

# REVIEWS AND REPORTS

**IATSS  
FORUM**  
LEARNING TOGETHER IN JAPAN

From Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> to Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Vol. 49**



*International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences*

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- Rasima Binti Abdul Rasid@Awang (Sima, Malaysia)
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- Hoang Thu Phuong (Fade, Vietnam)
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# Preface

Akira Haga  
General Manager  
IATSS Forum

Hello everyone. I am Akira Haga. It has been nearly 5 years since I took up my post as General Manager of the IATSS Forum in April 2008. I started with the 43<sup>rd</sup> IATSS Forum and I have already experienced a total of 7 forums. These forums were held twice a year until the 46<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum, and then once a year until this 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum due to the influence of economic downturn precipitated by the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy in 2008.

Every Forum is indeed memorable to me, and I would deeply like to express my sincere appreciation to all of the people concerned for their understanding, support, and effort. Thanks to them, we have successfully completed all the past forums. As I undertake the work of General Manager of the IATSS Forum, I have been asked by many people about my beliefs and aspirations towards the work of the IATSS Forum. In fact, I was interviewed for a local magazine called “Mie Nonprofit Organization & Volunteer News”, during the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum program, and I had a chance to express my own perspective.

I would like to introduce extracts from the interview shown on the cover below as the preface of the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum Reviews and Reports.

The IATSS Forum is the place where young promising professionals with a high level of motivation and ambition from diverse backgrounds (such as nationality, culture, gender, occupation, and perspectives) gather together. I believe that they broaden their knowledge, skills, and perspectives, sharpen their sensibilities, and cultivate leadership skills by going through various unique activities of the well-prepared-55-day program. Thus, I have no doubt that this variety of experiences in a highly sophisticated environment with diversity will



I also expect that participants deepen their understanding of Japan by looking into its current state and having a first-hand experience, and at the same time, they take a fresh look at their own countries and their culture, and deepen further their attachment and sense of pride in their unique heritage. By doing so, they can contribute to the development of their countries and that is the first step in serving the bridge between their countries and Japan.

*(The abstract from Mie Nonprofit Organization & Volunteer News November 2012 edition)*

# 執中手帖。

— 執中手帖 — vol.5

公益財団法人国際交通安全学会  
IATSS フォーラム

所長 芳賀 朗

東南アジアの将来を担う人材の育成に寄  
るため  
IATSS フォーラムが設立されたきっかけをお聞かせ  
ください。

理想的な交通安全の実現をめざし、さまざまな  
分野から多くの専門家を迎え自由討議し、研究す  
る場として 1974 年に国際交通安全学会 (IATSS)  
が設立されました。この学会では、交通安全に関  
する社会のさまざまな観点から考えられた、交通  
関係はもちろん、経済学や心理学、医学、旅行  
作家など、多様なさまざまな専門家が会員として活動  
しています。

そして、1983 年にマレーシアで行われた IATSS  
主催の国際シンポジウムにおいて、当時のマレーシ  
ア首相・マハティール氏と本田技研工業の創業者・  
本田宗一郎氏が同席し、将来の東南アジア発展の源  
泉は人材の育成であるという共通感を生み、東南ア  
ジアの将来を担う人材の育成に寄与すべく、  
1985 年に「IATSS フォーラム」がスタートしました。

※1 IATSS: International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences

多くの人と出会い、お互いに理解し合  
うことがリーダーシップを育む  
ことを行っているのでしょうか？

IATSS フォーラムでは、東南アジア 9 カ国から 2  
名ずつ選ばれた優秀な若者たち 18 名を日本・韓国  
に招き、55 日間のリーダーシップ研修を行っています。  
プログラムは大きく 3 セミナー「グループ研究」  
「視察」「文化交流」に分類されています。昨年までの 26  
年間で、約 830 人の卒業生を送り出しています。

現在一番力を入れているのが「グループ研究」で  
す。国・職業等異なるバックグラウンドをもつ研修  
生が 3 つのグループに分かれ、研究テーマに関する  
自分たちの国における現状・問題・解決を話し合い、  
相互理解を深め、それらの中から重要と思われる対  
象項目を抜き出し、現実的解決に向けてアイデアを  
出し合って、最終的には草の根運動的プロジェクトを  
提案しています。

国によって社会環境、抱えている問題が異なるの  
で、例えば「子どもの安全・安心」をテーマにする

質の高い多様性環境の中で  
さまざまな経験を  
提供していきま

と、ストリートチルドレンや児童売春、人身売買な  
ど、日本ではあまり考えられないようなことが日常  
問題として出てきます。

時間的に余裕のない過程においてグループのメン  
バーそれぞれが、高いストレスを感じることになり  
ますが、お互いにケア・フォローし合い、壁を乗り越  
え経験が各人の「リーダーシップの証書」につ  
なげるのだと思います。最近では、このグループ研  
究プロジェクトを、母国に持ち帰って実行したケ  
ースがいくつかあります。研修の成果の一つとして、  
これは本当に嬉しいことです。

また、「文化交流」では、研修生たちが自ら作り  
上げるイベント「文化交流」があり、母国の文化に  
ついていろいろ工夫を凝らして紹介してくれま  
す。昨年は、各国のおける伝承や伝統などの披露  
がありました。そのほかダンス・格闘技、チャリティ  
オークションなど地域の文化を積極的に参加し、国際  
交流が体験できるものとなっています。

このような文化交流などとも貴重な有益な経験で  
あり、東南アジアと日本の架け橋を強くするという  
意味でも、多くの地域の方々にご参加いただける  
と願っています。

※2 東南アジア 9 カ国: タイ・マレーシア・シンガポール・インドネシア・  
フィリピン・バングラデシュ・ミャンマー・スリランカ・ネパール

高い志を持つ若者のために、時代に合った  
プログラムを提案

今後の課題や抱負は？

IATSS フォーラムは、発足当初、東南アジアの優  
秀な若者たちにその近代化過程から学んでもらう  
ことを目的としていました。「人材育成」という目  
的は変わりませんが、数年前からは日本と ASEAN  
の課題を結びあがら「協働共創型のリーダー  
シップ」を強く掲げたと大きく変更してきました。今  
後、東南アジアとしてどのようなリーダーシップが  
必要とされるのかを考えたうえでプログラムを構成  
させると、できるだけ多くの若者に研修の機会を  
与え、各国各地の将来を担う人材を増やしてい  
けるプログラムにしたいと思っています。

## ABOUT

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ホームページ http://www.iatssforum.jp  
代 表 者 所長 芳賀 朗  
団体設立年月日 1985 年 9 月 17 日  
会 員 数 8 名

研修で行われる議論のようす

IATSS フォーラムには、性別や職業、習性や宗  
教など背景が異なるものの、才能あふれる志高い優秀  
な若者が集まっています。彼らが、周到に準備されたい  
ろいろなプログラム環境で数多くの経験を豊富なな  
ら知識を広げ感性を磨くこと、すなわち、質の高い  
多様性環境の中でのさまざまな経験は、必ず今後の  
キャリアアップ、人格形成に生じるものと信じていま

す。

正直なところ、研修直後では、彼等にとってだけ  
だけこれらの体験がプラスになったのか、当人自身  
もあまり認識できていないと思います。

しかし、「フォーラムでの経験が自分の人生を変  
えた」という声をこれまで何人もの同窓生から伺い  
ました。社会に戻っていつもの同窓な場面に出  
会ったとき、研修で得たものが大きく役立っている  
からでした。

一方、研修生には日本の現状をその目で見る  
、感じてもらい、日本について理解を深めていただ  
きたいです。また、同時に自国について改めて審  
み取り、自分の国・地域の文化を見直し愛着と自信を  
醸成してもらいたいと思います。それが自国の発展に  
寄与する根本姿勢であり、日本と自国の架け橋とな  
る第一歩になるのだと思います。

IATSS フォーラムは「人材育成」と「文化交流」  
を両立させたユニークな経験の場として、私たちは  
これからも頑張っていきたいと思っています。

※3 ASEAN (アソシアシアン・アソシエーション・オブ・サウ  
theast Asian Nations) 東南アジア諸国連合・フィリピン・マレーシ  
ア・シンガポール・インドネシア・スリランカ・ネパール・バングラデシュ・ミ  
ャンマー、ラオス、カンボジアの 10 国を指す。

# The 49th IATSS Forum Program

(Year 2012)

Date	Day	Program	Lecturer		
9	17 Mon	Arrival / Orientation / Facility Tour / Bicycle Training			
	18 Tue	Orientation / Self Introduction / Welcome Dinner			
	19 Wed	Gasshuku ①- Team Building Training	Suzuka Youth Center ↑	T. Seki	
	20 Thu	Gasshuku ②- Team Building Training		T. Seki	
	21 Fri	Gasshuku ③- Making Group Objective, Motto & Logo / Preparation for Opening Ceremony	↓		
	22 Sat	Opening Ceremony / Get-Together with Local Volunteers			
	23 Sun	Self-Development Activity			
	24 Mon	Group Study ①: Introductory Training - Facilitation Skills(1)		K. Tsubaki	
	25 Tue	Group Study ②: Introductory Training - Facilitation Skills (2)		K. Tsubaki	
	26 Wed	Group Study ③: Hands-on Training on Eco-tourism (1)	Toba ↑	K. Ezaki / C. Hyodo	
	27 Thu	Group Study ④: Hands-on Training on Eco-tourism (2)		K. Ezaki / C. Hyodo	
	28 Fri	Seminar ① Political System		Y. Tsuboi	
		29 Sat	Self-Development Activity		
30 Sun		Japanese Cultural Introduction Day			
10		1 Mon	Tour of Suzuka Police Station / Suzuka City Hall		
	2 Tue	Tour of "Moku-Moku Farm" / Move to Kyoto	↑		
	3 Wed	Group Study ⑤: Group Work			
	4 Thu	Group Study ⑥: Group Work			
	5 Fri	Seminar ② Environment and Sustainable Asia	Kyot ↓	K. Matsushita	
	6 Sat	Individual Plan Day			
	7 Sun	Individual Plan Day			
	8 Mon	Seminar ③ OVOP ~One Village and One Product~		F. Adachi	
	9 Tue	Seminar ④ Japanese Culture ~Japanese Aesthetics~ / Move to Suzuka		P. Fister	
	10 Wed	Self-Development Activity			
	11 Thu	Group Study ⑦: Group Work			
	12 Fri	Group Study ⑧: Group Work / Midterm Sharing Session			
	13 Sat	Home Stay			
	14 Sun	Home Stay			
	15 Mon	Seminar ⑤ NGO: Japanese Citizens' Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries		M. Ito	
	16 Tue	Tour of Japanese Traditional Stage Performance "Noh" & Todai-ji Temple		M.Ishihara	
	17 Wed	Seminar ⑥ Transportation		F. Nakamura	
	18 Thu	Group Study ⑨: Intermediate Presentation / Group Work		T. Mizota / T.Arakawa	
	19 Fri	Group Study ⑩: Group Work			
	20 Sat	Preparation for Cultural Exchange Day			
	21 Sun	Cultural Exchange Day			
	22 Mon	Self-Development Activity			
	23 Tue	Group Study ⑪: Group Work			
	24 Wed	Tour of Suzuka Circuit Traffic Education Center / Honda Suzuka Factory			
	25 Thu	Seminar ⑦ Education		Y. Kitamura	
	26 Fri	Seminar ⑧ Economics		F. Adachi	
	27 Sat	Group Study ⑫: Group Work			
	28 Sun	Self-Development Activity			
	29 Mon	Group Study ⑬: Final Check / Group Work		T. Mizota	
		30 Tue	Move to Tokyo / Visit to Headquarter of IATSS	↑	
		31 Wed	Seminar ⑨ Disaster Reconstruction		J. Hirota
		11	1 Thu	Tour of Tokyo Traffic Control Center / Visit to Respective Embassies	
2 Fri	Seminar ⑩ Enterprise Strategies ~Convenience Stores "FamilyMart"~ Tokyo		↑	S.Ogawa	
3 Sat	Individual Plan Day				
4 Sun	Individual Plan Day				
5 Mon	Seminar ⑪ Technology Development / Move to Suzuka		↓	S.Shigemi	
6 Tue	Report Preparation Day				
7 Wed	Group Study ⑭: Group Work				
8 Thu	Group Study ⑮: Rehearsal				
9 Fri	Questionnaire / Final Sharing Session / Preparation for Completion Ceremony				
10 Sat	Group Study Presentation & Completion Ceremony				
11 Sun	Self-Development Activity				
12 Mon	Departure				

\*Honorific prefixes are omitted



# Lecturers

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Tomoko Seki	President, Seez Japan
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Keiko Tsubaki	Managing Director, Global Network of Facilitators
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Kiku Ezaki	Representative Director, Kaito Yumin Club, OZ Ltd.
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Chiho Hyodo	Division Director, Kaito Yumin Club, OZ Ltd.
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Yoshiharu Tsuboi	Professor, School of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University
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Kazuo Matsushita	Professor, Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University
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Fumihiko Adachi	Professor, College of Contemporary Society and Culture, Kinjo Gakuin University
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Patricia Fister	Professor, International Research Center for Japanese Studies
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Michio Ito	President, Asia Community Center 21, Professor, Graduate School of Social Design Studies, Rikkyo University
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Masakazu Ishihara	Chairperson, NPO Nara-Noh
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Fumihiko Nakamura	Professor, Vice Dean, Institute of Urban Innovation, Yokohama National University
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Tsutomu Mizota	Professor of Academic Policy Sciences, Nagasaki University
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Tomoo Arakawa	Chief, Sales and Planning Section, My Ticket Inc.
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Yuto Kitamura	Associate Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Human Sciences, Sophia University
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Junichi Hirota	Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Sciences for Sustainability, Iwate University
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Shuji Ogawa	Manager, International Planning & Administration Department, International Business Division, FamilyMart Co., Ltd.
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Satoshi Shigemi	Chief Engineer, Fundamental Technology Research Center, Honda R&D Co., Ltd.
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(\*Honorific prefixes are omitted)

# The 49th IATSS Forum Participants List

Country		Name	Nick Name	Occupation
Cambodia		Ms. Kong Keomony	Mony	Administrative assistant to Academic Program Office, PANNASASTRA University of Combodia (PCU)
		Mr. Srun Bun Sroeun	BS	Interpreter/Translator and Administrative Assistant Wildlife Alliance
Indonesia		Mr. Budi Azmi	Budi	Team Leader Internation Auditing Unit Indonesia Port Cooperation I, Medan
		Ms. Irma Marfilla Situmorang	Fella	World Vision Indonesia Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Cordinator at operation department
Laos		Mr. Lakhaisy Sompathana	Arthur	Chief assistant Human resource development section HR department Lao Telecommunications
		Mr. Xaypanya Phetyasone	Phet	Lecturer Water Resources Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, National University of Laos(NUOL)
Malaysia		Ms. Atiqah Binti Johari	Achika	Audit Senior Audit and Assurance Khairuddin Hasyudeen & Razi
		Ms. Rasima Binti Abdul Rasid @Awang	Sima	Acting Safety, Health & Environmental Manager Facilities Division, Convex Malaysia Sdn Bhd
Myanmar		Ms. Myat Su Mon	Myat Su	Director Sales and Marketing Section Fortune Palace Co.,Ltd
		Mr. Pyae Moe Kyaw	Nick	General Manager Sales and Marketing Ryae Kyaw Rice Trading Group
Philippines		Ms. Go Ma. Karen Quilloy	Karen	University Research Associate II University of the Philippines Los Banos Foundation Inc.(UPLBFI)
		Mr. Lim Michael Kho	Mike	Exective Deredctor Animation Council of the Philippines, Inc.
Singapore		Ms. Chua Bee Hui, Lilian	Lilian	Senior Executive Officer Information Systems Department (ISD), TOYOTA MOTOR ASIA PACIFIC
		Ms. Teo Liling	Allene	Staff Officer Emergency Preparedness the Public Affairs Department Headquarters of the Singapore Civil Defence Force
Thailand		Ms. Kittisuwana Sadudee	Tum	Foreign relations officer at International Affairs, International Coordination Bureau, Office of Permanent Secretary Ministry of Labor
		Ms. Tuamyim Krittiya	Mod	Town Planner National and Regional planning bureau Department of public works and town & country planning

## The 49th IATSS Forum Participants List

Vietnam		Ms. Hoang Thu Phuong	Fade	Lawyer/Associate Finance and Banking Section Leadco Legal Counsel
		Mr. Vo Quang Toan	Tea	Executive Corporate Products Department Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam
Japan		Mr. Akihiko Takagi	Akky	Staff Purchasing Assurance Office Parts Quality Dept. Suzuka Factory, Honda Motor Co., Ltd.
		Mr. Noriaki Koyanagi	Nagi	Assistant Manager IT Division Honda Motor Co., Ltd.
		Mr. Ryuji Masuda	Ryuji	Senior Staff Quality Innovation Center Tochigi Honda Motor Co., Ltd.
		Mr. Satoshi Naruo	Satoshi	Staff Machinery & Die Engineering Dept. Suzuka Factory, Honda Motor Co., Ltd.



# IATSS Forum Staff Members



Akira HAGA (Akira-san)  
General Manager



Noriyoshi KIKUCHI  
(Nori-san)  
Course master



Midori Kishi (Midori)  
Coordinator



Yumiko TANAKA  
(Yumi)  
Accountant



Mariko SENOKUCHI  
(Mariko)  
Coordinator



Kazuna KOSHIZUKA (Kossy)  
Coordinator



Hiroyasu SUGIURA (Sugi-san)  
Project Coordinator



Mayumi ITOH  
(Mayumi)  
Assistant



Sachiyo TOYODA  
(Sachi)  
Coordinator



Masumi SAKA  
(Masumi)  
on maternity leave



## Messages of the 49th IATSS Forum Participants

Wow.....,

Am I going to Japan? Is that true? It is almost one year I have been waiting for you, Japan. My dreaming country!!!

I'm awaiting and going to see you soon. In the second I am told I am selected to the 49th IATSS Forum, 2012, I felt speechless.

I was so excited that I could have such a great chance for my life. I would learn and build up myself throughout the motto of the forum "Thinking and Learning Together" with many other young professional experts from ASEAN countries.



I would not only gain professional experience and career qualification but to network international understanding and inter-culture exchanges throughout the whole programs. I am enthusiastic to see all of you, the forum, the

IATSS staff and the ASEAN participants. The program would be the great impact, POSITIVE IMPACT, to my life, also to other participants, and I am SURE. Seem now I can't wait to see you!!!

Mony (Cambodia)

1-year period is such a long time to wait for the beginning of 49th IATSS Forum, but it really worse waiting. My heart keeps beating faster and I feel extremely delighted for having been selected to participate in this significant training program for young professionals from ASEAN and Japan to gather under the very crucial theme "Thinking and Learning Together". Not only will this crucial chance be able to turn me into a part of the solution



to the problem now and the future, but it also puts me into different cultures. It is sure that I will learn more

about different life experience and those cultures of different worlds from mine.

Through this, I will be able to develop friendship, mutual understanding and global network with those people which can result in contributing to promote a peaceful culture.

Since IATSS Forum is one of the famous institutes equipping with prominent professors as well as exceptional guest speakers, I would be very privileged to have an opportunity to be with them though in only a short period of time. I would like to profound gratitude to IATSS Forum for giving me such a good opportunity. I am looking forwards to seeing you soon.

BS (Cambodia)

Reading about the IATSS Forum, I am especially intrigued by its motto: "Thinking and Learning Together". This forum provides space for young people to learn variety of things. Young people should not restrict their mind to just one discipline because the solution to solve the complex world that our society faces will definitely be complex as well. More importantly, besides all the intellectual stimulation that I will be devouring, this forum will also teach me about different culture.

JAPAN??? It's like "WOW!!" I have for long been admiring Japan and its citizens. The poised, discipline, and highly dedicated nature that the Japanese have towards their work no matter what their occupations are, really strike me as astounding. The recent tsunami only seems to prove even more what a deeply interesting country Japan is: no looting has taken place and the citizens have maintained their calm demeanor throughout the hard time. This selflessness nature of the citizens has motivated me to be extremely dedicated to my work even more. Just curious to be there, especially to feel the autumn season along attending the program... So excited!:-)



Fella (Indonesia)

Selected as one of the participant for 49th IATSS Forum is a dream come true for me. I really want to join this program from several years ago. This program will provide an opportunity for me and all the participants to learn many things, such as Japanese technology and development experiences. This program also gives me a chance to meet and collaborate with many potential young leaders from the Southeast Asia countries which has many different characteristics and unique cultures too. This opportunity will certainly give a great contribution to my perspective and also influence me in think and re-act. I can't wait to go to Japan and find new adventures there.

Beside that, I would like to experience the different cultures of our ASEAN and Japanese experience. I think it will definitely be a most fun and enjoyable experience, especially when you learn from the best. I am also sure that staying in Japan, will be a great chance to know Japanese culture as well as get to know each other as participants.

Moreover, there will be many chances to improve skills in communication,



leadership, spirit for volunteering, judgment and decision-making in internationally diversified groups in the classroom, in daily life and in the Forum activities. These unique abilities will be very useful for my future career to lead groups with different cultural norms and backgrounds, and to work effectively in international teams.

I can see that IATSS forum could offer a great benefit to those of us who desire to achieve in life as we think and learn together. I'm really looking forward to meeting and sharing new things with others in IATSS Forum, where I can live and study in a multi-cultural environment with interesting exchanges and interaction.

Last but not least, I would like to get to know everyone at the forum, from the participants to the organizers, who have made it possible for us to step into Japan! See you all in Japan.

Budi (Indonesia)

Hello every body, I am Sompathana LAKHAISY from Vientain Capital, Lao PDR. To tell the true I was very happy and exciting. Since the final interview committee called my name the first

person was selected to participate in the 49th IATSS Forum. My heart beat very fast and both of hands were so cool, and at the same time I have told in my mine "Yes!!! I can do it".

From that day I have prepared myself quite a lot about information, physical, and mind with looking forward to the day of 49th IATSS Forum begin to meet talented young leader from



ASEAN country and Japan, professionals of IATSS Forum teamwork. In order to share the idea, exchange the experience, thinking and learning together with all of them. More than that, spend life time of 55 days learn to know each other and be come close friend as well as be a family of IATSS. So everyone Please take care and keep your healthy then go to Japan together to break down the 49th IATSS Forum.

Let's count down together from today,

Arthur ( Laos )

There is no such kind of words and sentences to express my feeling while I was selected as a participant to attend the 49th IATSS Forum, at the exciting minute made me out of control to show up the signal of happiness, and smiling face was with me for a week later.

Thousands of great reasons have been fascinated and inspired me in trying hard to gain knowledge



and experience in this country. On the one hand, Japan is my dream country where I want to visit the most, because of the unique of culture, ancestor and amazed people, especially not only Japanese people I can meet and learn from but also I am going to meet several different professional field careers in the similar society. On the other hands, the term of "Thinking and Learning together" it is hopefulness for me in having great opportunity to meet the professional in his/her career in the Asian region. The expectation to learn, think and share each one

experience is made up in my mind and waiting for the time come.

Right now, I am already starting to countdown the days until I will leave my beloved country (Laos) to prove amazing experiences what I have dream so far in Japan and I am now still exciting to meet all of you in Japan, See you soon !!!

PHET (Laos)



I am one of the luckiest people on earth to be selected and given the opportunity to join the 49th IATSS Forum in 2012. It's a dream come true!

We have just received our 2nd information kit, and I know that we are going to learn so much and at the same time have lots of fun.

Despite having so much to

prepare and research for the seminar topics prior to our trip, I really can't wait for the travelling dates to come – to learn, experience, discover myself, discover the world!

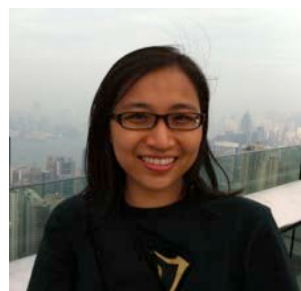
I look forward to spending useful and enjoyable time with people across Asia and broaden myself with knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural, environmental, economic and political perspectives of the ASEAN countries and in particular, Japan. The cross culture teamwork and working with people from different professions and backgrounds will definitely be exciting and an eye-opener.

And also, the staff and members of IATSS forum have been very warm, welcoming and hospitable even prior to our arrival – domo arigatou gozaimas! I'm sure we will all have a great time there!

Achika (Malaysia)

Hello everyone, Salam Sejahtera. Personally, I am honoured to be chosen for the 49th IATSS forum. This is indeed an incredible opportunity and such an eye-opening experience for me. The knowledge to be gained from this forum in particular the unique culture and lifestyle of Japan

would be useful for my professional development, enhance my self-esteem and improve my leadership skills. I must say, I have attended many forums and



seminar over the past years but I'm sure none compare to this exceptional programs and effective presentation by fellow speakers which I am so looking forward to. To fellow participants, I

hope to be able to share your experiences and wisdom throughout the session. As saying goes, gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow and so I am, truly grateful and take great pleasure to be part of this forum. Last but not least, I hope to simply enjoy and have fun interacting and learning with fellow participants from various countries throughout this forum.

Sima (Malaysia)

I felt as if my heart had stopped beating when I learned that I have been selected for the 49th IATSS forum. I was numb for the moment out of joy! It has been months but the excitement never fades whenever I recall. Can someone ever imagine going to Japan to be trained with skills one would need in the future career while everything will be taken care of for you during your stay in Japan? Yes, that's correct, I say... in Japan, a country famous for its inspiring spirit and people.

Participants are young professionals of different abilities and interests with unique ideas. The topics discuss will be on society, politics, economics, technologies, culture and international relations. Study tours and home stay to open up your existing knowledge and perceptions of life to prepare you for a better self. Plus, you feel the warm welcome from IATSS even before you are in Japan physically. You don't feel lost or insecure of what to do next. What more one could ask for!





I'm hopeful that I will come back with memories of a lifetime, equipped with experiences compare to nowhere in the world. See you soon Japan ;)

Myat Su (Myanmar)

"IATSS Forum" these two words are shaking my mind since I received message, I am being selected to join IATSS Forum: The best Leadership program composed of tons of knowledge of JAPAN. The themes of seminars of IATSS are really particular and widely covered the subjects what a perfect leader should aware of. 18 participants from 9 Asia countries will meet, discuss and share knowledge each other based on the highly development of Japan. It makes me really excited and I feel proud of myself. I am expecting to absorb much new knowledge and idea from IATSS Forum.

I have great expectation from colorful and hilarious Japan which is studded with innovation, R & D and exploration beyond border. I do have burning enthusiasm to learn everything within the shortest time possible by leap and bound. It goes without saying that Japan is an igloo of expectation and enthusiasm, of which can get skyful of precious general commercial knowledge and the needs of times in my country.

I do have an urge to relate my fellow business young leader on the value and virtue of IATSS Forum, which is still foreign to our dynamic and promising new generation. I will expose myself to them for their inspiration to learn arts and sciences in Japan in the nearest future.

Nick (Myanmar)

Mabuhay! As I write this article, it's exactly 2 months before my first flight out of the country- DESTINATION: IATSS Forum, SUZUKA, Japan. Mixed emotions starts creeping on me as I read on the 2nd pre-travel information kit, I said to myself, the forum hasn't formerly started yet but I already feel that I belong . It makes me think these pre-

travel activities were not just given to prepare us but as early as now discipline and train us to look forward on thinking and learning even while still apart. Imagine each participant as well as all the staffs and volunteers doing their part already, making the forum successful even from the start.

Preparing, anticipating, envisioning are few things that wells up within me right now, but what excites me most are the people I will meet that will make the experience worth keeping. People coming from different cultures, expertise, backgrounds and language and uniting them in this beautiful place of Japan would really be an amazing experience for us. All the things that I will learn, share and enjoy will surely have an impact on my life and prayerfully will be able to transcend it to my (Kababayan) country men as well. Looking forward to seeing you all!

Karen (Philippines)

Happiness and excitement are perhaps the best words that can describe my feeling toward the upcoming IATSS Forum. My acceptance to the forum came at a time when my family was in grief. The final panel interview was set one day after my family and I sent my father to his final resting place. It was also one day after our flagship project wrapped up, which I wasn't able to see through because it was my father's interment. And it was also the day when I had to go on a trade mission abroad; hence I was carrying my luggage with me during the interview.

It was a very difficult situation to manage. Many things were happening in my head. While I was still in the process of grieving, I was also controlling my nervousness

and organizing my thoughts in preparation for the interview. I have been to





a lot of panel interviews but I have never been this nervous in my life. One can feel the intensity, pressure and seriousness of the final exercise. And indeed, nothing could be more enjoyable and rewarding than hearing the sound of your name being called. Hence, I expect nothing less of the forum than to have a fun and fruitful learning for 55 days.

Perhaps, like everybody else, I consider my participation to the forum a great blessing. But I consider mine a sweeter victory since I felt that my father was helping me along the way even though he was not there physically. I guess this is really how the universe keeps our lives balanced. When life seems to give us a handful of sorrow, it will offer us a bucketful of happiness afterwards.

Mike (Philippines)

Keen anticipation of a much awaited event can be such sweet torture.

IATSS Forum へ行きたくてたまらない。

I have wanted to go for the IATSS forum ever since 2010 when I heard my friend recount her wonderful and fruitful 55 days' experience. I went online to find out more and was so thrilled by the opportunities offered by the forum that I spent days dreaming about going. My excitement rises as the day of departure draws near. The IATSS forum is a special opportunity to exchange ideas and grow in knowledge with other bright individuals, besides understanding other ASEAN cultures in the beautiful and advanced country of Japan. I'm truly blessed and thank God for this amazing opportunity to learn from top-notch lecturers, getting first-hand experience on the topics through field studies and developing communications skills through group presentation & discussions. I could go on and on about the things I look forward to at the forum in September but due to space constraints, let me end off by thanking all the forum staff for their efforts in

preparing for the forum. Here's to wishing all my fellow participants all the best in their preparations. Can't wait to see everyone!



Allene(Singapore)

Hello Everyone! My name is Lilian from Singapore! I am very glad to be able to embark on this learning journey. Apart from English and Mandarin, I can speak a little bit of Japanese, Thai, French, etc. I love to learn languages of the world as it brings us closer to each other. Being in the automotive industry, I am very excited when I saw the opening for IATSS forum and immediately applied for it! The words "go to Japan", "Thinking and Learning together", "Suzuka F1 circuit", "traffic safety", "social contribution" and "ASEAN friends" are what appealed to me greatly.

Indeed, it is the best thing that happened to me this year - to be chosen! It is only ~1 month's time and I will be there! I am very excited now! Looking at the syllabuses, I believe I will be able to gain much knowledge and improve the way I see things around me. I am very glad that this year's theme is Eco-tourism. It is a very important topic in this era where mother earth has suffered much damages now and we should learn to preserve it. This forum will not only help me in my career development, but my personal development as well. I will treasure this opportunity and learn as much as I can! Japan, here I come!! Looking forward to see all of you!



Lilian (Singapore)

Please allow me to start it with this quote "Life is a creation of mind". Human being is the sort of subjective creature. We see the world through filters, and these filters are relatively changed by our experiences. Experiences pave the way for deep understanding, and perspective influences everything. That's the reason why I've got to sincerely show my gratitude to IATSS for giving me a chance to come to Japan as a participant of 49th IATSS Forum. It is not only an opportunity for me to visit Japan, but to learn about Japan and to acquire all new experiences together with friends from neighboring countries. So I plan to prepare enough empty spaces in my mind, waiting for the



fulfillment of the new learning from the special 55 days at IATSS. I'm glad to know you all.

Mod (Thailand)

Being a part of IATSS is indeed a golden opportunity of mine. After reading and reading the Information

Kits, there are many pictures in my imagination.

In fact, Japan is one of my dream

destinations.

Personally, I am in-depth interested in Japanese culture, tradition and language.

Under IATSS 's unique motto "Thinking and Learning Together", I am able to broaden and deepen my practical skill and knowledge by sharing/exchanging opinions and experiences with the experts and other competent participants from different backgrounds about current regional and world issues facing ASEAN countries with looking up Japan as a case study.

More specifically, it is a good chance to create international relationships and networks at the Forum, learning the differences and similarities among the nations from participants, instructors and other Japanese people. I believe such strong bond will be more than eternity. I can't wait for the 55 days spending time at the IATSS Forum. Let's get ourselves ready, final countdown is coming soon.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in September.

Tum (Thailand)

Warm greetings from Vietnam to you all! I assume that I am the last person who has been selected to the 49th IATSS Forum. I still remember that day of July, when I received a phone call from the secretariat in Vietnam, to inform me the greatest news I have ever heard, I was surprised and felt happy extremely. I could not image a day I would come to Japan and participate in the Forum this year

but my dream really came true. The IATSS Forum is truly opportunity for me to expand my international network, gain experience and learn



from other participants over ASEAN about their communication skills and their professional skills and I would like to establish

friendship with them. It also gives me a chance to discover Japan; people, culture and history of the must-go country of my wish list. I believe we will reach the target of the IATSS Forum as its premise "Learning and thinking together". Let's countdown to the first day of the period of 55 days to Japan! I look forward to see you all in Suzuka and I think that all of us will have the unforgettable memories in here. I would like to give big thanks to the ITASS Forum organizers and staffs for bringing us the opportunity and your preparation for our journey.

どうもありがとうございました!

Fade (Vietnam)

My name is Vo Quang Toan from Vietnam (you can call me Tea). Up to now, I've still remembered the happy and



fruitful moment when the secretariat announcing the name of two lucky guys, including me, who will be the participants in the next 49th IATSS Forum in Japan. To summarize myself, I am a travel personality who has been backpacking most parts of my country, Vietnam, from the mountainous to the crowded downtowns, from North to South but rarely gone abroad. Truly, I have never been in a foreign country for such a long time and this opportunity can be a great experience in my life. I sometimes imagine about the days when all 10 ASEAN and Japanese friends live and learn

together, sharing our traditions, views and ambitions with each other, discovering ourselves through a well-design interactive programs.

Moreover, in my opinion, Japan is a special nation which has a rich culture and its post-war economic growth miracle was a historical phenomenon that I have admired since a student. Thus, I am eager to study your lessons in development and be an enthusiastic active member of the 49th IATSS forum. Finally, I wish you health and hope that we will have a practical and successful time this year. See you soon!

Tea (Vietnam)



# The 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum Participants



## Objective of the 49th IATSS Forum:

1. Strengthening and challenging individual abilities by balancing and inquiry
2. Fostering intercultural and interpersonal relationship and networks
3. Continuous enjoyable learning and growth through collaboration
4. Building leaders to affect global change





# Introductory Training Reports



Gasshuku



Facilitation  
Skills Training







## **GASSHUKU (Team Building Training)**

### **Ms. Tomoko SEKI**



September 19<sup>th</sup> – September 21<sup>st</sup> 2012

**Budi Azmi (Budi),  
Indonesia**

### **The Objective**

- To get to know the other participants and work with each other as a team.
- To recognize the unique characteristics of yourself and others and utilize them productively.
- To learn/master problem-solving techniques and skills by offering each other's ideas and sharing roles in the spirit of team work.
- To have higher goals for improvement by practicing learning styles.
- To set up goals, for both individuals and the group and to have clear-cut measures to achieve them.

### **Facilitator**

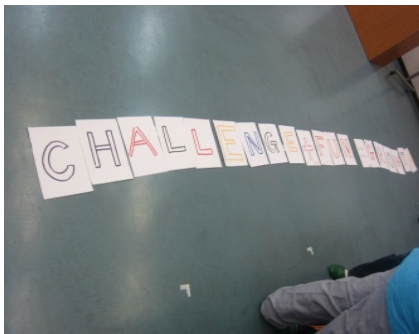
#### **Ms. Tomoko SEKI**

Director of Seize the Moment, Seeds, She's Japan Educational Consultant  
Trainer for Project Adventure Japan (JPA)

### **1. Finger Grabbing**

Each participant stands in the circle and tries to grab their counterpart's finger by their hand and at the same time tries to release their fingers from counterpart's hand.

This game reflects the situation of everyone's response and alertness. One has to listen carefully and immediately respond. This activity teaches us to be focused and alert with our surroundings and reminds us that it is not easy to multi task perfectly in time.



### **2. Corporate Maze**

The objective of this game is to select alphabet letters and to create secret words within certain period of time. Participants can move to the left, right, front or backwards from one position to another position but cannot move diagonally.

After several attempts, we managed to complete correctly the letters and the secret words were "CHALLENGE + FUN = GROWTH". These words have a deeper message as they tell us that we face challenges in



our daily life and they may be stressful. However, with a little element of fun and in embracing the pressure, we can grow together as a strong team.

### **3. Mouth against mind**

All participants create a large circle while holding each other's hands and follow the instructions of the facilitator either moves to the left, right, forward or backward or the opposite side of the words we hear.

This activity reminds us that sometimes we do not realize that our actions do not follow our conscience. Therefore, we need to concentration, listen and focus in carrying out any task.



### **4. Growth Circles**

Everyone forms a circle and are divided into three categories: Comfort Zone, Challenge Zone and Panic Zone. Each participant is required to stand in the zone that they are comfortable for each given situation.

It reflects about everyone's attitude and personality. With that, we understand ourselves better and learn how to deal with it. In our life, we will always comfortable and complacent in our Comfort Zone. However, in order to achieve more and be success in our life, we need to step out of our comfort zone and challenge ourselves. We have to learn how to manage when we are in our Panic Zone and change it into our Comfort Zone.



### **5. Drawing hand and your own goals/writing advice for others.**

All participants were given the opportunity to describe their objective and then write the goals they wanted to achieve from the IATSS forum. After that, all participants were required to exchange their hands' picture with other participants. Other participants could give comments or suggestions to assist the participants in achieving their desired goal.

This activity is essential for all participants. Participants have the opportunity to be clear about what the objectives of the other participants are. On the other hand, each participant also receives valuable input from other participants in achieving their stated objectives.

## 6. Making the rope square with blind folds



All participants required to form a square using a rope while at the same time are blind folded and other communication except verbal communication is allowed. We were given 45 minutes to complete the task. Team work was very important in this activity.

Actually I am very proud of this activity because we accomplished this activity within 30 minutes. We learned that proper planning, and inputs from other team members are important before the implementation of the activities. Task delegation and understanding our

roles and the objectives played a major role. Besides that, it taught us that we had to be patient and trust our leader.

## 7. Duplication



The participants were divided into two groups and needed to construct a structure exactly identical from the original structure within 45 minutes. The structure is placed further away and each team member can take a turn to view the structure.

This game teaches us to be detailed in our work and to work as a team as it is impossible to work individually with the limited time given.

## 8. Expectations, Concerns and Norms

Every participant had a chance to write their expectation, concerns and norms for the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum Program. Some of the expectations, concerns and norms that have been expressed are:

Expectations:

- confidence improvement
- better leadership skills
- understanding diversity
- time management
- good negotiator
- team work
- capacity building
- striking balance between being a team player and team leader

Concerns:

- conflict ideas in a team
- communication
- being to outspoken
- team work skills
- discussion method
- assignment deadline
- intercultural shock
- problem solving together
- language barrier
- too selfish/not giving other the opportunity

Norms:

- everybody listens for the instructions
- be punctual
- understanding personal style, specialization
- open mind
- cultural taboos
- acceptance
- be humble and share
- support each other

## 9. Star Wars Game



All participants were divided in two groups, and then the balls were lined up in front of them and were used to hit the opponents. Each team had their own “Jedi”, who held the light sword that is used to bring back the life of the dead team members. The ultimate objective of the game is for the opponent to hit the Jedi.

This game really requires physical stamina and good strategies. Each team must try to find the weakest opponent so that they can control their opponent's territory, while the others help to cover their team from being attacked by opponents.

## 10. Spider Web



This activity was to get all team members from one side of the web to the other side of the web without touching the rope within the limited time given. We had to work together as a team by supporting each other, planning the implementation and other. One important lesson we had learned was that we have to be flexible in our decision making especially when we encounter failures.



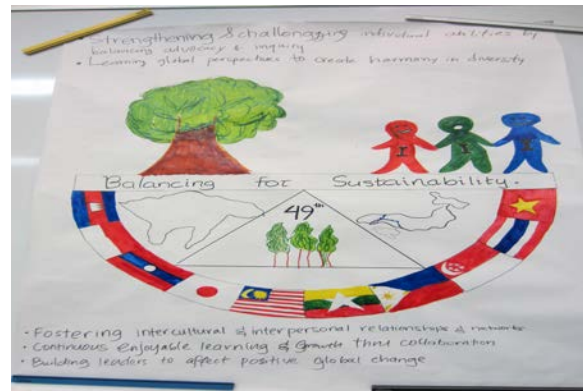
in our tasks. We had to relook onto the problems and find alternatives to complete the task.

## 11. Making a group objective, motto and logo.

We divided into 3 different groups, and each participant in the group shared their own objectives, motto and logos. The final discussion was when we combined as one big team and finalize our 49<sup>th</sup> batch IATSS Forum objective, motto and logo.

There were lots of ideas that been shared and suggested, so we had to discuss them, with good collaboration, sharing and respect and especially know how to accept and reject the ideas. We have done a very good job even though we did ask for more time to finish it.

Finally we choose the motto: BALANCING FOR SUSTAINABILITY. It means that we have to keep and maintain the balance between our human needs and resources in order to ensure that there is enough left for the next generation. On the other side, we have to make sure that sustainability is never ending.



The 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum Objective is:

- Strengthening and challenging individual abilities by balancing advocacy and inquiry.
- Learn a global perspective to create harmony in diversity.
- Fostering intercultural and interpersonal relationships and networks.
- Continuous enjoyable learning and growth through collaboration.
- Building leaders to affect global change.

## Conclusion

There are many learning points from the GASSHUKU – Team Building for the three days in Suzuka Youth Center. Almost all activities conducted require us to work together as a team and indirectly learn about leadership skills. Besides that, we also learn the importance of having a good communication skills and trusting each other to succeed in achieving the objectives.

The GASSHUKU – Team Building also gives us a chance to increase the teams understanding and improve how the team works together. Working as a team incorporates group accountability rather than individual accountability and results in a collective work product. It also encourages the team approach to working on a project.

The GASSHUKU – Team Building also provides to all of us problem solving exercises which are designed to help train a group's effectiveness in thinking, communicating, and behaving.







## **Facilitation Skills Training**

### **Ms. Keiko Tsubaki**



28 September 2012

**Michael Kho Lim**  
**Philippines**

When people look at facilitation skills at a glance, they may seem to be an “easy” skill to acquire. Most of the time, people see a facilitator as someone who just gets the meeting organized and makes sure that this runs smoothly. While this is true, it is not as easy as one thinks. Facilitation requires a whole range of skill sets focusing on the areas of verbal and non-verbal communication, group dynamics and time management.

The two-day facilitation skills seminar conducted by Ms. Keiko Tsubaki was indeed a great tool in equipping us for the next forty-plus days at the forum. It was an excellent follow-through seminar after the gasshuku / teambuilding activity especially since we will be having a lot of group activities in the forum, and every participant should know how to facilitate a group discussion so that we achieve our objectives as a group.

The seminar involved everyone working in different teams and tested our facilitation skills through various activities that taught us about mind mapping, brainstorming, the basic skills a facilitator must have, the different roles we play (as facilitator, timekeeper and secretary) during a discussion/meeting, using the whiteboard effectively, and many more.

Our discussion flow on facilitation began with whether there was a direct translation of the word “facilitation” in the mother tongue of each participant. Many of us (if not all) replied that there was none, primarily because facilitation is a western concept. Even in the Japanese language, Miss Tsubaki said that there was no translation for “facilitation.”

By being a very good facilitator herself, Miss Tsubaki was able to demonstrate the qualities of a facilitator. Her constructivist method of “teaching” or in this case, facilitating, was very effective in helping the participants acquire facilitation skills. The two-day seminar was centered on the participants and not on the “teacher.”

Miss Tsubaki utilized an interactive lecture style and the experiential learning approach or learning by doing. Each participant had the chance to be a facilitator and everyone’s experience was different.

The seminar was not really a lecture in the sense that there was a teacher and she was just transmitting knowledge to the participants. Instead, Miss Tsubaki facilitated the learning of the participants. Through this method alone, she was able to communicate that a facilitator is far different from being a teacher or a leader. One important note that she stressed was that everyone can be a facilitator but not everyone can be a leader.

A leader provides the vision, direction and takes full responsibility for the whole team. S/he is responsible for the future of the team. On the other hand, a facilitator doesn’t need to think of the future, so to speak. S/he doesn’t have that kind of responsibility. For example, s/he may just be responsible for the team for two hours—to make sure that the team has an active discussion and for it to go smoothly.

The power or the center of attention is not on the facilitator, but on the participants. There is a shift from being “the sage on the stage” to “a guide on the side.” The key point here is to generate insights and learning from the participants and not be the source of learning. The facilitator need not know the answers. S/he can join the participants in learning and finding the answers.

Even though the seminar was just two days, it was enough to let us discover ourselves and find our own style or technique of facilitation. Miss Tsubaki always emphasized this point. There is not just one way of facilitating. She said for example that she is a powerful/strong facilitator, but others maybe a quiet facilitator. Each has his/her own style.

This just proves that facilitation skill is both an art and science. While we are free to discover our own style of facilitating, we still have to follow certain sets of standards or guidelines in order to be an effective facilitator.

In the straw tower exercise for example, the importance of cooperation, teamwork and listening to everybody’s ideas was reiterated. We have to learn to always listen to one another. In facilitation it is more important to be a good listener than to be a good speaker. If the facilitator talks too much, s/he is not being a good facilitator.



A good facilitator also needs to have good questioning skills. However, one must be cautious in formulating his/her questions since the facilitator has the power to influence the group through his/her questioning, so it’s highly important not to ask leading or misleading questions.

At the same time, Miss Tsubaki pointed out that the facilitator is not a superman or superwoman. The pressure should not only be on the facilitator. It is everybody’s job. S/he should ask all the members to cooperate and to use everybody’s abilities or strengths to find a common solution. It should be the facilitator’s own solution.

Miss Tsubaki also noted that one of the more important challenges for a facilitator is to see the group from the outside or from the macro perspective. Most of the time, “newbie” facilitators tend to forget this. One usually just sees things from the inside or on a micro level. When one becomes a facilitator, s/he must be able to see him/herself from the outside if s/he is doing the job correctly. At the same time, it is very crucial for the facilitator to always stay neutral and to see things from the bird’s eye view, as well as the ant’s eye view.

In the trust walk paired activity, one is blindfolded while the other is not and the one who can see would act as the instructor or the one who will give instructions/directions to the other. At first, the instructor can touch the blindfolded person in guiding him/her. Then after a few minutes, the instructor will no longer touch him/her and just give directions verbally.

This exercise is very important in showing us the difference between fully guided instruction and partly guided or limited instruction. The first one is more of spoon-feeding directions until one reaches his/her destination, while the other is more of navigating through facilitation. The receiver of directions generates his/her own path (of learning) and just trusts the instruction giver until s/he eventually gets to his/her destination.

At the same time, when the person is about to fall or go to the wrong direction, the facilitator (instruction giver) should be able to catch/assist the person and lend a hand to stop the fall. We also learned that when the blindfolded person feels that s/he is lost, or when the facilitator him/herself or even the whole team is lost, one must be able to voice this out and make everyone aware that the team is lost so that everyone can find the correct path to the

destination (or to achieve the objectives/goals). Trust, like communication, is a two-way street.

Another exciting activity that we had was the NASA exercise. This is an activity on reaching a consensus. One important learning here is about conflict management. We should not avoid conflicts because they can make new ideas. Conflict here doesn't mean physical or verbal fighting that tends to hurt people. Conflict here is about disagreements on perspectives or thinking.

Definitely, each person has his/her own way of looking at things. There is no such thing as an "unnecessary idea" We have to listen even to the minority idea because it could actually be our conclusion. And when we are at the discussion table, ideas should just flow continuously. However, it is important to resolve the disagreements and reach a consensus so everybody can move forward. Miss Tsubaki reminded us again of the adage, "Two heads are better than one."

In order to create a healthy discussion, we always have to consider different perspectives and to base our decisions on logic and not emotions. Logical thinking is very important for everyone to reach a consensus. There is always a reason behind every decision, and we need (concrete) facts to justify our actions.

Another important trait of being a good facilitator is knowing how to paraphrase and summarize periodically. While we are listening to different viewpoints, people may have different understandings of a certain word, phrase or concept and it's important for the facilitator to clarify and explain this again, especially when the team belongs to a multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment. It is critical for the facilitator to also get involved in the discussion and synthesize everything so everyone is clear with the group's decision.

While voting is a method of reaching consensus, it is important to note that this should be done at the final decision-making stage and not at the beginning. The goal of the facilitator at the start of any discussion is just that: to generate the flow of ideas.

Now, on a more personal note, I think that the highlight and the greatest tool of learning in this seminar is the feedback mechanism that Miss Tsubaki has put in place. We took turns at being a facilitator for every group activity that we had, and she always distributed a feedback sheet that somewhat functioned as a scorecard so that we were able to get to know our strong points but at the same time our area/s of improvement.

The feedback sheet works as a self-evaluation, peer evaluation and even as a group evaluation tool. I find this very effective because feedback acts as a mirror. One looks at him/herself at the mirror and evaluates him/herself. Then the team members share their feedback about the facilitator, and during the last activity, each group was observed by two other groups. Hence, the whole group would know how its group dynamics was.

I also found the progression of the activities to be systematic and effective. For example, we begin to work in smaller groups then gradually progressed to working in bigger groups and then working somewhat as inter-groups. Like during the observation exercise, it was like we moved from holding a small mirror first before moving to a bigger mirror, and helped everyone to see from the outside.

When we are in our respective roles, the challenge is always how to see ourselves from the outside. We tend to forget this because we are so focused on the role that we should play. Miss Tsubaki reminded everyone that we have to be aware of this challenge and face it. We have to learn to step out but also to step back into the group. By doing so, we become





effective facilitators and strike or achieve the balance of being a participant and a facilitator or even the balance of being a team leader and a team player.

During the observation exercise, Miss Tsubaki noticed that during our discussion, I was acting as a co-facilitator. I guess that I wasn't able to help myself in resisting from playing the role. However, she is not saying this is wrong. My group also thought the same. This just demonstrated our teamwork—that when someone felt that the group was about to be lost or sensed that the discussion would be off track, someone had to remind the team and get the ball rolling in the right direction.

Unlike in another group, Miss Tsubaki pointed out that the team knew it was lost but no one voiced out about everyone being lost to the point that the team's conclusion and objectives were just the same. The group seemed to have gone on a circular route and didn't reach its destination. They ended where they started.

Miss Tsubaki also discussed the role of a facilitator in terms of controlling the speed/pacing of the discussion. S/he must be able to adjust in creating a more dynamic atmosphere. Sometimes, the discussion can run a little slow or a bit faster. The point is not to make the discussion flat and monotonous.

Overall, the two-day training was really about discovering ourselves more—finding out and learning about our own facilitation styles, how we will utilize these skills effectively throughout the forum, and that over time, we will eventually become effective facilitators. This seminar just proves that experience is indeed the best teacher and that there's really no one else to compete with except ourselves.













## **Hands-on Training on Eco-tourism (Toba City)**

### **Ms. Kiku Ezaki, Ms. Chiho Hyodo and Mr. Yuya Amada**

September 26<sup>th</sup> – September 27<sup>st</sup>, 2012



**Phetyasone Xaypanya  
Laos**

### **The Objective**

- To know and understand the ecotourism process strategy, methodology and related concerns (the advantage on economic development and environment conservation).
- To give participants an experience of the specific ecotourism project (Toba ecotourism site) by introducing its history, uniqueness and successfulness.
- To develop and expand an eco-tour for the further creativity in participants' home countries as well as to aware the sustainability of ecotourism.
- To be become aware of conservation of ecosystems and the environment by balancing community ecosystems and environment.
- To be aware and understand the important points of nature through ecosystem study.

### **Lecturer**

#### **Ms. Kiku Ezaki**

Representative Director of Kaito Yumin Club, OZ Ltd.

#### **Ms. Chiho Hyodo**

Division Director of Kaito Yumin Club, OZ Ltd.

#### **Mr. Yuya Amada**

The tourism department of Toba city

Hands-on Training on Eco-tourism is one of the important components to the IATSS Forum's training courses; it is 2-day training course including a lectured introduction from three points of view from different professional lecturers, and site seeing for both city walking and local food tasting. By visiting various kinds of restaurants around the Toba city, local traditional products were been presented in a particular way and the uniqueness of each shop owner, and community visiting understand community situation, life style and natural resources by jumping in and touching to the nature of the community and environment. The training is briefly described as follows:

## **1. Eco-tour experience I**

At first on arrival in Toba city, the warmest welcome was presented by Kaito Yumin Club representatives (Ms. Kiku Ezaki and Ms. Chiho Hyodo). The starting point of training on Toba Ecotourism was sightseeing, which included all of the communities and ecological systems of Toba city and its surrounding islands. The community living style and all of the living conditions were shown for us to have a better understanding of how to have all the things in place and sustainable for the tourism/ participants. The site is a good and concrete example in terms of ecosystem conservation; all the procedures and practice rules were applied at the beginning of the group tour in order for us to have better awareness and give the important point which is needed for sustainable community development as balancing of natural environment and community. Deeply knowing the community's life style and daily activities are an important idea for experiencing the nature of a sustainable community

## **2. Lecturing**

The first and second lectures were presented on the first day after sightseeing, and the third presentation was introduced on the second day in the morning session. The key words were attractive because the first lecture introduced the basic general information which was presented by Ms. Chiho Hyodo including important issues as below:

- Toba city information(history, location and view of Toba)
- The history of Kaito Yumin Club including statistic record
- The concept of Kaito Yumin Club and product composition
- The processing method and rule on the island
- The community living condition and life style
- The special local food and products
- The company mission and further development plans

For the second lecture which was given by the Toba city tour department Mr. Yuya Amada, the lecture was well explained in deep detail about the basic plan for Toba including the tour's guidelines, policies, action plans and implementation for the Toba ecotourism apart of those, the lecture also mentioned the Concept of the Counsel of Promotion for ecotourism projects.

The last presentation was given by Ms. Kiku Ezaki on the second day, the lecture's aim was to give more details all about the ecotourism in Toba project, and also the important concern to the communities, the key concepts, the motto and all the composition of the project. However, this lecture provided the most ecotourism information in detail which was the most useable one because everything was in detail, from beginning up to the end of the running process.

## **3. Eco-tour experience II**

The schedule was the second last activity; it was one of the most exciting and enjoyable tasks. Two groups were set up to extract from the bigger one as might be better touching experiences; for example various kinds of foods had been tasted by every participant such as Sushi, deserts and so on, aside of those nice foods, all participants also have chance to know some of the local traditional products like handmade cotton, sea

products (sea weed, shells and fishes) and thousands of decoration items made by local materials and local people which can be used as a very nice gifts back at home for all visitors. Moreover, the traditional cultural style of these people is unforgettable because the way they respect to each other is very unique and polite, eating style with famous local food is very orderly and careful in preparation as well, they enjoy eating, and everything must be in place which nowhere can be seen.

#### **4. Group discussion**

The session was held as the last task of the tour but it was so meaningful and useful, because it was run as a session summary, three discussion groups were set up with the useful and memorized topics such as the most impressive moments and things of two days visiting, the role of the tour guides which can be helpful to improve guide tours in ecotourism for the Toba eco-tourism and it was also useful for all of us in case are needed to improve our ecotourism procedures, policies and system in our home countries. Of course, being sustainable ecotourism is not kind of easy operation and it cannot be done without cooperation from the stakeholders as group of communities and also with the city tour department as a connector from the companies to the community and also as a measurement of balancing ecosystems by regularly checking and observing the ecosystems of environment and communities.

#### **5. The impression**

Since, Toba Ecotourism is one of most successful business tours in Japan, there are lots of points that we could obtain during and after 2 days experience, and the most impressive for us, from even the starting point was how the idea come up, to involve the community and elementary school students. It is nice shot and must have been being well train by any mean, because what we experienced was so great and unforgettable and it is good start for the better vision of those kids involved, and that great natural environment leaves me speechless. In addition, all the tasks were so nice especially the nice tasting food in the city tour which we all enjoyed the most.





# Seminar Reports













## Political System

### Prof. Yoshiharu TSUBOI



September 29<sup>th</sup> 2012

**Pyae Moe Kyaw (NICK),  
Myanmar**

#### “Politics and Politicians”

Most of the people from ASEAN countries still think politics is very sensitive and complicated to discuss in public. When I first heard this title “Politics and Our life”, I thought that the discussion would be silent and quiet for all participants. ASEAN countries possess very different political systems and political backgrounds, some are Kingdoms, some are republics and some are communist countries, being so was I very interested to participate in the Political System seminar. I took this seminar not only as a participant but also as a coordinator and group leader. I also chose this seminar for my country’s presentation. 3 countries presented in seminar.

They are

1. “Arthur ” Lakhaisy Sompethana & “Phet ”Xaypanya Phetyasone  
(Participants from “The Lao People's Democratic Republic”)
2. “Nick ”Pyae Moe Kyaw & “Myat Su ”Myat Su Mon  
(Participants from “The Republic of the Union of Myanmar”)
3. “Tea ”Vo Quang Toan & “ Fade” Hoang Thu Phuong  
(Participants From “the Socialist Republic of Vietnam”)

Professor Yoshiharu TSUBOI, (Professor, School of Political Sciences and Economic, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan) is the lecturer of the political systems seminar. He opened the seminar with the country presentation of participants.

“Arthur” Lakhaisy Sompethana & “Phet” Xaypanya Phetyasone (Participants from “The Lao People's Democratic Republic”) present about of the political system of their country with 7 contents: (1) Location of Laos (2) Laos general information (3) Rank Political & Government(4)Framework Political and Government (5) Present situation of Lao (6) People’s attitudes toward politic (7) Impact of a rising China. Lao P D R is a land locked country located in the heart of the Indochina region of Southeast Asia. Lao shares a border with 5 countries: China to the North, Cambodia to the South, Vietnam to the East, Thailand to the West, and Myanmar to the North West. “General information of Laos and Ranks policies”, “Laos Politic &





Government Framework “and “Government of Laos”. They explained the political back ground of The Lao People's Democratic Republic very well. But I was really interested in the title “Lao people’s attitudes toward politics”. I observed the Laos people and their attitude from this. Laos people are proud of Peace, Independence, Democracy, Unity and Prosperity. I was also impressed I know that Lao people strongly believe in their leader (Lao People’s Revolution Party) or LPRP. Impact and influence of china on Laos was more interesting for

me. According to their presentation, I assume that the weakness of the administration and the influence of Chinese businessman on the Laos economy is becoming an important issue for Laos. They presented that “Some groups from China such as business men, investors that bring capital for doing permanent business are good, because Lao’s economy will grow, and new high technology will be import to Lao. Lao people will have more choice of using products. More than that, Lao people will have work to do, and this will reduce unemployed. As well as it will make Lao’s economic strength direct and indirect. On the other hand, they also have a lot of weak points such as the administration and regulation of the system, for example, setting criterion for Chinese people who come to Laos. Also certificates of running a business in Laos are needed for example, what area of business should be allowed, and should be preserved for local people. Setting a time of foreigners stay in Lao duration of living.”

We “Nick” Pyae Moe Kyaw & “Myat Su”, Myat Su Mon, Participants from “The Republic of the Union of Myanmar” presented the political system of Myanmar. We mainly focused on changes in our country, changes in the economy, as well as in Political and other sectors. Many other countries were surprised by this rapid change. We presented the Political system in 5 points. 1. Outline of Myanmar Politics 2.Reform of Myanmar 3.Current Myanmar Political Issues 4.Future challenge of Myanmar Politic 5.Relation Between Myanmar & People Republic of China. Within these 2 years (2010 to 2012), Action of Myanmar Patriotic society turned an autocratic country to electoral democratic country. We made, changes to many incredible things but sometimes the changes made the current situation worse. Myanmar society needs to prepare very well to offset the impact of changes. I assumed trust Building within the political society, to maintain the Relationship between the military and civil society, cooperation between USDP and other Political parties, trust building with the national races, to maintain the current situation and keep moving forward based on the above mentioned, to build the perfect liberal democratic country by the power of the Myanmar people is a really large challenge for New republic of Myanmar. To find something in common between many nationalities, many different cultures and political background of Myanmar is very important mission for Myanmar people. The relation between





China and Myanmar is now in 5 decades or half of a century, being so Myanmar has a deep relationship with People republic of China in Politics and the Economic sector. As china is the closest country to Myanmar, both of the countries will work to keeps the relationship going well.



“Tea” Vo Quang Toan “Fade” Hoang Thu Phuong, (Participants From “the Socialist Republic of Vietnam”) presented the overview of the political system and impact of raising China to The Socialist Republic of Vietnam. They presented that in 20 century, Vietnam had been impacted especially by the Soviet Union and China in the respect of organizational direction and targets, economy and culture. China has influenced to the neighbor countries for thousands of years in of many sectors like culture, history, economy and politics. According to their presentation I assume that the PRC has an influence on The Socialist Republic of Vietnam not only in regards to the political system but also culture, religion and ways of thinking. The best concept I like from them is what political system we use is not important if it is of the people, by the people and for the people.

We learned and observed a lot from the 3 countries presentation and comments from Prof. Yoshiharu TSUBOI. Different countries, different political backgrounds and different thinking concepts help us to find out something in common.

We learned new concepts of the political system of Japan, ageing society and Japanese strategy of development in future from Prof. Yoshiharu TSUBOI. The problem of an ageing society has become one of the main issues for developed countries like Japan.

We discussed the three titles for group discussion,

1. In light of increasing influences of china in the world, what are the roles of Southeast Asia countries?



2. What kind of challenges are there?

3. How will the raise of china influence politic in ASEAN Country?

We discussed for 1hour the three titles dividing into 3 groups. In group discussion presentation, we found out that every participant assumed that the rising of China is composed of good and bad elements for ASEAN countries especially in economics, politics, society and other sectors. We all want to use the rising of China to our benefit by

the power of ASEAN. We all assumed that the resources of the ASEAN region are very

important for the rising of China. However we all believe that all ASEAN countries should be closer in future to take advantages of the rising of China.

All participants are coming from very different fields and backgrounds, but most of us are used to stay away from politics and political discussions. But because of Prof. Yoshiharu TSUBOI, and the values and virtues of IATSS forum, we understand the important of the strong power of the ASEAN in the coming future. We are sure that we will share our knowledge to the younger generation when we get back to our country.



## Environment and Sustainable Asia

### Prof. Kazuo Matsushita



October 5<sup>th</sup> 2012

**Srun Bunsroeun (BS)**  
**Cambodia**

For a number of years, there have been concerns that climate change negotiations will essentially ignore a key principle of climate change negotiation frameworks: the common but differentiated responsibilities. Realizing that greenhouse emissions remain in the atmosphere for a very long time, this principle recognizes that historically:

- Industrialized nations have emitted far more greenhouse gas emissions
- Rich countries therefore face the biggest responsibility and burden for action to address climate change; and
- Rich countries therefore must support developing nations adapt—through financing and technology transfer, for example.

These consequences of environmental problems are typically ignored by many rich nations and their mainstream media, making it easy to blame to USA, China, India and other developing countries for failures in climate change mitigation negotiations. Scientists have spent decades figuring out what is causing global warming. They've looked at the natural cycles and events that are known to influence climate. But the amount and pattern of warming that's been measured can't be explained by these factors alone. The only way to explain the pattern is to include the effect of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted by humans.

The Seminar 2, Environment and Sustainable Asia focuses on the balance between economic growth and environmental conservation by studying two specific objectives as follows:

1. To provide a general overview of global environmental issues such as exhaustible resources and disasters caused by environmental destruction.
2. To deliberate on how to proceed with economic development and environmental conservation at the same time, especially with a view to adopting renewable energy technology in each country.

The Seminar 2 was lectured by Professor Kazuo Matsushita who specialized in climate change policies and environment in Kyoto University. At the beginning of this seminar, all participants introduced themselves. Almost all of them shared their opinions about renewable energy and environmental problems in their countries in terms of balancing economic growth and environmental







conservation. My expectation for this seminar was to understand in detail about the effective renewable energy and environment and sustainable Asia. At the beginning, 3 countries presented the renewable energy situation in their countries: Indonesia, Malaysia and The Philippines.

Indonesia's participants listed energy and electricity policies established by the government as well as the government's subsidies to promote renewable energy alternatives. However, there are many challenges to be overcome in order to reach the target for renewable energy. The government of Indonesia has been providing subsidies for energy paid for taxes. However, the subsidies are limited and mostly only benefit rich people. The price of oil and fuel is increasing because of the scarcity of these natural resources. Therefore, the only choice is trying to promote and seek renewable energy.

Malaysia's participants raised the government's 5 action plans for renewable energy in Malaysia. They also mentioned that the government has started to understand the importance of renewable energy and the impacts of using too much fuel. So far, the government has been trying to implement renewable energy such as wind energy, solar energy, hydropower energy etc., but many people still do not understand the benefits of this renewable energy yet. Anyway, there is not enough technology, expertise and networking between government agencies and private companies. Currently, renewable energy is very costly and not many people can afford it. Moreover, the government of Malaysia has already promoted varieties of renewable energy, yet the policy is not so practical. For instance, the government set 5% RE of total energy mix but achieved on 1% so far.

Philippines's participants have presented the government plan and target for renewable energy such as the implementation of geothermal energy, wind power, hydropower, solar energy and so on. Moreover, they also raised the challenges encountered and the reasons for not being able to achieve the set target. The major cause of no electricity is corruption. Most renewable energy is managed by private sectors. The Board of Investment will try to facilitate the process of energy management by working with the private sectors. Normally, investment in power must be 51% government-owned and 49% private-owned.



After the country presentation, Prof. Matsushita presented us the overview of the global environmental problems and the prediction for the future environmental consequences. He presented the implications of global warming and the serious impacts of climate change. According to the presentation, it is predicted that the temperature will increase between 1.1 to 6.4 degrees by 2100 causing floods, droughts, typhoons. Moreover, the sea level will rise from 18 to 59cm which will lead to serious damage in world economy. He also addressed the international efforts to address climate change. There have been so many international treaties on climate change held almost every year to combat climate change. Finally, the professor presented the case of Japan and Japanese governments' commitment for the green economy and model for

sustainable Asia. For instance, the phrase saying that “The investment to keep Japan’s advantage and continue to be the environmental superpower for the future” clearly shows the world-leading environmental technologies and beautiful seasonal changes of natural scenery in Japan.

In the afternoon session, we were divided into 3 different group discussions and presented our renewable energy opinions and action plans for renewable energy. We were asked to play different roles in the group discussions and aimed to solve different issues in focusing on specific problem. The aim of our contribution is the establishment of a specific action plan which can be easily implemented such as solar energy, wind energy, tidal energy or any other kinds of renewable energy. Group A has come up with the action plan for biomass energy, using waste to generate electricity. They have an action plan to raise people’s awareness and to promote renewable energy starting from a small community. They raised one meaningful moto, “Don’t waste the waste”. Group B has come up with an action plan for solar energy.



Within a ten year period, the action plan will be completely implemented. The action plan is group C is similar to that of group B. It is to raise people’s awareness from local communities starting with small projects to bigger ones in the future. The action plan project coordinator aims to work very closely with the government agencies, NGOs and local communities and raise people’s awareness of renewable energy.

The professor was really happy to see the outcomes from this group discussion in term of its specific objective and group spirit. He briefly explained the serious impacts of climate change by Intergovernmental Policy on Climate Change (IPCC). Based on the IPCC report, global warming is unequivocal. The temperature has continued to increase, glaciers retreat and sea levels have risen 17cm in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, he showed us a lot of environmental issues which are becoming international concerns.

At the end of the lecture, I understood more about the environmental issues in Asia as well as the concerns and impacts of climate change affecting the future of human being. Since climate change is not just a national issue, it is a global issue. All nations, both developed and developing are working together to reduce the impacts of this issue aiming for the successful implementation of a Green Economy for the next generation.





# **OVOP: One Village One Product Movement**

## **Prof. Fumihiko ADACHI**



October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Kong Keomony(Mony),  
Cambodia**

The “One Village One Product” movement was initially established by Oita prefecture governor, Dr. Hiramastu , in Japan in 1979. The idea was to empower the community to generate economic development for the local people. On special occasions, all ASEAN countries have the opportunity to participate in the OVOP movement in their country. To begin with, three OVOP presentations were delivered to elaborate more on the current movement of OVOP concept by the designated countries: Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand. The up to date campaign OVOP in Malaysia is known as Satu Daerah Satu Industri (SDSI), which means One District One Product (ODOP). This movement was primarily established in 1992. Also, the project in Philippines was defined as One Town One Product (OTOP) in 2002 and it was officially launched in 2004, unlike the OTOP in Thailand that was launched in 2001. The common concept of OVOP is very similar in each country- to increase the income of local people; however, the strategy, rules, regulations and practice is obviously very different.

### **Country Presentations**

#### **OVOP in Malaysia**

It is fair to say that the most popular OVOP products in Malaysia are handicrafts and home-stay programs. The policies have been strengthened and go on improving in order to be successfully achieved. OVOP is strongly supported by the government and there are many other involved ministries in coordinating the programs plus 3000 entrepreneurs who join “Sahabat Usahawan Terengganu” (SUT) to start improving their business, and 3000 others join Terengganupages for online marketing. The creators hold courses, modules, lessons and lecture series to improve skills in various aspects to the programs. Also, there are exhibitions on OVOP to promote and market budding businesses in Malaysia.



#### **OTOP in Philippines**



The idea, of course, is a priority program of the government to promote entrepreneurship and create jobs for its people. Through OTOP, local chief executives of each city and municipality take the lead in identifying, developing, and promoting a specific product or service, which have a competitive advantage. OTOP supports micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to

manufacture, offer, and market distinctive products or services through the use of indigenous raw materials and local skills and talents. However, there are some obstacles occur such as Low demand, low production, scarcity of raw materials, etc, especially for “Able Iloko” items: hand-made products are slowly dying now, which is considered the main topic to discuss to find out such strategies to sustain the existing resources and maintain for future needs.

### **OTOP in Thailand**



It is obviously that the Thai government strongly commits and supports the OTOP movement to benefit its people in term of generating income, employment, as well as promoting OTOP products as nationwide uses. To encourage people produce good quality of products and sell them at a higher price at the market, the Thai government has set and applied a 5-star grading system to check and control the quality and grade for each specialty of products. Thai government related officers work closely with

local people in order to follow up on any issues which may happen in the community so that they can solve it immediately. Also, OTOP exhibitions always are held two or three times per years, so Thai people can be aware of such good programs.

### **My Opinion:**

#### **For Country Presentation:**

OVOP was a very interesting topic which I have learned a lot from. For Malaysia, The OVOP strategy and policy has been enforced and implemented to the advantage of the local people. Beside the most popular OVOP movement: handicrafts and home-stay programs, fish sausage is one of the most important foods for the Malaysian people as it can be either eaten as the main dish or snack. However, fish sausage is marketed in the country only, there should be a government set up and implemented strategy to export fish sausages for international markets. Yet the fish sausages have no branding; therefore, technology, technique, and quality in producing it should be developed. To this, it can increase only the local people's income but to add to GDP of the country. For OTOP in Philippines, “Able Iloko” is the hand-made product produced by threads. Because of facing the scarcity of threads as well as the low demand of production, the producers were not really happy to produce; therefore, this item will disappear sooner in the future. So both government as well as the local people needs to cooperate and work together in order to solve this problem. The government should encourage all business entrepreneurs involve and promote all the products, loan some fund to “Able Iloko” producers, and find the market for them. Also, the producers should cooperate among each other to produce more products to meet the market demand. For OTOP in Thailand, it is obvious that the government needs to set a clear policy and really involved in the OTOP production movement. So the local people enjoy producing their products with quality control by using the 5-star grading system. I hope that the Thai government will continue and support OTOP movement to his people.



### **For the Whole Seminar:**

The OVOP movement lecture was held by Prof. Adachi. He strongly emphasized successful examples of the OVOP movement in Oita prefecture. The main success factors were defined as: land, labor, capital, technology, marketing, local government and mass media, national environment, international exchange and local diplomacy. There are three important principles of OVOP in Oita: 1) Think globally, act locally, 2) independence and creativity, 3) fostering human resource. In order to success in OVOP movement in a country, the 3 main factors should be put into consideration and then into practice. In fact, Japan succeed in OVOP because the government allowed the people lead themselves which means people produce, set price, and sell directly in the market, by themselves, without interference from the government. This shows the best practice example for other countries in the world. Also, Prof. Adachi showed us some successful examples of OVOP products from the agriculture sector such as organic vegetables, rice, new plums & chestnuts, which generate high income agriculture products. Moreover, he encouraged us to involve and promote such activities because OVOP not only increases the income, employment opportunity but it is an environmental friendly program.

### **Group Discussions:**

After we finished the lecture by Prof. Adachi, we were separated into 3 groups creating a business plan in order to promote an OVOP product to benefit the community as a whole. The 3 groups were discussing and delivering their plan as follows:

#### **Group A: Promote Fish Sausage from Malaysia**

The supply of fish sausage is insufficient in Malaysia. The uniqueness of fish sausage is its taste, freshness, and Halal certification. So in order to produce sufficient fish sausage, a business plan was set up. First the group defined as the target market, were the family and local people. In the future fish sausage will be sold out over the country. Then product development will be introduced by producing a variety of fish sausages such as herbal fish sausages, improve cover or package design, check the quality and durability, especially promote branding, which can build trust form customers. It has to comply with health, safety regulations, also applied with technology and know-how to transfer to neighboring enterprises (for the same quality and brand). To do so, the marketing strategy was set up. To promote and sell fish sausage, they dealt with creating social media ads such as facebook, or blog, networking with post-Malaysia, and to promote it by online, and collaboration with individual entrepreneurs.



#### **Group B: Batik Development, Jara Island from Indonesia**



It is required everyone wears Batik on Friday every week in Indonesia, so hand-made Batik is being promoted. The key success is the uniqueness of each pattern, the color last longer, and product availability. The target market is to sell to local, especially young people. It was found out the challenges of the business were the competition between hand-made produces and

mass-produces, especially prices as well as the availability of ink. So in order to promote successfully, Batik will be promoted in fashion shows, and it is better to wear it every day or casual wear, it doesn't have to be on Friday. It will be displayed in exhibition events to let people know about the product. Moreover, Batik will be sold in local market as well as the product design needed to be improved. Finally, to make customers comfortable with purchasing the product, online shopping will be created and a facebook page or blog will be established.

### **Group C: Woven Grass Product-Laundry basket or shopping bag to replace plastic bag, from Thailand**

The business targets local customers, in order to become successful, some useful keys were defined such as the product must be made from local grass, natural color, without chemical substances, and with government support. So to promote the products, a brochure will be distributed to markets, involved in fair exhibitions, word of mouth marketing, and marketing online such as Facebook or blogs.



### **Prof. Comments on group discussion:**

The Professor appreciated all groups actively involved in the discussion. However, there were some points he would like to comment on with each group such as: to achieve our goal, we had to focus on a research and development unit to check the quality of the brand, but this would have cost too much. It was good practice to promote hand-made products that give more job opportunities to local people.

### **Summary:**

From my point of view, the whole seminar was really wonderful. Everybody really enjoyed learning this topic. OVOP plays very important role in improving economic development as well as empowering and benefiting local communities. To prevent depopulation, to decrease urban job seeking, to promote local products, and to increase income per capita, the OVOP movement plays a very good role as an example to be practiced. As a successful story in Oita prefecture, the OVOP movement was spread all over the world, especially in ASEAN countries, in which the idea was brought to help local people and increase the production of a country. This program inspires the local people to understand the resources surrounding them, start and to start to love the environment, and take advantage of the resources they have. Also, people are able to use resources in sustainable way. However, to run this program successfully, there should be collaboration between the government and the people. The government is the key factor in pushing the program to happen and equip them with technology and techniques to foster human resources to be skillful /specialists. Also, people have to follow the policy and strategy and work in cooperation with the government officers to reach the set goal. The OVOP movement creates local community economic development in a sustainably way as well as creates an environmental friendly view of our world. Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Adachi for his time sharing us brilliant suggestions and knowledge about the



OVOP movements of ASEAN countries and Japan. We have learned and thought together on the given topic, and I hope through the OVOP concept, there will be a great impact on our society.



## **Traditional Japanese Culture ~Japanese Aesthetics~**

### **Prof. Patricia FISTER**



**October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Myat Su Mon (Myat Su),  
Myanmar**

Prof. Patricia Fister is a professor of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, who has been residing in Japan for over 20 years now. Prof. Fister introduced the richness and diversity of Japanese art, with an emphasis on Japanese aesthetics to help participants understand and appreciate Japanese art and aesthetics, people and culture.

In the morning session, participants introduced themselves and gave a short presentation on Japanese aesthetics from their own points of view, as such:

- Japanese Tea ceremony which impressed most of the participants
- View of Kyoto from Ginkakuji uphill, which is quite a breathtaking scenario
- The Geisha or the Maiko, traditional Japanese female entertainers who act as hostesses and whose skills include performing various Japanese arts such as classical music dance and games
- The decoration of a uniquely designed Japanese fence
- Tori gates of Fushimi Inari which impressed the participants as well
- The hospitality of the Japanese public bus driver who always greets and communicates with the passengers getting on and off the bus each time
- Aesthetic of Kiyomizudera (Kiyomizudera, literally "Pure Water Temple"), which is one of the most celebrated temples of Japan.
- Some of the participants were impressed with an elderly Japanese person hiking in Fushimi Inari, which is totally contrary to their aging society in their respective countries.
- A Japanese style of mini frying pan for eggs also impressed some participants.
- An impression on a Japanese modern house was also discussed on how compact and mobile friendly design.
- Kimonos also made a big impression among the participants especially the way it has to be worn and the delicate material use in Kimonos.



- The stone and rock formation at Ginkakuji was also highlighted in a participant's discussion.
- The simplicity and creativity of Japanese aesthetics was also exposed in making bags simple and creative.
- Some participants discussed how the toilets in Japan are clean, creative, environmental friendly and well advanced.

Each participants view on Japanese aesthetics is different from each other's but it was an enjoyable sharing session.



After sharing the impressions of each participant, Prof. Fister conducted two lectures of different types of traditional Japanese art and aesthetics which covered the following:



- Waka poems from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, their paper, design and character
- Traditional food
- Cherry blossoms
- Irregularity/ Asymmetry
- Simplicity
- Woodblock paints
- Playfulness
- Ceramics
- Gardens
- Architecture

What impressed me most in the lecture is how the Japanese people appreciate the irregularity and uniqueness in things, which is quite different from the background of the participants. We were deeply impressed and understand better of the culture and appreciation of Japanese of asymmetry.

Prof. Fister not only provided effective visual aids in her lecture presentations, but also let the participants get the feel of asymmetry, simplicity and ceramics by handing out the ceramics to the participants.

In the afternoon session, Professor Fister led the participants on a tour in

- Arashiyama-Saga area of Tokyo
- Tenryuji, which is one of the "Five Great Rinzai Zen monasteries of Kyoto" established in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Shogun Ashikaga Takauji and
- Okochi-Sanso Villa, a private villa built by the famous movie actor Okochi Denjiro, which is a fine example of traditional architecture, the expansive grounds with wonderful gardens and spectacular views of Kyoto.





All of the places mentioned above were really breath taking and had mind soothing scenery. We also learned the simplicity and peacefulness of Japanese architectural design. One highlight during the tour was something that unless Professor Fister didn't hint at in lectures we wouldn't have noticed.

It was how everything in the Japanese garden is man-made to seem natural, in contrary however everything is intentionally put there including flowers, rocks etc.

Again, what impressed and amazed the participants of the seminar is that after the lecture in the morning, we had a golden chance to explore the architecture and the art as a hands-on experience since after lunch, which all the participants enjoyed a lot. Prof. Fister explained and shared knowledge all the way during the tour. We also had Q & A sessions during the tour without even noticing we were actually doing it.

It was such a fine day with a wonderful professor with a refreshing lecture and study tour, which was very unique among the seminars.

The seminar indeed was an eye-opener for most of the participants since most of us didn't have the slightest clue of how to appreciate Japanese art and culture. Moreover, Professor Fister skillfully delivered the message as well.

There are architectural sites in Myanmar, especially in Bagan, known as the forest of ancient buildings, in the central region of the country, where art, design and architecture are wonderfully diverse and rich. I've been to Bagan several times but had never realized how to appreciate the art. Now I will visit to Bagan when I get back to my country and admire it with a fresh perspective.



