters and explore about the modernization process of Japan.

Before coming to Japan, I received three pre-travel information kits. Of course, I started preparing “My Ordinary Day in my country” and “My Objectives” and sent those prior to going to Japan. I really love to explore about Japanese people for their technical know-how, systematic manners, mutual respect culture, hardworking and time management. I enjoyed very much for preparing country reports, Eco and Creative Life in Urban Area for group study, auction item for cultural exchange day, etc.
On the Arrival Day

When we reached Suzuka Circuit, many lovely staff warmly welcomed us from IATSS Forum office place. Seeing the welcoming white board near the seminar hall looked like giving a strong smile to us to take part in IATSS Forum in Japan. The staff explained to all of us about the green box which includes dos and don’ts. It is a very systematic way. I came to know that “on time” in Japan means to be there before the starting time (not the exact starting time).

Bicycle Training

I was so happy for that training as I did not get a chance to ride bicycle for last fifteen years. The route we must ride is the left side which is different from our country. The trainers demonstrated to ride and explained the rules and regulations for riding bicycles in Japan. It was very useful for us because we liked to ride around Suzuka City during our 55 day stay in Japan.

Our Gasshuku: Foundation of Trust Building

The team building activities known as Gasshuku became very famous among our participants. We encountered different kinds of activities like trust building, cooperation, collaboration, etc. during our stay in Suzuka Youth Center. Among these activities, my preferences are China’s Great Wall, Picture (Photo) Story, Bumpity Bar Bum Bar and Group Pulling-up together.

Concerning China’s Great Wall Game, we were divided into (3) groups. We had to create the longest line as long as possible with everything we wore on our bodies. Our group won because we had more guys.

Our very first prominent team work was setting IATSS Forum The 47th Batch Objective, Motto and Logo. Our logo shows that connecting our hands, our feet
and making strength together to pull up to get upright position. It reflects our unity.

**Lovely Local Volunteers**

On the opening ceremony day, respected Honda officials, respective embassies, invited guests and local volunteers attended the ceremony. We got chances to meet with local volunteers to make good conversations, ice-breaking for knowing to each other, etc. Asking the quizzes to volunteers about our ASEAN countries made them known and more comprehensive. They all are friendly and kind to us.

**Very First Seminar: One Village One Product (OVOP)**

I came to understand the importance of OVOP for each and every country. Indonesian participants presented about silverwork products, Malaysia presented strawberry based products, Thailand provided many products those are being OVOP in its country.

Concerning country presentations about OVOP, we came to know the cooperation among governments, privates and locals. I discovered that some resources cause environmental concerns, the usage of organic fertilizer for plantation, whether it changes the temperature or not and how they target to penetrate more to the international market. Besides, three groups were divided to do feasibility study project work within limited time for possible OVOP projects in the future and their presentations were shown up. We could learn the way each group thinks.

**Wonderful HONDA Suzuka Factory**
Honda is not only profit making but also considering and taking actions for environmental measures. Starting from 1970s, it established “Pollution Control Department” and chronologically undertook environmental measures till the present period. In 2010, it could launch “New Wastewater Treatment Plant”.

One of their achievements from brainstorming event is the separating technique O-Rings in the process line. It shows that Japanese people never give up and they work hard till getting the solution. I came to know that its competitors are “customer satisfaction”. Moreover, Honda accepts good ideas from its employees and makes those into the reality. In the Welding Shop, robots operating process was so impressed by us to know the Japanese advanced technology.

It is amazing that Honda is now producing not only its major products ie. motorcycles, automobiles and power products but also Honda jets embracing orders from customers. I also got the information that Honda airplane manufacturing makes the founder’s dream comes true.

Enhancing Our Facilitation Skills

The way the facilitator Ms. Keiko Tsubaki explained to us was marvelous. Some facts that good facilitator should possess are; bring everyone into the discussion, paraphrase continuously, stay neutral, manage conflict well, ping-pong ideas around, use good body language and intonation, accept and feedback, make accurate notes that reflect the discussion and summarize skillfully.

It is not only result oriented but also process oriented.

ABS and Traffic Education Center

SUZUKA Circuit Traffic Education Center cares the safety. Its philosophy is “Respect for the individual”. The Automatic Brake System (ABS) using, demonstrating and testing by the participants are very practical.

Field Study: Moku-Moku Farm

Moku-Moku Farm has its unique style. It is run together by pig farmers. Their way is farmers themselves cook pork as value added from pig and directly sell to customers. They also open (sausages, ham, and other came to sell products for the percent of total previous 90 percent of direct selling they give the to those who this kind of they consulted production in marketing cooking classes etc.) for housewives consumers. The farm overall agricultural customers. The 60 current visitors are visitors. They receive sales by using the method. Moreover, consultancy services wish to establish like farm. For example, Korean Dairy Milk Korea. Their channels are information given by members, good news spreading from customers and public media. The style of their business management rooted upon company’s philosophy of “farmers and farms
in a corporate organization” has grown to include many of the town’s farmers who help in supervising the company.

The farm yearly accepts about 700 interviews from media. Many customers like to visit here for the purpose of variety of BBQ, food, curry, desert, etc. The farm is fulfilled with local beer brewery, Jersey milk factory, pig performance house, small ranch for the education purpose and mushroom farm. It works together with local schools to develop farming demonstrations for “General Education Classes”; it brings cows to the schools to show children how milk is produced. It also introduces “Deposit Program” on the farm, as a way to educate people about the environment; not one piece of trash is allowed to be carried off the farm facility. Okaeri Village accommodation attracts visitors like us to test our one night stay there. It has its own wind mill to generate the electricity for lighting.

I enjoyed very much in handmade cooking class as I got pleasure from baking experience. Every participant created different styles of bread to be before baking. We made fashion such as HONDA vehicle, kid face, pig face, snake, ostrich, IATSS letters, doll, etc. After baking our things, it was nice eating to taste and feel our handmade baking and most of us kept half of it for the next day snack.

There are about 50 farms running similar to Moku-Moku but Moku-Moku is the most successful one.

**Traditional Japanese Culture I “Budo”**

We enjoyed it as it is very knowledgeable and informative for knowing the Japanese Martial Arts (Budo). The Professor A. Bennett could draw the attention from the participants by explaining in gestures as well as showing video interview of him makes impressive. The learning of (Budo) promotes courteous behavior, enhances technical proficiency, toughens the body, and refines the mind. Moreover, we came to know the steps and methods of (Budo) apparently. (Budo) catches the attention of the international and it is practiced throughout the world. It is also attractive to us as it gives stimulation to practice (Kendo) and it is good for being mentally and physically tough. (Budo) exponents build their character, promote the sense of judgment, and become disciplined individuals capable of making contributions to big society. This Japanese culture has composure of confidence even in the face of adversity, etiquette and humility, respect for training partners,
seniors, and opponents, respect for the training environment, pushing physical and mental limits, hard physical training and disciplines.

In the early days, the martial tradition was like patronage of warrior high society, religious revelation, exceptional technical ability, and genius killing machine. In 1870, the martial arts were almost disappeared. During 1880s~1890s, they were used for the purpose of police, nationalism, and education. Concerning the situation of post-war Budo, the authorities banned the martial arts in all schools and in the community. But starting from 1950s, the martial arts were gradually reinstated and reintroduced back into schools. Finally, they were also reincarnated as a modern “modern sport” as JUDO began to be participated in 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Budo would be compulsory in all junior high schools from 2012 as teaching Budo is to introduce students to unique Japanese culture cultivating to be sociable and rich in humanity.

The practical steps explanation, the contest for participants and the teaching method of Professor are great.

**Individual Plan Day**

The individual plan days were so exciting. One of the reasons is we could get lost the way. Sometimes, it might reach the wrong place even though we take the correct bus number but the direction may be opposite. Among the temples and shrines, I enjoyed going to “the Pure Water Temple” in Kyoto. It has breathtaking scenery. When I arrived there, it made my mind very peaceful. In addition, there is a place to put cups under the water fall and drink to be healthy and prosperous. I also tried drinking it.

**Seminar on Environment and Sustainable Asia**

The Professor K. Matsushita’s explanation was good. The handout and contents of lecture were fruitful for the participants. For the limitation of time, he had to make faster explanation so that some handout descriptions could not be covered. However, it was very useful for us as a reference. The Professor’s comment after each country presentation gave the clear picture for the respective presentations.

During the lecture time, we got the knowledge that taking care of global warming is one of the important issues nowadays. Concerning the accelerating de-glaciation of Greenland, 248km³ of ice cover melts every year ie. equivalent to sea level rise of 0.5 mm per year. This makes serious impacts of climate change. Moreover, global CO₂ emissions also happen the climate change. It affects the basic elements of the people around the world causing economic and social damage comparable to the world wars and the great depression and it is also a matter of human security relating to basic human rights.

We came to understand that this is the right time to do more international cooperation for our world and our next generations. Countries all over the world should focus on combating deforestation, promoting a shared understanding of responsible behavior across all societies (people awareness), bringing forward lower carbon technology-research, development and deployment and pricing the externality: carbon pricing via tax or trading, or implicitly through regulation.

Doing theme discussion, our group presented about “Traffic Problems and Air Pollution” and the case study was Jakarta. To take part in the role play, our group members performed as government official of the region, politician, car manufacturing owner, NGO representative and citizen. As we could do our performance dramatically, the role play was highly appreciated by the Professor.
Seminar on Political System ~Politics and Our Lives~

Grasping the faster development for a country, I think it mainly depends on the political system practiced in that country.

Concerning the Political System, the information given was the genealogy of the Imperial Family, their personal histories and annual expenses which are very rare data and facts for outsiders like us.

There were presentations about the political systems of Singapore, Myanmar and Vietnam. All the political systems in ASEAN countries are interesting. Regarding the politics, the explanation of the true picture and misunderstanding is very important. Our Myanmar participants explained the chronological eras after the independence (1948) from Britain. Among the Twelve Objectives laid down by the government of the Union of Myanmar, Four Political Objectives are;

1) Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility, prevalence of law and order
2) National reconsolidation
3) Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
4) Building of a modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution.

Furthermore, we clarified the forwarding “Seven-Step Roadmap” towards the Multi-Party Democratic System. Now, we are in the 5th step for holding the General Election in November 2010. Just after this step, 6th and 7th steps would consecutively follow ie. convening of Parliaments attended by Parliament Members in accordance with the new constitution and building a modern, developed and democratic nation by the state leaders elected by the Parliament; and the government and other central organs formed by the Parliament. Besides, we made clear that constructive engagement to the ruling government and encouraging the national reconciliation and transition processes to a democratic nation are better than sanctions.

Japanese Aesthetics

The way the Professor Patricia Fister described is interesting and clear. In the introduction part of the seminar, just after the Professor introduced herself, every participant presented one picture concerning Japanese Aesthetics to explain why those pictures make us impressed. This drove us more attention upon the subject. For me, I explained about Japanese “Origami”. It is the art of making objects like elephant, tree, bird, turtle, bear, camel, kangaroo, fish, human, etc. for decoration by folding sheets of paper into shapes. It is to be proud that “Origami” comes from Japan, where it is still widely practised. Moreover, getting an opportunity to touch and feel some samples of household utensil met our satisfactions.

More interactive lecturing style also should be provided during the seminar time. In the afternoon, taking field trip to nearby shrine led by the Professor made us knowledgeable and relaxed more.

Unforgettable Home Stay

My Home Stay family (Mr. Kazu and Mrs. Tomo) sent me to one Japanese Painting Shop in Suzuka City and bought the present for my family. They took me many interesting places and introduced the variety of Japanese food. They are kind and friendly to
me. At their home, we got nice conversations with some IATSS alumni members of Myanmar and my family members through online. I was also brought to two Ninja Castles which were exciting to see their performances. It is great to know each other loving voluntary services and good for future voluntary work cooperation.

Our Cultural Exchange Day in Suzuka Media Park

We celebrated our “Cultural Exchange Day” in Suzuka Media Park. The 47th IATSS Forum batch theme is "Birthday Celebration Around the world". Young coordinators from Brazil, New Zealand, USA, China and two Japanese participants also joined together with us. We practised the performances many times with them tirelessly before the Cultural Exchange Day. Each country prepared one auction item for that day and IATSS would donate the total amount to one college in Laos for poor students there. The collective dances were Singaporean, Cambodian and Bhangra dances. It was very lively and enjoyable for both participants and guests.

“Hatten” Group Study

As many people on earth have been paying attention to the environmental concerns, IATSS gave us the theme of “Eco and Creative Life in Urban Area” for Group Study project proposal. Among many other countermeasure ways, our group chose the project proposal, “Creating Green Space in Urban Areas” with a community garden for fulfilling public facilities to possess more green environment in congested urban areas having a less balanced ecological system. This focusing micro-level study was selected by brainstorming, initial fact finding, decision matrix and consensus of our “Hatten” Group members.

Conclusion

There are so many lessons learned by experiencing IATSS Forum program. Furthermore, a great milestone has been achieved in my life. Requisite expertise both theoretical and practical in Team Building Skills known as Gasshuku, Facilitation Skills, Group Discussions, Creative Thinking, Respect and Understanding, Balanced Perspectives, Updated Ideas, Coordinator Skills, Time Management, Self Management and so on has added in our portfolio for application.

Moreover, IATSS Forum enhanced the capability of our leadership skills. I am proud of involving in this network of young talented participants from ASEAN countries. As the Forum’s motto is “thinking and learning together”, we exchanged our experiences,
opinions and perspectives not only with other participants but also with lecturers. Field Studies and Group Studies gave us much more strengths to brighten our futures.

This Forum made my dreams come true ie. I achieved my personal objectives; (1) To explore the process of Japanese modernization, (2) To possess experiences by thinking, learning and discussing together with other ASEAN brothers and sisters, and (3) To contribute our society and country for the betterment.

Before I came to attend this Forum, as I mentioned above, one of my objectives was to contribute the society in my country. Eventually, after attending the Forum, my future plan is to contribute not only the society in my country but also beyond the sphere of it.

Besides, I would like to make a declaration of my pleasant immeasurable appreciation upon this course. I have a strong wish to express the most sincere gratitude to IATSS Forum and HONDA Motor for granting us the opportunity to take part in this Forum despite the tough economic situations.

I am also proud to be one of the alumni fellows nurtured by a multidisciplinary approach during the Forum. Although we were with tight schedules, IATSS Forum provided us the comfortable stay, excellent study facilitation and exciting experiences with fun that remains vivid in our minds.

Last but not least, I am more than happy and satisfied to have close and good friends from ASEAN and Japan coincidently. Additionally, I am confident that IATSS Forum gave the empowerment which I can’t wait to put in reality in the very near future.
A Great Chance in my life!

Pyai Pyai Pwint (Pwint)
Myanmar

I wanted to join the IATSS Forum for several years and this year I got a great chance in my life. When I heard about the interview result of IATSS Forum, I could not tell how I was happy. I was excited to prepare for my participation of the 47th IATSS Forum before leaving for Japan. I thought that the forum schedule has started before we arrive to Japan and it was effective for us.

Our arrival day

This was not first time for me coming to Japan but I was excited like my first time because this Forum program is different from previous programs and duration is quite long. Before arriving to Japan, I met Ms. Nary and Mr. Leap from Cambodia at Thailand International Airport and Mr. Vinh and Mr. Hugh on the plane in front of my seat as the passengers too. I was surprised and very impressed that Mr. Akira, General Manager of IATSS Forum was waiting for us at Nagoya Airport. When we arrived to IATSS Forum, all of the staff members were warmly welcoming us in front of the building and Charlie-san and Mikio-san brought our luggage to our rooms. I really appreciated their warm welcome and take care of us.

After lunch at Cafeteria, we went to the seminar hall for briefing, as there will be a lot of task to fulfill for these 55 days. In the evening, we had some activities for self-introduction and ice-break games and it made us get on well with each other urgently. I think it really broke the ice between us. We could create our own tumbler design during ice-break session because of Ms. Orie’s good idea.
Bicycle Training

Before I came to Japan, I was worried about bicycle training because I cannot ride a bicycle. But, I decided to try my best to ride a bicycle in this session. Only two of us, Ms. Shen from Philippines and me, cannot ride a bicycle. But, our trainer was very patient and Mikio-san and Charlie-san are also very patient and took care of us. Other participants could ride bicycle very well and they could pass the test. I enjoyed this training and it was a good chance for me because I had no chance to ride a bicycle in my country. During bicycle training, I was very sorry for Mikio-san because he was very exhausted to assist me, I will never forget this period and his kindness.

Gasshuku- Team building Training

I heard about the IATSS Gasshuku from Myanmar Alumni as an interesting schedule in this forum. It started on 22 September at Suzuka Youth Center. The contents and teaching technique of Tomo-san, our trainer of Gasshuku, for this training is very useful for me to reuse this technique at UMFCCI Training Institute. It consist many games for coordination, cooperation, teamwork and leadership. Among them, Group Lifting Game was my favorite game. From this game, I could learn important for group use everyone’s weakness while we work. Because of interesting and we could build team spirit among training made us get short time and we and sisters after this learn the strength each other and it made us better understanding among the participants who are from different background and different culture. It was the first step to think and learn together for 55 days program and very exciting and funny time for us. I got a chance to stay together with seven lovely ladies in Japanese style room and it was the great chance for me. After team-building training, we decided our logo, objectives and motto as “Diverse-Borderless-United”. It was our first product and we presented it at our opening ceremony.
Opening Ceremony

Opening ceremony was an important day for IATSS participants because it was the official introduction day for us and the Deputy Mayor of Suzuka City, IATSS Committee members, Honda’s official, representatives from our embassies and Japanese volunteers attended this ceremony. We had to introduce ourselves in Japanese in front of these people. I was very excited to introduce myself in Japanese because it was first time for me to introduce myself in Japanese. I believe that all of the participants were also very excited for this event. After opening ceremony, we did some activities with Japanese volunteers and it was happy moment for us.

