

JICE

40th Anniversary Essay Collection

~ Connecting Hearts and Minds Towards a Harmonious Future ~



JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION CENTER

Share knowledge and experience. For our world. For the future.

Profile

Name	JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION CENTER (JICE)
President	Sachiko Yamano
Establishment and history	Established on March 25, 1977, as the International Cooperation Service Center, it was renamed as the Japan International Cooperation Center on February 1, 1993.
Objectives	Contributing to the development of the global society through activities pertaining to strengthening mutually beneficial relationships between Japan and other nations
Network	- Headquarters (Tokyo) - Branch Office: Hokkaido (Sapporo), Tohoku (Sendai), Chubu (Nagoya), Kansai (Osaka), Kyushu (Kitakyushu) - Project Office: United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Cambodia, Kyrgyz, Tajikistan, China, Bangladesh, Philippines, Viet Nam, Myanmar, Mongolia, Laos, Nepal
Fixed assets	¥ 1 billion
Operating budget	¥ 7.8 billion (F.Y.2015)
Number of staff	317 (As of February 2017)
Number of coordinator	1092 (31 languages) (As of January 2017)
Number of Japanese language instructor	505 (As of January 2017)
Main activities	-International Training Programs -Overseas Student Programs -International Exchange Programs -Social Integration -Interpretation Services -Japanese Language Courses -Support for Technical Cooperation Projects -Support for Development Education

What is "Hatsune Miku"?

<http://piapro.net>

Hatsune Miku is music software developed by Crypton Future Media, INC., and it enables anyone to make the computer sing by entering lyrics and melodies. As a massive number of users created music using the software and posted their works on the Internet, Hatsune Miku quickly evolved into a cultural phenomenon. Moreover, Hatsune Miku has gained much attention as a character, involved in many fields such as merchandising and live performance as a virtual singer. Now her popularity has spread across the globe.

※Kagamine Rin, Kagamine Len, Megurine Luka, MEIKO and KAITO are also virtual singers developed by Crypton Future Media, INC.



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Looking Back on Forty Years of Mutual Learning and Encouragement

Sachiko Yamano

President of Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)



JICE was established in 1977 in order to undertake Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) services through providing assistance to participants and lecturers at the field in cooperation with Tokyo International Coordination Service Co., Ltd (TICS). JICE has been implementing Japan's ODA technical cooperation for 40 years in tandem with MOFA and JICA through implementing technical training courses provided by JICA for overseas participants from Asia, Middle East, South America, Africa, Indian Ocean countries, and so forth. The training coordinators of JICE, who covered over 25 languages, diligently completed their services. Also in JICA's overseas projects, they worked as project experts by coordinating diversified cultures and supporting respective foreign languages. To date, JICA has received around 516,000 training participants in Japan, and dispatched around 126,000 experts to the world. Thus JICA and JICE have run as two wheels of Japan's human resource development for about 35 years since 1977.

To all students and youth, participating in our exchange and training programs, I wish you a sincere welcome to Japan. The Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) marked the 40th anniversary on March 25, 2017.

In commemoration of the anniversary, we are happy to publish this booklet aiming to be read by all of you who visit and stay in Japan.

Through working with JICA and MOFA, we would like to further expand and deepen activities, with the utilization of experience and knowhow obtained youth exchange and scholarship programs for next generation.

Regarding youth exchange, we manage various programs for approximately 8,000 students and young professionals from abroad annually, with the purpose of promoting them to further understand each other's countries as we believe the best way to do this is by visiting the country and getting hands-on experience.

We are impressed when we talk with participants of the training and government officials participating in graduate programs. They have keen interests not only in their expertise, but also in the fundamental mindset and ethics of Japanese people, which have been cultivated through influence from various cultures and thoughts from abroad. For instance, Japanese way of management and work ethics at corporations, ministries, educational institutions, hospitals etc., are some of the most discussed themes by overseas participants and internship students. A graduate student told us that he was touched to hear his Japanese classmates often say that they had been told time after time by their parents, relatives and teachers that they could decide their own future as

long as they did not become troublesome or cause inconvenience to others. Japanese have been taught since childhood not to do things that others may dislike and /or consider as nuisance. After meeting with a number of ordinary Japanese who are distinguished and respectable, the graduate student realized that ordinary people's insight, mindset and ethics were admirable.