# **Japanese International Citizens' Voluntary Organisations (ICVOs) and Disaster Response to Tohoku**

## **Prof. Michio ITO**



October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Atiqah Johari (Achika),  
Malaysia**

The role of Citizens' Voluntary Organizations (CVOs) has been increasing in the recent years. The lecturer of the ICVO seminar, Professor Michio Ito, president of Asia Community Center 21 (ACC 21) and a professor at Rikkyo University explained to us that the role of CVOs has been recognized by Japan since the earthquake in Kobe in 1995, where a significant number of volunteers participated in the recovery from the natural disaster.

The professor then shared with us the different terms used by different countries such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Non-Profit Organizations (NPO), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Peoples' Organizations (POs) and many more. Aside from that, he highlighted the three main sectors in society, which are the government, the private sector and CVOs, where each sector plays different roles and there is a need for CVOs in every country.

Government support for CVOs in Japan is quite recent and Japan has just introduced a newly amended tax system to support the CVOs. On the contrary, Thailand is the first country among its ASEAN peers to do so, and this has been followed other countries like Malaysia, The Philippines and Singapore some years ago. The merits of significant roles played by the CVOs were also discussed during the seminar.

The most interesting session during the seminar was when the professor shared with us his experiences in the disaster response to the Tohoku earthquake which happened on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2011. He mentioned that ICVOs were giving aid and assistance for 3 days after the natural disaster occurred in Tohoku. He also shared with us some pictures of the disaster stricken areas and what kinds of help were given by the volunteers from all over the world.



The forum participants were also able to see the area after one and a half years of recovery effort, and it was surprising that the people have regained their lives, although they were not able to recoup what was lost during the tsunami disaster. What interested me the most was the feedbacks and reports written by the volunteers from ACC 21 from different ASEAN countries. It reminded us that every single one of us can make a difference to the lives of those affected by natural disaster, if, and only if, we care.

## **Country Presentations**



Prior to coming to Japan, all of the participants collected data and did a study in advance about the disaster response by local NGOs and their collaboration with the government in their respective countries. During the afternoon session, each country made a summary of the data collected and the findings to their study.

We noted that the situations in Vietnam and Laos were similar, where the participation of NGOs in supporting the society were quite weak, and their voices were not surely heard by other sectors in the society. NGOs in these countries are not very active in supporting the disaster recovery program.

NGO standing in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia are more or less the same too, where the NGOs voices are heard by the society. However, in disaster response, the government will surely be the first to tackle the disaster stricken areas. The NGOs will be the next in line to provide basic support, aid and help to the disaster victims.

In Cambodia and Myanmar, NGOs are quite important in the development of the society. We also noted that the members of NGOs are also closely acquainted to the government officials therefore in disaster recovery programs, both NGOs and the government work hand in hand.

NGOs are not too popular, as the country is well developed. Most NGOs were religious groups or supporting the preservation of environment and earth. Due to the geographic location of Singapore, no major natural disasters have occurred. Floods which have occurred very recently did not cause deaths, only minor casualties.

The Philippines on the other hand was different, as it reported the most number of NGOs registered within a country. This suggested a strong NGO influence in the society. Contrary to Singapore, due to its geographic location, The Philippines are prone to natural disasters. Therefore all individuals are equipped with basic knowledge on the handling of emergency situations. However, should a major natural disaster hit the country, NGOs are among the first on the frontlines to aid and support in disaster recovery.



## **Group discussions**

We were divided in 3 groups, and the main theme for discussion was the need and reason for cross-border and regional cooperation among ASEAN and Japanese CVOs in coping with natural disasters. All 3 groups found the need in doing so, and among the main reasons were the



needed support in funding and basic necessities, technology, medical experts, and morale support from other countries.

We also noted positive implications on this cross-border cooperation where it will strengthen the relationship between the ASEAN countries and open doors to other possible collaborations. The exchange in experiences will also benefit each and every country.

Overall, we noted that a strong collaboration between the ASEAN countries can give rise to many possible and positive opportunities for the development and growth of everyone.

### **Summary:**

Overall, we noted that a strong collaboration between the ASEAN countries can give rise to many possible and positive opportunities for the development and growth of everyone. The IATSS Forum can be a concrete platform for this collaboration, if the 800 alumni participants of the IATSS Forum come together under a tangible action plan to support each other in various areas and industries.



## Seminar : Transportation

### Prof. FUMIHIKO NAKAMURA



October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Lilian Chua (Lillian),  
Singapore**

Prof. Fumihiko NAKAMURA is Vice Dean at the Institute of Urban Innovation at Yokohama National University. His specialty is Urban Transportation Planning and Public Transport Planning. His expertise includes a detailed study of ASEAN countries such as comparing Urban Bus Transport Management systems in Hanoi, Bangkok & Jakarta, Circular Railway systems in Yangon, and the role of motorbikes and taxis in Phnom Penh etc.

In the morning session, we had a field study to experience and observe urban buses and pedestrian malls in Nagoya. We departed from OASIS 21 bus terminal to take the key route bus to Chayagasaka. During the trip, we needed to observe the facilities and share our feelings about each facility after our return.



The OASIS21 Bus Terminal with  
eco-friendly roof.



During the discussion in the afternoon, we observed the following:

[Key Route Bus]

- 1) Disabled/Elderly/Child seats are available
- 2) Bell to alight at every seat
- 3) Handholds for safety
- 4) Bus platform is the same level as the pedestrian walkway
- 5) Announcement for the next stop
- 6) Blinking light to show which bus coming (1 bus stop serves several destinations)
- 7) Bus stop in the center of the street -> Connects with pedestrian crossing/traffic signals and special lanes for buses (double white lines, no over-taking is allowed)
- 8) A railing is at the side to protect pedestrians



[Guideway Bus – Yutorito Line]



- 1) No disabled/Elderly/Child seats available
- 2) Fare chart on the bus
- 3) Elevated, like a train in the sky
- 4) Next station is a short distance
- 5) Card tap at the entrance
- 6) Rail to stop people from falling off at the platform.
- 7) Every 10 min, low frequency for the whole day, hence may not be so efficient
- 8) If a bus breaks down, all the incoming buses have to wait for the previous buses to go off first and then the tow truck can come to help.

[Oz mall]

- 1) Far from train station, not convenient if raining
- 2) Shops are far from each other
- 3) Merchandise is not attractive (The professor explained to us that before, the government wanted to widen the land and this caused some shopkeepers to move away. Hence, not many shops are there now)
- 4) Only statues can be found in the streets



- 5) It is not easy to find as there is no signage unless you are looking for it, you will probably not go there.
- 6) The playing of classical music the fountain and the statue of Dorothy makes the place very tranquil and nice
- 7) Shops look old, dark and run-down



8) Not fashionable. All the clothes are for the older generation.

The professor showed us interesting videos about Brazil's transport system and he also commented on observations made during the field trip and the facilities that we visited.



Question and Answer session:

Other participants asked about the money change in the bus.

Question: Why can we not get the change from the bus driver, and why do we have to use the machine to get the change first so that we can put in the exact amount?

Answer: The professor replied that there was some history. Bus drivers are not allowed to touch any bank notes (because there were some cases of dishonesty). It happened that there were some cases

where the driver kept some money. After that, passengers had to do it by themselves. The cash box cannot be opened until the bus is returned to the depot.

### **Conclusion**

We encountered many interesting ideas and I believe we can use this information for consideration in our group study as well, e.g. How to link transportation to the facilities around us. I am very impressed with the people who work in the transportation industry as they work very hard to ensure the safety and convenience of all passengers, and to the handicapped people. Each transportation method has the idea from the founders and they are all made with these concepts in mind.



Although the BRT stopped its implementation only at Nagoya, I think that it is actually a good concept. I believe we can make good use of it if the government allows. Hence, I hope that this will become possible in the near future.

Lastly, thank you very much Professor Nakamura, for your guidance!



# **Fostering Human Resources for the Global Community: Roles of Higher Education in Asian Countries**

## **Associate Prof. Yuto KITAMURA**

November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012



**Irma Marfilla Situmorang (Fella),  
Indonesia**

The objective of this seminar was to advise participants how to train the leaders to promote education and cultural development in Asia and in the world as a whole.

Professor Kitamura explained about the difference between the cognitive skills and the non-cognitive skills. Cognitive skill is proved by testing and non-cognitive skill doesn't need a test. The question was “why, in university, is education focused on sciences/cognitive only?”. Certainly, it seems to be like that, but actually during the lessons all the subjects are integrated to those points for example, studying natural, social science, and humanities. These aspects are inter-related to each other to form cognitive skills and non-cognitive skills, and not restricted to the study of one subject. Nowadays, universities to have both points, and these are being implemented. The points are freedom and autonomy. And the Professor said that these points are implemented well in Japan.

On other hand, education is not only a public good which benefits the community but also as public goods which are a commodity or product. Learn from Australia, exports many things about education to many countries through education companies. Some private universities act in the public interest and sell their education programs as commodity to gain money. We also can find public universities become good for the public because their autonomous funding has made them find funds by themselves.

Nowadays, Japan is facing “Monster Parents” who always complain to teachers at schools, and parents blame teachers. Not many parents in fact have these two skills to enable them to fully understand about education.

The autonomy of universities without subsidies from governments has made universities organize and look for their own funds by themselves. It has made education not only a public good (benefit to community) but public goods (as a commodity to sell). In this seminar, I've learned that a university has to be responsible to the public. It means collaboration to improve their quality and management. Opportunities that are given to universities on organizing the education program must be run well and not only to produce money.

Getting information from 3 different countries about education, we heard presentation from Cambodia, Singapore, and Thailand.

### **1. Cambodia**

In Cambodia, traditional education was implemented during pre-colonial period where





only a male could attend the school. Since French colonization came (1863-1953), education started being developed. The education in Cambodia just started to rise in quality after the era of the Khmer Rouge. The government allocates only a little money for education. There are many scholarships are available, especially for poor students. The challenge that is faced is that many students choose only if it's cheap. The universities have a lack of capacity and seem like they are not qualified enough to prepare their students for seeking jobs. That's why many students are unemployed after graduating from their universities and going back to their hometown.

## 2. Singapore



As we know education in Singapore is very well developed. In the presentation it was explained to us that the concept education is studying in harmony. One of the interesting points that was brought up was that there is school rule which divided into 2 classes; those who are smart students and less smart students. These students will start being divided in 3rd grade. It's implemented so students can study effectively, especially for students who are less intelligent to have

more attention from their teachers. Most of the education system has been run by e-learning systems. Students don't need to come to school because they can access all the lecture lessons online. Government and society have given big efforts to develop education in Singapore. It shows that many foreign universities can be found and be established in Singapore, so they don't need to go abroad.

## 3. Thailand

Quality and excellence are the success keys of education in Thailand. It is the same as in universities in other countries, Thailand also is facing an autonomous university system. It



makes the education services try to be free on managing and promoting their university in different ways. The current issue in Thailand is many that students are hard to look for a job in the city, because the availability of jobs that related to their major education are scarce. It happens because there's no assistance to the students when they have to choose their major in university, either from parents or teachers.

The autonomy of universities without subsidized forms of government has made universities organize and look for their own funds by themselves. It has made education not only as public good (to benefit the community) as well but as public goods (as commodity to sell). In this seminar, I've learned that universities have to be responsible to the university. They need collaboration to improve their quality and management. Opportunities that are given to universities for organizing the education program must be run well and of course not only to produce money.



### **Group Discussion**

We were divided into 3 groups (Thailand, Singapore, and Cambodia) and discussed the ideal education model to improve education. All members group acted as minister of education, minister of finance, and president of a private university, president of a public company, international student, lecturer, and local student. This role play helped us to think from different perspectives on giving ideas to this topic. From the discussion we noticed that education problems need thought and support from every stakeholder, not restricted to the education service only.

### **Conclusion**

Talking about education; quality assume is done by the university itself when the university wants to open, make sure that the university is qualified according to education standards. Facing the autonomous system in universities, it's better if every university cooperates to build a high quality of education and not compete on selling their "product" too much for getting money. And the last message of the Professor in this seminar is "Don't lose the beauty of higher education".



## Seminar Economics

### Prof. Fuminiko Adachi

October 26, 2012

**Vo Quang Toan(Tea),  
Vietnam**



### Theme of the seminar

The theme of the seminar was economics. It focused on the rise and the serious negative impacts of the slowing-down of Japanese economics. Besides, we had an overview of the economic modernization and international coordination of Laos, Myanmar and Singapore in the country presentations.

### Reports of 3 countries

#### Laos:

Laos is a land locked and developing country with a GDP of 1,320 USD per capita (2011). The main sources of income are from mining & quarrying and services. In the wave of modernization and reform, many state-owned corporations were in equitation, laws on foreign investment and trade were passed. Therefore the Lao economy has been on the rise, in which the GDP growth is constantly around 6.2% a year.

Evidence for the cooperation of economics in Laos are the SEZs (Special Economic zones), which are increasing in number year by year. Most of them are in the central and north west of Laos, near the border of Thailand. The biggest SEZs are Boten and Thadluang Leke, with a large share of Chinese investors, and Long Thanh, with a large share of investment from Vietnam. In these SEZs, there are many sectors, manufacturing, distribution and trade services, as well as accommodation, hotels, restaurants, parks, entertainment areas like sport centers or theaters, and requisite sites like schools and hospitals. The SEZs are fully supported by government and the public majority, and Laos is planning for the 25 SEZ projects in 2020.

However, Laos has some difficulties from both inside and outside factors.

Internal factors:

- Management levels are not sufficient to cope with the actual situations
- Rules and regulations
- Insufficient budget



### External factors

- The market economic mechanisms and the implementation of the policy.
- The improvement of organizational structures
- The geographical location of the country and the scattering of the population
- The national revenue

All the obstacles must be overcome but, more or less, Laos is on the right track for development.

### Myanmar

Actually, Myanmar is still mysterious for many people, even those from the ASEAN community. After the independence from colonial times, Myanmar has experienced complex eras, especially when it was under military rule which lasted from 1988 to 2011. Last year, Myanmar had a tremendous change in politics and the economy, with the important decisions of government for economic liberalization. Consequently, foreign investments increased from US\$300 million in 2009-2010 to a US\$20 billion in 2010-2011 by about 667%. Burmese currency Kyat (MMK) rises up by about 25%.



The reformed government would progress in three stages:

Stage 1: Transition to a stable, open political system.

The central theme is that without politics stability in an open society the development process cannot succeed.

Stage 2: Reform of the financial system.

The central theme is that Myanmar cannot hope to rapidly increase its GDP if its financial system is not modernized and integrated into the world financial system.

Stage 3: Increase GDP through local and foreign investment.

A preliminary draft of the new Foreign Investment Law has been approved by the parliament. This law is expected to be promulgated in a few months.



Now, Myanmar is opened for every country to take part in its reform. While the US, EU and Australia imposed sanctions, countries such as China, Thailand, India and Singapore are taking advantage of business opportunities in Myanmar, which is rich in natural resources like natural gas, timber, jade and rubies. The most attractive fields for collaboration between Myanmar and other countries are in the garment, oil & gas, banking, trade and mining industries.

The symbols of the international economic cooperation of Myanmar can be listed as:



Special Economic Zone Thilawa; Gas projects Shwe offshore Gas; Dawei Deep Sea port Project; Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)

## Singapore

Unlike the other 2 countries, Singapore can be considered as one of the Asian dragons, with magnificent economic development since its beginning of sovereign nation in 1965. Despite of limitations of land and natural resources, Singapore is now becoming a typical example for many countries in the area as well as around the world for self-reliance, with the core role of its Father, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Up to now, Singapore has been a good type of control corruption,



stable place for business, a paradise for investment with Free trade regime & Low corporate tax rate. Besides, Singaporean Government focuses on human development and adapts policies to meet the quantity and quality of skills needed for industry. Therefore, the society can build a culture of productivity and people can continue learning and upgrade their skills in Singapore. And finally, the role of technology has never been down in the country, where the number of scientists and engineers grew several times in the last 2 decades.

### Lecture of Professor

The lecture of Prof. Adachi focused on the rapid growth of Japanese economics since after the World War II, as well as its decline since 1990s, with many interesting data collections and information.

It focused on 3 topics:

- 1/ The modernization process of Japan based on related data and information
- 2/ Major factors contributing to the socio-economic development of Japan
- 3/ Insight into the causes of the prolonged stagnation of Japanese economy since early 1990s.



We participants had chance to understand more about the strengthening of Japan from 19<sup>th</sup> century in many fields: political, economy, society, military and so on. After defeat of World War II, Japan adopted many policies such as:

- Demilitarization and democratization of Japan; land reform
- Miraculous economic growth
- Ownership of consumer durables
- Appreciation of the Yen currency

All the above decisions, with the self-reliance basis of Japanese, as well as help from the outside, making Japan stronger and stronger and able to recover with very high speed. Eventually, the miracle of economic development that we all knew and admired, was born.

Nowadays, Japan faces some problems, deprived from the collapse of real estate bubble in the 1990s, the economic crises in 1997-1998 and the most recent 2007 up to now, which made the public debt double the GDP. Besides, the deficits of the pension and health systems, the declining birth rate and aging population, the weakening competitiveness in major industries as well as the emergence of some countries in the Asia Pacific region makes the process of recovery slow. However, we believe Japan is still strong and its influences on other nations and the international community are noticeable. Japan will soon be back on the right track and maintain a considerable position in the economic order.

## Group Discussion

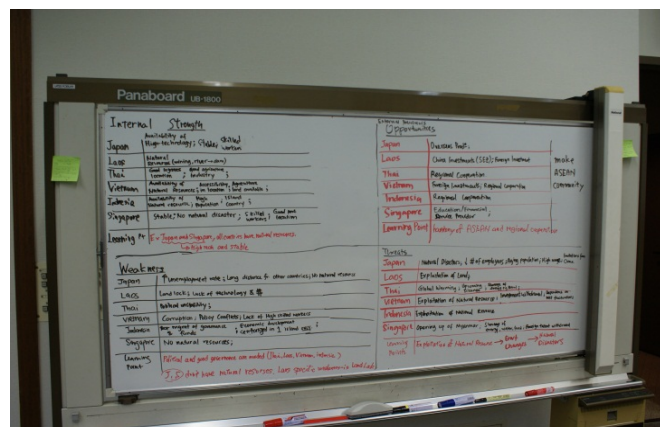


As usual, the participants were divided into 3 groups, and each participant discussed their country, using a SWOT analysis. SWOT is a model for analyzing the internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities, threats) that have an effect on an object (a firm, an economy). In the case, participant from each country had to make a table to illustrate each country's strengths and weaknesses, considering the economic opportunities and threats facing his or her country and the ASEAN region can do to boost economic development.

The discussion among groups was carried out openly and lively. Through discussion and presentations, we had a conclusion that in the ASEAN region, many countries have their own strengths and weaknesses. However, Singapore with the main strengths of human resources and technology can become a dragon of Asia, the other countries, which are famous for rich natural resources and cultures like Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos are facing many obstacles in development because of corruption, political instabilities, weak control and management. The problems are mainly from internal factors that each country has to think and choose the appropriate strategies that exploit opportunities and neutralize threats through the use of strengths avoiding or fixing weaknesses.

## Conclusion

It is uneasy that many countries in the ASEAN region, which are rich in natural resources and indigenous cultures, are still poor or on the beginning steps toward



modernization of their society and development of their civilization. Most of them have just shifted from agriculture to manufacturing and face many problems, especially severe corruption and low-end technology. However, the successful lessons from Singapore and some other countries show that with the right policies and human-oriented strategy, small, poor nations can overcome the impediments on the way to industrialization and modernization.





# Disaster Reconstruction

## Prof. Junichi Hirota



October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Allene Teo (Allene),  
Singapore

### 1. Overview

On 11 March 2011, the world watched in horror as one of the five most powerful earthquakes since 1900 occurred off the coast of Japan and triggered a mega tsunami waves that reached heights of up to 40.5 metres in Tohoku's Iwate Prefecture. The waves decimated whole villages leaving mass destruction in its wake with almost 16,000 deaths and thousands injured or missing. Although Japan is at the forefront in terms of disaster management, the magnitude of the disaster coupled with the added complications of the nuclear plant accident and global economic recession increased the difficulty of disaster recovery/reconstruction, causing it to be slower than expected.

This seminar by Professor Junichi Hirota gave an insider analysis of the damage from the disaster and the factors to consider for the recovery process. We were also very privileged to hear directly from one of the victims of the tsunami, Mr Kazuyuki Usuzawa. His tragic, heartbreaking experience and inspiring recovery from the disaster touched us all.

### 2. Impressions and Learning Points



The statistics and photos shown by the professor were shocking in the extent of the disaster. In one day cities were reduced to rubble with almost nothing left of the original site. This was clearly expressed in the story of one of the professor's students who went back to the disaster site on the spot where her home once stood to salvage something. However, her home and memories had been totally swept away from the tsunami, leaving only rubble carried on from other places. The villages and paddy fields along Sendai Bay were totally destroyed although precautions were taken; in Shinhama village of Yamamoto town, many trees were grown along the coast to slow down the impact of any tsunami but they were mostly swept away leaving only stumps. However the main city facilities in that area were safe because they were located on high land.

Although the infrastructural damage was high, I was very impressed with the disaster response system as the number of dead or missing people was very low in comparison to the damage, e.g. only 10% of the people in Rikuzen-Takata were dead or missing even though the residential area was located in the delta of the Kesen River and totally destroyed along with the city office & gymnasium.

Another thing that also left a strong impression on me was the difficulty of housing the victims of the disaster. There are 3 major issues for this:

- i. A lot of land is now considered waste land as there is the danger of a tsunami affecting that area in the future.
- ii. Cultural heritage items were discovered in some land initially earmarked for rebuilding which made it unsuitable for use. This resulted in some disaster victims complaining that the government places more emphasis on items from hundred years ago than their well-being.
- iii. The government has a lot of difficulty purchasing land for reconstruction as many land owners are probably dead or missing making it hard to determine the ownership of the land.



The circumstances of a disaster/emergency situation are unique. It is important for authorities to be flexible in their policies in such circumstances and to adopt methods not used in normal situations to cope with the disaster and speed up the recovery process.

Having said the above, the part of the seminar that had the greatest impact was the story of Mr Kazuyuki Usuzawa from Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture. His sharing gave us a deep insight into the emotions and feelings of the people caught in the middle of the disaster. It was heartbreaking to hear how he lost his sweetheart to the tsunami and very inspiring to hear of his efforts to bring children from other disaster-stricken countries to interact with the children in Otsuchi.

### **3. Group Discussions**

The second part of the seminar was group discussion. We were split into 3 groups to discuss the expected damage, damage prevention and recovery for the following natural disasters:

**Team A- Typhoon & Floods**

**Team B- Earthquake & Volcano**

**Team C- Tsunami**



Each group had people whose countries experience the natural disaster they were discussing. Team A presented points learnt from the flooding in Bangkok last year and Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. They suggested that cities should have no build zones in flood prone areas. Another suggestion was to change and improve the design of houses to be more flood proof.

Team B also reiterated the point that houses should not be built in disaster prone areas, e.g. away from fault lines or volcanic areas. However they also noted that volcanic areas tend to be very fertile and good for growing crops which is why people still return to those areas after a disaster. It is an on-going challenge for the governments of such countries to persuade their population to move out before disasters strike as many only move when they actually see the imminent impact of the disaster with their own eyes, e.g. flowing volcanic lava and ash.

A good suggestion from Team C was to create disaster response teams in high schools or with university students. Mr Usuzawa was very supportive of this point as a lot of evacuation centers in Japan are based in schools and during the Tsunami disaster in 2011, many students voluntarily acted as guides or helpers.

The group discussion provided the opportunity to learn disaster management techniques from the various ASEAN countries and made us think more deeply on the issues and how to implement ideas to save more lives. Personally I am very grateful for the opportunity to hear from people actually involved in the reconstruction efforts of one of the biggest natural disasters in Japan. Their willingness to share their lessons learnt will go a long way to helping other countries deal with a natural disaster when it strikes.





# Enterprise Strategies – Convenience Stores “FamilyMart”

## Mr. Koichi Kimura



November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

**Sadudee Kittisuwan (Tum),  
Thailand**

The Family Mart convenience-store chain was launched in Japan in 1973 it was the first Japanese Convenience Store. Currently, the Company operates over 20,000 stores in 7 markets (Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, China, the United States and Vietnam). The stores operate 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. The average number of customers visiting the stores per day, around the world is 15 million.

FamilyMart’s basic philosophy is to offer a shopping experience characterized by convenience, friendliness and fun by always regarding the customer as a member of the family, and so to help people achieve more comfortable and enjoyable lifestyles. Convenience is no longer enough.

By fiscal year 2015, FamilyMart aims to create a Global network of 25,000 stores, and 40,000 stores by fiscal year 2020. With roots in Japan, FamilyMart also has a target to be No.1 in Asia.

### Part 1: Participant Presentation: Popular Product and Popular Place



All participants, ascending by country name, gave a presentation about:

- Popular Product (item/product that is popular and sells well in each country)
- Popular Place (popular or unique place where people eat out or buy food)

No	Country	Name	Popular Product	Popular Place
1.	Cambodia	Ms.Kong Keomony (Mony)	Samurai (Energy Drink)	Sea to Sea (Sea Street Stall)
2.	Cambodia	Mr.Srun Bun Sroeun (BS)	Cambodia Beer (Beer)	Star Mart (Convenience Store)
3.	Indonesia	Mr.Budi Azmi (Budi)	The Botol Sosro (Sweetened Jasmine Tea)	Merdeka Walk Centre Food Square (Food Center)
4.	Indonesia	Ms.Irma Marfilla Situmorang (Fella)	Indomie (Instant Noodle)	Alfamart (Mini Market)

No	Country	Name	Popular Product	Popular Place
5.	Laos	Mr.Lakhaisy Sompathana (Arthur)	Lao fruit yogurt	Chao Anouvong Statue Park
6.	Laos	Mr.Xypanya Phetyasone (Phet)	Lao Khao-Jee (Bread)	Xieng-Khuan Buddha Park
7.	Malaysia	Ms.Atiqah Binti Johari (Achika)	Mentos (chewy Sweet small oblate spheroids)	Nasi Lemak Antarabangsa (Street Stall))
8.	Malaysia	Ms.Rashima Binti Abdul Rasid (Sima)	Choki Choki (A chocolate paste)	Sate Kajang Hj Samuri (Restaurant)
9.	Myanmar	Ms.Myat Su Mon (Myat Su)	Royal Myanmar Teamix (Instant Tea Mix)	China Town Night Market
10.	Myanmar	Mr.Pyae Moe Kyaw (Nick)	Green Tea Pickle (traditional food)	China Town Street Stall @ 19 Street B.B.Q Stall
11.	Philippine	Ms.Go Ma. Karen Quillooy (Karen)	Choc-Nut (Candy and chocolate)	JolliJeep (mobile canteen)
12.	Philippine	Mr.Lim Michael Kho (Mike)		
13.	Singapore	Ms.Chua Bee Hui, Lilian (Lilian)	Slurpee (Ice drink)	Starbucks Café in the shopping mall (ION, Orchard)
14.	Singapore	Ms.Teo Liling (Allene)	Maruku (Cracker)	Old Airport (Food Centre)
15.	Thailand	Ms.Kittisuwan Sadudee (Tum)	Knorr Cup Porridge (Instant Porridge)	Siam Paragon (Department Store)
16'	Thailand	Ms.Tuamyim Krittiya (Mod)	Crispy Seaweed “Tao Kae Noi”	Terminal 21 (Shopping Mall)
17.	Vietnam	Ms.Hoang Thu Phuong (Fade)	Vinamilk (Cow’s milk)	Old Quarter of Hanoi
18.	Vietnam	Mr.Vo Quang Toan (Tea)	“Mesa” Bread (A loaf of bread)	“Coc” Market (Market Stall)

### My personal opinion

The presentations from all participants were very interesting both popular products and popular places. There are some points that I noticed and learnt from the presentation.

For popular products, the difference is the uniqueness of each country participants tries to introduce their country’s unique product. There are some similarities as followings:

- PRODUCTS: those selected products/items are mainly “food products” or “eatable products”. So



there is no doubt to imply that people prefer buying “food” to other products/items from convenient stores.

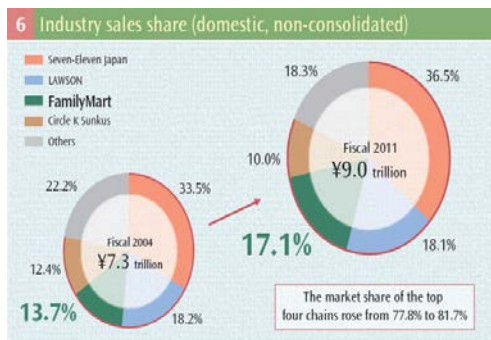
- PRICE: During the presentation, I was introduced to the word “Reasonable price” or the sentence “it is very cheap.” from most of the selected products. It means that we, as consumers, are indeed sensitive to price. In addition, sales promotion of some products (such as Indomie instant noodles from Indonesia and Knorr cup instant porridge from Thailand) are targeted to the price, for example, if you buy more than one of the same product, you get some privileges (e.g. discount or free gift)
- BRANDING: the strong branding product reflex the image and bring about the consumers’ confidence related to the quality of the product. For example, Samurai, energy drink, is a product of Coca Cola so in consumers’ point of view, the quality must be good.

Regarding popular places, the way that the participants select the places is very interesting. From my perspective, there are many criteria in the selection which can be classified as:

- Convenient location (i.e. central of the city, easy to access),
- Well known places for local people (e.g. market, convenient store, department store, shopping mall)
- Tourist places,
- Delicious taste and the hygiene of the food

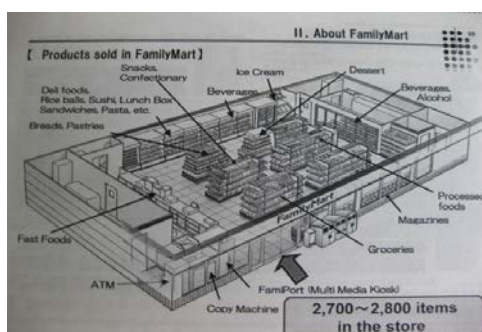
## Part 2: Lecture “About FamilyMart”

The market share of FamilyMart is growing and now ranks third in Japan with a market share of 17.1% as of 2011, following by 7-11 (36.5%) and Lawson (18.1%).



Source: Retail statistical yearbook, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and documents released by each company

In response to customer needs in local communities, FamilyMart ensures that its stock displays always contain a wide range of items from bento and beverages to non-food items, and that they stock the products their customers want to buy, when they want to buy them, in the right amounts. FamilyMart tries to match the demand from customers with the product supply to achieve the highest amount of sales.



In general, there are about 2,700 – 2,800 items in a store. The layout is designed to provide the best convenient service to the customers.

By only stocking the products, customers want to buy, when they want to buy them, and by also offering hospitality in everything they do and spotless store interiors, FamilyMart is stepping up its commitment to service, quality and cleanliness (SQ&C) to make FamilyMart stores even more appealing to customers.



#### ■ Three Marketing Strategies

Identifying new customer needs through generation-based marketing		
Focus targets	Forging closer ties	Development targets
Men (50-65) Women in their 50s	Largest customer segment (people in their 30s)	Children up to 15 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand range of products for target group</li> <li>Propose new dining styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce priority product categories and increase added value in each category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make product lineups more appealing to store visitors</li> <li>Plan stores that also appeal to parents and other guardians</li> </ul>
Improve average spending per customer by marketing based on pricing measures		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovate value beyond the price tag</li> <li>Take measures to improve average spending per customer</li> </ul>		
Prospering with the community through region-based marketing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure product ranges and planning are more firmly rooted in local communities</li> <li>Local produce for local consumption, and local produce for consumption elsewhere</li> <li>Urban style merchandising</li> </ul>		

FamilyMart has 3 Marketing Strategies to promote its sales:

1. Identifying new customer needs through generation-based marketing.
2. Improving average spending per customer by marketing based on pricing measures.
3. Prospering with the community through region-based marketing.

Moreover, FamilyMart has a strategy to make customers purchase “one or more product” by using in-store merchandising. In-store Promotion and Space Management (efficient Floor producing) are introduced to draw attention of the customers to the items, then the customers hopefully pick them up and purchase them.

#### My personal opinion

Learning from the experience of FamilyMart was a great opportunity. FamilyMart has shared with us its enterprise strategy theories and current practice strategies. FamilyMart has excellent potential for growth amid the current severe competition in the convenience store industry. Not only domestic growth, but FamilyMart is also speeding up the pace of its overseas development.

With those customer-oriented strategies, FamilyMart will continue to aggressively develop overseas markets, particularly in Asia, and successively build up its global store network as a set target.



#### Part 3: Store Visit

According to our assignment of an in Store Visit, we had to find out some gimmicks of the sales floor and look at the actual store with 4 categories in mind: Product, Facilities, Exhibition and other which later used for group workshop. Given 30-minutes time, all participants walked around the store exhaustively trying to notice and collect information covering all points as much as possible, from the outside of the store, to the inside; on the wall, on the shelf, on the displays and the products.



All participants walked around and around taking pictures, writing notes and exchanging ideas.

#### My personal opinion

Normally when people go to convenient stores, they just take a short time. Once they get in the store they only grasp the wanted items, then finish. However, only at this time, we have chance to carefully observe and take pictures of everything inside a FamilyMart convenience store. Along the day, there are 2 opportunities for a FamilyMart store visit:-

One time was when we were given a FamilyMart card for 1,000 Yen to buy our lunch at a FamilyMart Store. We also visited, observed and experienced the FamilyMart Store as well as tasted the food products from the store.

The other time is when we went to find out some gimmicks used on the sales floor and noticed the actual store in 4 categories: Product, Facilities, Exhibition and other which later used for group workshop.

#### Part 4: Workshop/Group Discussion

There are 4 groups for today workshop:-

Group 1: Cambodia, Indonesia and Laos

Group 2: Malaysia and Myanmar

Group 3: Philippines and Thailand

Group 4: Singapore, Vietnam and Japan

All group discussions came up with similar ideas which could be classified as followings:-

##### Product

There are a variety of kinds of products inside the stores.

With sales promotion, there are signs to attract customers, such as best sales product, New product, Discount price, Free gift given etc.

Beautiful decoration shelves for desserts.



- Laundry service

##### Facilities

- ATMs
- Utility and other bill payments
- Photocopying and faxing
- Ticket issuance
- Package-delivery agent
- Hot water
- Microwave

- Toilet

##### Exhibition



- The store has clear windows that allow potential customers that are walking by to vaguely notice what is available inside and this is an excellent way to attract customers.

Newspapers are placed inside right at the entrance. As a customer walks by, the large lettering of the headlines and some photos on the front page of the newspapers can easily draw their eyes and this could lead to a possible purchase of these newspapers or magazines.

A lot of small snacks, cigarettes, and hot food are placed in some sort of glass cases, when customers are paying at the cashier, they are attracted to the warm and sizzling meat.



- Table or Stand for specially display products.

### Others

- Active and lively staff
- Membership
- Ecological concerns
- Safety concerns (Height identification)

### Comments

- No free Wi-Fi / internet
- No parking space
- No tester for cosmetic products



### My personal opinion



All participants really appreciated this opportunity to learn FamilyMart, as before starting workshop/group discussion, FamilyMart staff brought top sales products (snacks and candies) for us to select and bring back as souvenirs from FamilyMart.

Besides the discussion, I myself find that FamilyMart has dedicated itself to various activities for Corporate Social responsibility. For instance, during walking from the train station to Sunshine building in the morning, we saw FamilyMart officers doing trash collecting activities along the street.



In conclusion, with high intentions, the best strategy and practical implementation, the accomplishment of Family Mart is not far to see.

Thank you very much for sharing with us.

Honto ni Arigato Gozaimasu!





# Technology Development

## Mr. Satoshi Shigemi



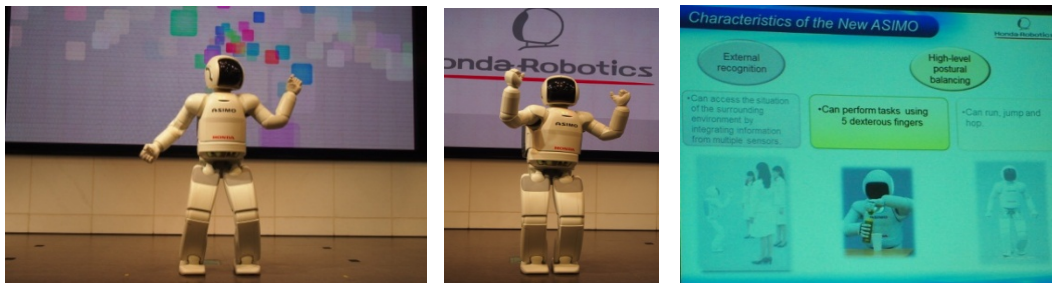
November 5th, 2012

Krittiya Tuamyim(Mod),  
Thailand

### 1. Overview about ASIMO and All-new ASIMO

The Honda Motor Co., Ltd. has conducted its activities with a commitment to protecting the environment and enhancing safety in a mobile society. Honda offers products that help make customers' lives better, and delivers technologies that are useful in everyday life and products that no one else has created before. The main products of Honda are automobiles, motorcycles and power products. Technology and development is one of the most important tasks that Honda gives precedence to. In the year 2000, ASIMO, a humanoid robot was released with the compact light weight, sophisticated walk technology, greater freedom of upper limb movement, greater ease of manipulation and a more human friendly design. The engineer's ultimate goal in their R&D efforts was to create a humanoid robot that benefited people in their daily environment.

In 2011, an all-new ASIMO was released. It has advanced from an 'automatic machine' to an 'autonomous machine' with the decision-making capability to determine its behavior in concert with its surroundings such as the movement of people.



The technologies required to realize these capabilities were developed;

1) High-level postural balancing capability which enables the robot to maintain its posture by putting out its leg in an instant

2) External recognition capability which enables the robot to integrate information, such as movements of people around it, from multiple sensors and estimate the changes that are taking place.

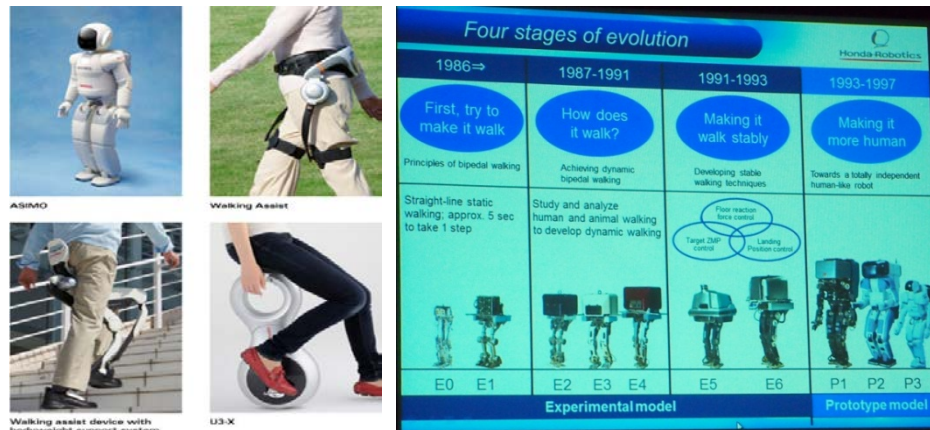
3) The capability to generate autonomous behavior enables the robot to make predictions from gathered information and autonomously determine the next behavior without being controlled by an operator.

With these capabilities, the all-new ASIMO takes another step closer to practical use in an environment where it coexists with people.

ASIMO exhibits the slogan of Honda 'The power of dreams'. Studying human beings to understand people and learn from them is the root of Honda's manufacturing. While positioning the humanoid robot research as one of the important pillars in the area of studying

human beings, Honda has been working to realize the various functions of a human being that is ultimate mobility with intelligence.

In addition to the all-new ASIMO and the task-performing robot arm, the previously introduced walking assist device with stride management system which supports walking for people with weakened leg muscles, the bodyweight support assist system which reduces the load on legs by supporting part of the bodyweight, and the U3-X, a compact one-wheel-drive mobility device that provides free movement in all directions, are examples of product applications resulting from the application of bipedal technology and balance control technology amassed through the research and development of ASIMO.



The brief description about ASIMO from Mr. Satoshi Shigemi was a good sample that demonstrated the power of dreams. Dreams are the powerful factor for people to step forward. Honda took 10 years, from 1986-1997, to create ASIMO. The All-new ASIMO also showed it is persistently developing better technology. Learning to dream and following our dreams might be the foremost lesson we have learned from Honda.

## 2. Group Discussion: Technology in the next 20 years.

In the seminar we discussed our expectations of the future technology in next 20 years. After the discussion we came up with 3 aspects that push us to think about better technology that would serve our life in a sustainable way; mobility, daily life, and energy. Doraemon, the most creative and imaginative story, was cited in the discussion. We learned that dreams and technology development were related to each other as the lecturer emphasized that dreams and technology had a role to play. Not only for individuals but it would be good if everyone could gain access to the technology to make their lives better.

We also discussed the obstructions to technological development. The limitation of knowledge, natural resources, budget and government policies were determined as the critical barriers. Then we tried to think about the way to overcome these obstructions. We found that



an alternative choice of resources was the important thing. For an example, in the limitation of energy, biodiesel was one of the creations that was expected to be an alternative power.

By the theme of group discussion, we were encouraged to dream about the future of technology reasonably, and considered the possibility to create them. Lastly, we learned the Honda way of thinking. We learned about the power of dreams, but we can't stop only dreaming. We should think about them until the end, and make them come true. Besides the knowledge we got from the instructor, we learned about the fantastic philosophy that could be adapted and practiced in our life and our career.





# *Field Study & Visit Reports*









## Field Study Moku-Moku Farm

### Mr. Shigeru Matsunaga



October 2, 2012

**Ma. Karen Go (Karen),  
Philippines**

#### Overview of the Tour

After seeing the urban side of Suzuka City Hall and Police Station last October 1, 2012, we visited a rural (agricultural) area in Iga city on our next field tour. This very interesting site and unique farm was called Moku-Moku. Moku which means wood in Japanese and Mokumoku “smoke that billows up” is an agricultural theme park. In the farm we get to see and experience many things, from making the raw materials to finished products like ham and bread. It was also said that there were other activities that could be enjoyed on the farm such as horse riding, milking cows etc. There is also a hot spring (onsen) that can be enjoyed with a view of the Iga Mountains.

Firstly we had a lecture about the history and concept of Moku-Moku farm by Mr. Matsunaga, the General Manager of Moku-Moku Farm. Then two staff showed us around the farm and bring us to a very special buffet restaurant in the farm for lunch. In the afternoon we were able to have hands on baking experience, and we also had some free time to go around the farm and discover interesting sites. Unfortunately we were not able to make it to the mini-pig show because of some delays in our cooking class. Our last stop was the foot spa area where we relaxed and enjoyed our handmade bread.

#### Lecture on Moku-Moku Farm



It was very interesting and quiet surprising how the farm started from just 19 pig farmers to now an agricultural producers' cooperative. From the experience shared by Mr. Matsunaga, it was not easy establishing Moku-Moku farm. At first they thought that having resources and good tasting food would make their business profitable, but they were wrong. Other factors also need to be considered in establishing the business. So as time passed by they were open to changes

and suggestions and the whole concept of “food and farming”, “natural food”, “agriculture” and “handmade” became clearer to them. They were thinking of what could be added or what the value of their product was and would they be able to sell it. And so they agreed to put the



emphasis on their “knowledge”, “reasoning”, and “making” as theme of their farm. Their concept of putting new values on farming and agriculture was the key factor for their success.

Not only that, Moku-Moku farm also makes good use of its community charm and characteristics in order to flourish as a community. Harmony between the producers and consumers coexist since both sides understand that learning and becoming aware of the importance of agriculture as a way of life and through giving and receiving new values of agriculture makes everyone happy and satisfied. The whole community did it side by side. And as Mr. Matsunaga explained the employers themselves are also the owners of the farm, while the consumers themselves get the experience of the farming community through food and agriculture education (classes).

### The Tour

After the lecture we were given a chance to go around the farm guided by two wonderful young staff. We saw a rich variety of fresh vegetables from the small shop that they have near the entrance of the farm. The farmers bring their harvest to this cooperative market to sell them. Some of the participants bought fresh fruit (plums I think but I’m not sure), we ate them and agreed that they were really fresh and that they tasted so good. We said we should have also bought some more.



There was also a shrine called Tonton, at first it looked ordinary but then we noticed a statue of a pig, it was a bit funny but they said that it has an explanation behind that statue of a pig. They said it is believed that once you rub the pig it brings good luck in work and love. However, others didn’t know about it they just took some pictures, because it looks more like a mini park than a shrine.

There were also some souvenir shops and stores where they directly sell their produce. They get their raw materials in the farm, making sure that they prioritize the farmers produce, and then bring it together in these shops and by this way they continue to help build the community. After visiting/site seeing we had our lunch. It was also a nice experience because we actually ate the fresh farm produce that they were talking about. They also had the concept of no waste and they encouraged that we finish the food we get.

We were also encouraged to put our dishes to a certain area and by doing that we participate in their mission of conservation (no waste of food). We got the chance to experience baking; it was really fun and we learned a lot. This type of activity in the farm adds value to the



produce that they have. Why? Because buying and eating bread is different from getting to eat the bread that you just made. Getting the experience adds value to it, hence Moku-Moku farm is not just interested in selling their produce but they wanted to really impart the importance of valuing how one produces the food. This type of learning is very good for the younger generation to value food and the resources that they have.

## Conclusion

What impressed me the most or should I say maybe what impressed us most is the principle behind Moku-Moku farm. They do not just do business but they greatly contribute to protecting the environment and at the same time make good use of their resources for the growth of the whole community (cooperative). The business itself helps to revitalize the community through their new values in farming and agriculture. Their active participation in protecting the environment by practicing safe and appropriate agricultural practices while producing delicious and safe food, are noteworthy. They see the importance of “knowing” and “thinking” together with the customers. Their high priority for the employees and farmers engaging together for business and they give importance to the “spirit of cooperation” which makes this farm very unique and sustainable.

As a whole Moku-Moku is far more than a farm, it's an experience (they call it wealth of the heart) and a very good place for learning and growth both for the young and older generations. And it is true, that one visit is not enough to see all that Moku-Moku has to offer- a return trip is a must and hopefully (I)we will get to spend the night their someday.



# **Nara Visit: Japanese Traditional Performance “Noh” and Toda-ji Temple**

## **Mr. Masakazu Ishihara**



October 16, 2012

**Hoang Thu Phuong (Fate),  
Vietnam**

### **Overview of the tour**

We departed Suzuka Circuit Hotel at 7am on 17 October 2012 and arrived at Nara Park about 9am. After two local guides introduced themselves to us, we enjoyed a Noh Performance in the Noh Theater, which is inside Nara’s new Public Hall. Noh is a form of theater involving music, dance and drama, originating in the 14th century. It was developed together with “Kyogen”, which are comical pieces performed during interludes of the main noh performances. The dual art of noh and kyogen is known as nogaku, and is listed as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. We were introduced to the history of Noh and how it is in modern life. The performers introduced us to four excerpts of four performances and explained us the stories and meanings.

After enjoying the performances, we were allowed to enter the Noh stage to take pictures and we wore a Noh mask. Everybody was so excited and very happy to be on the stage. Please noted that we had to wear Tabi (split-toed socks) before we entered to the stage as the Noh stage is a sacred area, no one is allowed to step on it barefoot or when wearing regular socks.

Then, the performers chose Nick – a participant from Myanmar to try to be a Noh performer. Nick was made up and dressed up as a woman who deeply loved a man, she wore her husband’s clothes and saw into the well with a hope that she could see her husband.

It was so interesting as we understood how many layers of kimono performers had to wear to dress up.

The introduction of Noh – Japanese Traditional Performance ended with an applause and we appreciated their preparation for our visit from early morning and their enthusiasm to all of us.

We had lunch at a restaurant nearby in Nara Park. After finishing, we divided into two sub-groups and followed the tour guide to visit Todaji Temple. Toda-ji Temple is one of Japan's most famous and historically significant temples and a landmark of Nara. The temple was constructed in 752 as the head temple of all provincial Buddhist temples of Japan and grew so





powerful that the capital was moved from Nara to Nagaoka in 784 in order to lower the temple's influence on government affairs.

The tour guide introduced us the history and religion co-nation of Buddhism and Shinto. We walked around and understood more about the history and culture of this Temple. We finished our visit at 4pm and moved to Suzuka Circuit Hotel.

### **Introduction of Noh – Japanese Traditional Performance**

At first, after introducing us to the performers, we took a look to whole Noh theatre. Then, the performers explained that the noh stage is an extremely simple space in which there is no curtain between the playing area and the audience. Originally, Noh was played in open fields. In order to retain the idea of performing outdoors, the modern Noh stage, though fashioned indoors, is designed complete with details such as a roof, bridge with a handrail and a pine tree painted on the back wall. And one thing is different with comedy is the light on the stage never changes.



*Noh Stage – Nara Noh Theatre*

Then, we were instructed that there are five schools in Noh, Kanze, Hosho, Komparu, Kongo, and Kita and each school has different style and performance.

One feature of Noh is that all performers in Noh are male. They are:

“Shite” - the leading character. Depending on the play, the “Shite” may act as a holy old man, a deity, a demon, a spirit or a living man. His movements express various moods.

“Waki” - the supporting actor. The “Waki” plays roles such as a priest, monk or samurai. In contrast to the “Shite”, the “Waki” always portrays living people.

“Hayashi” - the musicians. Four musicians provide accompaniment for the performance with a flute (fue), shoulder drum (kotsuzumi), hip drum (otsuzumi) and stick drum (taiko).

“Jiutai” - the chorus. The chorus sits to the left of the stage and assists the “Shite” in the narration of the story.

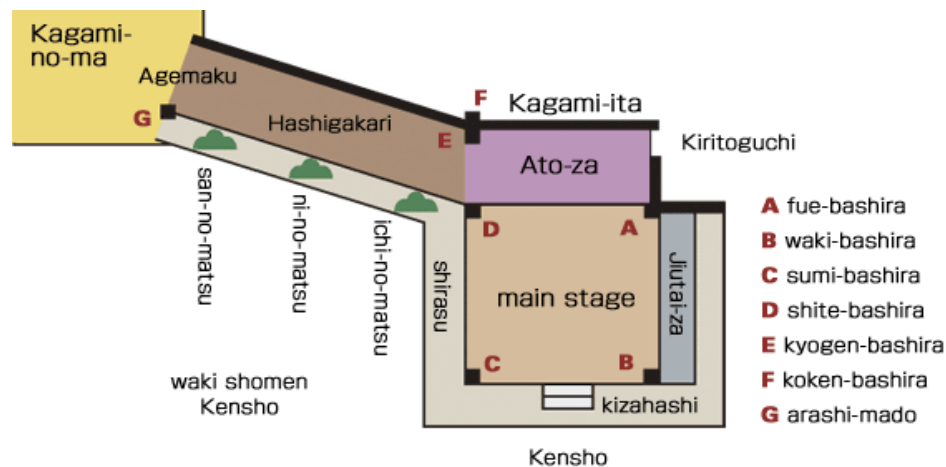
“Koken” - stage attendants. Dressed in black, the stage attendants are not part of the play but assist the performers in various ways, such as handing them props.

The music of Noh is produced as in the past, if any mistakes are made in the Noh performance to the Shogun, the performers as well as musicians has to seppuku (evisceration). Therefore, only easy music has been kept, the difficult ones have disappeared.



The performers also explained to us that the stage is constructed from hinoki (Japanese cypress). At the back of the stage is the kagami-ita (back panel, usually displaying a painted pine tree). In the front of the stage is the kizahashi (decorative staircase). Coming off the left side of the stage is the “Hashigakari” (bridge way). At the end of the “Hashigakari” is the “Agemaku” (curtain) which marks the entrance to the backstage area. It is thought that this current standard stage construction was established just before the reign of the well-known Shōgun Oda Nobunaga (circa 1550). The Northern Noh Stage, located Nishi Honganji Temple in Kyoto, is the oldest standing stage of this type of construction and is said to have been built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

The complete noh stage is comprised of the hon-butai (main playing area), hashigakari (bridgeway), ato-za (seating section for musicians and stage attendants) and the jiutai-za (seating section for the chorus). The main playing area is 5.4m per side.



The performers introduced to us four excerpts: Ceremony for shrine; Takasago, Mad Woman and Hell’s Performance. All excerpts were explained by the performers very carefully and we almost understood the stories.

Masks: One key element of Noh is the masks. They tell the audience what kind of character is being portrayed. Frequently used masks represent demons, spirits, as well as women and men of various ages. The masks are carved from blocks of Japanese cypress. Their three dimensional properties allow skilled actors to induce a variety of expressions with changes in head orientation.

After the lecture we were given the chance to enter the stage and took pictures and tried to wear mask. Everybody really enjoyed this.

Then, Nick was chosen as the temporary performer and was made up and dressed up. We were surprised because it took a lot of time the performers had to wear heavy costumes.





After having lunch, we visited Todaji Temple located in Nara Park. Toda-ji Temple is a Buddhist temple complex located in the city of Nara, Japan. Its Great Buddha Hall (Daibutsuden), houses the world's largest bronze statue of the Buddha Vairocana,[2] known in Japanese simply as Daibutsu(Budda). The temple also serves as the Japanese headquarters of the Kegon school of Buddhism. The temple is a listed UNESCO World Heritage Site as "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara", together with seven other

sites including temples, shrines and places in the city of Nara. Sika deer, regarded as messengers of the gods in the Shinto religion, roam the grounds freely.

Across the road to the Toda-ji Temple, there are many deers in everywhere, and they are quite pushy hoping to get a "deer biscuit" from visitors. Deer biscuits are sold by vendors all over the place with price of 150Y/bag.

We were informed about the Daibutsu (Budda) of Tōdai-ji.

The temple gives the following dimensions for the statue:

Height: 14.98 m (49.1 ft)  
 Face: 5.33 m (17.5 ft)  
 Eyes: 1.02 m (3.3 ft)  
 Nose: 0.5 m (1.6 ft)  
 Ears: 2.54 m (8.3 ft)



We were excited when we tried to pass through the hole, a supporting post in the Daibutsuden has a hole apparently the same size as one of the Daibutsu's nostrils. Legend has it that those who pass through it will be blessed with enlightenment in their next life.

Then, we walked around the Temple area and to the existing gate to wait for the bus. On the way to Suzuka, we took a rest at a Ninja Village and bought some sourvernirs here.





## Conclusion

The tour of the Japanese Traditional Stage Performance “Noh” and Todaji Temple was really a great chance for all of us – participants from ASEAN countries to see and experience the traditional performance of Japan – Noh. With hundreds years of history and imbued with the cultural history of Japan, what impressed me most or should I say maybe what impressed us most is the uniqueness of the Noh Performance. Although we listened to the introduction for a short time, I believe that almost all of us were impressed of this Japanese performance. This time we had a chance to listen to the history and culture of Toda-ji Temple by the local tour guide. We also impressed by the Daibutsu and the arrangement of the Nara government in combination of the temple area and park together, so it is a nice place for deer to live and be fed by the visitors.



## **Field Trip to Honda Suzuka Factory**

### **Jota Yamashita**

October 24, 2012

**Rasima Rasid(Sima),  
Malaysia**



### **Overview of the Field Trip**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012, IATSS Forum participants had an opportunity to visit the Honda Suzuka Factory.

Mr. Yamashita of Honda warmly welcomed us and briefed us about the program for the day which covered the outline of the Honda Company, Honda's environmental initiatives and finally tours the factory. Thereafter, he started his lecture explaining about the Honda Company. It was an interesting subject and we discovered many new and fascinating facts about the company.



Honda was established in the 1950s, when its founder Soichiro Honda, first started a company manufacturing motorcycles. Within a short period of ten years, it became the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer. Since then, the company has grown to become a multinational corporation running 67 factories in 27 countries. Today, Honda Motor Company consists of 3 subsidiaries namely Honda Corporation, Honda Engineering and Honda R&D. The company has 3 main product lines which are motorcycles, automobiles and power products. Besides that Honda produces a host of power equipment such as generators, pumps and boat engines.

Honda operates its business with the idea of "producing where there is demand" and therefore set up its first motorcycle plant outside Japan in Belgium during the year 1963. Currently, there are 5 Honda factories in the whole of Japan namely Tochigi, Saitama, Hamamatsu, Kumamoto and Suzuka. The Honda Suzuka factory started its production in April 1960 and

currently focuses in producing hybrid system products. Currently it employs about 8500 employees with 6900 permanent workers and 1600 part-time worker that run two lines i.e. Line 1 and Line 3. An interesting fact about the production is that Line 1 can produce about 1080 units with the line speed of 48 seconds per unit while Line 3 produces about 1100 units per day with 47 seconds per unit. After that, we watched the corporate video to have an overall insight of Honda.

The second part of the presentation was concerning Honda's environmental initiatives to protect the environment. Honda has created the "Blue Skies for Our Children" as a global environmental slogan to express their commitment toward environmental effort. The Honda Suzuka Factory has initiated many environmental initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint. This includes the use of co-generation systems and solar power to generate renewable energy, reduce the use of volatile organic solvent (VOC) chemicals especially the paint to water base paint and zero waste to landfill.

Among the initial initiative by Mr. Soichiro Honda, the founder of Honda was to plant trees. Since 1977, Honda has planted about 100000 trees which is equivalent of reducing 800 ton of CO<sub>2</sub> yearly. Another amazing initiative is the use of co-generation plant to generate electricity. The heat generated from the gas turbines are channel to electricity and steam. This cogeneration plant provides minimal electricity necessity especially for heating the water and safety devices system (fire protection and security system) of the factory especially during breakdown related to natural disasters. Besides that, the installation of solar panels within the factory started in 2006 to provide electricity. Next we were briefed on the overview of the waste water treatment process. The polluted water from production process are treated and transferred into a holding pond before being discharged into the Ise Bay. The treatment processes are so effective that the pond looks so pristine. The last visit was to the production assembly Line 1 to see the assembly of the car components. I was very impressed by how organized the whole production system including the usage of robots to install heavy parts to minimize defects and manual handling.

Overall, our visit to the Honda Suzuka factory was a very educational experience. It was very inspirational for us to learn and understand the Honda Motor Company's passionate desire to contribute to the sustainable growth of society and harmony between people and continue to deliver excitement through products and services that support personal mobility and a better life in general.





# Field Trip to Suzuka Traffic Education Centre (STEC)

**Mr. Akitumi Hisada**

October 24, 2012

**Rasima Rasid (Sima),  
Malaysia**



## Overview of the Field Trip

We departed the Suzuka Circuit Hotel at 0845 on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and arrived at the Suzuka Traffic Education Centre (STEC) at about 0850. We were greeted by Mr. Hisada, Director of the STEC, Mr. Tanabe and Mr. Izuhara (the training instructors) before being ushered to the training room.

Mr. Hisada started the presentation by emphasizing the fundamental principles of Honda's traffic safety education program and the history of the STEC. Due to the high fatalities related to road accidents, the Japanese government and community aim to be the safest country in the world by reducing the number of fatalities. As such, the STEC was established in 1964 and was the first facility to offer safe driving education in Japan. In 1970, the Honda driving safety promotion Centre was established when Japan experienced the highest number of fatalities. Since then Honda was involved in providing safety traffic education and the creation of safe driving courses. It also cooperated in the development of regulations related to road safety.



Honda's philosophy of road safety is "Respect for the Individual" through initiative, equality and trust. The STEC's main purpose related to traffic safety is to expand the circle of safety activities towards realizing a richer mobility society. To realize this vision, it adopts a two-pronged approach by

improving its hardware such as vehicle components and developed software programs on correct handling. Honda continues to pursue knowledge to improve driving techniques.

Honda's safety traffic awareness program focuses on educating not only drivers about safe driving habits but also pedestrians on proper road usage. Honda adopts the concept of raising awareness of safe behavior. The fundamental education is to encourage a change of the mindset and to improve skills for safe driving. The method used on road safety activities is to ensuring the road user recognizes their bad traffic behavior and address their shortcomings. With that, the STEC conduct practical activities through personal communication and hands on learning programs by allowing the participants to experience dangerous situations in a safe manner.

Honda has eight traffic training education centres in Japan as listed below:



1. Shikoku Honda Safety Training Center (Honda).
2. Suzuka Circuit Traffic Education Center (Honda).
3. Motegi Active Safety Training Park (Honda).
4. Saitama Rainbow Traffic Education Center (Honda).
5. Wako Rainbow Traffic Education Center (Honda).
6. Hamanako Rainbow Traffic Education Center (Honda).
7. Kumamoto Rainbow Traffic Education Center (Honda).
8. Fukuoka Rainbow Traffic Education Center (Honda).

The training centers that are operated by Rainbow do not only provide traffic training but also issue the licenses. Besides that, Honda also promotes safe driving abroad. Honda communicates the importance of traffic

safety to its customers outside of Japan through its local subsidiaries and affiliates in Brazil, China, Nigeria, Russia, Thailand, Singapore and Spain.

The education programs at STEC target a broad sector of community including government bodies, business organizations, schools as well as individual customers. This program is widely received. Since 1964 to 2011, a total of over 1 million people have received traffic training in STEC. Currently over 25,000 people and 500 organizations have participated each year.

Since 2007, new education programs were added to better prevent rear-end and intersection collisions which account for 60% of all road accidents. Among the programs are, the high technology Frequently Occurring Accident Response Program. The driving Habit Check Program that invites the driver to access their own driving skills and compare the results with a practical test evaluation. And lastly, the Night-time Accident Response Program (comprising two sub-components, the Collision Mitigation Brake System (CMBS) and Vehicle Statistic Assessment (VSA).



Mr. Tanabe further briefed us about the night time accident response program. It provides an understanding of the effectiveness and limits of safety devices. By watching the video presentation, we acknowledged that white or light color are more distinct at night time and hence are safer colors. We were also advised to use a reflector at night for our safety.

The highlight of the visit was an opportunity to drive and stop a car at high speed on a wet road. This allowed the participants to experience the anti-locking system which prevent the

car from skidding dangerously. This is particularly important on wet roads where cars are more prone to skidding and results in accidents. All participants were given the opportunity to experience this on a wet test strip on the driving circuit. It was a little unnerving driving up to 50km/h within a matter of seconds and stepping on the brakes forcefully to bring the car to a complete stop immediately.

The visit ended with a tour of the F1 race circuit. Overall, we were very impressed with STEC and Honda's commitment to road safety. STEC's comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to road safety education planning is worth learning.





# Event Reports



Japanese Culture  
Introduction



Cultural Exchange Day

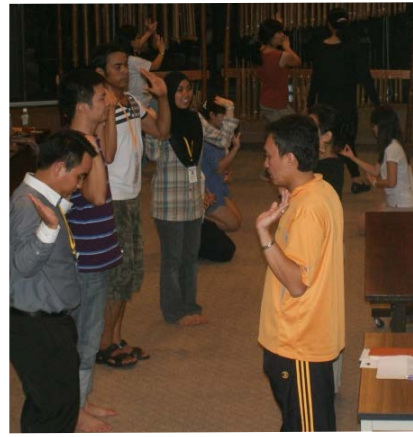






















# Cultural Exchange Day (CED)



October 21<sup>st</sup> 2012

Sompathana LAKHAISY (Arthur),  
Lao PDR

## I. In general:

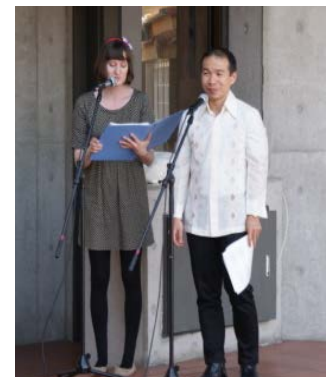
The cultural exchange day for the 49<sup>th</sup> batch is one of the most important parts of the IATSS Forum. This year the forum was held from September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. And the cultural exchange day was held on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 with the theme of Traditional dancing, which consisted of booth presentations from nine ASEAN countries including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. More than that, there were five more countries from other parts of the world which were Brazil, China, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States of America. During the event there were many activities such as cultural performances (different dancing styles from each country). And an auction of unique items from the nine ASEAN countries.

## II. Progress:

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012, an open meeting was held with all participants and the IATSS staff to select the event coordinator who was Allene and Achika. Mike was the event host/MC and Fella and Mony looked after the performer's style. Nick took care of country introduction booths. BS was responsible for the opening/closing performance. Arthur was the charity auctioneer and Sima was in charge of I.T. (power point). Lilian looked after the printed materials and Karen was the music controller. The rest were performers dancing different styles and other shows. After that, each person did their job and practiced their roles with a strict schedule. In addition, we had representatives for CNS (Mike, Karen, Myat su, Fella,). And representative for FM radio (Achika, and Mike).

## III. Cultural exchange day consisted of:

1. Welcoming remarks
2. Opening speech
3. Introduction of participants
4. Charity auction
5. Dance presentation
6. Quiz (The flag and dancing style which belonged to which country)
7. Country booth visit
8. Announcement of auction bidders/winner
9. Japanese dance performance
10. Closing ceremony



#### IV. Cultural exchange day running event on Oct 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012:

##### 1. Welcoming remarks:

Greetings and welcome guests by MC (Mike & Phillippa) give over view about culture exchange day (CED) and announcement on running the ceremony until the end.

##### 2. Opening speech:

Mr. Toshio Mochida the executive director of Mie International Exchange Foundation (MIEF) gave a short opening speech formally welcoming everyone to the event.



##### 3. Introduction of participants:

We have a total of 14 countries, nine of which are ASEAN countries and five more from the other parts of the world. All the participants present themselves in their national costume such a very nice moment.

No	Country	Participants	Performing (Dance)	Auction item
1	Cambodia	BS and Mony	flag dance	Coconut tea pot
2	Indonesia	Budi and Fella	Tor Tor dance	Wooden carved
3	Laos	Arthur and Phet	Paslop Dance	Hand woven bag
4	Malaysia	Sima and Achika	Sumazau dance	Floral Batik scarf
5	Myanmar	Nick and Myat Su	Thin Gya Yare Dance	Traditional shawl
6	Philippines	Mike and Karen	Cariñosa	Dining set
7	Singapore	Lilian and Allene	CIMO-CIMO	Batik shoe bag
8	Thailand	Tum and Mod	Lamvong Dance	Benjarong (mug)
9	Vietnam	Fade and Tea	Trong Com Dance	Painted picture
10	Brazil	Thais	Baiana dance	
11	China	YánLíuQíáng	Lion dance	
12	Japan	Ryuji, Akky, Nagi and Satoshi.		
13	UK	Phillippa		
14	USA	Jamie	Line dance	





#### 4. Charity auction:

This year we had many kinds of auction items from the nine ASEAN countries, all of which were very nice and unique some of which were very rare pieces. The charity auction this year was a silent auction which started from 13:50h to 15:30h. The money that was generated from the auction will go to Cambodia to support the education of the indigent children.

No	Country	Auction item	Starting price ¥	Biding price ¥
1	Cambodia	Coconut tea pot	300	500
2	Indonesia	Wooden carved	1500	1600
3	Laos	Hand woven bag	1500	1900
4	Malaysia	Floral Batik scarf	800 each	1900 Two pieces
5	Myanmar	Traditional shawl	800 each	2800 Three pieces
6	Philippines	Dining set	1500	1600
7	Singapore	Batik shoe bag	1000	1100
8	Thailand	Benjarong (mug)	1500	1600
9	Vietnam	Painted picture	1300	1500

**Total 14500 ¥**



#### 5. Dance presentation:

The theme of culture exchange day in the 49<sup>th</sup> batch IATSS Form 2012 was traditional dance. So, every country needed to have one dance performance to present to all co-participants how to dance. In order to let another participant join your dance. At the same time if you are interested in other dances from each country you also are welcome to join. More than that, there were young Japanese volunteers also sharing one Japanese dance performance in that period.

During the culture exchange day this year there were a variety of dances from the ASEAN regions five other countries from around the world it was such a very fruitful experience of happiness to enjoy with many different songs, different languages, and unique performance styles from 14 countries around the world. In addition, not only all of us were happy and enjoyed ourselves, but more than a hundred audience members including children, young, adults, and old. Boy and girl. Lady and gentlemen also enjoyed it and had fun with us on all of the dance performances from the beginning until the end. All of them were quick learners and had a good memory as they followed our dances from each country very well done in short time.



### **Cambodia:**

The Flag Dance is new creation of dance using Cambodian traditional music to portray friendship and solidarity among the ASEAN community.



### **Indonesia:**

"Tor-tor" is derived from the sound of pounding feet above the dancers in traditional Batak house siding. Dancers move to the accompaniment Gondang.



### **Lao PDR:**

- Lamvong is a Lao traditional dance. And Paslop is also Lao traditional modern dance, Lao people enjoy Lamvong and Paslop when they have party. Especially wedding parties, New Year's parties and all the occasions they want to enjoy.



### **Malaysia:**

- Sumazau dance is to indicate that farmers are rid of the birds from eating their rice crops.  
- Sumazau dance is slow rhythmic movements like birds flying. Each dancer must dance moves success of the few centimetres of the other dancers without contact.



### **Myanmar:**

Thingyan, a Traditional festival celebrated over a period of four to five days culminating in the New Year. The Festival takes place toward the end of the hot, dry season and ushers in the Myanmar New Year. ThingyanYane dance symbolize the Myanmar New year Festival.



### **Philippines:**

Cariñosa Dance

- Started in the 16th century.  
- The dance is to honor Maria Clara, who was the main character in Jose Rizal's novel Noli Me Tangere, ('Don't Touch Me'), about the colonization of the Philippines by the Spanish.  
- In it, Maria Clara is portrayed as a noble and loyal woman, who after the publication of the novel in the 19th century became the female symbol of virtue for Philippine women.



### **Singapore:**

CIMO-CIMO Dance:

Combines multi-racial dances in Singapore.

=>Chinese, Indian, Malay, Others





### **Thailand:**

Most popular Thai Folk Dance

- Originated in the Central Region of Thailand, during World WarII,
- Song lyrics refer to the goodness of Thai culture and the ability and daring of Thai warriors.



### **Vietnam:**

Trong com dance:

This is legend of a poor Confucian disciple who was very unlucky in competitions and examinations and had to go begging. Every day, he went past the mansion of a wealthy family where there was always a girl waiting to give him rice. One day, so moved by her good deed, the young man came to thank the girl. Seeing the poor man, the damsel said that she hoped that one day he would succeed. He decided to turn to music with a determination to achieve success. As time passed, he became famous. Unfortunately, upon arrival, he learnt that the damsel had just passed away due to illness. In his great lament, the young man brought along his musical instrumentalist guild to pay tributes to a deceased damsel and he created a small, cylindrical drum with rice stuck against both drumheads in commemoration of the ill-fated girl. The strip from which the drum was hung was made of white cloth symbolizing the mourning band. And as he clapped the drumheads, the doleful sounds echoed his deep pain and the loss of his sweetheart.



### **Brazil:**

BAIANA Dance: The mythical Baianas are one of the most known characters of the Brazilian Carnival and surely represent the utmost samba tradition and authenticity (aside with the Flag-Bearers and Samba-hosts). Foreigners and Brazilians simply fall under a spell when they ‘float’ through the Sambadrome’s runaway. Some of the Baianas, being more than 90 years old, still show plenty of vigor and charisma, as they are revered by public and samba-school members themselves.



### **China:**

Lion dance

It is one of China’s traditional dances in which performers mimic a lion's movements in a lion costume. Usually performed during the Chinese New Year and other important occasions.



### **United States of America:**

A line dance is a choreographed dance with a repeated sequence of steps in which a group of people dance in one or more lines or rows without regard for the gender of the individuals. The All American Line Dance Showdown is in the spring in Boston.



## 6. Country booth visit

As we known this year there are fourteen countries who joined the culture exchange day, but there were thirteen booths with the exception of the host (Japan). In each country booth there was the national flag, a country picture (Place to visit), a handicraft, an instrument, a toy, a country's product especially OVOP / ODOP / OTOP...etc. That relate to their daily life style. Furthermore, some country booths also had snack or sample product from their country for tasting.



## 7. Closing ceremony:

All parties must end sometime ending, after all activities were done smoothly up to 16:35pm. The closing ceremony of the culture exchange day for the 49<sup>th</sup> batch of the IATSS Form 2012 was announced by Mr. Akira HAGA the manager of IATSS Forum, and then followed by the last performance with the lyrics combined with a photo slide. At the same time with dancing and singing the song "Ashitaga Arusa".





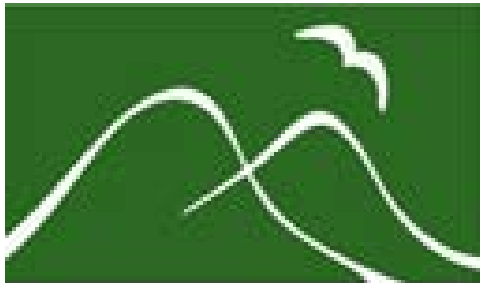
## V. Impressive:

Before the cultural exchange day for about one month, all participants had to prepare themselves a lot by following a schedule but time was quite limited. However, we wanted to have everything completely perfect. So, everyone was very enthusiastic about their practice and preparation. Whenever, we had time and sometime in the rest time, for example, in the morning time (before breakfast, after dinner or other short break). However, all of us also enjoyed ourselves and had fun with that situation (sometimes right and sometimes wrong), it was not only a great time to learn new cultural and traditional experiences from each other, but we also learned to share, living together or spending time together and going a long together. In this period all participants and IATSS staff worked very hard without feeling tired at all. Everyone was very excited and was looking forward to presenting their beautiful national customs, wonderful cultural and traditional uniqueness to other countries especial the audiences. Eventually, we looked so busy and exhausted but everybody was always happy, enjoy, have fun. All of us got more stressed about preparation and rehearsals when the day of the CED approached. However, all of us did a good job on the day of the performance in front of a hundred people. Some of us could not stop the tears coming out. Since everybody was very proud of the completely successful event. Because we had the help of the IATSS staffs, who were full of knowledge, skill and good experience to help us manage and organize the event as well as to be consultant and good supporter. Cultural exchange day this year was such a fruitful and colorful mix of people, national customs, culture and traditional, dancing styles, languages and religions from 14 countries of the world. It is like a “Many kinds of flower grow up in one tree”. Because of that, all of us become closer and deepen our knowledge and understand each other. For example, all of us can perform all dancing styles from each country very well. The most important things that we can learn from this event are solidarity, team work, love and care, also helping and supporting each other, never leaving any one behind.

Finally, let me express my sincere thanks to all IATSS staff, Mariko (CED Coordinator). CIR (Coordinator of International Relations), and all of the participants of 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum 2012 for your excellence cooperation and attention.



# Group Study Reports



*Eco-Tour of MEO VAC  
~Come with minority in mind,  
Leave with majority in your heart~*



*Pandin Lake Ecotourism Project  
~by Nature, with Culture,  
to Adventure~*



*The Heart of Inle Eco-tour  
~ One heart. One lake. Only Inle.~*











**REPORT OF MEO VAC ECO-TOUR PROJECT  
GROUP A – THE 49<sup>TH</sup> BATCH  
IATSS FORUM PROGRAM  
(November 2012)**

**M<sup>3</sup> TOUR**

**Minorities with mountains @ Meo Vac**

The road to the north of Vietnam, Meo Vac is very well worth traveling for the marvelous landscape, it offers to nature lovers and adventurers with passing through mountains and valleys of roads and villages of ethnic minority groups.

Now you can sense the north's most dramatic scenery, our Road of Vietnam! Scenic beauty coupled with diverse cultures, our Road of Vietnam tour is a sensational journey into one of the country's most remote regions. Now, now you can travel worry-free and have the eco-tour adventure of a lifetime!

**Come** with minority in mind,  
**Leave** with majority in your heart.



**M<sup>3</sup> Tour**  
<http://www.M3tour.com>

IATSS Forum  
Suzuka Circuit Hotel  
Tel: +81 (0)59-378-1111  
Fax +81 (0)59-378-1110

# **REPORT OF GROUP STUDY**

## **GROUP A: ECO-TOUR OF MEO VAC**

**Organization:** M3 Tour  
**Member:** Arthur, BS, Fade, Lillian, Ryuji, Sima, Tum  
**Slogan:** Minorities with Mountains @ Meo Vac  
**Motto:** Come with minority in mind,  
Leave with majority in your heart

### **PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

M3 Tour is founded in Oct 2012 during IATSS 49<sup>th</sup> Forum. It focuses on Eco-Tour planning of Meo Vac. Our logo M3 (pronounced as M-Three) depicts the Minorities with Mountains @ Meo Vac and the green color represents our concern for the environment.

Our motto is “*Come with minority in mind, Leave with majority in your heart*”. When one first visit to a place, there is little knowledge about the place, hence, this is the first minority. The ethnic minorities are the second minority. There is not much feeling in the heart of the customers about the place yet. This is the third minority. However, after we completed the tour, they can gain a lot of knowledge about the place, this is the first majority. The ethnic minority is not minority anymore; they get the understanding from the locals. This is the second majority. The customers also develop deep mutual feelings with Meo Vac. This is the third majority.

Our objectives are to provide memorable experiences to both locals and tourists and to promote healthy habits of locals.

Our mission is for our customers to “*Admire the nature, Enjoy warm hospitality & Experience uniqueness*”.

#### **1.2 Business**

Our group provides the service as an Eco-tour planner. Presently, our eco-tour is in the introductory stage. Our future plan includes developing Eco-tour in Meo Vac in the next one year.



### **1.3 Market**

We focus on following markets:

- Domestic Tourists
- Foreign Tourists
- Students & Researchers
- 

### **1.4 Risk/Opportunity**

Refer to Appendix Table 1 for Risk Assessment





## PART 2: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

### II.1 Discussion Overview

#### A. Concept of Eco-Tourism

Ecotourism is derived from the words “Eco” and “Tourism”. The word “Eco” comes from Ecosystem, everything surrounding us including living and non-living things. “Tourism” means activity done by an individual or a group of individuals, which leads to a motion from a place to another. Ecotourism is nature-based, learning-oriented tourism that has the intent of being environmentally, economically and socio-culturally sustainable. The positive impacts of ecotourism include its incentive effect for protecting natural habitats, its provision of funds and volunteer activity to enhance venues, and the stimulation of economic activity in peripheral regions.

*“Ecotourism involves visiting natural areas with the objectives of learning, studying or participating in activities that do not bring negative effects to the environment; whilst protecting and empowering the local community socially and economically.”* (Cristina, 2004)

A commonly accepted definition of ecotourism is:

*“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people”*

Ideally, ecotourism should...

- Minimize the negative impacts of tourism
- Contribute to conservation efforts
- Employ locally and give money back to the community
- Educate visitors about the local environment and culture
- Cooperate with local people to manage natural areas
- Provide a positive experience for both visitor and host

#### B. Information on the precious resources in ASEAN countries which we have shared within our group (See Appendix Table 2 for reference)

We found it very hard to choose only one best ecotourism because almost all of our ecotourism projects are attractive. There are six different ecotourism projects from six different countries namely Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. We found the effective way to evaluate each project based on the following criteria:

- Resources
- Local community involvement
- Economy

- Social and Cultural Awareness
- Educational activities
- Government support
- Accessibility

First, **Ecotourism project of Cambodia** which is called “Chi Phat Community-Based Ecotourism” focuses mainly on community development and conservation of natural resources. The potential resources of Chi Phat are mountains, forest, water, river, Asian Elephant and Tiger. Local community can get benefits from ecotourism by providing tour guide, homestay, handicraft, renting facilities, local food, etc. Currently local people are being educated on agricultural techniques, environmental awareness and benefits of historical site. The site is located around 200km from Capital city, Phnom Penh. This site is quite developed already.

Next, **Namguem project from Laos** which focuses mainly focuses on natural resources conservation and joyfulness. The main resources are forest, mountain, river, island and lake. Local people living around the area can get benefits from selling handicraft, local food and fruit plus boat sightseeing tour. Moreover, the project aims to raise local people’s awareness on conservation and hydropower dam. The site is located just 100km from the capital city, Vientiane. This is a popular tourist site already.

Another project is the ecotourism project from Malaysia which is called **Sungei Lepoh** which mainly based on the views of waterfall and forest as the resources. Local people depend on bamboo, local fruit, wild herbs and guild as the extra source of their daily income. It is just 15km away from Kuala Lumpur. In our research facilities, however we have limited information.

Labrador Park which is located just 2km from Singapore city is also quite attractive for its history and coastal area. Various flora and fauna can be found in this park. But there is low community involvement required for this site.

**China Town in Thailand Ecotourism** also shows us many potential points to be promoted to the ecotourism plan. The area is very famous for its history, varieties of food and goods and the attractiveness of the place itself. The project aims to protect the long history, ancient architectures, local community and the unique identity of this China Town.