Facilitation Skills

Facilitation skill session was one of the important sessions in IATSS Forum because we need this skill for our group study. The activities of our lecturer, Ms. Keiko, for this session were very interesting and fun. I believe that she is a very good facilitator. Having every one of us to be involved as a facilitator, timekeeper and secretary for activities is good way and supportive for our group study. We learned a lot from this session and got feedback from other participants that we could get a chance to know about ourselves to upgrade our ability.

Field Study

Our program included Honda Factory, Suzuka Traffic Education Centre, Suzuka City Hall, Police Station, Mokumoku Firm, Nara Noh, Sagawa Express, Family Mart and Honda Motor HQ in Tokyo. Every place was very interesting for us and it gave us not only theoretical experiences but hands-on experiences. We could learn about the developed Japanese police, high technology, time management and others. We got a chance to watch ASIMO show and learned about development of ASIMO and its history.
Seminars

Seminars are the important part for IATSS Forum and we, participants prepared our country presentation before we arrived to Japan. We had ten seminars such as One Village One Product, Budo, Environment, Political System, Japanese Aesthetics, Education, Japanese Citizens’ Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries, Logistic Strategies, Enterprise Strategies and Technology Development. Among them, we had to prepare the presentation about Political System and the report of Japanese Citizens’ Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries and MDGs Report. As I am a staff member of NGO in Myanmar, I was very interested in learning about NGOs from Japan and ASEAN countries. The seminars program included country presentation, lecture and group discussion. As a common theme “Thinking and Learning Together”, the group discussion time gave me a broader understanding of current issues in ASEAN and we had the opportunity to work together with each participants in different groups for different seminars. All seminar topics were interesting and it gave me broaden knowledge and upgrade my ability.

One Village One Product (OVOP) is not popular in Myanmar but our neighboring country is achieving in their OTOP since several years ago. Therefore, I wanted to know about the OTOP in Thailand and OVOP in other countries. From this seminar, I could learn about the process and implementation of OVOP from group discussion.

The second seminar was Budo and it was in Osaka Kansai University. Our Lecture, Professor Alexander Bennett explained about Kendo by using video presentation and it gave us very clear understanding. After lecture, we had a chance to play Kendo and we had a small competition among participants. Professor’s younger brother helped him to demonstrate Kendo and one Japanese student joined with us for this seminar. We could learn about the warriors and spiritual sports of Japan from this seminar.

Seminar on Political System was very interesting and I was excited to discuss about this topic. It was first time for me to discuss about political system with others from different countries. I could observe about political system in ASEAN countries and Japan. I got much knowledge from group discussion too. Professor Yoshiharu Tsuboi is a resourceful person on political system about ASEAN countries and he know more than the participants’ presentation. It was also a good opportunity for me.

Environmental and sustainable in Asia is the most interesting topic for me because the theme of our group study is “Eco and Creative Life in Urban Area”. I could learn about Kyoto Protocol, UNFCCC, Implication of Global Warming and Climate Security from his lecture. The lecture content was very useful for our group discussion.

Education seminar was also interesting topic for me and I learned the education system about Cambodia, Indonesia and Philippines from the country presentation of those participants. I learned that Cambodia, Philippines and our country have similar education system. Professor Yuto Kitamura had wide knowledge upon this subject and I could learn about the Japanese Education system from his lecture. During discussion time, we discussed about “Mismatching between Education and Industry”. We discussed a lot and I could share my experiences about this condition because I, myself also mismatched between my education and my job. We interested this topic very much and we wanted to discuss more and more with Professor.
I prepared the report on Japanese Citizens’ Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries and MDGs and I could share about the situation in Myanmar with other participants in our discussion time. I learned a lot from Professor Michio Ito’s lecture and other participants’ country reports. I noticed that there are 60,000 NGOs in Philippines and it made all of us quite surprised. This seminar gave me much knowledge upon NGOs that is my current work field.

**Japanese Volunteers**

I met many Japanese volunteers at our opening ceremony and I found that they are very friendly and very active. We played games, sang songs and talked together with volunteers. Some of us got a chance to meet our host family on that day. I surprisingly observed that three volunteers attended our first seminar “OVOP” and two of them joined with us for group discussion. In addition, our next seminars at Suzuka, some volunteers attended and Sato-san tried to introduce himself with our own languages. They actively participated at the Japanese Cultural Introduction program and our Cultural Exchange Day too. I was really appreciated the spirit of Japanese volunteers.

When I tell about Japanese Volunteers, I should not leave to tell about Mr. Kazu, who is the host family of my co-participant. Before I came to Japan, I heard about him from Myanmar Alumni as a very helpful and friendly person. Most of our alumni are friend of him and I met him at our opening ceremony. He explained about the places we would visit during our self-development days. We went to Yunoyama cable car before. I was scared but excited to experience this. We watched Ninja shows and took photos with Ninjas. We also met Mr. Kazu’s wife Tomoko-san on our self-development days. I also met his wife Tomoko-san and she is like her husband. We visited places such as Nagoya Castle, Ninja Village in Iga City and Iga Castle. We also went to Ueno Tenjin Festival in Iga City. We saw a parade composed of 10 rolling shrines and over 100 people wearing traditional ogre costumes snake throughout the street. I surprisingly noticed that although Japan is among the world powers in economy and technology country, Japanese people love their tradition and culture and these are heritages till now. Without the help of Mr. Kazu, I could not see this traditional festival and I thank to Mr. Kazu forever not only this one but also for giving me a happy moment in Japan.
Japanese Cultural Introduction Day

I did not get any chance to learn Japanese Culture in my previous trainings and did not get to wear Japanese Yukata. During Japanese Cultural Introduction day, we got a chance to wear Yukata and we were very pleased to wear this dress. We took many pictures with Yukata and we played Japanese traditional games with volunteers and students. The students tried to greet in our languages and I was very happy to listen our own greeting from Japanese girl. In this program, I could learn about Japanese Tea Ceremony, Japanese traditional games, Japanese musical instrument and songs, Calligraphy, how to make okonomiyaki and Japanese Arts. We sang Japanese song “Sakura” and I like this song. My teacher for Calligraphy was a good and patient teacher and I wrote my name in Japanese Kanji. It was also a great chance for me to learn Japanese Culture. Our program was finished by dinner with Japanese Volunteers and we prepared sushi and okonomiyaki by ourselves. I had dinner with my Calligraphy teacher and other volunteers. They taught me to make okonomiyaki and I could try my cook in okonomiyaki.

Home stay

Before I came to Japan, I received the message about my host family from Ms. Orie and I was very excited to stay with Japanese family because of language barrier and different culture. My host family was Mr. and Mrs. Takeuchi and I met my host mother and sister at our Opening Ceremony. It was a good time for me to meet them on that day. October 16 and 17 were our home stay period and before home stay we learned about the basic rules of Japanese house form IATSS staff and it was really helpful for us. My host mother, sister and brother brought me to their house. They live in Yokkaichi City and it took 45 minutes from our accommodation to their house. On the way we go home, we went to Japanese sweet shop, food store and supermarket. My host father was waiting for us from their house and all of them warmly welcomed me as their family member. My host mother told me that she could not sleep well last night because she was worried about my home stay at their house. It was the first time for me to stay with other family but I felt that they are my real family. We prepared takoyaki for our lunch and I tried many Japanese foods and sweets. I tried Natto, the favorite food of my host family except my host mother, and I also like it. My host parents and their children’s families joined for dinner and I did enjoy for their warm welcome and kindness to me. We visited Cosmos Flowers garden, Shinobu Shrine, Kiso Sansen National Government Park, shopping center and garden.
I learned origami from my host mother and she is good at origami because of her hobby. On the second day of my home stay, I cooked Myanmar traditional foods for them and they enjoyed my cook and traditional foods. I always thank to Ms. Orie because I got message from her and I knew that my host family want to learn how to cook my traditional foods. So, I prepared and learned to cook traditional foods. It was the second time for me to cook my traditional foods. Anyway, my cook is good enough and my host family likes my cook. My home stay period was happy moment for my life and I thanks to IATSS Forum and staff members for arranging this moment.

**Individual Plan Day**

I went to Kyoto last year but it was only two days and too short period for me to visit the historical city. The architecture and the structure of the house in Kyoto are very interesting. Kyoto is one of the oldest cities in Japan, which is rich in culture and heritage. That is the reason why there are many Kimono shops around the city. We stayed in Kyoto for a week and we had individual plan days not the good one to so I tried to visit with my friends. Cambodia, Shena from Philippines and my co-participant Kyaw joined me for days. Therefore, it was group plan day and good teamwork. Although it was raining the whole day, we visited Shoseien Garden, Higashi Honganji Temple, Nijo Castle, Kyoto Imperial Park and Nishiki Night Market on our first day. We took the city bus for our visit and the way was got lost when we went back to our hotel. Nevertheless, luckily, Ms. Nary can speak Japanese and we could ask Japanese people. I observed that Japanese people are very kind and helpful and they tried to direct right way for us.

On our second day, we visited Kiyomizu Temple, Yasaka Shrine, Gion Street and Nishiki Night Market as second time. We wanted to see Geishas but we did not get a chance to see Geishas. Therefore, I took the poster of Geishas performance to show my colleagues. From our visit, I learned that Kyoto has many world heritage places and we observed the ancient Japanese architecture of Temple and their good maintenance. We saw the clean and still good enough temples and castles during our visit. I was surprised that everywhere in Japan is very clean and I noticed that Japanese people are well disciplined and polite.
Cultural Exchange Day

Cultural Exchange Day (CED) was one of our important events in IATSS Forum and we prepared long time for this event. 4 CIRs also joined us for this event. Not only participants but also IATSS staffs were very tired and excited for CED. The theme of our CED was “Birthday Celebrations around the World” and we prepared to present various kind of Birthday Celebration in our countries. From this CED, I learned that Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia have similar culture. China, Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia also have similar culture and the rest have their own style to celebrate birthday. We presented three performances for this event and these were our teamwork. We were not very well for performances when we practice, but I surprisingly noticed that we presented the perfect performances in front of Japanese audiences. I especially thank to Rash and JY for guiding us for this performances. Most of participants tried to get good performance for this event. We practiced repeatedly for CED. There were many coordinators for CED and Mr. Kohn from Laos and me were coordinators for Country Booth. We tried to present about our countries and our cultures from our country booths. There was a quiz and prize section about our countries and culture for the audiences, and they enjoyed this section. I noticed that Japanese audiences were interested in ASEAN countries and our culture. In this event, the auction time was most exciting time for us and it is the kind of donation to ASEAN Countries. This year we chose Laos to donate all funds from auction. We could observe that the audiences willingly donate to the auction and they enjoyed this program. Indeed CED was a very successful event for us.

Group Study

My most interesting and favorite program was Group Study because I could learn together with 6 participants from different countries and different fields. We named our group as “Busy Bin Family” and it formed by Ms. Nary from Cambodia, Ms. JY from Singapore, Mr. Ponco from Indonesia, Mr. Kohn from Laos, Mr. Cafe from Japan, Mr. Woody from Thailand and me. We discussed about the garbage
mismanagement in our countries and we prepared the project to encourage the awareness of garbage mismanagement in urban areas. According to the facilitation skill training, we rotated each role (facilitator, timekeeper and secretary) for all of us every day. We put all our efforts and we made commitment to our group study. We entirely devoted ourselves to our project proposal. I love my group very much and our team worked very well with no arguments as we gave one another ample freedom to share our views. I can surely say that our group discussion was healthy and productive. From this group study, I could learn that when we use everyone’s strength among group, we can achieve good result for all. This experience will be a great help in our future life and career. However, I shall never forget the hectic days of the group study.

**IATSS Staff members**

All of the staff members in IATSS forum are very hard working, kind and helpful people. I noticed that they do their work more than their responsibility. They always try to improve the IATSS Forum program. They take care of us every time and always ready to help us. I felt that they all are my family members. Because of their kind assistant, I could pass my 55 days in Japan smooth and happily. I shall never forget their warm welcome, help and kindness to me.

**Conclusion**

During my days in IATSS Forum for 55 days, I gained greater knowledge and valuable experiences from many programs and participants from different countries and different professionals. This is a great chance for my life and it is difficult to get a chance like this forum. It was fruitful and memorable time for us. By staying same building, thinking and learning together, sharing various experiences, culture and visiting many places together made better understanding among it and us upgrade our knowledge and abilities. It is hard to get this chance again. I believe that the valuable experiences that I gained from this forum will help upgrade my ability and contribute towards developing my professional career.

Thank you very much IATSS Forum!
“First- Times” in a Second Time

Shena Faith Mateo Ganela (Shen)
Philippines

This is my second visit to the Land of the Rising Sun, but Japan experience still has not failed to surprise and impress me. I was still introduced to a lot of First Time-Experiences, and these just simply made my entire experience exciting, challenging and breath-taking.

First Solo Participant from the Philippines in IATSS Forum History

IATSS Forum program normally has two participants from each participating country, but just two weeks before the program started, I was told by the Philippine IATSS Forum Country Committee Secretariat that I would have to go and represent Philippines as a solo participant. I already had met my co-participant during the final selection process, and had already discussed with him regarding a lot of things to prepare for the forum, and it gave me comfort and confidence to be going and working with a fellow Filipino in this program. It was therefore, a surprise for me to know that for some personal reasons, he just couldn’t join the program. His absence added anxieties on my part, but I understood fully well the tough decision that he had to make. Being a solo participant is a little disadvantage in some ways, as I had to do all country presentations alone, and I never had a chance to share my thoughts and feelings using my native language at all, but it also brought some advantages, as all other participants became sympathetic, and offered their warm support and sincere friendship as well.

As a solo participant, I was challenged to give my best to bring pride to my country, and contribute fully to the success of the IATSS Forum program.

First Time to Travel Abroad Alone

Given a second opportunity to be back in Japan is exhilarating for me, but the idea of going alone is just quite nerve-wracking. I have travelled abroad many times, but I had always been with a group. I have a poor sense of direction, and I can’t effectively communicate in Japanese, so these caused butterflies in my stomach as soon as I stepped on Ninoy Aquino International Airport.
The first challenge was to carry my luggage all by myself; I had one big luggage and another hand-carry bag, not counting my sling bag and computer bag. How I looked that time with all those luggage was just unimaginable for me. The next thrill was when my check-in baggage weighed 2 kilos more than what is ordinarily allowed, but I was so glad that for whatever providential reason, the lady attendant decided not to charge me for that. The rest of the flight went well enough, but not quite as fun as I have experienced before with some friends with me on the flight. Jitters came to me when the plane was about to land when a negative thought came to me, just in case there’s no one who would come to fetch me upon arrival to Japan. The sight of a gentleman holding the IATSS Forum placard was just a relief and a comfort for me as I was greeted with a warm welcome from no less than IATSS General Manager, Mr. Akira Haga. After having hurdled this first-time experience, I can now say goodbye to jitters caused by anxieties of traveling alone.

First Participant to Arrive

On the 19th of October, I was the first participant of the 47th IATSS Forum batch to have arrived in Japan. I stayed overnight in a decent hotel near Chubu Airport in Nagoya, and the day next I had to come and welcome and meet the rest of the participants in the airport with Akira-san. While all the rest of the participants would have to spend 55 days in Japan, I already had a one day advantage of staying for 56 days.

First Autumn Season Experience

Philippines has only two seasons: the dry (summer) and wet (rainy) seasons. This Forum Program gave me the chance to experience an autumn season. I love the cool air that greeted me upon my arrival in Japan in October. I needed to buy a jacket here in Japan because the ones I brought from my country were not giving enough warmth as the air has gotten chilly as November came. The illumination effect is just beautiful as leaves started to change their colors this season. How I wish I could still stay longer to see the full illumination beauty by the end of November.
First Time to be Away from Home for nearly 2 Months

Since birth, it may be interesting to say that the longest time that I’ve been away from home was the last time I was here in Japan for the JICA program where I had to stay for 23 days. That was the longest time then, until this IATSS Forum experience came. I had to be away for 55 days, so the thought of it was something exciting, but with anxieties as well. I thought I could not manage being away, but thanks to advanced technology and very efficient internet connections in the forum venues, that I get to have all chances to get updates from loved ones back home.

First Birthday and Heart-Breaking News (While on Travel)

Ever since, I have always spent my birthday with my family and friends in the Philippines. No matter how simple the celebration may be, I always take the joy of celebrating this special day with special people in my life. Celebrating it away from them is new for me, but it wasn’t as lonely as I expected it. In fact, it turned out to be something so special, but an emotional one as well.

October 3 is my birthday and it was our Japanese Culture Introduction Day in the Forum program. Everybody was busy from morning until evening with a full-packed program of interesting activities which everyone enjoyed. I personally enjoyed myself since it was also my first time to wear the well-adorned Yukata, aside from the one provided in the hotel rooms.

Honestly, I almost forgot it was my birthday because it just was out of my mind due to the hectic schedule of the forum. Thanks to my best friend who took the time to give me a call the day before, that I realized indeed my birthday would come the next day. Together with that call however, was a not-so-good news about my mother’s health condition. She knew from the facebook wallpost of my sister that my mother was hospitalized due to heart attack. I didn’t know about the news because I have not taken the time to check my facebook account, and my family also intended not to tell me to spare me from worries. But indeed, the news worried me a lot that I had to do my “crying blues in prayer” that night.

The fun activities during the Japanese Culture Introduction Day for a time eased my worries, but when I had to write down my special prayer request to hang on a “tree” as part of Japanese religious tradition, I was reminded of my mother’s condition.

The participants, staff and Japanese volunteers shared dinner together, and I had to leave the group ahead after that because I wasn’t just feeling well at all. I was thinking that none of the participants may have known about my birthday. Not long after, Bobo came into my room and shared quite a strange story about her fight with Gate; I didn’t take it seriously though, until I received a phone call from JY. She sounded disappointed because I was not joining them for a dance rehearsal, and Bobo was supposed to inform me about it. 
Surprised and disappointed, I hurriedly went out of my room with Bobo to join the group. I got some reprimand from Leap which made me feel worse, until they all started singing happy birthday with a cake and gifts. It was all part of their plan, and they were successful for I never had any clue about it. When they asked me to make a wish, I was just not able to hold my emotion that I burst in tears as I shared about my mother’s condition. I was happy for their thoughtfulness, but I was also sad about the news back home. I had mixed feelings, that I wasn’t able to hold my emotions. Everybody showed concern, and tried to appease me. Mood changed to a livelier beat as we started to enjoy the eating, singing and dancing.