Although it is controversial whether such altruistic culture may be suitable in the current times, it is still regarded as the virtue of the Japanese.

While in Japan, you will encounter situations of selflessness and concession more often than that of assertion in their daily lives. We are sure that global economic competition with constant innovation can co-exist with a society rich in philosophy and ethics.

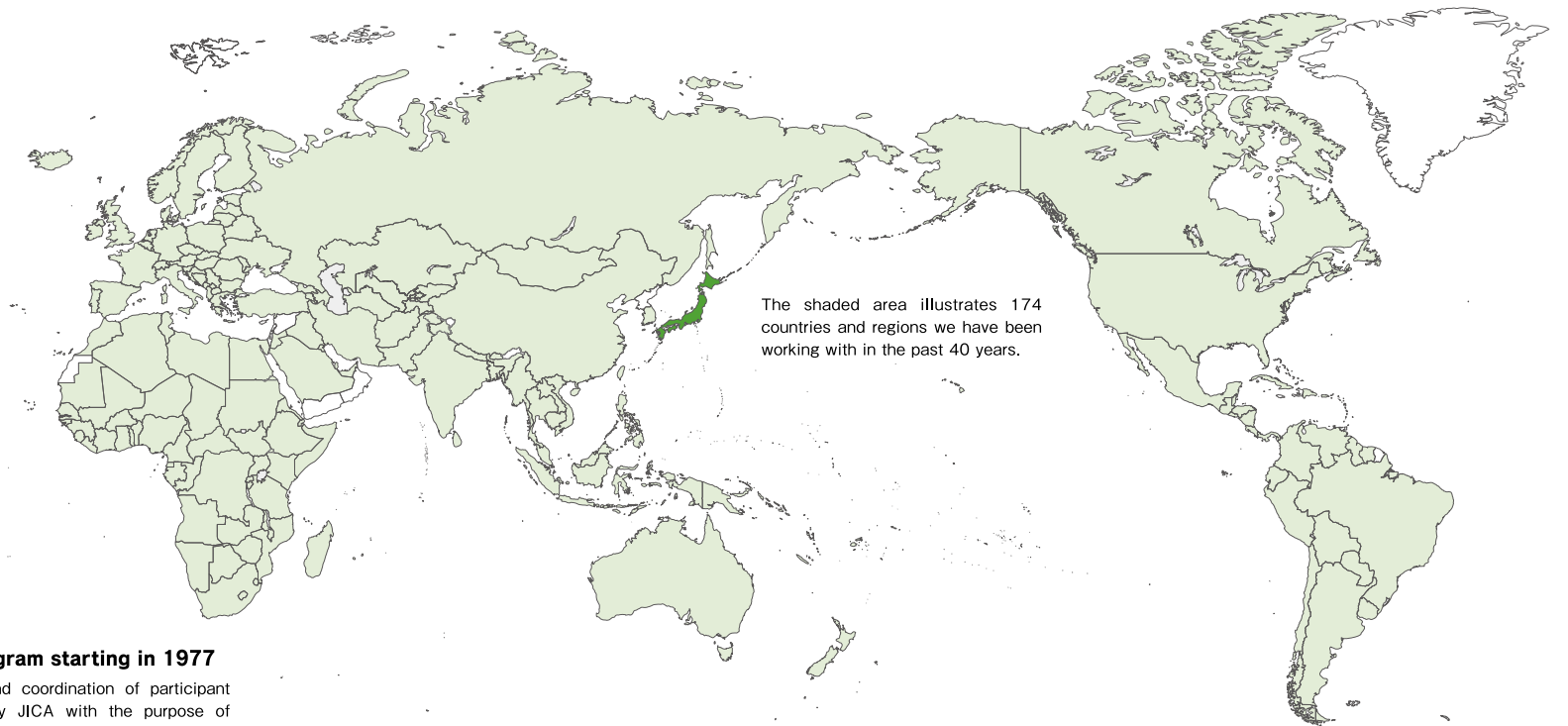
In this global socio-economic society with constant innovation and competition, we believe that it is possible to maintain an affluent society which respects philosophy and ethics.