The last ecotourism project is called **Meo Vac, Vietnam**. The area is very famous for its resources such as mountains, stone plateau, rice terraces, minority groups and unique cultures. The local people can benefit from this ecotourism projects such as providing homestay, tour



guide, handicrafts, local products, etc. The location is located around 400km from the capital city, Hanoi.

As mentioned earlier that all the ecotourism in our group are attractive for their main focus and conservation. After a few discussions, we could find the best project to be implemented for ecotourism. We all agreed to choose Meo Vac Ecotourism project based on its attractiveness of natural resources, people (minority groups) and uniqueness culture, current environmental issues in the region, and other undiscovered potentials of the area. Through the uniqueness of this area, untouched minority culture, and globally-recognized natural resources, Meo Vac is the best place to be promoted as our ecotourism project.

## **II.2 Background of the Project**

### **A. Meo Vac Village of Ha Giang Province** *(Source: Wikipedia.com)*

Meo Vac is a rural district of Ha Giang northern province. It is located in the northeast of Ha Giang province with a population of 53,915 (1999). It is about 150km from the provincial capital town of Ha Giang. Meo Vac shares the border with Dong Van District of Ha Giang Province and Bao Lam District of Cao Bang Province.

Meo Vac has most of the terrains in the Rock Plateau of Dong Van an is 1000m above sea level. The road from Meo Vac Town to Dong Van Town is 23km which is via the sublime beauty of Ma Pi Leng Pass. Meo Vac has a harsh climate in the winter from November to April with dry and freezing cold weather. There are different ethnic minorities groups living in Meo Vac including the H'Mong, the King, Tay, Dzao.

### **B. Co Tien the Double Mountain Quan Ba, Ha Giang**

Double mountain under the type of tectonic – Geomorphic heritage, located in Tam Son town, Quan Ba district, Ha Giang province. It is 47 kilometre from Ha Giang town. Situated at an altitude of over 1000 meters above sea level, fresh air, wild scenery, majestic nature with endlessly range of Limestone Mountains. The nature has granted here a wonderful place called “Co Tien Double Mountain”, it is two tops of the limestone mountain. Its shape is the same as “two breasts” of the girl, lying in the middle of the field in Quan Ba. This is an unique landscape of Tam Son in particular and Dong Van Karst Plateau (“DVKP”) Geological park.

“Co Tien Double Mountain” is a result of the process of leaching, erosion with regular practice in the destruction of the fault zone in Quan Ba- Huong Cha that its last phase of activity occurred about 5 million years ago. In fact that, there are many karst scene in

the valley of Quan Ba, only “Co Tien double mountain” is the most beautiful and located at the most favourable position visitors to see.

### **C. Dong Van Rock Plateau**

On October 3, 2010, in Lesvos (Greece), Dong Van Rock Plateau was recognized as official member of Global Geological-parks Network (GGN) for its prominent values on landscape, palaeobiology, geology, geomorphology and local culture. Dong Van Rock Plateau has become the first geological-park of Vietnam and the second one in Southeast Asia (after Langkawi Geological-park in Malaysia).

Covering the area of 2,350km<sup>2</sup>, Dong Van Rock Plateau belongs to 4 mountainous districts of Ha Giang Province, including Quan Ba, Yen Minh, Meo Vac and Dong Van.

This is one of Vietnam’s special limestone areas, housing prominent imprints that depict the development of the earth’s crust and natural phenomenon. Besides superb natural landscapes, the Dong Van Plateau has also preserved special traditional cultural values of ethnic minority groups and become a destination attracting many tourists and scientists.

Up to 80% of Dong Van Plateau’s area is limestone with 11 fossil – geological formations, of which Chang Pung is the oldest formation with the date of 545 million years. In addition, Dong Van has 17 paleontology groups which helped scientists draw a complete picture of development history in terms of geology of Dong Van Rock Plateau in particular and the northeast Vietnam - south China in general. Thanks to weather changes and geo-diversity, the karst evolution in Dong Van has created “rock gardens” and “rock forests” of diverse forms in the area, such as Khau Vai rock garden in Meo Vac, Van Chai rock garden in Dong Van as well as system of caves and grottos such as Rong Cave in Sang Tung (Dong Van), Kho My Cave in Tung Vai (Quan Ba), En Grotto in Van Chai (Dong Van).

The scientists have evaluated Dong Van Plateau as having a unique and diverse mountainous geo-ecosystem. Primitive forests here have been rather undamaged and are habitat for many rare flora and fauna species.

### **D. The Road of Happiness**



The road to the northern province of Ha Giang presents many breath-taking bends but is still well worth traveling for the marvellous landscape it offers to nature lovers and adventurers.

The 60-kilometre section from Dong Van to Meo Vac and Lung Phin winds up and down to the magnificent Ma Pi Leng Pass through mountains and valleys of rocks and villages of ethnic minority groups. During the French time there was no road like we see today that connected Ha Giang Town with DVKP. Traffic and transportation was all done either by foot or horse and it took 3 days to get to DVKP from Ha Giang Town.

The National Road No. 4C Ha Giang-Dong Van-Meo Vac was decided to be built after North Vietnam was liberated and it took 6 years (1959-1965) to build a distance of app. 300km. So difficult to build and so happy when it was done that the road was called “The Happiness Road”. More than 2 million workdays were spent by youngsters of 16 nations from 8 provinces of North Vietnam. But what is unforgettable is the construction of the Ma Pi Leng Pass, the most difficult pass to build but also the most fascinating and beautiful pass to enjoy in Vietnam. It took the youngsters one and a half year to connect the 24km distance between Dong Van and Meo Vac Towns but the Ma Pi Leng Pass alone already took them 11 months or more than 330 days of hanging themselves on rock cliffs to make it through.

Ma Pi Leng, in H’Mong language means “Horse Nose Bridge”. Many adventurers select Ma Pi Leng as the most beautiful pass in Vietnam. The road runs on the sides of black limestone mountains, which are typical features of Dong Van Karst Plateau. Wall-like rocks of all shapes also beautify the pass, which is in the middle of Dong Van Town and Lung Phin. The Nho Que River adds the finishing touch to nature’s perfect and picturesque painting.

#### **E. Meo Vac Market**

Meo Vac cattle market in Ha Giang Province is held every Sunday. It is the only one of its kind in the entire northern mountainous region of Vietnam. The market is not only for buying cows by the locals living in the karst plateau, it is also a time for the H’Mong ethnic people to get together. Visitors to the area are always encouraged to go to Meo Vac cattle market because of the unique characteristics of the local ethnic people. The market goes on have to start early in the morning. The cow sellers have to

wake up even earlier, usually at midnight, and walk their cows to market. Many, who live far from the market, have to walk dozens of miles, climb mountains and cross streams to get there. However they don't appear to be tired, instead they are smiling and cheerful.

There are not only cows for sale, but also dogs, goats and pigs. In spite of being tied up, a few chubby pigs are still able to run around. Goats lie near their owner's feet. Dogs wag their tails to welcome the passers-by. The market welcomes the first visitors around 5 am. From the echoes of the forests and mountains, the cow's footsteps can be heard as they make their way to market. At the market, visitors will get to see how the local mountain people dress for daily life. The H'Mong men wear black dresses while the Mong women are dressed in their best, most colourful costumes with their children running by their sides. Near the area reserved for selling cows, there are food shops selling traditional *Thang co* (stewed meat soup) together with the fragrant maize wine. Most of the H'Mong men can't afford leaving at the end of the day without trying some. Many locals do not sell their cows, dogs or pigs at the market; they just bring them there to show off for fun. However, there is an abundance of cows for sale, sometimes with herds of up to a thousand heads of cattle. The cows stand in line, side by side, waiting to be sold. Many people from the lowland areas, such as Vinh Phuc, Ninh Binh or Nam Dinh Provinces, also come to Meo Vac market to buy cows.



The H'Mong people are widely known for the good care they take in raising cows. On the karst plateau it is very cold in winter. There is often hoarfrost, but they can raise many strong and fat cows. On the average, a cow is sold for about VND 5-8 million. Larger cows may be sold for up to VND 20 million. To an ethnic family, a cow is truly an asset. After selling off a cow, the seller is often seen checking his cash carefully and counting it with pride. He is always ready though to spend some of his hard earned



money to buy a bowl of *Thang co* soup and a few cups of maize wine. He considers that a reward for his efforts at raising such a good animal.



#### **F. Transportation**

Traveling to Meo Vac was almost impossible earlier; transport has been made much easier by the newly-made systems of roads which offer heavenly beauty of nature.

#### **G. Climate**

The climate is symbolic of the climate of North Vietnam; featuring all four seasons. In summer (from May to September), it's hot, humid and rainy, while monsoons flourish.

Meo Vac has four different seasons weather in a year: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Spring lasts from February to April with warm weather. In Spring, it is characterized by fine drizzle that helps plants grow fast and flowers bloom brightly. Summer lasts from May to August with hot and showery weather. The sun shines almost every day. And there are sometimes sudden thundershowers that make summer less hot and become cooler. Autumn lasts from September to November with cool air, and dry and lightly windy weather. It can be said that it is the most beautiful season in a year with yellow leaves falling on the streets. Sometimes typhoons threaten life and agriculture in the country. Winter lasts from October April with cold and dry weather. It is the coldest season in a year. The average temperature is over 25°C. Annual rainfall totals between 1,700 and 2,400mm.

#### **H. Ethnic Minority (See Appendix Box 1 for reference)**

The H'mong ethnic minority people are classified as the poorest in Ha Giang province. The livelihoods of the White H'Mong inhabiting the high mountain zone, depend on the unique rock pocket agriculture whereby most fields are rain-fed and rock-covered.

Other than a very small area of wet rice fields in the valleys, crops are cultivated only in the rainy season. Almost all land is devoted to raising maize, their staple food.

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Meo Vac is home to 14 ethnic minority groups of which the largest is the H'Mong (41,428). The White H'Mong inhabiting the high limestone mountains are challenged not only by scarcity of agricultural land and water but also a very harsh climate. Due to low literacy rates, the main mode of communication is by word of mouth. A number of ethnic minorities had mastered some farming techniques. They grew rice plants in swamped paddy fields and carried out irrigation. Others went hunting, fishing, collecting and lived a semi-nomadic life. Each group has its own culture, diverse yet special. Beliefs and religions of the Vietnamese ethnic minority groups were also disparate from each other. Well known H'Mong families in the region include: the Vuong, Giang, Sung, Mua, Ly, Lau, The, Vu, Va, Ha, Chu, Sinh, Cu, Cha, Lu. These family groups can be distinguished by the colour of their clothes, the style of embroidery and the tone of language. However, traditional customs and rituals are gradually being fractured due to faster transportation (motor bikes), heightening interaction among groups. Specific demographic features are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 : Meo Vac demographic figures**

Area	574 km <sup>2</sup>
Number of villages	18 (17 villages and 01 township)
Population	53,915 inhabitants
Male	49%
Female	51%
Number of households	11,505
- Urban households	797
- Rural households	10,708
Number of 15-49 year old women	14,583
Number of 15-49 year old married women	11,191
Ethnic groups	Dzao, Tay, Giay, H'mong, Nung, Xuong, Lolo, Clao, Pubeo, Cao Lan, Muong, Hoa, Kinh, Bo Y

*Source: UBND Meo Vac, 2007*

The H'Mong came to Viet Nam from Yunnan, China about 200-300 years ago. On the way south, some H'Mong clans settled in the northern mountainous regions while others traveled to Laos, passing through Lai Chau and Son La into Xiengkhouang and Sam Neua. This movement of population is described by Christian Culas as a “flight from uprisings and wars and associated massacres, lootings and famine”. After living in Laos for three or four generations, many H'Mong settled in Nghe An, Vietnam.

Today, households of different H'Mong clans intermingle with other ethnic groups, a practice reflected in the names given to newly-settled families. This trend of intermingling differs significantly from the past isolation of separate ethnic minority groups. Worldwide, there are about seven million H'Mong people living in parts of Thailand, Laos, China, the US and other countries. In Vietnam, approximately 800.000 H'Mong inhabit three regions, North, Central, and Southern, making up 1% of the total national population. H'Mong history, culture, and rituals are preserved orally from generation to generation. It was not until the early 1950s when the Western missionaries came to South East Asia to preach Christianity that the H'Mong acquired a written language. Historically, the H'Mong form a clan-based society worshipping a common ancestor. The society is patrilineal and the family unit highly regarded. Most H'Mong people practice animism believing that well-being equates with harmony, creating a balance between the inner life soul and the spirits outside the body. For

centuries, the H'Mong practiced slash-and-burn cultivation (*đốt nương làm rẫy*), an agricultural technique that relates closely to their mobile lifestyle, even today.

The H'Mong (*Meo*) in Vietnam are divided into five principal branches, distinguished by variation in female costume, dialect, traditions and customs: *Meo trang* (*H'Mong dau*, in the *Meo* language) or white *Meo*; *Meo hoa* (*H'Mong lenh*), or diverse *Meo*; *Meo đen* (*H'Mong du*), or black *Meo*; *Meo xanh* (*H'Mong sua*), or green *Meo*; and *Meo đỏ* (*H'Mong pe*), or red *Meo*. Of all the *Meo*, the most numerous are *Meo trang* or white *Meo*. The H'Mong writing system, developed since 1956, is based on the latin alphabet.

H'Mong religion is influenced by the Chinese philosophies of Confucianism and Taoism. These religions impact strongly on the order of daily life in local communities. While on one hand women are expected to perform demanding duties and to uphold their responsibilities, on the other, they are denied both personal and RH(?) rights. When the H'Mong talks about religion, they are usually referring to the rituals and ceremonies that take place in the home. They believe that human existence is closely linked to an earth inhabited by spirits and religious cosmologies. They pray to many supernatural powers (to rain, land, tree, animal, home and ancestor spirits), believed to control the success or otherwise of their livelihoods. Most activities, whether house building, hunting, weddings, cultivating a new field, happiness, unhappiness and disease are shaped by a complex cosmology. For example, selection of the right piece of land for cultivation involves many taboos and may require the conducting of spiritual ceremonies. It is important to identify the right day and even the hour to finalize the transaction. The cult of ancestor worship is widespread. An altar, dedicated to the ancestors, is placed against the back wall facing the principal door, made simply of a rectangle of local bark paper (*cay zo*), about one hand span wide and one and a half long, usually colored red. The paper, bought from the cult master, is stuck vertically on the back wall opposite the principal entrance on the day of the house inauguration. The bark paper bears some Chinese ideograms and is adorned with a few cock feathers sacrificed for the occasion. As the ceremony proceeds more feathers and incense sticks are added.

The H'Mong abides by numerous rules of conduct and behaviour. Social and economic organization is mostly determined by kinship networks that reflect clan or lineage membership. The Chief of the H'Mong lineage (*hopau*) is very influential. His

responsibilities include, "reporting" to the ancestor about marriage and birth, organizing funerals, solving disputes between families within the lineage and between his and other lineages, mobilizing resources to help families in difficulty, ensuring safe transfer of lineage rules and practices to the next generation, and making decisions on migration. All lineage members are obliged to listen and comply with the lineage chief's advice although older members may also be consulted.

### **II.3 Goal and Objectives**

#### **A. Goals of our Eco-tour**

To ensure the sustainability of nature and local community in Meo Vac

#### **B. Objectives**

1. To provide memorable experiences to both locals and tourists (short term)
2. To promote healthy habits of locals.

### **II.4 Challenges in Meo Vac Local Community**

#### **A. Water shortage** (*Source: NGOs' reports*)

This challenge was the most cited by the Meo Vac people. Water shortage is a serious problem throughout the region. The cost of a can of water is subject to seasonal fluctuation that can vary between 5.000 -15.000 VND (100.000 VND for 1 cubic metre of water).

There are no household bathrooms and few latrines. Drinking water is seriously insufficient to meet demand, not helped by the fact that water sources are located far away. It can take several hours to traverse the mountainside on foot to fill containers. Children often miss school because of the need to fetch water, especially in the winter. The consultant located some water tanks (funded by UNICEF) but the quality of the contents was poor. Water shortage causes difficulties for women who are unable to bathe properly and maintain hygiene during menstruation. Lack of hygiene contributes to the prevalence of gynaecological infections in the region.

#### **B. Daily Life – Environment (Hygiene)**

Most houses in Meo Vac are makeshift, old, dilapidated and lack sanitation. People live in narrow and cramped spaces with no windows. The house also functions as a storage facility for maize and other starch food, compromising the occupants even further. H'Mong people are accustomed to breeding animals (goat, cows, ducks, chicken, pigs) next to their house, making the immediate environment very dirty, damp and polluted.



Another negative aspect found in this style of housing is the air pollution. Long term indoor exposure to smoke from cooking with wood fires, living with waste, animal dung and other biomass fuels contribute to illnesses. Women do most of the cooking and are therefore more intensively exposed to indoor air pollution than men.

## **PART III – MARKETING, PROMOTION & MANAGEMENT**

### **III.1 Marketing Strategy of M3 Tour**

M3 Tour is a one company that service Eco-Tour to the tourist both in country and oversea with the aim to provide you an environmentally friendly and socially responsible experience. Our head office is located in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The professional and experienced team of M3 Tour offers outdoor activity throughout the country as described on the brochure. Safety of our clients is a priority: all our guides have undertaken international training and follow regularly first aid training with the Vietnam Red Cross.

Whenever possible, M3 Tour employs ethnic people and supports families all around the country through its operations based on a participatory “pro-poor” approach. Anyone participating in a M3 Tour gets the unique opportunity to learn more about history and culture significance of the region, and making social contribution the tour groups are limited in size in order not to exceed the carrying capacity of sensitive places visited.

M3 Tour will continue to re-invest profit into eco-projects throughout the country, maintain close cooperation with international organizations operating in Vietnam and keep on applying the best practices we know whenever possible in order to make it a greener and cleaner country.

### **III.2 Highlight of M3 Tour (Travel your own way)**

M3 Tour proposes three categories depending on your adventure, thrill, culture or ethnic encounter.

#### ***1. Discovery: Culture tours and classic sites***

The classic sites (the road, valley, double mountain, rice terraces, stone plateau, local villages) and the beautiful landscapes can be appreciated by easy and enjoyable walks, sightseeing and get closer to the culture and local people.

#### ***2. Experience: Nature and local life encounter.***

Some exciting activities with no high physical requirements while enjoying and relaxing in the nature and experiencing local daily life around you ( rice or corn planting and harvesting, alcohol making, cooking, early morning market, school visit, weaving).

#### ***3. Adventure: Immersion in the nature***

4. Enjoy wildlife observation and camping on the mountain and in the forest. You will learn about the uses of the forest and experience the ethnic minorities' life in remote area.

**A. Networking:**

Mutual agreement with other tour agencies especially 8 branches over sea with strong network such as Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos.

**B. Collaborate with relevant agencies (Tie-in-sale):**

The price is reasonable. For example,

1-10 people pay standard price.

11 people & up discount 5%.

However, a couple for honeymoon can also enjoy a discount of 5%.

**C. Reasonable price and customizable plan:** As you know, the cost of living in Vietnam is quite cheap, and we can adjust the tour plan for you, and we also can be a consultant or give some comments for you.

**D. Promotion Channel**

- ✓ Facebook: Frequency update, reply all questions from customers, We welcome all suggestions and recommendations, all are invaluable to us.
- ✓ Website (www.M3tour.com): Company profile, organization chart, Information such as How to go to Meo Vac, Places to visit, Festivals and activity... etc.
- ✓ Brochures, Posters: place on every agency, hotel, travel information center, airport, coffee shop (Star Buck)...etc.
- ✓ Exhibition: Tour exhibition expo, national festival in agency country.
- ✓ Instant message: sms, email, (Make contract with Telecom company)
- ✓ Talk/presentation (collaborate with local university and schools).Ex: Open house.

**E. Proposed Social System for targeted local community**

M<sup>3</sup> Tour has supported the local community in Meo Vac to have a better social system via various activities for our customers to select and create their own packages. Our eco tour will focus to the following activities introduced to “School Visit” to provide the benefit to the local community in Meo Vac:-

**1. 3-year Plan**

- **Building Rainwater catchment** at the visited school. Due to water shortage which is a serious problem throughout Meo Vac and surrounding regions. Each time, M<sup>3</sup> Tour has chance to visit a school, we will bring tourists to support the building of a rainwater catchment. M<sup>3</sup> Tour will invite volunteer



specialists/lecturers/students from universities in Vietnam who can instruct the construction of Rainwater catchment building. In addition, M<sup>3</sup> Tour will cooperate with selected NGOs for any required technical and financial support. With proper design, maintenance, and water treatment, a rainwater catchment system can provide the local community with stock of water that is clear, odourless, and relatively free of contamination. This water can be used for drinking, bathing and washing,

- **Interaction experience** with children minority of the mountains through teaching of simple English and Vietnamese to them as well as learning with the minority to do handicrafts and decorate Eco bag. The tourists will each bring one old t-shirt that they want to throw away. This will be made into eco-bag. The eco-bag will be given to the minority people in market for them to use in place of plastic bag. The tourist will receive a small souvenir from the locals which the tourists are able to bring back as souvenir to their home. The tourist can use Eco bag during the trip when they go shopping to reduce the usage of plastic bag and keep their trash back with them.
- **Introducing collecting trash 10 pieces/day activity.** In this activity, the student, the future of the community, will learn and practice their habit, not to drop the trash and reduce the amount of trash dropped on the street nearby school area. Moreover, they will learn how to classify the trash into burnable and unburnable items. If this activity is widely accepted, it will help the local community reduce the amount of trash dropped on the street and eventually, bring about the clean community.

## **2. Future Plan**

- **Brother- Sister school**

In the future, M<sup>3</sup> Tour will cooperate with some selected school in the city and bring the students from the city to visit and do activities at the school in Meo Vac. By doing this, M<sup>3</sup> Tour will create the same understanding to both schools. To further the sustainable practice, the school in the city and school in Meo Vac are able to support and help each other in some instances, so called “Brother-Sister School”. For example, the School in the city can donate some book or other materials to the school in Meo Vac.

- Bring the doctor to the community (Educate hygiene and first aid)

Since minority in Meo Vac is very poor with low education and lack of medical support. M<sup>3</sup> Tour will offer special price to the hospital and bring doctors and nurses (who are interested/ volunteers) with their medicine and equipment to visit Meo Vac. Besides the travelling, M<sup>3</sup> Tour will set a day for medical mobile service in the local community as well as educate the minority to know about first aid and healthy habits. In this activity, it creates win-win benefit to all related parties, the hospital can have better through this corporate social responsibility (“CSR”) activity while the minority can receive the mobile medical service. M<sup>3</sup> Tour will try our best cooperate with the relevant parties including local government, NGOs and hospital and make this useful activity in the future.

### **3. Time frame and action plans for the implementation of Eco-tourism in the targeted local community**

M3 tour implementation will be proceeding in 2 periods.

- **Short term action plan**

Short term action plan is for establishing the Eco-tour at Meo Vac. At this period, we make agreement with community and supportive group (e.g. NGO, JICA) based on the original plan as 49<sup>th</sup> Group Study result. Evaluate the plan, and be ready invite tourists. This period will be complete following 3 steps.

1-1: Research

1-2: Complete the plan

1-3: Action -1<sup>st</sup> time M3 tour implementation

*(Details are written bellow)*

- **Long term action plan**

Long term action plan is for proceed next stage of Meo Vac Eco-tour. At this period, we will strengthen the Meo Vac tour. When we make the basic tour activities, we would add another aspect “Brother/Sister Exchange project”.

Action will be done by following 2 steps.

➤ Check and Amend (4 times)

➤ Proceed to 2nd stage (including Brother/Sister exchange project)

*(Details are written bellow)*

### **4. Detail information for implementation.(See Appendix Table 4 for reference)**

- **Short term action plan**

- Research

- ✓ Create proposal plan & Budget. (See Appendix Table 5 for reference)  
Creating proposal plan & Budget estimation has been done in 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum Group Study (GS). This GS was based on our challenge even nobody was professional tour agent, however, completed based on research and advice from Prof. Mizota, and Mr. Arakawa. The plan will be checked in the next step.
    - ✓ Research on the mindset of local minority of Meo Vac  
Go to Meo Vac and confirm the relevance of our plan. First we have to listen the voices of minority, and make agreement of the M3 tour. After that, we should amend our tour based on the discussion with local minority. We must not insist our plan to minority but should show the benefit for minority based on our research. Decision will be done by local minority.
    - ✓ To source out, Liaison parties. In this Eco-Tour, we try to avoid lack of water for daily life. In Meo Vac, they do have the water catchments, however, some of them are broken. We want to provide more sustainable water catchment to community. Our object is “To promote healthy habits of locals”. Therefore we need to find appropriate liaison parties to build up water catchment at Meo Vac. This period, we contact to outside parties (e.g. NGO, JICA, universities), to source out who is our liaison parties.

- **Complete the plan**

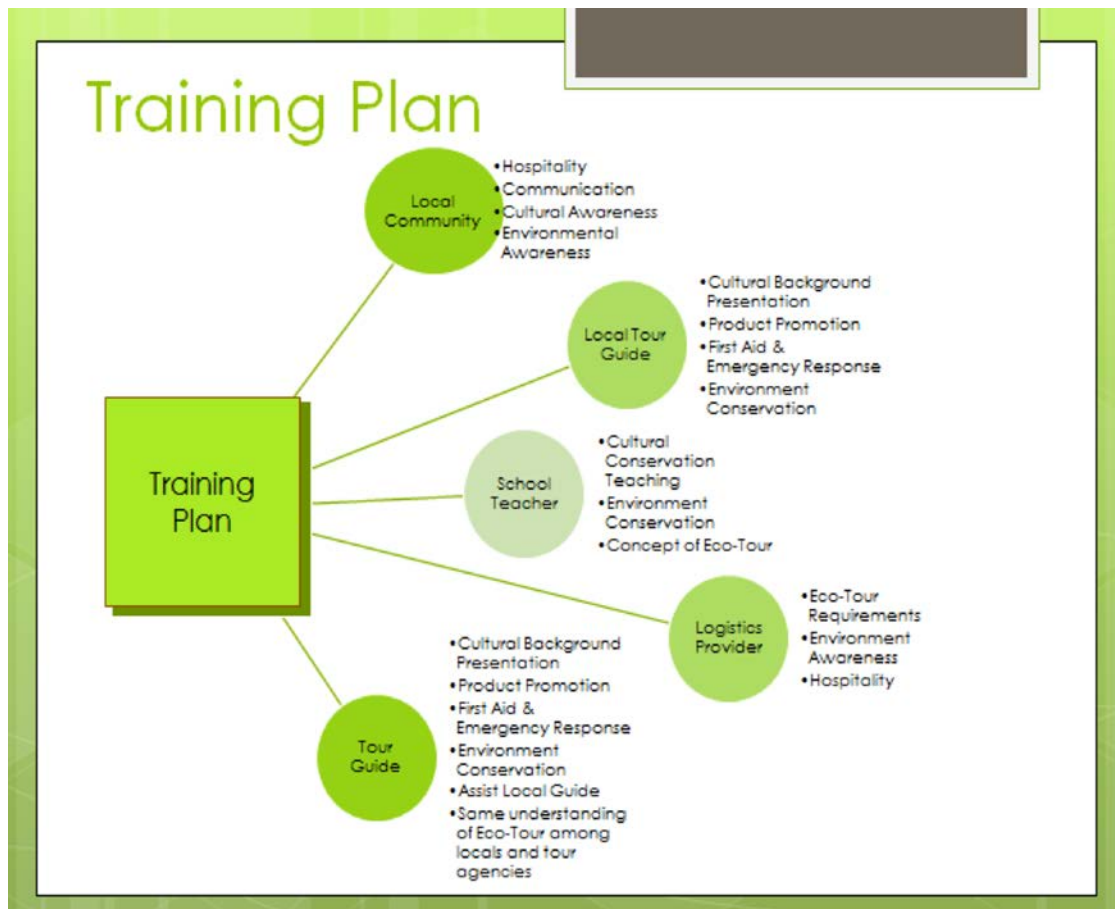
- ✓ Water catchment planning  
Once we find the liaison parties, we will proceed to practical activity. Confirm the proper water catchment size, material, necessary items surrounding water catchment (budget should be amended based on this confirmation). And further check on how to build up, how many hours do we need, how many people can be involved to build up. On top of it, we also check the maintenance period of water catchment. These information must be documented and provided to the local community.

- **Training Plan (Including Budget revising)**

To be successful in this Eco-Tour, we should have the same understanding with all related people about our goal. To reduce gap of understanding, we clearly explain each requirement to each of the supportive or involved people. When we have the same understanding and goal, this Eco-Tour will be really beneficial and sustainable activity.



**Figure 2 : Training Plan (Relevant Parties)**



▪ **Action -- 1<sup>st</sup> time M3 tour implementation**

➤ Trial implementation.

Up to this period, we had already completed the planning to go to Meo Vac. In this period, we actually go to Meo Vac and evaluate the effectiveness of our eco-tour. Expected tourists are, M3 members, Alumni and University students. We also have discussion with the alumnus at the IATSS alumni meeting in Vietnam.

➤ Finalization of the overall tour

According to the result of trial implementation, we will finalize the overall tour.

➤ Marketing & Promotion

After we finalized the tour, we will start on marketing and promotion. Formalize the tour brochure and A3 poster. We put poster on University, City hall, Hospital, and other expected place where our potential customer go. Any cost to put poster?

- 1<sup>st</sup> time M3 tour implementation.  
1<sup>st</sup> tour is expected in Nov 2013.

▪ **Long term action plan**

- Check and Amend

M3 tour will be brushed up after the result of the 1<sup>st</sup> tour implementation.

- ✓ Find the weak points and be improved.
- ✓ To point out what attracted to tourist even we are not aware.
- ✓ Make the tour itself and the connection more concrete, to proceed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage.

- Proceed to 2<sup>nd</sup> stage (including Brother/Sister exchange project): From Jan 2015 to Dec 2015.

Target: From the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 2015, we proceed to another challenge.

In this 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, we involve school kids of Hanoi.

- ✓ In 1<sup>st</sup> stage, the target number of tourist is 10 people. And 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, we involve kids of tourist, meaning number of the tourist will be 15 to 20.
- ✓ Intention to involve the kids is, to have exchange experience between city kids and local minority kids.
- ✓ Through studying environmental issues, geography and environmentally, constructing the water catchment together, kids will understand deeper each other.
- ✓ Our goal is, the kids themselves understand the cultural difference and life style. And as they grow up, they will consider the future Vietnam together.
- ✓ The men and the women who develop the future of Vietnam are they kids.

▪ **Profit Distribution**

The profit earned in this eco-tour will be to: (i) support the maintenance of this project; (ii) to buy the resources for the water catchment system; (iii) school maintenance and (iv) transport fees for doctors/volunteers in the initial phase.

- ✓ Water Catchment System
- ✓ Eco-Bag

**F. Concerns & Prospective Issues**

**1. Current Challenges/issues**

- Poor facility – water, cleanliness, housing condition

- No environment awareness (high consumption of plastics)

## 2. Prospective Issues

- Resource mismanagement
- Other tour groups copy our concept but not develop in the proper manner.
- Tourism often includes deforestation, disruption of ecological life systems and various forms of pollution, all of which contribute to environmental degradation.
- Profits are put into the pockets of investors instead of reinvestment into the local economy or environmental protection.
- Resentment by local people
- Local people have illegally lost their homes, and most often with no compensation.
- Ethnic groups are increasingly being seen as a "backdrop" to the scenery and wildlife. The local people struggle for cultural survival and freedom of cultural expression while being "observed" by tourists.
- Accommodation to be built should be constrained

## PART IV – POSTSCRIPT

### IV.1 Difficulties

Following are difficulties faced by our group in the process of making the eco-tour.

Difficulties	How to overcome
Language barrier in terms of understanding other people's opinion	Know and understand each other by talking and sharing. Don't be afraid to talk. Talk and confirm
Time management	External activities should be considered
Difficult to set up objective	Before going deeper, discuss first and set up a common objective
Different opinions during discussions	Discuss and get consensus by writing and recording
Hard to express our opinions	Listen patiently, try to catch idea and confirm again
Misunderstanding instruction	Clarify the concerns on instruction, confirmation of Professor and staffs
Difficulties to get actual knowledge and facts of resource about Meo Vac	Use variety of channels in sourcing information of Meo Vac



No experience in planning eco-tourism	Do more research and discuss together to get more understanding eco-tour
Lose focus	Get involvement and rotate roles
Ideas constraint based on one's opinion	Be more open minded in sharing opinion. Do not stop thinking. Respect other opinions and decide by yourself and share your own ideas.

#### IV.2 Lessons Learnt:

- *More understanding of the Eco-tourism concept & eco-tour*
- *Learn to share (listen to opinions and knowledge)*
- *Learn teamwork, interpersonal and facilitation skills*
- *Learn to respect and care of anyone (Never leave any member behind!)*
- *The importance of strategic planning to be understood by everyone*
- *Learn how to focus on process, not only outcome*
- *Synergy in group is more powerful ( $1 + 1 \geq 3$ )*
- *Support group members to shine (not just yourself)*



## Appendix

**Table 1 : Risk Assessment Matrix**

Target Tourists																				
A Domestic Tourists																				
B Foreign Tourists																				
C Students & Researchers																				
		Target Tourists			Evaluation						Tour Guide Requir									
	Activities	A	B	C	1	2	3	4	5	6		Score	Prior	%	Community	Culture	Economy	Education	Nature	Mitigation
1	Experience Hot spring	O	O	X	3	1	1	3	1	1	N	10		55.6			income for local people (entrance fee)		Chemical from soap	To use non-chemical soap
2	Sight-seeing (2 mountains)	O	O	O	3	2	1	2	1	3	Y	12		66.7	Local guide		Income paid to local guide	History & Background	- Trash - Bring something back from nature	- No trash policy - Nature orientation
3	Weaving activity	O	O	O	3	3	3	3	3	3	Y	18		100.0	Pass down skills to the next generation	enjoy minority culture/clothes	Income from sale of clothes	Weaving skills		
4	Rice Planting	O	O	O	3	3	3	3	3	3	Y	18	*	100.0	Farmer	Traditional method		Correct Planting Method		
5	Rice Tasting (for Lunch)	O	O	X	3	2	3	3	1	2	N	14	*	77.8	Farmer/locals	Traditional method	Cook for a meal	Cooking method		
6	Visit to Stone Plateau	O	O	O	3	3	3	3	1	3	Y	16	*	88.9	Local guide		Income paid to local guide	Geological	- Trash - Bring something back from nature - Vandalism	- No trash policy - Nature orientation
7	Visit to local/cattle market	O	O	X	3	1	3	3	2	1	N	13		72.2	Locals	Local product culture	Sell local product	Earnings keeping		
8	View to road	O	O	O	3	2	3	1	1	2	Y	12	*	66.7	<Refer to #2>					
9	Alcohol making & tasting (from Rice & Corn)	O	O	O	3	2	3	3	1	2	Y	14		77.8	Locals	Traditional method	Selling local products	How to make		
10	Flag pole & Mansion	O	O	O	3	2	3	1	1	3	Y	13		72.2	<Refer to #2>					
11	Corn processing/harvesting	O	O	O	3	2	3	3	3	2	Y	16	*	88.9	<Refer to #4>					
12	Music performance & Traditional wear, games	O	O	O	3	2	3	1	3	2	Y	14	*	77.8	Locals	Minority instrument	Income for locals	How to play/dance?		
13	Cooking & Tasting local food	O	O	X	3	2	3	3	2	2	Y	15	*	83.3	<Refer to #5>					
14	School visit (Teaching + Handicraft making)	X	O	X	3	3	3	1	1	3	Y	14	*	77.8	Locals/school children / teacher	Traditional games, minority background		activities included quiz & games		
15	Nature walk (e.g. hon tam giac mach flowers)	O	O	O	2	2	3	1	1	2	N	11		61.1	<Refer to #2> + hands-on					

**Table 2 : Precious resources in ASEAN countries**

Type	- Nature - Community	- Nature - Indirect Community	Nature	- Nature - Potential Community	Nature	- Nature - Community
Country	Vietnam	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Singapore	Cambodia
Place Selected	Meo Vac	Danau Sentanum	Nam Nguem	Sg Lepoh	Labrador Park	Chit Phat
1. Resources	Mountain <b>Stone Plateau</b> Padi Terraces	<b>Forest Lake</b> Endangered : Arowana Fish	Forest River, <b>Lake</b> Mountain Islands	<b>Waterfall Forest</b>	Historical Coastal area	Mountain <b>Forest Waterfall</b> River <b>Asian Elephant, Tiger Jar</b>
2. Local community Involvement	O	O	O	O	X	O
3. Contribution to Economy	Homestay Tour guide Local products - Rice - Handicrafts	Homestay Tour guide Food Transportation River Local products - Rice - Handicrafts	Handicraft Local fruits, food (fish) Cruise Electricity	Bamboo Local fruits Wild herbs Guide	- (Non-profit)	Homestay Bicycle Renting Tour guide Local food  Handicraft
4. Cultural Awareness <i>* Note : Social -&gt; Lifestyle (e.g Poverty) Cultural -&gt; Underlying</i>	O	O	O	O	O	O
5. Educational Activity	O - Minority, geological research	O - Research on forest conservation **	O - Conservation on fishery, hydropower electric **	X	O - History	O - Agriculture, <b>environment, history</b>
6. Government support	O	O	O	X	O	O
7. Accessibility (From Capital city)	O - 400km - 8 hours	O - 657km - 16 hours	O - 100km - 2 hours	X - 45km - 30mins	O - 2km - 10mins walk	O -200km - 4 hours
8. Availability of data	O Source : Internet,	O Source : Internet	O Source : Internet	O Source : Internet, Blog	O Source : Internet (Limited)	O Source : Official website, skype



**Table 3 : Eco Tour Plan Itinerary**

Tour Plan (4 days 3 nights)			Rainy Season : June - Aug								
			Dry Season : Sep - May								
Mode of transport : 12-15 pax seater bus											
Day	0		1				2		3		
Destination	Hanoi		Ha Giang		Quan Ba	Yen Minh	Dong Van		Meo Vac	Yen Minh	Hanoi
Time Start			0700hrs		0800 - 1000hrs	1100 - 1500hrs	1800 - 0900hrs		1100 - 0900hr	1300hr	1900hrs
Duration	4 hours	Overnight	1 hour	2 hours	1 hour	4 hours	3 hours	Overnight	2 hours	5 hours	1 hour
Activities			1. Experience Hot Spring		1. Sight-seeing of 2 mountains	<b>Option 1. Experience rice planting/ corn haversting</b>		1. Local tour guide brief on history	1. Road view [20km] - Background (how constructed)		1. Lunch
			2. Dinner		2. History / Legend	<b>Depends on season/stage process</b>		of stone plateau (on the way from Yen Minh to Dong Van)	by local tour guide (Miniature of how		
					3. Briefing by local tourguide	(Sept - May)		2. Tea picking (optional, depend on weather)	road was constructed)		
					4. Visit village	2. Brief on history		2. Visit mansion & Flag pole (Lung Cu) (optional);	2. Visit mansion & Flag pole (Lung Cu);		
						a. How it started		3. Experience vietnam coffee after dinner			
						b. Method to improve the crop		4. Early morning visit to local market (0500 - 1000hrs)	3. Arrive village (Visit & Homestay(Long-term))		
						c. Types of rice					
						d. Chemical not used - organic			b. See the cattle market (cow, buffalo, pig)		
						To combat disease					
						3. Lunch (1230 - 1330hours)					
						- Experience rice tasting (Traditional rice cooking method)			e. Teach math / science / english/ cleanliness to minority school visit		
						- Sample as souvenir			f. Kids to teach on the handicraft e.g. purse / coaster		
						or			(small items) to keep as souvenir)		
						<b>Option 2. Experience weaving activity and cooking/rice tasting</b>					
						Depends on season/stage process			i. cooking lesson for local food		
						(June - August)					
						2. Brief on history			k. nature walk tour - follow & experience how to find food in the mountain		
						a. How it started			l. hon tam giac mach flowers in Nov ** looks like cherry blossom fields.		
						b. Weaving technique					
						c. Types of rice			m. goat & bull fighting		
						d. Chemical not used - organic			j. traditional / local games		
						Cooking			d. Traditional musical performance		
						3. Lunch (1230 - 1330hours)			h. experience lifestyle - how to wear traditional dress / costume		
						- Experience rice tasting (Traditional rice cooking method)			NGO activity: Construct wells (water catchment), tourists participate		
						- Sample as souvenir			e.g base line and tour guide takes picture and update on website and		
									show the process and completion		
									~~> repeater for tourist to want them to come back		

**Eco Tour Plan (See Appendix Table 3 for reference)**

Itinerary (4D3N)	
<b>Day 1 : Hanoi - Ha Giang City</b>	
See : Hot spring Taste : Traditional Food	
<b>Day 2 : Ha Giang City – Yen Minh - Dong Van</b>	
See : Co Tien Mountain . Rice Terraces Do : Rice Planting* / Corn Harvesting* . Weaving Taste : Traditional Rice & Food . Coffee  * Rice Planting / Corn Harvesting depends on season and weather condition	
<b>Day 3 : Dong Van – Meo Vac</b>	
See : Stone Plateau . Happiness Road . Mansion . Lung Cu Flag Pole Do : <u>School Visit</u> (Water Catchment , Handicraft making) . Tea Picking* Taste : Food in Local Market  * Tea Picking depends on season and weather condition	
<b>Day 4 : Meo Vac - Hanoi</b>	
Back to Hanoi	

**Table 4 : Action Plan to make social system**

S/No.	Activities	Unit Cost (USD)	Quantity	Total \$ (USD)	PIC	Target Implementation Date	Objective/Reason	Implementation Method	To whom	Roles
1	Create proposal plan & Budget	0	0	0	M3	Oct-Nov 2012	To create an eco-tour plan	Discussion meeting/Brainstorm	Tour Agencies	Tour Agencies
2	Research on the mindset of local minority of Meo Vac			46	IATSS Alumni in Vietnam	Dec-Feb 2012	To reconfirm the objectives of the eco-tour	Interview with tour guide assistant	Head of village, tribe, community/school teacher/villager	Researchers
	Transport Fee (Hanoi -> Meo Vac (One way (Bus)))	10	2	20						
	Food Fee (Per meal)									
	Breakfast	3	1	3						
	Lunch	5	1	5						
	Dinner	6	1	6						
	Accommodation (Per night)	12	1	12						
3	To source out, liaison parties - School teacher - Rice/corn harvester - Weaving - Cooking - Local government - Transportation - Accommodation(Hotel) - Restaurant - Travel agency - NGO - Local guide - Sponsor for eco bag	Costs included in #2 above.			Alumni	Dec-Feb 2012	To provide the resources	Networking Site visit		Local people, local government, travel agency
4	Water Catchment Planning 1) Storage Tank 50 gallons HPVC (Materials : USD 50x3) 2) Pipes (USD 10) 3) Transportation for Students (USD 36) 3) Maintenance (~10 years usage) => USD 0			196	Local University & NGO	Dec-Feb 2012	To provide clean water to children & Community	Collaborate with volunteer (local university lecturer/students/researcher)	Local community & students	Tour operator



S/No.	Activities	Unit Cost (USD)	Quantity	Total \$ (USD)	PIC	Target Implementation Date	Objective/Reason	Implementation Method	To whom	Roles
5	Training Plan 1. Local tour guide 2. Local community - How to communicate/proud of their culture - Environmental awareness 3. Teacher - Create the cultural and environmental awareness - Concept of eco-tour	10 10 10	5 10 3	180 50 100 30	M3/Alumni	Mar-13	To ensure quality & same understanding of eco-tour	Create Training Need Analysis(Plan, syllabus,) Conduct, Coordinate	Local tour guide/community	Tour operator
6	Handicraft/making souvenir 4. Tour guide - Identify the local product - Translator - 1,2,6,5,8,9,11 - Risk management 5. Provider (Logistics) - Eco tour requirements	10 Not required	3 0	30 30 0	M3/Alumni	Mar-13	1. Expose children to learn their own culture & have exchange program 2. Tourists can have something after learning (eco bag) & come back again 3. To have same understanding with tour guide & local community & local tour guide	1&2. Through handicraft making activity 3. Lecture/Classroom	Local tour guide/community	Tour operator
7	Revise tour plan and budget			0	M3	Apr-13	Feasibility & expectation difficulties from actual plan	Discussion, meeting (skype)	Tour Agency	Tour operator
8	Trial implementation (For 7 pax M3 tour staff)	46	21	966	M3	May-13	To test/evaluate the effectiveness of the eco-tour	Invite Alumni & staffs to experience the eco-tour	M3 / Alumni	Tester
9	Finalization of the overall tour plan			0	M3	Jun-13	To ensure the eco-tour is feasible	Discussion/Meeting	M3 / Alumni	Evaluator
10	Marketing & Promotion execution - Review & Revise Brochure (500pcs - USD50) A3 poster (1000pcs - USD200)			250	M3	Jun-13	To promote eco-tour concept & Meo Vac	Feedback from local people & tourist tour guide	Potential customer (Target Group)	Tour operator

**Table 5 : Budget plan**

<b>Action Plan title (Short/Long)</b>			
1. Short term action plan (Nov-2012 to Jun-2013)			
"Category"	"Action"	Costs	Costs
1-1 : Research	On site research * 4 people	US\$184	US\$1,806
1-2 : Complete the plan	Water catchment trial	US\$196	
	Training	US\$210	
1-3 : Action -1st M3 tour implementation	Final evaluation	US\$966	
	Market & Promotion	US\$250	
2. Long term action plan (Jul 2013 to Dec 2015)			
"Category"	"Action"		
2-1 : Check and Amend (6 times)	6 water catchment	US\$1,176	US\$1,426
	Market & Promotion	US\$250	
2-2 : Proceed to 2nd stage (including Brother/Sister exchange project)	6 water catchment	US\$1,176	US\$1,526
	Eco bag	US\$100	
	Market & Promotion	US\$250	

**Table 6 : Rules to manage local resources continuously:**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Tourist</b>	<b>Local (Minority group)</b>
1.	Do not throw the waste	Throw the waste into trash bin (Training: benefit of keeping rubbish properly)
2.	Do not pick up flower/anything that belongs to nature	Do not ask for money to the tourist
3.	Respect the minorities - Do not express bad behavior (e.g take pity on them (treat them poor). Tourist may give things instead of valuables (money)	Do not give any information if you do not really know (to the tourist)
4.	Do not spoil the nature	
Safety		
5.	Do not go anywhere alone	
6.	Bring your own medication	
7.	You can politely reject request of minority if you do not want any offer	
8.	Do not show affection in public (kissing, hugging)	
9.	Ask tourist to wear appropriate clothes/equipment if requested	
10.	To check condition of participants during the trip	
11.	Weather condition (what to do) e.g fog	

## Box 1 Minorities in Meo Vac

### The H'Mong Or The Mong Ethnic Group In Hagiang

*The Mong is the largest ethnic group of seventeen ethnics community in Dong Van karts plateau Geopark. Mong people in Ha Giang province is similar to that in some northern mountainous border Viet Nam - China originated from China, then migrated to Vietnam more than 300 years ago. They mainly concentrate in the mountainous provinces, including Ha Giang, Tuyen Quang, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, etc. Mong in Ha Giang account for 32 percent total population of province, comprises two main sub-groups: White Mong and Flower Mong.*

The Mong people are famous for traditional farming milpa, planting rice, maize and other crops. Handicraft productions of Mong ethnic minority achieved high levels of skillfulness such as weaving, knitting, forging and casting, making wooden furniture's.



The H'Mong house is made from earth with three compartments, the middle one is reserved as the altar for ancestor cult. The main and extra doors are opened inward. Traditional clothing of the Mong women are very unique. A suit of women clothes consists of a skirt, a blouse, a shirt parceled at the breast couple with a brassiere, a belt, leggings, and a turban winded around the head. The skirt is usually in the form of a truncated cone with a series of creases which can spread widely. Sometime the skirt is in the form of a tube dress with creases at the two haunches. Decorative patterns on the dress are butterflies, snakes, flower, harrow teeth, eyes of birds, pig feet with the harmony of colour.



The wealth of traditional culture of the Mong people are quite abundant with customs, habits, ceremonies and rites, religion and beliefs. The Hmong families have different ways of ancestor cult. Some principal worships are “door ghost worship”, “great mother ghost worship” with different number and content of worship, arrangement, eating and drinking place. the literature and art of the Mong shows their community psychology and awareness, and other issues about nature, society and history. Prominent things are love songs using pan-pipe, flute, leaf-horn, lip-horn. They all are invaluable assets of the Mong community which have been conserved and inherited generations by generations.

### Nung Ethnic Group In Ha Giang Vietnam

*Hagiang Nung people mainly distribute in Quan Ba district, they live in valleys nearly rivers, streams or hills and live on farming rice, with high cultivation technique. Their animal husbandry highly developed while other handicraft makings are very diverse such as forging, casting, carpenters, knitting, paper making and especially cloth weaving. Clothing mainly in an indigo color, the Nung women wear five-panel robes with buttons under the right armpit. Men wear shirts upright collar leaving open at breast and belly but having a row of cloth bottoms and four pockets without cover.*





They live in wide stilt house with the outer compartment reserved for men and ancestor worship and the inner one reserved for women. Nung people do not celebrate death anniversaries, which makes birthday (celebration of life) for those beyond 50 years old and worship for the dead on July 15th, of lunar calendar.

Wedding ceremonies still preserve many ancient customs and the brother of the groom's mother plays a very important role in representing the groom's family in marriage proposal and organizing all ceremonies related to the wedding. The Nung folkloric culture is very famous with the "Sli", a love dialogue song of the youth.



### **Tay Ethnic Minority In Ha Giang Vietnam**

*The Tay is the second large ethnic minority in Ha Giang, account for 25 percent total population of province. They mainly live on planting wet rice in fields near river, mountain foot and farming slope. Tay villages are usually at mountain foot and include about 15 to 20 houses. They live in house of stilt, thatch roofed houses using palm leaves or grass.*

Their family handicraft is quite developed such as, knitting, making wooden furniture, pottery. Besides, weaving fabric of Tay is quite well known, especially, the type of blankets, brocade turbans with rich pattern which a lot of people love. Tay ethnic usually wear cotton clothes, dyed indigo, wear silver necklace and silver rings at their wrists and ankles. Their main color on costumes is indigo. The culture of Tay is very diversified with different kind of ceremony involving production, human life, wedding, funeral, new house celebration. The folkloric literature of Tay community are a



rich treasure of legends, myths, ancient stories, verse stories, folkloric songs. Of which, Tay's folkloric songs are well known for song " glider"- this is a form of culture of the Vietnamese.

### **Dao ethnic minority**

The Dao ethnic group in DVKP can be divided into sub-group such as Red Dao (Dao đỏ), Coin Dao (Dao tiền), White Trousers Dao, Long Robe Dao (Dao áo dài), Lo River Dao (Dao lô giang) who live by slope and terrace farming. The Dao people have some unique handicraft making such as forging, casting, jeweler, embroidery and wax printing-dyeing clothes. They live in stilt, earth or half stilt-half earth houses, close to water sources. Their dresses usually show traditional features and designs using colour thread, with lots of turban, shirt, skirt types. Their traditional religious culture is very complex, demonstrating communal spirit, conscience and conception. Worshipping and wizardry are not simply superstition but something special indicating the depth of their culture. The Dao folkloric literature is very rich in legends, myths, narrate stories, pop songs, quizzes, proverbs implying their communal perception of the universe and human life.



### **LoLo Ethnic Group Ha Giang Vietnam**

*The Lo Lo ethnic group can be divided into Flower Lo Lo and Black Lo Lo. Living in Lung Cu since ancient time, the Lo Lo people have made many efforts in reclaiming the virgin land and in grasping to this northernmost part of the country. The Lo Lo folkloric culture is very rich and unique, demonstrated with dances, songs, legends. The decoration on their turbans, shirts, skirts and trousers are particularly colorful. The Lo Lo calendar divides a year into 11 months, each corresponding to an animal's name.*



The ancient bronze drums are the holy thing of the Lo Lo people, buried for protection and sometimes dug out only for use. The head of each family is entitled to keep the drums which are used only during funerals or festivals to maintain rhythms for dances. The Lo Lo people are among the few ethnic groups in Vietnam who still use bronze drums, a traditional musical instrument closely associated with a legend about the Flood. According to the legend, a catastrophic flood took place to raise water up to the sky. The God saved a girl and her younger brother by putting the girl in a big bronze drum and the boy in a small bronze drum. When the flood retreated, the sister and brother stayed on in the mountains, becoming a couple, the re-Creator of the mankind. The Lo Lo people's perception on Yin and Yang, on birth is perhaps still preserved by playing at the same time the male and female drums. The drums are hanged on a stand at the feet of the dead, facing to each other. The drummer stands in between, playing alternately each drum with only one end of the same drumstick. Only single men or married men but whose wives are not pregnant can play the drums. The bronze drums are not only a precious asset but also a holy instrument. Only with the sound of the drums can the soul of the dead find the way to return to the birthplace of his/her ancestors.



### **Pu Peo Ethnic Minority People Ha Giang Vietnam**

*Pu Peo ethnic minority people live only in the northern mountainous province of Ha Giang. According to the 1999 survey, there were only 705 people living in the districts of Dong Van, Meo Vac and Bac Me. The Pu Peo ethnic group ranks 53rd in the Vietnamese community in term of population.*

The Pu Peo in Vietnam were first mentioned as the La Qua by scholar Le Quy Don in his book Kien Van Tieu Luc written in the middle of the 18th century. In early 19th century documents, the Pu Peo were mentioned as the Penti, Pentilolo, Kaobeo and also Pu Peo. In Ha Giang province, the Pu Peo, with a small population, live scattered on high mountainous areas along the Vietnam-China border.



Different from the H'Mong people who live high on the mountains, the Pu Peo establishes their villages on the flat grounds in mountainous areas. They reside in Pho La, Sung Trang and Phu Lung which has a sub-tropical climate. In this natural condition, the Pu Peo can grow wet rice and make use of forests to earn their living. They believe that the success or failure of each family and each individual depends largely on the position of their land and house. That is why their house building process follows very strict religious procedures, from selection of the land, trees for pillars and the building itself to the relocating ceremony.

The Pu Peo worship three generations including Pe, or parents, Te Ngan, or grand-parents and Te Gao, or great grand-parents. For each generation, they put a loog ten or jar on the altar. Offerings to ancestors on the first day in the new house will be put in the jars. Very often, in each jar, they put a chicken, five small balls of cooked rice and some meat. All procedures must be fulfilled before dawn. After that, relatives and neighbors will come, each bringing a chicken, a bottle of wine or some money to wish the host good luck.



The Pu Peo uses the calendar of China's Zhou dynasty. According to this calendar, a khuop mai or cycle comprises 12 years and a year comprises 12 months. Twenty-nine or 30 days will make a month and 12 "hours" will make a day. Similar to the current lunar calendar, there is a leap year every three years. So, the Pu Peo also celebrates the lunar New Year festival (Tet) as other ethnic groups do.

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Mansion

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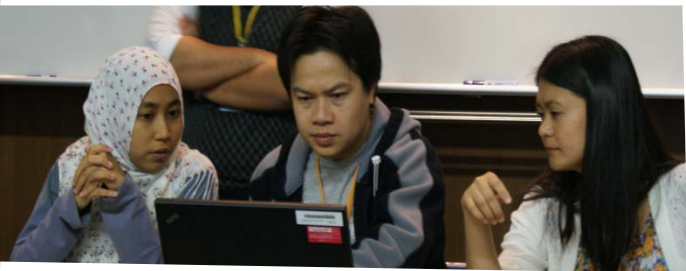
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## Ecotourism Project

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## **Executive Summary**

Ecotourism is defined as a responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. Ecotourism covers ecological, economic and community issues. The ecological aspect means that ecotourism contributes positively to the conservation of nature. The economic aspect means it is a tool for a sustainable economy. Community opinion requires ecotourism to empower the community, in an economic sense by giving roles in ecotourism to local people, and by improving their participation in conservation. Ecotourism is about how to uniting conservation, communities and sustainable travel.

We would like to promote cultural and natural environmental conservation by letting tourists know their values and the importance, and local genuine attractiveness, under cooperation with the local community. We would like to make a good environment where both tourists and local residents treasure and enjoy local nature and culture as they are. We would like to do our best to ensure that the tourist at one with the natural environment, and we would like to do this by taking special care of the fragile resources of the different ecosystems.

The vision of Pandin Lake Ecotourism project is as a model eco-tourism site in the Philippines with the sustainable environment and strong community. Our Pandin Lake Ecotourism project mission is:

- offering visitors unique and exciting tourism experiences that foster an appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural heritage;
- providing visitors with opportunities to experience attractions of local communities;
- making positive contributions to local and indigenous communities;
- contributing to the conservation of the natural and cultural environments through the establishment of partnerships with the local community;
- being a model for other forms of tourism, encouraging wider use of sustainable technologies and the promotion of best practice;
- and assisting in realizing the tourism potential through sustainable economic development.

The focus of our ecotourism is enjoying what the earth has to offer, without humans having a negative impact on natural resources, cultures, or communities. We are offering of ecotourism Pandin Lake as a responsible travel, where people enjoyed the trip in better use while sustain the natural resources, for both environmental and cultural integrity.

There are seven specific objectives or targets that have been specified for Our Pandin Lake Ecotourism:

1. To educate and enhance eco-tour management for the community.
2. To increase society capability by introducing additional livelihood programs.
3. To utilize untapped resources by exploring new products.
4. To introduce new tourist related activities.
5. To ensure that the culture of “Bayanihan” is maintained.
6. To increase tourist interest on Pandin lake by introducing the package tours.
7. To ensure the sustainability of the natural environment and the rule making.

We have a wide variety of itineraries where the priority is to offer tourist a chance to enjoy the natural resources and the ethnic authenticity of the Pandin Lake. We minimize environmental impact by only taking small groups. Every made in our Ecotourism Pandin Lake project is to ensure that the ecotours are sustainable and equitable with the benefit passing to the local community. Not only is the local community involved conducting the tour, but a percentage of revenues from every tour are given back to the community.

It is important to recognize that our Pandin Lake Ecotourism products are not defined by their scale of operations but rather by their adoption of the following key principles of ecotourism:

1. dependent on the natural environment;
2. ecologically sustainable;
3. contributes to the conservation of nature;
4. involves education and interpretation;
5. culturally responsible;
6. sustains local communities; and,
7. commercially viable and profitable.

By doing our motto from nature, by culture, to adventure, we would like to safe the water of Pandin lakes, the woman community in the village and off course the wide world for better sustainable.



## **1. Introduction**

Tourism can bring many economic and social benefits, particularly in rural areas and developing countries. It creates jobs, both through direct employment within the tourism industry and indirectly in sectors such as retail and transportation. When these people spend their wages on goods and services, it leads to what is known as the "multiplier effect," creating more jobs. The tourism industry also provides opportunities for small-scale business enterprises, which is especially important in rural communities, and generates extra tax revenues, such as airport and hotel taxes, which can be used for schools, housing and hospitals.

The improvements to infrastructure and new leisure amenities that result from tourism also benefit the local community. Interchanges between hosts and guests create a better cultural understanding and can also help raise global awareness of issues such as poverty and human rights abuses, but it can also lead to an erosion of traditional cultures and values. Moreover, money generated by tourism does not always benefit the local community, and mass tourism is also associated with negative effects. Tourism can only be sustainable if it is carefully managed so that potential negative effects on the host community and the environment are not permitted to outweigh the financial benefits.

Sustainable tourism is travel designed to minimize the impact of humans on the places they visit, encourage protection of both cultural heritage and the environment and provide long-term, socially just economic opportunities for local residents. Ecotourism is a mix of inter-linked concepts that all depend on each other in the hope of achieving a type of tourism that is sustainable in the long term. The three key concepts are the environment, the local population and education.

Ecotourism is indeed normally (though not necessarily) a type of tourism based on nature (e.g. rainforests or other environmentally threatened ecosystems). The idea of ecotourism is that the environment should not be damaged by the presence of tourists who visit to experience it. In fact, an ecotourism projects goal should be that the mere presence of tourists actively contributes towards the local conservation issues. Ideally, more tourists should mean more benefits / conservation / contributory funds towards the environment.

To achieve positive impacts upon the local environment in which tourists are enjoying themselves, the local population has got to be actively involved. Their vision is inherently more long-term than that of the visitors, and the local population will need to see tourism as an alternative source of income to their traditional practices. With significant economic benefits provided by a small scale tourism industry a local population can come to see their natural surroundings as a source of income, but only if they conserve their local environment. A local population needs a specific incentive to preserve its environment, rather than the western world telling them not to chop down all their rainforests because it contributes towards global warming.

The best incentive is invariably money - ecotourism is normally found in communities that are often very poor. The role of the local population is intrinsic to any form of sustainable tourism / ecotourism, and they should have active control of matters concerning tourism in their

locality. The locals should be in control, managing the project in a democratic fashion if it is to be truly sustainable in the long term. Control is crucial.

A means to these ends is education - of the local population as a whole, explaining why it's important to conserve their environment. Local tourists should also be educated as to why local ecotourism is important and should leave their travel destination with a greater understanding of conservation issues.

## **2. Potential Ecotourism Resources in ASEAN countries**

The problems on the precious resources in ASEAN countries (Group B: Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippine, Thailand) can be divided into four main categories which is:

### **2.1 Socio-Economic Change Fuelling Conflict**

#### **2.1.1 Indawgyi Lake (Myanmar)**



Indawgyi Lake is one of the largest inland lakes in Southeast Asia. It is located in Mohnyin Township in the Kachin State of Burma. Some of the globally threatened bird species can be found in this sanctuary. Some of those species are Greylag Geese, Oriental Darter, and Purple Swamphen. Visitors can take a tour by a motor around the lake to view the wetland species. The lake measures 13 kilometres (8.1 mi) east to west, and 24 kilometres (15 mi) north to south. There are over 20 villages around the lake.

A devastating “gold rush” is ongoing in Kachin State. Gold mining companies operate along all the major rivers and also on-land where gold yielding sediments are found (see map). The main mining centers appear to be along the Irrawaddy River north of the state capital Myitkyina and the areas around Tanai and the Chindwin River. Not even officially protected areas like the Hukawng Wildlife Sanctuary in the northwest of Kachin State, or places in the past famous for their pristine nature, like the N'Mai Ku area (northeast) are spared the necessary infrastructure. Together with the mining activities, the use of the mining agent mercury has increased. Methods of mining that disturb increasingly large areas of land are spreading, including employment of cyanide leaching, as the most easily accessible alluvial gold is depleted and deposits deeper in the ground and in hard rock are exploited.



Kachin State is known as a “hotspot for biological diversity”. The conservation of its natural resources, which cannot be valued in monetary terms, is of international importance. The logging and gold mining has already caused

incalculable loss of biodiversity in the riverine and forest ecosystems. Gold mining is taking place in the headwaters of the Irrawaddy, the lifeline of the country and one of the greatest Asian rivers. It threatens the ecosystem of the entire river basin and along with it the livelihoods of about 20 million people.

#### 2.1.2 Lake Toba (Indonesia)



Lake Toba is the largest lake in all of Southeast Asia. The giant lake sits at an altitude of 800 meters, and is 100 kilometres long and 30 kilometres wide, in the middle of the northern part of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. The lake is situated in the caldera of the huge Toba volcano which erupted approximately 75,000 years ago. The eruption of Toba was one of the most massive eruptions ever on Earth. Many scientists believe that this eruption triggered the last ice age. The eruption probably lasted two weeks until finally the volcano collapsed and formed the caldera which is now Lake Toba. The bottom of the volcano rose and formed the island of Samosir which is beautifully situated in the middle of the blue waters of Lake Toba. Most of the people who live around Lake Toba are ethnically Bataks. Traditional Batak houses are noted from their distinctive roofs (which curve upwards at each end, like a boat's hull does) and their colourful décor.

The conservation of Lake Toba ecosystem is disturbed. In several coastal area, water plant (hyacinth) has started to cover the lake surfaces, and shattered area appears on the slope and land around it. This ecosystem now is dealing with high level degradation that is caused by various human activities or by nature phenomenon with climate changes globally.



The spread of water plant in most area of Lake Toba coastal is a sign that the water is changed. This water plant population has indicated that the water has been polluted by heavy metal pollutant. The precipitate of this heavy metal is suspected come from the waste of *pelet* (a kind of fish food). People around the lake have cultivated fish in a floating *keramba* (a basket used for fish farming) which has grown vastly in recent years. Koi Herpes Virus (KHV) attacked all the fish in thousands of floating kerambas and made almost hundred tons of fish died. Instead of making suffer the farmer in about 8 billion rupiahs, it also made Lake Toba more polluted than before. Until December 2011, there were 6200 *keramba* in the District Haranggaol with the rate of 4-8% per year.



## 2.2 Tourism and Social Development

### 2.2.1 Pa Suam Waterfall (Laos)



Pasuam waterfall is located in southern part of Laos, about 700 km from Vientiane Capital and 23 km from Pakse city center, Champasack province. There is a village involved in total 23 families. This waterfall is located on the Bolaven Plateau and is a great spot to spend a lazy afternoon or a quiet overnight stay. The Uttayan Bachieng Lodge overlooks the waterfall and offers a wide range of accommodation options, from unique tree-house type bungalows to homestay in an ethnic Lave village.

The existing activities/facilities are sightseeing (waterfall, community, local products and dance performance including unique of local dress), accommodation (guest house inside the resort). Ethnic community say “khmou” in Lao, they have unique houses, life style, food, traditional dance and traditional dresses. Community improvement and sustainable ecosystem (natural resources) are really needed because the local people are not yet really aware on that. There is no any reaction from the government sector has been taking part and also community still in the hard situation for living.



### 2.2.2 Samtarom Village (Thailand)



Samtarom village in Kantharaluk district of Srisaket province also faced the migration of young people to the big cities. Since 1988, the head of village tried to turn the arid rice field into the fruit orchards. The land around this area is dominated by sandy loams which can be used for farm plant. Now there're 113 families, 470 people in the village (men 248 and women 222 persons). Most of them are orchardists.

The villagers try to promote the green orchards. Department of Agricultural Extension and Srisaket province administration set up “rambutan and durian festival” at the city center every year since 1995, trying to promote the fruit orchards tour from May to July. There are about 30,000 tourists come to visit the fruit orchard in this area. The fruit orchards could be the new hope for the villagers. Young people who went to study in others cities came back home when they finish their degree; taking care of the orchard and sharing some ideas about the agro-tour management of the village. Now Samtarom and Samkilek where is another agrotourism site in Srisaket province



are partner. So tourists can come to travel in Samtarom village and then go to Samkilek, and enjoy the different surrounding and landscape.

## 2.3 Privatization and Future Generations

### Pandin Lake (Philippines)



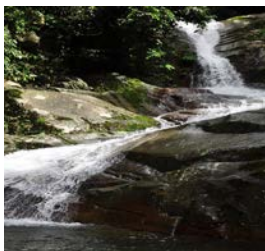
Pandin Lake is the part of the Seven Lakes system in San Pablo which is the low-profile volcanic craters. Pandin Lake is one of the "the most pristine" of the seven lakes. It is considered oligotrophic because of the abundant plant and fish life. The history of Pandin Lake related to the Yambo lakes. It was named after two lovers. A beautiful woman named Pandin was cursed not to step on the earth, otherwise, something terrible would befall her. Yambo, her ardent lover, didn't know about the curse and had made her step on earth, after which there was a terrible noise followed by the cracking grumble of the earth and a heavy downpour eventually converted the area where they're on into twin lakes separated from each other by a bare strip of land.

The activities in the community of surrounding Pandi Lake is bamboo rafting. Scrappy men are not behind the oars, but women possessed by an entrepreneurial spirit who are guiding bamboo rafts mounted with cottages for guests with gentle strokes around the quiet Lake Pandin. Pandin Lake has clean and clear waters, what make the water green in color are the plants that live at the bottom of the lake. The surroundings are also filled with trees causing some of their images to reflect in the surface of the water. Now, Pandin Lake facing a problem about a privatization of the area surroundings the lake.



## 2.4 Natural Tourism Resource Management

### Sungai Lepoh (Malaysia)



This tourism site is located between Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. It is the 5th largest district in Selangor State with an area of 840 square kilometres and a population of 1,141,880 at the 2010 Census (provisional result). Head village also known as Batin. It also famous with local fruits durians & bamboo. There is another famous areas for recreational activities and natural surroundings which is Sungai Gabai Waterfalls, Semenyih Water Reservoir, Congkak River Forest Recreational Center and Kuala Lumpur Look Out Point Tourist Complex are located at Jalan Ampang-Hulu Langat.

There are some ideas to make Sungai Lepoh more attractive in order to increase the number of tourism which is the supported from local government, to have a community for the camp operator/tour guide, to have public transportation from the main city

available and more proper directional signage, more promotion to local and international tourists, build better facilities for public use (washrooms, gazebos, BBQ pits, proper walking trail), set up environmental friendly stalls, offer a variety of activities (e.g. fruit picking, homestay, educational trip on flora and fauna, bird sightseeing, tarzan rope cling, paintball), provide local guides who have first aid experience for the jungle trekking.



### 3. Pandin Lake - Philippines

#### 3.1 Historical Background

Pandin Lake is one of the seven fresh water lakes of San Pablo City in the north of the Philippines. Located in Barangay San Lorenzo, Pandin has an area of 20.5 hectares and a maximum depth of 63 meters. It has a calculated volume of 6,600 cubic meters of water in storage. It was described as the most pristine lake of the seven, where humans and nature live together in harmony.

One of the researchers of the seven lakes writes:

*“The Seven Freshwater Lakes of San Pablo City were formed by a unique process called phreatic eruption where shallow lava from Mt. San Cristobal intersected groundwater which blew out (steam-heated eruption) the overlying rocks to form a circular and crater-like depression that eventually filled up with rainwater. (Ramon B. San Andres – FSLF, Inc.)”.*

The geography of Pandin lake is that of a valley, where the lake dwells in between two big mountains, thus allowing very limited access from the main roads around San Pablo. It is very close to another lake called Yambo Lake, where these two lakes are separated only by a strip of land.

#### 3.2 The Uniqueness

Pandin is considered **oligotrophic** because of the abundant plant and fish life. Due to the different seasons occurring at Pandin Lake (i.e. the wet season and the dry season), the lake undergoes a process called “Lake turn over” where the underwater eco-system changes and its nutrient contents differs from one season to another. This process is takes places to sustain the algae blooming season in Pandin.

The key attraction of Pandin Lake, aside from the pristine oligotrophic lake is the bamboo rafters. It’s a place where time has stood still. In Pandin, there are no cars or trucks or industrial smokestacks which belch pollutants into the sky. Instead of jeepneys, there are horses which tread the narrow paths. There are no jet skis or speedboats, just bamboo rafts which glide through the still water.



The main source of income of San Pablo City inhabitants are mainly coming from the agricultural sector, where the agricultural land covers up to 85% of the total land area in San Pablo City. However, due to the geographical location of Pandin Lake, the community residing around Pandin Lake are mostly fisherman, self employed and low paid odd job workers.

### **3.3 Legend of the Lakes**

Pandin and Yambo lakes were named after two lovers. A beautiful woman named Pandin was cursed not to step on the earth, otherwise, something terrible would befall her. Yambo, her ardent lover, didn't know about the curse and had made her step on earth, after which there was a terrible noise followed by the cracking grumble of the earth and a heavy downpour eventually converted the area where they're on into twin lakes separated from each other by a bare strip of land.

### **3.4 Community**

There is an estimate of 50 families living around Pandin for generations. Pandin Lake is officially owned by the local government of Philippines, however the land surrounding the lake belongs to different families of Pandin. The community of Pandin is known for its “bayanihan” culture, where the whole community cooperates and works together in an activity towards a common goal. Currently when few tourists come to Pandin Lake to enjoy the bamboo rafting experience, the women of the community will get together and take on different roles in serving the tourists. The activities include bamboo rafting, swimming and picnics in raft. In 2005, an organization was established to formalize the women community called SMLP (Samahang Mangingisda ng Lawa ng Pandin).

### **3.5 Matters of Concern**

Very recently, there is an attempt for privatization of areas surrounding Pandin Lake. Due to the geographic location of Pandin, the land area accessible to travel from the main city to Pandin Lake is very limited. Should this land be bought over by persons outside the Pandin Community, Pandin Lake may no longer be accessible from the city and its community may have to be relocated elsewhere. This may also be a threat to the balanced eco-system at Pandin.

The strength of Pandin community have also recently declined. Due to hardship and poor quality of life, some Pandin land owners sold their piece of land to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties at a very low price. Although majority of the community still remains around the Pandin Lake, they have started to sense vulnerability and susceptibility for the future of Pandin.

## 4. Pandin Lake Ecotourism

### 4.1 Goals

To support the nature conservation involving local communities by providing economic activities and preserving the local culture, through the introduction of eco-tourism at Pandin Lake.

### 4.2 Objectives

The Pandin Lake Ecotourism objectives is:

- a. To **educate and enhance eco-tour management** for the community. In order to ensure sustainability of the tour site, the correct eco-tour management should be implemented. This will be done via establish interactive training courses to SMLP and the community.
- b. To **increase society capability** by introducing additional livelihood programs and set up of facilities to support tourist activities. This is to empower the community strength and contribute to economic stability, thus resisting the temptation of selling the Pandin land to third parties.
- c. To **utilize untapped resources** of Pandin Lake by exploring new products and introducing new tourist related activities. This enables the community to provide a wider range of exciting activities to the tourists.
- d. To **ensure that the culture of “Bayanihan” is maintained**. The eco-tourism in Pandin Lake will further encourage the community to preserve its “Bayanihan” culture. This culture will also be introduced to foreign tourists by experiencing the homestay at Pandin.
- e. To **increase tourist interest** on Pandin lake by introducing the package tours. In accommodating different groups of tourists, the package tours comprising of various activities will be appealing and personalized to different groups.
- f. To ensure the **sustainability of the natural environment** and maintain the ecology of Pandin. Its uniqueness as an oligotropic lake must be preserved for the future generations. As it the heart of an eco-tourism, it is necessary for rules and regulations on the tour activities to be in place.

### 4.3 Eco-tour plan

#### 4.3.1 Tour Activities

- a. **Bamboo raft cruising and swimming** around Pandin Lake, with local women as the rafters. Tourists will enjoy the serenity and breathtaking nature of Pandin, while the rafters share about the history, legends and unique ecology of the area.
- b. **Vegetable farming** where the vegetables will be planted and maintained by the community. Tourists will then harvest the vegetables for the local dishes cooking session, and can also be brought back home. Types of vegetables include tomatoes, chilies and lime. Initial planting materials will be invested from IATSS Pandin Fund.
- c. **Cooking local dishes and picnicking** on the raft. Tourists can experience the traditional cooking of the Pandin community, or simply enjoying lunch on the raft, by the tree shade.
- d. **Handicraft making** where tourists can make personalized simple handicrafts to bring home, to cherish their memories at Pandin Lake. These handicrafts will be made using local natural resources, such as leaves and coconut shells.
- e. **Traditional Philippino games** at the playground activity area, especially for the tourists coming in groups for team-building sessions.
- f. **Homestay program** specially offered to foreigners to experience the “Bayanihan” culture of Pandin community. With this homestay program, they will also be able to experience **traditional fishing, coconut alcohol tasting** and **“Boodle fight”** where the community comes together for meals.
- g. **Hiking to other six lakes** located in San Pablo. This helps students who learn about Pandin Lake ecology system be able to compare its uniqueness, differences and similarities with other lakes.
- h. **Ecology exploration** where the study tour will include the details of eco-system for educational purposes. Students will have hands-on experience in learning about the oligotrophic Pandin Lake.
- i. **Tree planting** at the entrance to Pandin Lake from the main city, to utilize the bare land. Tourists who opt to plant the trees will have special attachment to Pandin Lake therefore inviting them to revisit Pandin again in the future. Types of plants to be planted are Banana, Rambutan and Mangoes as they plants which usually does not require fertilization and minimal maintenance. The fruits produce from these trees can benefit the community and also other tourists. Initial planting materials will be invested from IATSS Pandin Fund.



#### 4.3.2 Tour Packages

Tour packages are introduced to suit each activity to different groups of tourists. However, these tour activity itineraries are flexible to each tourist request. The suggested itinerary for each tour package is as suggested as per Appendix 1.

The available tour packages are as follows:

- a. **Family tour** activities to cater to small children and also parents interests.
- b. **Team building tour** activities especially for the youth and corporate retreats. The activity of this tour accommodates activities for group involvement.
- c. **Study excursions** are mainly for school students who wish to learn more about the environment and ecology. A more detailed explanation on the eco-system will enable the students to have a hand on experience of the flora and fauna.
- d. **Homestay tour** to accommodate foreign tourists in particular (but not restricted to). This tour will especially identify the culture of both the Pandin community and the Phillipinos in general.

### 5. Awareness on Sustainable Environment

**“Garbage to Garden”** is the highlight of awareness on sustainable environment of Pandin Lake. It is a method to make compost to solve the generation and processing of garbage. Composting is the natural process of recycling food and yard waste that normally goes to landfills. Create a compost pile just to process yard waste, or manage it to produce a nutrient rich soil that has many benefits for gardens and the environment. The more actively the pile is maintained, the more quickly compost is produced. Wet waste including vegetable and fruit cuttings, excess food as well as garden waste can be composted very easily.

Locals will share their experiences and practices of bio-degradable waste management. Tourists will also have hands-on experience on this matter, as they will be involved in separating their own garbage and bury the bio-degradable waste in the soil.

However, this “Garbage to Garden” program at Pandin Lake will only be a small scale bio-degradable waste management. This is to ensure that the nature and ecology of the area allocated for burying the bio-degradable waste is not negatively affected. In addition, small scale waste management is comparatively easier to control in its cleanliness and smell. This is important, so as to give the impression to tourists that they can do this waste management at home without much hassle, and save the environment.

## 6. Risk Management

Risk Identify	Management
1. Privatization	- Talk to government and alias with them - Talk to the community not to sale the lands, research more on private company objectives. - To urge government for a land readjustment project
2. Safety and security - Accident cause by tourist	- Specific swimming zones - Accident insurance(optional) - Inspection of life jackets and bamboo rafts - Reminder during orientation
3. Unclear rules & rights over usage of lake by community	Coordinate with SMLP and local government
4. Number of tourist - Package customer - Individual customer	Develop booking system First come, first serve Signboard, direction
5. Home stay	Registration Information and training of home stay families SMLP to facilitate and monitoring,
6. Utilization of land for tree planting	To obtain permit

## 7. Social System of Pandin Lake Ecotourism

### 7.1 Stakeholder

- a. **Community** is the central stakeholder of every eco-tourism project. The community, especially the SMLP is the backbone of the initial implementation and ongoing operations of the eco-tour. The eco-tour project is mainly to benefit the community and its environment.
- b. **Local government** is one of the main stakeholder, to authorize the usage of Pandin lake as the eco-tourism site, as a connector to make contact with other departments in the Phillippines and as a support and promoter of the Pandin Lake eco-tourism
- c. Collaboration with **Department of tourism** will enable larger scale of marketing and promotion of eco-tourism.
- d. **Department of Science and Technology** will assist especially on the research of the eco-system of Pandin Lake. This ensures that students who visit Pandin on study excursions can receive accurate and correct academic knowledge of the environment in Pandin.
- e. **3<sup>rd</sup> party land owners** will be affected by the eco-tourism project, as privatization cannot be done on this land. A detailed discussion will be held with these parties, as a common understanding of the future of the lake is very vital.

- f. **IATSS Alumni** will also be the key players in initial implementation of the eco-tourism project. IATSS Alumni will also be monitoring the eco-tourism site from time to time after full tour operations have commenced.
- g. **Tourists** will give an impact to the nature and community from the tour experience they have received. Tourists will have to ensure that minimal influence is left upon both the environment and nature by adhering to the rules and regulations of the eco-tour.

## 7.2 Tour Guide Training

### 7.2.1 How to Train

To conduct a short training course with a field study and workshop. These includes lecture, sharing of existing examples, group discussions, hand on training, practice and evaluation.

### 7.2.2 Target group

- a. Young generation in the communities who have interest in the program. This will encourage continuation of community driven eco-tourism for the future generations.
- b. The existing staff in charge and SMLP members who already have involved in the Pandin Lake tour activities. This group will enhance their skills to become successful eco-tour guides.

### 7.2.3 Training Objectives

- a. To provide participants with useful information and understand tour system.
- b. To provide participants with understanding of being better tour guide by presenting three conceptual ideas “From nature, with culture and to adventure”.
- c. To raise awareness of tour guide’s responsibilities to their customers with their beautiful natural resources, environment and community for sustainable ecotourism (more specific).
- d. To provide participants with concrete example from other successful eco-tour projects by giving them good tour behavior guides in various situations.
- e. To give them confidential using their skills by solving occurred problem cases in long experience of tour guides.