I am so thankful to all my batchmates for being so warm, kind and thoughtful, as well as to the IATSS staff, particularly to Akira-san, Mikio-san, and Charlie-san who had to stay late to join us and witness my “dramatic“ scene. This is definitely one of the most memorable birthdays I ever had, and one of the most unforgettable experiences I had in IATSS Forum. You made me feel so special, and for that, you deserve all my thanks.

First Visits in Suzuka, Nagoya, Nara, Kyoto, and Tokyo

This is my second visit to Japan, and gladly this gave me a chance to visit new places I’ve never been in the country. The Forum gave me opportunities to visit and discover the beauty of Suzuka, Nagoya, Nara, Kyoto, and Tokyo.

Suzuka: My Home Away from Home

Suzuka is where IATSS Forum Program is based, and it has become my “home” (in Japan) away from home. Personally, my room in Iris Hotel of Suzuka Circuit is my comfort space amidst the busy schedule and demands of the program. This is where I find solace with myself, do my personal meditation with God, and private communication with people back home through the efficient internet connection available in the room. The circuit provides all amenities from sports events, restaurants, accommodation areas and amusement park. Strangely though, I noticed the long-time celebration of Halloween around the area since I arrived in mid-September until first week of November as symbolized by some ground-park decorations. On the contrary, this doesn’t create an eerie atmosphere at all, but rather a very homey atmosphere seeing a lot of families going around. I have never missed a day without seeing adorable Japanese kids tagging along with their parents around the circuit, particularly in the restaurants and in the amusement park. The morning breakfast in the restaurant is made livelier with these kids around. The amusement park is also a fun place to feel young and be a kid again. I was never good in playing bowling, but this Suzuka experience made me realize that I can be good at least in this particular sport. It gave me a thought to give bowling another try when I come back home. It’s almost like around 5 years since I last played bowling in the Philippines, and my interest to it was just revived here in Suzuka.
Going outside Suzuka Circuit opens to more beauties to appreciate. Branded as “Honda City”, I am amazed of the traffic system efficiency in the city. Traffic lights are well-placed and efficiently functioning, and more importantly followed by the motorists and pedestrians. Traffic jam is not at an issue. This is something I truly appreciate because this condition is exactly the opposite of what I experience in the Philippines.

The visit to Honda Suzuka Factory gave me impressive impressions about the company. Producing a car in 48 seconds is amazing! But this is just the tip of the iceberg. I realized from that factory visit that Honda has committed to produce environment-friendly and fuel-efficient cars, and for me, it is this sense of responsibility in business that makes Honda more impressive.

**Nagoya: Appreciation and Respect for Japanese People**

My first step to Nagoya was on Chubu Airport upon arrival to Japan. It was almost dark when I walked out of the airport towards a nearby hotel, so I didn’t really see much around, but definitely I sensed the coolness of air, cleanliness of the surrounding and the decent disposition of people around. My second step to Nagoya was during the second Self-Development Day of the program. I wasn’t able to join the group who explored the place early of that day, but I had the chance to meet Tomo-san, a Japanese volunteer who was looking for a participant from the Philippines. He was married to a Filipina, and was interested to interact with a Filipino. Together with an Indonesian participant, Ajeng, we were invited to join Tomo-san and his group for their translation (English-Japanese) regular meeting in Nagoya. There we met three other members of the group, and I came to respect each of them in their desire to improve themselves through their group-initiated activity. Two of them are Ph.D. degree holders, and one is a professional translator. They all were smart, decent and respectable people whom I was impressed of. Ajeng and I were not able to enjoy the physical beauty of Nagoya, but I believe we were able to appreciate and respect Japanese people more through that brief acquaintance and interaction with them.
**Nara: Awesome Experience with Deer and Deepened Knowledge of Noh Play**

One day trip in Nara was very enriching for me. The visit to the park near Todai-ji temple was pretty exciting for it was amazing to see deer everywhere freely moving around with the people. It was also in Nara where we had the chance to be actually inside a Noh Theater. I have heard and read about Noh plays several times, and I was just excited to have been actually there to learn and witness such kind of a Japanese theatrical presentation. We were also privileged to actually wear the masks worn only by a few of the Noh actors. I just couldn’t wait to be back home and share this experience to my students who are studying about Japanese culture and literature.

**Kyoto: An Intertwine of Modern-urban life and Preserved Traditional Japanese Culture and Beauty**

Kyoto is definitely a bigger city compared to Suzuka. High-rise buildings, big shopping area, busy streets, efficient public transportation system, fashionable people- all these characterize a highly urbanized area of Japan. Surprisingly in the midst of all these is the beauty of preserved Japanese culture showcased in the splendor of several temples, shrines, castles and gardens. In our visit to Kiyomizudera, Higashi Honganji Temple, Kyoto Imperial Park and Nijo Castle in Kyoto, I was fascinated to see young and old Japanese people alike proudly wearing their adorned traditional clothes (kimono or yukata) as they moved around these places. Their sense of pride towards their traditional culture is just an unspoken manifestation of their expressed interest for it. I was however frustrated from having not met a Geisha in my stroll along Gion Street. I have read some literature and watched the film about geisha and I was just interested to personally seeing one.
Tokyo: A Roller-Coaster Ride-Experience

Just like a roller coaster, my one-week stay in Tokyo was quick, thrilling and exciting. My “roller coaster-ride” experience launched like a bullet through a speedy shinkansen which took us to the exciting world of Tokyo where fast-paced life is at its best. From sunrise to sundown, streets were just crowded by fast-paced, walking people going to and fro. Subway trains efficiently and safely brought us to different “colorful” places in the big city. Tokyo Disney Sea was breath-taking. Spending 14 hours there was just tiresome, but definitely worth it. The 2-3 hour-long queue for a 5 minute-ride was unimaginable, but added excitement to the thrilling experience.

For shopaholics, Tokyo may just be the place to be more hooked to this vice. Shopping centers are everywhere: from high-end and branded stores in Ginza and Shibuya, to the people-packed streets of Harajuku and Asakusa for souvenir items, and to colossal buildings of electronic gadgets in Akihabara. There were just so much to see…and buy! Since beauty and grandeur are definitely costly, everything around was just expensive.

Very interesting for me to see was the fashion sense of the ladies (girls and adults alike) in Tokyo. Almost everyone came around in flashy “costumes” with colorful hair, thick lashes and make-up, and fancy clothes. A lot of them look like “dolls” walking around in their high-heeled shoes. It’s amazing for me to see how well they survived the whole day wearing such apparels, while doing a lot of walking from one train station to another.

In the course of the roller-coaster ride, the most meaningful part for me was the visit in Shibuya, not for shopping at all, but to see the Hachiko mural. I just love the Hachiko film based on a true story about the loyalty of a dog to his master, which happened in Japan. My nieces were just as excited as I was to see the exact location of the train station where Hachiko (dog) had waited for his master until his death. Just too bad that I missed to see the statue, but at least I found its mural.

The visit to the Family Mart Factory was one of the peak points in my Tokyo ride. Going through the rigid sanitation process of people visiting the food-factory site was
impressive. The roller coaster ride ended with a great bang as we personally met ASIMO and the “brain” behind such an ingenious creation.

First Appreciation of Japanese Aesthetics

Among the nine seminars included in this program, it’s the seminar on Japanese aesthetics that I eventually realized to be the most interesting for me. During the seminar, I was actually struggling to keep myself awake because the dim-light atmosphere during the presentation was just making me feel drowsy. I did not realize how much I learned and eventually appreciated the lecture, until it was over. From that time on, I became more meticulous in looking at Japanese arts such as painting, landscape, architecture and pottery/ceramics. I was even surprised that I could clearly remember basically without looking at my notes, the characteristics of Japanese arts namely: irregularity, simplicity, suggestion, perishability and playfulness. Now, every time I look at a piece of Japanese artwork, I could tell its difference from Chinese art, and I just found this growing interest for Japanese aesthetics as a wonderful discovery in me. I even spent a half day in sharing and discussing with my host family regarding this topic as they showed me several Japanese art pieces in their home.

First Time Experiences during Homestay

This is my second time to experience a homestay program in Japan, but this second time still offered a lot of “first times” for me. The Matsui family offered me a lot of wonderful moments and experiences with them. It was my first time to join in a community-foot-onsen in their village, cook Japanese food such as temaki-zushi, inari-zushi and tempura, eat in a revolving sushi/maki bar or restaurant, enjoy a sumptuous and satisfying sukiyaki for lunch (the best ever), and be awed by the beautiful scenery in a wide and popular garden in Mie prefecture- the scene is just spectacular with flowers blooming as big as my head! These first time experiences were made even more wonderful because of the warm accommodation of the Matsui family. Kiyofumi-san was just indefatigable in driving us around; Nahoko-san was all the time busy in preparing food and making my stay comfortable;
Granny Masako-san was just always up and lively and cheerful, making me feel warmly welcomed, and Narumi-san was just so friendly and was a great communicator in English. Narumi has been to my home town in the Philippines, and it just carried us to many interesting topics to talk about and share. I deeply appreciate all their efforts to make my homestay experience memorable.

First Time to Work with ASEAN Participants for One Common Output

I have been involved in some ASEAN programs and activities before, but it’s my first time to really work closely with ASEAN participants and together come up with one output. Group study for me is the most challenging part of the IATSS Forum Program. Each member of the group just had a different way of thinking and working style, and it wasn’t just easy to easily blend-in altogether. I believe each one took efforts to keep the patience and respect for individual’s opinions, thoughts and ideas, no matter how difficult it may have been to some of us in the group. Putting that effort after all, taught us to set aside individual differences, focus on a goal, and strive to do our part in reaching that goal.

Japanese “Love Spell”

This Forum experience reminded me of two common adages which say that “first love never dies”, and “love is sweeter the second time around”. I fell in love to the beauty of Japan the first time I was here in 2006, and I said it was a once in a lifetime experience I could never forget. After having been given the second-chance to visit Japan, I could say that indeed Japan experience is sweeter the second time around. Japan is worth visiting even a million times, and it will just not cease to offer more of “fist-times” which become lasting memories to cherish for a lifetime.
Big Thanks to All!

My sincerest gratitude goes to Honda and IATSS Forum Staff for all the hard work to give us all the great opportunities to enrich the participants’ personal and professional experience and growth through this program. It confirmed my belief that there can be harmony in diversity. I hope to bring this learning experience in my professional and personal journey in life, and eventually making me a more productive citizen of my country, and of the global community as a whole.

My heartfelt thanks also go to all my batch mates. You all made my stay in Japan become even more meaningful and exciting. Memories with all of you will always be cherished. I hope friendship nurtured in this forum shall continue to grow even we’re miles apart. I hope that we keep to live our motto: “Diverse, Borderless, United.” Ganbatte!
Japanese Reminiscences and Reflections

Kuan Ming Leong (Ming Leong)
Singapore


1. With these introductory remarks at the 47th International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences (IATSS) Forum’s Opening Ceremony on 25 September 2010, I officially began my two-month journey in Japan with 16 other ASEAN participants (Exhibit 1). This has been a story of personal growth and self-development. The experience has enhanced my appreciation of cultural diversity and irrevocably shaped the way I examine issues. This report serves as a repository of my reflections during my time in Japan and the IATSS Forum.

Exhibit 1: The 17 ASEAN participants of the 47th IATSS Forum

REFLECTIONS ON ASEAN AND SINGAPORE

How different is Singapore?

2. It is not surprising that Singapore is different from the other participating ASEAN countries in the IATSS Forum. In terms of land area, the other ASEAN countries are 255 to 2,691 times the size of Singapore (Exhibit 2). Singapore has the smallest population, but is
acknowledged to be one of the most developed countries in ASEAN. In 2009, Singapore’s per capita GDP exceeded the other ASEAN countries (and Japan).

**Exhibit 2: Comparison of selected political, economic and social indicators in ASEAN and Japan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Land Area¹ (km²)</th>
<th>Population¹ (mil)</th>
<th>HDI²</th>
<th>Per Capita GDP³ (2009)</th>
<th>Per Capita GDP³ (2009 (PPP))</th>
<th>% Agriculture Land⁴</th>
<th>Anti-Corruption Index⁵</th>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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Sources:
1. Various official statistical agencies
3. International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2010
4. 2007 World Development Indicators, The World Bank
5. 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, Transparency International

3. During my stay in Japan, I gained a deeper appreciation of the differences between Singapore and the other ASEAN countries. Singapore’s agriculture sector is significantly smaller than the other countries. Between 2003 and 2006, agricultural land made up only 1.2% of Singapore’s total land area. In contrast, our closest neighbor Malaysia had 24% of land devoted to the agriculture sector (Exhibit 2). Coming from land-scarce Singapore, the move towards higher land productivity activities such as manufacturing and exportable services has been ineluctable. I gained a better understanding of the differing economic conditions across the countries. I learnt that issues such as deforestation were of greater concern in the region because they affected the livelihoods of many more citizens.

4. Singapore has a stable government that has been in power since 1963. Such stability has allowed our government to undertake longer-term strategic planning exercises for Singapore’s development. As such, I was surprised during the seminar discussions such as “Political Systems” (Exhibit 3) with Professor Yoshiharu Tsuboi that there were concerns about Singapore’s one-party government. Questions were also raised on whether it was appropriate for Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong, son of former PM Lee Kuan Yew, to be the current PM of Singapore.
5. Having been part of the Singapore system for a while, it was good to be reminded about the different external perceptions of Singapore. The seminars provided opportunities to share my perspectives (Exhibit 4) and to hear the views from the lecturers and other participants. I learnt that inherent perceptions were shaped by different conditions in a person’s country of origin.

6. First, some countries had a political system of family succession that was not endorsed by the people. Singapore adopted a system of meritocracy where talent is valued to achieve higher positions. To Singaporeans, Mr. Lee Hsien Loong was the PM because of his ability, not because of his family lineage. However, this sentiment was not naturally shared by others because of the different systems we came from.

7. Second, corruption was more ubiquitous in other countries than I could previously appreciate. To me, anti-corruption seems like a reasonable norm. As such, it came as a surprise that other countries viewed government corruption with some degree of helpless resignation. One participant candidly shared that changes in administration in her Ministry of Education were usually associated with changes in the textbook syllabus. Among the people, there was the suspicion that the new textbooks were aimed at justifying a larger budget, of which a portion would allegedly go into the new administration’s pockets.

What makes Singapore quintessentially Singapore?

8. Singapore’s uniqueness has traditionally been defined as being a dynamic global city that encapsulates a rich blend of arts, culture and cuisine from the region. Between 2004 and 2010, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) used “Uniquely Singapore” as a destination brand to attract tourists. Within ASEAN however, I realized that this uniqueness dissipated quickly through the conversations with other ASEAN participants. Being in the heart of ASEAN, Singapore had many similarities in food, culture and customs with the region. For instance, the fish floss that we brought to make sandwiches with at the Cultural Exchange Day was known as *akun* in Indonesia and *moo-foy* in Laos.

9. To the Japanese (including my home-stay Japanese family and friends), the most identifiable icon when they think of Singapore was the Merlion (Exhibit 5). To the ASEAN participants, they were interestingly most enamored by Singlish, a colloquial form of English in Singapore. In its most basic form, Singlish is

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1 In the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Denmark, New Zealand and Singapore tied for first place as the least corrupt country in the world.

2 As at 5 March 2010, the destination brand has evolved to a more personal (and albeit more nebulous) “Your Singapore” tagline.
Exhibit 6: Preparing to perform the “Singapore Dance” on the Cultural Exchange Day

Exhibit 7: Indonesia’s Cultural Exchange Day Booth

characterized by the use abbreviated sentences that end with meaningless terms like “lah” and “meh”. While the Singapore Government has actively discouraged the use of Singlish, I learnt that this may ironically be one of the most endearing aspects of Singapore to the other ASEAN participants.

10. Singapore’s diverse culture owed some of its origins to other ASEAN countries. Therefore, I was surprised to learn that some of Singapore’s biggest cultural exports to the region were our television programmes. A Myanmar participant was an avid follower of a hit Singaporean Chinese drama serial, Little Nonya. A Malaysian participant was a fan of the Phua Chu Kang series, which had been critically vilified by Singaporeans of late. In forging a distinctive Singaporean identity that is appealing to our ASEAN counterparts, it appeared that our Singaporean television productions may actually be useful avenues to explore.

11. During the programme, I was also constantly reminded about how resource-scarce Singapore had to depend on human ingenuity to succeed. As part of the preparations for the Cultural Exchange Day, all participants were asked to perform their country’s traditional dance for the other participants. My co-participant and I were stunned because unlike the other countries, Singapore did not have a unique native dance that came immediately to mind.

12. In the end, a four-step dance routine was devised that incorporated Chinese, Malay, Indian and hip-hop moves and which we hoped broadly represented the ethnic groups in Singapore. Ironically, the other participants liked it so much that it was selected as one of the group dances for the Cultural Exchange Day (Exhibit 6).

Directly feeling Singapore’s resource scarcity and country interdependence... during cultural exchange day

13. Singapore is a small and resource-scarce country. With only 710 km² of land and no natural resources, Singapore is dependent on the rest of the world for resources and its export markets. As a citizen in Singapore, while there is awareness about

3 For instance, the Singlish “Okay lah” is used in place of “It is alright. Do not worry about it”. The Singlish “Really mek?” is used in place of “Is this really so? I don’t believe you”.
4 In 2009, 72% of Singapore’s total demand was external demand
resource scarcity, it is seldom directly felt because of the solid networks and systems that have been established by the government.