Let us aim to shape such a coexisting society together.

1977 ▶ 2017

Historical Overview

Founded in 1979 as a non-profit foundation with the mission to bring Japan closer to the world, the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) marked its 40th anniversary this year. For the past years we have dedicated to help people gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills necessary for developing individual, institutional and national capacity by bringing in technologies, knowledge and experience from across public and private sectors in Japan. We have managed a wide range of international programs including scholarships, participant training, cultural exchange, settlement and multiculturalism service and support for overseas development projects. Looking forward, we will be committed to help people learn from and understand each other and create a prosperous and harmonies world built on 40 years of experience and our broad networks both in Japan and abroad.



1977

Founded as "Non-profit Foundation" named "International Cooperation Service Center" on March 25, 1977

Participant training program starting in 1977

Engaged in the management and coordination of participant training courses implemented by JICA with the purpose of transferring expertise and skills necessary for nation building of the developing countries. Our training coordinators played a pivotal role in interpreting and facilitating lectures, site visits, practical training and discussion. We also conducted Japanese language courses for the overseas participants and developed specialized curriculum for them.

Scholarship management service starting in 1999

Since the launch of Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) in 1999, JICE has been acting as the implementing agency for recipient governments. Services provided by JICE include recruitment and selection of candidates, pre-departure training, support for visa application, post-arrival orientation, monitoring and emergency support for students while studying in Japan.

1987

10 years

Renamed to "Japan International Cooperation Center" on February 1, 1993

Youth exchange program starting in 1984

The Japan Friendship Program for the 21st Century, an exchange program for Asian youth sponsored by the Japanese Government, began in 1984. We were selected from its onset as its implementing agency to arrange and facilitate lectures for understanding Japan, site visits and Japanese language lessons because of our experience of coordinating and facilitating JICA's training courses.

Settlement and multiculturalism service starting in 2009

The economic depression resulting from the Lehman shock in September 2008 dealt a severe blow to the foreign residents living and working in Japan. To promote employment of those residents, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare launched the Job Readiness Training Program for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent in 2009 and the program was later expanded to cover all foreign residents in Japan. JICE was entrusted to support their voluntary job seeking activities through providing Japanese language training for workplace and necessary knowledge for employment.

1997

20 years

2007

30 years

Reinstated as "General Incorporated Foundation" named "Japan International Cooperation Center" on April 1, 2013

2017

40 years

Participant training program

JICE provides management support for international training programs in diverse sectors in response to the complex global challenges. JICE assists in designing training courses, managing their progress, arranging interpretation and other support services for the participants in accordance with the clients' requirements. JICE offers high quality learning opportunities for the participants so that they can play leadership roles in addressing various challenges of their home countries drawing upon knowledge, experience and technologies from all sectors of Japan.

Youth exchange program

JICE aims to nurture friendship and trust among youths in the world and to promote international understanding through hosting various international youth exchange programs featuring school visits, home stay and other opportunities of exchange with local people in Japan.

Scholarship management service

JICE manages various international scholarships for Asia, Africa and the Middle East in partnership with a wide range of universities in Japan. We provide all-inclusive service package covering recruitment and selection of candidates, pre-departure training, support for visa application, post-arrival orientation, monitoring and emergency support for students while studying in Japan by mobilizing our broad networks both in Japan and abroad. Our aim is to help students to gain academic degrees, to learn many things from Japan and to contribute to the advancement of their home countries.

