

JENESYS East Asia Future Leaders Program 2009

(June 1 ~ June 14, 2009)

Tokyo-Kyoto-Toba-Nagoya

I don't know how to express my feeling of anxiety during the thirty minutes waiting time for result after the interview. I dialed the phone number as soon as the minute hand touched number 3. But the operator told me to wait and dial again. I waited restlessly for another two minutes and dialed again at 5:17 PM. At last, I was able to talk to Ma Khin Thiha. When she told me that I am chosen to join the tour-program, I felt that I was lifted and was floating above the veranda I was standing. I don't know how else to describe my joy at that critical moment.

June 1 2009

We left Yangon International Airport at 6:45 PM on May 31. We mean Gum Sha Aung, Thiha Kyaw, San Swa Li and I, Sang Za Nuam. We arrived at the Narita Airport at 8:00 AM on June 1. We had a guide waiting for us there. Then we waited for other participants from Thailand, Brunei, Singapore and Cambodia. From there, we took a bus to Shiba Park Hotel. It took us about 1 and half hours as it was dropping other passengers now and then. After we had checked in, we went out walking around the neighbourhood for a place to have dinner. My Room number was 1515, Roger's 1514, Gum Sha's 1513 and Swa Li was in 1516.

We were given a thermometer and face masks and were asked to measure our temperature twice a day, record it and get signature from our escort guide every morning.

June 2 2009

Orientation

We had our breakfast at 7:00 AM and our program orientation started at 9:30 AM sharp. Ms. Naomi Takasu, Mr. Masaru Susaki and Dr. Kimiko Kozawa were there along with Ms. Aya Yokoi. There were 40 participants from 14 countries and we introduced ourselves after Ms. Aya announced the changes in Itinerary.

Then, we were given a sheet of paper to list Ten associated words each which come to our mind when we see the words Environment, Nature and Community Design.

Attend Lecture

Then at 10:30 AM, we had a lecture on environmental issues and environmental education in Japan by Dr. Kimiko Kozawa, the former Chairperson of the Japanese Society of Environmental Education. The lecture took almost 2 hours.

Dr. Kozawa overviewed the development of environmental education in Japan along with the social and environmental problems as the background.

She spoke Japanese and there were two translators which we listened to them with the receiver they provided.

Then we were given a lunch break for an hour.

Participants' Presentations

After the break, we were grouped into three different groups and then did a presentation to our group. As we were given only 5-7 minutes each and all three groups were in the same hall with only one projector available, we couldn't do any power point presentation. Swa Li and I were in group A' which members were teachers. We presented what and how we teach our student related to environment in our organization.

Then we did a little bit of summarization of what our group members had discussed and shared to other groups. Two participants from India and Indonesia represented on behalf of our group.

Then Dr Kozawa gave us comments.

June 3 2009

At 9:20 AM, we left the hotel for Stop-Ondankan on foot. We walked about 20 minutes.

Visit Stop-Ondankan

The staff, Mr. Maro explained us about the facilities they had for schools and other organizations. They also allowed people to come in and borrow their facilities. One session visit usually takes 90 minutes but we had only 45 minutes there. It was opened in 2004 to be a national facility by the Ministry of Environment. It is also a local center for Climate Change Action 45/47. 'Ondankan' means 'Global Warming'. So, 'Stop-Ondankan' all together means 'Stop Global Warming' which I found a very impressive and meaningful name. They educate people about the global warming. It is a Japan Center for Climate change and they have 6000 promoters who volunteers to be liaisons between the Stop-Ondankan and the community.

One facility they had shown us was they put three different bags in a line with different colours.

<i>Red</i>	<i>Blue</i>	<i>Green</i>
3kg	11kg	22kg
China	Japan	US

Can you carry this bag?

We were then asked to try to lift every bag. I tried them and I found that the Green bag was the heaviest. At first we were not told which colour belonged to which country and how much weight it was. After some participants had tried, then we were asked to make a guess. So, this facility

was for the CO² emission per person in a country and we found out that US emits most among the three. But John from Australia said that his country emits far more than the US and I said that our country emits less than China.