#### 7.2.4 Training Items

No.	Title	Contents	Methodology/Activity
1.	Tourism introduction	Tourism info and background	- Lecture - Workshop on their understanding on eco-tour
2.	Eco-tour project	- Understanding of ecotourism + existing examples - Environment and sustainable eco-tourism (The importance, maintain and improvement) - waste management	- Field visit
3.	Eco-tour components of Pandin lake	- Eco tour mechanism specifically to pandin lake - Eco tour packages	- Group discussion - mind mapping
4.	The importance of community in eco-tour	- To highlight the vital role played by the community as the local guides	- Group discussion - Feedback session
5.	The importance of tour guide	- Role of the tour guide - Tour guide's responsibilities - Tour guide techniques on presenting and giving tourist satisfaction - Techniques in coordinating community and tourists	- Lecture - Role play
6.	First aid training	- Emergency measures and skills to handle emergency cases prior to reaching the nearest hospital	- Hands on training
7.	Basic English relevant to local resources	- To communicate with the tourists in explaining basic local resources and eco-tourism	- Handouts and practice

#### 7.2.5 Training Itinerary (As per Appendix 2)

#### 7.2.6 Expected Training Outcome

After the completion of this training, the participants should be able to present and interpret their resources with appropriate manner. They should also be able to take care of the local and international tour group regarding sustainable ecotourism with safety and tourist satisfaction.

### 8. Sustainable Management

#### 8.1 Rules for tourists (As per Appendix 3)

#### 8.2 Rules for the community (As per Appendix 3)

### 8.3 Rules for tour activities

- a. **Limit the number of tour reservation per day.** Among the concerns of tourism attraction site is jam-packed area where tourists cannot enjoy the scenery and serenity of Pandin Lake. Limitation of tourists per day will ensure that the tourism site is not too crowded and crammed;
- b. **Limit the utilization of resources** for handicrafts and bamboo rafting, to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. All utilization of resources should be closely monitored, to ensure that there will be no sudden depletion of resources, thus available for the future generation;
- c. **Limit fishing activities per day**, in ensuring that there is no over-fishing in the lake. This will maintain the number of fishes and also under water ecosystem of Pandin Lake. On the other hand, the fisherman of Pandin can undertake activities which will promote the growth of fish population of the lake.
- d. **Do not allow rafting or swimming during bad weather conditions**, due to the safety concern as it may be dangerous and a big risk for both the tourists and the tour guides. The rafting team must collaborate with the local weather forecast center to ensure safe weather thus avoiding any major natural disaster such as typhoons while on the raft.
- e. **Limit no of persons in bamboo rafts** according to the size of the raft and the raft capacity. The number guides and life guards for a group of tourists should be set and be strictly adhered to, where it is most important especially during emergency should any accident take place during the bamboo raft cruising.

### 8.4 Standard Requirements for Home stay

- a. **Standard homestay facilities** must be put in place prior to any homestay programs. This will facilitate a comfortable stay by the tourists. Home stay sites must be located within the Pandin Lake community area, which enables the tourists to experience the daily life at Pandin and its “Bayanihan” culture.
- b. **Detailed information** of each host family must be obtained to ensure the host family and tourists are well matched, and that they are able to share their experiences with each other. For example, the daily lifestyle of each family may differ from each other, therefore the tourists may have difference preference of the family’s lifestyle.
- c. **Orientation for the host families** to share about the dos and don’ts when there are tourists as guests, and also the norms and customs of tourists. The local community may not be familiar with outside society, therefore the orientation will help reduce the culture shock host families may encounter.

## 9. Profit sharing

SMLP currently has a profit sharing system for the tourists what visit Pandin Lake. An updated system should be implemented, to consider the new activities. A percentage of the amount received from the tourists will be divided as follows. Exact percentage can only be decided with the consultation of SMLP based on the current system.

- a. **Community's income.** This is to repay the hard work of each individual in the community who has made the eco-tour of the day possible.
- b. **Maintenance of lake area.** This fund is kept for maintenance use to ensure that the lake area is maintained with safety, security and its nature preserved.
- c. **Handicraft activities, cooking, and vegetable farming.** This is to cover the operational costs directly incurred for the eco-tour activities.
- d. **Maintenance of facilities,** for the inspection, repair and replacement of rafts, life jackets, toilets, lights and other facilities used for the eco tour.
- e. **SMLP organization fund** to cover for administration expenses which may need to be incurred from time to time.

## 10. Division of Roles

Items	Person in charge
Marketing sales <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Social network</li><li>▪ Video</li><li>▪ Advertisement<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pandin lake Blog</li><li>- Brochure</li><li>- Poster</li></ul></li><li>▪ Official website</li></ul>	- IATSS Alumni         (with the local government permission)
Tour guides <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Resources Interpreter.</li><li>▪ Facility &amp; time management guidance.</li><li>▪ Taking care of tourist (safety, tour package improvement, maintaining tourist satisfaction)</li></ul>	- Community as the main tour guide - SMLP as tour guide supporters - Travel information centre - IATSS Alumni as the consultation advisors



### Division of Roles (continued)

Items	Person in charge
Partnership (Local people & Groups) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Consultation</li><li>▪ Monitoring</li><li>▪ Implementation</li></ul>	- SMLP and Philippines Alumni acts as the connectors of the stakeholders of Pandin Eco tourism
Risk management <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identify</li><li>▪ Analyze</li><li>▪ Manage</li><li>▪ Implement</li><li>▪ Monitoring</li></ul>	- IATSS Alumni - SMLP - Local government

### 11. Promote Awareness of Eco-tour Among the Members of the Community

The community will be the backbone and support of the initial implementation and ongoing operations of the eco-tour. For a strong understanding and promotion of awareness on eco-tour, the following actions are to be taken:

- Collaboration with local Non-Government Organizations (NGO) to provide support. Since these NGOs have years of experience in this industry, additional awareness can be given to the community, apart from the training and workshop conducted by IATSS Alumni.
- Facilitate external training for SMLP to expose its members on more examples of eco-tourism components and its real life examples.

### 12. Action Plan of the Pandin Lake Ecotourism (Appendix 4)

#### a. Site visit and survey

Before we start the project, we decided to visit and survey the Pandin Lake to understand the requirement for project. We believe to observe the need and want of local people in is important to implement the development the local community. We can also increase the relationship between the local people and project implementers. As we intent to held workshop for introduction and sharing idea, we will collect the information on existing facilities. We will introduce basic home stay program and identify home stay volunteer within site visit and survey period. We plan to discuss with local community and SMLP in order to creating the new activities for eco tourism, making rules and regulation and introduce the new evaluation and data collection system.

**b. Establish eco-tourism awareness course**

As the role of tour guide is very important in Ecotourism we plan to provide eco tourism course intend to provide local people with useful information and understand tour system based on the conceptual ideas “From nature, with culture and to adventure”. We intend to raise the awareness of tour guide’s responsibilities to their customers with local beautiful natural resources, environment and community for sustainable ecotourism. Our training will provide participants with concrete example from other successful eco-tour projects by giving them good tour behavior guides in various situations and also give them confidential using their skills by solving occurred problem cases in long experience of tour guides.

**c. Set up facilities to support the tourist activities**

Pandin Lake area is an undeveloped site where is near to Pablo city. Pandin Lake needs many facilities and infrastructure for ecotourism as it is an undeveloped site. However we plan to create and set up the basic facilities for traveler and basic infrastructure for eco tourism.

**d. New product**

Special taste of local food and attraction of local product are the best thing to persuade the traveler. We will promote the Bayanihan cultural food and product of Pandin Lake to visitor and also we plan to introduce the local community with suitable handicraft making and cooking style in order to attract traveler.

**e. Development activities**

We plan to create the new eco tour activities based on the existing activities of Pandin Lake. We focus to explore the new tour activities for eco tourism base on sustainable local resources and creating more income for local community. New eco friendly activities will introduce the visitor the nature of Pandin Lake and awareness of eco tourism.

**f. Marketing and Promotion**

We plan to promote the Image of Pandin Lake globally through social website intending to achieve the maximum sales target within limited period. We decided that our limited sales and limited period must be sustainable for the ecosystem of Pandin Lake. Our next marketing plan is collaboration with other parties then promotes the oligotrophic value of lake and ecology.

(1) **Establishing online presence** by establishing a website and create a page on social websites. Website will include information such as accessibility, activities and tour packages offered, information on community, pictures, any other information relating to Pandin Lake which will be useful to tourists.

- (2) **Short video for advertisement** of Pandin Lake which features the new activities that will be introduced. This video will then be circulated online for public viewing as a means of marketing and promotion.
- (3) **Collaborate with tour information centre** where Pandin Lake would be introduced as one of the must-visit site in San Pablo City. Brochure of Pandin tour will be placed at these centres, which will generally for the foreign tourists.
- (4) **Posters** will be circulated around the San Pablo City to increase awareness among the local people who are located very near to the lake but never knew of its uniqueness and breathtaking scenery.
- (5) **Approach the local government** to support Pandin lake promotion. Currently there is ongoing promotion by the government for the other six lakes located in San Pablo City, but very minimal is done to campaign for Pandin Lake as its beauty is still not known to many.
- (6) **Connect to barangay captains** who will promote to the other barangay captains. This strong connection between different barangay captains can benefit word of mouth recommendations for Pandin Lake.
- (7) **Collaborate with schools** to make Pandin Lake ecology excursions be part of the students' educational trips. The students will then promote to their families to revisit Pandin Lake and enjoy other activities in the family tour activities.

#### **g. Monitoring and Evaluation**

As the monitoring and evaluation is the most important for the whole project, we plan to monitoring and evaluation the Pandin Lake by collaboration with IATSS Alumni and SMLP community. We plan to make the specific list for local and international tourist and evaluate the action plan and performance.

### **13. Budget Plan of the Pandin Lake Ecotourism**

<b>No</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Set up cost (US \$)</b>
1.	Site visit and survey	250.00
2.	Establish ecotourism awareness course	750.00
3.	Set up the facilities	850.00
4.	Produce new products	250.00
5.	Development activities	450.00
6.	Marketing and promotion	530.00
7.	Monitoring and evaluation	250.00
	<b>Total (US \$)</b>	<b>3,330.00</b>



#### **14. Source of Funds**

The sources of fund for the initial set up of the Pandin Lake Ecotourism project as follows:

- a. IATSS Forum allocated USD 2,000 for the project.
- b. Sponsorship from the local government.
- c. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) supporting ecotourism and environment conservation.
- d. Fund raising programs.

#### **15. Challenges**

- a. Cultural background differences
- b. Obtaining data and information about the detail resources of Pandin Lake
- c. Understanding the flow and the required outcome at each stage
- d. Leveraging the pace of each members' understanding and input
- e. Unclear guidelines about social infrastructure
- f. Budget allocation
- g. Time allocation

#### **16. Overcome**

- a. Understanding the diversity
- b. Find the new alternatives plan
- c. More research in order to gather more data
- d. Discuss and find the solution
- e. Be patient and try to encourage other
- f. Make priority
- g. Good time management

#### **17. Learning Point**

- a. It is very important to know the facts before making a conclusion
- b. Try to figure out the good point or potential of each person.
- c. Seven heads are better than one
- d. Accept and respect different ideas
- e. Express more idea
- f. Understand each other strengthens and weakness
- g. Right person right job

## 18. Description of Pandin Lake Ecotourism Project Logo



The Pandin Lake Ecotourism logo is mainly made up of three blocks, in the shape of a pyramid. This illustrates the stability of the eco-system in Pandin Lake, where each icon complements and supports each other, thus creating an environment where humans and nature can live together with sustainable tourism.

The three blocks represents the tagline of Pandin eco tour “By Nature, With Culture, To Adventure” as follows:

- **By Nature:** The first blue block with the image of water ripples symbolizes the lake of Pandin, i.e. the nature of Pandin Lake. The blue color on the other hand suggests calmness and serenity.
- **With Culture:** The second green block with the image of the women represents the community of Pandin, and the culture and customs of the people of Pandin Lake. The green color suggests growth, fertility and strength of the community.
- **To Adventure:** The last red block with the image of a bamboo raft represents the eco-tour activities of Pandin, where different activities will give tourists the feeling of excitement and adventure that is represented by the color red.

**19. Pandin Lake Ecotourism Project Team Members**



Above (left to right) : Mod (Thailand), Achika (Malaysia), Karen (Philippines)

Bottom (left to right) : Budi (Indonesia), Phet (Laos), Satoshi (Japan), Nick (Myanmar)



## **Appendix 1 : Pandin Lake Ecotourism Itinerary Plan**

### **1. Family tour/activity**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Location</b>
9.00	Hike to the lake (short information on history of pandin and ecotourism)	Entrance
09.15	Vegetable farming	Cooking area
10.00	Cooking of local dishes	Lake
12.00	Bamboo raft cruising (lunch, swimming)	Handicraft area
15.00	Handicraft making	Vegetable patch
17.00	Tree planting(optional)	pathway from the parking area (entrance/exit)

### **2. Team building tours/activities**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Location</b>
10.00	Hike to the lake (short information on history of pandin and ecotourism)	Entrance
10.15	Bamboo raft cruising (lunch, swimming)	Lake
13.00	Team building activities (hike, walk around)	Playground activity area
16.00	Tree planting	pathway from the parking area (entrance/exit)

### **3. Study excursions**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Location</b>
9.00	Hike to the lake (short information on history of pandin and ecotourism)	Entrance
9.15	Ecology exploration	Around the lake and community quarters
12.15	Bamboo raft cruising (lunch, swimming)	Lake
15.00	Free and easy	
16.00	Other lake tour sightseeing (and comparison of ecology environment)	Other six lakes

### **4. Home stay tour**

#### **Day 1**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Location</b>
9.00	Hike to the lake (short information on history of pandin and ecotourism)	Entrance
9.15	Lake tour (explanation of unique ecology	Around the lake and community

	and community)	quarters
10.15	Vegetable farming	Vegetable patch
11.00	Cooking of local dishes	Cooking area
13.00	Bamboo raft cruising (lunch, swimming)	Lake
16.00	Introduction to family host / free and easy	Homestay family host
18.00	Dinner with the community (potluck) Boodle fight (eating together in big banana leaf using hands)	Open area by the lake
20.00	Bonfire Coconut alcohol tasting Legend story telling	Open area by the lake

## Day 2

Time	Contents	Location
5.30	Lake Sunrise with traditional breakfast Local bread with coffee	By the lake
7.00	Fishing	Fish pen
8.30	Free and easy	Around the Lake
10.00	Brunch	Homestay family host / cooking area
11.00	Handicraft making	Handicraft area
13.00	Lunch	Cooking area
14.00	Tree planting (optional)	Pathway from the parking area (entrance/exit)
16.00	Other lake tours	Other six lakes

**Appendix 2 : Pandin Ecotour Training Course:**

<b>Day/date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>
<b>Day 1</b>	8:00-8:30	Registration	SMLP staff
	8:30-8:40	Opening Remark	SMLP Chairperson
	8:40-8:50	Presentation of agenda and objective of the training. Introduction of participants	Training Coordinator
	8:50-10:30	Tourism introduction	Prof. UPLB
	10:30 -10:45	Coffee Break	All
	10:45 - 12:00	Eco-tour project (1)	Prof. UPLB
	12:00-13:00	Lunch break	All
	13:00 – 15:00	Eco-tour project (2)	Prof. UPLB
	15:00- 15:15	Coffee Break	All
	15:15 - 16:30	Group work( Discussion)	Prof. UPLB + participants
	16:30-17:00	Presentation of Group discussed result	Participants
<b>Day 2</b>	8:30-10:30	Eco-tour components of Pandin lake	Prof. UPLB
	10:30-10:45	Coffee break	All
	10:45-12:00	Group work( Discussion)	Prof. UPLB + participants
	12:00-13:00	Lunch break	All
	13:00 – 15:00	The importance of community	Prof. UPLB
	15:00- 15:15	Coffee Break	All
	15:15 - 16:30	Group work( Discussion)	Prof. UPLB + participants
	16:30-17:00	Presentation of Group discussed result	Participants



<b>Day 3</b>	8:30-10:30	The importance of tour guide	Prof. UPLB
	10:30-10:45	Coffee break	All
	10:45-12:00	First aid training (1)	Prof. UPLB
	12:00-13:00	Lunch break	All
	13:00 – 15:00	First aid training (2)	Prof. UPLB
	15:00- 15:15	Coffee Break	All
	15:15 - 16:00	Group work( Discussion)	Prof. UPLB + participants
	16:00-17:00	Basic English relevant to local resources	Prof. UPLB

### **Appendix 3 : Rules for Tourist and Community**

#### **Rules for Tourist:**

1. Please do not swim naked in the lake.
2. Please do not drink alcohol and swim.
3. Please swim only in the designated areas.
4. Please ask before taking close up pictures.
5. Please do not give money or goods to children to encourage the practice of begging.
6. Please do not give medicines or medications (unless you're a doctor).
7. Please do not touch anything that may be of religious significance.  
Ask permission before entering a home.
8. Please always throw your trash on designated area.
9. Please do not cut down plants/trees.
10. Please do not disturb animal/insects homes.
11. Please don't smoke.
12. Please do not do illegal practices.
13. Please do not set up camp sites.
14. Please do not trek without local guides.

#### **Rules for Local (SMLP):**

1. Always greet and smile at tourist
2. Always check life jackets
3. Practice good moral and behavior towards tourist
4. Encourage tourist to discover new things in the community
5. Encourage tourist to participate in "bayanihan" activities
6. Have a mindset of personally connecting with individual tourist

## **Appendix 4 : Timeline and Budget Gantt Chart**

[illegible]





[illegible]

## Appendix 5 : Eco Supot











# The Heart of Inle Eco-tour

An Eco-tour Project

Prepared by:

Group C

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## **Executive Summary**

The Heart of Inle Eco-tour paints a picture of the present condition of Inle Lake and how the local community living in Inle Lake and the surrounding area can help in the preservation and conservation of this precious natural resource of Myanmar.

At the same time, this eco-tour project aims to share information and promote awareness about the effects of water pollution and improper waste management on Inle Lake. By making the local community more aware about the threats and risks that some of the local people are causing, everyone can work together and get involved toward the protection of Inle Lake.

This project is also an effort to encourage the local community, as well as the visitors/tourists, to practice the concepts of Clean as you go (Claygo) and “Don’t waste the waste” concepts that this eco-tour project is introducing.

## **Understanding Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is a concept that combines the concepts of ecology and tourism into one. Hence, it can be said that it is a showcase of a particular area that aims to make visitors and the community itself understand about conservation and preservation efforts to protect a particular area or environment.

Unlike mass tourism, ecotourism is a sustainable type of tourism that is nature-based and may have an educational component to it. Visitors travel to the undisturbed natural areas in smaller groups (controlled number of visitors) that provides tourists with the awareness and understanding of the environmental concerns/issues that the site may have, and eventually help protect this location.

Unlike mass tourism, sightseeing is not a primary objective of an eco-tour. Ecotourism aims to inform, if not educate, people about a clean environment, how to maintain the natural resources, and to respect and understand cultural diversity.

Ecotourism also looks into the impact or effect of the eco-tour to the visitors, the environment and the community itself. And the objective is of course to give a high impact or impression for the visitors while keeping the impacts low, if not none at all, for the environment and the community. Hence, limiting the number of visitors and proper management of local/natural resources such as the usage of these resources to produce souvenir items are very important concerns

Lastly, in order to have a successful eco-tour, the project must be able to build and foster a win-win relation between the visitors and the community, all for the benefit of the environment.

## **Possible eco-tour sites**

Six different countries presented their respective precious resources as eco-tour sites for an eco-tour plan consideration.

## Cambodia

Peam Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary (PKWS) is located in the south-western part of Cambodia, Koh Kong province. It covers an area of 23,750 hectares and is located approximately 300 kilometers from Phnom Penh city. PKWS is rich in mangrove forest that has more than sixty-four species of vegetation and wildlife (birds, fishes, marine-life, monkeys, etc.),



In 1980s, the living conditions and lifestyle in PKWS are rather poor. Hence, the local people cleared the mangrove forest to make shrimp farm, charcoal, firewood, and sell these to earn profit. A few people were lucky and made huge profits from charcoal production or various resource extraction activities. However, more and more people came to produce charcoal, and profits dramatically decreased. Charcoal producers are now extremely poor. Also, there were the problems of illegal fishing and logging. Local people created illegal mangrove charcoal kilns and made charcoal to make money and the mangrove forest has been destroyed since then.

However, after the election in 1993, the Cambodian government has set up strategy to protect the mangrove. And it was declared as a protected area in 2004. Then infrastructures such as road and water system were built. Local people can now earn by selling tickets, food and souvenir items to tourists. People are educated and trained about the importance of the mangrove forest, wildlife, and environment. There are now more than 600 families living in this protected area. Local people are no longer cutting the mangrove forest; and there are no illegal charcoal kilns.

## Indonesia

The Danau Sentarum Lake is located in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The Danau Sentarum National Park (DSNP) covers an area of 132,000 hectares and is located in the floodplain of the upper Kapuas River.



The area is inhabited by various ethnic groups, later collectively known as 'Dayak' and Malay. DSNP is well-known as a conservation site because it hosts about 250 fish species (including 12-26 endemics), about 250 bird species, Borneo's largest inland population of proboscis monkey, one of the largest remaining populations of *orangutan*, possibly three crocodile species, and several dozen endemic plants.

Danau Sentarum is also the original habitat of “Arowana” fish. The existence of lake and forest has given benefit to the community such as non-timber forest product harvesting—handicraft produced by local community, especially women and children.

Forests are heavily utilized as well, both for construction timber and for a wide variety of non-timber forest products. The lakes support a large traditional fishing industry, utilized by over 6,500 fisher folk inhabiting 39 villages in and adjacent the Park.

The ownership of “perahu” (boat) of every household has increased their income, because it is used as local transportation for visitors. The float house of community is usually used as guest house.

### Myanmar

The highly endangered Irrawaddy dolphins of Myanmar inhabit the coastal areas of South and Southeast Asia, specially found in the rivers of Irrawaddy (Irrawaddy in Myanmar), Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and Mekong (Lao PDR and Cambodia).

According to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), there are only about 90 dolphins left in the area as of March 2012. The dolphins are characterized with a bulging forehead, short beak, and 12-19 teeth on each side of both jaws, with head and body length at 180-275 cm.



Known for its cooperative fishing with fishermen, the Irrawaddy dolphins are now threatened by the new fishing methods of electro-fishing and poisoning, and the contaminated water in the river due to pollution.

The community along the riverbank depends on the river for fishing, farming, bathing, washing and cooking. The dolphin protected area is between Mingun and Kyaukmyaung in the Irrawaddy River. The local people need to learn about the importance of protecting their environment and to preserve the traditional way of cooperative dolphin fishing with humans and conserve the biodiversity of the river.

### Philippines

The Seven Freshwater Lakes of San Pablo City in the Philippines were formed by a unique process called phreatic eruption where shallow lava from Mt. San Cristobal intersected groundwater which blew out (steam-heated eruption) the overlying rocks to form a circular and crater-like depression that eventually filled it up with rainwater. The varying depths of these lakes, which are from 7 meters to 156 meters, suggest a volcanic origin.



The names of the seven lakes are Bunot, Calibato, Mohicap, Palaklapakin, Sampalok, Yambo and Pandin. San Pablunos take pride in their available resource. However, they admit that there are existing problems in managing and preserving their local resource due to increase tourism demand that result in the exploitation of their resource. Some of the environmental issues that the seven lakes are facing include pollution, increasing fish cages and increasing disqualified settlers. Farmers and residents also complain of declining water availability.



### Singapore

The Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserves is an 87-hectare park opened to the public on December 6, 1993. It includes Pulau Buloh and is situated northwest of Singapore between the Kranji Reservoir and Sarimbun Reservoir. Many migratory birds fly through the area as a resting stop. The area has a built-in infrastructure like hideouts and towers for unobtrusive observation of birds. There is a mangrove boardwalk to allow comfortable viewing of life in the mangrove like mud crabs and mudskippers. The area is one of the few remaining nature spots in Singapore. It is already an eco-tourism spots. Only minimal improvements can be suggested.



### Vietnam

The Van Long swampland in Halong bay is located in the Ninhbinh province, about 100km south of Hanoi, and is considered as the largest wetland reserve in the North of Vietnam. It is home to thousands of fauna, flora and aquatic life, on rocks, in land or underwater, many of which are listed in the Red Data Book of Vietnam. The Van Long swampland is rapidly becoming a commercial tourism development site in recent years, but not as an eco-tour site. Some factories (especially cement) near the area are



affecting the habitat of biologic community, and local government and residents are trying to preserve the nature, and an eco-tour plan can be the start of this conservation effort.

## **Selected eco-tour site: Inle Lake, Myanmar**

### Background information

Inle Lake is a freshwater lake and a national heritage site located in the heart of Shan State Highlands in Myanmar. Inle Lake is home to more than 170,000 people in over 400 villages and is considered as the second largest inland lake in Myanmar at 900 meters above sea level, 22km long and 11km wide. High hills flank the lake on both sides of the shore.



Ecologically, Inle Lake is home to wetland species such as migratory and residential birds. According to the statistics of 2010, Inle Lake and its surrounding areas have 36 village tracts and 34,272 households with 173,099 people. Among them, 15 villages are in the lake and the majority ethnic group is “Intha” meaning “sons of the lake,” the Tibeto-Burman who speak the same language with different intonation and dialect. Buddhism plays very important role in every part of Intha life and culture, giving them their identity, security and traditions.

Over time, Inle Lake has become a tourist destination because of its high cultural and scenic values. Excursions start by boat on Inle Lake admiring the view of the famous leg-rowers, typical floating gardens, local methods of fishing and village life and scared places from 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century.



Many villages can be found in the lake as well as on the land. Navigating through the canals to the villages in the vicinity of the lake is an exciting experience for the visitors. The people from near and far from the lake have worshiped the famous and sacred Phaung Daw Oo pagoda. Every year, there is a competition of leg-rowers’ boat racing during the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda festival in October.

The main livelihoods of Intha are floating gardening (hydroponics farming) and fishing. Floating gardening is the main source of income for the Intha, and growing tomatoes all year round on the floating islands is very famous, formed from the mass of grasses, reeds, sedges



and other aquatic plants. The floating island in Inle Lake is a major production site of tomatoes supplying to all over the country.

Traditional weaving is both for the local and commercial markets. Cloth weaving from lotus is a unique product of Inle. First, fibbers from lotus stem are extracted to make lotus thread. Spinning is done by hand with the spindle. By using these “Lotus” thread fabric, scarf for lady, robe for Buddha image and the monk, shirts, jackets and necktie are woven. Some believe that lotus can absorb bad things from the body and bring good luck.

### Current Environmental Situation in Inle Lake

The lake is a major source of hydroelectric power for southern Burma, raising the stakes for this Southeast Asian country to keep the lake afloat. In June to August 2010, the lake’s water level fell to record low levels, drying up the area and curtailing businesses, water transport and residents’ everyday lives.



During the last decade, environmental degradation of Inle Lake is severe because of various anthropogenic factors. The ongoing “in-lake” and “near-lake” agricultural practices are the main causes of environmental degradation of Inle Lake.

The environmental impacts include deforestation, sedimentation, water pollution (untreated sewage and waste water), rapid growth of water hyacinth, declining water level, and shrinkage of water surface due to the solidification of floating gardens. In the context of deforestation, logging, shifting cultivation and improper plowing system are main causes.



Due to deforestation of catchment area of the lake, the bare soil cannot maintain water anymore and the lake dries up easily. Moreover, when it rains, the water flows directly into the lake and causes soil erosion. Hence, sedimentation process occurs in the lake.

Many sources reported about the sedimentation of Inle Lake from 0.65 million m<sup>3</sup> per year to 0.8 to 4.3 million m<sup>3</sup> per year. Those offsite effects also affect

the downstream society of the Inle lake watershed. The most evident is the decreasing area of the lake. The lake was approximately 23 km long and 11 km wide. It is reported that the lake area decreased to 11 km long and 5 km wide in 1996.

The News Lights of Myanmar, one of State’s newspapers, reported that the original water surface area of the lake was 100 square miles. However, its area is only 24 square miles and watershed area is 2166.8 square miles in 2007.



In the lake area, Intha people practice in floating gardening. Floating gardens were introduced in the early 1960s and the development of floating gardening carries loss of open water area of the lake. These gardens choke the lake's fragile ecosystem.

In floating gardens, people grow various cash crops such as tomato, cauliflowers, flowers, pod, cabbage, and eggplant. Among them, tomato is the major cash crop. As the seeds are of hybrid variety, they have to use a lot of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides. These cause pollution of water and eutrophication.

According to local elder people, water in the lake was very clean and could be drunk in the past. However, nowadays, water in the lake is not drinkable anymore because of poison in the water. Other causes of water pollution are direct latrine system of houses in the lake, dye from weaving industry, residue of gasoline and diesel from motorized boats for transportation and tourist industry.

Inle Lake is also now facing dramatically shrinking of water surface because sedimentation contributes loss of space for water in the lake. As water surface shrinking, the pollution of its water rise. The fish population drops because of the lake shrinkage and pollution. In addition, the local fish species are threatened with extinction.



It is clear that the rate of water level decline has accelerated in recent years. With global climate change, Myanmar also experienced draught and scarcity of water due to little rainfall in 2009 and significantly increased temperature and late monsoon in 2010. As a consequence, the water in Inle Lake reached its lowest record, causing water scarcity and difficult transportation as well as floating gardening.

Before 2010, mass of floating islands never touched to the bed of the lake. In the summer of 2010, because of lowest water level of the lake, the plants constituting in floating islands rooted to bottom of the lake. The floating islands cannot float because of attachment. When water level rose again, these were still attaching. So, tomato plants on these floating islands were submerged and died.

That is why most of the floating gardeners in the lake had to face loss of their capital in both monetary and labor. A lot of capitals are needed in floating gardening for the whole processing from seeding to harvesting.

So the Intha have faced difficulties for their living. In some cases, the floating gardeners had to sell their garden to others because they did not have enough capital and they were in debt trap.

In 2011, although water level did not reach as low as 2010, floating gardens in a few villages as well as other some villages touched to bed of the lake. So, they cannot do floating gardening and have to change their livelihood. Some people change their livelihood from floating gardening to other livelihood.

For example, some people if they have enough capital to buy motorboats bought it and run traveling service for pilgrimage and some who once were workers from floating gardens are now become as motorboat drivers.

The water flow of Inle Lake contributes toward the socio-economic life of the local people and Lawpita hydroelectricity generated from Inle Lake-Bilu Creek is a key contributing factor in socio-economic growth of Myanmar.

So, it can be forecast that the decreasing water flow to Inle Lake can lead to decreased productivity for the country. Most of local people do not worry about environmental degradation of the Lake in spite of severe impacts on their lives. Only very rare people are worrying about lake environmental changes.

## Eco-tour plan

We call our eco-tour project “The Heart of Inle,” because the heart or essence of Inle is the water or lake itself. And the heart of Inle might stop beating if we don’t act on the problems it is facing now.

Also, the lives of the community revolve around or are centered in the lake. The local community does fishing as one of its major source of livelihood among others. Hence, the Inle Lake is central to the life of the community.

The heart also represents the heart of the Burmese people (and tourists visiting the place as well) in sharing their heart and caring for the environment.



Lastly, we only have one heart, and we can only have one Inle Lake. Borrowing the slogan of the luxury car Porsche, “There is no substitute.” Therefore we have to love and protect this natural resource before it’s too late. Like what our motto says, “One heart. One lake. Only Inle.”

Hence, this eco-tour project invites everyone to join us in our journey as we help keep the heart of Inle alive and beating strong for a greener and better tomorrow.

Project objectives:

- Share information on and involve local community in waste management.
- Provide visitors with hands on experience of the “Clean As You Go (Claygo)” practice.
- Reduce water pollution in the lake

Action plan:

- Share information with a **selected village** about bio-waste
- Promote & practice the concepts:
  - **DON'T WASTE THE WASTE** (creating value from waste )
  - **Clean As You Go** (Claygo)
- Share knowledge about waste management to selected floating market sellers
- Tap NGO/environment advocates to help in briefing/debriefing tourists about the protection of Inle Lake.

Target market:

- Myanmar People
- Japanese & other foreign tourists



Special tour information:

- Provide paper bag to tourist for food waste to give to tour guide convert to bio-waste. Special waste basket on boat/bus for liquid waste.
- Briefing on waste collection with paper bag upon arrival of tourist
- De-briefing about bio-waste.
- Incentive program:
  - Free eco bag (with slogan “ Don’t Waste the Waste”)
  - Free tumbler (used for refilling water so they don’t have to buy new bottled water and indiscriminately dispose it)
  - Small gift after answering the feedback sheet





## Itinerary

Date/Time	From	Destination	Duration	Transportation	Activity	Explanation
Day 1 Saturday 0700	Yangon	Heho Airport	2 hours	Air		
0900	Heho Airport	Nyaung Shwe	45minutes	Bus		
0945	Nyaung Shwe	Hotel	20minutes travel	Boat	Rest (30minutes) Talk (30 minutes)	Hotel check in Briefing Overview Paper Bag distribution
1105	Inle lake		2hours	Boat	Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, Jumping Cat Monastery	Sightsee & Lunch in the lake. Floating gardens are seen along the way.
1305	Inle lake		2hours 45 minutes	Boat	Home visit : Long neck weavers (Padaung)	View weaving culture, silk & lotus.
	Inle lake				Experience hands on weaving.	Small craft activity e.g., bracelet making(to be confirmed)
1545	Inle Lake	Hot spring		Boat 30minutes Walk 15minutes	Hot Spring 30 minutes	Nyaung Wun is a possible hot spring choice
1700		Hotel				Watch sunset on the way back to hotel
1800		Hotel			Dinner & Cultural Dance	
2000		Hotel			Lights Out	Open air shower

Date/Time	From	Destination	Duration	Transportation	Activity	Explanation
Day 2 Sunday 0500	Hotel	Inle Lake	1hr	Boat	Observe traditional fishing & view sunrise	Optional for early risers (with additional cost)
0600	Inle Lake	Hotel	1hour	Boat	-Breakfast -Distribute feedback sheet -Checkout	Freshen up in hotel. Breakfast at 7am
0800	Hotel	Inle Lake	40min travel 2hours at market	Boat	Floating Market (Sunday special)	Organic Food and flowers. Culture & Food introduction by selected food sellers.
1040	Floating Market	Inle Lake	1hour	Boat	Experience Leg Rowing with Fishermen	Est. 5 -10 minutes per person
1140	Inle Lake	Inn dein	0.5hours travel 2 hours viewing	Boat and Walk	Inn Dein Pagodas	Many Pagodas to view. Lunch
1410	Inn dein	Hotel	30minutes Travel 20min Debrief	Boat and Walk	De-Briefing Feedback collection	
1500	Hotel	He ho Airport	1hour 15min travel	Boat and car	Travel to airport	
1615	He Ho Airport	Yangon	1hour		Spend night in Yangon for departure next morning	

## Role of tour guide

- A local who can speak foreign languages (Japanese, Chinese, English...)
- Share issues about bio waste and environmental impact on the lake with the tourist. The guide must be familiar with environmental issues in the region.
- Constantly reminds tourists to dispose of waste properly
- Interpret for the locals in explaining culture and history and environmental concerns.
- Liaise with the hotel and other partners (e.g., NGOs/environmental activist)
- Wear traditional dress during the tour
- Look after the needs of the tourist
- Must be friendly, approachable, patient and passionate about the environment
- Male or female (below 60 years old preferred)



## Special Promotion

- Honeymoon/Wedding anniversary package
- Special discount at selected vendors in the floating market

## Marketing and Promotion for the eco-tour

- Facebook / Blog /YouTube
- Post on well-known tour websites (e.g., Trip Advisor)
- Marketing Materials (Brochure and Posters in restaurants & malls in Myanmar & other partner countries)
- Partner with travel agencies (e.g., My Ticket in Japan, etc.)
- An application for a competition (e.g., The Tour Grand Prix, etc.)

## Social System to Enhance Eco-Tourism

Social system is made to deploy the profits and benefits of ecotourism to make the community sustainable. It's important for the following reasons:

- a. Ecotourism maintains or enhances the local community's equilibrium.
- b. Community cohesion is improved as individuals and families work together to build a successful ecotourism venture.
- c. Some funds raised are used for community development purposes. E.g., to build public toilet, to provide trash bin, etc.



To run this social system, there are six factors to consider that can support the success of the ecotourism:

# 1. Supporters and Roles

Below is the matrix of supporters and roles in ecotourism project:

No.	Supporters	Roles
1.	Local People (Fishermen, Floating Market vendors, Tour Guide, Long neck weavers, Hill Tribes, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To initiate the Heart of Inle eco-tour and sustain it</li> <li>Practice and spread the concepts of CLAYGO &amp; “Don’t Waste the Waste”</li> <li>Act as consultants for the tour planners</li> <li>Share unique aspects of culture with visitors</li> <li>Raise awareness of issues</li> </ul>
2.	Researchers/NGOs/UMFCCI (Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry) /IATSS country secretariat/ IATSS alumni association of Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research &amp; monitor Inle Lake for environmental concerns</li> <li>Advisors on resource management for Inle Lake</li> <li>Provide technical data on Inle Lake</li> <li>Raise awareness of issues</li> <li>Liaise with Local Business to support the cause, (e.g., poster placement, flyer &amp; brochure distribution, etc) [applicable only to NGOs]</li> <li>Share facilities and resources to train local volunteers /tour guides/fishermen, etc (applicable only to NGOs)</li> <li>Act as the center of communication for the project</li> </ul>
3.	Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide data</li> <li>Update or revise regulations for such tours (e.g., possible homestays in the future, reduce hotel rates, etc.)</li> <li>Do promotional activities</li> </ul>
4.	Local Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the cause and activities</li> <li>Raise awareness of issues</li> <li>Practice concepts for environmental protection</li> </ul>
5.	Travel Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the community</li> <li>Adopt the Heart of Inle Eco-tour project</li> <li>Provide information to tourist</li> <li>Promote the eco-tour</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate with all supporters for the conservation of Inle Lake</li> </ul>
6.	Travelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in the tour</li> <li>Cooperate for the conservation of Inle Lake</li> <li>Practice and spread the concepts of CLAYGO &amp; “Don’t Waste the Waste”</li> <li>Promote the Heart of Inle eco-tour e.g., Blogs, YouTube, Facebook, etc.</li> </ul>

## 2. Tour Guide Training

In order for the local people to maximize their benefits and have some control over ecotourism in promoting the well-being of the local people and the Inle Lake and surrounding area.

There is a need for an approach to ecotourism, which starts from the needs, concerns, and welfare of local host communities. Hence, capability building of the local people in Inle Lake especially for the tour guides will be given through a two-day training program.

Below is the training program outline for the tour guide.

Type	Trainers	Duration
Eco-Tourism Fundamentals	Tourism Council	3 hours (day 1)
Heart of Inle Eco-Tour Concepts	Country Alumni	1 hour (day 1)
History & Culture Review (generic & specific to the sites)	Council that governs history and culture. Guest speakers from the specific community	4 hours (day 1)
Environmental Awareness & Current Issues (Inle Lake) – Bio-Waste Water Pollution	NGO or Environmental Activists	4 hours (day 2)
Basic First Aid & Safety (water rescue)	Local NGOs (e.g., Red Cross)	4 hours (day 2)

### 3. Rules and Regulations

The eco-tour project needs rules and regulations in order to continuously manage local resources for local people, as well as the tourists. Below are some rules and regulations that can be implemented for this ecotourism project.

- a. Minimum group size: 2 persons (exclusive package available at higher cost)
- b. Maximum group size: 10 persons
- c. Limit total groups at any 1 time: 2 groups
- d. Only provision of tumbler and huge water container (as water refill source). No bottled water will be provided and visitors will be discouraged from buying bottled water or other bottled or canned drinks).
- e. Tour guide must always be a good role model and set an example in disposing of waste properly according to the CLAYGO & “Don’t waste the waste” concepts.

### 4. Profit Distribution

Below are two suggested ways of distributing the profit and opportunities generated by the eco-tour evenly across the community involved and eventually lead to local revitalization.

- a. Tour Agency to donate 5% of the profits to partner NGOs to work on waste management improvements in Inle Lake (e.g., training, sewage treatment equipment, building public toilets, etc.)
- b. Local people who work with the tour, fishermen, floating market vendors, long-neck weavers, ethnic tribes will receive a portion of the fees for their services. This is computed as part of the tour package fee that will be paid by the tourists.

### 5. Ideas that help local people keep their enthusiasm about ecotourism

In order to support the community in keeping their spirits up and passion on protecting the environment, and keeping their resources intact, the following can be conducted:

- a. Hold event/competitions relating to waste management. Examples are:
  - i. Hyacinth clean-up activity or competition with trophies as recognition and some practical items like fishing nets, paddles & traditional clothes. Approach business sponsors like travel agencies.





- ii. Hold occasional environmental awareness campaign/seminars in the village and share the negative effects of water pollution.
  - b. Recognize active local participants who practice proper waste management, like fishermen, hotel management, tour guides, floating market vendors in the media (e.g., newspaper, journals, television)
6. Ideas to enhance awareness of tourists to become more conscious about their surrounding environment and reflect on their lifestyle during and after the eco-tour

To make tourists become more conscious about their surrounding environment and reflect on their lifestyle during and after the eco-tour, the following activities are suggested:

- a. Getting the tourists to practice “CLAYGO” and “Don’t waste the waste” concepts during the tour and encourage them to do it in their home country.
    - b. Providing tumbler, paper bag & eco-bag to encourage good waste management practice
    - c. Take home souvenirs like the woven handicraft and eco-bag will remind them of what they learned during the tour
    - d. Encourage tourists to post good waste management practices/ideas on the Facebook page
7. Risk Management for Eco-tour

Our group based our risk management assessment on the article written by Regina Scheyvens entitled “Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities” published in an online journal by the North Carolina State University.

Framework for determining the impacts of ecotourism initiatives on local communities:

Level of Empowerment	Signs of empowerment	Signs of disempowerment
Economic empowerment	Ecotourism brings lasting economic gains to a local community. Cash earned is shared between many households in the community. There are visible signs of improvements from the cash that is earned (e.g. improved water systems, houses made of more permanent materials).	Ecotourism merely results in small, spasmodic cash gains for a local community. Most profits go to local elites, outside operators, government agencies, etc. Only a few individuals or families gain direct financial benefits from ecotourism, while others cannot find a way to share in these economic benefits because they lack capital and/or appropriate skills

Psychological empowerment	<p>Self-esteem of many community members is enhanced because of outside recognition of the uniqueness and value of their culture, their natural resources and their traditional knowledge. Increasing confidence of community members leads them to seek out further education and training opportunities. Access to employment and cash leads to an increase in status for traditionally low-status sectors of society e.g., women, youths.</p>	<p>Many people have not shared in the benefits of ecotourism, yet they may face hardships because of reduced access to the resources of a protected area. They are thus confused, frustrated, disinterested or disillusioned with the initiative.</p>
Social empowerment	<p>Ecotourism maintains or enhances the local community's equilibrium. Community cohesion is improved as individuals and families work together to build a successful ecotourism venture. Some funds raised are used for community development purposes, e.g. to build schools or improve roads.</p>	<p>Disharmony and social decay. Many in the community take on outside values and lose respect for traditional culture and for elders. Disadvantaged groups (e.g. women) bear the brunt of problems associated with the ecotourism initiative and fail to share equitably in its benefits. Rather than cooperating, individuals, families, ethnic or socio-economic groups compete with each other for the perceived benefits of ecotourism. Resentment and jealousy are commonplace.</p>
Political empowerment	<p>The community's political structure, which fairly represents the needs and interests of all community groups, provides a forum through which people can raise questions relating to the ecotourism venture and have their concerns dealt with. Agencies initiating</p>	<p>The community has an autocratic and/or self-interested leadership. Agencies initiating or implementing the ecotourism venture treat communities as passive beneficiaries, failing to involve them in decision-making. Thus the majority</p>

or implementing the ecotourism venture seek out the opinions of community groups (including special interest groups of women, youths and other socially disadvantaged groups) and provide opportunities for them to be represented on decision-making bodies e.g., the Wildlife Park Board.

of community members feel they have little or no say over whether the ecotourism initiative operates or the way in which it operates.

<<http://gambusia.zo.ncsu.edu/readings/Scheyvens%201999.pdf>>

Type of Activity	Risk Level	Risk Factor	Action Plan
Leg Rowing & Boat Transportation on the lake	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falling into lake</li> <li>• Drowning</li> <li>• Rain (rainy season)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life vest &amp; Buoy</li> <li>• Tour guide has water rescue training</li> <li>• Advise tourist not to come during rainy season</li> <li>• Umbrella on boats</li> <li>• Raincoats for passengers</li> </ul>
Eating local food	Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible food poisoning</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> <li>• Food allergy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for allergies</li> <li>• First Aid ( medicine for diarrhea)</li> </ul>
Native cats	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cat allergy</li> <li>• Cat bites</li> <li>• Fear of cats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for allergies</li> <li>• First Aid (Bandages &amp; lotions)</li> </ul>

## 8. Concerns and prospective issues

### a. How to collaborate with Myanmar government:

One concern is how to persuade the Myanmar Government to support the Eco-tour to ensure its smooth progress. A possible means is to work with the IATSS Country Committee & Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) given that some Myanmar IATSS Alumni may have links to UMFCCI.

### b. How to get tour guides interested in eco-tour project:



Good tour guides are essential to the proper functioning of this eco-tour. We intend to approach the tour guide association and inform them of the training we plan to give to tour guides for our eco-tour. Once we get the support of the tour guide association, it will pave the way for our recruitment of tour guides to our cause.

- c. How to source for external funding & sponsorship:

Each project will need sufficient funds to continue. We will try to approach the various IATSS alumni for donations to the project. Once we have sufficient seed money, we can start the eco-tour. The proceeds from the tour itself should be sufficient for the eco-tour to carry on and survive.

- d. How to collaborate with NGOs:

NGOs are vital aspects of the eco-tour. We intend to invite them to conduct training on environmental awareness with tour guides. In the future, we would like to work with NGOs to bring tourists to sites that the NGOs is working on so they can learn more about the work that NGOs do as well as join in the volunteerism spirit.



- e. Finding a travel agency with similar eco-tourism ideals:

We hope to work with a travel agency who shares the same ideals on ecotourism. A travel agent that is just working on mass tourism will not be able to conduct the tour in a way that is sustainable in the use of resources or explain the ecotourism principles to the tourist.

- f. To seek the assistance of Myanmar Country Alumni for their inputs on the eco-tour plan:

There is a lot of professional inside the Myanmar Country Alumni and they may be able to give good inputs for the startup of the tour.

- g. How to address the negative foreign perception or image of Myanmar being unsafe for tourists (e.g., unequal treatment for foreigners compared to locals):

The outside world views Myanmar as being somewhat unsafe for tourist due to the strict, long military regime. It would be good for the government to invest some money into advertisements to showcase the beauty of Myanmar and recommend some safe places for them to go to.

- h. How to process bio-waste into useful materials:

At the moment, there is no clear procedure on how to convert bio-waste to useful materials like fertilizer. Nevertheless, we intend to work with NGOs already involved in waste management at Inle Lake.

- i. Street signs and directions are not clear. Not all streets have signs or directions and GPS is also not available. Hence, it may be difficult for foreigners to get around by themselves. Slow internet access is also a concern.

## Budget Plan

No.	Item	Example	Quantity	Unit price	Total (USD)	Notes
1	Trainers	Token or gift	5	50	250	
2	Meal	2 Snacks + Lunch	15	6	180	2 days
		1 snack	5	2	10	
3	Materials	Photocopy	15	2	30	
4	Transportation	Trainers	5	40	200	E.g., Red Cross
		Participants	15	1	30	2 days
5	Conference Venue	Jumping cat monastery			5	Donation only
6	Marketing materials	Poster	500	0.25	125	A2 color poster
7		Brochure	500	0.2	100	A4 back to back color
8		Tumbler	200	2	400	
9		Tumbler design printing	200	0.25	50	
10		Eco bag	200	3	600	
11		Paper bag	200	0.1	20	
Total					2000	

## Time frame

No.	Activity	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
		Dec'12	Jan'13	Feb'13	Mar'13	Apr'13	May'13	June'13	Jul'13	Aug'13	Sep'13	Oct'13	Nov'13
1	Present to Myanmar IATSS alumni												
2	Coordinate with IATSS alumni and UMFCFI												
3	Getting more data about Inle Lake												
4	Discuss possible collaboration with NGOs/Local Authority in Inle Lake												
5	Collaborate with local people (fishermen, local guide, longneck weavers)												
6	Coordinate with local hotel and monastery for training venue												
7	Doing assessment of selected/potential target village												
9	Trainers identification												
8	Training materials production												
10	Actual trainings												
11	Mock up tour (on test market) and evaluation												
12	Production of materials for marketing and promotion												
13	Marketing and promotion												
14	Eco-bag and paper bag prototype and production												
15	Tumbler production												
16	Collaborate with travel agency (My Ticket)												
17	Monitoring and evaluation												
18	Actual tour												



## **Difficulties / Challenges in group study**

Difficulties	How the group overcame these hurdles
a. Difficulty in understanding the eco-tourism concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- learning from the Toba experience</li><li>- reading and re-reading the provided materials</li><li>- frequently asking questions to clarify points</li><li>- researching for additional information in the Internet</li></ul>
b. Difficulty in selecting the topic of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- encouragement from IATSS staff and other group members</li><li>- learning from our mistakes in the first two attempts</li><li>- more organized and focused discussions</li><li>- roles clearly defined</li><li>- set timeline and target goals per meeting or session</li><li>- asking questions frequently to clarify and confirm points of discussion</li></ul>
c. Language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- speak slowly and clearly</li><li>- use simple words to explain and paraphrase</li></ul>
d. Different personalities and working styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- talk to understand each other</li><li>- take time to understand each other</li><li>- be flexible and open-minded</li><li>- do fun activities together</li></ul>
e. Lack of experience to create the tour plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- learn from My Ticket, Mr. Arakawa and Prof. Mizota's guidance</li><li>- getting some information from existing eco tour projects</li></ul>
f. Lack of information and data availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- exhaust all possible sources all information through personal contacts, IATSS alumni, etc.</li></ul>
g. Time constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- better time management</li><li>- division of roles</li><li>- delegation of tasks and assignments</li></ul>

## Lessons learned from group study

1. Divide tasks based on individual's strengths.
2. It is important to hear and listen to the opinion of all the members and come to a consensus.
3. Small ideas can turn into big ideas when the team brainstorms.
4. Take regular breaks to refresh our minds.
5. Discover our techniques and approaches to better manage our time.
6. Put ideas into writing (e.g., write it on the white board, use chart and concept map for better understanding).
7. Use available decision-making methods (e.g., Decision Analysis [DA] chart) to categorize information for better understanding.
8. Conflicts can work to your advantage if managed and handled properly.



## Appendix A: logo





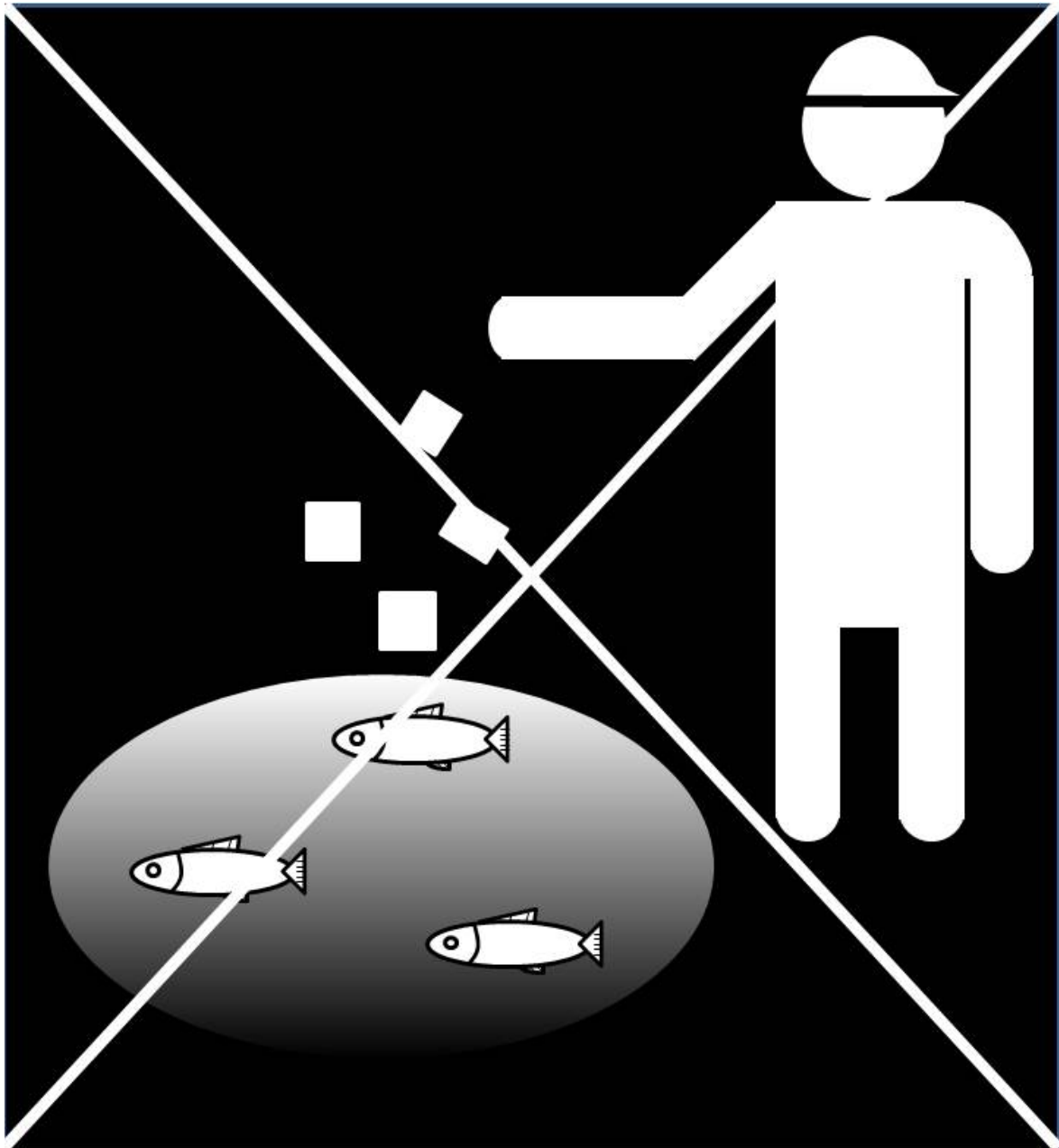
## Appendix B: Poster



## Appendix C: Claygo



## Appendix D: Don't Waste the Waste



Don't waste  
the waste!



## Appendix E: Tumbler



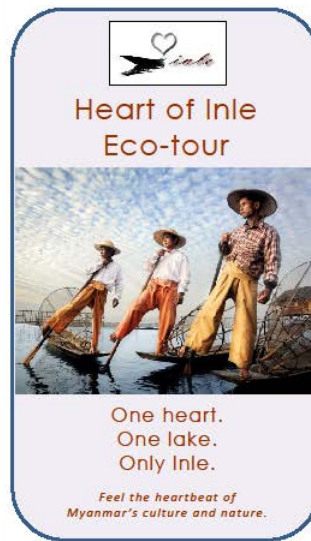
## Appendix F: Eco-bag



## Appendix G: Paper bag



## Appendix H: Brochure



MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
ONE STEP AT A TIME  
Tel.: 95-1-214344

*Protect Myanmar's natural beauty as you unravel her hidden mysteries.*

Myanmar is a place rich in natural beauty and unique cultures. It's an ideal destination to delight the eyes and heart of any visitor.

However, conventional tourism tends to destroy the marvelous beauty of the environment with its indiscriminate use of natural resources.

Protect & enjoy the wonders of Myanmar as you journey with us on an eco-tour of Inle Lake.



### HEART OF INLE ECO-1



Our mission is to give you a chance to care for the environment and commit as we explore the heritage magnificent beauty of Inle in Myanmar.

The heart or essence of Inle water or lake itself. The heart might stop beating if noth done about its environme problems.

Come and join us in saving Ir one step at a time.

### Heart of Inle Eco-1

UMFCCI  
No.29, Min Ye Kyawswa I  
Lanmadaw Township  
Yangon, Myanmar  
Tel.: 95-1-214344

Email: inleecotour@gmail

Like us on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/inle>

## Eco-tour Concept

The **Heart of Inle** eco-tour paints a picture of the present condition of Inle Lake and how one can help in the preservation and conservation of this precious natural resource.

Explore the unique cultures of the local community as you discover their stories, histories, lifestyles and hopes through personal interactions.



## Tour Highlights

Learn how you can help protect **Inle Lake** and make a difference to the lives of the local community.

Drift past the stunning white **Inn Dein Pagoda** and feel the presence of history that dates back to hundreds of years.

Play with acrobatic cats as they jump through hoops at the **Jumping Cat Monastery**.



Exchange stories with the graceful **Long Neck Weavers** as you learn about their handicraft and culture.

Explore the unique **Floating Gardens**, which act as a food source for the community.

Refresh yourself in the scenic **Hot Springs**.



## Custom Tours

Need a customized eco-tour to suit your budget, needs and schedule?

Call our friendly tour assistants to discuss. Tell us where you want to go, how long and how much you want to spend on your trip, and what kind of activities you are interested in; and we might have a package just for you!

Group rates are also available.





## Appendix I: Feedback sheet

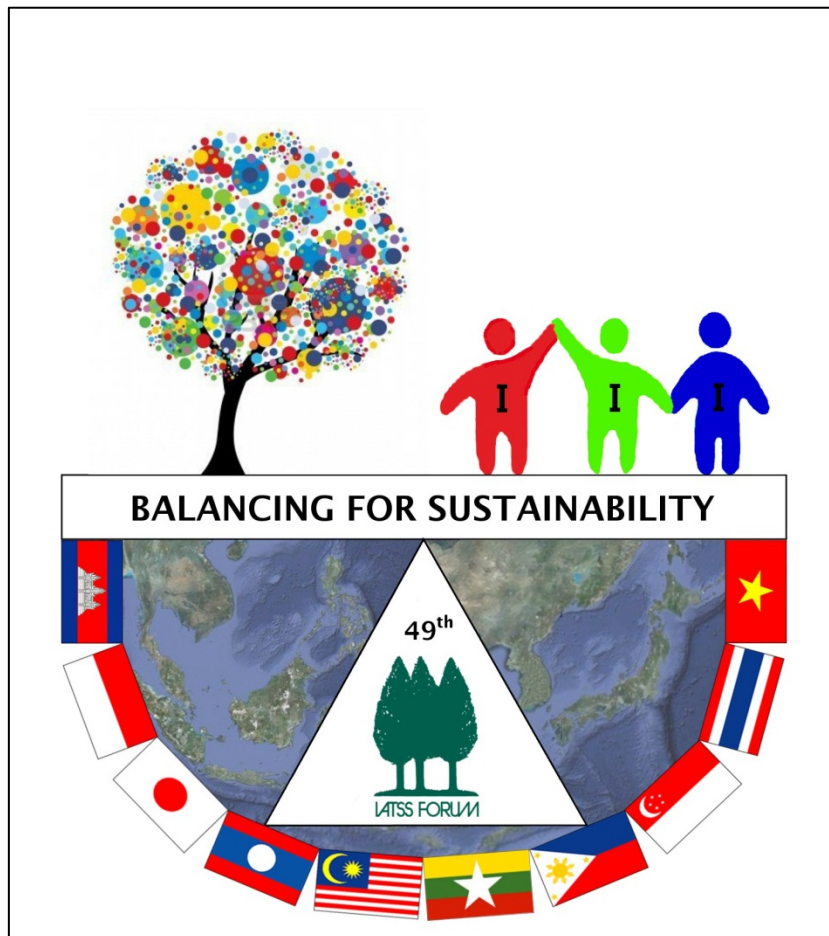
Heart of INLE Eco Tour Survey  
 \*<https://www.facebook.com/inleecotour>

We hope you enjoyed your trip! To help us better serve you, please complete this survey and return it to us at the end of the tour. Thank you!

<b>Name</b>				
<b>Address</b>				
<b>E-mail</b>				
<b>Phone</b>				
<b>Fax</b>				
<b>Tour guide name</b>				
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Tour guide responded promptly to needs.				
Tour guide was courteous and professional.				
Tour guide was knowledgeable about the History and Culture of Inle Lake & Eco Tourism in general.				
Tour guide gave instructions, information and explanations clearly.				
Itinerary was just right.				
My overall satisfaction with your service is high. I would recommend you to my friends.				
1) What impressed you most about the tour?				
2) What are things you want to change/improve about the tour?				
3) Any other comments or suggestions?				

\*Please like our Facebook page. ☺

# Accomplishment Report









## **A Happy and Unforgettable Memory in Japan**



**Kong Keomony (Mony)**  
**Kingdom of Wonder Cambodia**



### **Ready to be out of the box**

I, personally, told myself, since I was young, that I will go to Japan one day in the future. I do not know the reason why I like Japan so much. Or because it (Japan) is the most favorite country in my life; or because of its unique culture, people, or advanced technological country? Still I am curious and cannot answer to this doubt. And I don't really know to get my dream comes true. By the way, one of my professors encouraged me, "Mony, Why didn't you try to apply for IATSS Forum program, which held in Japan, the country you wanted to go?" And I asked, "Prof., what was the program all about?" And he told me the detailed info regarding to the requirements of the whole programs. I was very excited at that time that my dream and golden opportunity will be coming true soon as I applied for the IATSS Forum.

At the second I was announced to be selected to join the program I felt very much happy that I could have a special chance to go to my wishing country. I told myself, now it is time to be out of the box. I will have to learn and think with many people from different backgrounds with diversity cultural aspects in ASEAN and Japan countries throughout the motto of the forum "Think and Learning Together". So I have to get myself prepared and knowledgeable to successfully achieve the motto in this special program. "Mony-san, ganbattekudasai."

### **Before IATSS Forum**

It was the first time for me to be out of home for a bit long time, I felt like crying for the departure time. However, I told myself that you have to be strong; you come here for good, for self-development, and you will meet many young people from different places. You will



learn and share a lot experiences with them, why crying!?! Honestly, I thought at first that it must be hard for me for this trip because I have very limited experience going abroad, I did not know much about other countries' background, especially the participants. I thought that were they nice to me? Were they open-minded? Were they helpful? I thought a lot about this before coming to Japan.



However, I was told and advised from friends, IATSS alumni, colleagues in my workplace, and professors that I have to do well for a representative of the country, I am lucky to be selected to Japan, the 2<sup>nd</sup> powerful country in the world, so, what I need to do was to be the big-strong girl, and that was it. Because of all the encouragements and inspirations from them I felt like I am the luckiest person in this world who has a lot of people taking care of. And I will do my best for my country.

### **Learning from Gusshuku, Team Building**

I was so excited to be here, Japan. I was looking forward to seeing you for almost a year after passing the interview session. Anyway, I always remind myself the word “Try to Do Your Best” in any circumstances for the country.



lot of Tomo-san in this forum. That was the time I was able to know all participants' personality, and all the questions were doubt in mind have been gone away when I realized they were really nice, friendly, helpful, and committed to reach the common goal, learning and thinking together. During gusshuku, I could learn how to think and set the goal clearly, how important when I know the goal and I want to achieve in the future. So I can prepare for it and reach it. Also, I always remembered the saying says, “Two heads are better than one” it is 100% truly that a single idea cannot make change and improvement, but every single ideas come together can make a big impact. So team work is very important to improve and develop our society. We need to learn together to make our world to be better.

It was not really easy not for only me, but for everyone that we were not familiar and knew each other very well at the first meet. So, everybody seemed a bit silent and hesitated talk to each other. That reminded me the questions I was doubt in my mind so far. However, we were all spending two nights together in Suzuka youth center for gusshuku, team building. During that time, we went through a



### **Learning from Seminar**

It was very busy at the time I got many assignments, included seminar, group study and other things, to be well-prepared and completed by IATSS staff before coming to Japan. I was a bit stressful because I had to find a lot of information through searching the internet as well as keeping asking guidance from some professors to finish the tasks while I had many tasks to be completed in my office. There were many continuously tasks/assignments to be completed

during the whole forum, I realized after arrived here. However, I would be thankful to the staff to ask me to do in advanced; otherwise, I would die if I did not do it.

Anyway, the point I want to say is that I have learned and understood a lot from diverse topics that I have never experienced during the seminar, from the sharing and transferring knowledge by the individual professors with different skills/backgrounds and the involvements of all participants to make the seminar environment lively peaceful. Moreover, I felt some topics were a bit hard for me to understand and think of as I am really not specialized in those fields, but I did try my best and paid much attention regarding to the seminars' theme. Actually, the seminars' contents were really interesting and informative. However, I personally truly enjoyed sharing about education seminar rather than other seminars' topic because I may familiar with it while I felt not familiar with other topics. Frankly speaking, I did really enjoy learning new things and involved in such activities with all contributions from the professors as well as the participants in the discussions.



Furthermore, I learned how to be punctual as Japanese people were very serious with the time.



As ASEAN participants, we did not really care much about time whether we were late for any meetings or appointments. At first, tardiness always happened during the seminar, and we were sometimes reminded most of the time. Time is very important; we can make a lot of money in a second. So, I was always being aware of time. Since then I was be able to understand the culture of one's country and tried to adjust for the improvements. "Don't waste the time, time is money."

As the fact that I have realized the mutual understanding have built while the sharing was starting by the country presentations. I was able to have better consideration of ones' personality, from diverse backgrounds, which helped me to gain a sense of stronger and better relationship with them. Thanks to the forum to have such kind of the best program.

### **Learning from Group Study**

Everything went well; we always shared and had fun together. However, the most difficult part had come when we were all assigned into groups for group study research about how to establish an Eco-tourism. I have learned the difficulty at that time. We faced the problems in choosing the topic for our Eco-tour plan; we have changed topics from time to time; and we could not decide which



country can be chose and set up the Eco-tour plan until there was helpful intervention from the IATSS staff, especially Midori-san. She came and explained to us about how Eco-tour looks like and can be worked in a certain situation in a country. She gave us many fruitful ideas and encouraged us to struggle for the project as well as other group members gave a look on their face that they worried about us too. Finally, my group could be able to set up an Eco-tourism successfully. However, what I learned from the group study the most were:

I found out the difficulties during the discussion was the language barrier. English is the second language for almost ASEAN countries; and we used English as the communication tool. Everyone had different levels of English, so we need to understand and give time for everybody to express their feeling and ideas. Understand one's feeling and respect each other ideas were the most important elements I have learned from the group.

Moreover, it was really hard to work together in the group if one tried to dominate the meeting or discussion. If one tried to control all the ideas without giving chance to small ideas or other members to talk that would be bad and that group will never be united. What I learned was "small ideas can make a big impact or small ideas can make differences. So "be always cooperated and respect one's ideas"



One significant thing was that it was also useful to know how the important of one's role. To make the group going well and improving, role divisions should be taken so that everybody in the group could feel their responsibility. They could take part in the group and respond for it. To this, it reminded me the important of being a good facilitator, conducted by Tsubaki sensei. It is good to have a facilitator to control and manage the group to a prosper way and to get things on track. A facilitator plays very important

role to assist if things went not well in the group. With this matter, we could be able to improve ourselves within the group discussion in terms of strengthening the relationships and understanding each other feeling more deeply as well as to identify the core problems of the group in order to reach the common goal and conclusion of the research study project.

Another important thing I have found is team spirit could be definitely identified in this certain circumstance. If there is no a spirit of team work from every members, failure might also come along with. It requires everybody's effort and commitment to contribute to the group so that it will lead to a successful goal. All is to make everyone loves and respects their own group, especially members in the group.

### **Inter-Culture Exchanges**

#### **\* Japanese Culture Introduction Exchange Day**

I once used to join in Bon Odori festival which celebrated every year and held by CJCC in Cambodia. I enjoyed so much with this kind of culture. Japan is not only rich in technology





but also her culture. On the introduction exchange day of Japanese culture, I observed everything was very well-prepared included games, arts, tea ceremony, and so on. I was impressive with so many Japanese participants; they were so active in introducing us their culture; and they could stay till the end of the programs even there was a big Typhoon on that day. I was really appreciated their contributions.

Two points I have learned from them were the smiling face and the unity among people. Honestly speaking, most of the volunteer were middle age and elder people; however, they were full of energy. The way they performed and acted in every activity was very united, well-instructed with a smiling face. This gesture represented in a sense of happiness and peaceful mind. I really liked that behavior.

### *\* Culture Exchange Day: CED*



CED known as the most excited and challenged activity among the programs. It was not really easy for everybody to practices his/her own dance and teach other participants to dance while they were not really familiar with it. Anyway, it was a good start to be able to get to know and exchange each other cultures. I was so happy and felt so proud that this opportunity brought me to introduce my country and culture to everybody in the event. “Your culture reflects who you are”

It was always busy before setting up this CED. Everybody was busy with his/her own report as well as the CED meeting was ended late almost every night. But, everyone participated and enjoyed the meeting. It was not easy to complete thing alone, it needed to be cooperated among participants, so everyone had to contribute both physically and mentally energy in order to make things successfully accomplish. Time management, responsibility, cooperation, and mutual understanding played very important factors to lead things go well. So here I'd like to say that cooperation and responsibility play key roles in organizing such an event to be prosperous.

### *A Hand-on Experience from Study Tours*

The most wonderful experiences were the study tours. To me, it was the unique movement to get to know more about Japan through conducting study tours. I don't know how to describe how Japan looks like and well-developed; it was an eye-opened to see many developed things here, infrastructure, technology, culture, and its people. Japan was amazing to me.

Having been to such many places such as *Suzuka City Hall, Suzuka Police Station, MokuMoku Farm, Nara-Noh and Todai-ji Temple, and SuzukaTraffic Education Center (STEC )*, it gave me hand-on experiences to know more about how Japan could manage her country and people to





be the most powerful country in the world. Even Suzuka is just a part of Japan; I could use my imagination to get a big picture that Japan could lead her country in a prosperity and unity. I remembered there was a big Typhoon a day before we went to Suzuka City hall, there I could learn and know how Mie governor taking care of his people because they worked without sleeping at night in order to keep informed the citizens and prevent them from this storm, Typhoon. This showed the responsibility of the leader.

*“Where there is a good leader, there will security, harmony, and glorious to the country.”*

Thing I paid attention the most during study trip was the successful business story of Moku Moku farm. Moku Moku farm started its own business from the small enterprise, (which produced organic vegetable and fruit), and it expanded its image bigger and bigger since then. The farm’s strategy is to give the power to the employees who play role in decision making. The motivation technique is being used in order to encourage its employees to work hard and love their products and to maintain the sustainable operations in the farm as a whole. This is the best example which other business sectors should pay attentions with and cope with some good strategy point to develop and improve their business.

### **Discovered Better Know Japan**

I always observed the culture and people wherever I go during the stay in Japan. The lifestyle, the infrastructure, the transportation, the technology, the management, and the people were amazing. All I could see here everything was every well-managed. I felt safe and sound wherever I go. The security is the best, the food is really healthy, and the people are very kind and friendly. The environment is clean, transportation is quite convenience, infrastructure is great well-organized, and the people is very well-disciplined. I could curious how the Japanese government could manage all such things to be well-prepared like this.



### **Things I learned the most from the forum**

There were many things influenced me during 55 days in the forum. However, things have shaped me the most were as follows:

\* *Learned know how to be on time-* being punctual is important and serious in Japanese society. Even I am a person who don’t have problem with punctuality, I could feel the discipline and usefulness. I observed tardiness still was there in some circumstances, why not to be on time to make our meeting starts going well?

\* *Learned how to be a good facilitator-* the first time to me to be trained in the facilitation skills. I learned quite a lot from Tsubaki sensei during the training. I will practice this skill in the useful ways for further needs.

\* *Learned how to receive and give feedbacks*- I know when to give ideas and receive comments during discussion. It is a good chance to be corrected or advised when our ideas were not good or when we made mistakes. Let's enjoy improving things together.

\* *Learned to be networking and creating wonderful friendship*- I was thankful to be in this forum having fun and making so many friends from different places of the world. Hope this network and friendship will last ever.

\* *Learned on motivation skill*- the best thing which motivated me the most was the way Japanese people give encouragement to people. During group study research, every group almost got stuck with the project. I remembered the way Prof. Mizota sent strong message, kind of motivation to every group. That was really a nice thought indeed.

*"Be always positive, and keep it easy. Then good thing/idea will come after..."*

\* *Learned how to effectively work in team*- work and fun. It does not have to be serious all the time while fun should be come along with when the meeting/discussion going to be tough and serious

\* *Learned how to lead and to be led*- was the best point I have caught up. Being a good leader is to know when to lead members to reach common goal as well as know when to be led in order to give chance to other people having such experience

\* *Learned to be a patient listener rather than too much talkative*- it is quite good to listen to other's ideas first before we share ideas then. Be a good listener!

\* *Learned to be open-minded, not narrow-minded*- not always everyone is right. "No one is perfect." We live in a small world, so we should share and treat each other the same norm.

### **The hardest forgettable movement in my life**

#### **\* *The warm welcome of IATSS staff and Japanese Volunteer***

I had no another word to express my sincere thanks to the IATSS staff and Japanese volunteer for their effort to make this special program. This is the best place for calling all the ASEAN young professional people come and learn together to meet the motto of the forum. I was very impressed of the warm hospitality of the program, especially the IATSS staff. They are working really really hard, sometimes they left the office every late at night. They put their effort and commitment to us in order to make the program goes smoothly and builds up us to be better inputs/outputs in our home country. I was touched the way the staff work-really work hard, the helpfulness and kindness-really kind and helpful, the encouragement and support when we stuck or have problem-really encourage and support. All pictures and activities were captured in my mind all the processes since the beginning and then.

***To all staff:***

*"Hontou ni Doumo Arigatou Gozaimashita!!! ☺"*

#### **\* *The learning experiences from the forum***

What else I could describe? All things here were the best- the seminars, group study, study tours, and inter-culture exchanges among participants and Japanese people. Those were such

great life experiences. What more?! Honestly speaking, I have changed now. Changed means improvement; changed to be a better person who can use such skills from the forum to apply for professional life and develop the society in the future.

From here, I could strengthen my strength and improve my weaknesses by inter-acting such activities through the whole forum. I observed ones' personalities, working styles, and attitudes in the programs, and I learned from them. I took their good and strong points to improve mine. I was taught in the critical and logical ways of thinking in a certain thing/topic. This leads to usefully build my own personal growth to be more and more concrete. The working capacity either individually or teams have been developed resulted from commitment effort throughout the programs. This professional/special gift from IATSS will last ever for my future career life.

#### *\* Experience from local people-Homestay program*

Mottainai! was the most interesting word I have learned from my host family during the home stay program. The inter-action with just IATSS staff was not enough to get to more about real daily life of Japanese people. Until I went through a real life experience with them, I realized the mottainai the important meaning of it. I am not a mottainai person so far, I was sometimes waste things easily, especially food. I now know how to do with it, I have to keep in mind; no more waste, be always aware of mottainai. I totally love the way of Japanese people think, behavior, way of life, and society. Everything seems well-disciplined.



#### *\* Beautiful Real Friendship*



It is really hard to me to forget the most wonderful friendship with ASEAN participants as well as Japanese people, especially IATSS staff. Imagine we are from different places around the world; we met and shared joyfulness and sadness together within just only 55 days for the programs, but I felt like we have known each other for long time. This friendship is really worthy to me. I was touched by their kindness, care, and friendliness. This beautiful friendship will be kept in my heart forever.

*Where else we could have this kind of friendship. "We have our own mother at home, but we shared mother when we are far from home."*

#### *\* Suzuka hotel room*

I got a feeling that Suzuka hotel room belongs to me. It is like my room at my home country. I missed it when I went wherever far away from it-when we were in Suzuka youth center, Toba city, Kyoto, or even Tokyo for study purposes. Just only 2 months, but I really like everything in my room.



**\* Japanese food**

I can say that I will miss Japanese food. Frankly speaking, before coming to Japan, I worried about the food-raw fish seem to be new for me. I was afraid I cannot eat it. I did not know whether I could eat Japanese food. But it was beyond my worry; I really enjoyed eating food here, especially Sushi, Tempura, Soba, Udon, Miso Soup, and other food. Japanese food is really delicious, and it is totally healthy indeed.

**\* Biking in Japan**

It was such great experiences when I was able to go biking around Suzuka city during self-development day. I could enjoy seeing the view of the city, learned to experience Japanese lifestyle by bicycling along the road, familiar with traffic light. It was really nice discovery.

**\* Onsen**

I told myself before coming to Japan that I will not go to onsen. It is an embarrassing thing to do as I have never naked in public, and that is not my country culture. I had to take bath in public or I could choose not to take shower. I had no other way around; I could not sleep without taking bath. So I had to be brave naked and took shower with other girl participants. I was so shy at the first onsen experience in life. It was Wow... !

After a while ago, I felt I like onsen so much; I went to Kur Garden almost every night for onsen. It is really good for our health, especially our beauty. I could relax, chit chat, and share our personal story with other participants over there. It was the best place ever. And I will miss onsen so bad after returning to my country.

*Last but not least, I will miss everything here-people and the surrounding environment!!  
I would like to express my sincere thanks to IATSS forum for your warm welcome and  
hospitality since the beginning till now!!!  
Doumo Arigatou Gozaimashita!! ☺ ☺ ☺*



## **Japan, the Place of Memory and Opportunities**



**Srun Bunsroeun (BS)**  
**Kingdom of Cambodia**



### **BS in brief**

*“I control my future, my destiny. Having been recording my dreams and goals in mind, I set the motion of becoming what I most want to be.”*

First, I have got the Bachelor degree in Education from the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) where his English has been improved effectively in four micro skills, Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading. Furthermore, I have also graduated from National University of Management (NUM), majoring in Business Economic.

Second, with experiences of working with a few organizations both private and non-government organizations for nearly five years and other social work I have been doing, I have gained a great deal of knowledge and experiences including communication skills, public speaking skills, and other significant life skills. Additionally, I used to work for Wildlife Alliance, International Republican Institute, Student Resource Development Organization, and Outstanding Youth Group of Cambodia. Moreover, I used to involve in some social work during my academic period. During volunteering in OYG-CAM, I was trained with a capacity building course which is called Operacy. First, with the knowledge gained from Youth Peace Ambassador Training in Hiroshima, Japan, I have implemented a project for peace called “Conflict-free Angkor Wat Temple surrounding area” posted on [www.unescobkk.org](http://www.unescobkk.org) and [www.eubios.infor](http://www.eubios.infor). Finally, I had also contributed to HIV/AIDS knowledge sharing to all high school students in my community.

Finally, I used to join several training courses abroad such as Youth Peace Ambassador Training in Japan, Economic and Politics Training in Vietnam, International Conference on Crime Prevention in Malaysia, and International Youth Forum on Climate Change in Indonesia.

1-year period is such a long time to wait for the beginning of 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum but it really worth waiting. My heart keeps beating faster and I feel extremely delighted for having been selected to participate in this significant training program for young professionals from ASEAN and Japan to gather under the very crucial theme “Thinking and Learning Together”.

Not only will this crucial chance be able to turn me into a part of the solution to the problem now and the future, but it also puts me into different cultures. It is sure that I will learn more about different life experience and those cultures of different worlds from mine. Through this, I will be able to develop friendship, mutual understanding and global network with those people which can result in contributing to promote a peaceful culture. Since IATSS Forum is one of the famous institutes equipping with prominent professors as well as exceptional guest speakers, He would be very privileged to have an opportunity to be with them though in only a short period of time.

I would like to profound gratitude to IATSS Forum for giving me such a good opportunity. I am looking forwards to seeing you soon.



### **Pre- departure & Departure to Japan**

Time keeps flying. September 17<sup>th</sup> is about to come. I was getting myself really ready for the upcoming trip Japan, my dream destination. I am so proud of myself to have received such a good opportunity to join the IATSS program. I felt so excited and feel hopeful for the fruitful trip to Japan. It is very lucky that I have received a lot of pre-departure documents to read and prepare in advance from the professional IATSS staffs before the departure to *Suzuka city, Japan*. Soon after the announcement of the result, I and my co-participant; Mony had greeting dinner with professor, Akira san and Kozhi san. Then, we started to get to know each other and work with each other more closely for the benefits of IATSS forum. I and my co-participant usually meet each other at relaxing café shop for the discussion on our plan and preparation and build up closed relationship with each other. We have nearly one year for getting to know each other and preparation. The IATSS forum contained a lot of professional seminars presentation such as group study, individual tasks, study tour and Cultural Exchange Day (CED). Meanwhile, it was really amazing moment for me to have been invited for the IATSS dinner orientation with H.E. Va Kimhong, Senior Minister in charge as Border Affairs, held on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at Le President Hotel located in the heart of Phnom Penh City. In addition, I also got some help from the Royal Palace for this study trip abroad. More importantly, I am also lucky to get strong support from my parents who always care and encourage me for everything I aim for. Therefore, I will be leaving my lovely country and family in the mid-September 2012 to attend the 55-days IATSS Forum 49<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Japan.