Settlement and multiculturalism service

JICE conducts job readiness training for foreign residents at various places across Japan with high concentration of foreign population. The training program is designed to improve communication skills at workplace and to provide knowledge about labor laws and practice as well as labor and social welfare system in Japan. JICE also provides related services to local government offices such as translation of various public information materials for foreign residents and assignment of outreach lecturers for various seminars on multiculturalism.

There's a Job That a Politician Must Do If It Is Not Supported by Voters

By Asahiko Mihara

First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the 40th anniversary of JICE and to express profound respect to President Sachiko Yamano and her staff for their contribution to Japan's international cooperation for many years through steady but effective services. I wish that its services and activities will be further strengthened in the next 40 years.

I share a sense of dedication to the international cooperation with the staff of JICE. Thirty years have passed since I was first elected as Member of Parliament. During these years, I have been engaged in international cooperation in some way or other. I have travelled extensively to most of the South East Asian countries, a half of Latin American countries and 33 African countries out of 54. Every time I travelled, I always listened to the voices on the ground and try to learn and think about how best we can help develop these countries.

I am heavily inclined towards international cooperation although it is not a popular subject for Japanese voters because of the impressive experience I had when I was young.

I had a chance to visit Africa in the summer of 1973 when I was studying in the North America. I was greatly inspired by my Ethiopian friend named Alem whose home town was Asmara, the second largest city in Ethiopia at that time and currently

the capital of Eritrea. He would often talk to me about his hometown and the local fermented bread called "Injala". By taking his advice that I should go to Ethiopia, I flew to Asmara via Italy with the mission to meet and talk to the Japan Oversea Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) there and to write a course report about their activities. As I could not meet any members of JOCV in Asmara, I asked a young Englishman whom I met on the road to give me a ride to Gondar where I was able to meet Mr. T, a JOCV who gave me a lodging for a while. Being the same age as me, Mr. T joined the volunteer program while taking leave from his work as a Biology teacher at a high school. He was engaged in vaccination activity against small pox as part of the World Health Organization campaign. I joined his activity and traveled from village to village.



Author speaking the Second African Business Seminar in September 2016

The place had such a mountainous terrain that we could not travel by bike but only on foot. Mr. T and I walked days after days with food, tents and sleeping bags loaded on a donkey led by a local guide and an interpreter who could speak a little English. From dawn till dusk, we visited sparsely located small villages to convince the villagers to agree with the vaccination. Some of them were so skeptical about foreigners that they didn't. We had a hard time. After walking over a mountain we reached the border with Sudan.

We were so young and reckless that we didn't care drinking muddy water or not taking a shower for two weeks because we had a strong sense of



Visit to three East African countries while studying in Canada (Author pictured right end)

mission that we must care about the health of village people. I felt myself powerless when I saw a mother sadly embracing a baby dying with pockmarked face, which was a typical symptom of small pox. I felt a strong sense of indignation over the poverty and inequality that those village people suffered. In retrospect, this was a starting point of my political career. As a politician of a rich country, I think it is imperative for me to help improve the livelihood of people living in the developing countries and to make this world a peaceful place to live.



Author talking to African students of ABE Initiative, a program to train 1000 African business leaders in five years at Japanese universities and business firms

Promoting Global Understanding

By Glen S. Fukushima

When I was a college student, I participated in an exchange program between Stanford University, where I was an undergraduate, and Keio University in Tokyo. One of the Keio students on the exchange program had also spent a year as an exchange student at a high school in Leawood, Kansas. She told me that when she did not speak up in class, her American teachers and classmates inferred from her silence that she was ignorant or had no opinion about the topics being discussed. In reality, she was often quite knowledgeable and had her views, but she had been taught in her high school in Japan to listen to her teachers and not to speak up.

During her year at the American high school, she gradually developed the ability to speak up and participate actively in classroom discussions. But when she returned to her high school in Tokyo and spoke up in class, her teachers and classmates considered her ignorant for not realizing that she was expected to stay silent, only listen, and not speak up. She concluded that it is impossible to appear intelligent by behaving in the same way in both the United States and in Japan.