They updated the information and facilities now and then following the Ministry of Environment's data.

Attend lecture

At 11:00 AM, we arrived back at the Shiba Park Hotel and attended the Lecture on environmental education by Mr. Suzuki, Office of Environmental Education, Ministry of Environment.

Mr. Suzuki explained policies for the promotion of environmental education and some of the good practices on environmental education in Japan.

He himself also uses products which are recycled. For example, his necktie was made from a recycle water bottle. Very admiring he is.

In the afternoon:

Visit to Asahi Breweries, Ltd., Ibaragi Factory

Asahi Breweries is one of the major Japanese beverage companies and is actively engaged in various eco-friendly activities both in product development and in CSR program. We visited one of its zero-waste-emission factories in the suburban Tokyo area and see the beer production line, which is carefully designed to reduce consumption of resources and emission of CO² and to achieve 100% waste recycling. Throughout their step by step production from selecting good raw materials (barley-malt, hops, water and yeast), the processing of Barley, the Mashing process, the fermentation and maturation processes, the filtration process and the bottling & canning processes and sampling the finished beer by the beer masters, they carefully make sure everything is recycle and no waste come out. The waste materials and by-products for example, the yeast, are used over and over again. And the malt-feed, is reused mostly as cow feed or in making traditional medicine.

I was very impressed by their abilities to recycle even mercury and seeing the blue uniform staff wearing recycle uniform. I asked if it is convenient to wear the recycle clothes but she said it is quite hot compare with normal cloth but she try her best to contribute to zero-waste-emission.

In the evening:

Welcoming reception

Welcoming reception was held and one of the participants, Umi from Malaysia, gave a short welcoming speech. The ambassadors or secretaries from 14 different embassies in Japan also attended.

I turned on the mountain climbing VCD during our allowing time (10 minutes). And other participants also did some pictures slide show of their work in their respective countries.

June 4 2009

Visit to the Panasonic Center

With the business vision of contributing to the 'Coexistence with the Global Environment' through cutting edge technologies, we were introduced energy efficient products to reduce CO² emissions and a lifestyle with ecological technology to improve environmental performance in the home.

We were not allowed to take photos inside the building which was a sad thing. Among all the inventions they had shown us, I would like to describe about two of them which drew my attention most, Eco House and Future Corner.

Eco House.

It is in two storey buildings and everything is controlled by a remote. There are household equipments and furniture like everyone's house. But every electronic equipment for example, air conditioner, TV, VCR, rice cooker, refrigerator, washing machine, toilet and lights are invented in a way to reduce the electricity they use to operate. Every equipment has a monitor to show how much electricity has been consumed. The electricity comes from the solar plates they put on the roof. And the shower was invented with many very little holes for water to spray. The shower time per a person is five minutes. The lighting are also invented in a special way to reduce the energy consumption and they are put in a carefully considered position of ceiling to get the best light with a few number of lights. The wall is made of glass which will not need any lighting during day time and summer.

The house also has some trees pots inside to help circulate air from the aircon. I asked two questions of how old is the house and how many people in Japan had built the Eco house. She said that it was built six months ago and so far no one has built Eco house outside yet.

Future Corner

When our 'Group A' turn came to be in the Future Corner, I was amazed by the giant size screen on the wall which is about 25' x 20' feet and can also reduce its size just by moving your hand. You don't need any remote control or wire in there. It had many facilities in it too, for example, a TV, a clock, a vase, a photo frame, a window, an electronic library etc. The clock can be changed into many different shapes, sizes and colours. Just before we went in to the future corner, the staff took our group picture with her camera and it was then displayed in the photo frame on the screen with wireless. She turned on some music and movie. Surprisingly, TV screen can be changed into different sizes and it followed as she walked around the room. Then she opened the library with many different books. She chose one of the books about animal encyclopedia. Luckily I was sitting at the front row with one Brunei and one New Zealand. There was a table in front of us, with using my hand, I tapped on the table and could choose any animal I like which appeared on the big screen. It would be really beneficial if we can have that

in school. When I asked about when it's going to be available and with what price. The answer was not sure. They haven't even decided the price yet.