14. For the first time, I acutely felt Singapore’s resource constraints when I opened our Cultural Exchange Day resource box. While other countries’ boxes were packed with indigenous paintings, traditional figurines and beautiful display ornaments (Exhibit 7), Singapore’s single resource box had stacks of brochures, a lion dance head figurine, some posters, six miniature flags and a bunch of Merlion collar pins. Like Singapore, we were not blessed with rich endowments.

15. Part of the reason was the mindset of Singaporean participants. In deciding to bring something unique to feature at the Cultural Exchange Day booth, my co-participant and I chose to bring local Singaporean food such as Kaya and fish floss to prepare toasts for guests. While going through Singapore’s box, we realized that past Singaporean participants probably had similar plans and also chose foodstuff over less perishable items. Seeing our paucity of resources, my co-participant and I joked that as in the case of Singapore, we probably needed to employ our only natural resource – people. On the day, she would dance traditional ethnic dances and I would sing National Day songs on command.

16. In the end, we decided to keep our concept simple (Exhibit 8). Fortunately, the response to our country booth by the guests was positive, with the Kaya toasts particularly popular. At one stage, guests were eating our food samples faster than we could prepare them. The experience reminded me that, like Singapore, the lack of resources may not necessarily be a hindrance if there is the determination to succeed.

17. Thankfully, we also had the support of our friendly neighbors Thailand who kindly “exported” some of their resources to us. Thailand brought artificial orange and purple orchids. As the Vanda Miss Joaquim orchid is Singapore’s national flower, Thailand graciously offered to give us the purple orchids for our decorations. The continuous line of orchids from the Thailand to Singapore booth would also symbolize the close friendship between our two countries.

18. In setting up the individual booths, each country was allowed to use at least two bamboo poles to form side structures that could be used to hang decorations. On the opposite side of the hall, Myanmar, Laos and Indonesia each had two bamboos attached to their individual tables. In the end, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines agreed to share common bamboos (four, rather than six, bamboos for three tables). While not the original intent, it became clear when I was tying the bamboos that the structure was more stable when chained to two adjacent tables. Metaphorically, this demonstrated how interconnected we were and the value of collective strength.
REFLECTIONS ON JAPAN

Exploring a new environment...

19. This was my first visit to Japan. Japan was as beautiful, rich in culture and developed as I had always imagined it to be. During this trip, I was fortunate for the opportunity to admire the resplendent beauty of Kyoto’s Kinkakuji Temple and Nagoya Castle (Exhibit 9). I was also grateful for the chance to learn more about Japanese culture including the traditional tea ceremony, calligraphy and Kendo (Exhibit 10).

20. I was impressed by the attention to detail by the Japanese. When souvenirs were purchased, they were individually and impressively packaged, so much so that it always seemed a shame to open something that had been designed and wrapped so beautifully.

21. The attention to detail was also observed for time management. In Japan, everything appeared to run like clockwork. Schedules were planned with precision and followed with reverence. I was intrigued by the public transportation system where train and bus schedules were estimated to the exact minute.

Finding the balance between technological efficiency and costs...

22. What surprised me more was the uninhibited adoption of technology to raise efficiencies – Supermarket cashiers worked with automatic change-dispensing cash registers; automatic sensors activated voice greetings when guests left restaurants; and western toilet bowls had spray attachments and other nozzles which I had not seen in Singapore or other parts of the western world before. Honda’s humanoid robot ASIMO5, which incidentally celebrated his 10th anniversary this year, served as a model for Japan’s advancements in robotic technology (Exhibit 11).

23. The question was not whether technology should be used to improve efficiency but the extent. Technology adoption raised efficiencies but brought with it higher costs. Japan appeared to have gone towards this direction to raise its citizen’s quality of life. In Mercer’s

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5 ASIMO is an acronym for “Advanced Step in Innovation Mobility”.

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2010 Cost of Living Survey, Japan had three cities\(^6\) ranked in the top 20 most expensive cities, more than any other country.

24. The experience left me with several nuggets of thought. For instance, as Singapore’s population aged, automatic change-dispensing cash registers may facilitate greater employment of the elderly. The use of robotics in Singapore’s construction industry, as in Japan, would raise costs, but it could also increase labor productivity and reduce Singapore’s present dependence on foreign construction workers. I also wondered if Singapore citizens would appreciate greater efficiencies in the everyday living, but at a higher cost.

REFLECTIONS ON THE IATSS FORUM

Thinking and learning together...

25. The IATSS Forum served as an interesting social experiment. 17 different individuals from 9 countries were put in the same living environment and had to interact with one another for 55 days. Even within the same country, I noticed that participants from the rural and urban areas behaved differently and had different outlooks in life. In my less somber moments, I joked that if there was a reality television crew filming our daily interactions, it would make for interesting television viewing.

26. The seminars were informative and covered a wide range of themes including the environment, political systems, education and technology. The study visits to the Honda Factory, Moku-Moku Farm and Suzuka City Hall (Exhibit 12) broadened our exposure to new experiences.

Exhibit 12: 47th IATSS Forum with the Mayor of Suzuka City

27. However, it was the group study process that allowed me to appreciate the challenges of working with individuals from different backgrounds (Exhibit 13). Working closely together on a team project under tight timelines, the unique peculiarities of individuals became even more apparent. Through the process, I gained new insights on how participants in different countries worked, as well as their motivations and preferences. I learnt to better appreciate and adapt to the different working styles in ASEAN.

\(^6\) Tokyo (ranked 2\(^{\text{rd}}\)), Osaka (6\(^{\text{th}}\)) and Nagoya (19\(^{\text{th}}\)).
28. English was a foreign language for most of the participants, but it was the main language of communication between the participants in the IATSS Forum. During the discussions, I observed that our communication may have been lost in translation or distorted by our unique accents. Because of our cultural differences, I learnt that clarification and further communication should always be the first route of recourse to prevent misunderstandings.

29. During our initial discussions on the team’s community garden logo (Exhibit 14), one member exclaimed, “The logo looks like garbage”. Amazingly, it took everyone some time before we found out he meant “cabbage”, rather than “garbage”. In this situation, we sought to clarify his views because of the severity of the statement. However, this incident led me to wonder if there may have been other times whereby the language differences may have led to misconstrued communication. In any case, the group study process allowed us to grow as a team. It also gave me a better understanding of how our ASEAN neighbors thought and worked.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

A parent’s love for their children is universal...

30. My home-stay experience with a local Japanese family made me reflect on my childhood in Singapore. I spent two days with the Shinohara family, comprising Mr. Takeshi Shinohara, Mrs. Tomoko Shinohara and their two children Haruka (5 years old) and Kosei (3 years old) (Exhibit 15).

31. During the home-stay, we had family outings to Iga Ueno Castle, Iga-ryū Ninja Museum and Ise Jingu. Some of these visits involved longer car journeys whereby Mr. Takeshi would be driving while Mrs. Tomoko would be looking after the highly active children. Travelling in a seven-seater vehicle meant that the children had more room to

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7 Our project proposal involved constructing a US$30,000 community garden in Setu Babakan, Jakarta, Indonesia.
maneuver. Needless to say, they seldom remained quietly seated. During a one-hour car journey, Mrs. Tomoko had to stop the two children from brawling, role-play a Ninja game (exclaiming “yarareta!” whenever she was “attacked” by a sword-wielding Kosei) and comfort Haruka who suddenly burst into tears inexplicably. On many occasions, I could see that the two parents were visibly tired. Nonetheless, they remained continuously dedicated to caring for their children. In one instance, I watched in awe as a tired Mrs. Tomoko piggybacked Kosei and trekked determinedly up a steep slope near the Igo Uena Castle.

32. The home-stay made me reflect on what my parents had gone through to raise my elder brother and myself. For two days, I was offered a glimpse into the lives of a family with young children, as well as the joys and challenges. Although our families were from different countries, I learnt to appreciate that parents’ love for their children was universal.

This is not the end... but the start of something new.

33. The IATSS Forum experience allowed me to learn new skills and grow as a person. I learnt to speak more slowly to make myself better understood. I broadened my perspective and ability to adapt to different working styles. I learnt to better appreciate the diverse circumstances of others with different backgrounds. Most importantly, I forged friendships that transcended geographical boundaries.

34. The IATSS experience was more than one of thinking and learning together for me. It was one of Interaction, Acceptance, Teamwork, Success and ultimately Smiles (IATSS). Through the process, we grew as a family to be more than the sum of our individual parts. As a chapter in Japan closed for me as I returned to Singapore, a new one was opened. The story will continue to be penned, but I have no doubt that the invaluable experiences and fond memories that I gained in Japan will have an indelible impact on its direction.

35. Our accomplishment reports reflect the results of what we gained or learnt during these two months. However, none of this would have materialized without the strong foundation laid and the tireless support that was provided during the program by the IATSS Forum staff. To all the IATSS Forum staff who made this possible (Akira-san, Charlie-san, Mikio-san, Orie-san, Yumiko-san, Nanae-san and Hassy-san), thank you for making this experience enjoyable and memorable. I have learnt much from your unbridled passion, dedication, professionalism and indefatigable spirit. Arigatō gozaimasu.
The “Irregular” Chronicles in Japan

Lim Jia Ying (JY)
Singapore

A. Seminars and Group Work – “Studying again after 10 Years”
In order to prepare for the 47th IATSS Forum, I actually took up 6 months of Basic Japanese Language – and that was even before I was selected for the interview! This was the senseless faith I had, but it was all well worth the effort and I am so grateful to be here now, penning down my thoughts and experiences.

I had 3 very clear objectives – to be intellectually challenged during the seminars and group studies, to build friendships with ASEAN and Japanese people, and to learn more about the Japanese culture and way of life.

Before arriving in Japan, I was already very impressed with the materials sent by IATSS on the seminar topics, especially the appropriate choices of the countries that were to present for each topic. I thought the selections were very well thought through and I was looking forward to hearing from Myanmar’s participants on their political system as well as views from Cambodia on education in their country.

The seminars truly did not disappoint as I learnt so much on the various countries’ situations and perspectives of the different topics. I especially enjoyed the seminar of the One Village One Product, Budo and Japanese Aesthetics as there was a mixture of knowledge, discussion and hands-on experience.

The Group Study also fulfilled my objective of an intellectual challenge as it involved much in-depth research and discussion. This is something I have not done for the past 10 years since I graduated from university. It was great to exchange views and methodologies with ASEAN and Japanese participants on an interesting subject matter – garbage management.
B. Field Studies – “Even Pigs Can Help Our Dreams to Fly”

The Field Studies and Visits were an excellent part of the entire IATSS programme. I really appreciated the good variety in the nature of these visits - from farm (Moku Moku) and traditional theatre (Noh), to police station (Suzuka Police Station) and food (Family Mart) & car making (Honda) factories.

I was firstly impressed with the generosity and professionalism of Honda in sharing their knowledge and operational ways with us. Donning the hygiene attire while observing the food preparation of Family Mart was also mind-blowing for me as I saw how much pride the company took to produce quality and clean food for their customers. Thus, being able to witness how different parts of the cars were assembled and the details to make each bento was truly an extraordinary experience for me and I know I cannot get this opportunity anywhere else by myself if not for the arrangement of IATSS.

The Moku Moku Farm was also an unforgettable experience for me, especially in hearing how it was first started by a group of farmers, and how they expanded the business to serve their customers throughout generations. I was impressed that from providing pork, Moku Moku could develop into an interactive place for visitors and families to stay and learn about farm life and nature.
C. Japanese Cultural Sites - “When 2 Cultures Become 1”

If I were to list down every beautiful cultural site in Japan that I have seen in this trip, I think it may take up the entire report because there are simply too many! But if I could choose one, it would be the Rokkaen built in 1913 by a British architect who ingeniously combined Japanese and western architecture into one building.

Not only was the exterior spectacular, the interior design was intricate as well, with Victorian furniture and tatami rooms within a few metres from the other. Even the toilets were built with separate Japanese and western systems. The most impressive point about all these was not so much about the superiority of the architecture, but more so how much the architect loved Japan and Japanese culture to have created this original concept so ahead of his time. Just like him, I am genuinely in love with Japanese culture and would want to weave aspects of the culture into my own lifestyle and interests as well.

My other favourite cultural sites were the Tenryu-ji Temple and Gion district in Kyoto. In fact, even in non-cultural sites like normal residential districts, I am so pleasantly surprised that many Japanese houses are still traditional in its design. It is something I really appreciate because in Singapore, we have no choice – buildings by the government and private companies are all modern designs.
D. Japanese Food – “Food for the Stomach and the Heart”

Personally, I have never been much of a foodie, but in Japan, I have no choice because all the food I have eaten are so oishii! Here, I always look forward to meal times as each meal is a pleasant surprise with something new that I have never eaten before.

Since the start of the forum, I have been very grateful that IATSS had arranged for us to be able to have daily international buffet breakfast in the restaurant in Suzuka Circuit. And everyday, I look forward to 12 noon and 6pm which are our lunch and dinner times respectively. I am just amazed that everyday, the dishes are never repeated, and even when it is an ASEAN dish, they are done in a Japanese way which I enjoy.

Another deep impression I have is when I tried a very small plate of fried rice in Bell City as I was not hungry. I was so astonished that even though the ingredients were so simple, the fried rice was really tasty. Was it the Japanese rice or the Japanese way of cooking it? I don’t know, but my grandfather told me before that it is very difficult to cook fried rice deliciously – so I take my hat off the Japanese fried rice.

I am also a fan of how food is presented in traditional Japanese meals. It intrigues me how each dish is placed in a separate dish (literally) and how beautiful it is when they are collectively served. Once again, I guess it is how the Japanese take pride in the overall experience – not just the taste of the food, but its presentation and the holistic enjoyment to the eater.

Another aspect about food is that it is most delicious and enjoyable when prepared and eaten together with loved ones. I experienced this during my homestay when I joined my host mother and her daughter to prepare the lunch and dinner. It was wonderful learning the Japanese dishes from them and having great conversations in between. The sheer sense of satisfaction when I tasted the food was just immense.

I believe after this Japan experience, the way I think about food would be different. Food is not just for the stomach, it is also for the pleasure of the eyes and warms the hearts when we enjoy it together with friends and families.
E. Cultural Experiences – “Culturally Rooted and Dressed to Dance”

Traditional Wear

Two very significant cultural experiences in the IATSS Forum programme are definitely the Japanese Cultural Introduction Day and the Cultural Exchange Day (CED). In both days, I learnt new things about Japanese and ASEAN cultures even though I always thought I already knew much.

Firstly, in terms of traditional clothing, I always thought the Japanese yukata was a simple piece to wear. Now I know it is truly not easy as the lady would most often need another person to help with the obi. I am really impressed that there are so many beautiful ways to tie the obi even though it is just one piece of cloth. This is not just clothing but a true form of art!

Secondly, I also learnt new things about my own traditional clothes – the Peranakan kebaya and sarong (a mixture of Malay and Chinese ethnic wear). As I had to wear this for the opening ceremony and CED, I had to learn how to put it on properly as the blouse has no buttons and requires 3 golden brooches to fasten it. This is really not easy as they have to be taut yet look good and evenly spaced. I often spent the most time fastening the brooches.

Despite the difficulties in wearing the yukata and kebaya, I really like how it brings out the tradition and the feminine spirit behind the costumes. As I wear the yukata, I am more conscious about representing the Japanese way of moving and being. When I wear the kebaya, I am reminded how my grandmother and great grandmother used to wear it too and the very traditional lives they led. Surely, the traditional wear really does help me to connect to my own roots, and even to another’s culture.
Cultural Dances

As I used to be in the dance team in my church and also taught dance voluntarily in the past, I was really glad to be able to learn some new dances in IATSS. I had a crazy aspiration once to learn all the ethnic dances in the world – this is definitely impossible as just in Asia alone, there are already thousands of ethnic groups!

However, I guess it will still be satisfying enough to learn a new dance every time there is an opportunity. And the CED really presented a wonderful platform. Through a voting system amongst the participants, 3 Asian dances were chosen – Bhangra, Cambodian and Singapore. The ironic thing about the Singapore dance was that we came up with a few moves on the spot because every country had to present something and we had no real distinct dance to show. Ming and I were hoping to scrap by but our friends liked it and selected the dance to be showcased!

I think why the dance was special was because we incorporated Chinese, Malay, Indian and modern hip hop moves. Though it was randomly birthed, I guess it did represent the unique multicultural environment in Singapore, which is something I really appreciate about my country. When Kohn from Laos (who is actually the real dance teacher in his school) said that he would teach this short dance to his students, I was surprised yet glad that we could share a little of Singapore culture in this way to Lao children.

My other experience of dance was the Japanese Bon Odori dance during the Japanese Cultural Introduction Day. It amazed me when the volunteers started to sing the traditional songs with difficult intonations as we move along with defined steps to the music. As I danced, I wondered how many Japanese young people still know about such dances and would they pass on to the next generation? Honestly, I think the answer may be no. It is actually the same with me as I am also ignorant of the traditional Chinese dances. In this way, Japan and Singapore is rather different from countries such as Laos or Brazil where traditional dance is a very significant part of their lives.

My best experience of dance in Japan was doing the Bhangra dance. It was a stretching exercise as I offered to choreograph the ladies’ part of the dance even though I have no roots in Bhangra and I have never done it. I took a long time to understand the rhythm of Bhangra music in order to match moves to it. However, after getting the hang of it and seeing everyone’s energy as we practiced, I started to really enjoy it and I am so proud of our final product as all of us danced with so much joy and precision.
F. Irregularity – “Random Thoughts and Random Finds”

At the seminar of Japanese Aesthetics, we were taught that its key principles were “Irregularity, Simplicity, Perishability, Playfulness and Suggestion”. This concept was displayed throughout Japanese art, ceramics, landscape and architecture, for example, uneven texture on a ceramic bowl or crooked lines on Japanese calligraphic paintings.

The concept of Irregularity inspired me. It is an amazing method to express anything in an interesting and unexpected way. On this note, I am going to write this page with Irregularity too – about my random thoughts and finds in these 55 days.