This anecdote remains in my memory because it reveals vividly the different value Japanese and American societies place on speaking up, being articulate, and stating one's views clearly, logically, and confidently. In the U.S., an educated person is expected to engage in discussion and debate, and a leader is by definition an effective communicator. Although this is gradually being recognized in Japan, few schools or companies place priority on

giving speeches, making presentations, or engaging in debate. In fact, many Japanese believe that speaking too much reveals glibness and shallowness and that the most important things are conveyed by actions, not words.

Given these differences in communication styles and the cultural norms that underlie them, how can Japan gain understanding from, and contribute to, the outside world? There are three ways to approach this problem: (1) develop Japanese who are able to communicate effectively, especially in foreign languages, (2) develop non-Japanese who can understand Japan, and (3) develop non-Japanese who can understand Japan and have them explain Japan to non-Japanese on terms that they can understand.

Explaining Japan to the outside world is not easy. This has certainly been my experience as a third-generation American of Japanese ancestry who has since my student days been engaged in U.S.-Japan interchange—in academia, journalism, law, government, and business. In my experience, Japan tends to value groups and organizations, order, stability, continuity, certainty, predictability, precedents, conformity, uniformity, homogeneity, hierarchy, consensus, incumbents, and avoiding risks. The U.S., on the other hand, tends to value individuals, change, dynamism, disruption, turbulence, spontaneity, innovation, diversity, heterogeneity, debate, participation, newcomers, creative destruction, and taking risks. Bridging these gaps is a constant and often thankless task.

But the differences between the U.S. and Japan means that understanding them makes it easier to understand and deal with other societies. That is, the two societies are often on the extremes, and most other industrialized societies fall somewhere in between. An example is corporate governance, where the U.S. is on one extreme in the high proportion of outside directors on corporate boards, whereas Japan is on the other extreme in having so few outside directors compared to other G7 countries. Another example is gun control, where the U.S. has the weakest regulation of firearms among the G7 countries, and Japan has the strictest control. A third example is immigration, where the U.S. has among the highest rates of immigration among the G7 countries, whereas Japan has among the lowest. Many other examples could be added.

The point is not that one set of policies or ways of doing things is better than the other, but rather that each has its advantages and disadvantages and reflects the history, values, and preferences of a particular society. And although the cultural norms of the U.S. and Japan may differ, the two nations share much in their political values and institutions and in their emphasis on economic and technological progress, providing the foundation for a close and durable economic partnership and political and security alliance.

It is in this context that organizations such as JICE play such an essential role. By facilitating interaction between Japanese and non-Japanese,



With my wife, Sakie, in Napa Valley at Chateau Montelena winery, which won the famous Judgment of Paris in 1976, when French sommeliers judged California wines to be superior to top French wines (August 2016)



With Norman and Norah Stone, famous art collectors, at the grand re-opening of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (April 2016)

and especially by inviting to Japan students and young professionals from abroad, JICE provides the opportunity for Japanese and non-Japanese to study and work together and to understand each other more fully than is possible through merely learning each other's languages and cultures by studying in the classroom.

JICE's activities over the past 40 years are truly impressive in the number of individuals, institutions, and countries they have touched. The scholarships, international training programs, and cultural exchange programs JICE has administered have spanned the globe and have contributed both to the development of human resources and to the enhanced understanding of Japan in every part of the world.

Despite the growth of tourism, business travel, and information technology—including the Internet—true global understanding is remarkably difficult. This is especially true given the recent rise of populism and nationalism in certain parts of the world. In this sense, JICE's role can only grow in importance. JICE has developed many friends and supporters around the world over the past 40 years, and we earnestly hope that its activities will grow and prosper in the future and that its contributions to global understanding will expand exponentially over the next 40 years.



With ex-President Bill Clinton and ex-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at a dinner in her honor in New York City (December 2015)

Individuals, not institutions, sustain diplomacy

By Tomohiko Taniguchi, Ph.D.

There is an American individual who has been engaged in promoting the Sino-American people to people connections for a long time, longer than anyone else. The New Yorker began her work when the “ping-pong diplomacy” laid the groundwork for the future visits to Beijing to be made by Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon. She hosted the group of table tennis players the PRC sent for the first time to the U.S.