And then she asked two volunteers to go to the disco room, one New Zealand girl and I volunteered. We were then walked to the other room by another staff. In there we were asked to say any places we went to go in Japan. We shouted Mt. Fuji! Surprisingly people from the future corner saw us as if we were standing in front of Mt. Fuji. We were able to communicate with visual and audio with people in the future corner room. Everything was like a magic.

After that, we watched a short film in the Blu-ray Theater where we enjoyed the visual and audio perfection there.

There were about 50 students who were doing a research for their school assignment there.

As I came out of the future corner room, I felt like I was in the Scientific Movie. A few centuries ago, people didn't believe in operation/surgeon like in Frankenstein and Dr. Jekyll fiction books. But nowadays, the stories have come true. People take operations, they take out one of the unwanted body parts or substitute parts of their body. I wonder if the scientific movies we see nowadays, like robots having feeling and control human world is really going to happen in future.

Although I am very happy to see the amazing parts of what Panasonic center have to offer for rich people, I wonder if they are going way too far for majority of people to catch up. But of course, as more consumers buy products, the prices of those products will gradually drop. But I feel it's just a dream. Instead of producing new products and recycling, it's time to Reduce production, I think.

All the three staff with us there spoke English so well so it was very easy to communicate with them.

Visit to the Tokyo Chubo Landfill Site

We visited the final disposal landfill site for Tokyo's 23 wards, which treats bulk waste and non-burnable waste.

They have a very strong infrastructure. They know exactly what they are doing and how to do it. All the wastes they collected were groups into different categories. And they sterilize them, combust and use the ashes in landfill. They can do the landfill up to 30 meters high at most, as they need to calculate the impact of rises in sea level. First they fill in with rubbish and then with soil, then rubbish again, soil, rubbish and soil, just like a sandwich in three layers. They explained us the landfill sites are not suitable for building houses as it would take years to stable the soil. But I saw some part of undergoing construction for trains. I asked a question on why it is possible to build a railway which would make a lot of vibration than building houses there. He answered that the bridge is built on the natural land but not on the landfill site. The landfill sites will be use as a park. Some trees are grown naturally there already and I saw some birds flying there which showed that the land is poison less. The fact that they do a careful consideration for the fishermen when they make the landfill site is very impressive.

Visit to the Umi-no-mori (Sea Forest) Project

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government launched a tree-planting project, Umi-no-mori (Sea Forest), in 2007. Some 480,000 trees will be planted over the next 8 years on the top of a 30 meter depth of waste and soil at a former landfill site as vast as 88 hectares, where a total of 12,300,000 tons of waste was dumped. The cost for forestation will be fully covered by donations from citizens and enterprises.

Two teachers showed us around the man-made forest where many volunteers from different countries, students and community in Japan had planted trees last year summer. Then, we also looked at the one year old seedlings being taken care of there.

It is a good thing that the students themselves involve in planting and taking care of trees there. Some of the trees and grasses there were grown naturally either by seeds from birds dropping or soil. Sometimes, they also need to bring in more nutrients soil because some trees can't grow well on the landfill site.

June 5 2009

Shinonome School

As a member of UNESCO's Associated School Project Network, this school uniquely implements cross-curricular teaching in accordance with the national school curriculum to implement Education for Sustainable Development.

We were welcomed by a very active headmaster, Mr. Nishimura there. He showed us a power point demonstration of what the school is doing in environmental education. Then the students from Grade 6 came into the gymnasium. There were about 60 students with their PE uniform. They were at first very noisy. But as soon as the PE teacher said "Sit", just one word, they all were quiet and sat on the floor in a row. Then the music was played and they showed us the Japanese dance. It was so amazing how they could rhythmically dance. I felt like joining them. After the dance, they went out of the gym in pairs in a line. They are so well discipline.