### **Japan, my dreamed destination**

Having waited for a very long time, this meaningful and exciting moment arrives as the departure for Japan. Even though there are so many things to be prepared plus my busy schedule, I, with the other Cambodian participants tried to prepare everything one week prior to our departure. Actually today I am both excited and panic for this crucial trip to IATSS Forum. My friends gave me a drive to the airport. Even they did not say anything, their face clearly show me that they really don't want to see me go away from them.



I felt both excited and a bit sad because I have to leave my lovely family and friends in Cambodia. But all of them are blessing me and smiling face at **Phnom Penh International Airport**. The flight schedule is transited at **Suvarnabhumi Airport** at around 8:45pm. Next, at 11:55 pm, we are on the flight to **Nagoya** which takes about 6 hours. Finally, I have safely arrived at Nagoya airport in the very early morning. Next, we received a warm welcome from **Mr. Akira HAGA**, General Manager and the IATSS staff at the Airport at 8: 10am local time in Japan and we all have taken a group photo. After a very warm welcome speech given by Mr. Akira, we spent nearly 2 hours taking a bus from Nagoya airport to IATSS Forum which is located in Suzuka Circuit Hotel where we are supposed to live and learn together. When we arrived at the IATSS Forum office in Suzuka, we were warmly welcomed by all the IATSS staffs who were happily waiting outside the office. I am sure that they are also happy to see all the participants arrived safely. The impression came to me that this is how friendly Japanese people and this gives me a feeling of a perfect hospitality.

Actually, I was a bit tired during my trip but I really enjoyed myself at Suzuka briefly introduced by the IATSS Forum. They guided us around and told us about the facilities in the whole building. There're many things we can do to relax after the forum such as sporting shopping, swimming so on and so forth. One place that really captured my interest is Onsen. Everyone including I were shy after visiting this place, yet I wish I could experience this before leaving Japan.



### The orientation for IATSS participants

The next day, we received the official orientation by IATSS staffs and Management. At that time, the staffs have provided a few interesting activities to give opportunities for participants to know each other such as ice breaking activities and self-introduction sessions plus the presentations on the topic of "What has shaped me" in the evening. Through these sharing, I can know the participants' name even it was very hard to remember all the names in just a very short time. Then, we were all divided into a few small groups for IATSS Forum facilities tour including washing machine, bathroom, kitchen, PC room, Library room, seminar hall, and Onsen. In the afternoon, we had gathered at the Seminar Hall for "Self-Introduction" among participants to know each other and enjoy leaning and thinking together by short speech and funny game for brain refreshment at seminar hall of **the IATSS Forum**. In the evening, we have chance to listen to the presentation about what have shaped me presented by some of the participants.

## Once-in-a whole life bicycle training and Welcome Dinner at IATSS Cafeteria

Japan is a country carefully thinking from every aspects of thing even it is just small thing which has always been neglecting in my country such as bicycle training so that we could move around the city and enjoy the city tour during our leisure time. Actually, I have already known how to ride bicycle since I was a child. But I don't know anything about the rules and techniques for preventing accidents and how to take care of the bicycle. The training contains every details and techniques of riding bicycle. The trainers used power point presentation to explain all the information and rules of using bicycle in Japan plus some penalty when the rules have been broken. They also taught us the various ways to apply the left and the right brakes under different speed conditions. Then, I have a chance to practice cycling using all the techniques provided in the training inside the seminar hall because of bad weather conditions.

In the evening, we were all gathering together at the cafeteria for dinner orientation. Surprisingly, all participants received a certification of riding bicycle from the trainer even I never think of this before. In the next morning, I received small key plus other necessary items for cycling from Nori san, the super hero. I usually go cycling in the morning before breakfast as exercise and Suzuka city tour.



## Life-change catalysts, Gasshuku and Facilitation skills

All the programs and activities are really well-prepared, linking and supporting one another. They are sure that there will be so many challenges within us since we come from various countries with different cultures. That's the reason they provide us with the very important training, which is called "Gasshuku". All participants have to stay outside Suzuka Circuit Hotel. We have to stay and share room together in Suzuka Youth Center for 3 days without



any access to outside world (No phone, no internet access, and any other electronic devices). We have to care about every aspects of daily because the room is shared with other participants and no room keeper to clean and tidy up the room. We are all responsible for hygiene and proper way of living. Honestly speaking, I was really impressed of Gasshuku, a very effective team building which shows me who I am and how to be a good person among team. There are so many activities to deal with problems

such as Ubuntu card, Human Treasure Hunt, Jankenpon, Bumpty Bang Bang Bang/ Zip Zap, cooperate maze, finger and teams game, attitude game, train- track and many other activities which really help all the participants in confident building, time management, cooperation,

communication, problem solving, supporting and respect each other. I tried to make use of every second during the Gasshuku. Even though the schedule seems to be very tough, I felt comfortable staying, learning, and enjoying the time here. I would like to really profound gratitude to Ms. Tomo San for her clear and effective guide for my future success. At the last



day of Gasshuku Team Build, we 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS participants are required to work together and create our objectives, motto and logo. We worked together really hard to create our lovely and meaning full logo and motto, Balancing for sustainability. Gasshuku is one of the guides for my future. I would like to profound my gratitude to Ms. Tomo san for this valuable Gasshuku.

Just a few days after the Gasshuku, we all had a chance to enjoy the two-day facilitation training conducted by Ms. Keiko Tsubaki just before the first seminar had been introduced. It was indeed a great tool in equipping me how to be a good leader and how to be a good facilitator. It was an excellent follow-through seminar after the gasshuku / teambuilding activity especially since we will be having a lot of group activities in the forum, and every participant should know how to facilitate a group discussion so that we achieve our objectives as a group. The seminar involved everyone to work in different teams and tested our facilitation skills through various activities that teach us about mind mapping, brainstorming, the basic skills a facilitator must have, the different roles we play during a discussion/meeting, using the whiteboard effectively, and many more. At the end of each session, members of the group were asked to give comments on their facilitator's strengths and weaknesses. Through these exercises, we were able to gain a deeper understanding about facilitation skills and we also had the opportunities to witness various styles of facilitation which were unique to the individuals. Furthermore, a good facilitator needs to be able to constantly think on his feet so as to respond appropriately to any problems and issues that may arise during the discussions. The facilitator must also be seen as being impartial and neutral in all his undertakings, so as to garner the members' trust and support which are essential ingredients for fruitful outcome.





## Opening ceremony, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, Suzuka



The official Opening Ceremony of the IATSS Forum 49<sup>th</sup> batch was held on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 in Suzuka Circuit Hotel, Suzuka. It was one of the great moments in my life. There were so many VIP guests invited from embassies, IATSS Forum chairpersons, representatives from Honda Co., Ltd, and Japanese volunteers. I was really honored to represent Cambodia for this forum and also strengthen the existing solid friendship between Cambodia-Japan and Cambodia-other ASEAN countries. I was having a very great time chatting with

other participants, my host family and other friendly Japanese volunteers.

## Japanese Introduction Day

Another special event came to me almost the first half period of the forum. It was called Japanese Cultural Introduction Day. Japan is a country of magnificence especially in term of the interesting culture. For the very first time in my whole life I experienced a number of interesting Japanese dances and performances in relaxing atmosphere. The Japanese volunteers were working together very cooperatively to get this event becomes very successful and interesting. I was given lots of opportunities to participate in this interesting event such as playing Japanese toys, writing my own name is Kanji, sticking my name on the surface of the stone and wearing Yukata, a very nice traditional Japanese costume.



## Personal discoveries about other participants during the 55-day period

In the beginning, my level of joyfulness was fluctuated, sometimes high up, sometimes so down. I was not so closed to some participants, but after a while I noticed that I should adjust a bit and try to be closed and open to other participants. Obviously, I found out that I was one of the youngest participants comparing to others who are the dynamic persons with interesting backgrounds. Anyway, age and background are nothing to me but I do appreciate their talents. Honestly, I am the person who likes seeking for chances to improve myself by volunteering and participating in training programs abroad. However, I have discovered a lot of skills and self-ego during this period. I really appreciate country A's participants who are really mature and open-minded. They are quite talented and helpful. Furthermore, I will never forget the joyfulness provided by country B's participant. She is very funny and cheerful girl. She taught me to smile and laugh from my heart even I rarely smile from heart and laugh as happily as laughing with her. Moreover, I also learnt how to listen more before showing reactions to the case.





## Group Study and Research

To me, the most challenging task of IATSS Forum program is Group Study and Research. We were divided into three groups and we all have to work together very hard to implement the eco-plan and make this plan becomes sustainable both short-term and long-term. This concludes all important skills of all sessions and mainly focusing on leadership skill. IATSS Forum aims to see us working and helping each other achieving one main goal which is successful eco-tour plan implementation and practice.

Sometimes I feel so stressful in my group study because we did not get the agreement among all the group members. In return, it gave me a lot of chances to use my leadership skills and express my ideas within the group. We can understand each other very well and we always listen to each other's opinions. I really like the atmosphere of the discussion within our group. Mostly, we try our best to share opinions for the improvement of our eco-tour plan. Through this group study, I learnt so many things, especially team spirits. Everyone in a team is one aspect for the success of the whole group. However, I appreciated that the difficulties I experienced was part of the process because the program intended for the participants to learn the practical ways which the focus is not only on how to develop our country project but to



understand the group dynamic processes particularly as it involved different professionals from various ASEAN countries. We were so diverse since we come from different backgrounds, manner of thinking, level of experiences, working styles or even from the languages we speak. I feel more mature after the program, my way of thinking is sharpening now and I am ready to fight for my future goal.

## Cultural Exchange Day

Cultural Exchange Day is also one of my greatest success in terms of team spirit enrichment. We had to practice again and again with the hope for the most effective launch of this important event. "Cultural Exchange Day" in Suzuka Media Park was meaningful with exchanging traditional customs, beliefs and culture. Each country prepared one auction item for that day and I am very happy that the total amount of money will be donated to Cambodia with the purpose of education improvement.



CED was very meaningful and valuable for me, other participants and Japanese people. It further made us become one team as we need to show-up to the Japanese guests, also the series of performances that we need to do to entertain during the event. It made me confident that I had many appearances and roles in support of the other country presentations; this opportunity was also a good way in building good partnership with the rest of my co-participants.



### **My lovely host family**

Another memorable event that I will never forget is my meaningful home stay. During the half way of the forum, all participants are arranged to spend one weekend with Japanese host family so that they can have chance to exchange culture and fun with Japanese people. I was arranged to stay with a great host family, Mr. Kazuhiro KOBAYASHI and Mrs. Tomoko KOBAYASHI. This was a two meaningful days of my whole life. They were very kind to me and they always prepared everything well for me. They even know what I like and please me in all circumstances. Moreover, they brought me to many interesting places such as Ninja village, Ise Shrine, Ise Jingu and gave me so many chances to experience Japanese culture. I do smell the sense of happiness in this family. Even though I have only two days staying with them, I feel so belong to this family.



### **What IATSS Forum means to me**

The 55-days ITASS Forum means a lot more than my pre-departure expectation. Overall, I have learnt and explored myself in the varieties ways. First, I have chance to meet the self-development and growth because almost all the activities contain chances to explore the “Real Me” with the help from the resource persons and participants. Second, the forum guides me toward the real use of my creativities and talent. So many times I used my creativities and share these with others for improvement. This is a way for me to also set some personal improvements in terms of weak and continue and even enhance my strong points, respectively. I have explored myself as a little bit calm and helpful person. Next, it has provided me with valuable knowledge for my professional enrichment. All the topics and activities provided such as Gasshuku, facilitation skills, and group study sessions were all very useful and contain leadership skills for each participant to find out about their leadership skills and styles. I also learned and experienced more about conflict resolution and crisis management especially during the group working process. It is very hard working with group members coming from different backgrounds, countries, cultures, religions, professions, ages,

genders, and behaviors. As long as we understand each other and be open-minded toward each other, there is nothing we cannot come across. I find it hard to find the words to describe my feeling but I really would like to express my deepest appreciation for the opportunities provided by IATSS FORUM, especially IATSS staff members who have been involved and helped me in every circumstance. The IATSS Forum comes to my life as a dream. Even though it is just a 55 day period, it has given me a lot of knowledge and memorable experiences. I really cannot describe the level of knowledge I have gained from IATSS Forum. Anyway, I have learnt and grown a lot in term of both mental and social interaction. This forum really responses to what I expected before coming to Japan. Now I am more punctual, persistent, and patient.





## Extraordinary Experiences in Japan for 55 days!!!



**Budi Azmi (Budi)**  
**Indonesia**



Departure : September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012 is a day that I have been waiting for because I can't wait to go to Japan. Although my journey started from a sense of sadness because I will far away from my family, especially my beloved wife and children, for almost 2 months but I feel that I will enjoy the magnificent of Japan. My journey begins from Medan, my beloved city, to Jakarta for 2 hours. Then from Jakarta to Nagoya, for 8 hours. On the way I felt two very different things that I've missed out my family at home, while on the other hand I'm very excited to experience a new atmosphere in the Japanese city.



Arrival : September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Finally my airplane landed at Nagoya International Airport at 8.50 am. Once again I have been shown with an amazing view on Japanese technology. Starting from first class airport and very comfortable restrooms. Yes!!!!!!!!!!!! finally I can use and feel the Japanese modern toilet. Toilets in Japan are generally more advanced than the toilet in other developed countries. The most recent toilet models are equipped with toilet seat that also functions as a bidet.

At my first glance, the high-tech toilet Japanese products look like a regular toilet seat, but there are features like a warm wind blowing inside, the toilet seat warm when the cold temperatures, moderate pressure and volume of water spray when washing, toilet lid that opens and closes automatically, automatic toilet flushing, odor absorber systems, and wireless control panel next to the toilet seat or mounted on the wall adjacent automatic toilet which is very famous in Japan. Then I feel another excited feeling when Akira Haga, the GM of IATSS Forum, welcomed me with his smile. After that I met up with the other participants and get acquainted with each other. During the journey, I was even more excited about the scenery that I saw from the bus. There was a beautiful river along the way. There



was also magnificent mountain before my very eyes and off course that the traffic situation was very smooth, there is no traffic jam.

### Orientation/Bicycle Training/Welcome Dinner : September 18<sup>th</sup> 2012

My second day in Japan begins with an orientation program. The IATSS Forum staff patiently and clearly explains all related activities from the beginning until the end of the program. The most interesting events of course is an introduction to the Japanese language. We are taught to introduce ourselves to the Japanese.



After that followed by the bicycle training. Unfortunately that the weather on the day it was raining so the bicycle training was held in the seminar room. I am very satisfied with the lessons given by the Honda staff because I learned about good and safety techniques in cycling. In the afternoon, we have a welcome dinner. We are given the opportunity to introduce ourselves each other and be acquainted to the guest including IATSS Forum staff and Suzuka Circuit Hotel staff. Finally I get a chance to introduce my selves using Japanese language. It was a wonderful experience to me.

### Gasshuku : September 19<sup>th</sup> - September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012



There are many learning points from the GASSHUKU – Team Building for the three days in Suzuka Youth Center. Almost all activities conducted require us to work together as a team and indirectly learn about leadership skills. Besides that, we also learn the importance of having a good communication skills and trusting each other to success in achieving the objectives.

The GASSUKU – Team Building also gives us a chance to increase the teams understanding and improve how the team works together. Working as a team incorporates group accountability rather than individual accountability and results in a collective work product. It also encourages the team approach to working on a project.

The GASSHUKU – Team Building also provides to all of us problem solving exercises which are designed to help train a group's effectiveness in thinking, communicating, and behaving.

### Opening Ceremony : October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

The opening ceremony is one of most interesting activity during IATSS Forum program. This ceremony was held to welcome us so we felt that we like being at home. All participants are given the opportunity to introduce themselves in front of each of the honored guests. I have been practicing for a few days



to introduce myself by using Japanese in front of Mayor of Suzuka City, the IATSS member of committee, ambassadors of ASEAN countries as well as the volunteers. This is a very wonderful experience and enjoyable for me.

After the event, followed by a warm-hearted with the guests. On this occasion, I met my very friendly homestay parent, Mr. Takehiro Mizuno and Mrs. Naomi Mizuno and their cute daughter Nana Mizuno. We talked a lot, and I can not wait to get a new experience with them.

#### Introduction Training/Facilitation Skills (September 24<sup>th</sup> – September 25<sup>th</sup> 2012)



This seminar was led by the beautiful Mrs. Keiko Tsubaki. She taught me lots of valuable ideas of how to conduct good facilitation skills, especially about the win-win solution. And she also guided me not to be pushy during the discussions hours. I learn new thing about the facilitation. Facilitation is a technique of providing leadership without taking the reins.

Our job as a facilitator is like a bridge to other people to get other to assume responsibility and also to take a lead. Facilitation is also the concept and management structures of structures and processes that help a group to do their work and minimize the common problems. We don't have to avoid the conflict. Sometime we need the conflict to find a new idea. One quote that I've learned from this seminar is : Two heads are better than one. There are four communication skills that should be improve for the facilitator which is smile, eye contact, questioning and reacting.

#### Toba City (September 26<sup>th</sup> – September 27<sup>th</sup> 2012)

This is our first field study, trip to Toba city to know and see the ecotourism in there. I'm really looking forward to a trip to Toba city, because my project proposal that I would offer is Lake Toba, has the same name. It was unique and interesting due to the similarity name, as it was said by Professor Tsutomu Mizota when we met at the opening ceremony. We went by train and on arrival at Toba city and we were greeted warmly by the management and staff of Kaito Yumin Club to further proceed to Suga Island by using the ferry. Arriving at Suga Island, we were surprised by the incredible reception of children grade 5. They warmly welcomed us, and then they turned out to be our tour guide during in Suga Island. It is an amazing experience to me be accompanied and guided by elementary school children; they patiently and diligently explain Suga ISLAND area to all the participants.



After lunch, we go back to the Toba city and get valuable experience from Ms. Kiku Ezaki, CEO Kaito Yumin Club. There are four parties play an important role for the success of ecotourism which is natural environment, local residents, tour guides and tourists themselves. I can learn a lot about how to manage an attractive and enjoyable ecotourism. Beside that, I get another valuable lesson that some steps should be considered to increase the value of a community

which is : the first step of planning start from the purposes, the message, the themes and concepts as well as the target market, the next step is how to change the essence and unique concept to be a product and the next step is a marketing activity that is how to create the image and value to the community.

### Seminar 1 : Political System (September 28<sup>th</sup> 2012)



The first seminar was entitled on the political system to have some general overview of politics, and national administration from ASEAN countries and Japan. Laos got the first chance to deliver a presentation, followed by Myanmar and Vietnam. It is an opportunity that is quite valuable because in addition to exchange information about the political system in some ASEAN countries, I have also gained valuable experience from Professor Yoshiharu Tsuboi about the political system in Japan.

Further into the second session followed by a discussion group about increasing influence of China in the world so what are the roles of ASEAN countries and what challenges will coming and how can influence politics in ASEAN countries. Finally, Professor Yoshiharu Tsuboi told that the most problem that facing in ASEAN countries are funding problem and a meanwhile Japan has a serious problem about aging society. In this case, we agree that Japan and ASEAN countries should work together in order to solve the problem and each country must keep their own originality.

At dinner, I got a birthday surprise from all participants. It was a very surprise party for me, because my birthday was suppose to be one day ago. I actually did not expect this surprise party, but I am very happy and appreciate the effort and attention from my friends. At least I feel like they're my own family. They were singing a happy birthday song then we slice the birthday cake and eat together.

### Japanese Cultural Introduction Day (September 30<sup>th</sup> 2012)

It was another wonderful day which is Japanese Cultural Introduction Day. I have a chance to wear Yukata and I feel that so relaxing with this suits. I was very lucky because I can get some I experienced a number of interesting Japanese cultures in relaxing atmosphere. I was given lots of opportunities to participate in this interesting event such as; throwing ninja's star to the objects in the table, joint the sacred tea/ocha ceremony, watching a band of guitars and drums from Japanese women, folding papers in origami, and the most important thing was writing down kanji about my name and its philosophical message upon me.



### Tour of Suzuka City Hall/Suzuka Police Station (October 1<sup>st</sup> 2012)

My first official visit was to Suzuka Police Station. We got a warm welcome from the Chief of Police



Suzuka and then we got the guidance and lecture about Japan's traffic rules and also the fingerprint identification. The second tour was a courtesy visit to Suzuka's Mayor Office. First we visit the parliament house and then we had a chance to look around, taking a picture and learn some information about the parliament representative in Suzuka. After that we had delicious spaghetti for our lunch.

I was given an opportunity to be interviewed by a Japanese TV station NCS, covering the courtesy visit from participants of IATSS Forum Program 2012. I was given the opportunity to deliver my motivation to join the IATSS Forum Program and what is my impression of the Suzuka City. Although, the Mayor couldn't welcome me because she was very busy. However, I felt so please by the deputy, a nice warm welcome given by her gentleman. We get a chance to interact directly to the Vice Mayor and ask some questions about Suzuka City. He also gave me beautiful postcards about Suzuka and a nice t-shirt pictured with a deer, a symbol of Suzuka City



#### Tour of Moku-Moku Farm/Move to Kyoto (October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012)



This was a very unique tour because in this tour I was doing the thing I have never ever done in my entire life, baking the bread! It was so much fun and full of surprises. There was a lady who trained me and all participants about the process of baking the bread.

This is a very unique tour, because I get a chance to make bread for the first time in seriously. Previously we get a lesson about Moku Moku Farm, started from the history of the establishment, including the operations of the company policy. The basic principle of Moku Moku Farm is to perform its business to help revitalize the rural community through the agricultural promotion. In Moku Moku Farm employee are investor, employee are employee. They want to make employee like a president in Moku Moku Farm. They run their business based on democratic rules, by placing importance on the spirit of cooperation

as a first priority.

#### Group Study : Ecotourism @ Kyoto (October 3<sup>rd</sup> – October 4<sup>th</sup> 2012)

I along with 5 other participants joined with Group B. We get a chance to deliver a presentation on ecotourism projects respectively. Furthermore, we should be able to choose the best project that we will do together as a working group. After going through a fairly lengthy discussion and deliberation we finally chose Pandin Lake as ecotourism project of Group B. As a first step, we try to identify about problems





faced by Pandin Lake. Next we create and dissect potential that Pandin Lake to be used as objects of ecotourism.

### Seminar 2 : Environmental and Sustainable Asia (October 5<sup>th</sup> 2012)

Indonesia was given the first opportunity to presents to renewable energy in, before Malaysia and Philippines. We got a chance to deliver a presentation in front of Professor Kazuo Matsushita at Kyoto University. In Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest energy producer and consumer, government energy policies are fostering reliance on dirty and subsidized fossil fuels. Little progress has been made in increasing renewable energy usage, but the country has enormous renewable energy potential. Energy sources such as geothermal power could readily meet up to 40 percent of Indonesia's energy needs.

A consequence of this skyrocketing demand is that since 2004, Indonesia has become a net importer of both crude oil and refined products. If no new domestic reserves are found, and with the increasing demand for energy and a business as usual approach, Indonesia will be a significant oil-importing country in less than two decades.



The moment is ripe for Indonesia to make tough decisions to sustainable secure its future energy needs. The Indonesian government needs to stiffen its political resolve to phase out subsidies for fossil fuels. Actions to reform policy incoherence, remove structural impediments and promote investments in renewable energy are also needed. Mixing various sources of funds from the private sector and international funding institutions, as well as encouraging investments with pricing and tax reforms, could promote investment in renewable energy. Strong leadership and clear guidance from the top, notably from the

president and his cabinet, is needed.

### Individual Plan Day (October 6<sup>th</sup> – October 7<sup>th</sup> 2012)

The first individual plan day in Kyoto began with a trip to the historical places around Kyoto which is Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion). It is just one word to describe this site: wonderful. Once you get it, and enter the area, you will become part of the ancient Japanese culture, with a unique atmosphere and most probably a unique experience. A first look on the temple is possible from the other side of the lake, with the water reflecting it, you will see a double temple. A typical Japanese garden surrounding, the famous Kyoto gardens, are the best conditioning for this site. During the tour, in fact, you can experience the silence and the solemnity of the lake and the flowers, with the typical, maniacal, care Japanese people dedicate to the flowers and the trees inside the site perimeter.



The next trip was to The Ryoanji Temple, which is most famous for its Rock Garden. In a sea of pebbles, there are small islands of rocks and moss. There are a total of 15 rocks, which can not be seen all at once, no matter from which angle you look (apart from the sky). The temple

offers more than just the Rock Garden. It also has a big pond, called the Kyoyochi Pond, and another garden/small forest where you can walk around. The price for an entrance ticket is 500 yen. This temple isn't as crowded as the Kinkakuji Temple, but there can be a number of people present. After lunch, I went to Kyoto Station, the second largest train station building in Japan (after Nagoya). This modern station was built contrasts greatly with the ancient cultural sites of the city. In addition to being the transport hub of Kyoto, it houses a shopping mall, a hotel, theaters, and a big Department Store.

At the second day, I along with some friends went to Osaka. We were accompanied by a friend from Malaysia. The trip started with a visit to the Osaka Castle. Osaka castle is surrounded by an enormous garden, including a long pedestrian, assorted garden and also there is nice boulevard and playground. We also went to Dotonbori, a very famous commercial street and food street, and having lunch at the Thai restaurant. After that, we went to Universal Studios and Hard Rock Cafe Osaka. Before we returned to Kyoto we also went to Kaiyukan Aquarium, is an aquarium located in the ward of Minato in Osaka, Japan, near Osaka Bay. It is one of the largest public aquariums in the world.

### Seminar 3 : OVOP (October 8<sup>th</sup> 2012)



This is one of my favorite seminars, because I learn many things here. I know that the importance of community-driven regional development, rather than dependence on assistance from central governments. I had a chance to learn the famous OVOP from Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. OVOP is about how to promote the innovative, creative local products/services based on potential resources, uniqueness, value added and environment friendly.

Later, I got some trips to from Professor Fumihiko Adachi about ecotourism in Oita prefecture. Another remarks from the seminar is if we want to explore the ecotourism we have to consider the contradictive between nature conservation and increase many tourists. There are 3 main principles, which is think globally and act locally, independence and creativity, fostering human resources.

### Seminar 4 : Japanese Culture/Move to Suzuka (October 9<sup>th</sup> 2012)

This seminar was presented by Professor Patricia Fisher. We had a chance to share something that really impressed us in Japan, and my choice is Kimono. I think Kimono is one of the most beautiful dressed in the world. When someone wears Kimono, look very elegant.

After lunch, we went to visit Tenryuji temple and Okochi-sanso villa. By explore this two sites, I had a chance to feel and see the beauty and dynamics of Japanese architecture and horticulture.





### Self Development Activity (October 10<sup>th</sup> 2012)

Home sweet home!!! Suzuka is like my second home now. After a week we stay in Kyoto, now I'm back to the nice and lovely city. This is our free day. I went to go the city by bicycle with my friends and then at the afternoon we meet four new male participants from Japan. We went to bowling center and playing wonderful games.

### Group Study : Ecotourism @ Suzuka (October 11<sup>th</sup> – October 12<sup>th</sup> 2012)

In this group study activities, we had two days to discuss our next project beautiful Pandin Lake, Philippines. The uniqueness of Pandin Lake, was formed by a unique process called phreatic eruption, an oligotrophic lake which has an area of 20.5ha and max depth of 63m deep where humans and nature can live together in harmony and also SMLP organization that supports women-paddled bamboo raft.



Our mission for Pandin Lake is preservation of the women centered-community that has been passed down through generations, preservation of culture (“bayanihan”) and its wisdom, preservation of the oligotrophic environment, protection from threat of privatization that has recently emerged and providing alternative employment to the community. The motto of our project is Safe the Water, Safe the Woman and Safe the Earth.



### Mid Term Sharing Session (October 12<sup>th</sup> 2012)

Tomo-san is back!!! Yes, we surprised with the mid term sharing session is delivered by our energetic sensei Tomoko Seki. The objectives of these activities are midterm reflection and sharing the idea about how to manage your conflict. The goal of conflict resolution is to use conflict for its constructive and

positive aspects, not its destructive ones.

There are three conflict resolutions which is first, having a conflict is a normal and natural part of life. Without conflict, there is no growth or progress. Second, conflict is not a contest. Winning in a conflict means getting what you want or what you need. Third, there is no one way that is the right way to handle all conflict. In conflict resolution we aim for what is called the win-win solution.





### Home Stay (October 13<sup>th</sup> – October 14<sup>th</sup> 2012)

My host family is a friendly couple with 1 son and 1 daughter. The father's name is Takehiro, the mother's is Naomi, the son's is Takahiro and the daughter's is Nana. At the first day, they took me to their Hippo Family Club. It is a multi language club. The underlying concept is that anyone, at any age, can acquire new languages, given a conducive setting for language acquisition. Hippo Family Club members get together in community-based clubs at least once a week for interactive activities. Members that feel confident recite what they feel they can from the recordings, even if the sounds are not accurate, and even if they don't exactly know what they are saying; the goal is simply to get a feel for the language sounds and tones of voice. Members play games, sing songs, dance, and speak with each other in the various languages they are learning. Through interaction with friends and family of all ages that participate, members absorb both new sounds and important context.

After that, they take me to their beautiful house. It's made by wood and it is really amazing. We had a welcoming party at night with their Hippo Family members, and I cooked nasi goreng for them. It is one of Indonesian favorite food. Beside that, they also teach me how to make sushi. It was a very nice experience for me.

At the morning, Naomi also teach me how to bake a cake. We make a roll bake. This is another wonderful experience for me after Moko-moku farm trip. Then before we go out, Takehiro cook a noodle for our lunch. We plan to have a lunch at the Takahiro sport ground while watching baseball game. Then while we waiting his son practice his running lesson, we went to the Suzuka Museum of Traditional Crafts. I learn and try about Ise Katagami, the art of stencil cutting. Beside that, I can see the famous Suzuka sumi ink. Then afternoon, we went back to their house, and they teach me again for making a sushi. After dinner, Naomi had a dance lesson with Nagato-san and I have a chance to try the shi bu and saw kem bu, a nice dance with katana swords.

They took me back to IATSS Forum at 10pm after taking me around the trip for two days and allowing me to sleep at their wonderful house for one silence and peaceful night. I will always remember their hospitality. I love them as my own family. I will never forget their kindness. One priceless lesson that I learnt from my host family was how sincere they were in welcoming me as a part of their family even though only for 2 days and 1 night. Their sincerity showed me the true colors of Japanese Way of Life in honoring the guests and treated them in the most appropriate ways.

### Seminar 5 : NGO (October 15<sup>th</sup> 2012)



Professor Michio Ito, President ACC21, share his valuable experiences to all the participants. We can learn so many think from disaster response in Tohoku, March 2011 last year. In this seminar, we also learn about the definition Non Government Organization (NGO), Civil Voluntary Organization (CVO) and Civil Society Organization (CSO). Each country also had a chance to share their information about the disaster response in

their own country by local CVO or NGO and their collaboration with the government in each country. From this seminar, I can learn and understand about the current situation in Tohoku, that devastated by the earthquake and tsunami. Another learning point that I got from this seminar is : Learning is important, but taking action is more important.

#### Seminar 6 : Transportation (October 17<sup>th</sup> 2012)

This seminar is different than the others, because at the first we have a chance to experience and observe urban buses and pedestrian malls in Nagoya. Before that, we saw a beautiful Oasis 21, a modern architecture bus terminal in Nagoya. Oasis 21 has aimed to be an earth-friendly landscape, not to be a burden on the earth, with the making the most use of the power of nature. They have many uniqueness about this building which is they use a high top roof and let natural lightning into basement area, the roof is filled with water that can mitigate radiant heat to the basement, reuse rainwater and make use of well water and use many concrete so can reduce the wood to protect from tropical forest issue.



We had a chance to try a Key Route Bus system (Kikan Bus), Guideway Bus system and Subway Train. Key Route Bus system uses separate bus lanes in the middle of the roads as a similar system to tramways. Therefore this exclusive bus lane might provide an effective solution to the increase of level services of the bus system. Another system is Guideway Bus, which uses curb-guided bus technology. This system applies mechanical track guidance by derivation of drive-guiding wheel attached to vehicles and guiding rail attached on the elevated track. Elevated track is completely separated from the road. Therefore buses are able to run at high operational speed and also punctuality is one of the advantages of this elevated track.

#### Group Study : Intermediate Presentation (October 18<sup>th</sup> 2012)



Each group had a chance to deliver the presentation about their own project in front of Mr. Tomoo Arakawa (My Ticket Inc.). My group B tried to deliver a presentation on an ecotourism project that is Pandin Lake Philippines. We would like to promote cultural and natural environmental conservation by letting tourists know their values and the importance, and local genuine attractiveness, under cooperation with the local community. We would like to make a good environment where both tourists and local residents treasure and enjoy local nature and culture as they are. We realize that this ecotourism project proposal is far from perfect expectations. Therefore we expect all suggestions and input from the participants, and also Mr. Arakawa based on his valuable experience.

Some remarks that we got from this session are about security and safety concerns, privatization issue, itinerary program, risk assessment management and explore the resources to find a new uniqueness and best attractiveness to the tourist.

### Cultural Exchange Day (October 21<sup>st</sup> 2012)

The Cultural Exchange Day, the biggest event at the 49<sup>th</sup> batch IATSS Forum finally comes. It was the loveliest day in the whole program. I and my partner were given a chance to introduce one of the dances called Tor-tor, North Sumatera, Indonesia. Our turn was the participation dance. It was very smashing moment because I impressed lots of Japanese audience. Lots of them were watching our dance enthusiastically. At the auction, I and my participants brings the handy traditional wooden craft from Bali.



At this event, we was also given chance to introduce Indonesia through country booth with my co-participants. We were working together side by side preparing our booth in interesting ways by using lots of things given by the previous batch and Indonesian Embassy from Tokyo.

### Tour of STEC/Honda Suzuka Factory (October 24<sup>th</sup> 2012)



It was a very amazing tour. I get the opportunity to learn how to drive properly and safely from the Suzuka Training Education Center. In addition I also get the practice on the field directly assisted by experienced instructors how your way of doing good and safe braking.

After that I also get a valuable opportunity to see and feel the atmosphere of the Suzuka circuit. It is fabulous. I really did not expect to be in one of the best circuits in the world, where the drivers are always competing here.

The next visit to Honda Suzuka factory was another valuable experience for me. We were given very interesting presentation about Honda history and the effort in environmental protection. Honda Suzuka factory has undertaken many initiatives meant to reduce carbon footprint. One of these initiatives is the use of co-generation plant in its factory to generate electricity. Another initiative was the use of solar panels within the factory. Due to the heavy usage of compressed air in the factory, the company took up a project to increase the efficiency of the air compressor by modifying two components on it. We were told that they were about 100.000 trees planted around the factory which could absorb 800 tons of CO2 per annum, and the idea of planting the trees came from the founder of the Honda, Mr. Soichiro Honda. The trip to Honda Suzuka factory was really fruitful for me. It was encouraging to see the commitment of Honda to becoming a Green Factory and making various initiatives to achieve the goals.

### Seminar 7 : Education (October 25<sup>th</sup> 2012)





It was a very wonderful seminar for me. Lead by a very well experiences Professor Yuto Kitamura. I was very satisfied from the entire lecture given by him. He gave us a very clear and understanding about education in Japan and particular ASEAN countries.

There are four pillars of education (by UNESCO) which are learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Learning to know implies learning how to learn by developing one's concentration, memory skills and ability to think. Learning to do is concerned less with the acquisition of structured knowledge than with the mastery of learning tools. Learning to live together addresses the critical skills that are essential for a better life in a context where there is no discrimination and all have equal opportunity to develop themselves and to contribute to the well-being of their families and communities. Learning to be is the complete fulfillment of man, in all the richness of his personality, the complexity of his forms of expression and his various commitments - as individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques and creative dreamer'.

Before lunch, we got some sharing information about education in Cambodia, Singapore and Thailand. Then, after lunch we have a very unique group discussion. We divided into three groups, and every group member play different role in each group. The roles are Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, President of Public School, President of Private School, President of Company, Lecturer and Student. My role as a Minister of Finance and we discussed about education in Singapore. The challenge we face is number of university places that available, different range of courses and shortage of financial supports.

#### Seminar 8 : Economics (October 26<sup>th</sup> 2012)



This is the second seminar with Prof. Fumihiko Adachi. I get a lot of information about the economy in ASEAN countries particularly Laos, Myanmar and Singapore. I also learn about Japanese Economy: Rise and Decline of Modern Japan. In term of modernization, Japan has failed in two challenges and facing third challenge now. First Challenge, between 1854 until 1954, after opening the country, Japan tried to build rich and strong nation under the threat of colonization by Western powers. In the second challenge, war devastated Japan started their reconstruction effort as an ally of Western free nations. Through achieving miraculous economic growth, Japan became the second largest economy after the United States. And in the third challenge, enduring the

protracted period of stagnation, Japan is facing unprecedented aging society coupled with the aftermath of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant melt down.

#### Move to Tokyo/Visit to Headquarter of IATSS (October 30<sup>th</sup> 2012)

I got a chance to visit the IATSS headquarters in Tokyo and met with the staff. I also learned a lot about IATSS history and background. The guiding principle of IATSS is to promote the development of the ideal transportation system by the prompt undertaking of traffic and safety-related research activities, hosting of research conferences, active



support of publicity and publication activities, and bestowing awards and grants for transportation-related research, education and other activities. The goal is contributing to the realization of an ideal mobile society featuring interdisciplinary and international activities for the practical and farsighted output. IATSS Forum is one of the activities, with the aim of helping foreign countries to create an ideal mobile society. Main study area in IATSS Forum is related to Traffic and Transportation, Science and Technology, Industrial Management, Social Structure, Education and Culture and Modern Japanese History. Total number participants are 852 participants, as per November 2012. The most valuable lesson I learned from the words of IATSS founder, Mr. Soichiro Honda, is ***“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall”***.

#### Seminar 9 : Disaster Reconstruction (October 31<sup>st</sup> 2012)



We have a chance to meet Mr. Kazuyuki Usuzawa. He is one of the survivors of the earthquake and tsunami in Otsuchi, on March 11, 2011. He shared his experiences to all of us. He was a very brave man and a very kind person. He tried to help people especially children to have better future. He has a very noble project to bring orphans children from Aceh, Indonesia, who was also victims of the earthquake and tsunami in December 2004, to come to Otsuchi and meet with their friends to share their stories and experiences. For his services, he received an award from the Indonesian Government. The lesson that I learned from him is never give up on the situation. Keep trying and eager to get out from the crisis and an issue to make it better.

#### Tour of Tokyo Traffic Control Center (November 1<sup>st</sup> 2012)

Another impressive experience is visiting Tokyo Traffic Control Center. I learned that, the traffic control center has one of the important roles to establish the environmental-friendly traffic society by traffic safety and smooth. One of the advantages points of traffic control center is to control the traffic signals and information boards depending on traffic flows in order to make traffic congestion relief. The relief of traffic congestive makes the number of stops and the amount of the exhaust gas and noise by cars decreased. It contributes to the establishment of human-friendly environment. The relief and provision of traffic congestion prevent traffic accidents by frustrated drivers and also the smoothing traffic flow makes travel time and fuel consumption less, with can improves and enhances energy efficiency.



#### Seminar 10 : Enterprise Strategies (November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012)



We were invited to the Family Mart head office and have lecturer there. Family Mart is a convenience store that was genuinely born and raised in Japan. The number of stores, as per September 2012, reached about 21,360 including area franchising stores. They opened a new store in Jakarta, Indonesia last month. Convenience store grew rapidly in Japan. All of the usual Japanese convenience store goods such as basic grocery items, magazines, manga, soft drinks, alcoholic drinks like sake, nikuman fried chicken, onigiri,

and bento are available. I learned many things from this seminar especially the concept of the Family Mart where they are really focused to provide excellent services to their loyal customers. With their motto "Family Mart, Where You Are One of the Family" it creates a comfortable feeling for the customer while they are shopping.

#### Seminar 11 : Technology Department (November 5<sup>th</sup> 2012)

This is the last seminar, I had the opportunity to visit directly to Honda headquarters in Tokyo. First we were showed to the appearance of ASIMO, the genius robot. It was a very rewarding experience for me to see ASIMO in action. After that, I also get lessons from Mr. Satoshi Shigemi, Large Project Leader of ASIMO Development Project from Honda R & D Co, Ltd. Honda began developing humanoid robots in the 1980s, including several prototypes that preceded ASIMO. It was the company's goal to create a walking robot which could not only adapt and interact in human situations, but also improve the quality of life. Before it was launched officially on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2000, ASIMO has gone through several stages. First in 1986, they try to make it walk with the principles of bipedal walking. From 1987 until 1991, how does it walk by achieving dynamic bipedal walking. Between 1991 to 1993, they try to making it walking stably by developing stable walking techniques. And from 1993-1997 they making it more human towards a totally independent human-like robot.

ASIMO has the ability to recognize moving objects, postures, gestures, its surrounding environment, sounds and faces, which enables it to interact with humans. The robot can detect the movements of multiple objects by using visual information captured by two camera "eyes" in its head and also determine distance and direction. This feature allows ASIMO to follow a person, or face him or her when approached. The robot interprets voice commands and human hand movements, enabling it to recognize when a handshake is offered or when a person waves or points, and then respond accordingly.





## It's true; Thinking and Learning Together!



**Irma Marfilla Situmorang (Fella)**  
**Indonesia**



### **Surprisingly...**

My first impression when I arrived in Japan was like “Wow, surprisingly”!!! and I did it almost all the time for the first two weeks in Japan. The warm welcoming from the IATSS staff especially when they were waving their hands to and lined up in the entrance gate of IATSS office with smiley face. It was my first time to feel like this, to be honest!

Other impression was after our arrival we didn't have much time to take a rest directly because the staff had provided us our schedule for that day (September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at around 11.00 am).

And It made me surprised again...at the time I thought that “ *oh my gosh, I just arrived and now I must attend my class for this program...I still want to enjoy my arrival in Japan and just lay down my body in my new room for these 2 months ahead.*” But now I realized that it is one of Japanese culture, they don't use to waste time even it's just a small thing. They are very discipline to what they expect to do. First, I was a little bit overwhelmed for this punctuality. Now, I do realize that all Japanese people are punctual! And all that IATSS does is very useful to prepare a good leader in the next future.



### **“Enriching knowledge through the seminar”**

#### **Political System**

In this seminar we heard about political system from Lao, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Even they were the main presenters but other countries also had chance to share about this topic in their countries. Each country has their own system to run their rules.



This topic became most interesting, because at this moment we also discussed about the influence of China in Southeast Asia and Japan. After hearing all information and ideas, I've learned that we have to against money, and use our intelligent and new ideas to settle down the peace of the world. Of course, ASEAN and Japan need young men-power to find good solution on developing strategies and trying to make every factor being settle down. Even, China is powerful, but lets to appreciate our original country. It's very

importance; even we do collaboration with other countries.

### **Environment and Sustainable Asia**

Indonesia was the one of presenter for this seminar other than Malaysia and The Philippines. This topic is one of the hottest topics around the world. And the previous meeting was RIO+20 Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Talking about environment, we discussed much about the renewable energy. Especially for Southeast Asia, they are facing due to utilization of renewable energy. Even the government has made regulation for this, but there's still lacking of implementation in fact. Such in the Philippines, I was surprised that the electricity is organized by private company.



Compare with Indonesia and Malaysia, it uses to be organized by the government. The Philippines has used the renewable energy to generate the electricity by wind power. It's caused of they have many islands and also typhoon always happened every year. Malaysia also promote using solar power, especially if a company wants to construct the building, they have to install line of electricity using solar. So, they can save energy. It is still ongoing in Malaysia. According to my opinion that government has to controlled and implement all

the policies that they made to save energy and promote the utilization of renewable energy. In Indonesia, renewable energy is less popular than fossil fuel. Even we have many resources can be developed, but socialization and promotion to the citizen and also to the company which consumes most energy are still poor.

### **OVOP**

We were in Kyoto when we attended this seminar. It also quiet interesting topic. One Village, One Product; each country has its product to be known with their uniqueness. But, the problem that we're facing now is the sustainability of the product.



Because many young people especially from the rural area, choose to go out from their village for schooling and working, and they don't have enough chance to improve and train themselves to develop their unique product. They expect high salary if they work in the city (study case from Thailand). There are also parents who ask their children to go out from the village for the better education (study case from the Philippines). That's way people who do "*woven binakol clothes*" are most elderly. Government has tried to solve this problem through the

curriculum in school.

## Japanese Aesthetics



In this seminar, I've learned that Japanese has high aesthetic. I realized it from every temple, shrine, house, tea ceremony, and the garden.

They can express themselves through such as those things. For me, I'm not quiet good to have essence about the art and the beauty. But in this seminar explained: "everything is beautiful and has its own meaning". That's all according to our point of view to see something.

## NGO

Capacity of Government has limitation to tackle all the problems. The roles of Non-



Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Non-Profit Organizations (NPO), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Peoples' Organizations (POs) and many more to help society and government through-out that problems. Those are as voluntary organization; help community and without profit. During the time, it is also one of parts who brought the globalization other than Business Company, religion, and NGO people. The main problem of NGO sustainability is; dependence of fund from civil, donor, grant.

## Transportation: Urban Buses and Pedestrian Mall

I was very amazed to see the transportation system in Nagoya, especially OASIS 21. Yes, it's like in airport. Not only the amazing transportation system but also the huge and high technology building was more impressed me.

Observing the transportation system by experiencing was very helpful to know about urban transportation. Every type of transportation is punctual. The schedule of subway, JR, and bus are provided well, the payment system also has helped passengers. All information is provided well, so we don't need to be worried if using the transportation system like this. The government and private company worked together to set up this system. It took more than 10 years to finish this project. The government also has contributed to create pedestrian mall which near with the station. It was purposed to pedestrians to have space and enjoy the



atmosphere around the mall. Many stores were provided to make this area become interesting, but in fact only a few pedestrian come to this place. After doing observation with my group members, in architecture side this place is nice but the stores that provided were look old and the environment also lack of decoration and not well-organized.



## Education; Roles of Higher Education in Asian Countries



Talking about education is not only about cognitive skills (need to prove by testing) but also include non-cognitive skills (no need test). Issue in Japan is there are MONSTER PARENTS who always complain to teachers at schools, and parents blame teachers. Not many parents in fact have these two skills to understand about education. The autonomy of university without subsidized from government has made universities must organize and look

for their own fund by themselves. It has made education not only as public good (benefit to community) as well but as public goods (as commodity to sell). In this seminar, I've learned that university has to be responsible to the university. It means collaboration to improve their quality and management. Opportunity that given to university on organizing the education program must be run well and not only to produce money.

## Economics: Understanding the modernization of Japan

Economics situation is always made as an indicator to the success of one country. We studied from 3 countries about their economic development; Lao, Myanmar, and Singapore. We told

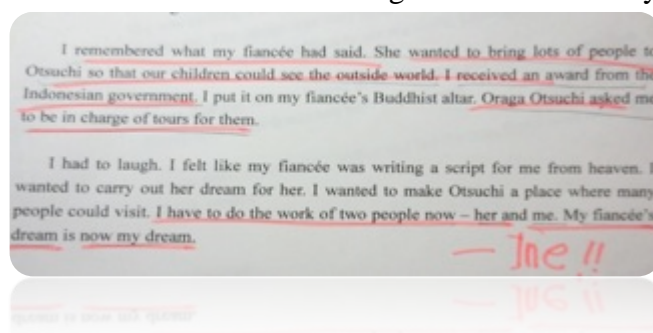


this topic more detail by using SWOT analysis on group discussion. My impression in seminar when I heard that there's no debit card or credit card in

Myanmar. The government doesn't allow all banks to make it real. It's Wow!!! After asking Myanmar' participants, they always take cash money. If they want to pay in large amount they will transfer it manually from the bank. From those 3 countries, of course China is the most widely planted in economic sector. Even in Japan, I saw that many products are sold out there with label "made in China".

## Disaster Reconstruction

I got fruitful information regarding recovery/reconstruction in great east Japan earthquake. My country also has ever faced the great tsunami in 2004, and it took long time to do reconstruction and recovery. But Japan seems to be more responsive to repair it, especially on reconstruction. Beside that, I also learned how Japan assists community for emotional recovery. Many people lost their jobs and of course government gave them subsidy to survive, but it's only for house reconstructions. According to the Mr. Kazayuki information that Otsuchi is most elderly. The youth move to the big city because recently were available; as a



populated by people chose to for seeking jobs only a few jobs fisherman. In

discussion session, we all realized that to overcome and to reduce the impact of disaster it needs support from all parts, especially policy and regulation from government to provide information about disaster mitigation. It will be done well when community has awareness of it and know what to do when disaster comes. In this meeting I was impressed of witness and sharing of Kazayuki Usuzawa (one of the victims in Tsunami disaster in Otsuchi), my tears fell down to hearing his love story. His fiancée was one of the victims at the time and they won't be able to meet again because she has gone to heaven.... But his fiancée dream becomes his motivation to wake up and develop Otsuchi as a touring place. And it's still running now! Awesome!!

## Enterprise Strategies



Family mart is one of the biggest convenience stores in Japan. I can find it easily here. This seminar was quite interesting, we were given time to observe one of family mart store next to the seminar venue and exactly we got free shopping about ¥ 1.000 ☺. We heard about the famous place and product in 9 countries that often bought by many people when they go to convenience

store. During the seminar, I didn't learn much because it's just sharing information and opinions for family mart. But, one thing that I grabbed from this seminar that among the many stores in Japan and almost everywhere can be found but the family mart remain the best option for consumers. According to them that service is the key point to their uniqueness not the price!

## Technology Development



ASIMO!!! Advanced, Step in, Innovative, Mobility. Yeah...it was my first time to see the smart robot, called Asimo. I only ever heard only the name and the story.... In this seminar, Honda staff explained us how can they created that robot. The vision of Asimo is towards living in harmony with people. It took over 10 years to make it much better, and even now they are also still doing research for this robotic. I was wondering why they created robot? Here, I got the answer... to provide people with joy through development of ingenious product at a reasonable price. The idea of creating this robot is make

impossible became possible. Asimo is like human, can talk and walk. Yeah, first time it was like a dream.... So far, Asimo often uses to help people on serving the customers. Talking about technology, on group discussion we were discussing about what is to imagine what would we like to see as the most significant change to make living better. Everyone gave a lot of ideas, even it looked ridiculous, but Fun and Interesting! One thing that I learnt; don't stop dreaming, because it may happen start from a dream. Like this quote; *"A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality."* — **John Lennon**. And Honda's motto; the power of dreams! And now they made it real, ASIMO is only one of the proofs.

## **“Shaped character and leader skill through the Group Discussion”**



Many things that I've done during the GS process, each person has different potential. It made the circumstances was dynamic and fruitful. Conflict and different ideas were often faced, but those were like small part that shaped us but have big impact to run our discussion. I saw that every member in each GS tried to do their best and made their ecotourism project is the best. During the process, we knew immediately our objective and that has brought us to be a tough, thinking broadly, and realized that “we can make the best by sharing ideas, learning, and solving it together”.

## **Explore the beauty of Japan on Individual Days; Kyoto and Tokyo**

### **Part 1: Kyoto**

At the first time we arrived, I almost lost my dinner with other participants. Because when I went down to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Super Hotel, I didn't find anyone there. I tried to go out in the entrance gate, and also I didn't find anyone there, except pedestrians. *Oh my goodness!!! Am I dreaming? I admitted I was late for 5 minutes and no one call my room.* But, luckily...3 heroes came to pick me up (Budi, Akira-san, and BS). They knocked my room, and my expression was so surprised, happy and almost crying (a bit ☺). Then we went to the restaurant near by our hotel for having dinner.

My experience in Kyoto was amazing! I went out to accomplish my plan days alone. First, I didn't feel comfortable because I cannot speak Japanese. But, information about the place and the transportation are provided well. I went to Kinkaku-ji, Ninna-ji, Nijo-jo, Ryoan-ji, Ginkaku-ji, Toji temple, Gion, Heian-jingu Shrine, and Kyoto Hadicraft Center. I really enjoy my two days to discover those places. Kyoto is very rich of Japanese culture. Actually, all places have similarity because those are temples. But each place is wonderful. I shouldn't worry to go there, because I could access all easily.

### **Part 2: Tokyo**

Again, I did similar thing in Tokyo. I woke up late on the first day, two alarms didn't work at all.... I just woke after Allene called me. Unfortunately, other participants went to the seminar venue first then Akira-san, the hero on that day picked me up again while Allene also waited me. The seminar venue was luckily close to our hotel Marroad Inn Akasaka (10 minutes by walking). Even so, I was so sorry to Akira-san, and promise we'll not do it again (at the time I was like a kid to ask forgiveness while bowing down to Akira-san) and I felt guilty to myself, all participants, and especially IATSS staffs although, finally I attended the seminar on time. I thought that it was disaster, like our topic on that day...about “disaster reconstruction” :p.

Discovering Tokyo for two days was a very tough situation. Because the circumstance is so different when we're in Kyoto. Especially, for the transportation (JR and subway)! I felt that time run out most on the way. Because I have to walk from Line to another Line...and then



of course from station to all my destinations were reached by walking. It made time fly so fast...I couldn't accomplish all my plans. I only went to Shibuya, Harajuku, Ueno, Asakusa, Odaiba (I went here by using the new water bus...so exciting!), Kamakura, China Town, Tokyo Sky Tree, and Tokyo Tower. I skipped to go to Shinjuku...☺. Even so, I really enjoyed my plan days in Tokyo...its crowded population, the cold atmosphere, and the colorful lights accompanied my journey there!!



Overall, I do enjoy my individual plans day...but I preferred to use bus transportation in Kyoto then JR or Subway in Tokyo...☺. And I'm thankful because IATSS Forum gave us time to explore Kyoto and Tokyo by ourselves, and it's a very good idea, indeed....

### **Do I grow up during this Forum????**

My answer is absolutely YES! During my time in IATSS Forum, I obtained a lot of things. I take a look back again what are my objectives in this program. Yeah, now I can say that my communication skills and interpersonal skills were growing here. I learnt so much, how to deal with people and time. The punctuality of Japanese people realized me that discipline is very important on doing something. It helps me much to manage and to run all my activities here. To be honest, I felt overwhelmed at the first time.



But it pushed me to make it all real. Those assignments and the hectic schedule really made me growing up to be more responsible on something. And I appreciate and more be proud of myself that I could run through all these. Exhausted, lack of sleep, laugh, and overwhelmed in dealing with many activities has accompanied my experience as process of growing up. Seminar, Group Study, Study Tour, Individual Plan Day, and Self Development Activity that have been given in this forum is really helpful to achieve and to discover myself even more. I realized my English is not good enough to communicate with other participants, but here I found the place to improve it. We make it better together with my Southeast Asia' friends! Even sometimes, we found difficulties to communicate with each other, but during the time we make it better and better. Especially in group discussion and group study, it pushed me, how to deliver my idea to every topic given. And It has helped me so much!! Beside that, in this forum I learnt how to be a good leader. IATSS Forum has given me opportunity how to lead seminar, group discussion, and other events like Culture Exchange Day. The responsibility has drove me to sharpen and to improve my leadership skills. Even, it's like a

small thing, but I do believe It will help me on doing my job after coming back from Japan, for sure!!

### Closing

Here, I convey my big thanks to IATSS Forum, especially to all staff (Akira-san, Kossy, Sachi, Mariko, Mayumi, and Midori). You all did such a great efforts for our improvements during this program. Now, I'm thinking that I have to share all what I got here to all people and prove it to my job, so the world can see how IATSS forum impacts to my success life in the future. Before I came to Japan and attended this forum, I was thinking; "will I get what I look for in this forum?". Now, I can save bravely. Exactly Yes!! Keep running this IATSS forum to others young people in ASEAN countries. Ganbattene and Arigatou gozaimasu!!!



*"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." — H. Jackson Brown Jr., P.S. I Love You*

## **My destination is Japan, IATSS Forum is my choice!**



**Sompauthana LAKHAISY (Arthur)**  
**Lao PDR**



I can't seem to find the right words to express my feelings about the wonderful challenge that was spending 55- days in Japan. It was such a golden chance for me to open my eyes to the wide world and the real world with high technology and full facilities here in Japan.

### **I. Arrival**

I was really excited on my travel. When the plane was getting close to the destination, Japan Nagoya Chubu Centrair, a flight attendant announced the preparation for landing. I looked out the airplane window and saw a nice view of Nagoya. Chubu airport is located beside the ocean and it is such a beautiful airport. After my co-participants and I cleared the immigration, I was very glad to meet Mr. Akira HAGA; the General Manager of the IATSS Forum. He was waiting there to greet us at the airport. He kept smiling and taking photos of us from behind. After everything was done at the airport, we moved to Suzuka by bus. It was about 1.5 hours. Unfortunately, there was no drinking water in the bus and most of participants were sleeping, but I was still awake because of my excitement to see Japan again. I arrived at the IATSS office and I felt really happy to see all IATSS staff standing in front of



the building to welcome all of us.

### **II. Orientation**

After we put our luggage in the hotel rooms completely, orientation was given by IATSS staff about the necessary daily life activities at the SUZUKA circuit hotel, rules of 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum 2012 and what we have to do during the program. For the first time, I was confused and misunderstood the information. However, there were good friends and excellent staff in the IATSS forum, so that they helped me. At the same time, we also had an official



self-introduction officially. Eventually, we got to know each other a little bit on the way to SUZUKA. And now it is time to start our new life here at IATSS Forum.



### III. Bicycle Safety Training

Bicycles are usually used for outdoor activity. Unfortunately, the weather was very bad and it rained for three straight days. So we had bicycle safety training at the seminar hall. Most of the participants were able to ride a bicycle well, just only two of us couldn't ride a bicycle. Even though you can ride a bicycle well in your country, I think you need to learn how to ride a bicycle when you come to Japan. Because the rules for riding bicycles in Japan is very strict, and every bicycle is made with the modern design.



### IV. Gasshuku team-Building

I really liked all of the activities in Gasshuku team-building and I hope that everyone agree with me. I was not feeling tired at all for three days. It was full of fun and I enjoyed the good lesson activities. There were many learning points in almost all activities. For example, getting to know and remembering the names of each other, teamwork, leadership skills, good communication skills and trust building exercises through games. There were tasks that challenged our brains and also physical activities. For me, the game I liked the most was the "Spider Web." This game was taking all team



members from one side to the other side of the web without touching the web within a limited time. In this activity, we needed to use teamwork by supporting and helping each other, making a plan then implementing it in a short time. The important point that we could learn

was to be flexible in our decision making, especially when we encounter failures in our tasks. We had to re-look into the problems and find alternatives to complete the task. In addition, the main points were solidarity, teamwork, love and care, and to deepen the understanding among the team as participants of the 49<sup>th</sup> batch.

## V. Opening Ceremony

This was the time to present myself as well as my national customs and my country Lao (PDR) to other ASEAN countries and Japan. I was so excited because I had to introduce myself in Japanese in front of a hundred people and especially the VIP guests such Mr. Yasuhei Oguchi, the chairman of IATSS, and other governors as well as representatives from the embassy of the ASEAN countries. However I did quite well in speaking Japanese after I had practiced for two days.



On this day, IATSS also invited the host families to the opening ceremony, it was a good chance for us to meet and greet our host families for the first time before we had our homestay. Most of the host families attended the ceremony, but it was unlucky for me, my host family did not come on that day. I supposed that they must have been busy for work, so I missed them on that day. However, on the homestay day, they came to pick me up and treated me well.

## VI. Facilitation Skill Training



Facilitation skill training was conducted by Ms. Keiko TSUBAKI (Managing Director, Global Network of Facilitators). She was full of knowledge and experience and was very confident and active. Her topic was very attractive to me because it is related to my current job. Usually I am a training facilitator in my office but I have never learned or received training about facilitation before. Here, only the IATSS Forum offers an opportunity to

learn with the real methods and the real practice (learn to know and learn to be) from the excellent Japanese professor. This training gave me great information, experience and skills. It was such a fruitful and useful experience for me and my organization. From learning through this training, I gained a lot of knowledge. For examples:

- The facilitators should keep in mind to be a good listener and respect other ideas.
- People are capable, and want to do the best thing.
- Working in groups (Brain storming) must be better and more effective than working alone.

- Helping each other among the team members to assess their needs and create plans to meet them.
- Success of the group must be bigger than successful by one.
- Giving processes that help members use their time efficiently, in order to make high-quality decisions
- Guiding group discussions and trying to keep on the track.
- Time keeper, motivate, open, feedback, leadership, compromise, communication skill, emotional intelligence, etc.
- Everyone's opinion is of equal value, regardless of rank or position.
- People are more committed to the ideas and plans that they have helped to create.
- Participants can and will act responsibly in assuming true accountability for their decisions
- Groups can manage their own conflict, behaviors and relationships if they are given the right tools and training.
- The process, if it is well designed and honestly applied, it can be trusted to achieve results.

**The best tool of facilitator is:**

- |                   |                    |                                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| - Staying neutral | - Staying on track | - Giving and receiving feedback |
| - Listen actively | - Paraphrasing     | - Providing summaries           |
| - Ask questions   | - Synthesize ideas | - Park it (complete or stop)    |

**Best and Worst Facilitator Practice (Some examples for best practice)**

- Create and open and trusting atmosphere
- Speak in simple and direct language
- Make sure every session ends with clear steps for the next meeting
- End on a positive and optimistic note

**VII. Japanese Cultural Introduction Day**

It was a great time to learn to know and understand about Japanese culture and traditions.

It was such a very nice experience and good opportunity to see the reality. For instance, the tea ceremony was very neat, and it requires a lot of attention to do it. The Kimono dresses are very beautiful and unique and are the national custom of Japan. It was a good chance to approach and touch a real one, especially to see the way of wearing traditional Japanese



clothes. The Yukata is also a nice dress and easy to wear, both men and women wear one at the ceremonies and some performances. This time in Japan, I was very lucky to have had an opportunity to wear a Yukata. I feel relaxed when I have a Yukata on. I took a lot of photos and then posted them to my Facebook, a lot of friends and cousins around the world commented on my post as "You look very Japanese". A part from that, on Japanese



cultural introduction day there were also many Japanese activities and games presented to us, it is such a happy time and full of Japanese cultural and traditional experiences. I had fun and enjoyed it a lot.

### **VIII. Seminars (Thinking, learning and sharing together)**

The Seminar is the main objective of the IATSS Forum program, this year we had an eleven seminar syllabus including: Political System (Our lives and Politics), Environment and Sustainable Asia, OVOP (One Village One Product ), Japanese Culture (Japanese Aesthetics), Japanese Citizens' Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries, Transportation (Urban buses and pedestrian mall), Education, Economics (Understanding the modernization process of Japan), Disaster reconstruction, Enterprise Strategies (Convenience Stores "FamilyMart"), and Japanese high-technology (Honda humanoid robot "ASIMO"). All the seminars were excellent and very interesting. But let me share a few of seminars syllabus that I was impressed by the most. The First is Transportation (Urban buses and pedestrian mall): A lot of the conversations were easy to understand because I could approach and reach to the real situation also deal with the problem and understand by myself.



Second is the enterprise strategies (Convenience Stores "FamilyMart"): It is good idea to ask all the participants to present one item that you would like to buy or eat the most, and one place that you would really like to visit. As for me, the item that I selected was the "Lao fruit yogurt" and the place to visit was "Chao Anouvong Park." A part from that, during the seminar the FamilyMart also gave us a value card for 1000 yen for role playing as a customer to shop at FamilyMart for lunch and other things. So, the seminar learning outcome was more effective than the others.

### **IX. Home Stay**

Thank you very much to my host family who gave me the wonderful home to call my own for that time. Two days and one night was such a short time that we have shared each other. However, it was a very wonderful time for all of us to learn and share together. From that experience, I found that the general life styles for all of us are almost the same.

My host family consists of parents with three daughters and one rabbit. The youngest daughter has already been married and has two children and lives in another new house, just two daughters are living with the parents. Unfortunately, the older sister had gone to another prefecture for work for that weekend. So, just only the middle daughter stayed at home with the parents, all of them took care of me very well. On the first day, we went to the beach together by bicycles with mum and a sister then came back home for a dinner. On the second day, dad, mum and sister took me to a restaurant for lunch, and then we went to museums. After that, we went to visit their youngest daughter's new house and we walked sightseeing

around the village, finally all of us go to have dinner in restaurant then come back home to get my bag and take me to the IATSS Forum. They printed the photo that we have taken together for me with a short message “*Thank you for coming!! We enjoy time with you, we will go to Laos. See you again*” Norihiro, Masako, Maya. When we said good bye, Mum cried.



## X. Cultural Exchange Day

This year, the cultural exchange day was held on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 with the theme of traditional dance. That event, which consisted of *booths* from nine ASEAN countries, such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and



Vietnam. More than that, there are more five countries from other parts of the world such as as Brazil, China, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States of America. At the event there were many activities for example, cultural

performances (different dancing style from each country. And auction the unique item from nine ASEAN countries. With honor short opening speech formally welcomed everyone to the event by Mr. Toshio Mochida the executive director of the Mie International Exchange Foundation (MIEF). And announced the closing ceremony by Mr. Akira HAGA, the manager of IATSS Forum at 16:35pm.

- Cultural exchange day this year also consist of 10 main steps as bellow:

- |                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Welcoming remarks            | 6. Quiz (Q & A)               |
| 2. Opening speech               | 7. Country booth visit        |
| 3. Introduction of participants | 8. Announcement of auction    |
| bidders/winner                  |                               |
| 4. Charity auction              | 9. Japanese dance performance |
| 5. Dance presentation           | 10. Closing ceremony          |

## Impressions:

After working hard on preparation and rehearsal for about a month for cultural exchange day, all of us did a good job on the day of the performance in front of the audience. Some of us could not stop tears from running. Since everybody was very proud of our successful completion of this event, the cultural exchange day for this year was such a fruitful

experience. Since everybody came from different national customs, cultures and traditional, dance styles, languages and religions from 14 countries around the world, it looks like “Many colorful flowers blooming on a tree”.

## **XI. Field Visit**

This year, the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum is consist of five main fields visits including: Tours of Suzuka city hall, Suzuka police station, Moku-Moku farm, Japanese traditional stage performance “Noh” and Todai-ji temple, Suzuka circuit traffic education center, Honda Suzuka factory, Tokyo traffic control center and visit to respective embassies. All the places that I visited were so useful, interesting and exciting for me. I cannot express all the fruitful out comes from those experiences and field visits. However, I would like to share one of my experiences at the Suzuka circuit traffic education center and Honda Suzuka factory.



- Field visit on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at Suzuka circuit Traffic Education Center (STEC), we were greeted by Mr.Hisada, Director of the STEC, Mr. Tanabe and Mr.Izuhara (the training instructors). After that, Mr. Hisada started the presentation by emphasizing the fundamental principles of Honda’s traffic safety education program and the history of the STEC. The STEC was established in 1964 and this is the first facility to offer safe driving education in Japan. In 1970, the Honda driving safety promotion Centre was established when Japan experienced the highest number of fatalities. Since then Honda was involved in providing safety traffic education and the creation of safety driving courses. It also cooperated in the development of regulations related to road safety. On this field visit, the participants also had an opportunity to



drive a car at high speed and stop on the wet road. This allowed the participants to experience the anti-locking system which prevent the car from skidding dangerously. This is particularly important on wet roads. The car becomes more prone to skidding when there is the water on the road and that may result in more accidents. All participants were given

the opportunity to experience this on a wet test strip on the driving circuit. It was a little unnerving driving up to 50km/h within a matter of seconds, and stepping on the brake forcefully to bring a car to the stop immediately.

- After visiting the Suzuka Circuit, Traffic Education Center, we moved to the Honda Suzuka factory and all of us were warmly welcomed by Mr. Yamashita, and he gave us brief introduction of the program for the day which covered the outline of the Honda Company, Honda’s environmental initiatives and finally the factory tour. Honda was established in 1950s; the Honda Suzuka factory started its production in April 1960 and currently focuses on producing hybrid system products. Currently it employs about 8500 employees with 6900 permanent workers and 1600 part-time workers. I was really excited and interested in the field visit of the Honda Suzuka factory. Since this is my first time to visit the car factory such as Honda, I was really surprised as I walked through the entrance to see the production line, the robot and



workers were working together in a very quick manner, and the robot can adjust the tasks quickly and correctly.

## **XII. Individual Plan Day**

It was the time to survive by myself and to discover new things and also find new experience in Japan, eventual the individual plan day was not much and sometime raining and cold, it



was very challenging for me. As we know, Japan is a developed country with high technology, full of facilities but also still keeping the beautiful nice culture and traditions. So, I can't stop exploring new areas and find new challenging experience even though I am tired by my work or there is still something to do. Whenever I have time, I am eager to go outside and find something new to discover.

This year, the IATSS Forum has setup the individual plan day over the program two times as 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> October 2012 in Kyoto. I was so impressed by my individual plan day in Kyoto since Kyoto has a long history and this place used to be a capital city of Japan before. That is why Kyoto is rich with wonderful cultures and traditions as I can identify, there are many nice old historical temples and castles as well as houses and life styles of people in Kyoto. I almost visited the temple on my individual plan day. The most impressive temple was the Kiyomizu-dera. Officially, Otowa-san Kiyomizu-dera is an independent Buddhist temple in eastern Kyoto. The temple is part of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto UNESCO World Heritage site. And on 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012 in Tokyo, I was much more excited to see the capital city of Japan where the center of business, commercial, high technology and international organization is located, the city of fashion, night life, shopping etc. This time in Tokyo, I was really honored to visit the Lao embassy and pay a courtesy call to Mr. Thepthavone SENGMANY the first secretary. Furthermore, I enjoyed sightseeing on the water bus and after that I had a dinner with my old Japanese friends.



## **XIII. Group Study**



We were divided into three different groups for the group study with the same topic of the Eco-tour. Group A consisted of seven members as follows: Arthur, BS, Fade, Lilian, Ryuji, Sima and Tum. All of us were going well. Because everybody was easy going and friendly and we were also helping each other in everything, especially work in our group study. Our group had a lot of stories and fun; sometimes we were a bit crazy especially while taking

photos.

Furthermore, we always had a meeting and discussions outside (picnic meeting) and sometime also breakfast meeting.

From this experience I learnt a lot such as:

- More understanding of the Eco-tourism concept & eco-tour

- Learn to share (listen to opinions and knowledge)
- Learn teamwork, interpersonal and facilitation skills
- Learn to respect and care of anyone (Never leave any member behind!)
- The importance of strategic planning to be understood by everyone
- Learn how to focus on process, not only outcome
- Synergy in group is more powerful ( $1 + 1 \geq 3$ )
- Support group members to shine (not just yourself)
- The important is Solidarity, and forgive.
- 

#### **XIV. Self-Development Activity**

Even though the IATSS Forum had a tight schedule, we still had self-development activities (Free days). We could do anything and go anywhere we wanted. On the free days, I went outside to explore and discover the best of Japan with my friends sometime by myself. I had some embarrassing experiences. For example, we bought a normal train ticket but we got on an express train. Everybody said “Oh it is nice and goes very fast” and we took a few photos. Then, a train crew member came to us and asked us to show our tickets. All of us showed him the normal train tickets and he explained to us in Japanese and a little bit of English with body language as well.

We did not understand at first. Later on, we realized that train fares were different. We had to pay more; we thought that we will be charged the additional train fares.

We took money out from the bag to pay more to a train crew member, but he said No! He showed us the price is double. He recommended us to change the train at the next station. Finally, we dealt with it and got off that train to catch the right one.



#### **XV. Conclusion**

Japan is my destination; the IATSS Forum is my choice! Japan is a wonderful land and the destination of many people around the world. This is because, Japan is a developed country with high technology and a lot of facilities. In addition, Japan is full of beautiful culture and tradition and has old long history, people are also developed and generous and full of spirit and cities are very clean. Japan is a country that is practical ruled tightly, has stable politics, and strong economics. So, my destination is Japan. The IATSS Forum was my choice because IATSS Forum is an international training institute to nurture talented people from ASEAN countries. Their goal is to bring them to Japan for a broad range of seminars, field studies, group studies, and cultural exchanges under the common theme, Thinking and Learning Together.

During 55-days of the IATSS Forum, it was such a wonderful time for me to gain new knowledge and good experiences, making friends as well as opening my eyes to the wide

world. This program is fruitful, with many excellent lessons to learn, to know, to learn to be and learn to enjoy. In the 55- days of the IATSS Forum, I suppose I have learned to know how live with other people, learned to know what is going on around the society, learned to know how to survive by myself, learned to know other cultures and traditions also life styles. Furthermore, I suppose that I have learned to be a good facilitator, listener, follower, leader, organizer, and time keeper and lastly learned to enjoy myself. I suppose that I enjoyed my stay during the 55-days of the IATSS Forum in Japan. I enjoyed my new experience and my life. All of these lessons cannot be counted. It was such an invaluable experience for me to continue living forward with this wider world view. Most importantly, I will utilize all the knowledge, skills, and experience that I have learned from the IATSS Forum in my daily life, work, organization and my country. More than that, I will distribute the lessons that I have gained from this program to my friends, colleagues, and next new generation.

To share my personal idea, I suppose that I achieved my goal. Since the IATSS Forum provided me a lot of excellence knowledge, challenging experiences, wonderful events, and very nice memories and also invaluable lessons more than I expected, I would never refuse to harvest them. Today, the IATSS Forum has changed me a lot in positive ways such as being more confident, daring to show my ideas and giving some comments and providing some suggestion to friends and group study, more understanding about social life and social networking, and a deeper understanding about ASEAN countries and Japan. Additionally, the IATSS forum experience pushed me to think bigger and better, and also urged me to do many things in my home town after I got back to my country (such as improving my work, life style and doing a small business). So, I can strongly say that the IATSS forum has shaped me a lot.

Finally, please let me express my sincere thanks to Mr. Akira HAGA, the manager of the IATSS Forum and all of the IATSS staff members, professors, volunteers, my host family, and other sectors that relate to this program for giving me the good opportunity to join the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum 2012.

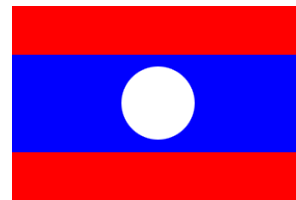




## **Memorable and Exciting Moments in Japan**



**Phetyasone Xaypanya (Phet)**  
**Laos**



Time has gone by so fast during my stay in Japan. I can't believe it! Oh, it has been almost 55 days I am having fun with other participants from nine Asian countries and Japan, "Thinking and Learning together". I am speechless about the amazing moments in Japan. I have found lots of useful weapons that can be applied in my future life. Thousands of concrete examples and lessons have been noted in my mind; of course, the IATSS Forum is important, to connect and supply us with an opportunity to do a great deal of networking with participants from Asian countries as well as Japanese participants. This is also shaping us to have wider visions

### **Feelings before departure and on arrival at the IATSS forum**

After a long time waiting, it was almost 1 year before the departure day which was a very long year. In fact I was very busy at that time but the time still moved quickly. And it took a bit more time in a day. My mind was always thinking about the modern and high tech cities and such kinds of the big new things I was expecting to see. Of course, it was really exiting on the day of my arrival. I couldn't believe that I was already in Japan, I asked myself "Am I here in Japan? "Am I already landing in my dream country?" There were so many questions that came to my mind and then I discovered all the answers to the questions after all.

We had the warmest welcome from Mr. Akira Haga, the General Manager at the airport at around 8 o'clock local time in Japan and took a group photo and we got on the bus to the IATSS Forum. I was very sleepy because I could not sleep on the airplane. But I was so excited to see the new things in Japan; so I was not feeling sleepy at all on the way to the IATSS Forum. Later on, again it was another big warm welcome from the IATSS staff which gave me a more comfortable feeling like that we are not strangers, we could communicate with them, we could see their smiles and of course it was great moment at starting point of the forum.



## Orientation and Bicycle Riding

In the afternoon we had a brief introduction to the IATSS Forum and the program overview was given at the seminar hall. Aside from short speech introduction; several funny games were used to get to know each other more and make closer friends for the next 55-days. We enjoyed learning and thinking together in the forum. The afternoon session ended by talking, gathering information, and interviewing new friends in the cafeteria.



The day after, it was another exciting day; having more information about the forum and how the previous forums were done for a short lesson. And the bicycle training, there was

something we have to know for the next 55-days in Japan, even though I had lots of experience in riding a bicycle. Riding bicycles in Japan seems to be serious because the rules here are quite different from our country especially the punishment for someone who breaks the rules. The systems are very unique and much more organized than our country. In the evening, the welcome dinner was prepared by the hospitality chef for IATSS forum participants. At that moment, we were warmly greeted by the restaurant and hotel staff, hotel manager and chefs who were taking care of our breakfast, lunch and dinner. Our hearts were filled with gladness. Furthermore, some of the IATSS association members joined and they were having more conversation with Japanese people.



## Amazing Gasshuku and Facilitation Skills Training

Tomo san is my first favorite trainer in Japan, who is always active but cheerful, funny at sometimes and very professional in a team building capacity. Of course, if we talk about Gasshuku, we never forget about our first great Japanese life style experience here in 3 days and 2 nights which will always remembered deeply in my heart. The training is about how to build successful teamwork. As the participants would stay together in 55-days and do activities together, then knowing and learning about each other, I believe it is a must. I never knew any of them. How could a stranger work together and even collaborate on something with other strangers? Here come the challenges. This training is a very meaningful program, which has been well-prepared by the IATSS Staff and Ms. Tomo. I never thought that it would be very interesting, since I have never followed any kind of program like this before. I was amazed how games could really impact my way of thinking directly. However, when the group members were becoming larger, the challenges were getting bigger as well. A group consisting of a pair is totally different from a group consisting of many members. With the same rule hands and feet ticking together, what is a possible way to lift all the bodies at the same time?

We keep thinking to find possible solution in every game and encouraging each other and we did that in almost every occasion, even after Gasshuku. I found team-building games are a fun way to develop cohesiveness. They tear down walls in communications, provide avenues that encourage discussions and increase productivity. Team building takes time, but in the end results are well worth the extra time. It is an ongoing process that boosts commitment.



The last day at Gasshuku was spent on designing a team motto and logo which required a lot of participation and creativity. Through many activities, we realized that it is necessary to put a lot of effort on working together as a team effectively that would require a lot of cooperation, and more importantly, putting the team's goals before ours. And finally, we established our motto "Balancing for sustainability" which match to our batch group study for the ecotourism project.

Keiko san was a facilitator of Facilitation Skills Training. I liked her facilitation skills. She created a friendly safe environment for us to get involved in her activities. I learned about the differences between a facilitator and a 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.

### **IATSS Forum Opening Ceremony**

The most exciting thing about it was to introduce ourselves in Japanese. I was so nervous when speaking Japanese for the first time in front of honorable guests at the quite formal ceremony. At the same day, it was a big surprise when one of Japanese people came close to me and asked if I was from Laos and so sure saying that I am special guest for his family in the next few weeks for a home stay experience. After all, hundreds of conversations were made up between us and other Japanese volunteers were also meet and got to know some more Japanese culture in overview.





## Seminar Lesson Learning

The first seminar was started on Sept 28, 2012, here it also excited me because we were in charge of taking respond in country presentation, to show up our political system which I am not so sure how to present our current situation but it was really good after all because the discussion was going smoothly. So, all of us had lots of chances to share and talk about political systems for each country. Since we all know that sharing is the connecting point of success and all of us have done so.



In this session 11 seminars were conducted to strengthen the participants on alternative views and visions. Participants can learn a lot through country presentations for each topic and also from the professors' lectures. Of course, we had a sharing session and a group discussion in which we could learn from each other and some of them were familiar to me already such as environmental and sustainable Asia which has us known about the regional situation and

concerns especially Asia and Japan. Besides, the country's experience facing in the past was really good chapter for other countries who have the same way going but might not have the same mistake as neighbor countries faced.