One would forever remember what she was like once having met her. Her hair was all silver and hip-long, untrimmed perhaps for years, which reminded one of a Li Bai: white hair extends three thousand fathoms. It was none other than this lady, far from publicly famous though, that sustained the U.S.-China relationship at its very bottom.



Author giving a lecture on the history of Japan-US relation to young researchers from Brookings Institution and Center for American Progress at the reporting session of KAKEHASHI Project. KAKEHASHI is the youth exchange program between Japan and North America hosted by JICE

Times do change. Unchangeable is the value people to people diplomacy bears over any bilateral relationship. It gives blood, bones and flesh, as it were, to state to state diplomacy. And yet nothing is more unfit for a big diplomatic organization, be it the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Department of State, than pursuing and maintaining human connections.

It is about meeting many people from abroad, speaking with them, and remembering them, a task those rotate their job assignments every so often could scarcely handle well. Files and folders about the visitors may remain in the office cabinet but hardly do their personal memories. The essence of human diplomacy, however, comes down to dealing with feelings and emotions as it is about building friendship, which grows only among those who share joy and emotions. That applied to the U.S., where at the bottom of the U.S.-P.R.C. people to people diplomacy lied not an organization but an individual, a lady of life-long dedication.

The truth, that only individuals propel people to people diplomacy forward, is not lost in Japan, a realization that occurs to this writer every time he observes the activities Ms. Sachiko Yamano is engaged in, and of the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) that she has fostered. It is reassuring that even at this writing the JICE adds a record of someone, who we wish might

turn a friend a future Japan could count on, into a stockpile of memories, ones that are rich in personal feelings.

By the year 1977 Japan had gained maturity as a member of the group of advanced liberal democratic economies. Those days saw the country beginning at long last to seek its own brand of diplomacy in South East Asia and elsewhere. Launched petite in that same year of 1977 the JICE has put 40 long years behind it. It is the memories of the people who Ms. Yamano and her colleagues at the JICE have met and held dear for those long years that count as an asset beyond valuation. Not only an asset for the JICE, it is a precious one also for the whole of Japanese diplomacy.

Japan now welcomes an increasing number of visitors coming from overseas to study something more of the country. They are the ones, proactive and self-motivated in learning things Japanese, who Japan in the future must count on as friends and empathizers of the country no matter where they are from. Ms. Yamano and the JICE have hosted and treated them equally by giving absolutely no regard to their countries of origin, an effort undoubtedly quite hard for ordinary people to do, for 40 long years. Who can do anything other than taking his hat off to their effort?



Author being interviewed by BBC New York at the time of his visit to the U.S. accompanying Prime Minister Abe

Japan is fortunate to have been endowed with the JICE and Sachiko Yamano. Celebrating their 40th anniversary, it is to be hoped that the future brings forth even more tasks to the JICE, as it is the same thing to wish for a still farther advancement of Japanese diplomacy, per se.



Author photographed with Prime Minister Abe (It is a known secret that the author is a speech writer for the Prime Minister)



Author working onboard Japanese Air Force One on the way back from Kenya where he attended TICAD VI

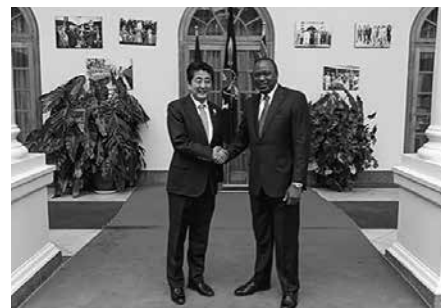
Message From Amb. B. H. O. Ogutu, Mbs, Special Envoy For TICAD And Director-General TICAD VI Secretariat

By Benson H.O.Ogutu

Kenya's relations with Japan began when Kenya gained her independence in 1963. Through organizations such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE), relations between both countries have been deemed as fruitful. Kenya's relation with Japan has mainly been based on mutual interests and potential for continued cooperation.