Then we were then walked to the poolside where about 50 Third Graders were catching dragonflies with nets in the pool. There were two PE teachers and five parent volunteers. The students wore their PE uniform with caps. They were in the pool either in pairs or in group with bare feet and a net. They all were looking a dragonfly and eggs. The volunteers made sure what they caught were dragonflies. Catching dragonfly is a part of the curriculum for the third graders and they do it once a year during summer season just before the swimming lesson begins. The caught dragonflies are then taken care by each of the students to study and observe and then release it into the pond in Biotope.

The school has a Biotope for third graders which was just about 30 x 40 feet area. It has a small pond with dragonflies, some flowers, some trees, some plants and paddy fields. The Biotope itself was designed by the students themselves. The students learn different shapes of leaves, plants and insects there. They also have an activity of planting paddy and harvesting there.

The headmaster mentioned that with some unknown reasons they had fewer dragonflies this year than last year. Dr. Kozawa commented that it may be the impact of the new construction of buildings around the school neighbourhood.

In school, the fourth graders learnt about construction. They have many activities in school for example design a city for animals to live. The sixth graders learn about the Hydrogen Car. And the fifth and sixth graders do overnight field trips where they can enjoy countryside by chasing sheep and sleeping in a tent. They learn about Japanese culture available in the region. They also have a kind of culture festival where people from different countries like Malaysia, India, China, Philippine, Korea etc., come and show their dances and music.

The students also do many activities to change their way of life and their parents. For example, fifth graders try to act like pregnant women to understand how precious their life is. And also take part in playing handicapped-basketball game with a wheelchair to learn to sympathy. They also put on gloves, thick glasses, weight at the feet and walk with stick to understand how the aged people feel when they walk.

And also they have the whole school meeting for peace. A student may represent as a Martin Luther king, Diana or Theresa etc, do a research about them and talk on behalf of them in the meeting. They also carry water with bucket to precious the water and learn about water supply. They also learn about the human rights, global shortage of food with the cooperation of Unicef. The students also do a survey about the shopping practices and street diseases. The Fourth Graders got Kid's ISO 14000.

All the subjects in school have linked to the ESD. The school is trying to have about 110 hours of Comprehensive learning which they hope other schools will also join them.

The school also had a record of how much energy they used and saved. So, by saving the electricity, they calculate how much CO² emission they reduce. For Example, 6723 kwh is equal to 3731.265 kg of CO²

Visit National Science Museum, Miraikan

We were given an hour to explore the museum on our own on 3F (Robot, From Imagination to Creation, The Drive Force of Innovation and Connection) and 5F (Space and Time, Exploration, Extreme Environments, Earth Environment and Me). Although an hour seems long enough, I wasn't able to go through all the things I had chosen to go. One frightening fact I remember is that we have cut down forests and do landfills in ocean areas so much that 83% of the land area on earth has been modified by human beings.

Courtesy Call on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

He gave us a short speech about JENESYS program. One participant from Vietnam, Tong and I from Myanmar, Sang, gave a short grateful speech on how the previous sites visits have been beneficial for me as a teacher. I gave some compliment to the Shinonome school and the Japan Foundation and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for inviting us and request to continue this tour-program in future as well.

June 6 2009

We had half day free so we went out to Shinjuku to look around. They said the train station is used by 4 million passengers per day which may be the population size of New Zealand. I hardly saw anyone talking to each other on the JR line we took and everyone was occupied by their mobile phone.

In the afternoon:

Based on the participants' presentations and feedback from previous sessions, this workshop provided us an opportunity to deepen our understanding about what we had seen in Japan and to find solutions for common issues/challenges, including factors to promote social and environmental sustainability. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Kozawa, Dr. Sato and Dr. Iwamoto.

We were grouped into five different groups. I was in group B as I am one of the teachers. The Assignments given by Dr. Sato was to sum up the

1. Promotion Factors and

2. Obstacles

in 45 minutes. We hardly had enough time to discuss, decorate and display. We categorized promotion factors and obstacles into five different categories,

1. Pre-condition,
2. Individual capacity,
3. Institutional capacity,
4. Social capacity and
5. Civic capacity.

Ranjeeta from India represented on behalf of our group.