Firstly, after so many seminars, group studies and dialogues we have had with one another, I realized one thing. *Even though we are all Asians, even though we all speak English – it does not mean we can understand one another easily.* This was proven in countless situations. During Gasshuku, we played a game where 1 person describes a picture and the other 2 person draws it out. Even though the instruction was the same, the drawings were different because 2 people perceived the same thing differently. During discussions, we could spend a long time discussing on one subject, and usually it was because we were spending more time understanding and clarifying the basic point before even heading deeper. It is a double edged sword – sometimes, it delays our progress. Other times, it widened our perspectives when we finally understood what the other party really meant.

“If I have a good point, should I push for it?” In the first place, what makes me so sure that my point is good? Secondly, what makes me think that others do not have better points? During the forum, there are many opportunities to express one’s views and to recommend one’s method as the better choice. But these thoughts would make me think very carefully first before airing my opinion. I always believe that there is a time to speak & to be silent; a time to advance & to retreat; a time to lead & to follow. The more important thing perhaps, is knowing the right time to say the appropriate things. If everyone speaks everything that comes to mind, meetings will never end. If nobody speaks, nothing gets done. Apart from these, one has to understand the people we are communicating with at a more personal level. Once we understand the team dynamics and have built mutual trust and friendship, I think it will be easier to know when and how to communicate.

Apart from random thoughts that stirred my mind, I was pleased to have randomly discovered little treasures in unexpected places – a tailor shop selling 3 levels worth of wonderful fabrics, a quaint little café with a young waiter cum cook who speaks French, and an obscure but delightful museum that displays costumes from the Heian period.
G. People – “Without People, Any Programme would be Incomplete”

I believe my best experience of the trip is the people I have met – IATSS staff, my homestay family the Kokubuns, the lecturers, volunteers and most of all, my fellow participants. It wasn’t just because everyone was new to one another, it was because of the thoughtfulness, authenticity and our true acceptance of one another over time.

In the beginning of the forum, I was quite perplexed at times why our programme and deadlines have to be so packed. (Even as I write this now, I have 5 more questionnaires to fill!) However over time, I began to understand why this was so as our time here is so short so the more we experience within these 55 days, the more we will be enriched. Seeing how hard the staff worked also inspired me – our hard work is so little compared to all the details they have put in the past many months.

Similarly, at the start, I found it a bit difficult to make conversations with fellow participants as I just cannot find any topics to talk about! But after Gasshuku, and going through so many experiences together, I find that I can now talk to any of them on everything in life! At the last seminar, we learnt that it took so many years and hard work to create the Asimo of today who can walk and run. It’s great work and for me personally, it made me appreciate all the more how ingeniously God had created the human being – a brain that thinks, face that express, limbs that move and a heart that feels. Every human being is unique so I am thankful for every friend I have made here – unique and wonderfully created.

At this point, perhaps I can’t really describe my feelings completely, but I must say that getting to know everyone here has been one of the greatest blessings in my life. I am grateful, humbled, moved and inspired. Every of my 3 objectives have been met, beyond what I expected. Thank you all my friends!
Second can be the best!

Wuttithon Donavanik (Woody)
Thailand

I. What’s in my mind before 47th IATSS Forum!

“Suzuka City is located in northern part of Mie Prefecture, covers a total of 197.67 square kilometers, and presently has a population of approximately 200,000…….Suzuka Circuit is one of the oldest remaining tracks of the Formula One World Championship, and so has a long history of races as venue of the Japanese Grand Prix. Its traditional role as one of the last Grand Prix of the season means numerous World Championships have been decided at the track……”

All those above mentioned are some examples of what I goggling about Suzuka before I came to attend 47th IATSS Forum during 20th September-15th November 2010. At that time, I was wondering what would be like to spend almost 2 months in such a small town which is famous for their circuit track. Coming to attend this program is not the first time for me in Japan. In fact, this is my second time in Japan since my last visit to Tokyo in 2005. Actually I used to think that I won’t have any problem at all to live and spend my time in Japan for 2 months since I love Japanese foods and quite fascinate with Japanese way of living because my house is located at the central area among one of the biggest Japanese communities in Bangkok, but I had no idea what it would be like to attend all this seminars, group studies, study tours & visits along with making new friends among ASEAN participants yet. However, I just kept talking to myself that this would be once in a life time opportunity to learn more about Japanese and ASEAN culture at the same time.

Then the time passed by, from month to month became day by day, I started to feel a bit nervous because there was a lot of pre-travels information that IATSS kept sending us ovetimes which required us to do many preparations such as pre-study related to each seminars, prepare for two country presentations, find an auction item for Cultural Exchange Day and etc. Beside all those preparation, after I read tentative program and Seminar syllabus, I was about to faint away by massive assignments, reports and tight schedules. I started to ask myself “Is this the right move for me to join this program?” The reason that I questioned myself was because I have not been doing any academics study since I was finished my Master degree almost 10 years ago. For that reason, anxiety, concern and worry became my little phobias whether I could get through 2 months of IATSS Forum or not. Nevertheless, I kept telling myself that this kind of once in a lifetime experience is the wonderful experience
to accomplish in this certain age. If I do not take this opportunity now, there will be no energy left to do this activity in the future.

In addition to challenge, develop and refresh my academic thinking skill, I also need more exposure to various development techniques and expertise that have been used successfully throughout the world especially from Japan which become well known as one of the advance in term of technology and fast growing economic for the last 10 years. In fact, there is so much more theoretical and practical knowledge that I hunger for. More significantly, I find the program in IATSS Forum to be great complementary for my passion and career goals. The exchange of knowledge from all ASEAN participants along with various lecturers from well developed country like Japan will also be essential for real world applications in my future career.

Even though how important and significant all academic knowledge is necessary in order to develop my own perspective toward self development process but to be able to work as a team and establish deeper understanding among diverse background of our team members are among top priorities for future work and live in harmony together as one big global community. From my point of view cope with 8 years working experiences, it comes to my mind that understanding your colleagues is one of the top priorities to get our work done successfully. This understanding of each individual is very much an abstract thing that people always talking about. But in reality, this is the hardest part to implement the idea and knowledge inside your brain concerned human philosophy to daily basis real world practice. I considered all this challenge factors to be my obstacles that I will experience and overcome during the time in 47th IATSS Forum.

II. My so-called life in Suzuka. "Thinking and Learning Together"

"Thinking and Learning Together" is one of the very first things I heard during the orientation day in IATSS Forum. Before I came to attend this program, I did some research on how my life could be during my time in Suzuka. I found out that this motto is very attractive to me somehow.

(Our first day of arrival at Nagoya Airport)

1) Absolutely I have to learn something together with all other 16 participants from 9 different countries due to many seminars and other programs. But what about thinking part, how many people from different backgrounds, careers, cultures and Nationalities can, think about one topic in the same direction.

2) What kind of togetherness, are they talking about? I had some ideas that other 16 participants and I have to do many activities together throughout 55 days of IATSS Forum but what is the level of togetherness we have to share.
I would like to mention more about how I discover my own definition toward IATSS Forum, motto and life in Suzuka. There are some personal impressive points of view toward the overall program provided by IATSS Forum. For me, to be honest, I had no clue before that all those activities would be like before I come to Japan. All I realized is that those mentioned activities would be some kind of learning methods that will keep all participants occupy all the time. However, I have been through some of the activities, one by one, day by day, my perception started to change and understand more about the core meaning of each activity. Some missing pieces of the big puzzle sudden pop out of nowhere. And in some funny ways, I was able to understand more why IATSS Forum arranged those activities for us in the reasonable and systematic order.

My Mind Mapping: 47th IATSS Forum

1) Learning part
Many people may question what is the meaning of my “Learning Parts”? Personally, I think of many activities as indirect learning process. By the term Learning, I am defining more of the cultural learning and exploring my broader understanding toward Japanese culture and people experience.

I discovered some activities as the funny way to learn more about other way of living. Who could imagine that sometime in some occasion we might over look of a little detail that lay down in front of you waiting to be discovered? The activity such as Bicycle training could have big impact to certain period of your life especially during my 55 days in Suzuka. After more than 1-2 years absent from riding any kinds of 2 wheels transportation, I came across how important and exciting bicycle is in order to get around and discover more around city area. Beside that I find out some fascinating fact that many Japanese people in Suzuka like to
travel around by bicycle which is very new to me since I’m living in the city of more than 6 million people who rarely use bicycle as their mean of transportation. This kind of fact finding and absorbing new thing about yourself and different cultural experience is define as my learning process.

Some example of indirect learning and discovering of mine happened during the Gasshuku (Team Building Training).

During 3 days and 2 nights of Gasshuku session, I’m learning and getting to know a lot more about other participants. This learning is deeper beyond simply their names and occupations. But it’s so unbelievably to discover deeper how others can react and come up with wonderful ideas through simple games and activities. All those games and activities are more than just for fun and ice-breaking method but it showed me that if you could open your mind and carefully put some heart and soul to it, even some silly games can give meaningful learning experiences to you.

It’s definitely the true that learning process involving and associating with academic knowledge from classroom learning in school and university. To find the right work with high salary required highest certain degree that you can get from decent school and college. In my opinion, the most important factor beside academic study is how you can utilize your life learning experience to become a better person, employee, son/daughter and most importantly how you can apply those experiences to real world application. Those kind of experiences required more that just an academic term of leaning, it’s also come from your broader perception toward real world experience. As I mention before some learning experience can be overlooked if you are not considerable enough or not open your sense of acknowledgement. This is one aspect and considers valuable learning experiences method which I gain from IATSSS Forum. In fact, there are so many details I would love to mention in this report but I would like to summarize and highlight my alternative ways of leaning and discovering new experience like this;

Field study and Visit: Suzuka police station
- Most of Japanese police officer don’t carry armed weapons, this reflect the low rate of criminal activities in Japan.
- From that above mentioned face, Arrested Technique by using mix martial arts is essentially required for Japanese police officer.
Field study and Visit: Moku-Moku farm
- Beside the value-added idea of Moku Moku’s farming strategy, they also considered CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) as one of their main priorities.
- “kurukuru coin” represents 10 Yen from customers’ one good deed such as put the plates back to the cleaning area; and for that they will be part of the charity to donate that money to local community

Nara Study tour: Noh performance
- Noh are only performed by male actors for every character.
- When you put on Noh mask, you will hardly see the surrounding with limited eyes sight from the form of the mask. Dragging the feet on the floor is essential for Noh actors in order to know their position on the stage.

Osaka and Kyoto Study tour: Budo and Japanese Aesthetics
- Budo and Japanese Aesthetics are the topics relating to Japanese culture. But I was so amazed to experience that this two topics were introduced to us by Westerner lectures who deeply passionate with Japanese way of living and culture.
- Without a doubt, I started to understand and appreciate more about Japanese culture and also inspired to pursue my further and deeper understanding of enchanting way of Japanese culture

Exchange Activities: Home Stay
- Beside experienced Japanese tradition and culture from spending a daily life with my host family, I have learned that there are group of Japanese people called Hippo Family Club which families and friends get together and enjoy multilingual activities. Moreover, one of the languages they use during those activities is Thai.
2) Thinking part

My definition of thinking part during 47th IATSS Forum might be different from international and standard term of thinking process. Before I joined this program, I could not think about the better way to do my thinking except from some relevant facts and figures. This kind of thinking process became my habit since my work is relating to many economic data and international trade figures. Sometime when you stick with something or get used to doing something for long time, you will rely on your daily basis routine too much and hardly realize that there are alternative ways to thinking and doing in order to reach the same goal which is call “Out of the box kind of thinking”.

Personally I assume that all the seminars provided to us by IATSS Forum only required us to discuss each seminar topics relating to facts and data from each participant’ countries. But after a few seminars, I started to aware that it requires more than just a fact and data to develop our own thinking skill. I realized some key words of seminars objectives that essential for my self developing thinking skill. The key words such as deliberate, discuss, deepen and broaden your understating, utilize, strengthen your weak areas and gain a comprehensive knowledge.

One of the reasons that I highlight all the seminar sessions as my “thinking part” is because after all I experience from our seminars, in order to develop my own thinking method, I have to start new revolution. There are much more comprehensive factors beside facts and figures to do your thinking process. I have learned a great deal of this during Group discussion for each seminar.

I still totally agreed in the idea of preparing the presentation need to base on facts and figures. But through out the discussion and group study, you need more that your own data and information in order to acquire your self development of thinking process. It is utmost important to sharing your experiences, and exchanging ideas and opinions with other participants. This kind of discussion will broader your understanding and deepen your perspective which you can utilize for your
own further thinking process. I believe that each person has their own area of specialty which differs from their backgrounds, studies, work or even experiences. One man cannot know everything without sharing.

3) Togetherness part
I have already explained what I accomplish and discover both Leaning and Thinking part from the previous section. However, both of those mentioned part cannot complete my 47th IATSS Forum jigsaw picture without the most important piece of my jigsaw; Togetherness.

My term of Togetherness here mean everyone who I’m getting to know from every activities that I have done during my 55 days in IATSS Forum.

- Without my 19 friends from ASEAN + Japan how can I develop my learning and thinking skill? Moreover, without them I could not enjoy more of my time in Japan as much as I enjoy it right now. Thank you for making my time flies so fast because of happiness. (I consider one of the best moment of my life)
- Without my lovely IATSS staffs who put this wonderful and memorable program up together in a very orderly and systematic way. How can I realize to appreciate and value every minute that is spent for the entire IATSS Forum. Thank you for making this program, the best training program I have ever been through.
- Without every Japanese volunteers and our host families, how can I get to know, discover and deepen my understanding about Japanese culture and way of living. Thank you for put so much effort for us.
- Without our knowledgeable Lecturers, I could not be able to broaden my knowledge and strengthen my weak areas study that I never experience before. Thank you so much Sensei.

In face there are so many people that I did not mention here but I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for complete my life long memorable journey in Suzuka. Without any single one of them, my Togetherness could not be perfectly connected with my Learning and Thinking parts.
III. My self Assessment

The hardest part of doing this report is the self assessment. In this process, I tried to be neutral as much as I can. I could not find the more appropriate one to express my self accomplishment than doing this Radar Chart. From this chart it can be observe and understand each parts and perceptions of mine that gain from IATSS Forum.

![Radar Chart: Before 47th IATSS Forum](image1)

![Radar Chart: After 47th IATSS Forum](image2)

Finally I would like to thank IATSS Forum to give me an opportunity to “Learning and Thinking Together” among “Diverse, Borderless and United” environment.
I have gained so much personal lesson as I have had a chance to be with myself during the stay in Suzuka. Normally, my life back home always surrounded with people such as friends, colleagues, students, or parents all the time, so I haven’t got much time to consider myself and thinking about what I have done and what I want to do. Here, on the contrary, I have learnt to evaluate the nerve-racking situation to try to reduce of the potential for conflict. During the group discussion, together with other group tasks, I have experienced various stressful situations but the only demanding circumstance is when I have to deal with myself. Therefore, I would like to divide my accomplishment into five important aspects. Personal growth, new discoveries, team work, meaning of IATSS, and future plan.

**Personal growth**

As a teacher, I always speak in public without great chance to listen to others much as my job requires primarily on sending messages across to others. In the Forum, on the other hand, has provided me chances to learn to listen. Understanding what the other person is thinking really help me tailor my message to their needs. Generally, I would say that throughout the program, I haven’t had any serious communication problem with other participants as I have been learning how to listen more here. Likewise, the intellectual opinions from other teachers like Shen from Philippines and Ponco from Indonesia also gave me the encouragement of playing teacher roles and maintaining friend level in the adequate amount as we had to learn to adapt when to stand back and when to take action during the group work. Their inspirations also jogs my memory about many philosophers have suggested that we have two ears and one mouth so we can listen twice as much as we speak. That's great advice for me to bear in mind while I was listening to someone gave me frankly comments that I am so dramatic, idealistic, and emotional-oriented person. Of course, without patiently listening, I would not be able to get such a treasured truth about myself.
It is great for me to have knowledgeable people around who kindly enough to remind me to evaluate myself both performance and emotion, I cannot think about what to brag about my accomplishment without referring to those people; my daddy, Kyaw and Pwint from Myanmar who always comfort me with gentle talk. Pwint often offers her tender caring when I need someone to hug, Vinh from Vietnam and Ming from Singapore who continually take me back to reality, one dealing with emotional aspect while another one provide academic aids. It is my fortune to meet these talented people in Japan.

New discoveries

It is undeniable that IATSS forum provides a lot of seminar in various topics such as OVOP, agriculture, politic, education, technology, Japanese culture etc. I have a lot of new viewpoints form those lectures which will definitely be useful for me as a resource to tell my students. Some of remarkable points that I would like to mention are the reason why Japanese OVOP is very successful in both local and global market while other counties who adapt the same concept are not likely doing as well as original in Oita. From the lecture, I have learnt that Japanese tend to do 360 degrees business, which means all the distribution channels are opened widely for various types of potential customers. There are so many kinds of OVOP stores ranging from proper center to local convenient store such as young wives shop. The range of stores allow the products to be introduced in different markets, together with the harmony of people in the community who collaboratively support each other to reach the same goal such as when all the villager were waiting for the football team late at night to welcome their foreign guests. This touched practice of Japanese is another important point I have learnt for the first time. Furthermore, I have learnt that my co-participant is one of the most easy-going people to work with because it was the first time when we have worked together. He had never put any pressure on me by even asking a single question to overwhelm me for obtaining a flawless work. It was the easiest task in the world when I worked with my older brother Woody. I would like to express my appreciation to him here that it has been my honor to have him as my co-participant.

The work ethic of Japanese is very impressive, especially the way they have treated on every detailed part which others might neglect. To this point, I would like to pinpoint that personally, I think Japanese is detail-oriented for example, when we went to Honda factory and there was a team talking about how they figured out the O ring problem in machine. That
is so amazing how the team could possibly stand on investigating the same issue over and over until they can define the real problems and solve it eventually. It seems like Japanese spend a lot of time to plan extensively and make careful instructions in order to avoid possible problems in the future. I have learnt that sometimes problems in our lives occur from a tiny thing that we might overlook; the successful people will always figure that tiny part out before the ordinary people. It will be out of the ordinary if I don’t mention about IATSS staffs work, they are the wonderful example of how Japanese represent the extraordinary working custom. I was so impressed about how they have prepared things for us even the tiny detail such as giving us toothbrushes with our names on during Gasshuku. Only Japanese can do such neat and precise things like this, I think.