This has been through official development assistance (ODA) and technical cooperation in economic infrastructure advancement. Examples are the establishment of the Dongo Kundu Special Economic Zone in Mombasa and expansion of the Mombasa Port; agriculture development; human resource development to boost innovation and industrialization through partnerships with Kenyan universities such as the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and bridging industrial development between Kenya and Japan through the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative); assistance in health sector; agriculture and adapting to climate change.

TICAD VI was held in Nairobi, Kenya from the 28th to the 29th of August 2016 under the theme: "Advancing Africa's Sustainable Development agenda: TICAD Partnership for Shared Prosperity". It focussed on three thematic areas: Promoting Structural Economic Transformation through Economic Diversification and Industrialization;



TICAD VI was held in Nairobi, Kenya from the 28th to the 29th of August 2016

Promoting Resilient Health Systems for Quality of life; and Promoting Social Stability for Shared Prosperity.

The Summit adopted the Nairobi Declaration, the Nairobi Implementation Plan and the TICAD VI Business Declaration which was seen as a road-map for the next three years in ensuring that the TICAD VI objectives will be implemented. This will also bridge the gap with the Yokohama Action Plan of 2013 which discussed on an inclusive and dynamic in Africa.

Hosting the conference in Africa provided an opportunity for localizing the TICAD process. It reaffirmed the principle that underlines TICAD; which is "African ownership and International Partnership". It also provided: a platform for fostering a better understanding of African realities for Japanese people including the challenges and opportunities in Africa; provided excellent opportunities for



Ambassador Ogutu (4th from right) meeting with Sachiko Yamano, President of JICE at Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

African and Japanese Business Executives to meet and forge closer partnerships and; provided for the first time in the history of TICAD a forum for the private sector to dialogue in plenary with Heads of State and Government.

Hosting the TICAD VI in Kenya provided an opportunity to promote the country as the model of Japan's development cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa. Also, it has raised Kenya's profile as a destination of choice for trade, tourism and investment. Hosting this unique gathering for Kenya was a major stamp of international approval and a manifestation of Kenya's commitment to the life changing and transformative leadership that Africa needs today.

In Kenya, the ABE Initiative is billed as a success as it seeks to empower youth from the public and private sectors of the Kenyan economy. Since its inception during TICAD V in 2013, Kenya has been a major beneficiary.

The Abe Initiative is of special significance as Africa moves to woo more Japanese Private Sector participation. Japanese prospective investors

interested in tapping into the African economy can attain manpower and human skills from these participants who will apply the relevant skills and training learnt while in Japan.

Kenya acknowledges the big role that JICE has played especially as an implementation body of the ABE Initiative in Africa. This is seen in JICE's fruitful relationship with the Kenyan government and the Jomo Kenyatta University on Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). JICE's role in supporting human development initiatives has been seen as important in ensuring that the African youth are empowered. For instance, in 2016, JICE implemented two (2) intensive Japanese language course known as "Basic Japanese for Daily and Campus Life" and "Basic Japanese at Workplace" over duration of two (2) weeks from 4th July to 15th July, 2016 at JKUAT in order to nurture future business leaders by bridging Kenya and Japan.

In conclusion, Japan has been a great partner not only for Kenya. Bilateral relations between Kenya and Japan is based on development and with this, Kenya has been able to advance its infrastructure and economy.

Challenge Facing Japan Towards Promotion of People-to-People Exchange

By Masato Ohtaka

At the time of growing importance of people-to-people exchange and internationalization of Japan and the Japanese, JICE has marked its 40th anniversary and its role will be more crucial than ever. When we talk about internationalization, we must be keenly aware of the challenges facing Japan.