Mr. Taro and Dr. Kozawa gave us comments

Mr. Taro

He mentioned that Ethics is important and how to address it. The collaboration-learning from each others also played a critical role. We need to consider about "What education exactly mean?" And also there are some facts we need to consider such as

1. Some can be promoting factors and obstacles at the same time.
2. Interpretation is important.
3. Consumption

4. Need to consider the interlink of Elements

7 June 2009

We left the hotel at 8:30 AM by bus to the train station. We got on the Shinkansen 700 series, a bullet train at 9:30 AM. The fastest train on earth! Hooray!!! I hurried and chose the seat on the right side as my friend told me Mt. Fuji would be appeared on the right side. When I asked the escort if we were going to see it, she said she couldn't be sure. Although it was sunny on that day, there were some white and gray clouds floating above us. But I was hoping to see it all through the way. After we had passed Nagoya, I started to see some green tea leaves plantation which showed that we were near Mt. Fuji. When I looked carefully far away, to my delight saw the tip of snow Mt. Fuji among the white clouds. I shouted Mt. Fuji! Mt. Fuji!. Everyone was awoken and took pictures! Pictures! It was fun. That last about 5 minutes.

We had only TWO minutes to get down at Kyoto station, so we, 40 participants hurried through the door. We were then taken by bus to eat typical Japanese food at the famous restaurant 'Junsei'.

Visit cultural and historical places in Kyoto

1. Golden Pavilion

After we had our lunch, we visited the Golden Pavilion, Rokuon-ji which was built in 1220. It was inscribed as World Cultural Heritage in 1994. Just like its name, all the wall of the Golden pavilion was coated with gold-leaf which glittered beside the mirror pond.

2. Kiyomizu Temple

The Japan foundation gave us a group photo in front of the temple. Then we visited the inside by ourselves and spent sometimes in the souvenirs shops nearby the road. We all met again at 5:00PM to go to Hotel. We checked in at 6:00PM at Hotel New Hankyu Kyoto.

8 June 2009

Zen Meditation

The priest there welcomed us. Although he must be of an important post in there, he wore a very old cloth. The meditation centre wasn't decorated or had any modern equipments. We could learn how simple life he has there. He told us a history of the meditation center. Then we mediated for 10 minutes. During that time, we could feel the air flowing around us and the bird chirping over our heads which we didn't noticed at first as it was disturbed by our noise. It was so quiet during 10 minutes and I really enjoyed it. Then the priest told us about how the mediation and the nature are related. Then he treated us with the Japanese natural cake and

green tea. The cake was soft like a cotton wool and sweet. The green tea had got green colour and I still could get the smell of green tea leaves. The Zen Meditation centre is really a place to learn about typical Japanese lifestyle. I do respect for the way the priests live there, so simple and so near to healthy nature world.

Sweets Cooking

At Kanshundo shop, we learnt how to decorate the Japanese cakes. Before we did anything, we were asked to put our bags away and wore aprons and washed our hands. The sansai then still not satisfied and spray spirit on our hands. We made four different kinds of Japanese cakes in there. Sansai there gave us step by step instructions on how to do the decoration. It was fun and the food seems to be very healthy and clean. We were then served with a cup of green tea to drink with our cakes. I ate only one cake there and took away the other three to take photos of them and eat later.

Visit to the Miyako Ecology Center

This center was established to commemorate the organization of COP3 in Kyoto in 1997 to be utilized as an environmental study center and a place from which to initiate activities that aim to preserve the environment. It is under the Kyoto Municipal government and is a part of associated foundation. It was established in 2004 especially for children who are not interested in environmental education. They have 80 volunteers whom they call it Eco-maids. They also have a network with NPOs and NGOs staff. They make use of natural renewable resources such as air, water and wind.

The center's hands on displays and eco-friendly facilities provide us with many ideas about what the environmental problems are and what we can do to deal with them. The building use LED lights. They treat the garbage well, they think about the garbage wood buy from foreign.