The detail-oriented of Japanese is also clearly seen through the unique traditional practices presented to us on the Japanese Cultural Introduction Day. The volunteers were so kinds to us as they were prepare things as it should be for us to see. All the details of different activities show the precise aspects of the culture such as Kimono, tea ceremony, and calligraphy. Those gracious elements reminded me of my own traditional practices which sometimes I have already forgotten. There are a lot of common things between our traditions for example the sophisticated way to cook for guests, musical instrument and intricate ways to wear traditional cloths. Those superb methods of tradition makes me wonder how it can be linked to the concept of being simple in Japanese aesthetic when I first discover that it is impossible to decode all the “correct” meaning from Japanese arts because there are so many dimensions that can be allowed to perceive and interpret. To me, I felt like I was very naïve and new to the whole basic concept of things are impermanent, imperfect and incomplete in Japanese context as I have seen everything in their daily lives are prepared neatly and precisely. It seems ironic to me to believe that the core value of aesthetic has derived from the simplicity. During the visit the Zen garden at Nanzen-ji temple, I had expressed my thinking to Prof. that the Zen garden in front of us didn’t show the simplicity to me as things were arranged elegantly, leaves were tidily trimmed, pebbles were carefully put etc. She also agreed with me that it meant to present the Buddhist monastery of the old age but once the place has turned into World Heritage, the matter of conjecture has affected the historical site to attract visitors. For this reason, I could not really sense the feeling of unpretentious process of creating the work.

On top of that, Kyoto is the place of my memory since it contains so many striking events and places. The time in Kyoto is my peak of this Forum because I love every minute in this city. All the roads I have walked, all the shops I have been and all the buses I have used still fresh in my memory. My semi-individual plan day was one of the most awesome days as it was the greatest drizzling day I have had. The damp atmosphere could not destroy my extraordinary wandering day especially, walking up and down the ragged hill at Kiyomizudera. These photos remind me of one of the feeling of “I am lonely, but not alone”.
Similarly, in Tokyo, the city of crowded people where I have never thought I can enjoy much. However, it made me realized that the well-planned itinerary tremendously helped to shorten the time and avoid the crowd in specific places. Thanks to Vinh who kept teaching me how to travelling in the right directions by looking at maps, notice important landmark and using hi-tech equipment like GPS. His systematic thinking and planning encourage me to learn how to be logical and thinking precisely before offering any comment or suggestion. Apart from sense of direction, I believed that my Japanese also had a bit of improvement as I had to deal with local people. For this reason, I had to try to come up with new strategies to communicate both verbally and non-verbally to achieve the common goal of being survive in Japan. I thought I had done quite well especially, on the first day; I went walking alone without any maps in my hand. Then, I had decided to take some photos to remind me of the direction since it turned darker and darker. I had found that this technique was pretty good because I could manage to get back on time at the meeting point.

It was interesting that I could gain my sport skill here too. Since the day we were back to Suzuka, we had played ping-pong which I thought I couldn’t play with others. Hugh and Rashvin were so kind to guide me and pair with me in some games before I had realized that it might waste their time to play with the apprentice like me.

Moreover, Japanese way of life also reminds me of “rice culture” that Thailand and Japan are shared because both of our cultures have long been based on agricultural activities. Every time when I eat and look at each grain of rice, the pre-industrial method of living often come up to my mind as I think that farmers always have to work hard to feed us with these precious food; however, they still be the grassroots people who suffer from poverty. For us, as educated people who have been fed by their strength can use the energy gained from their
product to broader social ramification, fostering the standardization of language which we then use to argue and create conflicts between each other. On the other hand, it is lucky for me that I have not used the energy to create issues especially, when I have amazing host family like Yuko san and her family. They all give me such a warm welcome to their house, teach me how to stay as Japanese in globalization era and kindly support me doing lots of things. In this case, our everlasting friendship will be worth all the rice we have eaten.

Team work

Thinking and Learning together is the core concept of IATSS. It really helps me to learn how to adapt communication styles to suit with people in my group. The spirit of being team had started during Gasshuku when we had known each other more through several of activities. It was the first time when I had a chance to observe what others did while adjusting to cooperate with them. It was the time when I had a chance to go night-walking with some of my friends who then become great pals. I remembered that very moment when Ajeng, Indonesian lady, and I were looking at the bright star through shadow of pine trees’ leaves and both of us said “this is so beautiful”. Since then, we had known that we had something in common in term of how to define beauty of nature. We also knew Vinh, Vietnamese participant, who also becomes the greatest brother of mine as he always leads me through various ways on the same route. According to the family relationship within the program, it will be strange if I do not mention anything about Laos girl, Bobo, as the younger sister of mine and others. She has her ways to make people laugh and sometimes want to give her a bang. She always gives me a shout when she needs something such as “P’ Kate, Bobo wants some ice-cream”. With the sense of being big sister, I keep biking to seven-eleven to get her ice-cream; I mean one for her and ten for myself. To be honest, she is the good reason for me to indulge myself with lots of sweets at night. However, when it comes to working period, giving her comment needs to be harsh and direct as our personal relationship do not allow me to preserve the soft-spot for my little sister. Luckily, the learning environment in IATSS is not for being serious and stressful as real-life practice. Therefore, no one hurts from being frank and direct to each other. Saving faces concept will not work very well in friendly learning atmosphere, I think.
This community garden project can drastically improve appearance of the certain place and offer a healthy exit for stress. The group, similarly, has learnt how to create the project contained both eligible exterior and satisfied team’s member in term of enriching our interpersonal relationship. Without this project, we would not have a great opportunity to learn about others’ perspectives and find the middle ground to figure out the solution for the outcome, our report. During the project, we all enjoyed thinking, raising question, manipulating, investigating diverse themes together which helps us to develop a deeper, richer understanding the people around us. There are six members in our team who come from absolutely different background and culture. It is amazing how we have compromised well with short saying “whatever”. We all agreed on one thing that nothing matters when everyone aims to the same goal which means getting the project done properly in the “office hour” time. For this reason, we have spent our time wisely, shared adequate information and gave constructive criticisms to each other. However, when it came into the point where any disagreement arose, one of us would say our classical phrase “whatever”, then all the rest would laugh and subconsciously realized that nothing did worth for us to argue. Afterwards, our team have learnt how to make fun in stressful situation so, our saying was gradually extended into “whatever, as long as you happy, we are here to serve you, nobody dies (just suffer)”. Therefore, this relax saying became our common share of stress-free environment. By acknowledging the similarities and likenesses, we create a starting point for understanding and appreciating diversity in the work place. However, by noticing differences, we also learnt how to cope up with communication style and personal preference of each member.

Conflict management is something necessary to teamwork and everyday life. It is important to understand that conflicts do not have to be avoided or blown out of proportion, and if conflicts can be managed they can actually provide all members of a conflict with a valuable learning situation. Conflict management is something that is important for all people to understand and practice in all areas of life, and it is extremely important when working within a team. There are so many methods to deal with communication problems. Some of my friends have shown me the perfect ways to deal with each situation; P’Kohn sometimes deals directly and frankly in his polite manner to stop the unnecessary explanation while Rashvin and Leap have chosen the taking turn style to deal with unneeded talks. It is fun to hear all these stories and laugh with stunning faces. Leave bad emotions out will always be my emotional rescue saying.
Community gardens are expected to be filled with various plants and flowers. It may also be packed with friendship and other valuable intangible assets apart from benefits of connecting to nature and exercise. Our group also has a chance to reconnect to the nature by researching and exploring how to set up the garden which we may have used at home to remind ourselves of impressive connections we have grown in IATSS.

**Meaning of IATSS**

Certainly, the idea of being part of this Forum is changing over time since I have been in Japan. At first, I did not have any idea about what would be the experience during my stay and what kind of people I would meet. Our feeling would be like walking in the dark represented by this photo of us when we first met each other.

Now, it becomes apparent that I have learnt a lot from everything around me such as people, knowledge, environment, way of life etc. It is the way for me to explore things like students do. Being young and curious again is priceless experience, we have talked for many times that we spent time here just like ten years ago when we were young, we fought, we laughed, we cried, and at the end we learnt together. Thanks for all the friends joining me in tons of crazy posts especially, JY and Jane, my cartoon’s mate from Malaysia. Not surprisingly, we get along well. It was so funny that Jane and JY cooperate so well to do lots of crazy things with me because we always sit near each other for some reason.. All those gentlemen who act as ladies’ bodyguards or sometimes we have to guard them as they are also national treasures. These funny stories cannot be created without the support from IATSS, so I would like to say that this Forum means the gathering place to me now. I mean the gathering place where various meaningful activities can be created such as meeting, catering, and party or even reunion services for participants.
My future plan

For me, as an educator, I would use all the gained knowledge and connections with people to prepare my students who will be part of ASEAN community. Before I came to Japan, one of the hottest issues of Thailand education was about of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED). This new idea of transferring students within the region has made tremendous changes affecting me directly as the lecturer in university. According to SEAMEO meeting in Jakarta around March, 2010, there was the initiative to harmonize students in Southeast Asia by allowing transfer of learning credit from one country to another. It surely means that all the teachers in Thailand also need to enhance students’ communication skill to allow them to be accepted as an exchange student. According to the news I have read, “other strategies included identifying ASEAN's international niche, enriching the ASEAN brand for education, and promoting ASEAN studies to enhance multicultural understanding among the group's peoples.

Exchanges among teachers, staff and students in the region will also be an integral part of the capacity-building process of the region's human resources. Development in English, mathematics and science will be the key areas for such cooperation” (Jakarta Post).

Moreover, the idea of intercultural communication is another aspect that I have to “explore” by myself before transferring to my students.

From the points I have mentioned, it becomes clear that my future plan is to use the connection gained from IATSS to benefit my students as currently, there is a pilot project launched for regional students exchange in three countries: Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. There are several subjects included in the pilot project: agriculture, tourism, language and culture, food technology and international business.
I am sure that this program will continue expanding. However, at least, I have known one lecturer form Indonesia, Ponco who is mastering in communication skill, so we can discuss later about the possibility of exchanging our talented students or even lecturer in our countries. Anyway, I am still thinking of any other possible future plan to be used in the near future; I would like to conclude that the process of thinking and learning together will not end easily because to live is to learn, so I have to keep generating new ideas.

“They who know how to think need no teachers” (Mahatma Gandhi)
Saving each experience in Japan

Bui Tran Hieu (Hugh)
Vietnam

47th IATSS Forum…

a huge collection of small but meaningful discoveries,
a big lesson made by small but profound experience,
a short trip that would leave lifetime memories.

Since I am neither a good writer nor a logical thinker, and since 55 days are fulfilled with programs, activities and experiences, I just cannot write my accomplishment report in a normal, formal and professional way. In this case, it would be best for me to jot down whatever images flashing across my mind like when I do brainstorming with the central topic IATSS Forum 47, and the writing criteria are ‘no priority’, ‘no arrangement’, ‘no proofreading’ and ‘no editing’. Or let say, it is kind of ‘irregularity’ way. These following experiences are what I just want to share with you, with my dears, my friends, and with my own as well.

My room

It is not big but clean, tidy and convenient with a comfortable bed which is probably the place in Japan that I love the most during night time. The electronic alarm clock and light control system right beside the pillow make it the most useful (every weekday morning) and advanced bed I have ever used.
The toilet is also among my very first surprises in Japan. It is pretty small but modern and convenient. I, now, prefer Japanese toilets to any other types of toilet which I have tried so far.
Another daily stuff I may never forget is the Yukata which I wear comfortably almost every night. I cannot imagine that Japanese people have been wearing Yukata for many centuries ago until nowadays.

Cafeteria

Admittedly, I have not noticed until the last 2 weeks that Miso soup was the number one dish for my lunches & dinners. Actually, I enjoy Japanese foods and it is so great that never have we had the same dishes for each single meal. Big gratitude to Hirata-san that she is always there, enthusiastically serving us with delicious foods, her nice smiles and unchained rhythms of ‘Konnichiwa’, ‘Konbanwa’, ‘Hei, Arigatouuuuuuu…’.
**Breakfast**

Within 55 days, we had nearly 40 buffet breakfast at S-Plaza and 99% of them are the same. This fact makes us like in heaven for the first week, starting to wonder for the second week, and being bored for the next 2 weeks. Fortunately, I eventually find out how to keep myself motivated every morning by changing self-created menus each 2-3 days. Generally speaking, I love Japanese foods and I love breakfast here.

One beautiful image I see every time I go there is Japanese young-couple families. They look happy with one or two kids serving breakfast for themselves. I appreciate the idea that they prepare several higher chairs for kids to sit, using forks or spoons themselves to eat foods. It is quite different comparing to Vietnamese kids as most of them are rather dependent on their parents.

**Suzuka City**

Let’s start with the Suzuka Circuit and Suzuka Hotel Complex. I was surprised to know from Mikio-san, one of IF Staff, that they are belong to Honda Corporation. What makes me surprised is great influences and contributions that a private organization may have upon a local government like Suzuka City.

Suzuka City has many deserted streets that bring about the feeling of peace and relax. Not only me but most people visit Suzuka, even some Japanese people like our Japanese participant from Tokyo, Hide, share the same feelings with me that Suzuka is ideal for a peaceful life and relaxation, and people here are very friendly and supportive in comparison with city dwellers.

I feel that Suzuka City is like Danang City, a small but peaceful and highly-developed city in the Central Vietnam. People and life there are simple and gracious. If I have a chance to study and live in Japan, Suzuka is definitely a good destination for me.

**Seminars**

Japanese Martial Arts (Kendo) and Education are the most enjoyable and memorable seminars for me due to several reasons.

Firstly, these two topics are concerned with human development. While the former is about a specific and unique way of personal development physically and mentality, the later is regarding development of human being under the view of society and community. Both are directly relevant to my major at work as I am both an educator and a self-development trainer.

Secondly, each seminar provided many ideas and information that I can work on and develop later on when I come back to my own job.

Thirdly, Prof. Bennett and Prof. Kitamura are young and active. Thus, they kept us busy and involved in their lecture and activities.

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*Images: S-Plaza Restaurant, Young Family Breakfast, Suzuka Circuit Race, Group Photo @ Suzuka Circuit, Kendo Practice @ Gym Center, Kansai University, With Prof. Kitamura @ Seminar Hall, IATSS*
from the beginning until the end. Honestly, I truly appreciate all the valuable time & sharing from lecturers of all the seminars in IF.

**Gasshuku & Facilitation Skills Training**

As one of my major concerns is capacity building & personal development training, Gasshuku & Facilitation Skills seminar were, to me, two most favorite academic training activities of the 47th IF Program. Not only that I learned about teamwork, facilitation and leadership, but various new ideas arise and I think I can bring home and apply to my current job and future career.

Youth Center (as we stay in the Suzuka Youth Center (SYC) during the Gasshuku) is a concept that I am really interested in. I have started thinking of how to develop such kind of for-youth model and program in Vietnam for a couple of years, and Youth centers can play as a key factor contributing to youth development in Vietnam.

Facilitation skills are essential for teachers since they are leaders and facilitators of their own classes. I think this could be a good chance for me to learn from Ms. Tsubaki’s experiences to set up such training program for Vietnamese teachers, particularly primary and secondary school teachers.

**Visits**

**Honda Suzuka Factory.** Full of astonishment about the advanced industry of automobile manufacture, specifically the giant scale of Honda Suzuka Factory (just one among many of Honda subsidiaries). We were impressive by the robots and assembly lines. It is a pit that we could not take photos with them as it is prohibited inside the factory according to the factory’s regulations.

**At Suzuka Traffic Education Center,** I like the idea of eco-driving and the way each Japanese person is taught and trained to drive safely. Thanks to the advanced technology and facilities of training centers in STEC, drivers have more chance to learn and practice dealing with dangerous situations in a safe environment. It is quite different with, and that’s why it’s a good lesson for, Vietnam traffic education. The current situation of Vietnam traffic, especially in urban areas, is in a mess and it is very challenging and unsafe for traffic participants since they do not receive either proper training or enjoying a safety driving environment.

**IATSS Headquarter:** IATSS Forum is a just a subordinate of IATSS, a rather big contributor to Japan’s Traffic field with its scientific researches and studies on traffic and safety. The visit to IATSS Headquarter was interesting. It was my great pleasure to visit the office room of Mr. Soichiro Honda, the deceased founder of Honda Corporation, and took photos with… his portrait. We had great time dinning with friendly and hospitable IATSS’s staff.
I enjoyed talking with Sasa-san very much & we shared a lot about both Japanese & Vietnamese culture.

**Tokyo Traffic Control Center**
When talking about Tokyo Traffic Control Center, I would definitely show high appreciation and admiration. Looking at the traffic map of Tokyo and the traffic controlling room at the Center, people will understand why. It is said to be the most advanced system in the world. And throughout the country, Japan has almost one similar (a bit less advanced) system in each prefecture.

**Tours**

**Moku-Moku Farm**
Moku-Moku is possibly the most impressive destination we have visited. The farm is far beyond just a green, natural and peaceful separated village. Once touring around Moku-Moku at least a complete day, we will agree that it is a diminished kingdom. It is a concept of combining living healthily, creatively and working productively. I can never forget the lunch buffet with a great variety of dishes all materials supplied by the farm itself. I bought two eco-bottles and I will give one to my friend and tell the story of Moku-Moku Farm when I come back to Vietnam.

**Nara (City of Deer)**
We, participants, shared the same feeling of exciting and pleasant to see the city of deer. I could not imagine a modern city with such a huge number of deer like in Nara. More than one thousand deer live in a nature-human open environment. Furthermore, everyone can touch and feed the deer. In my country, deer just can be seen through iron fence in zoos. We were also excitedly try Noh masks and experience movements on a Noh stage.