## Japanese Cultural Introduction Day



In this manner, I am highly appreciative to the Japanese volunteers as well as the IATSS staff who spent lots of their time to show us their unique culture which we can't find in other countries in the world. The program was started in the morning and went into the evening, even though that day the weather was not so good because we were hit by a typhoon, finally everything was so fine. In fact, at first I was a bit worried about the situation according to the news and the warnings given by the staff. We were supposed to have only half

day but everything was going well and I enjoyed so much with yukata, tasting many Japanese foods, watching lots of show styles and the highlight was a tea ceremony experience because we can see the patience in preparing for tea ceremony all the steps so carefully doing .

## **Suzuka City Hall and Police Station Tours**

Knowing more about the traffic safety in Japan is not something to waste, but we enjoyed learning and absorbing the lesson content. In here, I liked the most the way of teaching about safety issues. If I was a kid, I might be more excited to see it than this time because the supporting materials were really good and creative ideas. At the police station, we met the high ranking police who greeted us with a very warm heart we felt like we were safe living in Suzuka.

And then, visiting city hall was another worthwhile experience because the history about Suzuka was explained to us, as well as the current situations and weak and strong points. We also had a chance to see the Suzuka parliament and we were told another story on that. The highlight on this trip, we got a small gift as a souvenir from the Suzuka mayor. The experience of visiting Suzuka city hall became very good memory.

## **Toba Eco-tour Experience**

Toba Eco-tourism Training is one of the important components of the IATSS Forum's training courses; it was a 2-day training course including a lectured introduction from three points of view from different professional lecturers, and sightseeing for walking and local food tasting in the city. By visiting various kinds of restaurants around the Toba city, local traditional products were presented in a particular way with the uniqueness of each shop owner. Community visits help us understand the community's situation, life styles and natural resources by jumping in and touching the nature of the community and environment.



Since Toba Eco-tourism is one of the most successful business tours in Japan, there are lots of points that we could obtain during and after the 2-day experience. And the most impressive for us from even the starting point was how they come up with ideas, and to involve the community and elementary school students. It was nice shot and they must have been well-trained by any means, because what we experienced was so great and unforgettable and it is good start for those kids to be involved, and that great natural environment leaves me speechless. In addition, all the tasks were so nice especially the nice tasting food in the city tour which we all enjoyed the most.

## **Group Study (GS)**

GS was something very useful and it was a match to the term of Thinking and Learning Together. I have a good understanding of teamwork so far but I have never understood how to make it and have very good team work, because in a working group we cannot escape from conflict and various types of thinking and understanding from the group

members, basically we have different backgrounds knowledge, different visions and also come from different conditions that is why those things always occur during group discussions. In this case, we have already passed the team building and facilitating training so all of us get along well with each other in almost all situations.



This year GS is focused on eco-tourism, which all the country participants had to prepare their own project to share and select the best one which is the most matched to the project criteria. Finally for our group, we selected the one from Philippines. The project is about the lake “Pandin” which has met all the requirements such as the lake itself, community involvement and uniqueness of culture. For all of these, it is best to present the ecosystem because our goal is

to conserve the ecosystem with a big concern about nature and culture as well as to community sustainability. The work in the group went smoothly we all know our responsibilities like we have divided the main work into small parts and distributed to all the group members and had the group discussions at the appointed specific time, and our group was very mutual group members because even we have already separated the work but we then still help each other if one cannot finish and cannot reach the point. It was a very nice experience of working together as a group. Moreover, our group always finished ahead of time. That is why all the group members had a good time with each other. I really loved this GROUP.

### **Moku-Moku Farm**

On another exciting day, we had a chance to enter the complex farm called “Moku-Moku”. I am really relaxed whenever I see and know about agriculture. It is similar to our country where agriculture is based. It is an amazing story how the farm grew and owner’s patience concerning the problems in the past. It was a very good example for all of us to learn how the important chapters from another one’s experience. It came from nothing and become everything and I have to learn something from



that chapter maybe I may have a chance to apply in my hometown. The Moku-Moku farm presented their great experience like how many times their business failed before they succeeded. One thing that I realized and love is the uniqueness that they have a very good method in control their products which is quite different than I have ever seen before, because



they do not discount on their products even though their business going to fail. Finally, they are very big success on their hand.

### **Kyoto Individual Experience**



Kyoto is one of my highly selected locations since I am related to Buddhism. It is all about temples. The city was well-known by its cultural uniqueness and state of the traditional arts in various ways. The scenery of the Golden Pavilion in the pond was hard to describe into words. It was the unique picture that I longed to see. After spending some time and enjoyed the moment with lots of tourists and local students, I took a short walk around the temple and its surrounding area. I found out all the

decoration around the area were meaningful and dedicated to the Buddhism by using arts as a medium. After taking a long walk in the temple compound, I went to another attractive tourist place such as Kiyomizu Temple. The temple was very unique and astonished. After reading the history of the temple, I learned that this temple was built according to their solid faith and beliefs in Buddhism. Because of their strong faith, they overcame every obstacle successfully. I spent my time exploring the temple area and its scenery and along the way. A lot of students and families were visiting there and learning about this magnificent temple. As I strolled around the temple's neighborhood and stopped by some souvenir shops, I still had a plenty of time before going to Gion. So instead of taking a bus; I decided to walk through the old walking route to Gion area. There was a nice walking route down from Kiyomizu temple through the old alley with steps. Along the way, there were few Japanese girls dressed up as a Maiko. Unknowingly, the girls made the town so lively and created the colorful atmosphere for old town which was perfect combination especially when the old-fashioned rickshaw passed by. I spent my extra time exploring any other places which was not in my original plan such as Heian Shrine and Yasaka Shrine and ended up with window-shopping at Gion area and watched a cultural show at Gion corner.

### **Cultural Exchange Day (CED)**

Cultural exchange day is the most difficult challenge for me because I have never had any show dance performance in my life, and the big problem is we did not have time to practice. A few days before the CED, I was a bit nervous. It seemed like our dance did not show any significant improvement from the first time. We tried hard but there were still a lot more work to do before the CED. For our group dance, we needed to get more practice. So, we practiced until midnight for two nights before the day of CED. Finally, our group also done very great job, I was so confident on the real day of the CED and I guess that all of us had the same feeling as I do.





The CED started with very serious preparation because of the limited time for preparing. The country booth was also exciting thing for me because I feel like I have done a very important thing to represent our country in front of many people from different countries especially to Japanese people. The program started after lunch around 1:00 pm with the warm welcome to the guests and introduction of the participants to the audiences. It was somehow like all of us felt very proud at the

moment. This year was a bit different than other years because the performance was held outside in front of Suzuka Media Park. Many people were out there for shopping on weekends. Some people stopped to watch our performance or joined us and dance together. Since the theme of this year is dance performance, then we separated into two parts, for the first part we have show dances and second part we have participate dances which the audience can enjoy traditional dances from various countries including Japan. As the highlight of this event, we danced to the Japanese song music for closing ceremony which is full of meaning for both Japanese and all participants. I guess that all of us will remember this song and never forget that feelings forever.

### **Education and Economy Seminars**

It was quite a broad topic and it is hard for us to explain. Since, economic is everything; we need to explain well and understand all the economic sectors, it is harder if we want to talk about the successes and failures regarding the factors like political issues, education, agriculture and finance including international impacts. The seminars were very useful because all participants had to present their own country's situation. We also learnt from the lecture regarding Japanese economic experience given by Japanese professors. Aside from that, the Q&A session was also useful since all participants had varieties of views on the issue and tried our best to share by asking question and some recommendation for each country. What was really worth it was that that professor gave us very nice and useful comments on what we have presented regarding our situation in our home countries.



### **Tokyo Trip**

One-week experience in Tokyo was the great opportunity to see such a kind of high-tech and modern city. Besides enjoying seeing the new things there, the seminars and site visits such as the IATSS Forum and Honda headquarters are very interesting, and it is really nice to see. Moreover, double individual plan days were unforgettable moments that we could find something by ourselves in such difficult environment. For example, at first I was very scared riding the train in Tokyo but for we have used to and have more information on that, the entire thing was easy and very comfortable in using. A brief explanation would be as follows:

- The IATSS Forum head quarter was the first place we visited in Tokyo. We got a warm welcome from General Project Manager, Secretarial and all staff members. They were in our mind and I was very proud on that time. The history and statistics of the IATSS Forum together with profound partnership with Honda company as a main supporter have been presented and it was useful session that we were able to know about the journal publication as an international journal partnership by the IATSS Forum which can be an advantage to all who who love doing research and study on transportation safety.
- Visiting of the Honda main office was also a great moment to meet ASIMO and absorb more from technology as well as the overall processes of the ASIMO project's strategy. In addition, the lecture and group discussion were also helpful for us to build some imagination of future technology for each country. For the sharing session, it surprised me because this was the first time that I had ever dreamed about something far away from reality. But I really hope that my dream about modern and very safe transportation will turn into a reality. Hopefully, I will have a chance to see myself using it in the future.
- The seminar on natural disasters is the one that we learned a lot from, especially from the story of local victims who have faced a real tsunami situation. I was interested in this lecture because the professor showed us several case studies of disasters as well as from the different country environment. For group discussions, we were divided into three different islands (groups) and had a different kind of disaster for each island and we tried our best to overcome and had a great deal with those disasters. Each group has come up with very nice conclusions and useful ideas on how to deal with the disaster problems.
- The FamilyMart study was one of the useful seminars in the way of creating, managing, and adapting based on environment situation. Sharing famous products from each country was another experience in a different society. Of course, FamilyMart from Japanese styles was always helpful for SME owners and some people who want to have his/her own business. Since the Q & A session was about the strategy, some of techniques lead to come up with very great idea for us to understand the business.
- Individual plan days were great and the most memorable for me because I have found lots of things in this large, modern and orderly city which we could remark that one time in life we have done something challenging and interesting.



## IATSS Forum as a Worth Experience 😊

Since IATSS forum is the first and only one complex training workshop I have attended, there were lots of impressions regarding the 55-day experience starting from the



beginning of the program. These were team building, being a great facilitator and other professional skills were presented to me. In here, we were not only to study about the subjects but also everything surrounding us because the purpose of this forum is not only to introduce the technical subject seminars but also something related to the human living conditions such as culture, living styles, problems as well as the success. The theme of Thinking and Learning Together is a very appropriate slogan because we were here in Suzuka not only learning from the professors but also learning from our fellow friends the country participants. Aside from that, in order to reach the successful point, we need to have everything turned in a punctual way and one could not succeed without another one's help. Therefore, all the segments of one thing are important we could not miss any of them and in terms of success and failure, any result must be the same situation for all its parts. For example, if we work as a team, the result can be win or fail together for all team members. Moreover, leadership improvement is provided here at the IATSS Forum. Because if we want to do or control something, that means we need to know something in detail through this kind of training. That is why I use the term of COMPLEX TRAINING WORKSHOP here ☺

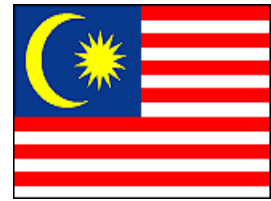
# THANK YOU



## Learn, Experience, Discover Myself, Discover the World!



**Atiqah Johari (Achika)**  
**Malaysia**



*~ 55 days almost came to an end; how time flies on a jet plane. It was as if we had our Gasshuku training just yesterday. Part of me wants to stay here; learn, think, laugh and experience more, but the other part of me longs to be back home. I am not too sure of the detailed expectations that I had for IATSS forum before I came, but what I know is that this program exceeded my overall expectations in so many ways, especially the hospitality of every single Japanese person I met during my stay here. ~*

The motto “Thinking and learning together” certainly describes me during my stay in IATSS Forum. Almost every single aspect of the course was about doing things as a group, if not just in a pair of twos or threes. We had to trust, depend and rely on each other to achieve results. We came together from different countries from very different backgrounds. After spending 55 days with them, I realized that we are different in some ways, but still the same.



### **Learning**

I am rather an introvert and usually it would take months to bring me out of my shell, but somehow the Gasshuku did break the ice very effectively. I was actively participating almost immediately, and that was thanks to each and every single participant as everyone was eager to involve, play a part and share with others. The “what has shaped me” presentation briefly told us where everyone was coming from. In a very short time, we learnt about each and every 18 participant from 9 countries and created very unique bonds that have helped us face the ups and downs of the remaining days in IATSS forum.



To me, the highlight of this forum was definitely the facilitation skills session. As a senior auditor in a private practice firm, I lead my team regularly in assigned jobs thus using facilitation skills every single day. However, the session with Professor Tsubaki was something completely new to me.

The session started out just like any other session would – defining facilitation and its tools, what facilitators do and what they believe in, their roles etc. But after that, we were divided into groups and had a role play training on one major facilitation skill : active listening. Only



after the exercise did I understand the power of body language, actions and reactions in attentive listening.

Following that, we had several other team building / problem solving exercises and rotated the facilitator role between team members. All my life, I have participated in this kind of activities for countless times – straw building making, trust walk, etc; but what is focused on during this session was the process and not the outcome (i.e. the facilitation skill of each individual). In a group,

we observed and evaluated each others' skills in our group and immediately gave comments, positive and constructive ones.



For the first time in my life, I got to know that I am somewhat impatient when facilitating a group. I needed to collect more facts before making any conclusions or decisions, and that I should encourage the ones who are more passive in the group to speak out their ideas. I should also look and analyze the situation first, before trying to solve or reach the goal.

After that, we took on the observer and evaluator seat, where we watched and analyzed the facilitation skills of other groups (i.e. instead of taking on two roles at the same time, as the discussion group member and observer at the same time). Through this activity, I learnt about the many different facilitation styles.

The most valuable lesson to me after this activity was this: "In any group discussion or team work, as much as the role of the facilitator is very important, the team members' role and attitude are also equally important in accomplishing and reaching the goal." Based on all these feedbacks, I immediately tried to apply them throughout my stay in IATSS forum, especially during the group study work and discussions and as the coordinator of Cultural Exchange Day.





## Experiencing

Eco Tourism is the main theme for the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum, so our group study work during the 55 days here revolves around this subject. This topic is something very foreign to me, as I have never participated in any tour packages, let alone an eco-tourism program. I have travelled to several countries outside Malaysia, however, they were all individually arranged in small groups, either with my family or friends.



Hands-on training for eco-tourism in Toba was an eye opening experience for me not just for the topic, but it was also the first trip we made outside Suzuka city. We were first introduced to “Kaito Yumin Club” (KYC), a local tourist agency supporting eco-tourism. Following that, we were guided by elementary school students, where part of their curriculum was to interact with foreigners to improved their communication and interpersonal skills. I was awed by this fact, and even more so when being able to experience one of the best

eco-tours Japan can offer. I too was impressed by how all the stakeholders of Toba city are able to come together to one understanding that is to make Toba a real eco-tourism site.

The visit to Moku-moku farm was a complete new experience too. I have never set foot in a pig farm before and never thought I would one day. In Malaysia, I have never known of any pig farms which are open to the public and I highly doubt any of them is nearly as clean as the Moku-moku farm. We walked around the farm, baked some buns with pumpkin filling and explored the area. Aside from that we learnt about the basics of a sustainable business, where it is a win-win situation for the company, community and also the environment.



Based on the brief experience we had in Toba and Moku-moku farm, we had to come up with our own eco-tour during the group study and research time allocated. Since each participant had brought one resource from their country and the difficult phase was to choose which project to work on. Throughout the whole forum, I realized that choosing one consensus option in a group is very much harder than the brainstorming phase.

I tried my best to listen to the minority opinions and understand them. Each and every single one of us had different ideas, some of them were bizarre and at some other times they were just not applicable to the situation. We had many opportunities to experience and improve our imaginative skills, and at the same time reflect on the ideas generated whether they are feasible and practical solutions to the implement the project we have planned.

The time frame given to us in accomplishing the tasks were almost impossible. Throughout the program, we all had to think on our feet as the time allocated for group discussions were very limited. For a countless times in different activities, I squeezed my brains for ideas

which I never knew were there. At times I was also surprised at myself and our team that we could come with such out of the box but realistic ideas.

Each of us also had a number of opportunities to experience speaking in front of a crowd. Although I would still shiver right before talking (even as simple as giving introduction before each seminar begins), due to the many experiences I have had during the forum, I am now a little more confident in speaking to a large audience.

During the visit to STEC, we learnt about safety driving. Back at home, I drive my car every single day to work and to all other places but have never thought of the safety issues in driving. We experienced night time driving simulation and the safety issues concerned in a HD wide screen. At STEC, we experienced driving a car that simulated a dangerous situation; but in a very safe manner. Each and every one of the drivers tried to hit emergency brakes in the proper and correct way. The experience was something that can never be forgotten!



### Discovering myself

During the initial stage after arriving at IATSS forum, I had an inner conflict – whether to take up responsibilities, leave my comfort zone and challenge myself, or just to sit back and have fun. I decided on the former, because as we were reminded so countless times, this program is an experiential learning platform. So what is there for me to lose if I try?

Being a volunteer for various organizations at various times, I have always been involved in the event coordination, but I have never been in the shoes of the main coordinator. Being the main coordinator representing the IATSS participants was something new to me. In addition, as the main coordinator, I had the chance to speak live on radio at Suzuka Voice FM.



First of all, the theme itself (Traditional Dances of the World) was a challenge to me. I have never ever participated in any sort of dance performance in my life, nor do I have any interest in this subject and it has never crossed my mind that one day I will perform in a public space. When my co-participant and I first received the CED theme, we decided on the simplest traditional dance Malaysia could offer. But after the tentative program was decided, we each had to choose

and involve ourselves in other countries' dance too. I've always thought that I do not have a single streak of dancing skill in me. I was nowhere near to becoming a professional dancer after the CED was finally over, but I now know that my hand leg coordination skills are not hopeless after all.



We had exactly one month to prepare for the CED event from the day I volunteered to become the coordinator, in between all the other seminars, field trips, group study, country presentations, reports that we had to prepare for. To have a productive meeting with the CIRS, we made sure that everything on the agenda were those concerning the CIRS. Anything that should be decided just among participants had to be discussed at other times. Time was very limited and we had to hold our meetings at night.

I had to hold the meetings, and prepare everything else in between. It was not encouraging when some participants just spaced out during the discussion. When asked for suggestions, they remain quiet. When asked for opinions, they neither say they agree nor they disagree. Some just had these words plastered across their face “Can we end the meeting already? I need my rest”. It seemed like only half of us were interested in the discussion. Halfway through the preparation, I felt de-motivated.

Fortunately we had a mid-term sharing session with Tomo-San, our Gasshuku instructor. It was high time that we re-evaluate ourselves and motivate ourselves again. I found myself stressed out with the CED preparation, so during the objectives re-evaluation, I told myself to take it easy. We also had post-it note sharing, and from the feedback we received, I decided that we should try our very best not to have any CED meetings at night. Only individual country dance rehearsals should be done, if any. I felt that the air was much lighter after that, even though it may have been just me feeling that way.



All along the way, I did rely on each division coordinator and had to trust them to do a good job. Initially I was worried about some of the division areas, but I had no choice but to facilitate what I could, and leave the rest on them. I learnt to trust.

The assistant coordinator and I had different styles of working and although we were on good terms, I did not ask for much help from her and she did not offer it herself either. Instead, I asked for assistance and opinions from my close co-participants. However, when the event date was nearing, I had so many things on my plate and she insisted that she be of help, so I was able to ease my load. I realized that although different people have different styles, we can successfully work together to achieve a common goal.

A lot of times during the forum, we were reminded that majority ideas are not always the best ideas. In many instances during our discussions, I realize that if I listen carefully and understand others’ ideas, there are so many brilliant ideas out there that can be benefited from.



A lot of times, I tend to be biased and not wanting to listen to those who do not seem to actively participate in a discussion. Especially during the CED meetings and group study work, I noticed that should this continue to be my attitude, I will lose out on many exceptional ideas and thoughts. I started to be more conscious of this matter and tried to listen to different ideas and fully understand the explanation, before making any conclusions.



Throughout the 55 days, language has also been a challenge for me. I consider myself as a relatively fluent English speaker although English is not my first language, as I have been attending an English-medium school since small. All my life, when there is a need to use English as a medium of communication, every single person involved is familiar with the usage of the language. But this has not been the case here in Japan.



Due to our different backgrounds, we each have different levels of exposure to English language. I found it very hard to understand others' explanation of ideas, facts or opinions. I was also aware that part of the reason why a lot of times some of us seem to space out is because we don't fully understand what is being presented, due to language barrier. Some participants also commented that some of the words that I use were too difficult. At the end of the day, we were able to grasp the meaning and context of what is being delivered, but only after a long hard thinking process. This therefore delays information exchange during the discussions. The only solution I found to this is being patient, and keeping the eagerness to learn from others.

### **Discovering the world**

The seminars we attended varied in subjects, from seminars on politics to technology, from transportation to NGOs. They all thought me in different ways, especially during the times when each of us shared the situation of related subjects in our countries and had an interactive discussion. The phrase "In my country" became really popular, and turned out to be somewhat funny at some point. In addition to the seminars, we too had field study trips made to Honda Factory, STEC on safety, Tokyo Traffic Control Centre etc.

We also had a seminar specifically discussing on Japanese Aesthetics. I selected "Furoshiki bags" as the most interesting thing in Japanese aesthetics, as I find it very unique. In Japan, a simple square cloth can be folded into many different ways, and be used as many different

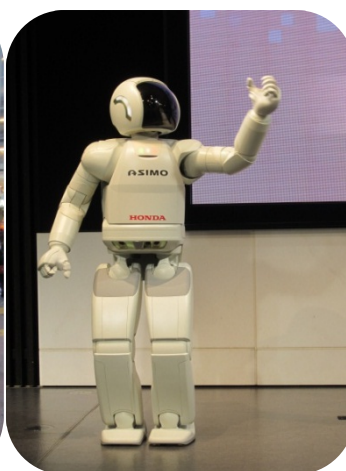
types of bag. I realized that this reflected the culture of most Japanese people, as they are able to use the same resource or situation as others but the outcome and results are much more outstanding and amazing. I believe that the nearest example I could find to this was the Kobe and Tohoku disaster recovery. The green factory effort by Honda factories reflected this culture too.

Looking at Japanese aesthetics in a bigger picture, I discovered many beautiful sceneries and buildings which are dated back to many centuries ago. On my individual plan day in Kyoto, I was impressed by how Japan maintain and preserve their unique culture, despite the modernization of the country and being one of the strongest player in the world.

There were many different shrines, temples and castles and other cultural sites preserved for the future generations. At first, I was very impressed by this. However, during the Tohoku Disaster Response seminar, we learnt about the conflict over land - between preserving the cultural heritage and rebuilding homes and lives of the people affected by the tsunami. It seemed that the laws and regulations were on the side of the cultural artifacts and not for the thousands of people who lost their loved ones and their homes, living in the Japan today.



Tokyo on the other hand was almost totally the opposite of Kyoto, a city so modern with very limited space, jam-packed with people walking in every corner of the street. I was impressed with the transportation system in Tokyo especially with the train system; it was rather complicated for a foreigner but the whole system was well managed. The Tokyo Metro line alone accommodated 6.3 million passengers daily, based on the 2010 statistics. Some trains were 200 meters long that I was not able to see both ends of the train even if I stood in the middle of the station!





We also had the chance of visiting the Tokyo Traffic Center Headquarters, where the local government monitors the automated system for reducing the traffic during peak hours. In addition, they are also able to manually control the traffic lights in every single road in Tokyo to ensure minimal traffic jams and reroute the traffic should any accidents or road constructions take place.



Throughout my stay in IATSS forum, I had many experience in dealing with Japanese people, in addition to the IATSS staff. All the seminar lecturers were Japanese except for only one, all the people we met during the study trips, excursions and site visits were Japanese and the IATSS volunteers were all Japanese! This was something foreign to me, as I come from a multi-racial country.



The one thing I notice Japanese people have in common is their exceptional hospitality. Prior to coming to Japan, I was already impressed by how the IATSS staff were preparing for our stay in Suzuka. Meeting them face to face and working with them everyday made me even more impressed with their culture of politeness.

The IATSS volunteers' warm welcome made us feel special during the Japanese Cultural Introduction day. The people we met during our travel to the many places were ever so kind and thoughtful.

During the two day one night homestay program, I was accepted by a senior couple who was living with their two grandchildren. Japan is a country of aging population, and I was able to experience a very brief daily life of this couple. Although in their 70s, Tokuhei-san and Masako-san are very strong and physically active. Each of them played a voluntary role in the society, either busy coordinating events, gardening in the front yard to harvest for fruits sent to the needy people, attending meetings with the local community or simply surfing the net to stay connected with people from all over the country and the world. I aspire to be like them one day, that is to never stop giving back to the society.



Throughout the forum, I tried to note on how the IATSS staff acted as the facilitators who facilitated our facilitation training. I noted that in many situations, especially relating to our group discussions and decisions, the IATSS staff tried to leave it to us as much as possible. From this, I discovered that in human development, it is best for each individual to see for themselves, instead of spoon feeding them in every possible manner.

Just as how Mr. Arakawa mentioned during the Nepal eco-tourism role play, a mother of a chicken would gently click the outer of a chicken egg, to encourage its hatching and allow time and nature to take its own course. However, should the



chicken click harder than it should and be impatient, the egg would crack and it is something that cannot be undone.

During the education seminar facilitated by Professor Kitamura, I learnt that in this world we are living today, non-cognitive skills is just as important as cognitive skills, if not even more. I realized that IATSS forum program is one of the golden opportunities I had in my life, to improve my non-cognitive and soft skills. The best things in this world like love, friendship and experience cannot be materially measured and calculated. I understood that although what we learnt during the forum cannot be marked and quantified in any way, the non-cognitive skills we have acquired during our 55 days here can never be replaced or taken away. It was as though the Kaito Yumin Club's tagline "*Only Here, Only Now, Only For Me*" was really meant for me and my trip to Japan for the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum Program.



## **My Once in Lifetime Opportunity!**



**Rasima Rasid (Sima)**  
**Malaysia**



### **1. Any personal growth/achievement/changes since you came to Japan?**

Being an introvert, I am comfortable being in my comfort zone. I enjoy doing things by myself or with those who are close to me. Meeting and communicating with new people was not something that I look forward to. My biggest hurdle is my shyness and it was never easy for me to start a communication with others. In IATSS Forum, almost every new activity we would have to meet new people. This gives me the opportunity to learn to converse with other people.

However, coming to Japan has been an eye opener for me. It encourages me to challenge my weakness and move out of my comfort zone and build up my confidence level. For example, it never crossed my mind that I would be involved in the Culture Exchange Day (CED) and performed in front of a crowd. I challenge myself to be out of my comfort zone and do things that I would never do in my life before.



One noticeable thing that really amazes me is the sincerity in the way the Japanese welcomes a person. They are so happy to meet new people and their hospitality is so warm. They are very approachable and would be happy to communicate with us with their limited proficiency of spoken English. I can feel the friendliness and politeness during our interaction. A majority of the Japanese that I had met, they are eager to learn more about us and our countries. This motivates me to overcome my shyness in meeting and interacting with people.



The study group activity has given a huge impact to my personal growth. It shows me how to coordinate and motivate team mates to complete our project on time. We learned to delegate tasks and we also learn the importance of group discussion to produce exceptionally good result. There were times when we were so exhausted after a hectic activity. However, as days progress; we learn to manage our time properly.

Besides that, I strongly felt that I have gained close friendship and respect from other team members. Group A is much closer and have come along with better outcomes. It is obvious that being patient and collaborative in communication in an international setting is must have for an individual team member. During and after group discussions, I am confident that I am now more patient in discussion and can give others chances to contribute.





I have also learnt to be confident in expressing myself especially in public. I was never confident when I talk in front of other people. However, throughout the IATSS forum, I acquired the skill to express my opinion openly in any discussion or presentation.



One of the most important lessons learned is to always challenge the impossibilities in order to achieve excellency in life. I realize that nobody is perfect and nothing is impossible. We need challenges in life to perform better in our life. The mindset of continuous improvement is a must in order for personal growth.

## 2. Your new discoveries and learning (about yourself or others)?

It is remarkable that we manage to work and cooperate with each other to achieve our end results although we all came from different background and experience. We have our differences in looking on an issue from different perspectives and somehow we manage to see the logic of the individual's perspective. I learned to respect and accept the view of others. Besides that, time is very valuable and I have to stay focus and diligently carrying out my task.

From the Gasshuku training, I understand the importance of teamwork in a deeper meaning. The activity of building of square box from a rope without visual and vocal guidance has a really huge impact to me. The learning point is that in order to have a proper planning and strategy, getting the involvement of all team members from the planning stage is very crucial. Once they are involve, directly or indirectly each team member will undertake the commitment and responsibility to ensure the task is done successfully. I have also learned that we should trust others to take the leadership role with the understanding that the most important thing is to perform and achieve our goal together.



Besides that, I started to understand and realize that each participant is unique individually. The concept of panic and comfort zones during Gasshuku assisted us to be aware of the differences among and around us. With the differences and irregularities, it brings diversity to the team. Everyone has their strength and weakness. We learn to use our strength and weaknesses to perform and achieve the goal.

Another thing that I learnt from the group discussions at seminars is to come up with ideas or action plan within the limited time provided. It was amazing how all of us manage to come up with solutions by having open discussion with participants from different backgrounds. One experience that really impressed me was that in our earlier discussions, there was one participant who always gave a different viewpoint from the rest of us. At first, I thought the idea was kind of irrelevant but as it was elaborated, we understand better and make sense of it. Ever since then, I am always interested to listen and try to understand the views of other participants ever since.



One of the things that really impressed me is the Japanese work ethics. The Japanese takes great honor in carrying out their job with much dedication and passion. They ensure that every single job is done with full concentration and discipline. This can be demonstrated by the lovely IATSS staff in coordinating all the seminars and field trips without any hurdles. Every single detail of the programs was looked into and properly planned. One thing that really amazes me was the details done in coordinating a large group using the public transportation to our seminar locations in Tokyo which includes our meals. Besides that, the IATSS staffs are always there to remind us the importance of punctuality and discipline especially when attending formal events. This has really made a clear impact on me especially when I carry out my task. The key elements of duty of care, passion and pride shall be part of work practice.

Another thing that I found really interesting with the Japanese etiquette is that it is not recommended to make noise when you are in a lift or in public transportation. There is even signage in the train reminding us to switch off our hand phones and refrain from talking on phone in the train. This is to show consideration and respecting other people's space. However, it is rather uncharacteristic for us to be quiet in public as we tend to express our enjoyment and excitement openly and unaware of the noise created. Besides that, the Japanese people are also very respectful of their seniors and behave very well in public. They are very careful not to cause any shame to others and try to find win-win situations whenever possible.



### 3. What does IATSS Forum mean to you now?

IATSS motto “Learning and grow together” really has an impression to me. It teaches us that although we come from different background and culture but there are similarities in the way we think. In order to be successful, teamwork plays a major role.

Before coming to Japan to attend the IATSS forum, I was very excited and could not imagine the life changing experience that I will be exposed to. We had heard the experiences from our alumni back home but it was never the same to experience it ourselves. No words could actually describe the impact of IATSS forum to each person. The degree of the impact depends on how a situation happened and the way to address it.

My initial impression of IATSS was a forum where we will definitely learn many interesting skills and competencies. It never occurred to me that the programs also have created experience that has an indirect impact on me. The seminars and field trips are exciting activities but the actual learning derive from such activities were tremendous. To begin with, punctuality was emphasized to all of us since we arrived in Japan. Every second is money for the Japanese and hence they do not like to waste time unnecessarily. Besides that, it is not respectful to waste the time of people by not being punctual. We were taught to manage our time diligently.

To me, the forum is an outstanding education center to learn more about culture, history, lifestyles and the people of Japan and other ASEAN countries. The forum is also the information resource center as well for participants and the alumni overall. I have enjoyed such a unique and valuable interaction with fellow participants, staff and volunteers throughout the 55 days.





#### **4. Did you achieve your personal objectives?**

Before coming to Japan for IATSS forum, we were asked to identify our personal objectives that we want to achieve from this forum. I have set my personal objectives to improve my interpersonal skills as there are times I do not know how to start conversation or interact with peoples. In addition to that, I want to share my knowledge and skills with people from different back ground. Furthermore, I want to gain more knowledge and deeper understanding of other cultures and lifestyle of other countries. More importantly, I wanted to develop the confidence to express my opinion in public, able to think on my feet, make wise decision and to improve on my problem solving skills. Finally, I aim to improve my report writing skills and creative thinking.

From the above list, I am pleased that I have managed to accomplish the targets that were set. I have learned to start conversation with others especially those whom I am not familiar with. Through the conversations with other participants, I would be able to have a better understanding of their culture and lifestyle.

With the countless reports, questionnaires and articles that need to be completed throughout the forum, it has definitely improved my report writing skills and polishes my creative thinking skills.



#### **5. Any frustration/disappointment/conflicts? What did you learn from these experiences?**

Perhaps, the most meaningful lesson that I have learned comes from group study session as we were put into a groups consisting of participants from diverse background. There were some frustration and conflicts among group discussions and also during midterm sharing session of other group. I can see the repercussion of not to be a team player. Conflicts happened and cause frustration among team members. Frustrations arise as a result of no mutual understanding and consequently cause the team to fail to perform. Having gone

through the same situation in my previous workplace, it was essential for me to ensure that the same circumstance does not occurred in my group study.

Throughout our group study, there was no conflict as we emphasize the importance of team discussion and group support especially when one is left behind. There were times when we were let down by team members who do not contribute actively. However, with team spirit in mind, we are able to overcome this challenge. By rotating the role of facilitation, everyone has a fair chance to experience and practice individual's facilitation skills.

Team bonding activities are very important as we try to make the group study interesting as possible by having an imagination tour and breakfast discussion. We have learned to have self-respect, respect for people, maturity and democratic in making our group processes effective and enjoyable. We discussed issues openly with contributions from all parties before coming to a mutual agreeable decision. Language barrier may be a challenge but we learn to be patience and listen attentively.

In conclusion, I have learned that when there is conflict, we have to face them and find solutions to it in a constructive manner. Mutual understanding among team is very important to ensure the achievement of desired result.



**6. If there are specific programs that had a big impact on you, please explain how they may have influenced you.**

When I first look at the forum programs, I thought that facilitation training would be just like any other facilitation training that I had previously attended. However, after attending Ms.Tsubaki session, it gave me a new perspective of what facilitation really meant and how to implement it. Personally, my knowledge on facilitation is rather limited and has not realized its full potentials particularly the correct method to implement it.

The observation and remark activity during the facilitation activities was really effective. It identifies our strengths and weaknesses and hence the improvement to be developed. Nobody is perfect and being a good facilitator takes time and lots of practice as the saying goes “experience is the best teacher”.

One of the most important theories I recalled in Ms.Tsubaki training was that there is a marked difference between a manager and a leader. A manager is someone who manages

people but a leader is someone who brings the strength of each team member and guides the team to a success result. With this understanding I will be able to sharpen both my managerial and leadership skills which are necessary for my role and responsibility in my workplace.

In term of seminar, I was really interested in the environmental and political seminar. During the environmental seminar, I was really amaze by the Japanese commitment and concern towards the environment especially in term of renewable energy and energy efficiency after last year's Fukushima earthquake that affected the radioactive reactor. These definitely give me the ideas and input to be considered in my workplace after returning from this forum. Besides that we also had the insight of the Kyoto Protocol and the associated issues. The political seminar was interesting and inspiring for a person like me who has no serious interest in politics. However, after attending the seminar, I have a better view of other ASEAN countries political status and learn that politic does play a significant role in developing countries.



**7. Any future plans that you have? How do you want to make use of these experiences in your future?**

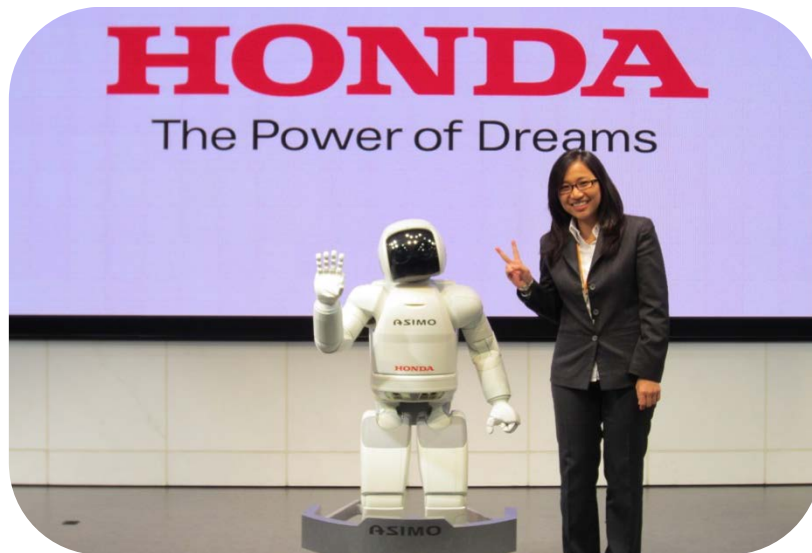
The experiences I have gained throughout this forum are memorable and remarkable. I would definitely promote and encourage others to join the IATSS Forum.

My plan is to gather my experience that I have gained here throughout the 55 days and share my learning points with my team mates. There are various insights that I have learned particularly the management and leadership skills. I look forward to apply the additional skills and competencies in my workplace and share my experience with my colleagues in my organisation when the opportunity arises.

Generally, this forum gives me the courage to carry on my new discoveries of my life journey. I am interested in learning and being part of the efforts of contributing towards a new ideals. I would definitely continue to do my part in the alumni activities and continuously learning and thinking together when I return to my country after this forum.

Last but not least, I am hoping to have an opportunity to visit Japan again in the near future. There are so much more to explore in this beautiful country.





### Appreciation

I am so grateful to be given the chance to participate in the IATSS forum. I enjoyed every moment of it that I did not realise the days passed by so fast that it has come to the end. In fact, every single minute spent here is a wonderful learning experience. In addition to that, I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to every single person who has been working very hard to make the 49<sup>th</sup> batch a success and making my dream come true. I truly wish to thank the IATSS management and team for your tireless effort, patience, sincerity, and generosity and kind hospitality. I will always cherish the memories that I had experienced during my stay here. This is definitely my educational journey to further develop my professional competencies and also enriching my personal life.



## “The door to the World”



**Myat Su Mon (Myat Su)**

**Myanmar**



### **Dream comes true..**

I couldn't sleep. I was laying the in bed, I wanted to skipped time to the next day evening just before the departure of the flight. I was anxious. I was excited. I've waited almost a year since the final screening interview was conducted last year. It was such a sweet torture to have waited for months for something I was so much looking forward to and passionate of.



I have known the forum since 2007 when I attended the seminar of IATSS alumni sharing session. Even the word “Japan” alone had caught the glimpse of my interest but then when I saw the picture of them wearing “Yukata”, seminars and their field trips with formal dresses, I was totally impressed. I knew in deep inside of me that it was the exact program I needed. The alumni were also passionate of sharing their experience in Japan, too. The forum was already in my blood from that day on. Even when I was applying other training programs or classes I take, I would keep IATSS deadline somewhere in mind.

Unfortunately, I was abroad every time the deadline for the forum was due. I tried writing essays on the airplane,



while I was



shopping, but all in vain

may be because I've never been in a situation of finishing a task within a limited time frame. I thought I could never make it in time to the deadlines. May be my tendency to the procrastination has really played hard since then. I missed the deadlines for application every year until last year when I finally made it to the application submission and also made it

straight to the final screening and got selected. I was on cloud nine! I was smiling for no reason for weeks after the final screening day.

Finally I was really heading off to Japan. I couldn't believe it yet. "I'm going to miss my mom", I said to myself. I've traveled abroad quite a number of times before. I've been on vacations, trainings or on business trips from as short as just a few days to over a month. I've studied some short course in Business Management at a university in Taiwan for two months. I've got a scholarship to Thailand for some training for ASEAN professionals of Logistics for a week. Every time I go, I come back fresh, as light as a feather. No sweat. I thought I could mingle well.

### **IATSS life.. for 55 days**

However, 55 days of life in IATSS, in Japan, is something one cannot explain in just a few paragraphs. It will be just a glimpse of some highlights of life in IATSS. After all, every moment is a treasure for me; the ups and downs, the learning and the challenges, the happiness and annoyed, the home sick, the conflict we had overcome, the dances we had in group study while we become sleepy, the laughter we shared, the pictures we took are the moments I've never imagined before. All will be the lifetime memories of my life.



### **Impressions, mixed feelings, adaption..**

For appetizer, everything was sweet. Even when waiting in transit lounge at Bangkok airport couldn't wear away my ecstasy. As I landed, I wanted to scream, "I'm in Japan!" Met with the participants from ASEAN countries at the airport. It was fun trying to spot each other and to guess who could be the participants among the passengers; we smiled at each other while we're queuing at immigration although we've never seen each other before. I was blessed to have met with such nice and smart peers of different culture and talents of which I learned from later. It never occurred to me that everything since the selection period had been setting up for the road ahead. Each of us had been already put onto the track, of learning and growing.



I didn't see anything extraordinary along the way on the bus from Nagoya to the forum in Suzuka. No big deal. We were thrilled to see the beautiful ladies from IATSS waiting for us once we got off the bus. Their warm hospitality and generous smiles made me feel at ease, at home. We were provided our green boxes along with bicycle keys and room keys after a few minutes we arrived. Everything is well organized and systematic. "Dear Japan, you're such a beauty", I kept saying in mind. I was on top of the world.



Back home, I thought I speak a good command of English and Chinese, since our business partners are foreigners and we need to conduct meetings in either English or Chinese, and some French. For the first few weeks in the forum, I felt really lost. I could not communicate effectively. The large group of peers overwhelmed me. I could not find my stand.



Most of them are smart and well trained while some of them are so calm, graceful and kind, while some people are verbose and ignorant. I was conscious and I kept analyzing myself, monitoring the process going on in me. I was happy most of the time but at the same time, I couldn't find myself and I was stressed. I couldn't find the root cause. Everything happened so fast. I even wondered why I was here. I stopped analyzing and I felt much better.



I hardly have stress in my whole life. A position in the family business awaits for me after graduation. I play piano, take whatever classes I would love to since I love learning new things, I can have leave on paid, I get into most of the programs I applied. Life has always been beautiful to me. I've never encountered to mingle with a group of people packed with strangers for more than a few hours.

There was this orientation and ice breaking activities for us once we got to the forum. We memorized all 18 people's name in a few hours through the games. The ice was broken. We were all ready to rock. Everything was well planned. Information and guidance of life in IATSS was provided in a booklet on the very first day within the few hours we arrived. I loved it. "I am gonna get trained to be in a Japanese way. Yay!" There was this orientation, facility tour, self-introduction and welcome dinner. We were taken care of big time. We were happy.



Gsshuku, a team-building training for 2 nights and 3 days at the youth center, was an amazing experience. I learned a lot of others and myself. I learned what actually is a leader or a great team, how to lead and how to play in a team.

At least, I saw people and things from different perspectives which I've never experienced before. I could feel that I was starting to peel off (or being peeled off) some of the shell from my inner self. I kept analyzing myself during the whole stay at youth center. I thought I was able to cope with new atmosphere or environment easily, I was wrong. I felt intimidated by the group of people. I noticed my competence level was down. I wanted to scream but I couldn't. I was conscious of what was happening to me. All of us were tired, busy and happy at the same time. This home-sick kind of feeling was starting in me too.



There was no word to express what kind of training that was, one has to experience it in order to know it. It was not about happiness nor sadness nor an outcome. It was more of a process of discovering yourself, your strength and weakness and to change it in a positive way if one can.

Talking of Japan I couldn't possibly skip Onsen,

The famous Japanese hot spring public bath. We were taken to Onsen and introduced the proper usage of it. It was the first time I saw women in naked walking confidently. I couldn't understand why the need of taking off all clothes. We tried next few days, and I fell in love with Onsen. With time, I began to realize the Japanese way and why they love it so much. It was such one of the nicest experiences from Japan I would never be able to forget ever. I've never known it'd be useful during my stay later.

I became to realize that Onsen is one of the scapegoats for a stressful life in Japan. Sometimes, we all were so tired from Seminars, group study, field trips, late night meetings and rehearsals, but I look forward to going to Onsen as most of the participants are looking forward to.



### **Experiences I gained..**

One of the trainings that had deep impact on me was Facilitation training. Ms. Tsubaki was such a nice and strong women. I learned a lot from the way she talked and posed while sitting, walking or even conducting the lectures as well as other participants while they're presenting. I was anxious that I couldn't express myself during the training. I was somehow intimidated. I didn't know what was wrong with me, but I felt I was being peeled off again. However, I was glad to have tested in a safe practice environment. As the lecture in the training, moment of shame was better than shame for life. I was having a hard time getting to keep up with Japanese time management although it was one of my goals even before coming to Japan. My excitements began to fade away. I felt the training was so strict. I was beginning to feel stressed.





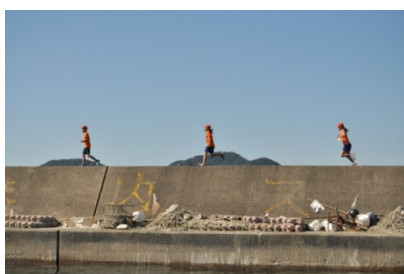
Japanese culture exchange day was one of my favorites. I was looking forward to wear Yukata since I first found out about this forum. In fact, it was more than just wearing Yukata and posed for some photos. We were able to learn what a real Japanese culture was. Volunteers were well prepared and we enjoyed a lot. We played games. Participants were thrilled to wear Yukata in a group and be a Japanese for one day.



### **I love Field Trips..**

Things were arranged nicely for us. I was thankful. I wanted to express my sincere gratitude to every bit of the things and people providing us. The accommodation, the room service, the bicycle for going around in Suzuka, the ONSEN, the swimming pool and the message, the table tennis, the generous allowance, the opening ceremony, culture exchange day, all the field trips and courtesy and plant trips, the homestay, all the food we had; the nice buffet breakfasts at “Sora Tabeyo”, yummy lunch and dinner at the cafeteria, wonderful breads and nice view of Moku-Moku farm, the feasts in Toba, the sashimi and sushi tour, the lecture at Kyoto university, all the wonderful dinners during the stay in Kyoto. I felt like we were being treated like spoiled kids.

Our first field trip was to Toba, which was a small island where one could explore the rural life of a modern country and meet the amazing kids guide. The kids really impressed me a whole lot.



Kyoto was the first big city we've visited since our arrival in Japan. It was a nice city with a mixture of modern and old temples and shrines with breathtaking scenic. I was extremely pleased when a



lecture was conducted in Kyoto University. We toured around the campus and got the feel of what the higher education atmosphere of the Japan. One of the highlights was the individual plan day. I had the change to explore Kyoto, admire its people and lifestyle as well as the transportation system. It was a lovely trip.



We learned a lot in every trip we made, but then often times we could become so tired since we jumped onto every opportunity and experience we were offered to explore. We grabbed some quick naps every now and then on every given chance.

One learning point here in Kyoto is that during lunch time on one seminar day, I sat right



beside to the manager of IATSS. He was talking to one of the participants who was already there. I didn't have any clue of what was happening but when I realized, it was too late to move to another table. I felt like I was not the one who should hear this since I was not the ones who strayed from the plan. He was kind of upset, but he still smiled when he was talking. He also emphasized what was the purpose of planning ahead and if someone didn't plan to follow the plan, then it was really a waste of time to plan in

the first place. His words were logical and I saw how and why the Japanese people plan and why they stick to it no matter what. It was more like intercultural lunch and I was really glad to learn some more of Japanese culture.

### **The growing point..**

Group study for eco-tourism started in the following weeks while we were in Kyoto. It was a headache. We couldn't get to any conclusion. We were not



going anywhere. We got stucked. The discussion didn't go smooth. Not every one voice was heard nor had the chance to participate in the group discussion. Everybody in the group was tensed. Two days wasted without any fruitful discussion. We couldn't move in the process of



brainstorming even after we got back from Kyoto to the forum. We had to trade group members from other groups. Changed the project from Myanmar to Indonesia. The Indonesia project was dropped the next



day. We were all getting anxious including IATSS staffs.

As I cannot handle the stress tactfully, everything was written on my face how upset I was with the group study project. No one was really talking in discussion apart from some participants in the group. I have a special thanks to one of the IATSS staffs, we bumped into in the ladies' then she gave a sudden brief hug and asked me if I was okay. I was so moved. I saw the other side of her, the warm and caring. She is more like a strict mother to us, and I've always felt like she might be upset with me since I couldn't express myself well during the forum. I didn't want to upset the people who had selected me for this forum but I couldn't get the stand I needed. I was so confused. I somehow see what the forum really expects from us. I was injected with the energy I needed to face the issues I had been trying to avoid, wishing it would vanish by itself.

The mid-term sharing session came in at the very right timing for most of the participants including me. Tomosan provided the tools to tackle conflicts. I was really stressed as well as a few other girls in the group. It was



a lifesaver for the group. We decided to talk out rather than avoiding the conflict. I

talked to one of the group member and we all shared our concern within the group discussion. I was also surprised to learn that we all had our own issues and difficulties in adjusting life in the forum. Finally, to be short, we managed to get one project from



Myanmar and kept focus going through. Lessons learned. Each of us somehow grew as a person and as well as a team member. Life goes on.

I am also glad to have a “moshi-moshi” group, which was formed by three group members each when we were in Gasshuku. We were sometimes allocated to sit with our moshi-moshi to catch up and give advice to each other. I am blessed to have this girl as my moshi-moshi. Although our rooms are next to each other, we don't normally stop by to catch up since we are busy almost all the time with our own assignments, deadlines and our own personal tasks to attend to.

### **My worst nightmare..**



thought I could do it, let alone just one take. I was so afraid I might make other participants in the commercial to have extra takes just because of me. We did it and the commercial

The TV commercial for Cultural Exchange Day(CED) really freaked me out. I told myself I would try since I am here to challenge myself. I posed for some socialite features in some news back in my country but not to be aired of me dancing. Looking back, I really felt like I was dreaming. I never





shooting was done in just one take. I didn't dare to look at the video clip of me dancing but at least; I managed to face something I fear to do. I've been put into situations I have to stretch out of my comfort zone. It wasn't easy, but after all I was stretching in a safe environment.



In every event we had in the forum, I grew somehow. CED was also highlight of the forum. Mariko-san and some of the participants worked really hard for the whole event to go smoothly. They liaised the whole event. Special credit to the people who put their precious time and energy into this to make things happened. We were too busy with individual assignments and deadlines but we had meetings before or after dinner for cultural exchange day. People were kind of sick with the late night meetings and mid-night dance practices for CED although we all saw how

hard the individual coordinators were working their ass off for the event. Among us, the phrase "I'm dying" became quite popular. We were literally dying. We had different kinds of rehearsals as such country-dance rehearsal, participation rehearsals of other countries and the whole group rehearsal. Everything was on time management. We had fun. We made it. Thank you everyone.

### Memories I will be taking with me back home...



I've learned a lot in every aspect we've been put into. The forum is designed to put all the participants in situations where we have to apply the knowledge and experiences each have learned so far from the forum. Everything we do in the forum has its own meaning and purpose. I've learned that there is no right or wrong answer. I've learned to respect in conflict and differences. I learned from IATSS staff and my fellow participants. One of my peer

participants always remind me that, "Remember Myat Su, learn to work with people you don't like because that is life" I also see that I need to listen attentively to my team back home and accept them for who they are. I feel like I grow somehow into adulthood after 3 decades living in this world. I was beginning to realize what the alumni had said that they were somehow reborn after the forum.

Everything in the forum is the learning point for me. I hardly talk to someone if I don't like the person or just simply space myself out if I





don't like the atmosphere. However, after I saw how my peers in the forum deal with the situations or the person they don't really like with simple smiles and calm attitude, I was really impressed. I've learned to be less judgmental. I grasped the sense that people's working style varied from one to another. I also learn to respect the difference and tackle problems in a diplomatic way. I also need space and time when I first meet someone but in IATSS, I had no choice but had to dive into the group right away since we got off the airplane and landed the famous Japan.

Life in IATSS is a unique life stage, which I know I can never experience again in my life.



Almost everything is a challenge for me. I'm kind of the person who always analyzes people's behavior and myself as well. I have an invisible boundary and limitations when interacting with people. But I didn't know it was serious issue for me until I had a difficult time overcoming when building relationship with my peers in the forum.

I am thankful that the 49<sup>th</sup> batch is really fun and people are friendly, smart, and resourceful apart from some people who ruin everyone else's happiness or peacefulness whenever or wherever they drop by. At first, I thought I was only me who has a difficult time dealing with total strangers but then later, I learned that a lot of people feel the same way towards some specific people too. I do not want to spend my energy being nagged by those people no more. This is where I learned the need to accept people for who they are and set a flexible space of my comfort zone.



I was beginning to take IATSS as my second home in Japan. Every trip to Kyoto, Toba, Nara or even Gashuku was enjoyable, but I was always happy to get back to my cozy room in IATSS to rest and chill. My room was my comfort zone but I need to stretch in order to grow. I feel I'm growing because I feel something in me is kicking all the way.

I can just go on and on if I have to write every single experience and personal growth I've ever gained in this forum. To be short, I have learned and exposed far beyond my boundaries and I must say I really enjoyed my stay here although it was a little bit rush and harsh on me sometimes. Nonetheless, I sincerely believe it is the signal that I was growing.

Time flies, in the blink of an eye, our stay here in Japan is almost over, we're now packing our stuff getting ready to go home which I am looking forward to but part of me still want to be here as I believe most of the people feel the same as well. Thank you so much Japan, the IATSS and my fellow participants who makes significant impact in my life. I am going back, but I am also packing up all the bittersweet memories and experiences, which I doubt I will ever get the chance to embrace once again in my life, with me back home.



## My chance to be new one



**Pyae Moe Kyaw (Nick)**

**Myanmar**



### **My life in IATSS (My chance to be the new one)**

When I think about of my arrival day to IATSS forum, it still like at the yesterday. Time passed very fast and now our departure day from IATSS Forum is much closed. I learn many valuable things and new idea from the forum and I understand more about of my life. Many people asked me one question before I come to Japan,

“What is IATSS Forum”. I answered them quickly IATSS Forum is the leader ship program. But now I knew it. I was wrong absolutely wrong. Now I know it, IATSS Forum is not only



the Leadership program but also the place where make a person to know his/her own weak point and change weakness to strangeness. There is a Chinese saying “If a man who know about himself is 50% win in battle before the start, If he know not only about himself but about his enemy is 100% sure to win”

Because of the forum, I know not only about what is leadership & leader but also about myself very well, I could change my weakness to strangeness because of forum. I gained more power and courage from the forum. I am sure I will be winning the future challenge of my life. Because the forum show me what do I need and How to overcome the challenge of my life.

The Seminar of IATSS Forum gave me the knowledge I need, The Group discussion life of forum teach me how to find the common ground in difference cultural background, the team activity of the forum explore me my weakness and strangeness. I feel that I become a new one after the forum. The IATSS Forum equipped me with the best weapon in order to overcome the future challenges; I am ready to go out of comfort zone. I am ready to challenge the future. There is a question what do I learn from each activity and movement of IATSS Forum. I will be present what did I learn and the best lesson I learn from each seminar and activity.



## 1. GASSHUKU (Team Building Training)

### Ms. Tomoko SEKI

Director of Seize the Moment, Seeds, She's Japan Educational Consultant  
Trainer for Project Adventure Japan (JPA)

“GASSHUKU” It changed my personality and attitude within 3 days. Team Building for the three days in Suzuka Youth Center helped me to close with other participant and concept of IATSS FORUM. All activities are focus on think together and learn together concept. We all have to work together as a team and I learned what is leadership and teamwork from all activities. I also learning the negotiation, organization skill and planning skill in GASSHUKU.



GASSHUKU provided me understanding in collaboration and difference of accountability between the individual and group work for same project.

Team Building also provides to all of us how to approach the problems. Concept of Thinking, Learning, behaving and communication together changed me to be a new man after GASSHUKU.

## 2. Seminars

### Seminar 1: Political System Our Lives and Politics

We learn and observe a lot from 3 countries presentation and comment of Prof. Yoshiharu TSUBOI. Different countries, difference political backgrounds and different thinking concepts help us to find out something in common.



We learned new concepts of the political system of Japan, ageing society and Japanese strategy of development in future from Prof. Yoshiharu TSUBOI. Problem of ageing society become main issues for developed countries like Japan.

We discussed the three titles for group discussion,

1. In light of increasing influences of china in the world, what are the roles of Southeast Asia countries?
2. What kind of challenges are there?
3. How will the raise of china influence politic in ASEAN Country?



We discussed 1 hour for three titles dividing by 3 groups. In group discussion presentation, we found out that every participant assumed that raising china is composed of good and bad for ASEAN countries especially in economics, politics, society and other sector. We all want to use rising of china as our benefit by the power of ASEAN. We all assumed resources of ASEAN region is very important for raising of China. However we all believe that all ASEAN country should be closer in future to take advantages in rising of China.

We all participants are coming from the very different fields and background, but most of us are used to stay away from politics and political discussion. But because of the Prof. Yoshiharu TSUBOI, values and virtues of IATSS forum, we understand the important of the strong power of ASEAN in the coming future. We are sure we will share our knowledge to the younger generation when we get back to our country.



## **Seminar 2**

### **Environment and Sustainable Asia**

In all these year the whole world focuses on the climate changes. All of the climate changes conferences loss the focus on the industrialized Nations which are always emitted the green house gas emissions. Rich countries always weighing the profit and loss even the whole world is in difficult situation. The environmental issues of the world are bigger by bigger under the neglect of rich countries. Blaming someone for a problem is very easy. There is sayings that “Please light the candle, instead of blaming in dark. Rich countries blame on small countries for failing the cooperation in global warming discussion. Scientists spend many years in finding answer of global warming.



Environment and Sustainable Asia emphasize on the balance between economic growth and environmental protection by studying two specific objectives as follows:

1. To provide a general overview of global environmental issues
2. To deliberate on how to proceed with economic development and environmental conservation at the same time

Environment and Sustainable Asia seminar is lecture by Professor Kazuo Matsushita, (climate change policies and environment in Kyoto University). In the seminar all participants mainly present the renewable energy of each country. I learn the understanding about of effective renewable energy plans for future Asia.

From this particular seminar, I obtained important of environmental conservation in Asia and role of human to save the world, For the peace of future generation we all have to focus on how to recover the climate changes and all countries need to cooperate together



to encounter the global warming. As the Climate change is global issues we all have to work together and solitarily in order to save the world.

### Seminar 3

#### OVOP- One Village One Product



The One Village One Product seminar is lectured by Professor Adachi. He mainly focus on OVOP of Oita Prefecture. He defined the important of land, labor, capital, marketing and local government in order to success the OVOP movement. Think globally and act locally, independence and creativity, Fostering human resources, successful story of Oita Prefecture is very legend for all countries which want to implement the OVOP project. Also Professor Adachi lectured us the

importance of agriculture sector for OVOP success. As Japan is the leading country of OVOP, Success stories of Japan spread the world and all ASEAN countries is participate in OVOP movement. Role of the local government is also important for success of OVOP. Also all local people need to work together with government officer to achieve the OVOP movement .Finally I knew that one village one product project is not only good for community but also it strongly support the environmental conservation from this seminars. I believe OVOP could create better future for local community.



### Seminar 4

#### Japanese Cultural

#### Japanese Esthetic

Japanese Esthetic seminar is lectured by Professor Patricia Fister (International research centre of Japanese Studies). Lecture of professor is focus on the

- 1) Waka poems from 12<sup>th</sup> century
- 2) Traditional food
- 3) Cherry blossoms
- 4) Irregularity/ Asymmetry
- 5) Simplicity
- 6) Preference of under at events
- 7) Woodblock paints
- 8) Playfulness
- 9) Ceramics
- 10) Gardens
- 11) Architecture



The most impressed part for me is the art of gardening. After the morning lecture time, Professor plan the study tour for participants to

- 1) Arashiyama-SaGa Area
- 2) Tenryuji(14 Century Shogun AshikaGa Takauji)
- 3) Okochi Sanso (Japanese traditional garden, architecture, build by OKOCHI DENJIRO)

Lecture of Professor Fister is composed of knowledge sharing and field study report, I think it help me to understand the Japanese culture more easily. For me Japanese Esthetic seminar is more like a open discussion with professor and other friends between the world of Japanese culture.

## **Seminar 5**

### **NGO : Japanese Citizens Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries**

NGO : Japanese Citizens Voluntary Organizations seminar is led by Professor Michio Ito (President of Asia community Center, Rikkyo University). Professor defined the term of Non Government Organization (NGO), Non Profit Organization (NPO) and Community Based Organization (CBO). Professor Ito discuss with us about of 1995 Kobe disaster and roles of Community Based Organization in seminar. Important role of NGO and CVO is recognized by government after the 1996 in Japan.



Professor share the experience of Tohoku disaster (March 11, 2011), After the Tohoku nature disaster, Local CBO are the fastest organization which get to the disaster area and give support immediately. Professor share the knowledge for how to respond the ASEAN countries if one region is encounter with nature disaster.



Over all, I understand the role of the government and local community if one region is encounter with nature disaster. Strong cooperation between the all Asean countries could create the better opportunities for creating

the brighter future.

## **Seminar 6**

### **Transportation**

#### **Urban Buses and Pedestrian Mall**

Transportation Seminar is lectured by Prof.Fumihiko Nakamura (Vice Dean , Institute of Urban Innovation, Yokohama National University). He research on the detail of ASEAN countries transportation plan in Hanoi, Bangkok & Jakarta, Circular Railway system of Yangon, Myanmar and the role of motor bike in Phnom Penh.





Nagoya is the city with amazing transportation plans. Key Route bus line, Yutorito buses and JR line of Nagoya is the best of field study experience for all of us. We started from the OASIS 21 bus terminal. We observe the transportation facilities and share the knowledge each other on the way.



We made the field study for

- Key Route Bus
- Yutorito bus
- Oz Mall

We obtained many new idea, experiences and information form group study. As the safety and convenience of transportation is the most important, I am very impressed to the people who work in transportation facilities in order to fulfill the requirement of urban people.

### Seminar 7

#### **Education –Foster Human Resources for the Global Community: Roles of Higher Education in ASEAN Country**

Education seminar was lectured by Prof. Yuto Kitamura (Department of Education, Faculty of Human Sciences, Sophia University.) Cambodia, Singapore and Thailand presented the education system of each country. As the roles of education is higher in this new era, discussion of education seminars is focus on globalization of higher



education, fostering human resources for global community and international cooperation in higher education. I achieved new idea of rapid development of higher education system, network of regional and international program and also roles of international collaboration for quality assurance.

I understand the history, current issues and challenges of higher education system in Japan.

Education seminar enlightened me the importance of human resources for national development in 21<sup>th</sup> century and also collaboration of public and private sector in order to improvement of political, economic, social and cultural development.

### Seminar 9

#### **Economic –Understanding the modernization process of Japan**

Economic seminar was lectured by Prof. Fumihiko ADACHI, College of Contemporary Society and Cultural, Kinjo Gakuin University. As Economic development is very important

for state building, economic seminar is one of my favorite seminars in all time. The lecture figured out the understanding the modernization process of Japan, essential factors contributing to the socio-economic development and history of Japanese economy (from 1990). I learned the achievement, development processes,



problem and issues of ASEAN countries from economic seminar. As the Economic development and geo strategic position of ASEAN is important in global movement, I understand the important of equal development in ASEAN Countries in order to create new changes for world from the Economic seminar.

## Seminar 10 Disaster Reconstruction

I will never forget the Tsunami experience of Kazuyuki USUZAWA which is full of tragedy and sorrow. I believe there will be many tragedy experiences caused by Tsunami. I wish there will be no more tragedy experiences and stories caused by Tsunami. Disaster Reconstruction seminar is lectured by Prof. Junichi HIROTA, Iwate University.

Prof. Junichi HIROTA discussed

1. Damage
2. Evacuation Action
3. Recovery Situation
4. Local Community
5. Rebuilding houses
6. Victim of Tsunami



Even Japan is the most advance technology country of the world, natural disaster is still unforeseeable for Japan. I understand the concept that production is better than reconstruction. We can reconstruct the better building and in fracture than before but we cannot replace the lost of community and the people who encountered the lost of family members and friends. I believe the best way to stop the tragedy is protection .Now is the time for protect and maintain the environment in order to stop the Natural disaster and also time to educate the people how to encounter the natural disaster. I hope one day the tragedy of natural disaster is completely stop on the whole world.



## Seminar 10

### Enterprise Strategies

### Convenience Stores “Family Mart”



Mr. Shuji OGAWA (Manager, International Planning & Administration Department, International business Division, Family Mart Co., Ltd) and Mr. Koichi KIMURA (International Planning and Administration department, International Business Division, Family Mart Co., Ltd) lectured the Enterprise

Strategies Seminar. The Family Mart Seminar is divided into 3 part, Lecture, Family Mart Visit and Group discussion. I think the most important point of the success of chain stores is Logistics system and customer relationship. As family mart is the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest Chain of the world, I learned many new ideas form these seminars. The new concept I like form Family Mart is “Family Mart never join in price competition”. Family mart attract the customer with quality, Services and own products.

I visited to the nearest family mart and discover the attraction and trick of family mart for customer then we discussed in group discussion time. Concrete and pragmatic future plan of Family Mart “25000 Stores globally by 2015 (15500 Stores Overseas) & 40000 Stores globally by 2012 (29000 Stores Overseas)” is showing me the perceptive plan of the world biggest Chain Stores Group.



## Seminar 11

### Technology Development

### ASIMO



“HONDA Robotic Technology” I have a chance to learn the famous robotic technology of HONDA in Technology Development Seminar. Research & Development sector of HONDA is showing me the future plan of HONDA. Mr. Satoshi Shigemi (Chief Engineer, Division Manager, Research Division 5, Honda R&D Co.,Ltd lead the lecture

of the whole seminar. History of Robotic technology is very long and it take tons of times and expense to get one step. I do admire the Perspective future plan of HONDA. As HONDA is one of the leading organizations of robotic technology, Asimo





is the latest development model for robotic technology of world. Till today, I feeling really excited when I think about of I met and I learn history of Ashimo in HONDA headquarters.

### 3. Field Study

#### **Toba Ecotourism**

Toba Eco Tourism trip is training composed of theories and field study of Eco tourism. 2day training course is leaded by Ms. Kiku Ezaki(Director of Kaito Yumin Club), Ms. Chiho Hyodo (Division Director), Mr. Yuya Amada(The Tourism Department of Toba City). Sightsee trip, Local food; Japanese traditional guest house and lecture with particular viewing angle are uniqueness of Toba trip for me. I understood how to polish the natural life style of local people, and natural resource in order to attract the traveler in eco tourism. The concept of Eco tourism that I most impressed in Toba is “More than the sightseeing”. It make a lot of meaning for me, I got many new ideas concern with ecotourism. As to my understanding, Toba Ecotourism is mainly based on the local community and sustainable local recourses, It is perfectly focus on community development .For example “the elementary student tour guide of Toba”, “The arrangement of the trip to Suga Island” all are showed us how to create the Ecotourism based on sustainable resources. It support us a lot to focus on group study “Eco Tourism”. Unforgettable memory of Toba is not only the ecotourism field study but also it is a trip show us how to values added a place.



#### **Moku Moku Farm**

We had a lecture about the Moku-moku farm by Matsunaga (General Manager of Moku-moku farm).It was very interesting story how the Moku-moku started from 19 pig farmers. They encountered with many obstacle in starting. They thought that good tasting food would help their business be successful, but finally they knew that other factors also need to be considered in establishing the business. So as time passed by they were open to changes and suggestions and the whole concept of “food and farming”, “natural food”, “agriculture” and “handmade” became clearer to them. They changed their whole concept to values added production and farming. It became key



factor of their success. We look around the farm and bring us to a very special buffet restaurant in the farm for lunch. In the afternoon we were able to have hands on baking experience, and we also had some free time to go around the farm and discover interesting sites.

## **Nara**

The Japanese Traditional Stage Performance “Noh” and Todaiji Temple was really a great chance for me – I have the great chance to see and experience the traditional performance of Japan – Noh. It has hundreds years of history and the real art with the cultural history of Japan, The most impressed point for me is the uniqueness of the Noh Performance. Even I listened to the introduction for a short period; I truly impressed the real Japanese cultural Noh performance.

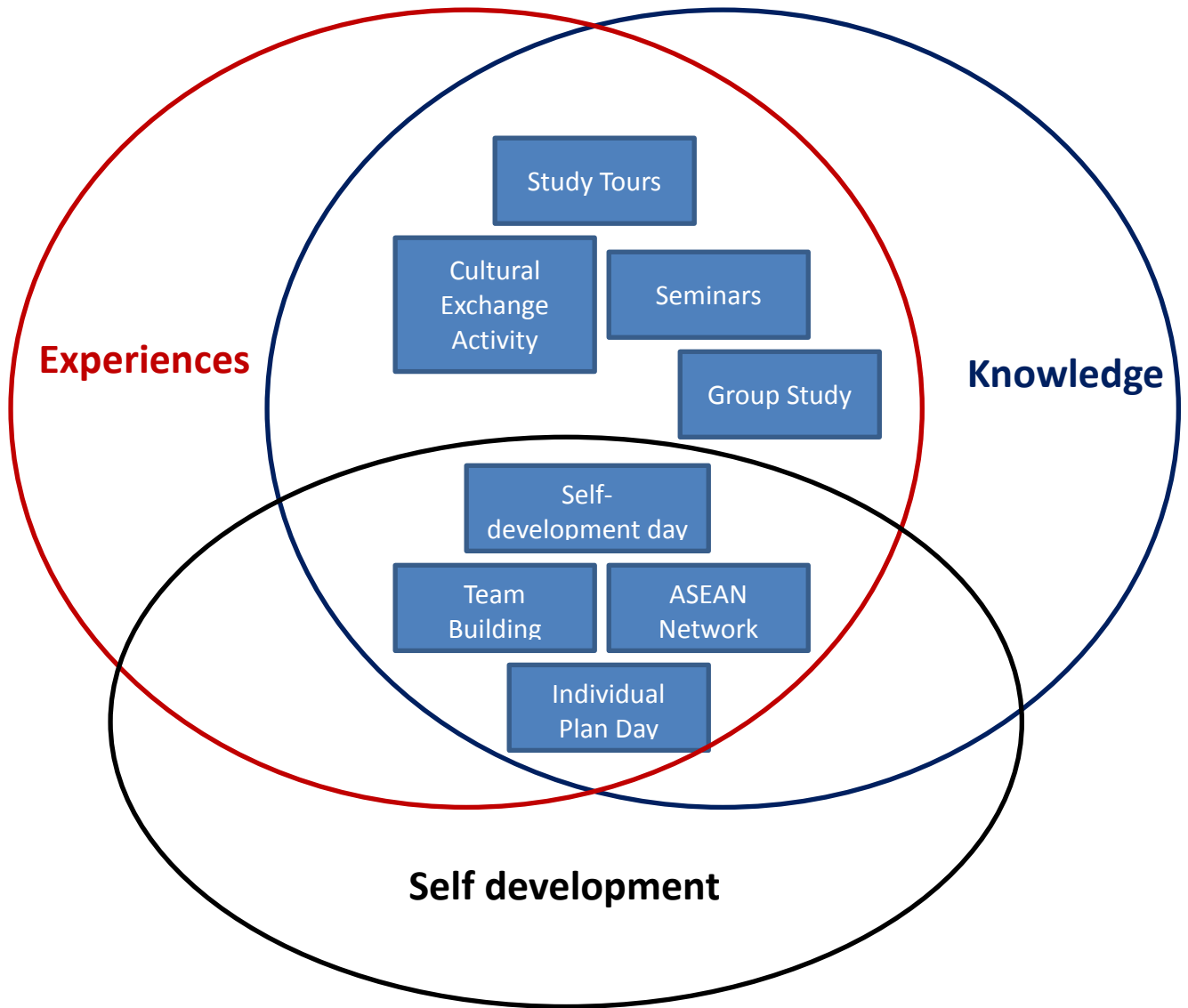


I had a chance to listen to the history and culture of Toda-ji Temple by the local tour guide. I also impressed by the Daibutsu and the arrangement of the Nara government in combination of the temple area and park together, They create the paradise for deer can live human together and also can see the nature of deer lively.



## Conclusion

### IATSS FORUM



*“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in raise every time we fall”*

**Soichiro Honda**

I learn this concept from HONDA Head Quarter, I completely agree to this concept. I used to afraid of falling in life. I used to enjoy in the comfort zone of my life because I want easy life



to pass through. IATSS FORUM empowered me and strengthened me to overcome all challenge of futures, I will start everything in new when I get back to my country and also I will share the knowledge provided by IATSS FORUM to the next generation as many as I can.

I was born into the world with bare hand and bare foot but within two months IATSS FORUM equipped me with



- The **hat** that called **knowledge**,
- The **clothes** that called **wisdom**,
- The **shoes** that called **social network**,
- The **gloves** that called **experiences**.

Now I am ready to overcome every current challenge and also ready to warmly welcome future challenges by wearing the hat, the clothes, the shoes and the gloves provided by IATSS FORUM.

Thank you IATSS FORUM, Thank you all.

## **For Me: An Answered Prayer Indeed!**



**Ma. Karen Quilloy Go (Karen)  
Philippines**



### **When and where did it all begun?**

Over and over again, I ask myself this question, when and where did the desire of going to Japan really start in my life? With deep thoughts now I recalled.. it was when I started working professionally in year 2005. I remember the times my officemates would share their experiences including the opportunity given to them to join a training program. They keep talking about the wonderful and amazing experience they had in Japan. How such experience brought a lot of learning and motivation for them to become a better and stronger person in and out. Although the program they joined wasn't IATSS Forum, the experiences they shared gave a deep desire in me to also look for opportunity to visit Japan. So from then on I started to seek for such occasion, I applied for some program twice, but unfortunately wasn't selected. So I said to myself and prayed this simple prayer..”Lord if it is your will to bring me to Japan, let it be so, I entrust my hearts desire knowing full well that everything works for the good of those who love you”.

Then come April 2011, my Boss selected and asked me to apply for IATSS Forum. I gladly do as I was told and immediately applied. Then before submitting the requirements I again whispered a silent prayer, “Lord if this is from you let it be so”. Then after more than six (6) months, (which I almost forgot that I applied) I received a letter from DOST, with an invitation for interview for the IATSS Forum. At that time I just transferred to a new work (which by the way was also a result of answered prayer) and lot of changes and adjustments were still going on in my life. For one, when I asked my new Boss that I was selected for the final interview for IATSS Forum she initially do not seem to give any support. She told me that she was worried because of project that I would leave behind in case I was selected. I explained to her that it was just an interview I wasn't selected yet. I researched about IATSS Forum and tried my best to explain and convince her of the wonderful chance I might miss if not given a chance to even attend the interview. Then in the end, she allowed and gave me permission to attend the said interview. After that incident I remembered that what happened to me was exactly the situation in the given essay question from the IATSS application form. Amazing isn't it?

Then comes the day for the interview, honestly so far it was one of the biggest interview of my life! I was so excited but at the same time was also really nervous . There were moments that I felt intimidated because most of the interviewees seem to be very competitive. So in my heart I once again said a silent prayer “Lord again if this is your will let it be so”. And in the end, Mike and I was selected, I was really surprised but very happy. At the back of my mind I wanted to ask why I was selected but then I remembered it wasn't

really about me. And from then on I believed my coming to Japan was indeed an answered prayer!

### **What happened to me in this forum?**

For me, as soon as I received the pre-travel information kits I know the forum has already begun. So let me share from this time on forward what happened to me in the forum. Like the things I wrote for the newsletter, that these pre-travel activities were not just given to prepare us but also to discipline and train us to look forward on thinking and learning even while still apart. I believe that every step is necessary and important to understand and completely see what IATSS forum is all about.

Firstly let me share my personal objective in this forum and the things I wrote on what do I think I need to do to achieve my objective. I will also share my list on the three specific skills (interpersonal/professional/social) that I want to obtain and my weakness and how to overcome my weakness.

My Personal Objectives are as follows:

1. To be able to contribute/share my knowledge, skills and experiences
2. To learn and acquire new insights, skills and experiences and enhance my leadership skills
3. To be able to make new and lasting friendships

To check my objectives I should:

1. Whole heartedly participate in all activities
2. Willingly open myself up to changes, suggestions and opinions
3. To be friendly and open-minded

Three Special skills I want to obtain:

1. Interpersonal - confidence in problem solving and decision making
2. Professional - enhance my communication and presentation skills
3. Social – to be able to negotiate in a situation of conflict with somebody

My weakness and how to overcome it:

My sometimes being reserved and quiet that people around me sometimes cannot easily relate to me. By learning to express myself openly, confidently and by actively participating in the forum.



At first, when I was answering this question, I was saying to myself, what is this for? Why are they asking such question I don't even fully understand what I can learn and benefit



from the forum. What are they going to do with the answers, part of me was really wondering. Because these kind of questions are deep, they are asking not only for superficial, outer layer questions, but deep things that make up a person. It made me think that probably its not just an ordinary inter-cultural, leadership training. It seem to offer something more, but at that time I wasn't sure what it was.

Then comes the part for the preparation of powerpoint presentation, at that point of time there were a lot of demand in my work place. I am also involve in ministry activities and was in a leadership training apartment. My fiance and I were also starting to prepare for our wedding on December, so to me another responsibility seem to much, but then again I was up for the challenge. It was hard at first because I wanted to do a lot of things at the same time, but when I started prioritizing and appreciating all the oppurtunities in front of me I began to do things much better. I also remember that I am not alone in this, probably most of the participants are in the same situation as I was and especially the staff for all their preparation. So again I was motivated knowing that I am not alone and I must do my part because others are doing their part as well.

### **My personal notes:**

I try my best to list down everyday the new things I learned. I will be sharing some of them, however to tell you honestly sometimes I am too tired to write at night, but in any case I want to keep and pass on all the lessons I have learned. Because I believe learning is not just acquiring things intellectually or about gaining skill but it is more of what one really becomes inside and out. The things we learned we must share and the real measure of growth will be the multilication of these learnings to other peoples lives. So here I will share some of my personal notes and insights, hope you'll pick up something new as well.

Let me start with my lessons on TRUST. Saying good bye to my family was quiet easy, however saying goodbye to my fiance was really hard. Because I will be leaving him a lot of things to do for the preparation of our wedding. I'm worried because I want to be there to make the necessary arrangement. But I know I must learn to TRUST him more. Not just an ordinary trust but to really trust and believe in him. So with a prayer I say "Lord grant me the



strength to fully trust my fiance in all the things for I know you have brought us this far and the opportunity given to me comes from you". So with deep breath I say to my fiance that I trust him I know he will be able to do it. I shared this because I wanted to share that I brought

with me all these emotion and motivation here in Japan. And probably by sharing what's happening in my heart you will be able to understand where I'm coming from.

Mr. Akira Haga was the one who picked us up in the airport on the day we came. I have met him before but didn't really have the chance to talk to him personally. However, since the Philippines was the first one to arrive we were given a chance to spend a little more time with him before meeting the other participants. We went for dinner with him the night before other participants came. I would like to say that my interest was again stirred up by the words he shared to us over dinner. My co-participant and I asked him questions how he started working for IATSS and so on..then he also asked us on what we think IATSS is all about, but reading between the line I can sense that he was trying to say something more, something deeper I guess. But then again at that time I could not figure out his real point. All I know is that he was trying to communicate something important but it was for us to discover it.

For what I understand IATSS Forum is a training institute for young professionals from ASEAN and Japan to come gather in one place and achieve the theme of "Thinking and Learning Together". The Forum uses seminars, field study, group study and cultural exchange to understand the theme/concept even deeper. Though they asked us to prepare presentations in different issues related to current situations in our country, IATSS claims not only to focus on in-depth research in a particular field but their commitment is in developing young leaders through liberal arts skills. So I researched on these so called liberal arts skills so that I may personally see what IATSS staff and organizers really wants us to develop. Below are the things that I found out:

**Liberal arts definition** - The areas of learning that cultivate general intellectual ability rather than technical or professional skills. The term *liberal art* is often used as a synonym for *humanities*, although the liberal arts also include the sciences. The word *liberal* comes from the Latin *liberalis*, meaning suitable for a free man, as opposed to slave. Liberal art skills include:

**Analysis** – the ability to examine a situation or problem from many angles; compare and contrast events, facts, ideas, opinions; assemble elements of research and develop an answer or argument from them; assemble facts meaningfully, using logic and reasoning.

**Communication** – the ability to organize ideas, facts, information into a logical flow; create clear, efficient messages and documents; write things that are readable, not dense and clunky (as so much of business writing is today!); aim the information at the audience.



**Cultural literacy and foreign language proficiency** – the ability to understand the ways in which cultures are different and how that's reflected in levels of formality, expected

behavior between generations and genders, the pace of activity, and many other ways that affect how business is conducted.