One thing that they try to make the students understand how hard it is to produce electricity is by creating some small cars with a small battery in it. The car is put on a fan like wind turbine and which is then fan by using a hand fan. Our Group A was divided into three smaller groups there. Each group was given a car with wind turbine and a fan for each member. We were given one minute to fan the turbine. We tried our best in fanning. After that the small car was removed from the wind turbine and put on the paper sheet which has some measurement units on it. Then the cars were switched on and we could see how far a car can go and calculate how much electricity we produced. Manual labour was really tiring. By doing this activity, the student learn to save or reduce the electricity they use at home.

Another thing is that, all the rubbishes were put in a big bottle with an opener. He demonstrated how we are throwing our rubbish and the manufacturers are the holder of the opener. They control how much rubbish we will make. They also have a small Biotope on the roof for students and volunteers to plant and take care of their plants. They also showed us the proper way to use water when we wash our hands.

June 9 2009

Visit Miyama City

We met at the hotel lobby at 8:30 and gave our health check sheet. Then we left the hotel at 8:40 AM. It took us more than 2 hours to Miyama from Kyoto by bus. On the way, we passed through many tunnels surrounded by beautiful mountains with thick and green trees. The rain was showering and scene was so peaceful which can make you somehow want to get off the bus and walk.

Miyama City is famous for its landscape, which is characterized by centuries' old houses with thatched roofs. Lecture was conducted by municipal government officials on policies and implementations to revitalize the aging town while conserving historical buildings.

It was about 11:15 AM, when we arrived there and we were welcomed by the municipal government officials Mr. Ohata and Ms. Uchisawa along with other officials. He explained us a short history of the Miyama city which was formed by merging four small towns in 2006. They have snow of 1 meter depth. In the past time people cut down the cedar trees and sold them with high prices, but now they are very cheap and it isn't worthwhile cutting them. They also have some Japanese deer up to 8000 in the forest and Osanshaw fish in the river.

In 1993 it was decided to preserve with four main ideas.

1. Preservation of environment – fireflies, frogs in November
2. The protection of the quality of water – fish that exists in pure water, sewage process
3. 96% of land are preserve wood
4. To preserve the river

The city has a network with Tokyo University, public organization and business to do research in the areas. It acts as a Model Forest Associated in Kyoto Prefecture. They try to protect the river by not using detergent but soap. They also do cleaning up the river by removing bamboos and leaves fallen in the river naturally.

There are different kinds of species in the forest, flowers, deer, birds and fish which can be found only in Miyama area.

The population was 10180 in 1955, but it dropped to 4500 fifty years later with a few children. I asked a question on why they have very few numbers of children in the city, is it because they move to another city like Tokyo or because Japanese people don't have many children. They answered that they have only 27 students in the whole elementary school. We were very surprised by it of a population with just over 4000 people and having only 0.7% of children and others are aged or retired. It seems almost like there is no future there.

Another question raised by John from Australia is that if they have done any study on the impact of plantation since all they grow is pine trees which eat soil nutrients a lot. The answer was no.

And Yu Yin from China asked of what is their main income. The answered is that they rely on people who work in offices in another city.

There was a question raised on the garbage. The garbage in the city was carefully collected but it was sent to Osaka city rather than doing something with it in the city. They also have a trekking program for tourists and visitors.

I think the city need the voice of children laughter.

Visit the preserved area for groups of historical thatched houses

We visited a settlement that consists of 38 thatched-roof houses out of 50 houses. The settlement is designated by the national government as a preserved area for groups of historical buildings.

But it was strange when I learnt that all the building materials were imported from other regions properly from my country. And the rebuilding houses cost a certain amount.

At night back in Kyoto, we took the JR line to Gion Corner and tried our luck of spotting beautiful Geisha there.