**Kansai University/Osaka**
I just want to mention Kansai University as it is the first university in Japan that I have chance to visit. The facilities there are good and supportive to students. Also, here and there in the campus, there are a lot of students’ activities from dance performance to environment protection projects. It reminds me of my university when I used to a member of Student’s Association. I asked a Japanese student and came to know that Japanese students today are much more active and social-oriented than their precedent generations.

**Kyoto (City of History)**
For me, Kyoto, as some people advertised me before going there, is really a city for tourism. The number of shrines or temples itself can tell. Also, I was pretty much amazed by the Kyoto Station and Kyoto Tower. If the sooner made me excited for its big, complicated but proper organization, the later made me even more surprised since there are totally 20 towers throughout the country. I have learned that the development of technology and sciences could help human beings make whatever they can and dare to dream. I had such thoughts since I first used the metro system
in Kyoto, and later on in Tokyo. Questions such as how long, how much and how many workers it took to build such an amazing construction were churning in my mind now and then.

**Kyoto University (University of Bicycles)**

Apart from the informative and useful seminar on environment and sustainable development, what made me impressive about Kyoto University, one of the best university in Japan, was that most of students and even professor here prefer to use bicycles to go to school. I asked a Japanese student who participated in our seminar and he told me that bicycles in KU were favourite means of transportation not only because of cheap price but more importantly energy saving & environmental-friendliness. I appreciate & advocate that attitude of KU members.

**Tokyo (the World Most and Luxurious City)**

Tokyo is a really modernized and high living quality. In comparison with Suzuka and Kyoto, Tokyo has its own uniqueness to become one of the major metropolis of the world (beside New York, London, Paris or Berlin).

In the Tokyo Center, I had chance to travel around to Shibuya, Shinjuku, Ginza or Asakusa, etc. Each area is well-known for its own specialties and features: energetic and exciting in Shibuya, luxury in Ginza, busy and active but also messy in Shinjuku, and cultural and historical in Asakusa. One can say each area is like a small city where we can discover a variety of interesting places and activities to immerse ourselves in. The more I travelled, the more things, places and activities I could have chance to discover and experience. Actually, I bought most of gifts, souvenirs and took most of photos here. Also, it is in Tokyo the concept of cute Japan is proven. Not only girls and ladies but boys and gentlemen as well are well-dressed with eye-catching and state-of-the-art fashion. They could be encountered anywhere, from subways to street pavements. They make Japan, and Tokyo in specific, more energetic and adorable.

**Events**

**Japanese Culture Introduction Day**

I enjoyed all the cultural activities prepared and performed by volunteers. Thank to their passion for Japanese culture and arts and the willing to share with others that they brought us many meaningful, traditional and creative activities, such as tea ceremony, calligraphy, koto and folk-song performance, traditional games. However, what I loved the most was the Taisho-koto collective performance by seven ladies coming from Taisho-koto club. Taisho-koto is a half-modern musical instrument which is a combination of guitar or mandolin (using strings) with piano (with typing notes). They played several songs including the slow waltz song ‘Santa Lucia’. I will never forget how lovely it was and how we danced with the melodious music.
Culture Exchange Day (CED)

The most memorable event during the IF Program might be the Culture Exchange Day (CED). To me as well as most participants, this was the first time we were involved in multi-cultural booth shows, auction, and multi-cultural dance and drama performances. We have learned a lot about the diversity in ASEAN community. More crucially, however, we had meaningful time together, sharing, preparing, and practicing dances. It was the time when we practiced dancing the Bhangara dance very hard in the evening with CIR’s members and our two special Japanese friends that we enjoyed so much and that we may never forget.

My Home-Stay

My host mother, Fusako-san, is a kind-hearted and considerate woman. She and her husband, Muneaki-san are about the same age with my parents, and they welcomed and hosted me so warmly that I felt like at home. The 2-day homes-stay was well-prepared and planned. From accommodation and facilities to weekend activities, all were great and memorable. I love music and I would rather join in activities than go sightseeing. And during the stay, I was taking part in several music events and other activities. We played Taisho-koto with Suzuki-san, a friend of Fusako-san. We attended a traditional folk music show at Inou Shrine. And the next day, we went to a flamenco demonstration at an arts exhibition club where her friends were an artist couple. The wife was a flamenco dancer while the husband was an modern and a modern-school artist. The special point was that, his major works were paintings on his wife. And I could see a great love for his wife from his inclement eyes which projected beautifully through his art-works. Another impressive idea left on me was the image of a modern Japanese lady. Japanese girls are traditional and believed to be closed and passive. That’s why I am really interested in those who are more modern and influenced by western style. Then they become even more attractive, as a rose in a secret garden is approachable when the garden gate is open.

The next day was beyond excited day as we were involved in ‘sweet potato digging’ activity with the participation of several neighboring families. The fruit and vegetable field was belong to Fusako-san’s family and she invited her surrounding neighbours to join the Sunday activity. We played lucky draw game to receive our potato beds. After digging, each family could bring home their own dug potatoes. I loved seeing small kids, just about 4-5 years old, enjoying digging work and playing with some soil worms which they saw the first time. We ended the stay with a warm dinner we cooked together. I hope I would have another chance to come to Japan; I will certainly be visiting my host parents, Fusako-san and Muneaki-san.
**Group Study**

*From practical…*

Group Study was the most confusing and really challenging part of IF program. I was quite sure about the feelings not only for me but for other participants as well. Doing research and writing a project proposal under a short time and a multi-cultural working group are never easy for anyone. Some of us might have experience in real projects or writing proposal before. But when working as a group, we met difficulties due to different languages, backgrounds, thoughts and working styles.

Language is the essential tool for communication. However, English was not our mother tongue. Thus, we found it hard to clearly and precisely demonstrate our ideas and thoughts. This was inversely proportional with the effectiveness of group-work since it consumed more time. In addition, misunderstandings occurred several times, leading to unnecessary arguments.

Different backgrounds and thoughts were sources for different ways of approach to the project task and the proposal writing process as well. It took us at least 2 or 3 discussions to agree on the story-board and the sub-theme for the project. To me, dissimilarity in working style was the biggest issue. For some people, the project should be taken seriously and they tried to apply more scientific way of study. Others, however, preferred to make it simple and general. That was the starting point of how to work along with each other throughout the overall group study duration.

Eventually, we completed our task just in time of deadline. Most of the group members felt satisfied with the final results. To overcome all difficulties and problems, each individual had made big efforts to accomplished his/her own assignments and we had compromised successfully.

… to lesson learned

This was the first time I studied and worked in a multi-cultural environment and I have drawn several experiences from the group study activity. I have learned that to convince others, we should have clear visions and try to visualize them. We also should adjust our objectives according to the real situation that we are in. And, leadership is a vital factor to ensure the success of a group, particularly in difficulties.

**Unclassified experiences**

Too many amazing things & open-eyed experiences that I just do not want to miss out.

- I love **onsen** for it is not only a healthy method for to improve physical health but also an ideal time for mental relaxation.
- **Tumblers** are wonderful. I used to have tumblers since elementary years. And I like the way that I can change the cover of my own tumbler. Besides, it is not just an idea of carrying water. It is an attitude of living that it helps save bottles and consequently save money and avoid plastic use.
Staying in the Super Hotel in Kyoto, for many of us, was a hard time of accommodation in Japan. I prefer the sweet room in IRIS Hotel, Suzuka. But looking at another aspect, Super Hotels taught us the lesson of effective building-effective using. In such cramped, crowded and expensive cities like Kyoto or Tokyo, saving space is a crucial problem, and Super Hotels are perfect solutions.

Just two words to talk about the metro system: greatly amazing

And many more…

A couple of inconvenient truths
Not everything in Japan is perfect. There are quite a number of things making me uncomfortable in terms of environment.

- Packaging industry & Plastic bags: Goods with eye-catching packing are special and unique in Japan. However, I am not sure how the garbage treatment industry of Japan deals with the plastic bags issue but the way each single candy or cookie is wrapped with plastic bag is really questioning me. Hygiene and commerce are big answers but they seem not satisfy.

- Electricity: Thinking for Suzuka IRIS Hotel & Tokyo during night time makes me wonder how much electricity is used in Japan a day?

- Water: water shares the same story with electricity. Japan ranks second (behind the US) in using water (~1150 m³/day per capital). The abundance of water and energy sometimes can easily make me myself feel free to consume excessively these resources in my room.

Volunteers
We always enjoyed meeting with IF volunteers. Since the first time we met at the day of Opening Ceremony, and then at the Japanese Culture Introduction Day, the volunteers became our good friends. We had chance to meet some volunteers again during seminars, the final presentation day and the closing ceremony.

I had special impression with Omori-san as he has been an IF volunteer for about 20 years. He has lots of friends (as seen from his Facebook) who are IF participants. Grateful thanks to Omori-san for his kindness that he gave each 47th participant one picture drawn by himself. Particularly, he presented me a CD of Koto music since he had noticed in the Japanese Culture Introduction Day that I loved dancing and music.

From all I have witnessed, IATSS Forum volunteers are so unique and perhaps they represent the values of typical kind-heartedness and hospitality of Japanese.
IATSS 47th Participants

Diverse & United

It was never easy for such a greatly diverse group like IF participants to be united. After Gasshuku, we did come to consensus in general, but as small groups or individuals we still struggled sometimes. However, I bet that this 47th batch members are among the ‘youngest’ (in style and characteristics), and the most emotional as well. We love and care for each other so much that we felt annoying and irritated at times. Two months are not a short period, enough for us to become good friends, even brothers and sisters. We are borderless here in Japan. To me, each of them is special because they are unique and adorable.

IATSS Staff – Save the best for last

Thank you, Orie-san, for your endless and tireless support for us. Especially, my gratitude for your grateful help me fix my ID tag at Gasshuku, giving me some medical cream when I itched, finding me a suitcase as mine was broken…

Thank you, Yumi-san, for financing and accounting everything during our stay. And certainly, thanks for giving me your suitcase freely. I am sure that not only me but all the participants and staff could not survive easily so far without your work.

Thank you, Mikio-san, for taking me to the medical office when I got Herpes Zoster.

Thank you, Charlie-san, for trying to answer and help whatever I asked or requested.

Thank you, Hassy-san for patiently waiting and checking lunch and dinner for each of us on our self development days, and for participating enthusiastically with us in all activities.
Thank you, Nanae-san, our most adorable girl, for your great efforts coordinating the biggest and most meaningful event, and for your moments sharing with us as a beloved sister in our big family.
And last but not least; Thank you, Akira-san, for your silent but huge efforts in planning and managing an outstanding training program. I enjoyed talking with you about Japan, mostly during the time we walked from station to station in Kyoto and Tokyo.
Thank you all for your being with us for such a long time, smiling and being tolerant with us always, from the first until the last day…

‘Your life is your message’ (Mohandas K. Gandhi)

I conclude my writing with the famous saying by Gandhi. What I mean is that although IF accounts for only 55 days in my whole life but it has really made my life with that short period, and it did help me leave a meaningful and memorable message for my next stages in life, and for those who read this writing as well.

Thanks to IATSS Forum,
Thanks for helping make my 55 days a meaningful message.
Thanks for all.

Hugh (Vietnam)
The 47th IATSS Forum is the good opportunity for me to “seeing is believing” on the Japanese country and people. Secondly, IATSS with the motto “Thinking and Learning Together” is not only the forum to make me further understand Japanese history, culture, society and economy, but also the multinational forum to make Japanese and ASEAN participants mutual understand. Thanks to 57 days of “traveling forms a young man” in Japan, I am able to study on Japanese scientific and technic advances on infrastructure, especially the system of traffic safety.

With these objectives, on September 19th, 2010, I began the study tour to Japan.

1. “Seeing is believing” on the Japanese country and people

The country:
After nearly 6 hours for flying from Hanoi to Japan and transiting in Bangkok, I arrived in Nagoya International Airport safely. Bless me, this was the first time I have been in Japan. Everything is so clean to make me so impressed. On the way to Suzuka with the average speed of 100km/hour, I had the chance to admire at the beautiful and peaceful landscapes along the highway. Especially from the far far distance, the Japanese farmers used the light trucks to go to their fields that it's rare or never appeared in Vietnam.

Coming to Suzuka, once again I was so surprised at the cleanliness of city. I did not see the plastic bags, wastes or bins scattered on roads. Everywhere I had gone, everything are clean from Suzuka where we spent the most of time in living in Japan to Yokkaichi, Nagoya, Nara, Kyoto, Osaka… where I had the chance to visit and tour study; from roads,
the public places to the mountains, rivers…. I realized that Japanese people are conscious
themselves of protecting the living environment as well as the nature not only for them but
also for the future generations. One day when chatting with my friends, who are living in
Vietnam, I joked that my time of staying in Japan could be the longest time to stay in the
airport within 55 days. Could you image everything in Japan is as clean as in the airport?
It’s very difficult to find the place to smoke that makes me as a smoker sometimes get
troubles.

“The Japanese farmer uses the light truck to go to their fields”

If it’s said that Japan is the modern country with only high sky buildings, it’s untruth.
Firstly, green trees, flowers and grasses are grown everywhere not only for the beauty but
also for green belts as the parks and “lungs” of city and residential communities. Secondly,
the works of traditional and modern architecture have been designed to harmonize with the
nature and geographical landscapes as the alive pictures.

The people:
There are many things to enthuse about
Japanese people, but for me, the most impressing
ones are the Japanese characters: Considerateness,
meticulousness, spirit of group working, high
discipline. I recognized these when I have been met
and worked with Japanese colleagues in Vietnam,
it’s also more affirmed through the chances of
witnessing, meeting, talking and working with
Japanese people in Japan.
These are very interesting memories to meet and talk with Japanese people in the different ages who have different jobs. Possibly, the strongest impressions for me are the chances to visit two Japanese families.

**Two-days home stay with “Yamashita san”:**

Mr. Isami Yamashita and Mrs. Yoshiko Yamashita are relatively old as same as my parents in Vietnam. They are living in the 18th floor apartment in the center of Yokkaichi where there are one living room, one working room, one bedroom and one Tatami room for guest. When I came to their house, they felt sorry for the small Tatami room, but for me it was ok and so comfortable. The small behavior like that showed their concern to make me feel warm.

In spire of short time, we had a lot of interesting and memorable activities to enjoy together. They spent time in guiding me to some beautiful places like the Gozaisho mountain, Tsubaki Grand Shrine, and having Japanese traditional meals. Mrs. Yoshiko Yamashita took care of me very carefully from sleeping places to breakfast; especially she prepared one small flower tag on the table in the balcony where I could admire at the
whole city in the early morning. Their warm hospitableness and considerateness made my feeling not in the strange house like in my parent’s house.

**Dinner with the “Takasu san” family:**

The Takasu family was my wife homestay when she took part in the 29th IATSS Forum. And I have the chance to meet them when they visited Hanoi in 2002. Time has gone by so quickly, the world is so small. It’s amazing that after 8 years, I also met both of them: Mr and Mrs. Takasu in Suzuka, Japan and had dinner with all members of their family in their house.

Mr and Mrs. Takasu are not only our best friends, but also they are really as our relatives in Japan. Just after receiving my call, they drove car to visit me in IATSS and took me to have meal with them. During the time here, they always contacted with me and invited me to have dinner with their family. The tradition of East Asian culture is seen in the Takasu family where the generations lived together under the same warm root. There, I had the chance to meet and talk with Mr. Takasu’s parents, especially Mr. Senior Takasu who is now 92 years old, had been participated into the Second World War in the Southern China. He also loves Vietnamese people but feels embarrassed in discussing on the war time between Japan and Vietnam in 1945. He asked me whether now Vietnamese people hate Japan because of the famine. I was not so surprised at this question because many foreigners including American and Japanese people wanted to know that. I answered that there is no war between ordinary people of these countries. From the past to now, Japanese people have been supporting and loving Vietnamese people. Since 1905, Japan people had supported Phan Boi Chau against the French Colonialists, and now Japan government is one of the active donors for Vietnam’s social and economic development. “Close the past toward the future” is the thinking and action of all Vietnamese people. Vietnam is the friend of all nations over the world. Japanese people as well as American also warmly welcome to Vietnam.

It can’t help mentioning the group working and strict discipline of Japanese people. Due to these daily activities like seminar, workshops by Japanese professionals, activities in the super markets, field visit of Honda factory, Suzuka police station, Moku-Moku farm, Japanese people also show their spirit of group working like ant community as well as strict discipline that it’s the main reasons to make the “miracle” of Japan. It’s as right as Vietnamese idiom “one swallow does not make a summer”.
2. To further understand Japanese and ASEAN cultures

Japanese culture:

In Vietnam, I’ve known about Japanese culture through the books, films, electronic products, internet, but when I came to Japan, by myself seeing, tasting and enjoying, I’m getting further well at the Japanese cultures, has really admired at the fine mixture between the traditional and modern cultures.

Firstly, Japanese culture is shown through the cuisine. Talking about Japan, no one doesn’t know about Sashimi, Soba, …., Tempura. Eating fresh sashimi with wasabi was made in Japan, you can’t help forgetting.

Secondly, it’s the traditional architectural styles:

Shrine architecture: One of the oldest architectural forms extant in Japan today is shrine architecture. The Ise Jingu Shrine at Ise in Mie Prefecture where I visited, is an especially important architectural monument that is rebuilt every 20 years using the original construction techniques. The simple one of unpainted Japanese cypress reflects the appearance and spirit of ancient Japanese architecture, but harmonizes with the surrounding environment.

The influence of Buddhism: Buddhism which reached Japan from China in the sixth century, Buddhist temple architecture in Nara, Kyoto and most of other cities in Japan, with its grand construction materials and architectural scale conveyed a magnificent image of the continent. One of the most admired things is the hall housing the Daibutsu (Great Buddha) statue at Todaiji Temple in Nara, completed in the eighth century, it’s the world largest wooden structure.
The Gion streets in Kyoto: It’s wonderful to walk along the Gion streets in Kyoto where I could witness the traditional living style in the modern time. The past and recent seems to no exist there. I could admire at the beauty of Japanese girls in Kimono.