**Emotional intelligence** – the ability to understand human motivation, how individuals and groups behave, to be emotionally aware of oneself, and to use emotions in decision-making.

**Leadership** – a broad area, but briefly – the ability to visualize what needs to be done and can describe it to others; the willingness to sign up to do what's needed, demonstrate initiative, say, "I'll do that!"—and then they do it, with integrity and intention.

**Managing qualitative information** – identifying, categorizing, tracking, and retrieving things like documents, diagrams, and maintaining the associations between them.

**Planning and organizing** – the ability to envision and manage a unit of work in the future, to anticipate events, including risks and contingencies, to recognize interdependencies, track progress, and to estimate timeframes.

**Research** - to examine new business ideas, assess the competition, develop plans, understand laws and regulations, study customers (marketing research), investigate causes of problems, keep abreast of technology—and more.

**Systemic thinking** – the ability to see situations or problems as a collection of interconnected, interdependent parts, and be able to recognize or anticipate what will happen when one part changes, its effect on the rest.

Sources of definition: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/liberal+arts>  
<http://liberalartsadvantage.wordpress.com/2011/08/25/liberal-arts-skills-what-are-they/>

And it hit me, wow IATSS forum is far more than intellectual or leadership training. Its how one becomes as one undergoes the process of learning. Im trying to find the exact word or Im trying to express myself more clearly, but I seem to run out of words to describe what IATSS forum for me is. So other than all the knowledge and interesting points I learned from every seminar and during each country's presentations and group discussions, again from my personal notes here are some of the insights/realization/learning that I gained throughout the seminar, field study, group study, individual day plan, cultural exchange and self development activities. Here are some of my personal notes on the application of these learnings:



*Definition of fun is different for everyone.* There are times I am being challenge to do things that others or most people are doing. They define it as just having fun, but I personally



discover that the definition of fun really differs from one person to another. I have learned to say no even if I feel I might offend them, it was hard but I think it will be harder to be stuck in a situation that I really do not like to do or enjoy.

*Respecting differences.* I try my best to respect our differences, but there were times definition of right and wrong has been mistaken as just differences. This is very critical and right now I am still in the process of knowing the facts and truth so that I may be able to respect differences.

*Listen. Everybody wants to be listened to.* I always remind myself that we were designed with two ears and one mouth. Meaning to say we must listen twice as much as we talk. Learning to listen, is a very special key to establishing a good relationship with others.

*Speak. Everybody needs/wants to hear what's on your mind/heart.* Especially in group discussion, I learn to share my opinion even if it sometimes is different from the rest. Also, even if it was difficult to understand others, I work it out in my heart to listen to them. Because just like them I sometimes have a hard time communicating myself, I always put that in my mind.

*Everyone is unique, but we can grow together. Respect, love, trust and support key to success.* It's amazing to see the uniqueness of everyone, and once I understood that I started to accept things wholeheartedly. I also start to know myself better and discover things I didn't know about myself. And I believe that we can grow together as long as we help and understand each other.

*One cannot grow alone- we need each other.* I learned this from one of the participants, the first few meetings with him seem that he doesn't need anybody. That he can survive and can do things alone, but when I got the chance to speak with him then I understood where he was coming from. He just needed someone to remind him of what his situation is. Good thing he was open enough and I also learned to share my opinion to help him. In effect it was really a two way learning for us.

*Nothing to lose.* We were reminded in gasshuku that we should not fear anything especially while we are here in the forum. Because we have nothing to lose. I have to overcome my fear in voicing out my ideas and trusting others to be there for me.



*We must be patient in listening.* I get frustrated at times because others have difficulty expressing themselves, and communicating what they really want. Especially in our group

discussions, I tend to become impatient. But as I see myself having that attitude, I just take a deep breathe then release it then focus to what is more important. I try to always remind myself that it's the process that is important not just the outcome.

And below are some remarkable word/ insights that I heeard that made an impact on me:

*“Survive yourself” “Discover”*. I asked myself again, why do they give us this individual day plan. For me its one of the challenges that we should face on our own, because we are to learn a lot of new things by ourselves. Because in reality its how we experience things and how we discover them that much learning comes. In one of our individual plan day in Tokyo I got a little bit lost. The map that I read was very simple yet I cannot seem to find the place where I wanted to go. At first I just kept walking hoping to get where I intend to, but when I felt I was going to far I went back and checked the map again. Yet I still cannot find the place im looking for. I know I had to do something, in my mind I said maybe I should skip this, but in my heart it says “giving up already?”. So I said I must use the things I learned especially in Japanese class, and asked for help. So I did, I met a few old ladies and asked for direction. But then they also got confused, so I asked another person, and finally she printed a map for me. And when in got to my designation, I was very happy and satisfied. It may seem too easy but for me it was the inside of me that has been changed in that situation.

*“Advocacy and inquiry- learn it-do it”*. Honestly im still in the process of learning how to ask good and relevant questions. I know I must practice more. But the good thing now is that I am aware that I am weak in these area and I really want to improve more.

*“Stock at some point-look at the logo-bring back the feeling. Accept what needs to be change to grow”*. I honestly do this at some point in the forum, and its true it brings back the feeling of trusting and believing in each other again.

*“Having a comfort zone is important, but go-also do stretch zone”*. Everyone is the same, put aside who we are in the country. I learned that most of the time we need to move out of our comfort zone to learn and grow. We must know what we want while considering the consequences of those things. That even in collaborating with others we must not loose our identity and uniqueness. Comfort zones gives our uniqueness, stretch zones challenges us.



*On seminars-* The important thing is not simply to accumulate knowledge but to ask what lead to a given result and why you ended up making those choices. System is just a system- it is how it function. Everything we learned from the seminars gave me a greater

global perspective and concern. We all affect each other, and knowing these things motivated me to extend my horizon to be able to reach out more. Experiences shared from all participants and lecturers gave wonderful learnings and I hope I can use all those in the relating to different people in the future.

*On group research-* This was the application of all the things we are learning from this forum. During group study we have to work hand in hand, we must be patient and learn to acknowledge differences. *The topic is no more than a devise; the important part is the cooperative process used in reaching conclusions.* Process is more important rather the result itself.

*Do not fear failure. Fear doing nothing.* These words reminded me so much of the discipline especially on time management. Prioritizing and learning to say no to things that I cannot really do.

*The possibility of expansion through cooperation.* Collaborating for growth Importance of cross border. All are inter-related. Communication or language differences may be a barrier but one's idea must be heard.

On conflicts and resolutions:

Yes there were conflicts. Every morning I would pray that I wont have so much encounter with this person, but the more I think of it the more chances we meet. So one day I changed my prayer and said, "Lord give me the wisdom and strength to love and understand this person". I honestly prayed that I am having difficulty within me because I am annoyed at the attitude and manner of this person. But I have to deal with it, in fact it revealed so much of myself. I learned that I cannot really change the person, rather I can change myself, the way I think and act towards this person. It wasn't easy, and up to this moment writing about this reminds me of so much lesson that I am learning. As I can see greater conflict and change is happening within me. I know I need this, because I am an emotional person, but these kind of situation helps me think more practically and logically. Its really funny because the situation is hard, but in the same way it keeps challenging me so in effect im happy and learning.



Going back to my objectives above, I cannot exactly measure if I did meet them. But I would probable find out when I go back home and once again face the challenges of life that awaits me. For me really great learning comes from the way I relate with the people I met. All the staff, participants, professor, instructors, speakers, interpreters, even bus drivers and



people at the hotel and other places I went to had an impact on the way I see life right now. IATSS forum really gives so much opportunity of learning and growing.

To all my co-participants, thank you for the wonderful experiences. For all the knowledge and wisdom as well, these will be treasured in my heart. I believe each one of you contributed to making me a better and stronger person. Again I thank you and I pray that all the things that we learned will be multiplied in the lives of others, so in our own little way we can contribute to make a better and stronger community.

To all the staff and all the people that made this forum a success, I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. I know you may say it's just a part of your work, but in reality I believe you all put your heart into it. You showed me that it's not the forum itself but it's all the people behind it that makes this forum extra special from all the trainings out there. Thank you for your big heart and dedication. We love you and really appreciate you. I'll be praying for the continued success of this forum. I would like share another desire and prayer that's in my heart right now "I pray that in all these many people will find true meaning of life and success that points to the one who created us all. Without the Lords' mighty hand and moving and guidance we really did not get so far, but with Him in every step of the way, life is complete. May the Lord bless us all". I'll be waiting once again for these prayers to be answered in one of these days. Again thank you so much everyone. Till next time...



## **The 55-day dash**



**Michael Kho Lim (Mike)**  
**Philippines**



I started the forum with this question in mind, “Are leaders born or made?” I ask this in the same manner that I ask whether teachers or writers are born or made. The question may appear simple and may be answerable by yes or no, but through the years of trying to discover the answer, I realize that these are not absolute questions with absolute answers.

A leader (or a writer or a teacher) is neither born nor made. One could be born a leader but if one doesn’t realize or discover his/her leadership potentials, then his/her innate leadership skills will not be honed and utilized. On the other hand, when one is really eager in developing his/her leadership skills and has the desire to become a leader, then over time, s/he can achieve this because s/he has the will power to become one. Just like what American TV actor and comedian Milton Berle said, “If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.”

In my case, I can say that I was fortunate because I didn’t need to build a door. Opportunity knocked at my door, and that opportunity was the IATSS Forum. It came just at the right time, because had it come earlier or later, I would have not been qualified.

I didn’t apply to the forum to be accepted and just to find more answers for my question. Instead, I have another question that I contemplated on, “Am I going to find the personal and professional growth I’m looking for by joining the forum?”

I will have to say, “Yes!”

For the longest time, I have wanted to either study or work in a highly competitive multicultural environment so that I can challenge myself further, develop my leadership skills and bring out the better person in me.

Like what I have indicated in my application form, my constant hunger and desire for growth and learning is what drove me here. There is always a better me somewhere that I have to keep on finding as I go through life’s journey. In this case, it’s finding the better me in this IATSS’ journey.

In this report, I am going to use running as a metaphor to structure the paper and describe my process of going through the entire IATSS Forum. In track and field, a dash is also called a sprint. It is a short-distance footrace where runners run in a burst of speed. I call this journey



the 55-day dash, because our 55-day stay in Suzuka seems to have been very brief that the days came by like a breeze.

### **Starting line**

When I received the race kit back home, I knew that I have to start training myself to the new racetrack that I will be joining. The whole program appeared overwhelming with all the assignments and preparations, and it seemed that I'd be running a long-distance track. And before the tasks gobbled me up, I was reminded of one of Zig Ziglar's famous lines, "You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great." Hence, pre-studying, researching and preparing the presentations served as my long warm-up activities before the actual race day.

In running, we have two types of runners—the front-runner and the kicker. At gun start, the front-runner speeds up his/her way and sets the pace of the race, while the kicker dillydallies in the rear of the pack and saves himself/herself the energy for a final lap sprint to the front. Hence, when a front-runner makes a tactical mistake, he sets a trap for himself/herself for the kicker's killing rush. And many front-runners have given world records to kickers because of this.

It's difficult to classify myself as a front-runner or kicker since I am not really a professional runner and I really think that I belong somewhere in the middle. I don't immediately exhaust myself and pour all my efforts into something without calculating my moves or strategizing, but I also don't cram my way to finish something.

### **The (learning) curves and slopes**

If there is one thing that the forum emphasizes, it is the importance of process of group study and the group study itself. Group study serves as the core of the program and integrates all our learning from the seminars.



My group has quite an interesting journey for our group study. This year's theme is ecotourism, and we had to choose one location to be our eco-tour site. Unfortunately, our group went through three changes of eco-site. We even had to switch one member from our group to another so that we can create an eco-tour project for her country. However, during our discussion and further research, we found out that it's also not feasible and manageable to do the project in her country. Hence, we had to go

back and choose from one of the countries of the original group composition, which is Myanmar.

It was like a roller-coaster ride—from the Irrawaddy dolphins of Myanmar to Danau Sentarum of Indonesia and to Inle Lake of Myanmar. With only one or two more group study



days before the intermediate presentation day, we really brainstormed hard and put all our ideas together to come up with a very good presentation.

This time, we also made sure that our roles in the group were clear to us so that tasks were delegated properly and the discussion was more controlled and focused. But our group also saw to it that we keep the discussion atmosphere fun.

Come presentation day, everyone in the group was quite anxious with regard to our project's feedback. On the other hand, everybody else was rather excited because it would be the first time (again) that everyone would know about our project.



Indeed, there's always a rainbow after the rain. All our efforts paid off. Our project received positive feedback from Mr. Arakawa, a guest panel who runs an eco-tour travel agency. Of course, we have also received suggestions on how to further improve our project. But everybody in the group was truly happy because we were on the right track. Our progress was then faster and we had a clearer direction. We were no longer lost.

It called for a celebration after the long hardship and hard work, but we knew we still had another stage to go through, and we started working on this. But in our own little ways, we celebrated that moment of sheer happiness in our hearts. I was then reminded of one of my favorite quotes from the hit TV series *Queer as Folk*, "Mourn the losses because they're many, but celebrate the victories because they're few."



The methodology of the program is actually good. It makes use of the constructivist learning approach where learners are the primary focus and the instructors only act as facilitators. Here, the learners construct their own knowledge by actually doing things on their own, researching and discovering new things through discussion, collaborating and interacting with one another, and presenting the project to an industry practitioner to assess our output.

This is interesting for me because I am familiar with this type of learning methodology. I have experienced this learning style as a graduate student and I also had the chance to create programs as a teacher using this technique. And it was really effective in making students learn.

While I already had experienced the constructivist approach of learning as a student, I was never a participant of any leadership training program. Hence, it was still exciting and challenging for me.

What makes the program effective is that everybody always had the chance to be a facilitator or to lead the group in discussion. And the facilitation skills seminar was indeed very effective and the most useful tool that we had with us so that we could carry out our tasks well during the program.

Most of all, this is a very rare chance of gathering. It is not easy to gather participants from nine ASEAN countries under one roof and work on something together. The creation / provision of this multicultural learning environment is rich in itself and is already a learning factor for each participant.

One learns to be really flexible and adopt different working styles to suit the varying or even clashing personalities in a group in achieving a common goal. One also learns to respect our cultural diversity and sensitivities, to always listen to others and hear out different perspectives, even to what could be considered a “minority” opinion because every idea counts. We discover our differences to understand one another and yet find our common ground to move forward—all toward the forum’s motto of “thinking and learning together.”

In the IATSS journey, one also learns to think out of the box, to discover one’s voice and to find one’s style in leading and working in teams. It is important to find yourself and be yourself. However, sometimes people may misunderstand you for being yourself while other people tend to be themselves too much that they forget to be sensitive to other people and respect their preferences. This is one of the challenges that everyone has to face in the forum. No exceptions. As for me, this is both a challenge and a learning experience.



Sometimes, I feel that other participants think that I am too serious or somewhat introverted. I beg to disagree with that. It’s just that I am the type of person who doesn’t find the need to be always with someone or a group. I tend to balance my personal time and my time with other people. There are moments that I just want to be alone and moments that I want to be in a group.

This is how I exercise my personal freedom and flexibility, which only a few people can understand. But I think we learn to discover and understand one another’s personality over time since we live together under one roof. Along the way, we become more assertive and we learn to respect each other more.

Vivian Stanshall, an English singer-songwriter aptly puts it, “I am not different for the sake of being different, only for the desperate sake of being myself.” We are all different but we have to learn how to live with each other.

The program also asks the participants to reflect on their learning. This is done either through various sharing sessions or in report



writing like this. Reflection is another characteristic of the constructivist approach especially since we just don't put our learning in writing, we also learn more about ourselves, learn to manage ourselves better, analyze the process of learning that we went through, and eventually learning from our mistakes or failure (if any). As they say, there is no better teacher than experience.

I think this program is also effective in "teaching" achievers about handling defeats and failures. In my various encounters with people, I have observed that there are achievers who don't know how to handle failures especially when they reach that point of defeat, primarily because of the perception that failing is bad.

As the forum puts emphasis on the learning process, it is also a good exercise in teaching the value of humility—that we have to acknowledge that we don't know everything and that there could always be someone better than ourselves. It helps us to always keep our feet grounded and teaches us that failures and conflicts are the real teachers of success—that they actually contribute to our growth.



On the other hand, I think that the program has put too much emphasis on the process as an important learning component more than the output or result. This was made very clear though from the very start—that it is a process-oriented program. However, in reality, outside this multicultural learning environment, when we are in the so-called real world, one's performance as a leader is measured by his/her output. Has s/he led the team to its destination? Has the team achieved its goals?

Leadership and management are abstract concepts, and that's what makes them complex to measure. Hence, key performance indicators/index or key result areas have been developed to measure the output of people in this role or position.

In the real world, while we are also there to learn in and from the process, we cannot just stick to learning. We have to produce. Yes, we are here to learn (from and to go through the process) but we are also producing a project for implementation. Hence, maybe it's better to remind everyone that the process is just as important as the outcome.

### **Water stops**

By water stops, I mean our activities outside the usual classroom setup and the group study, which also contribute to our learning. These water stops or field trips are breathers for me. They give me a breathing space to move freely and think creatively. That's why I always feel excited every time we have





a field trip or study tour even if we need to wake up very early or sleep late.

I have always believed that learning does not only happen inside the four corners of the room. Hence, during our first week of arrival in Japan, we had the bicycle training immediately so that we can use our respective bikes in going around the area and learn outside the walls we live in.

Aside from the fact that Japan puts top priority on safety, it was interesting to note that in Japan (or maybe in other countries, too), one doesn't sound the bell of the bike to signal that one is passing through. One only sounds the bell in case of emergency.



On the other hand, in order to foster camaraderie, get to know and understand one another, the program has what it calls “gasshuku” or teambuilding. If there was just one message to remember during the whole forum, it is this formula that was introduced in one of the activities: “Challenge + Fun = Growth.”

In the beginning, we were guided to identify our objectives, formulate our goals for the forum, create our batch logo and objectives, and many more. We were constantly reminded to get out of our comfort zones and yet never taking away the element of fun as we challenge ourselves, because it is only by having fun in taking any challenge that we grow happily. And indeed, it was a long and tiring yet fun three-day teambuilding activity.

Of all the seminars that we have had, the seminar on transportation is worth noting, because we actually tried the transportation system in Nagoya before we discussed the topic. It was like a joyride at first, but there was really a learning component. The professor emphasized that we have to keep our eyes open and observe the how the transportation system works, the driver and the bus itself among others.

This field seminar gave me a more realistic picture of Japan, because this time, I can see some of the problems or challenges that Japan faced or is facing—that despite being very organized and systematic, there are still flaws in the system. I'm glad to know that Japanese people are still humans after all.



Since this year's theme is ecotourism, there's no better way to learn about the topic than to experience an actual eco-tour. Hence, we also travel a lot. One learns a lot from traveling. It teaches you about the place itself, about culture,

how to be street smart and everything else about life in general.

From the several field trips that we had, I must say that the children of Toba touched me a lot. These elementary kids were our volunteer tour guides. Even though they can't speak English that much, they did their best in explaining the important points of the tour to us. While we had the IATSS staff to interpret for us, we could see and feel the children's effort in reaching out to us. The feeling was difficult to explain but when we left the place, some of us were teary-eyed. Even if it was just a very short moment, we felt the connection. And this kind of rapport doesn't usually happen in ordinary tours.

The other field seminars that also piqued my interest were our visits to a Zen garden and temple and the traditional Japanese Noh Theater.

Since my work mostly deal with a lot of people and mounting of events (which are usually my sources of stress), I look forward to having my own quiet time and meditation. And I am very happy to have entered a real Zen temple and garden to appreciate its aesthetics, commune with nature and be in touch with myself.

On the other hand, being a fan of theater and an amateur theater actor, I was really all ears and eyes during this seminar, especially since I missed to see the Noh performance that was brought to my country some years back. And I felt really happy to have caught a glimpse of and understood a little more about Noh Theater.

Throughout our stay, we also had two individual plan days in Kyoto and another two in Tokyo. I also always look forward to these days because it allows me to discover and experience things on my own. It's not that I don't want to go in pairs or in groups but traveling on my own gives learning a whole new perspective and the experience is never the same.

If there's another thing that the forum emphasizes (which we learned from gasshuku), it is getting out of our comfort zones. And traveling on one's own is one of the best ways of getting out of that comfort zone, especially if one is used to traveling in groups.

Traveling in groups has its own learning perspective in the same way as learning in teams has. By wanting to travel on my own doesn't mean that I don't want to travel in groups. In fact, I travel more in groups than by myself.





That's why maybe I'd like to travel more by myself and be independent and experience being a real backpacker more.

I just love how IATSS Forum general manager Akira-san always says, "Survive yourself." The individual plan days aim to teach one to travel independently and discover the ins and outs of Kyoto and Tokyo cities. Getting lost is part of the adventure of traveling. It teaches one to be more self-reliant and interact with the locals and learn from the experience or from one another.

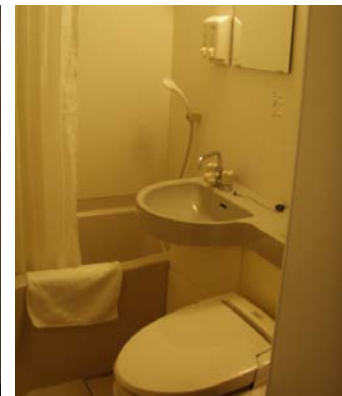
During our stay in different hotels, I learned about their methods and efforts of caring for the environment. When one thinks about it, the system that the hotels instituted is rather simple. It follows the basic principle of incentive system.

For example, when one doesn't use the toothbrush provided in the room and returns this to the front desk, one receives a snack treat. When one doesn't have his/her room cleaned, s/he has to inform the front desk before 9 a.m. and s/he receives free bottled water. However, one still receives a fresh set of towels hung on one's door lever. And for the men, one asks for the razor at the front desk only if they need to.



This system is somewhat similar to Korea. In fact, Korean law prohibits hotels to provide complimentary toothbrush and toothpaste to their customers. So everyone is encouraged to bring his/her own dental set and does his/her share in saving the environment.

I was also amazed on how Japanese maximize their use of space. The hotel rooms are relatively small and yet still provide one's basic needs. The design is pretty simple but the Japanese have thought of maximizing space while being eco-friendly. This is evident in the bed structure and design, where under the bed is quite a huge space where one can store his/her luggage. The toilet fixture is designed with a spigot on top of the water tank to allow users to conserve water by washing their hands in the water flowing from the spigot, which is destined for the next flush when the flush lever is pressed.



Some of the bathroom sinks are also designed to be right next to the tub, where the faucet can be moved to drop water into the tub. At the same time, there is a lever on the sink that allows water from the faucet to flow into the shower. In this way, space is maximized and the shower area doesn't appear too small or crowded with so many knobs and fixtures.

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What makes all these systems work is that the Japanese people know how to implement the systems properly and





everyone has the discipline to follow the implemented systems. The Japanese people act as one in caring for the environment, such that over time, these systems have become their habit and general practice wherever they go.



The Japanese also pay great respect to the elderly, not just because Japanese has a big number of “aging society,” but Japanese are very respectful in general. It is also noticeable that in all public or private spaces, care and concern are always given to consider the physically challenged/handicapped and the elderly.

So be it in their respective homes or outside, they need not be told or reminded. They just practice the discipline of being on time and concerned for the environment since these have become part of their lifestyle. Hence, I “envy” the Japanese people in general because we don’t have that kind of discipline in my country.

The strong discipline that I just described was also very evident in my host family during my home stay program. Like when we were walking the dog, the eldest daughter of my host family carried a bag with her. At first, I didn’t know the bag’s content but when the dog pooped on the street, she drew out a plastic from the bag and picked up the poop and wrapped it properly and put this inside the bag. This is just a very simple act and yet this little act contributes a lot to the clean environment of Japan.

The home stay program was a very good learning experience as well. Even though it was only two days and one night, the stay was really wonderful. My host, Yuko Morikawa, was very kind and accommodating. She even invited some of her friends to her place. And oh, what fun it was to actually interact with this bunch of septuagenarians or octogenarians, namely, Yasuyo Higuchi, Miharuru Suzuki and Kinuko-san.

I found them really cool. At their age (no pun intended), they were still very active and were doing their best to communicate with me in English. One of them has a hobby called *oshibana* or pressed dry flower art. She explained a bit about the process involved and what she does with her craft. I found this very amazing as her artwork was like a living art. She said that after about seven years, the pressed flowers / leaves will have been dried up and turned brown. When that time comes, she returns all the dried flowers and leaves back to the soil.

I felt sad about that because the artwork that she carefully crafted for months will be gone. But that’s where the artwork’s beauty lies, as what I have learned in the Japanese aesthetics seminar. It is this transient or temporal beauty that makes one appreciate the beauty of something even more, because one knows it won’t last



that long so one has to appreciate its beauty while it lasts. This is why when the Sakura trees (cherry blossoms) bloom, the Japanese people rejoice in seeing its transient beauty.

All of Yuko-san's friends also played "Sukiyaki" using the ocarina musical instrument and they taught me the sign language dance of "It's a Small World After All." During my stay with the Morikawas, I also helped in the cooking of a traditional Japanese dish called *niku jaga*. My host also cooked *okonomiyaki* and we enjoyed a hearty meal.

While cooking, Yuko-san shared one piece of trivial information that I found to be interesting. She was explaining to me about how the faucet works—press the lever down to let the water flow and pull the lever up to stop. It follows that since the water flows down, the lever must be pressed down. However, she said that in other places or houses, the faucet lever functions the other way around.

After the great eastern earthquake in Tohoku last year, residences with the same faucet system as hers wasted a lot of water. When the shelves or big objects or debris fell on the faucet, the lever went down and water kept on flowing. Hence, Yuko-san said that I would notice more and more houses now make use of the new system, which stops the water flow when the lever is pressed down.



The following day was something that I really looked forward to. Yuko-san arranged a hiking activity for me with her friend Sugimoto-san. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to join us because she had to dance in a marathon event very early in the morning. So only her husband Takayuki-san and her eldest daughter Eri joined us.

What's amazing about Sugimoto-san is that he is already 71 years old and he was our guide to Komono-fuji Mountain. Most people who know him also call him "mountain crazy." Here's why. The first reason is a given. He's crazy about mountains. He has been climbing mountains since he was 20.



So experienced in mountain climbing that when Eri actually asked Sugimoto-san how far we were going to climb, he replied, "We are not going to climb a mountain. We're just going to walk around the forest!" Eri just dropped her jaw after hearing the answer and we just laughed.

Sugimoto-san was also explaining stuff to us along the way—more like survival techniques such as how to know what time it is when you have no watch or your watch failed to work, finding the



magnetic north without a compass, and which mushrooms are edible and poisonous. And to our shock, while he was explaining about the poisonous mushrooms, he plucked out one from the tree trunk, bit it and then spat it out. We were all blown away in disbelief and he laughed. Then Takayuki-san said, “Now you know why he’s mountain crazy.” Then we all laughed again as we continued climbing up the mountain.

In the afternoon, my host family and I went to Nabana no Sato in Kuwana City. It is by far the biggest botanical garden I’ve been to and everywhere you look is a bed of flowers. It was such an eye candy. We just walked around here and it was a very good breather for me since flowers always give a soothing and relaxing feeling to people and somewhat relieves stress.



### Cool-down

Speaking of stress that comes from the tons of workload and very tight schedule, it helps that we have the self-development activity days. However few these are, I value them so much even though I spent most of them still working on assignments. Nonetheless, I tell myself to slow down, take a good rest and enjoy the day.



It couldn’t be denied that most of us gained weight during our stay because of the delicious food in bountiful bento boxes and the occasional buffets that we had. Throughout my stay, I tried to keep myself fit and healthy. This is also a general characteristic of the Japanese people. Hence, inasmuch as I could fit in my schedule, I do some morning runs and exercises, some afternoon biking and occasional swimming, and the regular *onsen* nights.



*Onsen* is the Japanese style hot spring. It is very common and famous in Japan, where everybody wears his/her birthday suit and enjoys the minerals of the water. Needless to say, male and female areas are separated.

So after the long day of study and discussion, it always helps to stay at the open-air bath and dip in the hot water while looking at the moon and stars. And whenever I miss my friends and the special people in my life back home, the moon always reminds me that we are never really far.

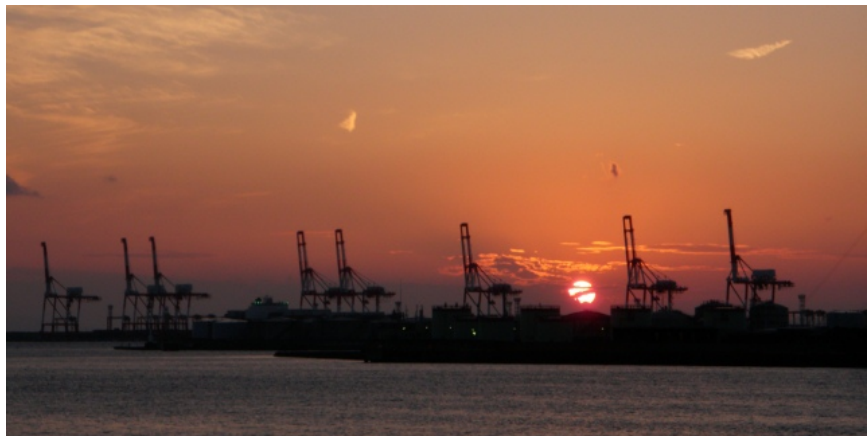
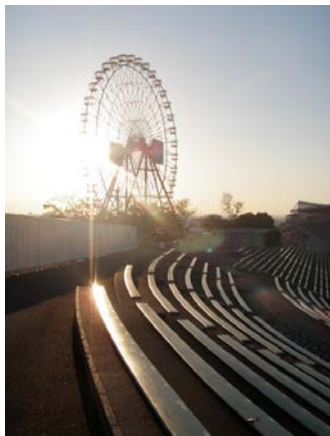




I remember this line from the movie, *Dear John*, “No matter where you are in the world, the moon is never bigger than your thumb.” Such that when I raise my thumb to compare to the size of the moon, and the other person in my country does the same, it keeps our distance closer since we know we are only a thumb’s away and we are still connected through the moon.



I will also not forget our chitchats over *onsen*, the boisterous laughs we shared, the surprise birthday treat, tranquil tea breaks I had, quiet strolls, the many jump shots we took, the exciting geisha sighting we had in Kyoto, a number of sleepless nights, some sunrises I caught and the few sunsets I’ve seen.



These little breaks, no matter how short they might be, formed good memories, kept my balance and sanity; but most of all, they helped me to be just me here in Japan.

### **Finish line**

As I technically and officially cross the finish line of the IATSS Forum racecourse, I bring home with me a finisher’s medal—a certificate of completion to be exact. But more than that, I bring with me the memories, the discipline, the learning points and the experience of “thinking and learning together.”



IATSS Forum is more than just a gathering of ASEAN nationals and more than just a fellowship of the minds. It is a place that provides you with the learning environment, the tools, the participants, and it's up to you how to put the pieces of the puzzle together. You may successfully solve the whole jigsaw puzzle (or not), depending on your pace, technique and process. But what is important is to remember that there is never just one way to approach things. We may not have the same method in solving the puzzle, and we don't need to have the same strategies to solve the problem.

For me, the forum is rather a personal journey of transformation. It is not here teach you how to lead; rather it will lead you to lead. It's not here to change you; it's for you to find that change and grow. Like what people say, it's not the destination but the journey that matters more.



I am reminded of what Japanese running novelist Haruki Murakami said in his memoir *What I Talk about When I Talk about Running*, "In long distance running, the only opponent you have to beat is yourself, the way you used to be." In a team, there is no competition among one another. There is no opponent to beat except the self.

While the program is centered on teamwork, it's also focused on the self, on bringing out the best in you such that you contribute your strengths to the team, acting as one body and one mind, and moving forward in reaching that one goal. Hence, IATSS can also mean:

Independent individuals  
Acting as a  
Team and  
Sharing the  
Success



It is using this framework—the interrelationship of the self, the other and the environment—that I based my definition of leadership: that it is a process of self-development in relation to how we deal with others and how we handle given situations.

In IATSS Forum, one learns that leadership is not something autocratic. It is not the rule of one; rather it is a consensus of all. If a participant is overbearing, s/he has to take the back seat or make one step back. If a participant is too meek or timid, one has to step up and speak up.



IATSS Forum is about shared leadership, about building trusted relationships, about being and doing things together. It is not about who's best but what's best for everyone. It is not about getting good grades or scores or good feedback but about what more can one do to contribute for the good / benefit of everyone.



I believe this is a distinctive Japanese characteristic that the forum is sharing to its ASEAN neighbors. It is this selfless act and attitude of sharing (what worked for them) to others with the hope that its neighbors learn from their experience and apply this learning in their respective countries.

After all that's been said and done, the time has come to return to our countries even though majority (if not all) of the participants (including me) don't want to go home yet. We have many reasons and excuses. Work and problems are waiting and we don't want to face them. But I guess that's the whole point of the program—learn and apply, and face the forthcoming challenges head on. Like what Honda's founder Soichiro Honda would say, "Rise to each challenge."

And that is just how I will move forward after the forum. Take on new challenges; but more than that, I'd like to give back to the community. I have always planned in doing an outreach program or participate in a volunteer activity. Specifically, I want to be a street educator and help street children learn how to read and write; but time always gets in the way. This is not an excuse, however. We need to make time for it if we want something to be accomplished.

Lastly, I dedicate my completion to the IATSS Forum program (my graduation if you may call it that way) to my father who passed away a few days before my final interview for the IATSS Forum. I believe he has been guiding me all along even though he is no longer physically present.



A heartfelt thanks also goes out to the IATSS staff members who tirelessly work day and night just to prepare for our program. Shepherding 18-22 participants with diverse cultural backgrounds everyday is no joke.

As I bid goodbye to the land of the rising sun and go home, I face the shining sun that greets me with head



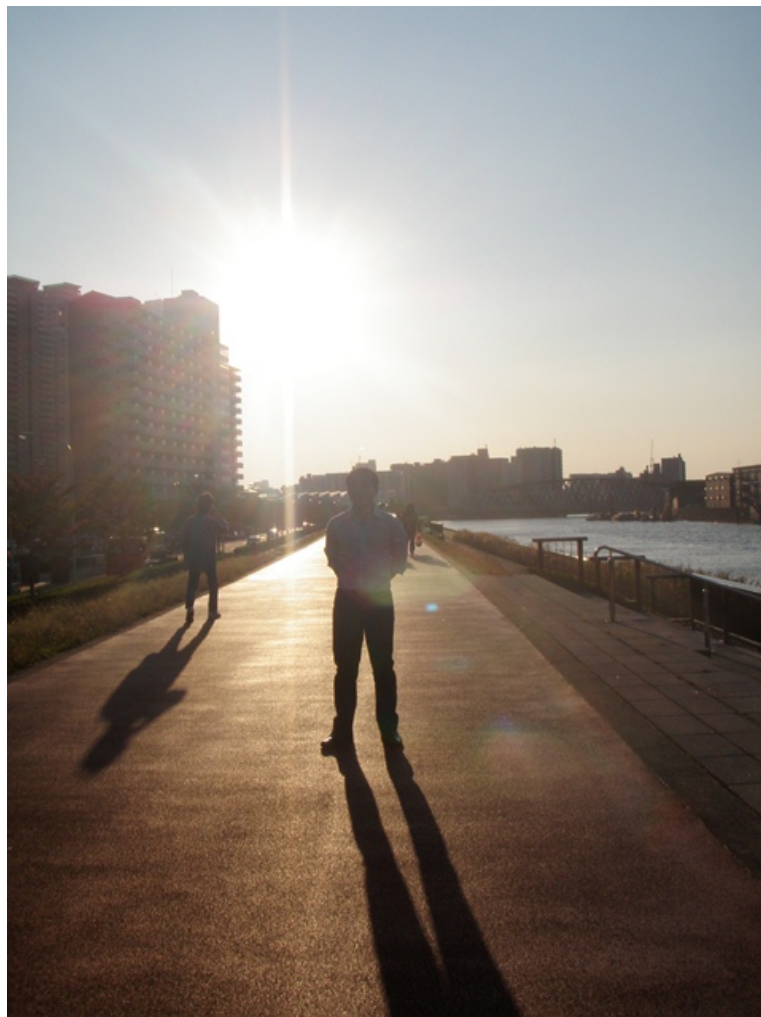


held high. Happiness maybe an overused word for everyone, but it is the common feeling that generally describes our experience. And I am more than glad to have been accepted and to have grabbed this rare opportunity.



I am reminded of Murakami's coming-of-age novel *Norwegian Wood*, where Reiko advised Toru (about his feelings for Naoko) in a letter, "But who can say what's best? That's why you need to grab whatever chance you have of happiness where you find it, and not worry about other people too much. My experience tells me that we get no more than two or three such chances in a life time, and if we let them go, we regret it for the rest of our lives."

Indeed, there is no end to learning, to growing. My IATSS journey is only a pit stop. I am only parking my shoes here. And as I go back to my home country, I bring home a brighter sun and a better me with me. The challenge is on. The race goes on. There is only always the starting line but never a finish line.



## My Once in Lifetime Opportunity!



**Lilian Chua (Lilian)**  
**Singapore**



It had been 38 days since we came when I wrote this paper and time flies so fast! From the beginning till now, I had learnt a lot from the program. Before I do not know how to cycle and there was a cycling training class. It was really very good! I had always asked my friends how to check the bicycle and they cannot really tell me exactly. Now, I know the way to check it. Even though I am still just a beginner, I will continue to ride as it is a convenient tool. However, I still need to practice more!! There is really so much more. We always forget the important step to do safety check before we move off. It is good lesson for me especially when I am still a novice.

### **Gasshuku**

I am very glad to have Gasshuku program as it helped all of us to get together in only 2 days! We had to eat together, sleep together and bath together! It was really amazing that we managed to break the ice after many activities. In this activities, we realized the strengths and weaknesses in each of us. This session helped us to know each other better and get a fresh team to fall in place quickly!



It also explodes our creativity in terms of problem solving, building mutual trust and getting consensus to the same goal and motto – Balancing for Sustainability. I am very happy that my logo was chosen as my original idea was just a see-saw for balancing the trees and the people on earth. After the group developed more ideas, our logo was now meaningful and although it was pretty frustrating to be given only a short time to develop the logo, we did a good job! The writing of our expectations, concerns, norms was good for us to know how each of us felt anonymously!

## Group Study

After that, we had training in terms of facilitation skills. Although it was pretty short, but we are now better equipped with how we can conduct a discussion. It is certainly not easy task for me as I am not an outspoken person. I also do not have the capability to ask the right questions during the sessions, but through this training, I know my weaknesses better and learnt to trust my team so that we can get answers from each other in the event when I do not know how to proceed.

Now, I become more outspoken. I speak my mind if I feel there is anything wrong or different from the rest. I need to bear in mind about this as it was a habit before and this should be overcome with conscious effort until it is natural behavior to speak up!

We also have Eco-tourism project which I am very glad that this topic was chosen this year because I can be part of the team to investigate and study deeply about this topic.

Each group study session was enjoyable and fun. I really love my team very much! No matter what, for each topic, we always discussed with each other, all the time! Although this takes a longer process to come to a conclusion, I really enjoyed the discussions. We do not have much problem about each other at all, and each of us speaks our mind but also accept another person's idea. However, it is not easy to make the group study, as we discussed a lot, a lot each time. Our group always think too deeply. It is not easy to balance between generalization of ideas and detailed ideas so sometimes progress is not as fast as other team.



I really would like to have a chance to see how the other groups do their group study and learn from them too! Maybe they may have better strategies which can help our group improve! It's a pity we do not have the luxury of time to visit them.

There is something that I do not really like about this group study. I got to know that other groups think of this as a competition and sometimes, there is some reluctance in sharing what they discussed in their groups. I do not like this feeling, why we cannot share our information freely and there is some fear that we will win the trophy instead of them? Our group were thought of a strong competitor for them. Some participants actually asked, do you think your group will be chosen? I was confused and asked them what they meant. Then I found that they have some idea of competition. Their idea is that only one of the groups will be chosen by the tour agency and they hoped to be chosen.

I think our group did our very best and we do not think of any competition with the others during our work. I am quite disappointed with this behavior. I tried to explain a few times to the participants who asked these questions. I hope they can understand that as time goes by



the process of Group Study is more important than the result. Although, we do want our project to be successful but if only result is the only concern, I think, my group would not have enjoyed so much and have to proceed our discussion in a different way.

Our group chose a place in Vietnam, Meo Vac and we are really addicted to this place now! Wherever we go, we think that we are going there! During the group study itself, we also go outside to discuss when we have mental blocks. There was once when we went for a picnic at a secluded pathway at the back of our hotel, with hot tea and a floor mat! It was very cold and we imagined we are on the journey to Meo Vac. It did help us to ascertain some ideas! The feeling was wonderful!



Our group was very cooperative and we always have good ideas from the team! I am lucky to be in group A, which I termed, Group Acme! It's my Perfect team!

## Seminars

Frankly speaking, I do not really like to join Seminars as it was lecture-based and at times it was not easy to keep concentration! However, it was indeed useful for us to attend these seminars for knowledge. There were some information which I never knew before, such as the way Japanese view aesthetic-ness, how another country manage with the resources they have. I guessed this is inevitably required because it helps us to get to know each field quickly in the shortest time. As a leader, we should know more about our surroundings and what happens around us. It is a good starting point, though I really prefer if the lecturers will share more about Japan than focusing on ASEAN situation. Japan has many many good points that we want to learn but by sharing mainly ASEAN situation, due to time constraints, we do not know much about Japan. This happened in many seminars. I guess we will just have to read about it ourselves later.

However, I like the Japanese Aesthetics and Transportation seminar the best. Japanese Aesthetics gave me a different point of view in Japanese culture and why some designs are asymmetrical, yet beautiful. People from outside world sometimes feel that Japanese are weird! Going to Tenryuji helps us to appreciate the architecture and feeling of the Japanese gardens and temples better. It is not easy for a foreigner to understand the meanings by just going to the temples and gardens.



I was the coordinator of transportation seminar and I like the lecture method, to go through the transportation first then to have the lecture.



We were given the chance to take the different types of transportation modes. When I asked some Japanese, they do not know about these available transportation modes. Hence I felt very honoured to be able to go through this seminar where I can learn some important observations which we do not notice in our daily lives. The lecturer made me want to take up a master degree in transportation!

### Out of Suzuka Circuit Hotel!

As each field tours are first-hand experience for me, it is eye-opening and memorable. Getting the owner to share is also very good point. For example, Toba experience is very memorable with the school kids as the tour guides. I will tell this idea to my teacher's friends in Singapore and hope our children will grow to learn more about my country.



In Suzuka police station, we know how they collected finger prints and how the police maintain order in the city.

After the visit to Moku-moku farm, we know about how they care for their customers and environment, I will also practice this type of management technique to empower the staffs when I return. In Noh and Todai-ji visit in Nara, what is Japanese ancient performance about and the visit to Honda's Suzuka Factory helps us know how a car is made and the safety measures that Honda do. I really like the visit because especially for my company, we are



considered rivals but I do not have a chance to visit my company's factory in Japan before. However, I do not want to be labeled as a spy or any such name because my motive is purely learning with no such intention of copying and reporting. It is more for my personal growth and that is why I value the IATSS program and want to apply for it!



Moving to Kyoto and Tokyo is also a very good experience for us to experience Japan! We see a different side of Kyoto and Japan, from Suzuka.

Kyoto is really a very beautiful city. Although I had an overdose of temples and shrines during my individual plan day, I enjoyed the sights around it. However, as it is individual plan day, we go through our plan alone. I felt really lonely. I had travelled alone before and do not like the feeling. I have no problems getting around in Japan. In the temples, people who go there are usually couples or with a few friends. After each individual plan day, I hear other participants go around together and have very close experience with Japanese people, except those of us who went alone, we do not get close experience with Japanese people.

I had a little regret that I did not arrange with the others before to go together. However, the places I wanted to visit is different from the others and I wanted to learn to be independent, so I already decided at the beginning to go alone at that time.

This experience tells me that Japanese people may not feel so comfortable to interact with single female foreigner. However, if it is 2 persons foreigner, they are more comfortable and they are more willing to offer help. I really envied my co-participants who managed to meet such kind Japanese people.



For Tokyo, I went to 2 of Fuji 5 lakes (Kawaguchiko lake and the Saiko lake). The scenery was captivating! We saw the autumn colours and the tranquil lake with fishing activities.

It was my first time to see autumn colours (green, yellow and red). It was so vibrant. The air was chilly. From the lake, we could see Mt Fuji but there were some clouds covering part of it. I had never had the chance to see Mt Fuji clearly before. In the last time I came, it was covered by clouds. Today, we get to see almost 3/5 of it! We stayed around till noon and went to Saiko. There, we went into the forest and it was a nice small lake to explore. We were



busy taking pictures and finally, towards the end, I turned and saw the majestic cone of Mt Fuji clearly. We were all so excited that we ran very hard to get a better view of it. It was just behind us and it is like smiling to me. Finally we got to a viewpoint and I was astound with the majestic feeling it gave. I never felt this way before. I am glad that I came! Some day, I will do a trek up there.

During Self-Development days, I never missed to go out to explore!

At the 1<sup>st</sup> self-development day, I managed to ride the bicycle to Bell City. However, this journey seems to take 1 hour to reach there whereas other participants said they can reach within 30 mins! I felt a burden to the others although everyone is kind to wait for me. After that, I had not had the chance to try it again.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> self-development day, me, Tum and Allene went to Seki-juku and it was a really nice experience to meet a local volunteer guide who was already retired. We just happened to bump into him when we arrived and although he can only speak some English, he is very brave to come to us and asked if he could help. He picked up all the rubbish he could see on the ground. I think we have a lot to learn from this man. He thought me how to take a rest even though we are tired. It applies to my daily life as well and the courage to speak to strangers and love for mountains.

He led us all around and finally, towards the end, he brought us to a foot spa which I think we would not have been able to enjoy this if we wandered by ourselves!



He even offered to send us back. He felt really upset because we rejected him to send us back!! So we allowed. But we felt that we imposed on him too much the whole day, that we suggested for him to stop near one of the supermarket near here and we walked back instead.

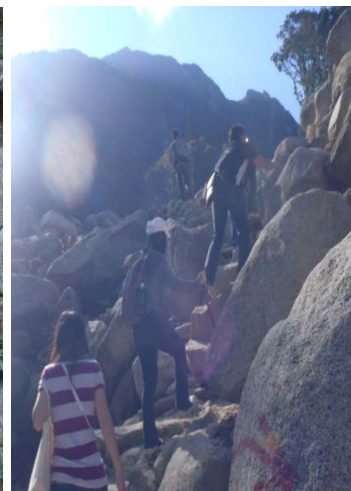
日本人はとてもやさしいね！！

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> self-development day, me, Tum, Allene, Fade went to Ise-Jinggu. It was pretty hard to see how the new shrine was built. However, going around the shrine is really tranquil. We reached there almost 3pm at the Geku shrine and I find that even though the closing time was 5pm, people still visit the place.

We had to rush to Naiku and end up having problems to come back to the hotel! We had to take taxi to come back from Shiroko station as there is no more bus back! We were so worried about the price that we almost screamed to stop at the Shell station nearby! It was 1990Yen!! Our target was to keep within 2000Yen! Phew...we managed and walk back to Sora Tabeyo for our dinner! Keeping within 8pm, as promised on the white movement board!



On the 4<sup>th</sup> self-development day, me, Tum, Allene, Fade, Ryuji and Arthur joined us. We went to Gozaisho! We tried to walk up to find the ropeway mid-way. However due to some construction there, we got lost and end up having to back-track and we went back to the original starting point to take the ropeway! We also had the chance to take the open air cable-car. It was really an eye-opening experience. We had many adventures along the way and it was really exciting for me! There was many things to see and each section has its own beauty! We even saw a 1m long snake and I was running away when I saw it!



Through this, we really need a local guide and we were lucky that Ryuji came with us! In the end, we also come back after 5pm where Shiroko bus will stop. We had to take taxi and again, we had the 1990Yen taxi stop and walk back to Sora Tabeyo for our dinner! Through this, we learnt that we should not trust the locals too much because on the way, we asked each person and based on their estimate, it was not accurate and it became quite dangerous for us. Our group was not well-equipped with proper shoes, food, water and we did not check on the time to reach the cable car. Some members were exhausted as well. It was good that we had turned back. We really need to be well-prepared before this kind of trips!

### Homestay

This is really a very memorable time for me. I enjoyed the hospitality of a cosy Japanese family. They introduced to me about Japanese 料理. We made mizu-manju and kuri-kinton. We also have Tempura and sukiyaki. The next day, they brought me to pick up mushrooms in the forest. It was really fun and exciting!





I am amazed by how the Japanese get their ingredients for cooking. They can easily get it from their gardens. It is something that I do not have in my own home. This is a good learning point. They have a simple home and happy family. The bedroom is really just a bed without any other things. It is very clean and I really like the room because my own room back home is filled with many things other than the bed which makes my room very cluttered! I am very happy to stay with them and I hope to visit them again in another time.

## Cultural Exchanges

### Japanese Cultural Introduction Day

In this program, we were introduced to various Japanese cultures. It is amazing that all the Japanese cultural essentials were condensed into just 1 day and very fruitful for me. I get to wear Yukata which is my very first experience. Also, I get to enjoy 茶道 and calligraphy and dances. Through these culture introduction, I can appreciate why Japan was so orderly and beautiful. There is always details in each step that makes the whole process seems very elegant. It was easy to get to know Japanese cultures from the volunteers! I really enjoyed this day!



### Cultural Exchange Day

It is a chance for us to allow others to know about my own country and dances and culture. It is a good session and we are surprised that many Japanese joined in our dance program. It was fun and I had learnt the song "Ashita ga aru", which is pretty motivating for our working level.





### **New discoveries and learning**

I find that I do not like to talk about my own achievements or my abilities freely to anyone. This is because I do not think I am good enough to say I am good at something. It is sometimes frustrating for some new person who do not know about me. They usually find me boring and nothing much to talk about because I do not open up myself to anyone easily. I take a long time to warm up to others and be comfortable to speak to someone. However, I just found out that at any point in time, there are people who always observe us, what we do, how we do things. Unknowingly I had been observed. I am also surprised by the remarks that was given to me. It was really good feedback to me and the group study was probably a good opportunity for each of us to discover our strengths and weakness as the group is smaller, it is easier to find another person's strengths and weakness as well. But we share about such comments and it helped me to improve. I really want to thank my fellows in Group A!!

**IATSS Forum** has a special place in my heart and this is something that I will use the essence of the spirit of motivations from my fellow participants and seeing the perservance of making the ASIMO come alive in our daily lives in the future.

### **A Small Incident yet a Major Outcome.**

(Similar to my Eco-Tour slogan. Come with minority in mind, Leave with majority in your heart) Although there were controversial comments that minority in this slogan is inappropriate, however, I think sometimes, we should not read too much into the words such as minority or small. Because the meaning behind it is the heartwork from all of us. Also, in many communities, the minority themselves really call themselves minority because they accepted that they are minorities and are proud to be one. It is when we think otherwise, that we start to think that they are "losers" because of the word "minority" which will cause bad feelings. We want the world to know that minority does not mean less privileged or less-abled, they are just lesser in numbers.

In this environment that is safe for us to explore our creativity and experiment with the possibilities, experiential learning was helpful to learn new things quickly. I really like the dynamism in each topic and felt good about what ideas came out from our discussions, especially in group study time.

Although I would not say that after IATSS forum, I had really became a leader overnight, I think the teachings and experience is valuable and will help me to become a better leader in the future.

## **Personal Objectives**

Before coming to the forum, my personal objectives is :

1. Improve my thinking ability
2. To gain knowledge of ASEAN neighbours
3. To understand safety education in our countries

In terms of my thinking ability improvement, after going through seminars, I learnt more about each countries strength and weaknesses. Hence, sometimes, when we require some information about another ASEAN country, it is easier to understand what my co-participants are expressing. Review about the lectures materials also helps us to understand how we can approach each subject with an open mind. The traffic safety education in Japan is certainly eye-opening experience for me and I am happy to be in this field where many people are working hard to ensure the safety of everyone. I am now more proud to be working in an industry that is important for people.

Before coming to forum, the skills I want to achieve :

1. Improve Japanese language
2. Decision Skills
3. Public speaking anytime

I had improved in my overall skills although it is not much, but I get more confidence to speak. I believe this is accredited to my friends in this forum who always encouraged me. They always have confidence in me and it boosted my confidence too.

My Japanese language improved during my homestay period as I conversed in simple Japanese language and my host mother taught me as well. Interacting with the Japanese participants also helps and going around especially when you are lost helps to improve Japanese as well. I really like this way of learning. I wished we could have more time with them!

For Decision skills, I think I am still quite a wishy-washy person who cannot make decision swift and good! But once I decided, it will be only be that decision which I will not change easily. Over here when we only have a short time to do many things, we really have to decide fast all the time. It did help to improve the decision making process.

For Public Speaking anytime, as I have more confidence to speak, I do speak my mind freely. I learnt that no matter whether your opinion is good or bad, we should speak up and discuss about it. However, for this, I still need to improve my PR (People Relationship) skills! To be able to talk about anything under the sun and yet know each other deeply.

## **A little disappointments**

The only disappointment I have is during seminar's group discussion, I always get to join the same group of people for my discussion. There are other participants whom I had never had the chance to join in the same group together for discussion and I felt it is a little regret as I do not hear and discuss with these people. I do not mind with the same group of people but I would like to get with other members as well. Even till the last seminar, it is also with the same person whom I had discussed in other seminars and even in my group study. I felt that we do not have much chance to interact with other members from other group study members. However, I respect the decision of the forum and probably there may be some group dynamics that the staffs find in us which is why we are always in the same group.

There is no specific program that has a big impact on me. I am very happy everyday. I can cope easily with changes perhaps because I had the experience to work with foreigners and English is not much of a problem. I am glad that some participants looked for me to help

about this too and I am very glad to be able to help them with any problems. Sometimes, laptop issues, sometimes language issues, sometimes, just a listening ear.

However, I am pretty much in awe when we were arranged to go to meet the mayors of the city, high level officials from various government bodies such as police and embassy representatives.

I think I am not so well prepared to meet important people and to interact with them. This is something that I need to improve.

**In the near future**, I hope that after I returned to my home, I can continue to work in the Alumni of IATSS and join with other members from other countries and see through our eco-tourism project together with my fellow group members. In terms of my work, I am sure the experience in traffic safety is helpful to improve my negotiation with my bosses.

It is with a simple philosophy that made this forum together and we should carry it on. Maybe each year, we can visit each of our countries to get together. I am sure there are many exciting activities ahead of us.

Time flies so fast that sometimes I do not even know which day is it. It was enjoyable everyday even though we have many datelines to complete! Somehow, we take things in our stride and we still practise our daily routine – Onsen! This is one of the things that I will cherish in our remaining 5 days here. Sometimes I hear quite a number of participants all wanting to go back as they missed their home very much. However, for me, I do not wish to return back home so quickly. I wished time would be really really slow for the last day to come! I really enjoyed my time here in Japan and wished to stay longer.

At the end of the program in the 55 days, this closes a chapter of my life, but it is just the beginning to another new chapter, back to reality again, from this dream. Survive Yourself!!





## **An Unbelievable Learning Opportunity!**



**Allene Teo (Allene)**  
**Singapore**



### **Overview of Learning Experience**

The feedback from the Alumni of the IATSS Forum all confirmed it as a wonderful learning opportunity and I certainly have not been disappointed in my expectations. I expected to gain a lot of knowledge and information through the seminars and field trips which I did, but I did not expect that so much more would be learnt on effective communication between people from contrasting backgrounds and working style. The IATSS Forum time table is extremely hectic, a lot of reports need to be churned out in tight deadlines. In such circumstances, when people face roadblocks or challenges, there is bound to be friction. My greatest learning opportunity arose from these challenges, allowing me to put into practise the facilitation and conflict management skills taught during the Seminar and Gasshuku.



**Picture 1: Team Building Training during Gasshuku**

The choice of Eco-Tourism for the Group Study also provided new learning opportunities. The practical experience gained from actual eco-tours in TOBA was invaluable. The lessons

learnt cannot be properly taught in a classroom setting, from a purely academic point of view. The other field trips besides the eco-tours, e.g. Suzuka City Hall, NOH Theater also contributed a lot to the overall learning experience. There was a good variety in the different field trips, creating many opportunities for interesting, new learning experiences.

I must not forget to mention the learning one can gain from the seminars on a host of different topics, the most direct form of learning opportunity at the IATSS Forum. The country presentations together with the group discussion are great avenues to view issues through different perspectives. While we participants may not always agree on an issue, it is useful to hear viewpoints seen through different lenses in order to broaden our understanding and develop a global mindset.



Picture 2: NOH field trip at Nara

In mentioning the above, it is important to remember that the common thread and the essence of the IATSS forum learning is the people. The lovely, bright bunch of participants, each with our own quirks and talents, the hardworking and dedicated staff as well as the many lecturers, presenters and volunteers who took time out for their busy schedules to meet with and speak to the IATSS Forum participants. It is the people and my interactions with them that I will remember the most and which have shaped me most significantly in my time at IATSS forum.

### Learning from Challenges and Conflicts

There is a saying: "The most solid friendships are often made in mutual adversity." To a certain extent I have learnt the truth of this saying through my time at the IATSS forum. While we cannot be said to really go through real adversity, we do face quite a bit of challenges and conflicts as already mentioned. There is a significant amount of work that is required of the participants; country presentations, CED preparations, coordinator reports, Group Study preparation and reports and of course, this accomplishment report. All this work



combined with the tight timeframe could be quite tiring at times and I sacrificed quite a bit of precious sleep in trying to rush out work or rehearse presentations or CED dance performances. This lack of sleep and resultant stress sometimes caused me quite a lot of frustration during the group study discussions when it sometimes seemed that we had no solution to our problem. At first I tried to push the group along to reach some consensus, being very mindful of the deadline to submit concrete proposals and presentations. However, I soon realised that I had to slow down and take a few steps back. Many of the IATSS forum participants come from countries where English is not their 1<sup>st</sup> language. Thus, they had a lot of difficulty understanding me, as I was very used to speaking at a speed too fast for most to follow. When reminded of my speed, I would slow down, only to forget and increase my talking speed a few minutes later. Moreover, misunderstandings would also arise from the different cultures and personalities of the participants. Take the following examples for instance:

- 1) An expression of surprise “ AHHH” by the ASEAN participants was taken as an expression of anger by the Japanese participants.
- 2) My working style is very direct with little time for pauses. When I ask for questions or opinions, I usually wait a short while, if there is no response I will move on to the next topic. While this is not a problem in Singapore, I slowly realised that an adaptation of this working style was needed to reduce misunderstandings at the IATSS Forum. Some participants were not confident in their use of the English language and took time to digest information or questions. They were not able to respond fast enough before I moved on the next topic or question. As a result, I missed out on opportunities to hear their opinions on the topic.



Picture 3: Eco-Tourism Group Study Discussion

My learning points from the experience was to constantly remind myself to carefully observe the people around me and try to adapt my habits to their comfort level. It is important to try and clarify or check whether my understanding of certain actions or behaviours was the same



as the people around me. In addition, patience and a gentle attitude is essential in overcoming conflicts and reaching a consensus on difficult issues. I learnt that one of the most difficult things to master is balancing the need for assertiveness to push through with the project work by the given deadline and taking a step back to give others room to think things over and discuss. While I definitely have not mastered this skill yet, this experience at the IATSS Forum has made me aware of the necessity to develop in this area.

I am thankful for the difficulties faced, as it gave me an opportunity to understand the people and other cultures better. Without the conflicts or struggles, I would not have been aware of the unspoken behaviours and issues. Furthermore, the challenges helped deepen the friendships built among the participants as we tried to face the difficulties together. The satisfaction that comes as a result of mutual hardwork is very beautiful. Special mention has to go to the preparation for Culture Exchange Day (CED) and the successful carry out of the event itself. All the participants were actively involved in CED, whether it was coming up with the dances, preparing the music, coordinating the script or just practising the dance steps. Many times, after making many mistakes on the dance steps, I secretly wondered if I was going to make a fool of myself on the day. Furthermore it rained some days before the CED, making me slightly concerned about the weather. The staff and the CIRs were very supportive, telling us it would always work out well on the day itself and not to worry. Thank God, the day dawned bright and clear and the event proceeded very very smoothly, with great participation from the audience. All the participants coordinated well with each other and worked hard to make the event a success. It was a good lesson to just do my best on any task and trust God for help on things which are out of my control, like the weather.



Picture 4: Cultural Exchange Day

### Learning about Eco-Tourism

Eco-Tourism is a very new and valuable concept for me. Up till this point, I have had almost no experience with eco-tours, being focused only on mass tourism or humanitarian projects. The Eco-Tourism fundamentals hold a very strong attraction for me. It is well acknowledged that resources on earth are limited and running out fast. Many people, including myself, do not really think much about this issue even though it is vital that available resources are used in a sustainable manner if the earth is to be preserved for future

generations. Moreover, coming from the city, I seldom think about preserving traditional cultures, practises & lifestyles as my work consumes most of my waking hours, leaving me very little time for such musings.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on eco-tourism this year opened my mind to the possibilities of doing my part as a responsible earth citizen and intrigued me to examine traditional cultures more closely. I am more aware of the damage that mass tourism can inflict and want to be more involved in developing and going for eco-tours. What impacted me the most was the practical eco-tour experience in TOBA. The tour allowed us a peek into the lives of the people on the island. All of the participants were touched by the group of school children who guided us on Suga Island. Their warmth, innocence and enthusiasm with their simple professionalism made the tour an enchanting experience. What impressed me most was the way the little children tried to take care of us; pushing and guiding us to the side of the road if they saw a vehical coming; having a child always in front of the group to lead the way and behind the group to ensure they did not leave behind any stragglers. This connection with the people was, for me, the heart and soul of the eco-tour.



Picture 5: Children Guiding the TOBA Eco-Tour

If it was just an ordinary tour guide, I would not want to visit the island again as there is nothing much to do there, beautiful though it may be. However, the contact with the children makes me curious to know how they have grown or developed through time and I would want to go to Suga Island again just to see them. The developer of the eco-tour also explained that although the children do not get any monetary benefit, they gained confidence in expressing themselves through the interaction with foreigners. Researching for the tour and preparing the quiz games for the tourist also sparks their interest in the place they live. This

kind of valuable non-economic benefit is what makes the concept of eco-tourism so attractive to me.

The process of developing an eco-tour also generated a lot of learning opportunities. I have travelled quite a few times but never developed a tour for other people. Moreover there are more considerations in the creation of an eco-tour as compared to a commercial tour. We had to think about creating a social system that will sustain the tour. The tour also had to be beneficial to the local community and minimise impact to the environment and in some cases, even try to improve the environmental condition of the area. Thinking through these concepts increased my awareness of environmental issues in other countries and made me reflect on my behaviour as a tourist. In addition to the above points, the most challenging aspect of the eco-tour creation for my group was finding a suitable place for the tour. We were limited by country as we could not choose the Philippines and Vietnam since they were already taken up by other groups. Our initial choice of a tour of the cooperative fishing between fishermen and dolphins in the Irrawady River also fell through because we received information that the dolphins were hardly seen any more. We had a member substitution in hope of being able to start work on a suitable eco-tour but the activities were again found unsuitable. All these difficulties gave me some cause for worry as we lost more than 4 days of group study preparation due to this problem. Finally however, our group managed to settle on an eco-tour for the waste management issue in the lovely tourist destination of Inle Lake in Myanmar. Once we fixed on this eco-tour our group worked doubly hard together to speed through the preparations needed for the intermediate presentation and come up with something interesting. Our hard work was rewarded when we received good feedback from the representative of the eco-tour agency. Through this experience, I was reminded never to give up when the going gets tough but to press on and work together with others. Sometimes, short deadlines and stress can push you to develop good work too.

### Learning from Seminars & Field Studies

The IATSS forum gets very prominent lecturers who are experts in their field to give us seminars and training on a variety of topics. What makes the seminars even more interesting is the series of country presentation done by different participants in the IATSS Forum. Prior to my arrival at the forum, my contact with ASEAN countries and people from ASEAN was very limited. I have only been to 4 locations out of the 9 ASEAN countries. The seminars gave us a chance to hear about important aspects of the country, e.g. political system, environment, education, economics...etc. Moreover these presentations were made by the actual citizens of the country resulting in a wonderful opportunity to understand the ground sentiments, viewpoints of those countries. The group discussions after the presentation were also great learning experiences as all the group members come from diverse background giving rise to many suggestions and ideas on the topic that I had not considered before. Such information is not something that can be easily obtained by just reading articles or online websites.

Many of the lecturers who came to the forum did a good job in getting us to think deeper on vital issues. A good example was the education seminar by Professor Kitamura. He raised a good thinking point about whether higher education in our countries was done for the "Public Good" or being marketed as "Public Goods". It is sometimes difficult to maintain education as being solely for "Public Good" as many higher education institutions face funding problems and increased government subsidy is not always a viable option in the long run. Moreover it is important to have educational leaders with strong moral integrity to



maintain a “Public Good” system. I came away from this lecture with a deeper understanding of the concerns regarding educational systems and a hope to see my country have such a system.

The seminar on disaster reconstruction touched my heart as we heard from one of the survivors of the biggest tsunami to have hit Japan since the 1900s. His heartbreaking story of losing his sweetheart and how he overcame the various challenges was a great encouragement to do one’s best and keep hoping for better things in the darkest of times.

The field trips were very fun learning experiences. The field trip that I enjoyed the most, while learning a lot was the one to Moku Moku farm. It is a great example of a farm which uses environmentally friendly techniques to grow and produce and process food and still make a good profit by setting their own prices and selling directly to customers, cutting out the middle men fees. There not many farms which not only grows the pigs but processes the meat into sausages. The other unique thing about the farm is a classes they conduct for the general public to enjoy. I totally enjoyed the bread making lessons. It was my first time making dough from flour, butter, milk & yeast. Eating the bread which you make from your own hands was definitely a very satisfying experience. Another field trip which gave fun practical training was the trip to Suzuka Circuit Traffic Education Centre. The experience of driving on a slippery road and doing a sudden emergency brake was exciting enough to feel the danger and drive home the importance of safe driving to avoid such scenarios.



Picture 6: Baking Lessons at Moku Moku Farm

The other great learning experiences were the Individual Plan Days. It was a fun experience planning the tour and seeing it through. The best thing about planning tours in Japan is the greater confidence one can have in the transport system. The trains and buses come so accurately, facilitating the transfer between various forms of transport. This allowed us to see many more things as it reduced unnecessary time waiting for transport. It also

showed the importance of good tour planning in order for a better tour experience and built up my confidence to travel in unknown areas. Of course the best of plans need God's help especially when things go wrong. I thank God He brought helpful people along the way to guide us when we got lost in the dark in a remote area of Japan. Getting lost in a foreign country is truly a lesson in faith and guts.

### Learning from the People

Since coming to the forum I have learnt a lot from the dedication and hard work of the IATSS staff, many of whom work for long hours to complete their work without grumbling or complaining and always greeting us with a smile. Their friendliness, care and concern for the participants inspire me to emulate that working style. They give me the feeling of one big family, working and supporting each other together. Besides the staff, the Japanese participants have also shown a very helpful spirit, with their willingness to help all participants in various aspects like CED translations and Individual Plan Day. Another group of people that impressed me are the volunteers. On the Japanese Culture Introduction Day, the volunteers stayed on throughout the whole day even though there was a typhoon raging. Their dedication and enthusiasm in showing us Japanese culture and creating such an enjoyable experience for us was very heartwarming and touching. These 2 groups of people have taught me much about Japanese hospitality and service which has always greatly impressed me. To me the Japanese attitude towards service is world no. 1 and I hope to apply the principles learnt here in my workplace and interactions with other people.



Picture 7: Calligraphy lessons during Japanese Culture Day

Last but possibly the factor that generates the greatest learning opportunities is the fantastic bunch of people who are the 49<sup>th</sup> participants. I have learnt so much more about ASEAN people and ASEAN countries than I have ever learnt in my entire life. The participants try to help and support each other as much as possible. While we may have started out with cultural misunderstandings, we learnt more about each other and interacting in a diverse environment along the way. Each of the participants are unique in their own ways and interacting with them has taught me much about effective communication in a culturally diverse setting. The forum has been an unforgettable, once in a lifetime, amazing experience and part of the reason why it has been such a wonderful experience are the participants. I believe the IATSS forum will turn out to be one of the key milestones in my life due to the friendship bonds forged and learning received, both in the cognitive and non-cognitive sense. I hope this IATSS Forum will be just the beginning of a new learning experience as I join in the meaningful alumni activities and give back to the community that has given so much to me. I will always be grateful for being given the unbelievable opportunity to come to the IATSS forum to meet with all the wonderful people to learn and think together.



## **I, ME, MYSELF @ IATSS Forum**



**Sadudee Kittisuwan (Tum)**  
**Thailand**



### **Preparing and Arriving to Suzuka!**

Before coming to Japan for IATSS Forum, I kept reading and trying to understand all details in Information Kits sent by IATSS Forum as well as the story telling from IATSS Alumni. There are many pictures in my imagination wondering how my life is going to be in 57 days with IATSS Forum, as a representative from Thailand in 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum.

Arrival at Centrair Airport, Nagoya, with Mod, my co-participants, it's our first time to meet and talk with fellow participants from other 8 Asean Countries, namely, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam. With warm welcome of Mr.Akira Haga at the airport and all IATSS staff members in Suzuka Circuit Hotel, I can feel that my loneliness of leaving my country, my family and my friends, has been relieved. During 55 days, room number 4520 at Suzuka Circuit Hotel becomes my home in Japan. I have learnt a lot from the provided seminars, cultural exchange days, study tours, extra-curriculum activities, participants, Japanese local people and IATSS Staff. Comparing with my expectation, Actual achievement from IATSS Forum is more beyond.

### **New Discoveries and learning!**

From Day#1 to Day 55, in Suzuka City, with unfamiliar people, my life keeps growing and exploring. Each day, I have chance to learn something new and/or practice my personal skill.

#### **I can ride the Bicycle!**

It was one of my worries that I was told about riding a bicycle in Suzuka city" because every place from the hotel is very far.

Me? Oh! How???

I have never successfully practiced any bicycle riding since I was young. After I had been confirmed and suggested by IATSS staff to practice bicycle riding beforehand, I tried to practice bicycle riding sometimes before I came. I have some practice in a park in Bangkok.



Anyway, I have no confidence to ride bicycle on the road at all.

Thank you so much, IATSS Forum, for providing Bicycle training class, I learnt a lot on how to ride bicycle safely. Also, I learn some tips about how to start practicing bicycle. For me, this class is really practical and useful for staying in Suzuka city. Even, the first time riding was not so impressed. Thank you very much, Nori-san, who supported me on my first bicycle riding in Seminar room. And, so so sorry if I made anyone worried about me.

Keep practicing and keep going!!!

First, inside the hotel, I kept myself practicing bicycle riding. Around the parking lot, in front of flag poles, Lilian (one of Singaporean participants, who has the same problem of no confidence in riding bicycle) and I practiced many rounds and many turns.

And after that, on the first Self Development Activity Day, we went to Bell City with most of all participants by bicycle. Slowly riding bicycle up and down hill in Suzuka, along the way with supports from surrounding friends “You can do it!”, “You are almost there!”. I felt like I had to overcome all my fear. I, finally, could make it, safely going to Bell City and going back to Hotel. I, now, feel more confident to ride a bicycle on the road. With bicycle # L, provided by IATSS Forum, I can go anywhere around. I now really like riding the bicycle.

### **My Japanese language is improved!**

It was so long that I have never used Japanese language. I had chance to study some Japanese words almost 4 years ago when I was in Okinawa for 6 months. After going back to Thailand, I have never practiced and used Japanese Language anymore. It was totally broken. In IATSS Forum, I have chance to learn and practice Japanese Language.

I can introduce myself in the Japanese Language for a few short sentences.

“Konnichiwa. Hajimemashite.  
Watashi wa Sadudee Kittisuwan desu.  
Tum to yonde kudassai.  
Tai no Bankokku kara kimashita.  
Tai no Roudoushou de hataraitte imasu.  
Dozo Yoroshiku Onegaishimasu.”

“Good Afternoon.  
My name is Sadudee Kittisuwan.  
Please call me Tum.  
I came from Bangkok, Thailand.  
I work for Ministry of Labour, Thailand.  
Very pleased to meet you.”



I cannot believe that on the Opening Ceremony of the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum, all participants had chance to introduce ourselves in the Japanese language in front of many elites and important people, such as the professors, embassies and local volunteers.

In addition, the Japanese class and the provided materials in the morning are really helpful especially for surviving me, myself, in these 55 days, as well as, help me brush up my very basic Japanese. Moreover, this inspired me to further study the Japanese Language when I go back to Thailand.

### **Believe in power of Teamwork!**

Effective and efficient teamwork goes beyond individual accomplishments. The most effective teamwork is produced when all the individuals involved harmonize their contributions and work towards a common goal. It is my first time to realize and believe in the importance of TEAMWORK through activities during Gasshuku at Suzuka Youth Center, especially, duplication, making the rope square and spider web.



Within a group, leader and follower have different crucial roles. Once again, all members are important. Team must have clear goal. Members should open and trust, not afraid to offer ideas and suggestions.

I really appreciate the way we were able to successfully make the rope in square shape. Well DONE!

### **Broadening knowledge through seminars!**

Throughout the course with IATSS Forum, the seminar topics are very useful and interesting which I urge to take part in. All selected professors/lectures are guaranteed with their reputations, education backgrounds and relevant experience. They are very well-prepared, willing to response to all questions and able to convince all participants to share ideas/knowledge/experience.

In some seminars, the participants have chance to experience by using our 5 senses bringing about a fruitful discussion. One of the most impressive seminars is Transportation, we went to Nagoya to experience various kind of transportation including Oasis 21 Bus terminal, Kikan Bus, Guided Bus.





Moreover, another seminar about private company called FamilyMart Convenience Store. Family Mart Co.,Ltd. shared with us its enterprise strategy theories, current practice strategies and in-store visit experience. Another unforgettable seminar is Technology Development, I learnt how ASIMO is developed and its application to benefit the elderly and disable people. Lucky me, it is my first time to have opportunity to meet with real ASIMO. WOW, so Fantastic!

### **Practicing to be a good Facilitator!**

In my work life, I always hear about Facilitator, but I really don't understand really what the facilitators do and how to assist the progress of the discussion.

After having a Facilitation Skill during Group Study Training, there are some tips for being a good facilitator: Smile, Eye-contact, Questions and Reacting. Keep in mind that “facilitator” is not a “leader”, but to persuade team members to speak out and give chance to everyone to speak out in the right track order to get the expected result.



To be a good facilitator needs more time to practice and practice in various style/condition of discussion.

### **Presentation: speak in public!**

I am too nervous to speak in front of the public. I sometimes talk too fast and don't look professional. During seminars of IATSS Forum, I have many chances to practice my public speaking skill. I try to make myself more confident by better preparation and keeping practice. In addition, I have to force myself to be more relaxed as well as slow down to talk in clearer sentence and think before I speak.



### **Eco-tourism: from Group C to Group A!**

Learning from the best practice of Eco-tourism experience from Kaito Yumin Club is a very good chance. Kaito Yumin Club organizes Eco-tour by pursuing “essence” and “uniqueness” of Toba city and community. It aims to preserve nature, history and culture of Toba. “Only now! Only here! Only for you!” is the motto of Kaito Yumin Club. It means this tour is limited offer, uniqueness of Toba and specific for you.



Undoubtedly, Kaito Yumin Club needs various network and support from the community including local elementary school, restaurants as well as the local government. Kaito Yumin Club has to train all relevant local parties in Toba to have the same understanding about “Eco-tour concept”. Finally, with the win-win situation of Kaito Yumin Club and Elementary School, the kid tour guide is inserted as one subject in the curriculum of the elementary school in Suzuka Island.

At the beginning of Group Work, I was assigned to be a member of Group C. With some technical problem that Group C cannot find the location to implement the project, I was switched to be a member of Group A which consists of participants from Cambodia (BS), Laos (Arthur), Malaysia (Sima), Singapore (Lilian), Vietnam (Fade) and Japan (Ryuji).

At this point, I also learn from IATSS Forum how the staff solved this problem that Group C cannot find the place to implement the Eco-tour project. They recalled all participants for an emergency meeting and tried to find the best solution in order to proceed Group C’s Group Study. All participants, especially members from Group A and Group C, impacted from the change. However, we all are flexible with all difficulties and have ability to handle change so we can get through the problem and eventually are able to proceed the next step of our Group Work.

Thank you, all Group A members, who are warmly welcoming me to join you. During discussion at Piano Lounge, Group A uses Brain Storming method, Ping-Pongs ideas among members step by step, switching facilitator roles until reaches consensus and gets the results.

The Eco-tourism concept at this present is different from what I thought after getting assignments from IATSS Forum. Eco-tour concept is not only about preserving resource (e.g. natural environment, culture, history, etc.), but the development activities (e.g. education and other social infrastructure) are also taken into account.



I really like the procedure of Group A. I learn a lot from exchanging experience, ideas with Group A members. We come up with many creative ideas and solutions for our M<sup>3</sup> Tour, we do eco-tour @ Meo Vac.

### **Let’s Dance: Cultural Exchange Day!**



On the Cultural Exchange Day (CED), I have a chance to promote my country, Thailand by charity auction and Booth decoration. Mod, and I bring a Benjarong (Thai porcelain) covered mug from Thailand to be our charity auction. About Thailand Booth decoration, we have concept about Songkran Day and Thai Fruits. We also bring some preserved fruits from Thailand for guests to taste, such as Fried Durian, Dried Tomato, Tamarind candy, and



dehydrated mango and Glico Pretz (Larb flavor). There are many guests interested and come to visit Thailand booth.



“Traditional dance” is the theme of CED 2012. Apart from RamWong (one of Thai traditional dances), it’s a very good chance for me to learn other countries’ dances: Myanmar Yane dance from Myanmar and Paslop from Laos. I really enjoy singing and dancing with participants from Asean countries, Japan and MIF members. With all contribution from all relevant parties (IATSS participants, MIF and IATSS staff), we bring about the success of the event.



### Discover unknown “Noh”!

I have chance to see Noh, Japanese Traditional Stage Performance. Noh stage has special characteristics with no curtain between the playing area and the audience. Only men can play on the stage for both male and female roles. Even, the music is not played on that day, Noh stage, costume, song, mask and slow movement of the actors are stamped in my heart as one of my unforgettable Japanese Aesthetics.





## Unfamiliar people become forever friends!

There are many chances to meet with unfamiliar people during training at IATSS Forum:-

The Japanese Cultural Introduction Day is very amazing. I really appreciate the kindness of volunteers who come to create and fulfil the day. When I first met them, Yukata (a Japanese traditional dress) is fit on me. Step by step, wow... this is so unbelievable; I finally become a Japanese look lady. It is my first time to wear Yukata. During the day, I learn a lot about Japanese culture such as Tea Ceremony, funniest telling (Rakugo), musical instruments, dance, games, and stone art decoration. Besides, I admire the contribution of volunteers to the success of the event.



Furthermore, during homestay visit with Shimokawa family, spending time 2-day and 1-night makes me understand and know the Japanese lifestyle deeper and deeper. Mayuko (mother) drives us, Yuto-kun (her 14-year old son), Reiko-chan (her 4-year old daughter) and I to Okage-yokocho in Ise City. Here, we tried food tasting along the street. I really enjoyed the time with them. Noticing in their mansion, I learn that Japanese people are very discipline and efficient space utilization.





Next, Prof, Adachi has arranged a program of “Volunteer students” for IATSS Forum participants to spend a day travelling in Nagoya. I am one who joined this program and had chance to meet with 2 students of Prof. Adachi, named Ms.Nanami Nakajima and Ms.Mitsuyo Takeda, who brought totally 5 of us around Nagoya even it rained a lot on that day.

As our request, we would like to try Hitsumabushi, Nagoya's favourite grilled and copped unagi (eel) served on top of rice. They tried to find the cheapest restaurant that service Hitsumabushi.



Lastly but not least, all 22 participants (18 participants from 9 ASEAN countries and 4 participants from Japan) as well as all IATSS Staff, who spend my 55 days together, our bond will be prolong and our relationship will be eternal. The story of 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum will never end. With them, I learn about differences and similarities among the nations as well as to manage and utilise the power of diversity.



### **Future Plan: LifeLong Learning!**

“One minute is value! Never loose time for nothing. Be punctual.”

“Keep on learning! Never stop to know and experience more.”