10 June 2009

Free Time

During our half day free time, Yu Yin, Swa Li and I went out by bus to Heian Shrine. Then we went and walk around the Junsei restaurant. There were many temples nearby. I saw many groups of students holding book and a pen in their hands asking questions to the Shrine keeper. It was so interesting how they manage to do their assignment without any teacher nearby. When we went back to the hotel, we still saw other groups of students on the bus. Some looked really tired.

Travel to Toba

We travelled to Toba by bus which took us more than 3 hours. Since it was a long ride, we entertained ourselves by singing karaoke. But there were about 15 English songs we could choose. So everyone sang what others had sung. But we all made fun each other and still happy. The rain was showering the whole day.

We checked in at the Toba Hotel International at 5:00PM. This time three or four participants shared a room. The rooms were in Japanese lifestyle and they were so beautiful. We just wish and wish that we would stay more than a night.

We had dinner together at the reception hall there at 6:00PM. Ms. Aya and Dr. Kozawa also joined us there. At night, we enjoyed Japanese Public Bath.

11 June 2009

Visit the Jingu Shrine

The primeval forests of Ise Shrine cover an area of 5,500 hectares, which amounts to about one third of Ise city. The main sanctuary is situated within 180 hectares of forest that has been left untouched and the remaining forests covering 5,320 hectares have been used to supply all the timber of Japanese cypress needed for the reconstruction of the sanctuaries every 20 years at the time of the Shikinen Sengu ceremony, since its establishment which is traditionally said to have been in 4BC. In 1926, a new reforestation program was started in order to supply the necessary timber for the Shikinen Sengu ceremony over the coming 200 years. The purpose of this program is to supply the material for the Shikinen Sengu ceremony, but also to keep the pure clean Isuzu River clean and to keep the natural environment sustainable.

We were welcomed by one of the priests there. First we looked at the Jingu bridge under construction. We crossed the river by another smaller bridge to the Jingu Shrine. All the way was paved with pebbles which were almost same in size and colour. We are asked not be made too much noise. He explained us they make sure the scared compound is free of rubbish even dried leaves will not be lying on the roads and it was true. There were people who were cutting and picking up the dried leaves on the way. They also plant flowers for the purpose of offering only. And also there were scared animals mainly chicken.

When we arrived at the Jingu Shrine, we saw the thatched-house similar to the Miyama town but a lot bigger and the roof was coated with gold. It's a sad thing that we were not allowed to take any photo there as it is a very scared place. 1 in a 6 million people came and worshipped there every year. They rebuild the Shrine once in twenty years with wood from the Ise forest.

We were given a special permission to go into the Ise forest where we saw how they carefully selected trees to cut down for building Shrine and preserved trees to grow to 100 years. The trees are marked with a white circle or two to show that they are preserved. When they cut down a tree, another native seeding is planted on its place straightaway. There are many species especially birds. Recently, there is a rumour that bears are spotted in the forest.

Travel to Nagoya

We arrived at Nagoya Hilton Hotel at 5:00PM by bus. We, Myanmar participants were on the 19th floor along with Korean. After taking bath and settling down, we went out to look for a park and a place to eat our dinner. We ate at the Korean BBQ shop. Ms. Misako from Japan Foundation joined us in our group. We gave her some troubles by asking her to translate us some describing of food. I had studied Japanese for a month before I joined the program, but a part from saying greetings, I couldn't read anything. I will try to learn Japanese language as well after I have mastered English.

June 12 2009

Visit to Nagoya Plastic Handling Co., Ltd

We visited the company that treats plastic garbage collected by Nagoya City as segregated garbage. The Nagoya City Municipal Government officials overviewed the city's history and implementations to decrease the amount of garbage in the last decade.

It is a private own company which was founded with over 2 billion. They have 150 garbage trucks come in per day. All the plastics collected were divided into Plastic bags and containers. Then they were purified. After that the wind power selection machine selects heavier and lighter plastic bags. There is also a need to do selection by hands. After that, the packaging machine compressed and packed into sized of 1 m. The weight is about 200-250 kg per packet. They made 500 packets per day and they were taken by manufacturers to recycle. The plastic materials can be recycled as a stopper for cars.