Tea ceremony or Chanoyu: This is the first time for me to taste and witness tea ceremony which is an aesthetic pastime unique to Japan that features the serving and drinking of matcha, a powdered green tea. It’s interesting that Chanoyu involves more than merely enjoying a cup of tea in a stylized manner to purify the soul by becoming one with nature. The true spirit of the tea ceremony has been described by such terms as calmness, rusticity, gracefulness and the “aestheticism of austere simplicity and refined poverty”. Chanoyu has played an important role in the artistic life of the Japanese people.

The Noh: In Nara, I was in my eyes to enjoy Noh performance. Noh is a classical theatrical form that has its origins in the 14th century. A noh troupe consists of the tachikata, performers who wear masks, act and dance, and the hayashikata, musicians who are in charge of beating time and intensifying the emotional atmosphere of the play. It’s amazed that there were many people to come and see Noh performance that it’s rare for Vietnamese people to see the Vietnamese traditional music excluding the old one.
- ASEAN culture:

*Cultural Exchange Day:* There are 16 participants from 9 ASEAN countries which has their own cultural identity. IATSS Forum, especially the cultural exchange day is the good opportunity for ASEAN participants as well as Japanese people, and others to exchange their cultural similarities and differences. It seemed the small and realistic ASEAN community to help those who haven’t got a chance to come any ASEAN to further understand, at the same time make mutual understand to build up the peaceful and prosperous East Asian community.

*Thinking and learning together:* IATSS Forum is useful for each of us to learn the best points from others and share experiences to make us better.
3. **To study on the infrastructure of Japan**

Infrastructure: The system of infrastructure is the comprehensive master plan. The system of highways, railways and airways as well as ports, buildings has been designed and constructed synchronously with the technical advances. It not only makes the users convenient, but also bring the best economic benefits.

4. **My achievements**

Thanks to the 47th IATSS Forum, I have gained these following achievements:

Getting less and less temper: In fact, within 57 days of learning and thinking together with 15 ASEAN participants and Japanese people, especially through the Gasshuku – Team Building Training, Group Study and Study Tour, I progressed to control my temper and learned the skill of getting patient.

Being more and more active and creative: All of the IATSS activities require every participant to be active and creative including me though I am one of the oldest one in the 47th IATSS Forum.

Interesting contacts with the different Japanese and ASEAN people: IATSS Forum makes favor of me to have the real and wonderful contacts with the different Japanese and ASEAN people from the young to the old ones that also makes me to further understand the Japanese and ASEAN characters, feelings and life style. Furthermore, It helps me to better communicate and work with Japanese and ASEAN colleagues in the future.

Get the best experiences on the Japanese system of infrastructure: I had the good opportunities to field study on the Japanese advanced system of highways and traffic safety to meet the demand of my coming works.
New Discoveries through IATSS Forum

Hideto Ushio (Hide)
Japan

Introduction

I am a system engineer of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. My attending period for IATSS Forum is from Oct. 14th 2010 through Nov. 2nd. My objective for this forum is as follows:
- Understand cultural difference through communication with ASEAN participants
- Improve facilitation skill by group work with a variety of professions and nations
- Improve English skill, especially discussion skill

During this period, I found following new discoveries.

Similarities among Japan and ASEAN Countries Culture

The Cultural Exchange Day (CED) and its preparation had a big impact to me. The dance and music of ASEAN countries were impressive. At first it sounds strange for me because I didn’t have much opportunity to be exposed ASEAN culture until this forum. Through the dance practice for CED, gradually I became to enjoy these dance and music. Also, I found some similarities for birthday celebration among Japan and ASEAN countries which we presented on CED. For example, people in Vietnam celebrate elder’s birthday of 60, 70, 80, this is similar to Japan’s birthday celebration of 60 “Kanreki”. People in Philippines, China and Singapore, celebrate birthday with long noodles which mean long life. Long noodle is a symbol for long life in Japan, too. I found such points of similarity among Japan and ASEAN countries of its culture. These similarities remind me that Japan has been a part of Asia.
On CED: Oct 24th 2010, I realized the importance of grass-root level international exchange. The performance of CED was acted by J+ASEAN IATSS participants (including me) and CIRs (Coordinator for International Relations) from U.S, New Zealand, China and Brazil. Before we started CED program, we had a parade in the parking area around the Suzuka Media Park where CED was held. At that time, every participants and CIRs carried their national flags.

When I saw our parade with many flags, I had a feeling of respect for other countries flags, naturally. I had a feeling of respect to my CIR friend from China and her flag, China’s flag. This was a great surprise for me. Because until then, sometimes I felt unpleasantness to China for Senkaku Islands territorial dispute between China and Japan. Sometimes, I felt an aversion toward a news which told people in China burned Japan’s flag. However, at that moment of our parade I felt a natural respect to other countries. Because, we: J+ASEAN participants, CIRs from the U.S., New Zealand, China and Brazil made a great friendship through the preparation for CED. We planned the CED program together, danced together, and practiced for birthday celebration together. We have shared our experience, joys, struggles and special time. Naturally, we became good friends each other. Then there was no feeling like a hostile in my mind at that moment.

This experience realized me the power of grass-root level international exchange. I became confident that people can boost mutual understanding and relation of trust among nations as grass-root level. This experience is a big impact on me.
The Importance of Sharing Time

I found the importance of spending time together. Other participants and I made a great friendship by talking in cafeteria, playing table tennis, going hot-spa “Onsen”, watching movies together. As our sharing time increases, we became to know each other deeply and made a relationship. This experience changed my thinking and attitude, because until then, sometimes I was inactive to enjoy going out after work for a few drinks with my colleagues. I learned that sharing time contributes relationship.

Difficulty of Group Discussion

During my stay in IATSS Forum, I have struggled in my group study which needs a project proposal “Eco-Creative life in urban area”. My group often lost discussion points and discussion process because of different way of thinking, working style and backgrounds. On that situation, I made an effort to clarify the discussion points by using a white board and PC. I proposed our discussion process (see Figure1) and tried to make it visible many times.

Visualization of discussion process was very helpful to our group work. Our group tried to share each way of thinking. Even though, our group struggled with endless discussion. Gradually, our discussion process became more mature with iteration of discussion. I realized that it is very important for group to visualize the discussion structure and points. This experience shall be good for my future business.
Good Balance of Rationality and Creativity

Some members of my group had very good and unique ideas against environmental issues. However, those ideas could not find how to concrete. During our group discussion, I learned that “good project needs good balance of rationality and creativity” (See Figure 2). For example, if you propose a project, the project will need not only the clarified objectives, but also a feasible and concrete action plan i.e. rationality. At the same time, new original ideas will come from creativity, imagination and free thinking. For another example, when the group makes some decisions for environmental problems, you need to consider the reality e.g. project budget, schedule, human resource, etc. On the other hand, when you create new ideas through brainstorming, you do not criticize however crazy idea is. This new discovery improved my discussion and facilitation skill.

(Figure 2: Balance of Rationality and Creativity)

Conclusion

During IATSS Forum, I found many significant discoveries. These experiences grew my personality. In future, if I have a chance of working abroad, I will believe that I can enjoy my life abroad by using this experience. All my experiences in IATSS Forum: discussion, struggle, and great joys are very valuable in my life. I am very proud of friendship with ASEAN participants. I will appreciate whoever gave me opinions, suggestions, argument and respect. Finally, I thank all the IATSS staff, CIRs and ASEAN participants most sincerely.

Thank you!

Hide
Like a café break in my lifetime!

Kohei Mizutani (Cafe)
Japan

ABSTRACT

Retracing all the seminars and Group Study (GS), time flies when you enjoy the moment of your life so much. For me it was like a different day everyday, because there were so many things I found, learnt, felt and shared with participants in relaxing and good atmosphere like a café break. To make it easy to write and show my experiences, the first chapter is about “Objective and achievements throughout all programs”, the second chapter is about “Discoveries and learning in from frustration and all experiences,” the third chapter is about “How to connect these experiences to my future work”.

1. Objective and achievements throughout all programs

It becomes more important working with ASEAN people for Japanese industries. We have many problems about territory and natural resources with Russia, Korea and China. Especially in China we have some plant there. There are many unexpected issues going on. So in these backgrounds some Japanese companies start their plant allocation moving to ASEAN countries. I’m not sure my company does the same thing. Anyway it’ll be more usual and important. So I was really interested in working and making a project with experts from several ASEAN countries.

My objective is “to understand their cultures and behaviors through all the programs and the free time”. It is very important to know their background when making a good relationship with them. Even though I used to travel some countries and found many differences about their cultures and behaviors, it was just like seeing the differences, it was not understanding the culture. So this time I was going to learn about these.

2. Discoveries and learning from frustration and all experiences

I learned about facilitation skills from GS, for me it was my first time to be a facilitator. So I read the book about facilitation until the day I played a role of a facilitator, but it was different a lot between reading and doing. I was supposed to do ice break in the beginning of the day. But it wasn’t necessarily with a nice atmosphere Gr A, thanks for some handsome men in our group. We had a cheerful mood almost everyday. Anyway, I could start leading discussion easily with all the team members’ cooperation and excellent secretary. During the
discussion there were some frustrations that we had to argue with ourselves. Sometimes I couldn’t facilitate the members I was more likely to lead the members to my anticipation. I felt frustrated often actually from the beginning of my GS, when I was joining the discussion of each group because there were many ways of speaking English, including my Japanese English. Since everyone has each country’s specific accent, I was confused about this. About this frustration I soon try to expect the words from the sentence. I learn that getting an outline by sentences is better than listening carefully in each word, like when we listen to own mothers tongues.

The other one is the different ways of thinking between all the participants and Japanese in discussion. Japanese common sense, we want to discuss outline first, then we need to share the connection to the discussion theme to the next discussion or all stories. I found the discussions we had were logical in each part, and discussion were always mentioned with in each reference or source, I guess it was more than Japanese do, but I was always confused in discussions at the beginning of the part, because there was not much discussion or information about how to connect or how it’s related to all the stories. So I asked the participants to make it clear about the connection with the theme almost every time. I remember about an American presentation that there was no story, even each page was well-organized. So I found that making or putting a story for everywhere as most of Japanese do is not a common in the world.

Next are actually the same things I used to do. From my first day join in each GS, discussions were always going from backwards (goal to start). Even in Macro study, there were already some action plans without discussing the cause of problems which we needed to make an action. So I suggested every team to make sure about what macro study and micro study are, participants were not much informed about these method and studies. But once I taught participants, they got it quickly.

Gr A discussion with Prof. Mizota

Learning point through the GS process, there were many research, discussion and facilitation as an individual and a group. There were 7 of us coming from different countries, backgrounds and professions. We learnt about the issues and impacts of bad garbage management; how it affects the climate and the different ways to address it. If not for the GS, many of us would actually not be very familiar with this subject as it is something dealt with by the government or experts in our countries.
3. How to connect these experiences to my future work

Being around all the participants, exchanging cultures, listening to their experience were my greatest pleasure. Our friendship and their strong support made me a better person with more knowledge about ASEAN countries. Now I know we have a lot in common and differences.

Now I discuss and make decision in practical way with multicultural situation. Especially I could explain about the ways and methods what macro/micro analyses are, with picture writing on whiteboard. This skill might support myself when I work overseas to solve the problem both quality and production.

I want to say thank you, for all the participants and IATSS Forum staff. Now I have confidence in my ability to work in overseas, and I found some of my weak points, need to learn more words and need more knowledge in each country’s background, etc.
"The Most Chauvinistic but Humble Batch of Participants Ever!"

"Whatever, we are here to serve you, as long as you are happy, nobody dies, only suffer, I don’t care! Sounds disorderly and messy? What do you think happens when "people" with such "words" come together and work? Do they only create chaos and act unproductively? Are they rude and harsh to others? Or maybe just empty with hollow thoughts?

If that’s what you think from reading the above, then I am sorry to disappoint you distinguished readers! The hard facts are: these people are excellent, they can be very orderly and perfectionistic in differing ways. They have clear purposes and know how to achieve them in different ways. And believe me when I say they have strong determination to reach their goals. They are not only smart. They are brilliant! They are more than willing to listen to others and learn from them. They have a lot of guts inside and dare to challenge themselves.

But, they are soft inside as well. They are full of compassion. They love being together, singing together, hugging one another, caring for one another and loving each other as well! They are not too shy to cry in front of others. They all have good hearts...though sometimes they can be pretty crazy. So, how can words, such as ‘whatever’ be uttered by them?

Well, the reason is quite simple: they are drop dead gorgeous and yet humble people. They just do not want to show themselves. These words are magical, a simple tool to remind them that nobody is perfect and everybody has limitations. So these words do not represent their true mental state at all.

Who are these people? They are us, the 47th IATSS Forum participants! And please remember, we are not talking about proud people here. We just love being us.

(Ajeng-Indonesia)
What IATSS Forum meant to us..

The IATSS experience has been more than one of thinking and learning together for me. It has been one of interaction, acceptance, teamwork, success and ultimately smiles (IATSS). Through the process, we have grown as a family to be more than the sum of our individual parts. I have no doubt that I will return to Singapore with forged friendships and fond memories.

(Ming-Singapore)

To me IATSS Forum is a training course that provides basic knowledge for young leaders in ASEAN countries. There are many detailed and useful themes in the seminar sessions that can help the participants comprehend issues in the ASEAN region deeply.

(Kohn-Laos)

As the Forum’s motto is “thinking and learning together”, we exchanged our experiences, opinions and perspectives not only with other participants but also with lecturers.

(Kyaw-Myanmar)

The IATSS Forum gave me an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge, a chance to network with the ASEAN and Japanese participants, and to gain good experiences.

(Pwint-Myanmar)

IATSS brings to me a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget. I enjoyed and learned a lot from the short but meaningful trip to Japan. I want to thank my fellow participants and all the IATSS staff for the great times together. It is sad to say goodbye but it also leaves a hope to see each other someday. I want to say out loud many times "IATSS is so wonderful..."

(Hugh-Vietnam)

IATSS means HOME in Japan to me and I believe that all participants think and feel the same thing. Through out the 55 days in Japan, we stayed together, ate together, cried together, had fun together and even SLEPT together. Luckily we did not feel homesick together or else this place would be much different than what it was.

(Bobo-Laos)

Introduction Japanese culture and technology
Accomplish personal goal and objectives
Train and facilitate professional skill and talent
Sharpen knowledge and ideas
Strengthen the relationship between the ASEAN countries

(Jane-Malaysia)

The IATSS Forum for me is an avenue for the meeting of "minds". It purges out one’s creativity and brilliance sharpened by challenges brought about by diverse personalities and demanding program activities.

It also brings out the best in each participant as it offers varied learning opportunities for personal and professional growth.

(Shen-Philippines)

I do not know the most suitable word to describe IATSS. I can only say that day one to 55 was packed with a variety of interesting and fun activities. There was no time to miss home at all.

(Nary-Cambodia)
IATSS has taught me how to socialize and view other perspectives. This situation has made me act and communicate in other ways than in my ordinary life in my country, and I found it very interesting and enjoyable.

(Ponco-Indonesia)

"Diverse-Borderless-United: the IATSS experience has been this and so much more. I have to say that it is the best program I have participated in - a great balance of cognitive and experiential learning, and a wonderful way to build long lasting friendships across ASEAN and Japan. Well done, IATSS Forum!"

(JY-Singapore)

I had a valuable opportunity to see how a man can sharpen another, to see myself growing and moving to wider range of comfort zone. IATSS Forum is not just visiting Japan, thinking and learning together. It is more. I am blessed to have a chance to discover those hidden treasures.

(Ajeng-Indonesia)

IATSS provides the opportunity for me to discover that all of participants can eventually grow separately without growing apart after our precious process of learning and thinking together.

(Gate-Thailand)

It has been one hell of a ride. I have made a countless number of friends in a relatively short time span. I now have about 440 friends on Facebook compared to 390 before arriving in Japan. I learned a lot about Japan and the ASEAN through the seminars, presentations and endless discussions. These 55 days have definitely been one of the best times of my life.

(Rashvin-Malaysia)

IATSS helps me to develop my self-understanding, hold my temper and enhance cross cultural-awareness based on respect different ways of life.

(Vinh-Vietnam)

Working with IATSS participants has had a big impact on my life. I learned that people from various nations can understand each other despite the different way of thinking through my experience in IATSS Forum.

(Hide-Japan)

The IATSS Forum: A lifelong memorable journey in Suzuka along with the other 18 participants from 9 ASEAN countries plus Japan that gave me an impressive experience. Not only all participants but also the IATSS staff and every Japanese person I met here during my 55 days in Japan made the 47th IATSS Forum a lifelong meaningful experience.

(Woody-Thailand)
"What did you write on Facebook today?" or "Did you write anything on her page?"—these are samples of our common chat topics of the day. Of course, as part of the teen generation (whoever does not count, we can count ourselves... as long as we are happy), we are all doing the same thing in our free time... "Facebooking". (According to the www.urbandictionary.com, Facebooking means wasting time by browsing www.Facebook.com).

For example, it is very normal for us to greet each other with...

Yeah, I spent all night Facebooking instead of writing my paper... Come on!! This forum is for teens like us. Before you judge us, take a look at some of our famous shots during our stay, then you will know why we don't mind being called Facebook addict.

For 55 days, we lived, laughed, ate, cried and sang with one another. For 55 days, we learned together and put in by the IATSS staff for sure. We acknowledge their slogging during the late nights and weekends. We appreciate that they tried to accommodate our every request (no matter how silly some of them were).

So in no particular order, we would like to thank the IATSS staff: the ever-happy Mikio, the ever-quiet Yumi, the ever-observant Orie, the ever-crazy Charlie, the ever-generous Akira, the ever-smiling Hassy, and the ever-tender Nanae. Without you, our time in Japan would not have been as fruitful or wonderful. Arigato Gozai-mashita!