55 days in IATSS Forum incubated “I, me, myself”,  
 how to think and learn together.  
 how to live in diversity.  
 how to be a part of good teamwork.  
 how to absorb and apply knowledge.  
 How to better manage my time.  
 etc.

As a civil servant, I have to go back to work for Ministry of Labour, Thailand. In my opinion, all knowledge and experience, I received from 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum can be applied to my work as well as I will transfer the knowledge and experience to my colleagues.

In addition, I have commitment to Meo Vac Group Study to support and implement our Eco-tour Project in Vietnam in 2013.

Besides, I will contribute myself to strengthen IATSS Alumni Activities in Thailand.

In summary, PRESENT IS A GIFT. This is just a starting point of “I, me, myself”, my life journal. I will DO my BEST to create and collect valuable memory.

Please follow my next journey!!!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Thank you**

The Royal Thai Embassy  
IATSS Forum Committees  
IATSS Staff  
IATSS Secretariat, Thailand  
49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Participants  
All Volunteers  
etc.

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## Accomplishment Report



**Krittiya Tuamyim (Mo:D)**  
**Thailand**



I had a chance to join in the IATSS Forum 49<sup>th</sup> Program for 55 days with the brief ideas about team working. To live and learn with friends from the others ASEAN countries; Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, and 4 Japanese participants, I didn't expected for the great improvement of myself. However, by all activities and seminars IATSS Forum prepared for us, I can feel something different. My life time in Suzuka has already embedded as the wonderful memory I will never forget.

**\* I have learnt something from "Gasshuku"**

After finished the orientation on the second day that we arrived to Suzuka circuit, we went to the Youth center for Gasshuku. Actually we had not been informed about the detail of Gasshuku, we just started all activities at once when we arrived to the Youth center. However, if you tried googling this Japanese word, you might find the definition of it.

*" Gasshuku literally means staying together at a lodging house. In gasshuku, members of the group share their lives for a certain period of time, ranging from a few days to a few months, to develop and strengthen their relationships."*

In three days, two nights at the Youth center, my life completely changed. I found no private space or private time there. We took a bath together, slept together. We ate together, and play together. All I had to do were the kind of team building activities. It was quite surprise that by that all activities, something popped up in my head. With no direct training or teaching, I could learn something new about team working.



To Work in team we couldn't avoid dealing with the variety types of people and conflicts, we need cooperation and we also need to take some role and positioning. Team working couldn't go well without "trust". We need to trust our friends, our group members and believe in our team. Trust was the main principle which was emphasized in the team playing. Moreover, I've learnt that to deal with the complex tasks, strategy is the useful mechanism for the effectiveness of the team work.

Without lectured, I also wondered how I could get many ideas about team working. On the third day at the Youth center, I got on the bus and came back to Suzuka circuit with the doubt of being a good team player. With those requirements, can I really be a good team player?

#### \* **The constructive class "Facilitation Skill"**

We always expect to make the meeting productive, participative, friendly, and cooperative, but we might not know how to make it. After taking the facilitation skill class, I've learnt some techniques to be the facilitator. Although I was not born to be a good facilitator, at least I knew how to be a good facilitator. "Each facilitator may have different way of facilitating", that sentence from the lecturer had a big effect on me. It sounded like an ordinary words, but to me it was meaningful. One can be a good facilitator in their own style.

Good facilitator had to be go-round. Everyone gets to speak for a short, equal time, taking turns, often going round a circle of people. Moreover, facilitator should to encourage creativity, involve everyone, taking the accurate note and generate excitement and energy.

The facilitator will be able to offer information and solicit ideas that may enlighten the group. Good facilitation skills must be demonstrated. This would include the ability to communicate, the ability to manage and lead a group, the skill to actively listen and use effective questioning technique, and the capability to easily resolve conflicts or misunderstanding, to create a healthy interaction among the participants, elaborates the points of the team and her own, and effectively conveys ideas and messages to them.

By taking the class, everyone would have a chance to lead the group discussion which meant that everybody would have a direct experience on being a facilitator. Those who were the facilitator would get feedback from other members in the same group and also from the observer. The teaching technic in the class was so constructive.

At the end of the class, I got some ideas of making the meeting productive. Anyway, I was not confident weather I could apply all of what I had learnt into the meeting or not, but I should try my best.

### \* **Learning about Eco-tour in Toba**

26-27 September 2012, IATSS Forum gave me a chance to learn about Eco-tour in Toba city. We went there by train. It was the first time for me to travel by train in Japan, from Shiroko station to Toba station. We walked to Toba marine terminal for the ferry. Suga-shima (shima means Island), a small island in Toba Bay, was our destination. On the island, our local guides were the primary school students. They were waiting for us when we arrived there. They guided us to see the seaweed plant. It was the first time in my life to see the seaweed plantation. Next was the Lobster wholesale area. The giant lobsters scramble in the basket with their big claw showing the plentifulness of this island. We had lunch at the local restaurant. Our Bento box was packed with the food from the island in this season. They called it seasonal food.



Ama is one of the uniqueness of the local community. Ama dive for shellfish and seaweed. Mostly women, they have been diving the waters of central Japan for thousands of years, particularly around Toba town in the Ise-Shima area.

Toba's ecotourism is conducted by Kaito Yumin Club. They tried to persuade people to come to visit Toba by promoting the essences of Toba city. With the concept of "Only Now, Only Here, Only for you!" the tourists who come to visit Toba will get the special experiences which you can find only in Toba. Only two days in Toba, I've learnt many things. As the town planner, it also inspired me of the slow city concept. The peaceful environment and easy going life style of people there were so impressive.

### \* **Colorful Kamigamo Shrine and Nene's Street, Kyoto**

The first Individual plan days in Kyoto, 6-7 October 2012, there were many interesting places I visited: Kiyomizu Temple, Kyoto tower, Fushimi Inari, To-ji temple, Kinkaku-ji temple, Ginkaku-ji temple, Nishiki Market. Every place was beautiful and nice, but Kamigamo Shrine and the Nene's street were the most impressive for me. I went to Kamigamo Shrine late in the morning and went to Nene's street in the evening.

**Kamigamo Shrine** is an important Shinto sanctuary on the banks of the Kamo River in north Kyoto, first founded in 678. Its formal name is the Kamo-wakeikazuchi Shrine. It is



one of the oldest Shinto shrines in Japan and is one of the seventeen Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto which have been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. When I was there, there were many activities running around. Surrounding by all activities in every part of the shrine, I could feel peacefulness in my mind.



### **Nene's Street (ねねの道, nenenomichi)**

Nene's street is one of the best streets in Kyoto. It is located in front of Kodaiji Temple which was built by Nene for his husband Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Nene also removed her house and garden on Fushimi Castle and built Entokuin Temple. Those two temples Nene for Hideyoshi are on this street. The view of Nene's street is considered as the most apparent view of Kyoto.

On the street along the way to Kodaiji temple, I was there with the intention of visiting the Kodaiji temple as the last place of the day before going back to the hotel. Along the street, there were many beautiful young ladies and young man wearing the colorful Yukata. They were chatting and smiling. Walking along the Nene's street, I couldn't recognize the time. The beautiful landscape and charming surrounding will keep my heart warm forevermore.



### **\* Visiting the land mark of Nara: Todai-ji Temple**

Todai-ji (東大寺, "Great Eastern Temple") is one of Japan's most famous and historically significant temples and a landmark of Nara. The temple was constructed in 752 as the head temple of all provincial Buddhist temples of Japan and grew so powerful that the capital was moved from Nara to Nagaoka in 784 in order to lower the temple's influence on government affairs.



At Todai-ji temple I learnt about the great and long history of Japan. During the Nara period, Todai-ji served as the central administrative temple for the provincial temples. The Great Buddha Hall (Daibutsuden) has been rebuilt twice after fire. The current building was finished in 1709, and although immense—57 m. long and 50 m. wide—it is actually 30% smaller than its predecessor. Until 1998, it was the world's largest wooden building. Sika deer regarded as messengers of the gods in the Shinto religion, so they roam the grounds freely.

By the fantastic story and architecture of Todai-ji temple I was persuaded to go back to the long history of Japan. It also reminded me of a quote 'All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of yesterday'.

### **\* Learning Japanese culture and sharing ASEAN cultures on the Cultural introduction day/ Cultural exchange day**

I would not have these marvelous memories if I didn't come to Japan as the IATSS Forum participant. The Japanese cultural introduction day and the cultural exchange day were the most beautiful days for me in Japan. On the Japanese cultural introduction day, it was my first time to wear Yukata, and learned something about Japanese culture from the Japanese volunteers. For this nice memory, those pictures I had on that day will always keep me smile.

#### *Japanese Cultural Introduction Day (30<sup>th</sup> September 2012)*



The cultural exchange day was the big day for me! It was one of the highlight of this program. For that day, we, all participants and staffs, had to prepare and practice many things. Especially me who couldn't express oneself well, I needed to try it hard. October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 was the day. At the media park, we went there in the morning for the last rehearsal. The



festival started at 1 pm. People occupied the seat gradually. All participants, CIR staffs, 4 Japanese participants and all IATSS staffs tried their best to make it good. By the best attempt, it appeared to be an enjoyable day. People joined in all dances. Smile and joyfulness expressed in one's eyes. Only these little something on the cultural exchange day, I will never tell anyone that I have the stupid life. It will long lasting as an unforgettable memory for me.

#### *Cultural exchange day (21<sup>st</sup> October 2012)*



#### ✿ **Learning Agricultural tourism from Moku Moku farm**

Moku Moku Farms (モクモクファーム) is an organic farm in Iga that produces many varieties of food but is especially known for its pork and beer. It is one of the largest such farms in Mie and draws a decent number of tourists to its main farm in northern Iga. It also runs a number of buffet-style restaurants which are directly supplied by the farm, three of which are in Mie.

We learned about the agro-tourism from their experience. They start the business only by develop and selling sausages. From sausages, it becomes the agricultural park that people from everywhere come to visit. They don't want to increase the market sharing by competing over the price, but they built the 'Moku Moku' brand to be the high quality product brand. I found that Moku Moku development background story was very useful for me to adapt it into practice in Thailand.



#### ✿ **Homestay**

On 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012, I got an e-mail from Nori-san informing about my host family. I was so exciting to have an experience with Japanese family. My host family is the 'Shibagaki' family. In the morning of 13rd October, Shibagaki family came to pick me up at Suzuka circuit hotel to their home. Actually I felt a bit uncomfortable to bother other people this much, but they were very friendly. There are 4 people in Shibagaki family (English teacher(Part time job)); Yoshiko SHIBAGAKI (Teacher(higher professional



school)), Kanji SHIBAGAKI, Satoru SHIBAGAKI (6 years old boy), Kaoru SHIBAGAKI (3 years old boy). The day before we went to stay with our host family, we were explained about do and don't in the Japanese home. To stay with the Japanese family was the very rare experience that was not everyone can easily expect for. Yoshi-san and Kanji-san, they arranged a cozy tea party for me. Our guests were the 6-7 years old boy and girl in the neighborhood. I was very exciting when our guests came. They were right in front of the Shibagaki house on time. We enjoy the snacks, tea and juice together. We play and chat. Two days one night at the Shibagaki house, in that peaceful and friendly neighborhood, I buried the friendship tree. Until next time, I will meet them again. Then I will welcome them and treat them as good as I was treated here, in Japan.



✿ **There are 11 seminars and 1 group study tasks in 55 days**

When I was informed about the program schedule, I was surprised that we would have 11 seminars in the 55 days.

Seminar 1: Political Systems: Our Lives and Politics

Seminar 2: Environment and Sustainable Asia

Seminar 3: OVOP: One Village and One Product

Seminar 4: Japanese Culture: Japanese Aesthetics～

Seminar 5: Japanese Citizens' Voluntary Organizations Active in ASEAN Countries

Seminar 6: Transportation: Urban Buses and Pedestrian Mall

Seminar 7: Education

Seminar 8: Economics: Understanding the Modernization Process of Japan

Seminar 9: Disaster Reconstruction

Seminar 10: Enterprise Strategies: Convenience Stores "Family Mart"

Seminar 11: Japanese High-Technology: Honda Humanoid Robot: "ASIMO"

Thailand had to prepare the presentation for 2 seminars which are the OVOP (One Village and one product) and education. Mostly we would have the lecture from the professor who was invited by IATSS Forum for each seminar in the morning and having the group discussion in the afternoon. In each seminar, I could learn some important aspects and some hint from the lecturer. In the group discussion activities, there were the good chances for us to apply all knowledge, especially the facilitation skill that we had learnt since the beginning. Members of the group discussion would be assigned alternately in each time. We would learn to take responsibility and tried the variety roles in the group discussion of each seminar.

We went to Kyoto for the Environment and Sustainable Asia, OVOP seminar and Japanese Culture (Japanese aesthetics seminar). To learn about Japanese aesthetics, we were led by Professor Fister to Arashiyama area. There was no group discussion in this seminar, but we went out to visit Tenryu-ji.

### The Japanese Aesthetic Seminar

When we learned about Japanese art and aesthetic, we would learn something about Shinto. Due to the fact that Shinto is considered as the fundament of Japanese culture; with its emphasis on the wholeness of nature, we were surrounded by natural landscape and the great wooden architecture in the Japanese aesthetic class on that day. From the very beginning point to learn about Japanese aesthetic, I hope to gain more ideas about this in the future. It's interesting for me. Thank you for the good inspiration from the seminar.



### Tracking the public transportation in Nagoya

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012, we went to Nagoya for the transportation seminar by bus. We arrived to Sakae, the Nagoya's downtown district. We met professor Nakamura at the Oasis 21 complex. It is the Sakae's new landmark which was opened in 2002; accommodates Nagoya's highway bus terminal and several shops and restaurants. We got the Manaca card which was the prepaid card to use for JR train in the greater Nagoya area, the Nagoya subway Meitetsu trains and Meitetsu and Nagoya city buses.

We travelled around Nagoya by various types of public transportation. It was the valuable seminar that gave us the whole image of transportation development in Nagoya.



*These 55 days of IATSS Forum program was kind of intensive course for me to brush up my knowledge, to gain for more skills and to be more responsible. Parallel with the training classes, I also had a chance to learn about Japanese culture which was the rare and exclusive experience for me. With its tight schedule, I can say that this is the constructive and valuable program I have ever experienced. I won't let all precious time and experience that I*

*got while I was staying in Japan with IATSS Forum passes by and fading from me. I hope to go back home and try to do something different, for I can prove that the program was productive. After finished the program, this proverb comes up to my mind "I've got a great ambition to die of exhaustion rather than boredom."( Thomas Carlyle) Thank you IATSS Forum.*





## **A new me!**



**Hoang Thu Phuong (Fade)**  
**Vietnam**



When I am drafting this report, there are a few weeks left to the day we will leave here, IATSS Forum at Suzuka Circuit Hotel. To be honest, what I learn from IATSS Forum Program and other participants are more, more than what I expected. I can say that I am growing since I came here.

### **The first impression**

A moment I never forget is when we just arrived at Nagoya Chubu Airport and saw Mr. Akira Haga in front of checking gate taking picture for us and other participants from ASEAN countries. They were all very friendly and we made friend easily. And when we arrived at Suzuka Circuit Hotel, all staffs of IATSS Forum were waiting for us and waving their hand with smile. This impressed me much; I was so pathetic with their warm welcome to all of us.

I also felt comfortably as accommodation arranged by IATSS Forum, each participant stayed in one room and no need to share. Everyday new towels and pajama were given to us, the room was cleaned twice or three times a week, we had buffet breakfast and lunch and dinner in the cafeteria. I really appreciate IATSS Forum for their thoughtful preparation and careful arrangement in order to create convenience for us during the period of two months.

### **“Thinking and learning together”**

It is truly the simplest motto I have ever known. Easy to remember, simple to understand. But the meaning of this motto is more than words, only when you spend two months with new friends/participants, you may understand the meaning of it. We think together, we learn together and all activities of IATSS Forum Program have the same purpose, is making us gather to study and improve ourselves.

### **Knowledge and experience**

It will be a mistake if I do not mention Seminars as the resource of knowledge and experience I have gained. To become outstanding leaders, it is important to acquire basis knowledge of each field and at the same time to gain understanding of the viewpoints, way of thinking, ideas, etc. in each field and to learn how to interlink them cohesively. The Seminars are designed for study of basis knowledge in social issues in Japan and other ASEAN

countries by looking into such issues. Each seminar was presented by three designed countries and from there, we spoke out our opinion or ideas the filed. We also listen to the lecture of professor who was invited by IATSS Forum in order to provide us knowledge and experience on the topic. Based on looking into such issues and successful case studies, we could understand more other countries and know about political system, environment, NGOs, education, economy and international cooperation and found down what is similar and what is different between each country. Also, we explored deeper through discussion and to cultivate a multifaceted perspective and problem awareness in problem-solving. According to the instruction of the lecturers, normally we divided into three sub-groups and discussed together the current problem and what is the solution or policy for such problem. It was definitely a good chance for us to open mind and speak out what we think about it. Problem and solution, discussion and argument are the way to deepen our understanding toward each topic through exchanges of opinions in group discussion with fellow participants.

The seminar which I like most is Seminar 6: Transportation. This Seminar was quite different with other seminar, Professor let us experience traffic system of Nagoya before the seminar. We were provided a prepaid card “Manaca” which can be used for both city bus and Meitetsu bus. After that, we came back to discuss about the topic of seminar – transportation.

### **Group Study – The biggest project**

“Eco-tourism” is topic of Group Study which we researched and proposed a group solution to an allotted topic while carrying out the IATSS Forum motto, “Thinking and Learning together”. We divided into three sub-groups and we focused on one topic which was selected and agreed by all members when we were in Kyoto. We studied from our different perspective throughout program so it was not easy for us to discuss and agree all matters of the project.

It is very new to me as I have never involved to any tour operation activities and of course, I have never participated in any project like this before. Moreover, the concept of “Eco-tourism” given by IATSS Forum was quite different with my understanding and I was interested in the concept of Eco-tourism: *“That form of environmentally responsible tourism that involves travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the object of enjoying, admiring, and studying the nature (the scenery, wild plants and animals), as well as any culture aspect (both past and present), found in these areas, through a process which promotes conservation, has a low impact on the environment and on culture and favors the active and socioeconomically beneficial involvement of local communities”*. However, the eco-tourism currently has not implemented in many places, and not many tour companies understand this concept and plan an eco-tour due to benefit, so “eco-tourism” is quite new for tourists.

We had a chance to experience the real eco-tour in Toba-city and to understand the concept of Eco-tourism. We spent two days and one night in Toba-city, a very quiet city and visited Suga Island in a sunshine day of September. A surprise to us, some school kids were our tour guides (Oh, I never knew that a school kid could be a tour guide!). They – little tour guides introduced us their hometown, fishing activities, Amasan and Awabi.... They, although are younger than us for more than twenty years old, but they did their “job” with high responsibility, they took care of us all the time and wonder whether we could understand what they introduced. When we said goodbye, little kids were running across the bridge and tried to say “*Modotte kite kudasai!*” – “please come back”. I will remember the kids in orange color T-shirt standing on the bridge and waving their hands. I hope someday I will visit this place again to see kids of Suga Island.

After visiting, we participated in a presentation of Kaito Yumin Club and after the two day discussion, we understood the concept of the eco-tourism and important elements of an eco-tour.

Regarding the project of my sub-group, fortunately, my presentation of Vietnam was chosen and I was so happy about this. Our project is “Meo Vac” located in Ha Giang, Vietnam. Currently, there is a typical tour to Ha Giang but it is a normal tour, just go sightseeing and take pictures. But after discussing, other members realized that it may become an eco-tour and we decided to choose it as our project. Only four days for Group Study, we worked very hard to completed our project and I wish we will make it become true, someday in next year (2013), all members will meet each other in Vietnam and we will travel in a eco-tour planned by us.



*Taking a nap during lunch time - Group Study*

Though Group Study activity, I understand that all participants will provide not only tangible research result, but also be able to improve their interpersonal skills. Yes, I learnt a lot from this activity, I learnt how to share, how to contribute and how to discuss with each other, especially when we are different, our opinions, our behaviors, our personalities. Totally different but we learnt how to pass difficulties and control if there were any conflicts. As a result, we did a good job and the most important thing, we all are happy what we did together.

### **New discoveries and learning**

Two Individual Plan days in Kyoto were an opportunity for me to discover Japan and myself by the unusual way. Individual tour places importance on each participant independence and encourages us to act independently, in order to deepen our understanding of Japanese transportation and social system and to boost our planning skills. Before, I never ever lived far from my home and any trip I also went with my family, friends or colleagues. Thus, I did not know whether I could travel alone and enjoy Japan unusually. The first day, it was quite hard for me to be alone, no friend to talk, no instruction, no sharing... “Survive yourself” said Haga-san. But everything was smooth than I thought. I did not get lost, if not sure anything, just try to ask local people, by English, a little bit Japanese, by body language.



I felt happy as I could communicate even though I had some language. And Kyoto is so beautiful and attractive; I walked around and took as many pictures of Kyoto as possible and enjoyed the journey by myself. I realized that as a paper has two sides, the same as group and individual has its advantages and disadvantages. But either from group or individual, what I learnt from Individual days is how to change ourselves to fit with situation, thus we could feel comfortably even though we have no experience with this. Therefore, the second day, I really enjoyed and felt happy all the time. I realized that when I was happy, seems everything was fine. I met kindly people, I got a good luck to see the student dance festival, walked slowly in the area of a temple, felt the quiet and peaceful of that place... Or just had a good meal of a Japanese restaurant which I found accidentally on a street.

Other than the Individual plan days, there are some self-development days which we have free time to travel around Suzuka city or further to go sightseeing or to discover the beautiful spot or just enjoy daily life of Japan. We have been provided a bicycle for each person, it was nice to ride a bike and see the life of Suzuka, peaceful city. I felt that I was like the citizen of the city, lived and enjoyed there.

One of the self-development day which I keep in my heart is the day we – Arthur, Allene, Lillian and Ryuji – one of four Japanese participants had a trip to Gozaishou Mountain located in on the border of Komono, Mie Prefecture and Higashi-Ōmi, Shiga Prefecture. When we arrived there, after double checking with local people and local guide, we decided to walk to the summit as information given, we could walk following a small road in forest and could catch cable car to the summit of Gozaisho mount. But from the 10am until 3pm, we did not walk, we trekked into the forest and we saw the road becoming more difficult. Without necessities for trekking and of course we could not have lunch because we were in the forest and trekked for more 6 hours, we were tired. Ryuji, at that time, tried to ask and got instruction of the locals who were trekking there. Then he informed us that, if we still wanted to walk to the summit, it would take more than 3-5 hours and from 5 pm, it would be dark. He analyzed our situation and we listened to him and we decided to come back. Finally, we could see whole Gozaisho Mount from the cable car and changing leaves, green to red. It were very cold in the summit and we could not see anything because of fog. Just tried to take pictures and then came back. But we must say thanks to Ryuji, without him, sure that we would get lost and could not find the way to come back as we cannot speak Japanese fluently. I appreciated what he did for us on that day.

## **Homestays**

To understand the Japanese culture and discover the daily life of Japanese people, IATSS Forum arranged us to have homestays with two days and one night with Japanese family. My host family is the Australian – Japanese couple and they have two kids: the five-year-old daughter and three-year-old son. This is the first time I experience homestays and I really love a little happy family with two kids fighting all the time. The host family is so busy but they still arrange time and welcome me to their home with expectation that I would enjoy a daily life of Japanese people, simple but sincere. Colin-san (the husband) already prepared a small event for his class and his students would join. This was a small event as the out-class activity for his students, to create new environment and his students were still able to practice English. Colin-san asked me whether I want to come and make friend with his student, I thought "students? sounds good" but I was so surprised when I met them. They all retired and they still want to study English. Colin-san explained to me this is a reason why Japan is the one of developed countries with the powerful economy, everybody always works hard and

studies more and more. I wish when I were at their age, I would keep studying and never stop. My host family cared about me and they baked till 3 a.m to have bread for breakfast. They let me sleep late in the morning and we had breakfast at home and chatted with each other and enjoyed bread in peace.



*My host family and his students*

Even though we did not go out for sightseeing as most of host families did but it is truly unforgettable memories in my mind.

### **Meaning of IATSS Forum to me**

From the activities I involved, now I understand clearly that each activity of IATSS Forum has its own meaning, some activities improve leadership skill, some improve teamwork skill, the others provide some technique for professional skill such as communication skill, good listener ... I have learnt a lot from such activities and from the participants as well. Now I understand the purpose and motto of IATSS Forum. Its purposes are to train us and improve our leadership skill, teamwork skill and other skills in need through interesting activities such as Gassuku, practicing for Opening Ceremony, training course of Facilitation Skills and out-door activities as Toba city – Eco-tourism, Moku Moku Farm and visiting some places such as Police Station of Suzuka City, City Hall, etc. Each activities brought to me lessons regarding teamwork, professional skills and others. Now I would like to list some of the activities which I impressed most:

- **Gassuku:**

Gasshuku is a Japanese word referring to a group of people stepping outside of normal lives and routines and going on a sort of retreat together. There are lots of happy group activities, practice, and of course, sleeping together. Before we went to Suzuka Youth Center, IATSS Forum staffs gave us information and taught us carefully about discipline and regulation there. They also taught us how to fold blankets and clean the room. One interesting thing was we had only one hour for bathing and had to light out on time. We did not know how we could follow the very tight schedule.

Yes, it was a very very tight schedule and just a few days since we were in Suzuka, we could not adjust as appropriate for Japanese working style. However, activities of Gassuku given by Tomo-san were really interesting. We understood each other more, understood their personalities and learn how to respect each other. We also learnt how to collaborate, how to work as a team, how to express our mind. One activity I like very much was “Moshi-moshi group”, I could tell to my Moshi-moshi members – Budi and Lillian my objective, my weakness which I want to improve and my target in future. They were so kind to listen to me and also told me their objective, their weakness and we discussed together how to achieve our target. The other activities also made me understand how to connect people and how to learn from people. Gassuku is a good sample of “Learning and thinking together”.

- **Culture Exchange Day (“CED”)**

This is a part of International Exchange program which included ASEAN countries and China, UK, USA and Brazil to discover common ground and differences in culture. It must be the happiest event we had until now. We, participants had many opportunities to meet people from the Suzuka area and other cities. Theme of this year was “Traditional Dance”, we already prepared from country home but it was really difficult to practice. At the beginning, it seemed that all fellow participants thought it was very difficult because not easy to perform well. We (my co-participant - Tea) and I discussed many times to collect the music and how to dance. The last time I dance when I was in junior school, a long time ago, how I could dance our “Trong Com dance” even we tried to make it simple to learn. However, with the support of CIRs – we, step by step, prepared and practiced for this day. Everything was smooth as we discussed together to find the best option for the CED. I still remember the days before the CED, we still practiced dancing until midnight. All were so nervous and did not know we could make it successful or not. But, we tried our best and we did it, the CED was so successful. Mariko-san cried because not any problems happened, she was very happy. We were too. All audiences enjoyed our dances and they danced with us! So excited! We made everybody happy on the CED!



*Culture Exchange Day – Suzuka City – 21 October 2012*

- **Field Study – Nara “Noh” Performance**



Tour of Japanese Traditional Stage Performance “Noh” and Toda-ji Temple was really a great chance for all of us – participants from ASEAN countries to see and experience the traditional performance of Japan – Noh. With hundreds years of history and imbued with cultural of Japan, what impressed me most or should I say maybe what impressed us most is the uniqueness of Noh Performance. Although we listened to the introduction for the short time, but I believe that almost all of us impressed this Japanese performance. We were introduced the history of Noh and how it is in the modern life. The performers introduced us four excerpts of four performances and explained us the stories and meanings.

After enjoying the performances, we were allowed to enter to Noh stage to take pictures and wore the Noh mask. Everybody was so excited and very happy on the stage. Then, the performers chosen Nick – participant from Myanmar to try how to be Noh performer. Nick was made up and dressed up as the women who deeply loved a man, she wore her husband’s clothes and saw into the wells with a hope that she could see her husband. It was so interesting as we understood that how many layers of kimono which performers had to dress up.

The introduction of Noh – Japanese Traditional Performance ended with applause and we appreciated their preparation for our visit from early morning and their enthusiasm to all of us.

## **Changes**

I am so happy because I am here and make friends with participants from ASEAN countries and learn from them a lot. Although I have never ever participated in any international program but I must say this is the best chance I had because it changes my mind, means that it changes my life. Remember what I wrote down in the My Objective, I would like to improve professional skills, to understand the purpose of IATSS Forum Program and apply in reality, and experience life in Japan; now I am on the way to achieve My Objective. The first week, I still did not know how I could reach my targets, but now I feel more confident to say I am changing.

Before participating to the 49<sup>th</sup> batch of IATSS Forum, I was not confident in communication with people, either my client or new friend. I felt very bad to communicate with them, I was not able to express what I wanted to say or what I liked to do. In work, my communication skills are limited due to I just contact with client via mail or phone. Therefore, now my communication skill has been improving, I can confirm again that IATSS Forum gave me a chance to change myself. Day by day, I feel more confident to communicate with people, with new friends I have made, although my English is very bad, but they are happy to teach me and listen to me, it makes me comfortable to participate to all activities of IATSS Forum.

## **Achievement**

People could not change themselves in short term of two months, but I believe what I learnt from the Seminars, Group Study, Field Visit, Study Tour and other activities would impact me, therefore, I may achieve my objective in near future. How lucky am I, I met kindly and friendly participants, they are willing to support and assist me whenever I need helps. If I did not meet these people, maybe it would be harder for me because no one could improve himself/herself alone or just for himself/herself.

I have three objectives and now I reached two. Now I understand the meaning of IATSS Forum and its purpose, and I experience life in Japan. Two months, it is not a long term but enough to see and feel the way of life of Japanese people. The other, I think it is the most difficult, to improve professional skills. Maybe I have not succeed yet, but now I

understand the way to achieve it and I hope by what I learnt from here, I will improve my skills.

For my personal goal, I reached three fourth. Speaking Japanese more fluently; Making friend with people; Going to Fuji Mount and Participating activities of host family or public activities. Yes, Japanese language is so difficult but I will try my best to learn as I really want to come back here again and discovery the unknown beauty of this country.

### **Fuji Mount**

One of my Objective is Fuji mountain. Yes, I wish I can see Fuji Mount by eyes even once in my lifetime. So when we had the two individual days, I planned to go to Fuji Mount and found some fellow participants having the same purpose, then we make a plan and ask the Japanese participants for their comments and always, they were very kind to help us.

It was a cloudy Saturday and after 3 hours by train to Kawaguchiko Station, we could see the AUTUMN! Leaves have been changing and some of trees were red. This is my first time to see the red leaves, all of us were so excited. Then the summit of Fuji Mount appeared from cloud, incredible!!! Many feeling were mixed in my heart. I could not believe someday I could see Fuji mount close to me, it seems like I could touch, so beautiful, so wonderful, so majestic... But in the afternoon, my fellow participants and I could see whole Fuji summit covering by snow and its sparkling under sunshine. I will never forget the image of Fuji standing pride and independently under sky.

### **Summary**

Last but not least, I would like to thank IATSS Forum for giving me an opportunity to improve myself, professional skills as well as personal skills. For my future, I already determined a new “Objective” and I think with lessons I learnt from IATSS Forum, from my fellow participants, I can reach my target. Also, IATSS Forum brought me a chance to open my network, now when I go to any ASEAN countries Japan, I can meet my friends and have a nice time with them.

Future is a decision today. Thank you to support me to have a good decision.



## **Live life fully!!!**



**Vo Quang Toan (TEA)**  
**Vietnam**



Time flies so fast. 8 weeks seem not long enough for each of us, the participants of 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum Batch, especially me, to think and learn together. Here, I have a unique chance to meet and enjoy life with many friends who came from the same home, ASEAN. And I have wonderful experiences in my admirable country, Japan.

I discover that how beautiful Japan is, especially in autumn, when the leaves turn red. I have taken thousands of photos and still wondering they are enough or not. The temples, the shrines, the flora, the roads and modern downtowns I have traveled so far cannot be expressed in some pictures. Everything has its own soul, that I suppose it is the embodiment of Japanese spirit.

I really admire the IATSS staffs, who always smile and say Ohayo Gozaimasu every day when I meet, who got up at 5am just because they want to go with us in field study to guarantee safe for our tour, who can go to the Forum at 7am, spend 16 hours a day with us, always help us with the whole heart, in every activity, from Seminars, to Group Study, Culture Exchange Day, etc.

I really admire the volunteers, my host family, the circuit staffs and many other people I have met for their kindness and helps, so that I can understand how you can overcome many difficulties and challenges to become an Asian dragon, a miracle story of Nihon.

For the friends from other ASEAN countries, actually, everyone is lovely, friendly, enthusiastic and helpful. I have learnt much from them.

### **Arrival**





It created mixed feelings inside me on the first day. Not only because this was the first time I have gone abroad for such a long period (two months) but also I have to participate in an international environment with many characters. A little nervous arising inside me because we come from different countries, different religions. In fact, I don't know much about religion like Muslim, nor country like Myanmar. They seem to be mystiques that I have to discover.

I still remember Karen, Mike and Mr. Akira-san waiting for each of us at the Chubu airport of Nagoya, in a mixed weather of raining and sunshine we can see many times in Japan in a typical autumn. Then, I met the other participants, one by one, Mony and BS from Cambodia, Mod and Tum from Thailand, Arthur and Phet from Laos, Nick and Myat Su from Myanmar, Allene and Lilian from Singapore, Budi and Fella from Indonesia, and the last ones from Malaysia, Sima and Achika. Nick, very soon, showed his potentials to become the photo coordinator from the first day.

### Gasshuku



Real challenges!!! That is all I can say about those days with Ms. Tomo-san. We played many games that required the collaboration of each member. Actually I don't remember all the games but I am sure that after a long day with many activities, both mental and physical ones, I only wanted to take a bath and sleep in a Japanese traditional room, on the tatami mattress.



However, it is true that all the activities we took on those days played an important role to bring every participant together. Some games were easy, like Ubuntu cards, mouth against

mind, some games were much more complicated, like spider web, duplication, but I felt we became more confident, erased the remaining invisible distance between each other, headed to a consolidation and mutual trust, which are the utmost conditions for every activity afterward.

## **Opening Ceremony**

A big event!!! I was surprised that Ms. Mayor of Suzuka and many Mr. Ambassadors were to be the delegates of the ceremony. In Vietnam, this is not popular in similar events. Moreover, the present of Japanese volunteers truly made the day more meaningful.

## **Toba**

Toba is a nice small city. Exclude Suzuka, Toba is the first city we traveled in Japan after nearly 2 weeks. At first, my impression of Toba was about the quietness of the city. Further, I love the sea of Toba because of its cool and clean water.



But the most memorial parts I had were on Suga Island. We have real experiences by involving the community with lovely elementary school students. They are so nice and so Japanese. I love their smiles and so excited when we have to say goodbye, they run and chased our boat to say Sayonara. This memory can be unforgettable and speechless.



## **Seminars**

11 seminars bring with them 11 fields that require us to have a base of knowledge and the issues come from them. Each seminar was presented by carefully-chose countries. Thanks to

that, I earned much fruitful information about the other countries as well as experiences from the participants. Furthermore, with the lectures of professors, we have a good orientation of a flat world and the movement of a new international relationship. Most attractive subjects for me are Environment and sustainable Asia, OVOP, Transportation, Education, Economics and Technology development, where we can meet ASIMO, the pride of Japanese Technology in general as well as Honda in particular. Actually, what I have considered the chance of meeting ASIMO as one of my dreams became true.

## **Kyoto**

A wonderful journey I had in Kyoto! An old, ancient town with many temples and shrines! I like Ginkakuji temple and Gion Corner. One represents a sign of remarkable history. One is a mark point of culture among the crowded downtown, where I can find a maiko or a geisha who occasionally walks under fanciful lights along the streets. Besides, a bus system is an interesting point for me.

## **Homestay**

I have to thank my host family very much because of his kind and hospitality. At first, I was so surprised when I know my host family is a fisherman. In Vietnam, fisherman is a very hard job and he usually goes to the sea for a long-time fishing. However, Mr. Kohama is very different from the other fishermen I met. He once was a teacher, traveled around the world, from European, North America to Asia. He also visited Vietnam 20 times or more, and knows my country very well. He has many Vietnamese friends. Living with his family for 2 days is a special experience that I have never met before, when I can have many Japanese traditional foods, drink beer and go to the sea by his boat.



## **Tokyo**

In my personal view, Tokyo is one of the most dynamic and crowded cities in the world. When I was student, I have a dream of traveling around the world, and one of the most desired cities is Tokyo. Tokyo is modern city, famous for much architecture like Tokyo tower, Tokyo Sky tree, the National Art Museum, the International Forum Building, the Rainbow



Bridge, etc. And I had chance to go by Shinkansen, could feel how fast it is. This is the first hand experience for me.

We spent most of the time to travel Tokyo. A normal day in Tokyo started at 7am, and not finished before midnight because we always want to go and experience more, as much as we can.

The first day, we have a chance to go around Tokyo Station and see how complicated of the system of traffic there. Frankly, I felt so nervous because I could not navigate the direction, the lines as well as the intersection to change line. It was a true chaos with the Shinkansen line, JR lines, metro lines and so on.

However, the concern passed away, as soon as it generated. After few days, all of us can travel independently. Therefore, we can hang out at nights in many places in Tokyo, from Roppongi to Shibuya, from Shinjuku to Ikebukuro, from Asakusa to Odaiba, from Ginza to Ueno.

I traveled Tsukiji Fish market in the early morning and see how the dealers can make an auction and trade. I could see the fish, the shrimps, the squids that were alive in the white boxes which were well – organized, see the vans run up and down to carry fish, and finally, enjoy the sashimi with friends.

I traveled Shibuya to see Hachiko statue, the symbol of eternal friendship between man and animal, enjoy a latte while seeing the famous intersection aside Shibuya station, where hundreds of people crossing the junction when traffic lights were red.

I traveled Harajuku to see the modern styles of the youngsters and teenagers, to eat strawberry and chocolate crepe.

I traveled the only one in the world Disney Sea and enjoyed the famous parade of the Disney cartoon movies' characters there.

I traveled Tokyo Metropolitan tower to observe whole the city from the above position. I took hundreds of photos in Asakusa and Odaiba, with the Liberty statue and Fuji Head Quarter building.

I had a chance to travel Akihabara, a paradise for a Japanese electronic fan like me. It is very crowded every day, with many foreigners who want to buy a famous electronic thing from this famous site of brand new or second hand use. Actually, I bought a lens for my Nikon camera and feel happy for this choice.

And the most impressive memory in Japan, I think, it is the chance to see Mt. Fuji. I spent one day with friends, to enjoy the mountain from Kawaguchiko Lake and Saiko Lake, in the season of red leaves and rather cold weather of Japanese autumn. This is the unforgettable memory in my life.

### **Personal objective**

My objective is to learn experiences from each other. I suppose that, in some ways, I reach that purpose. Through the numbers of activities like Seminars, Group Study, Field Study,

Culture Exchange Day... we have to work together, to express our view, brainstorming the ideas, sometimes we have to debate and therefore, learn how to defend our opinions. However, we also learn when to stop the debates, harmonize the opinions and find the best solution for the problems. In such actions, I can realize the good points, knowledge and experiences from the others.



For example, in the Group Study, I am in a team with Mike, Allene, Myat Su, Fella, Mony, Nagi, Akky. Gradually, Mike proves his skill as a good facilitator who can manage the whole process of studying Eco-tour, and by his explanation and directions, the other members feel comfortable and things go on track, naturally.

Allene can add more information and she seems to be good at typing. Furthermore, she can conclude the ideas we brainstorm and put them on the slides and reports with the correct and concise English.

Fella is a type of creative person who always raises the questions. Many times, we have to thank her because of the new problem she finds that we forget. She makes our research more perfect.

Myat Su brings her idea of Inle Lake and takes charge in collecting data. I am really impressed with the costume and culture of the Intha people there. She promises to bring the project into practice and welcome all of us to Inle and Myanmar. That makes us eager to try to work harder and harder to have a chance to visit the mystique and potential country.

Mony is a type of worker bee. She works hard and sometimes gets tired, especially when the Cambodian King passed away. She is a nice little girl, and we love her, care her as a youngest sister.

Nagi, Akky contribute to our work in many ways. Because they are Japanese, with the different background, so we have to face some funny problems, such as the copyright law. However, they bring their ideas and give us much useful information to make the report more completed.

### **Activity I like most**

One of the most attractive activities is Culture Exchange Day. I think the most important factor for its attraction comes from the participation of whole members. For Seminars or Group Study, we have to work in one specific group. However, in Culture Exchange Day, we have to work not only in different groups, but also together, with all the other participants, Japanese volunteers and CIR students as well.

We have to practice dances, making the agenda, prepare for country booths, do many works that we have rarely or never done before. For our dance, I have to watch the video clip hundreds of time, modify the music, thinking about how to start, to change the moves, and to finish the dance, how to cooperate with Fade in the dance and in setting up the booth. Those are quite unusual for me. However, I think we did a good job. Many Japanese came to our booth, asked many questions, and took all the free brochures we have. That made me happy and proud.

### **Frustration or conflict**

Actually, I have not faced a big frustration or conflict with the other. Every concern is resolved quickly and frankly. I think because we are young and extrovert, so we need not to keep much in our minds. It is better to speak out and solve. I think all of us have positive mindset about that.

However, when we traveled here, we had been told to keep silent in the public, on the bus or train. We sometimes cannot do that, because it is not familiar in our society. I can feel the unease of some Japanese once or twice when we were in subways. Frankly, I felt sorry about that.

### **Future plan**

The leadership skill is not only thing I learnt from IATSS forum, but also the management, teamwork, presentation. I will try to apply what I learnt here to my present work, moreover, share my experience whenever the opportunity comes. Furthermore, I want to go to higher study level, like Master degree. Things and skills I learnt from the program are fruitful for me to apply for a scholarship, for doing my dream of learning from the most developed countries in the world.

I think the Forum gave me a gift that I appreciate very much. It is an opportunity of making a fresher me, to keep my open eye to see the world. Generally, the forum motivates me to try harder and harder every day, not only in my work but also in my personal life. Besides, it encourages me to volunteer and hold tightly every chance in my life journey. Definitely, I will join Vietnam alumni to do activities and may be, put the Meo Vac eco-tour into practice.

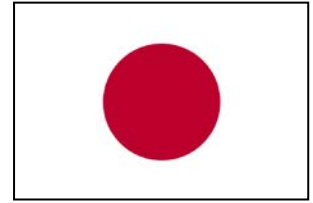
I hope to have another opportunity to visit Japan again in the near future. There are more things that I missed to explore in this beautiful country, and I still regret about that.



# **MY EXPERIENCE IN IATSS FORUM**



**Akihiko Takagi (Akky)**  
**Japan**



## **1. Introduction**

- Background

I work at the Suzuka Honda factory Honda and belong to the power train quality control department. I don't have a chance to speak English at work. I have been abroad only once, to Korea, but I want to work all over the world in the future.

- Reason to join IATSS Forum

I first heard about this program from my superior co-worker. The information about the IATSS Forum he provided interested me a lot. I thought it was a rare opportunity to speak English and communicate with people from the ASEAN countries. So I asked my supervisor for permission to join it. And thanks to support from my office, I had a chance to take part in IATSS Forum.

- My objectives for the IATSS Forum

1. To improve my English skills through group work and other various activities.
2. To communicate with local people and understand the ASEAN cultures.

My experience at the IATSS Forum started with these objectives, and thankfully, I learned something more than this through the seminars.

## **2. Cultural Exchange Day (CED)**

We held this event on October 21, 2012. I had never been involved with such a big event, so I was worried whether the CED would go well. But every participant came to work with enthusiasm and in cooperation with each other as time went by. I really

enjoyed the mood of the event even though it was tough to make all the preparations. I tried to translate from English to Japanese for the first time. I also danced the “TOR TOR” from Indonesia at the CED. I enjoyed practicing the dance, and we could dance together with all our guests. It turned out to be very successful and unforgettable event.

It was a very good experience to make something new. I think that we do need a leader and someone to support him/her to facilitate discussions, especially in case of too many participants for mediation. I did learn through this experience that if we had both, we could make it better.



(TOR TOR dance)



(All dressed in their own national costumes)

## 2. Lessons learned from seminars and visitations

### 2.1. Seminars

I experienced only four seminars they were about NGO's, Transportation (study in Nagoya), Education, and Economics. I realized the differences among the ASEAN countries through these seminars. For example, in the Economics seminar we discussed the strengths and weaknesses in each country. I learned that almost all ASEAN countries (excluding Indonesia) have the same advantage about their location. They are located near to each other and so have geographically easy access to the other countries. Since Japan is an island nation, we can't go to other countries easily. Of course, I already realized this, but listening to people from those countries made me realize this more strongly. In every seminar, the more I learned about other countries, the more I rediscovered about Japan. I think I will work abroad in the future, so I will remember the knowledge acquired through the series of seminars that I attended.

### 2.2. Visitations

We went to Nara, Suzuka Circuit, Honda Suzuka Factory and the Suzuka Traffic Education Center. I experienced a Noh play in Nara. I put on a Noh-mask and found out why a Noh stage is so small and the players move slowly. It's because my eyesight was very limited while the mask was on my face. I will never forget this experience.

Japanese sometimes cites this concept, “3gen-syugi” (three actuals). It means to think based on the actual place, actual thing and actual situation. I reaffirmed the significance of its philosophy.



(Leading economic seminar as facilitator)



(Experiencing Noh play)

### 3. Group Study (GS)

We spent almost half of our time in Group Study (GS). It required hard work and our group members were always short of sleep. But on our final presentation, we succeeded in all things. I wrote down two learning points through our GS.

#### 3.1. How to share information

If discussion proceeds only on a verbal basis, you may not be able to clearly understand each other especially due to a variety of cultural backgrounds. In that case, you should use a pc or whiteboard to display your opinions to people. If you do, everyone can readily see all of the information given.

#### 3.2. How to proceed if you are stuck

If you are stuck, first of all, listen to any opinions or ideas others offer. It may give you a clue to make big progress. But if you stay the same, then try to relax first. For example, our group members were dancing when we were in trouble and couldn't move forward. I think if all members are relaxed, everything is going to be OK. It is important to find your own way to solve many different problems. And in our case, after relaxing, we could concentrate more and suddenly came up with new ideas. I think it can be used if I work abroad.





(Me wearing Myanmar traditional clothes in a presentation)

(Dancing to break an impasse)

#### 4. Conclusion

I spent precious time in this forum. At the beginning, I was worried about my English caring about people's reactions and did not know how to interact with them. But the more we understood each other, the less I felt that way. I think the most important things are being with them and sharing the same time together. I went to the Onsen almost every day with the participants. Those times were so enjoyable and important to me during the IATSS forum. And the variety of activities we did in the seminars made it feel easy for me to connect with the participants.

The original objectives of my participation in the IATSS Forum were to improve my English, learn about the cultures of the ASEAN countries and get to know the people better. Finally, we were able to communicate well with each other and became friends. I will keep in touch with them and cherish the connections I have with them forever. And last, I appreciate my co-worker and supervisor supporting me in attending the IATSS Forum. And I thank all the IATSS staff for preparing everything and the participants for playing an active role in the activities. I want to put my experiences in IATSS to good account in the future. Thank you all!!



(Our group picture)

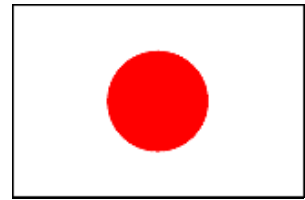


(My workplace: Honda Suzuka factory)

## **This experience is very precious to me!**



**Noriaki Koyanagi (Nagi)**  
**Japan**



### **Background**

I am a system engineer from Honda Motors. I've been with this company since 2000. I want to work abroad someday. But I don't have any opportunities to use English in my current office. So, when I heard about the IATSS forum first, I was very excited.

I was anxious about my current project because this project was very big and important. And I was a group leader of the project. So I thought that I had to give up this forum. But my supervisors and co-workers supported me so that I could participate this forum. I deeply appreciate their support.

### **My objectives**

My objectives for this forum are as follows:

- Know how develop a global young leader in this forum
- Notice what I need to learn to be a global young leader
- Understand other countries' situations
- Build good relationships with the participants

### **Preparations and arrival**

I received a lecture from the IATSS staff before this forum started. I only had 3 months to prepare. I had read materials and researched seminar's topics. I was waiting for the day to come.

Finally, the long wait was over. I arrived in Suzuka on October 10. I was a little nervous but excited. I was expecting to only check our schedule on that day but as we met the other countries' participants, they invited me to go bowling and practice dancing for the Cultural Exchange Day (CED) until midnight! I enjoyed spending time with them. The fun had just started.



## Lesson learned

### 1. Group Study

Next day after the arrival, I had to join “Group Study” first. The theme was “Eco-Tourism”. We had to understand eco-tourism, plan an eco-tour and make a social system to enhance eco-tourism. Other participants had already divided into 3 groups. The IATSS staff decided which group I would join.



Group C which I joined was worried about their theme. The theme had to be decided before the discussion. There were a few opinions in a bad atmosphere, but we continued discussing about our theme. Finally, we had to change our theme twice. It was a result of discussions about feasibility and value in implementing our tour. I think we were able to overcome difficulties. After the extra effort and determination showed by everyone our tasks rapidly progressed, and we could only see one goal. The common goal was a result of a long discussion about the theme.



The atmosphere became better through members efforts and a workshop on conflicts. We could voice our own opinions. We did not only speak but we also sympathized and helped each other, which I can be proud of. If we were at a deadlock or felt sleepy, we could break the situation to use our original method “Dancing”. After dancing, we felt refreshed and able to continue with the discussion.

When we reported on the Intermediate Presentation Day, Mr. Arakawa encouraged us with praise. He said “One of the good points is making local people and community as the main target”. In addition, I wanted to make our itinerary based from a tourist's viewpoint. As a result, we could make an itinerary which I wanted to join as a tourist.

The points which I learned as team building through “Group Study” are as follows:

- Speak about my opinions and don't be afraid of conflicts
- To feel for your members and make good relationships
- Make efforts to create a good mood and devise ideas to break a bad mood
- Divide responsibilities for time management.

Finally, we could report on the Final Presentation Day. However our “Group Study” had not finished yet. Our goal was to implement our “Heart of Inle eco tour” in Myanmar.

There are so many tasks for us to implement our tour and we have to go back to our own country. But I believe that we can help each other. And I want to be the first tourist of this tour!





## 2. Seminar

### Introduction

The "Seminar" was good opportunity for me to attend a professor's lecture after graduation from university. This seminar included not only a lecture but also a presentation from other country's participants and group discussion. I could experience the style that was the IATSS Forum's motto "Thinking and Learning Together"! I joined lectures that were "NGO", "Transportation", "Education", "Economics" and "Enterprise Strategies". My experiences and learning points are as follows.

### NGO

This seminar's interesting point for me was the knowing and having interests about NGO's which I haven't had any opportunities to know. In addition, I could know about other country's treats and they also have plans for natural disasters. Professor Ito said that "Many companies tried to increase their development amount. These actions caused many traffic jams". And he also said "What is a real volunteer? Are companies' volunteers real volunteers?" We haven't had answer for this. But this question will remain in my heart and I will keep thinking about it.



### Transportation



The difference between this seminar and other seminars is visiting and observing targets that are transportation systems and places around there before the lecture. This method was good for us because we could observe them without our prejudice. It felt fun and satisfying to visit as a guide with members. We had interesting time in Professor Nakamura's lecture after visiting sites, because there were many real cases that include other countries examples. I hope these actions will solve issues on traffic jams in many countries in the future.

### Education

I have been interested in Education, because I thought Japanese education was not effective for jobs and our lives. I am interested in the Singaporean education system especially. That was more progressive than other countries. Japan has to implement this system that is especially a bilingual system. In addition, I got to know about Cambodian issues about the education system in the group discussion. In the discussion, I became a facilitator. There were many reflection points for me, but it was good opportunity to do a presentation after the discussion. I appreciate for members' kindness and helps.



## Economics

After the lecture of Japanese history, Professor Kitamura explained about other countries' situation. After that, we took a group discussion. We talked about Strength, Weak, Opportunities, and Threats for each country. I thought that we had to discuss these topics in more detail than this lecture and group discussion, but I could feel that Japanese weakness is natural resource and strength is technology. Japanese has to exert more effort to increase our strengths.



## Enterprise Strategies

First, I really appreciate the IATSS Forum's staff because they supported me when I suddenly decided to join this seminar. It was good to know about other countries' popular products and hot spots. Actually we went to Family Mart and bought some products. I felt good to help participants understand and experience a Family Mart. I want to continue increasing my knowledge about other countries.

## Finally

I was very happy to be able to learn so many points in every seminar. I could know many categories from a global viewpoint. They will serve as a motivation in my life. In every seminar, I felt that I could do more. I want to savor this feeling. I also felt that it was important to visit actual spots, so I want to go to their countries.

## 3. Field Study & visit

Nara Noh & Todaiji-temple I visited Nara for the first time during a school trip in junior high school. At that time, many students including me fell asleep when we saw Noh. So I was worried about doing the same thing again with the participants this time. However, they performed simply with an interpreter. All participants seemed to be interested in "Noh" at the chartered hall. In addition, we could go up to the stage! It was a precious experience for us.



After seeing Noh, I visited Todaiji Temple which I saw 20 years ago. There was an explanation from a guide, so I could discover new topics and reconsider my culture.





## Suzuka Traffic Education Centre (STEC) & Suzuka Factory

I was surprised that the principle of STEC was based on “Honda Philosophy”. I had not heard about it. After learning STEC program, we moved to the training course to experience ABS (Antilock Brake System). I had to sit on the passenger seat that has a brake to support a driver. I sometimes stepped on the brake pedal. My experience was a little scary but I hope that other countries’ safety will be increase thorough this program.



I visited Suzuka factory for the first time in my invitation ceremony. I was also surprised at the changing of the factory. I could see many robots instead of people!



We learned about the effluent treatment system. Participants were a little troubled with the smell but I hope that they knew the cleanliness of the Suzuka Factory.



## 4. Cultural Exchange Day (CED)

### Practicing

I had to practice dancing every day since arriving in Suzuka. It was hard but refreshing especially when we felt tired in the



seminars and Group study. I had to make a video, a translation and an explanation. It was very hard, but I felt satisfaction at being able to do those



We sometimes practiced per group, had a meeting or groups dance all together while waiting for the performance. And we were waiting for the time.

### Performance

Finally, the most awaited day came. In the morning, we prepared each country’s booth, had a rehearsal, changed our clothes, and waited for the opening of performance. After the opening, I felt time was so fast. I think experiencing this achievement makes us grow and be a good a team. It was a very good opportunity for us to experience the achievement. I think to experience these achievements makes us grow and make a good team.





## 5. Others

### Individual-Plan Day

I went to Osaka on an Individual-Plan Day with some participants. I am not knowledgeable about Osaka. So my heart was a little pounding with tension when I planned to this trip and showed them to Osaka. We sometimes lost our way, but we can spend pleasant time.

After participants arrived at Tokyo, they also had “Individual-Plan Day”. Tokyo is my hometown. So I could support them to make their plans. It was hard to make many plans for participants. But I could find new things of my hometown. I did some sightseeing in Tokyo. It was also an enjoyable time for me.

Through Individual-Plan Day, I felt that I had to be interested in not only other countries but also my country. I would like to show the merits of Japan to the world in the future.

### At night

It was also a very precious time for me. We usually went to the “Onsen” (Hot spring) and had “an Onsen Meeting” every night. We talked about not only this forum but also our culture, lifestyle and secrets.

We sometimes had a party at a cafeteria, played table tennis and music in the piano lounge.

I think it was necessary for us because we could make good relationships like a family. After that, we could speak opposite opinions whenever we wanted in the seminars and Group study.



I would like to try making good relationship like this in my office.



(It was first time for me to eat Indonesian food by my hand.)

## Conclusion

I want to compare my 4 objectives and experience.

- Know how to make a global young leader in this forum

In this forum, there were seminars of "Team building", "facilitation skill" and etc. There is important for global young leaders. In seminars that we could know other countries' situations, we had to become a facilitator in turns. It was a good experience to practice for us. In "Group Study" that include many countries' members, we could know how to proceed with discussions, how to overcome the conflicts and how to do presentations. We couldn't become young leaders just after this forum, but we could grow in so many different ways. In addition, we noticed what we needed to do for our development. So I expect that we will become young leaders in the future.



- Notice what I need to learn to be a global young leader

I had to be open minded with other cultures with the other country's members. I had to decide my position as a leader and adapt if I find something new. In addition, I felt a big gap of information between Japanese and other countries' participants. The information was not only about government, politics and economics but also movies, music and lifestyle. I would like to collect information to see the world from many angles.



- Understand other countries' situation

I've know a lot about other countries'' situations and issues that include Cambodia's education, Myanmar's economy and infrastructure. I also knew their life's issues that include Indonesia's quality of tap-water and other countries traffic jams and etc. I would like to share to my co-workers and continue exchanging information with participants.



- Build good relationship with the participants

Of course, I experienced very good times and made a good relationship with participants. I wasn't expecting all of these when I arrived at Suzuka. This forum that includes food, clothing and shelter has good programs, so we could make closer relationships. I want to hold on to this relationship. If participants continue to connect every year, we will achieve something in the future. I would like to join the movement.



Our 49th IATSS forum has not finished yet. We have to be active at the forefront all over the world by using this experience. We are not only good partners but also competitors. We often have partners to help each other. We often have mutually stimulating competitors to grow together.

This forum was very precious time for me. I really appreciate IATSS Forum's staff and participants. Thank you very much. Keep in touch!

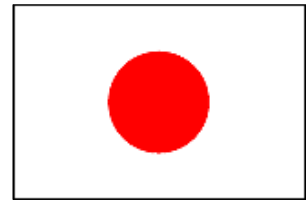




## **Mission and Marvelous Memories!**



**Ryuji Masuda (Ryuji)**  
**Japan**



I have 3 reasons to complete this report. First of all I would like to share the experience of the IATSS Forum with future participants and their managers". "Second I would like to review training days and finally I would like to learn these lessons again". "This is my assignment".

And I complete this report with full of appreciation for IATSS Forum staff, professors & teachers, volunteers, all associates they gave me this opportunity even if I had to be out of the office for 3 weeks, I also wish to show appreciation for all of the friends who shared fruitful days together in Suzuka.

### **1. Overview:**

Suddenly the chance came to me. Management selected me to attend the IATSS Forum. I usually share my future vision to work overseas with my managers. It might bring this opportunity. First I expected much fun and value to come from learning with ASEAN participants, however, I couldn't grasp a clear view of this training. Even the IATSS staff kindly organized our orientation, I asked ex-participants their experience, but could not make the training days. On top of it, we Japanese participants had to join 3 weeks later than the ASEAN participants. It made me worry if I could be as much as a teammate as the ASEAN participants were. With such mixed feelings of expectation and worry, I made 2 objectives based on one certain fact, 20 days with ASEAN participants.

Objective 1. Evaluate my own facilitation and English skills.

Objective 2. Understand ASEAN culture deeper.

I'm 32 years old, I started consideration about leadership for 20 years, working for Honda 8 years. I have experience to make business deals with more than 100 Japanese people. But I have never been to ASEAN countries. I have never worked with ASEAN local people, and I was not sure if my English skill was acceptable or not for them.

From this situation, I did my best at IATSS Forum, "Group Study", "Seminar", and "Field Activities" with some challenges. I had some tough experience with non-mother tongue communication all day, with participants who have different special knowledge, different backgrounds, first time planning of Eco-Tourism, flying time.

In these fruitful tough days, I reached goals below.

- I can work with ASEAN people taking leadership and possible to build up strong team.
- My mind changed drastically in a proactive direction to ASEAN countries.

I made many life time friends.

I shall report how I can get this conclusion in later part.

## **2. What makes me strong**

Accomplishments on each 3 main activities, Group Study, Seminar, Field Activities.

### **2-1. Group Study: To consider building up a stronger group**

I put 2 challenges on Group Study. I have a way to build up a stronger team in Japanese. This is what I get the image based on long term experience since I was 12 years old. However, I am not sure it works ASEAN people. Following challenges are come with such background.

#### Challenge 1.

Try to apply my procedure to build up a stronger team with ASEAN participants.

\* Stronger team:  $1+1>2$ , discuss together all time

This is my procedure in group,

- Watch and listen carefully: Try to grasp the roll and atmosphere of the group.
- Express my own idea: Proactively involved to discussion, be the one of the teammates.
- Talk one on one: Understand my teammates deeper, grasp their objective and desire to this training project.
- Try to make the group more active: According to each objective and desire, share and suggest rolls.

#### Challenge 2.

Leading the group and making conclusions in English.

- Grasping the character of my own group:
- Much Higher English skills than Japanese

- Lots of fruitful idea
- Sometimes discussion gets scattered due to lots of ideas
- Sometimes discussions are too deep
- Make our recognition clear:
- We are all not English native speakers, it is very important to make our understanding clear, and to know where we are in the process.
- Confirm and show objectives of each step:
- To avoid getting lost in discussion, re-confirm where to go based on where we are.
- Adjust agreement point in group:
- make agreement together with the Quality Control method.

When I joined Group A, I was completely behind the others. Group A had already fixed the target country and resource for Eco-Tourism, but I had no idea on it. I must be really carefully not to interrupt the discussion but catch up as quickly as possible. I watched carefully how it's going on in Group A, and not extract idea in short mind listen, listen, listen, and confirm own understanding. Honestly speaking, I didn't understand where we Group A was, nor where to go on the first day. It was a really patient but necessary step. And later, I had a chance to talk deeper in the intermediate session and the free time e.g. just before dinner. I could get to know some parts of the objectives and desire of my teammates, and also to express my own ideas with them. It's nothing related to Group Study, but it was really helpful to understand the logic of Group A. It accelerated our discussion because I could suggest roles to my teammate and make conclusion together.

I would say we became a much stronger team together. It means that I succeeded to apply my team building procedure with ASEAN teammates, and leading the discussion in English. Everybody, not only those who were standing in front, considered facilitation. I believe the real facilitator can be hidden in group and lead by creating a good atmosphere. We group A became a group with many hidden facilitators. And I can not forget to say thank you to all my teammates. I was stuck or couldn't tell what I thought several times. But my teammates were patient about my English and helped to extract my actual intention.

With these efforts, we never left anybody behind. Anytime I put topics on the table and shared them. I confirmed my understanding many times. It took a lot of time. We were usually late, and organized a breakfast meeting sometime. We joked saying to ourselves that we were a lazy group. But I was proud of our slow, careful, strong team work in Group A.

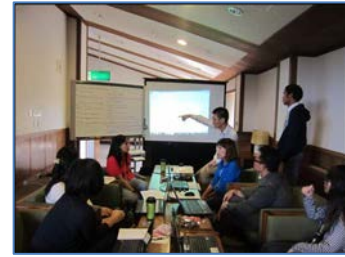




Meeting outside



1 on 1 talk



Group Study

## 2-2. Seminar: Learn the history of each country according to seminar topic

In one seminar, ASEAN participants had to give a presentation about their own country. Of course it is not good as professional because the topic covers rather general area and is and difficult to cover with their own specialty. And sometimes it has no relation to their job. But it came to my heart very much. Their presentations were very interesting, and it generated lots of “why”, resulting in me really wanting to know more about ASEAN countries. Actually I studied the history and topics of ASEAN countries, for example GDP, population, major concerns, religion ratio, etc. It unfortunately easily flew away like wind blows a paper. However the topics which were given by friends remain strong in my mind. When I considered this change, I thought, I piled up information papers on ASEAN countries, but they blew away. Now friends are trees standing on their own country and the leaves are knowledge, which rooted strongly. It last long and kindly gives me study and “why”, seed of learning.

It is really great change. ASEAN countries were just behind the media, internet, newspaper etc. before IATSS Forum, but now, it is the country where my friend, are living. I’m sure this change is valuable for my lifetime.

And another good thing, we had teachers from several specialties. It’s more difficult to have new teachers when we getting older. Of course there are seniors in the company. But if you want to extend your vision, you need another elder. I was touched by the professors and the teacher’s words. They use small but really accurate words and moved us.



Country Presentation



Lecture



Discussion

### **2-3. Field activities: Touch and express culture mutually**

I kept in mind what I can do as Japanese participant. I think we Japanese participants are closer to the ASEAN participants than IATSS staff is in some part. And we are representative of Japan. In this situation, it's also a good experience I'm a participant but partially a host.

What I tried for field activities and for off time, introducing Japanese culture, reducing some barriers which were disturbing ones to try. It's my fun, nothing moved me as much as duty. When a friend feels happy, it's my pleasure.

- CED (Cultural Exchange Day)

First half period, we spent most of the evening practicing for the CED dance performance. We learned and enjoyed Asian dances, and Japanese songs "Ashitaga Arusa". It's tough to sing a song in a foreign language. And most of the participants are not used to listening to and catching Japanese sounds. I amended the style of the lyrics, to make it easy to understand. For example, the beginning part is "Ashitagaarusa Asugaaru". I changed to "A shi-ta ga a ru-sa A su ga a ru". Then you can understand when you keep sound. It was well accepted and actually I saw participants try to catch the song in front of the PC with my amended styled lyrics. I felt happy to see it. Of course we practiced dancing very much. We understood deeper because of those efforts, and I think it is the entrance to understand their background, culture.

- When we go out, anywhere to experience Japanese culture

When we went out to Todaiji at Nara, Mt. Gozaisho, Iga Ninja park, there were full of Japanese culture. If I was a foreign participant, I would want to know many topics about local culture. And usually if we are tourists, we can not guess, but see lots of fruitful background behind. Therefore, I tried to explain with mobilizing all of my knowledge. It is not easy because even in Japanese, it is difficult to explain it all. In English it is much harder! It was a really good experience, I could share Japanese culture with foreign participants and also I could consider Japanese culture deeper and more accurately.

- As somebody who understands the Japanese environment

In our free time, we didn't have IATSS staff to help us. Only the Japanese participants could understand the surrounding environment correctly. So I considered what foreign participants felt and were concerned about in some situations.

In October, it was getting colder day by day. I knew it because I'm Japanese but it is tough to adapt to the changing temperature. It was much harder to foreign participants. Some of them were nearly getting cold. Then I understood that the lowest temperature in their country, was around 20 degrees C. I knew this because we studied it in school, but

only when somebody faces difficulty on it, you realize what it means. I immediately prepared a Hokkairo (pocket body warmer) which they had never seen before, and turned on the heater in the facility. Even temperature, I learned the difference.

When we went out, I drove to a family restaurant because there are various foods. I thought it would be easy to find some seafood or vegetables for Muslim friends, but it was not. Even though it seemed to be, but when I confirmed to waiter, some of them included meat. Fortunately I found good food for my Muslim friends. Next time, I should check beforehand!

And last, we, I and 5 participants nearly got lost on Mt. Gozaisho. I bought map and it showed 2 to 2 and half hour walk to climb up to top. We decided to go on foot. We enjoyed the beautiful view of the mountain, and trail. However, even though we had walked more than 3 hours we were behind half way. When I asked another tourist who was coming down, he said it was more than 2 hours to top, the other said 3 hours and more, very confusing. Friends desired to complete this climb on foot. But it got dark suddenly on the mountain. On top of it, we didn't prepare to climb up, no food, less water, so we skipped lunch, all beginners, snakes from the bush,,, I decided to turn back. When we went up to top by cable car, it was completely dark in the forest. I felt a great relief that we did not continue climbing up on foot. When you invite people to climb a mountain, you must consider the situation and decide quickly.

We have lots of foreigner for business trip. I should apply these experiences when I'm host.



Mt. Gozaisho



Cultural Exchange Day



Iga Ninja Show

### **3. Realized Challenges and Important action**

I realized some of my weak points through my time at the IATSS Forum.

- Higher English skills are needed to extract, or guide one's opinion.

I was helped several times from the other participants to express my ideas. I could understand and lead the discussion. But I felt that if I had the same skills as the others, I could extract more from the others and activate and motivate the group more. This is one of the challenges for near future.

- To understand others cultures and back grounds more,



As I wrote already, I need more improvement to grasp other cultures and to be ready. It makes for quick understanding and avoiding unnecessary stress. To be better facilitator or host, I would need to improve it.

- Do not leave “Why” and “What”.

After any session, I have lots of questions. And I enjoyed confirming it in free time, lunch, dinner time, Onsen, in bus anywhere. Whenever I asked the other participants they kindly explained to me their culture and back ground. And through Q&A, I felt understanding deeper not only the question but also somebody who explained things which he or she is interested in. I think we could become really good friends like that.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Even in 21 official and 3 additional training days, I learned lots of things that I have never experienced in my life. I evaluated my strengths and weak points with ASEAN participants. And now I have friends in ASEAN countries. I must accelerate my understanding about ASEAN countries. With these valuable experiences, I hope to improve my strengths and overcome my weak points, and become able to work actively in global situations.

And last, I am really grateful for this experience I studied, laughed, sang, worried, did anything together with foreign participants. I want to know them, and their countries more and more. I want to tell my Japanese topics to friends. I will keep in touch and we will be life time friends.

I shall close this report full of appreciation for all who prepared this grateful opportunity, the IATSS Forum staff, Professors & Teachers, Volunteers, fellows associates, and all of the participants who created and participated in the brilliant training days.



Certification

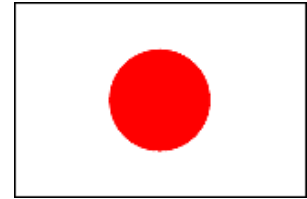


Lovely Group A

## **My Great Experiences in the Mystical World “IATSS Forum”**



**Satoshi Naruo (Satoshi)**  
**Japan**



### **The 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum**

The IATSS Forum was wonderful. It broadened my mind and view of the world. In fact, I had heard of the word “IATSS Forum” since my former colleague participated in the forum in 2006. However I couldn’t get information about this forum, because he was transferred to headquarters soon after the forum. In 2012, 6 years later, I was selected as a participant by our company, which I had never dreamed of

I don’t usually have the chance to speak English at work, I just sometimes read English when I use the CAE (Computer Aided Engineering) system developed in the USA and translate E-mails for the request from branch offices abroad. So my goal was a little bit different from what the IATSS Forum expected. However, I tried my best to reach my goals and it was a great experience for me.

### **My targets for taking part in the IATSS Forum**

- †To broaden my international outlook by understanding the culture, habits and fields of other countries.
- †To learn and to practice English in discussions on business.
- †To make relationships with other participants from ASEAN countries better and stronger.

### **Group Study**

“Group study” is one of the most important programs in this forum, and we spent lots of time discussing the 49<sup>th</sup> theme, “Eco-Tourism”. In fact, I was ashamed because this was the first time that I had discussed anything with a group people and made a presentation in English, so it was very hard to understand what was going on. However, it might sound strange but I became able to understand almost all of what they said by listening to them carefully everyday everywhere after a week.

I felt a couple of differences between them and me. One thing, for example, their thinking about the procedures for making things seemed different from ours. Most of them have an intuitive way of thinking like an artist such as a painter. Typically, Japanese people think rationally including me, and that difference confused me sometimes. I really wanted to discuss with them about that and to

tell them about Japanese peoples thinking procedure but I couldn't do it due to my poor English skill. Even if I had had enough time to discuss it with them, I might not have got the conclusion which is better, but it was a quite valuable experience to know that there are some differences and also difficulties in the world. I hope to utilize fully of experience to make the relationship with people in those countries I would meet in the future better.



### **Seminar**

I learned a lot of things from, not only the professors, but also the ASEAN participants. Actually if we want some information about something we can get almost all of it on the Internet these days. However it was a precious time for me to listen to and talk with them face to face. For example, in the economics seminar, I was really shocked to hear the Myanmar presentation. I learned and realized again that Myanmar has been controlled by a military regime and is a closed country. I was also surprised to hear that even “Mc Donald's” and “Seven-Eleven” which are very popular in the world and we can see them anywhere are not in Myanmar at all.

I must confess that I was not very interested in ASEAN countries before I participated in the IATSS forum, because I am an engineer and my narrow outlook focused only on Europe and the USA which have high industrial technology. However It opened my mind and I learned that ASEAN countries have various possibilities of success. I was very glad I could meet the participants from the ASEAN countries. I appreciate the IATSS forum for the wonderful opportunity to learn and share a lot with them.

### **Cultural Exchange Day**

During the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS, the theme for the wonderful cultural experience day was “Traditional dances/festivals in the world”. When I heard of that, I remembered the nightmarish experience I had while I worked at the recreation department of our company. I practiced dancing hard to cheer our Honda official baseball team which participated in the Intercity Baseball Tournament at the Tokyo Dome, but I couldn't do well because my body action was always different from my image. That is why I was really nervous before practicing with the other participants. However fortunately, this weak point opened my mind and I became able to communicate with the other members better. In the end, thanks to our Sumazau team members who always helped me kindly and patiently, we could succeed in the performance. I appreciate their kindness.

Looking at the dance styles all the participants showed, I was overwhelmed by their flexibility, creativity and great power. Sometimes I was also shocked by their quite free and unpunctual attitude.



However as the weak points could be changed into strong points like my dancing experience, we could create fantastic dance and produce an enjoyable time. For me, it was a common sense that “Time is money” and also “do everything seriously”, but I learned that “Do in Asia as the Asians do” should be also important, and also we should be more flexible and creative to get along well with other countries in the world.



### Field Visit and Study

The most impressive things were seeing Japanese traditional play “Nara Noh” and a valuable architecture “Todai-Ji”. Although I have been there and visited the temple a long time ago, I only remember my friends and I made noise and enjoyed the trip together, because I was a junior high school student.

This time I was quite impressed by the “Noh Play”. To enjoy fully the performance, we need a good imagination to understand the meaning of their action. It is really Japanese and fantastic art I thought. On the other hand, I was really disappointed and ashamed of myself that I don’t know much about our traditional culture and can not explain how wonderful they are. This experience gave me a big chance to broaden my mind and get more interested in Japanese traditional culture.

### Individual Day

To understand each other was the most important for us while doing many things together at the forum. We could talk about many things not only during the forum but also our private time. I can’t forget that I talk about secret things in my car on the way to the Iga castle. I wish I could tell them more these secret topics called “Girl’s talk” in Japanese.

We had also a pleasant lunch at that time and I will never forget a happening at the family restaurant. Although there were many different foods enough to satisfy Japanese people, we participants were from 9 countries and have also some different religions, so we had to ask about the food which included some meat such as pork, beef, chicken or something and it took about over 15 minutes to give our orders. It was also a valuable experience for me to learn about their different backgrounds and cultures.



### **For the Future**

After spending as such a long time as 3weeks out of the 55days, this forum provided me a lot of incredibly precious time and things to learn about other Asian countries and a big change in my view of them. Of course this program is made for fostering the leaders not only for their country but also for Asia and the world, so we took many seminars, visited many places, and discussed a lot during the group work it was hard but enjoyable.

It was important to understand their points and messages, to make fantastic presentations together and also to improve my English skill. However since my English was limited the biggest priority for me was to connect these huge regional Asian countries. I'm not very sure how much I can utilize the relationship for my business from now but I believe this strong 49<sup>th</sup> participant's friendship and benefits will foster me as a human in the future.

I'd like to say many thanks to all the IATSS staff, all concerned and all the participants. I wish you happiness and prosperity.







Autumn 2012

# Hai, Chiizü!

## The official newsletter of the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum



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Vietnam

Vo Quang Toan  
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Hoang Thu Phuong  
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Welcome to the wonderful and wacky world of the 49<sup>th</sup> IATSS Forum—a juxtaposition of personalities and cultures from ten countries that give rise to comical adventures and misadventures. Take a peek into our interesting, funny, sometimes even weird and crazy moments during our 55-day stay in the various cities of Japan. Read through the snapshots of our lives in IATSS and you might just wear a smile or even laugh out loud wondering who did what, even without taking a halt (hai,) and saying “chiizu” (“cheese” in Japanese).



# GUESS

# WHO???

There's a girl with big grey eyes and straight black hair, walking along the street with her friends. Without noticing the red light, she tended to cross the road. However, one of her friend told her, "Hey, please don't cross! The light is still red!" Suddenly she answered, "I am not going to cross. I am just bowing."

He is the "Photo Crasher." You can get no peace in taking photos if this guy is around. When the girls gather for a girls' only shot, he will step into the picture at the last minute, or stand in the way pretending to take pictures of something else. But he's forgiven as he's also the guy to whip up a storm in the kitchen for hungry participants.

In the middle of a group discussion, who suddenly said, she is not only in my heart, but also in my blood?"

"I'm sleepy nah." A girl who always says this even though it is just 5 PM. Perhaps she is the person who sleeps earlier than any other participants at night. We call her "Sleeping Beauty" as she is a little girl with long black hair, petite but has a big heart. She is really a cute girl who everyone wants to be close to.

On the train from Osaka to Suzuka, while everyone was enjoying taking wacky photos inside the train, he was the only one sound asleep throughout the trip.

They are rather "dangerous" — these four gals and one guy. They wanted to see the beautiful colored leaves at Mt. Gozaisho. I preferred to go up by cable car, but they decided to climb the mountain on foot. It was getting darker and we had no food and water with us. We even encountered a snake! Finally, we decided to return to the starting point and went up by cable car. When we looked down, it was completely dark. We almost got lost in the forest!

Every time we go to onsen, he always forgets to bring his locker key to the counter even if he is Japanese, when he should be the one to know more about onsen and be a good "teacher" to all the other guys going to onsen.

Although he stays stylish and dresses up very well, he is very ticklish. Because people know this "secret," one can see him "dancing" as girls begin to sandwich and tickle him.

They are two girls who run hundreds of meters to catch the buses in Kyoto. I've never seen such a scene before. They were like Usain Bolt, the world's fastest man!

He is always nervous when he sees a beautiful and sexy girl. Then he will go to the toilet for about 10 times to overcome his nervousness. And my little stupid question is, "What did he do inside the toilet?"

Someone forgot to pay his bus fare for the city bus. He went past the driver, and the bus driver called him back by pushing the horn loudly to ask the money from him. And yet this experience didn't teach him to remember to pay. When he went around the Ninnaji temple, he once again forgot to pay the entrance fee.

This story begins at the public bath in an anonymous hotel in Toba. She was already in the bathroom. Then a man came in and said, "Oops!" and went out. He came in again and said, "Hey, this is the men's room!" Only then did she realize that the "male" and "female" signs outside the bathroom were interchanged.

She is a beautiful girl with big soft eyes and beautiful slim body. She always has the best photo taken among the IATSS 49th batch female participants.

He is a very quiet and meek Japanese guy that everyone was so shocked to know that he's in fact a Formula racer driving about 200kph on the Suzuka race circuit.

Just one day before the deadline of the accomplishment report draft, she came up with a surprising plan, which is to sleep immediately after dinner and get up at 9:00 PM to start writing her eight-page report. Deadline came the following day. She revealed the truth. "Oh god! I got stuck and ran out of ideas after the very first page. Then I started to ask others in Facebook about their report writing." Then she repeatedly said, "I'M DYING! I'M DYING! I'M DYING!"

During the field seminar of observing the transportation system in Nagoya, the girls were especially interested in shopping cosmetics. When we reached a drugstore, they asked me to translate and explain what's written on the products. Then one girl took a rather strange egg-shaped item and asked me, "What is this? How do you use it?" When I saw it, I didn't understand immediately. Then I realized that it was a toy for adults!

I have never seen a man who took the emergency phone by mistake. Then I had to explain to the onsen staff members in detail in Japanese that it was a mistake that my friend picked up the phone. He thought that it would be able to connect to the hotel rooms.



Akky



Achika



Fade



Budi



Ryuji



Arthur



Phet



Mod



Mike



BS



Lilian



Nagi



Myat Su



Karen



Satoshi



Allene



Tum



Fella



Tea



Sima



Mony



Nick





Eto neh.  
Moshi, moshi.  
Dozou.  
Hai, Arigato.  
Why me?  
In my country...  
You're not a gentleman.  
Onsen, onsen.  
Oh, you!  
So sweet...  
I'm dying!!!  
So mean!  
Ha ha ha! <signature laugh of Fella>  
Hajimemashite. <Arthur's version>  
Just a little stupid question.  
Last but not the least...

Here's a list of the most commonly heard and used expressions during our stay in the program, which somehow made our experience more colorful.

These are our stories—the different faces and smiles that we wear throughout our stay in the forum. A lot of times, we are serious. At other times, we are just really crazy. We are different and unique in our own way, and these differences keep us strong, keep us together, and even perhaps make the world go round. 55 days seem to be so short a time to build lasting friendships but the IATSS Forum has its way of building relations that could last a lifetime. If we could just stop time so we could stay together, we would. No one knows when our paths will cross again, but when that day comes, one thing's for sure, it will be one heck of a gathering.