The Foreign materials were then divided into Noncombustible and Combustible. Noncombustible includes metal, glass and porcelain etc. Combustible are paper and wood etc.

Visit Aichi Kaisho Forest Center

The Kaisho forest is 100 years old. We were shown the slide show of what Kaisho looked like 100 years ago which were some mountains with no trees. But now it was green all over the place. They have about 3000 species in it. The plantation is all native. It was established to learn and observe nature, to do environmental based activities and to exhibit about nature.

They have the training room, observation wall, handicraft room, information library and exhibition. They get this idea from Germany Curriculum. We looked at the forest they keep for the students to explore nature. There were many places for the students to play. They have made a place for students to eat their lunch with logs. I am sure the students will be able to feel the different between the quiet and cold in the forest and hot and sunny outside.

Travel back to Tokyo

We travelled back to Tokyo by bullet train again. This time, we could see the whole Mt. Fuji as the clouds were clear and sunny.

June 13 2009

We had half day free. But I had done my shopping and no money left. So I left the hotel at 6:30 and jogged to the Imperial Park. I walked in the park and enjoyed looking at the beautiful small trees. I arrived back at the hotel and 8:35AM and went straight to eat breakfast. Then I did a little bit preparation for the following workshop.

Wrap-up workshop

We were invited to this workshop to sum up the past 12 days and elaborate the fruits of the study tour that we could bring back to your home and share with colleagues. The workshop is again facilitated by Dr. Kozawa, Dr. Sato and Dr. Iwamoto.

We were divided into six different groups. I was in group B and our group was responsible for listing Values and Ethics. Then we changed the ideas with group F whose responsible was to list Project management.

The assignment was:

Lessons Learnt – sites visit in Japan in terms of

(a) Project management

(b) Values and ethics

We grouped it into four categories (Technology, Education, Culture and Policy). One person each from four countries represented. Yu Yin from China talked in terms of Technology, Bora from Cambodia for Education, Sang, I, from Myanmar for Culture and Tong from Vietnam for Policy.

We were then given a new sheet of paper with the same task given on the first day which is to list Ten associated words each when we see Environment, Nature and Community Design.

Dr. Kosawa gave us comments

Dr. Kosawa

She said that the Culture, Political and Education issues are related. It is important to share knowledge each other. There will be Natural destruction and human destruction; there isn't time to only dream Utopia but to keep on working it. As we are doing our work, we sometimes tend to forget some important values as we all headed to globalization. We need to look two aspects carefully – learning... and teaching.

Farewell party

Most of us came to the farewell party with our national costume. We were given our completion certificate and then one of the participants from Indonesia, Astri, gave a farewell speech. Then we hugged each other and cried on shoulders of our friends. Although two weeks seemed a really short time to have a kin relationship with people from different countries we never met before, we felt really upset of leaving each other behind. But we all know that we will always be in each other's mind and thought.

After the formal farewell party, we had another informal gathering in my room until 12:30.

June 14 2009

We were taken by a shuttle bus from the hotel to the Narita airport at 6:40 AM. One of the two Australians, two Cambodians, three Thais, three Indonesians and one Singaporean were on the bus together. We got down at Terminal 2 for Thai airways to Bangkok Terminal C6 to transit to Yangon International Airport. We arrived back in Yangon at 8:30PM and 11:00PM (Japan Time)

Finally I am very grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment, schools, business enterprises, academic experts and The Japan

Foundation for deepening my understanding of environmental education and for helping me build peace in the international community.

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Helpful Japanese phrases:

- Domo arigato gozaimasu
- Chotto suminasen
- Ohayoo gozaimasu
- Konnichiwa
- Kombanwa
- Sayoonara
- Oyasumi nasai
- Oishi desu
- Kirei desu

All “Group A” 14 members were on Bus 1 and we helped our escort guide Moku San by helping her count in Japanese. Ichi, Ni, San, Shi, Go, Roku, Shichi, Hachi, Kyu, Juu, Juuichi, Juuni, Juu san and Junshi. My number was *Kyu*.