Let me refer to three conversations I have recently had as a case in point. The first conversation is with senior citizens who had been assigned overseas as Japanese language teachers. Many of them told me that after staying in a foreign country not only good things but also bad things about Japan caught their attention. Despite the general impression that Japanese are polite and kind, they found, after returning home, that faces of people walking in the street were stiff, the atmosphere was without tenderness, no one had the kindness to give seats to elders in the train and some drivers picked up speed at amber traffic light. Such things may not be felt keenly by people living in Japan but these are clearly strange phenomena in other countries. After living in a foreign country for a long time, the language teachers became able to observe Japan from the viewpoint from outside. Living in a foreign country or having international experience may impact the value judgement of one's life. I often hear JET alumni saying their types of friendship changed after returning home. One makes progress and evolve after obtaining knowledge and experience through human exchange. Japanese are

often ridiculed as Galapagos for their isolated character. International exchange will be the most effective means to change such character because it will enable people to look from the outside of themselves.

The second conversation is with students who studied abroad or who has a foreign parent. Such students with multicultural background are often said to have flexible attitudes in their life. But on the other hand, these students face difficulty in adjusting to the system of the society both in the country of residence and of parent's origin. This problem occurs in any countries to some degree but they say Japan is the country where people with different culture and ethnic origin find it more difficult to assimilate than other countries such as the United States. In general, Japanese are not so accustomed to interact with foreign people due to its geographical, ethnological and historical background. The foreign educated students with high international sensitivity may keenly feel such characteristics of Japanese. They said in every mouth that Japanese should have more opportunity to exchange with foreign people to familiarize themselves with foreign cultures.

The third one is with a professional tennis player. She said that the skill of Japanese student tennis players in Japan was so high that many famous American universities were ready to offer admission as tennis student-athletes but the students had to

abandon the privilege due to low TOEFL scores. English is the stumbling block for many Japanese students who wish to study abroad. It is often pointed out that the purpose of teaching English at Japanese schools is not to develop international communication skills but to help obtain high marks at the entrance examination of the higher school. Many Indians, for example, study or work abroad, successfully, because they are good speakers of English. It is true that for them, more opportunities exist in other countries, but such options are real because of their ability to communicate in English, which is the publicly used language in India. Raising students' ability of communicating in English is the imminent challenge facing Japan.

In globalizing Japan and the Japanese people, we need to get more Japanese people to be interested in the outside world, and to this end, it is also

important to offer more opportunities for international experience at younger ages through various programs such as AFS, Rotary Club and Japan-China High School Students Exchange Program. The KAKEHASHI and JENESYS programs for international youth exchange managed by JICE are also important opportunities. There is a virtual exchange program using internet such as Kizuna Across Culture.

I have explained above the importance of people-to-people exchange. I should also point out the difficulty from the management side in securing budget, recruiting participants and arranging host institutions and families. I would like to express my profound respect to the JICE staff for making such efforts for so many years and wish all the best in their continued endeavor.



Meeting by students who have multicultural backgrounds, or third culture kids/ cross-cultural kids



A group of Chinese students studying at Japanese high schools for one year under the Shin-Ren Shin program

Working Together with the Countries in the Middle East

By Hideyuki Urata

Twenty-five Japanese have won the Nobel Prize including one in physiology or medicine 2016. The number of Japanese laureates in the natural science sector is the second largest after the United States in this century.

As I have been engaged in the relation with the Middle East countries, I always think that there is a commonality between basic research for which Nobel Prize is awarded and human exchange. The achievement of the Nobel Laureates owes very much to the basic research in the past decades. It may take a long time before the result of human exchange bears fruit. In human exchange it is also important not to ask for a return as Mr. Yoshinori Osumi, Professor Emeritus of Tokyo Institute of Technology and 2016 Nobel Prize Laguerre in Physiology or Medicine warns against excessive merit-based research system.

When I served at the Japanese Embassies in Kuwait and Iraq, my day-to-day job was to visit Government offices such as the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Oil and Ministry of Finance to settle problems for the Japanese companies there. Every time I visited their offices, I was warmly welcomed by the ranking officials at the age of 50's or 60's many of whom had been trained in the Japanese plant makers and energy companies.



Author discussing economic cooperation with the Government officials from Abu Dhabi

Human exchange programs must be planned and conducted with the long term perspective for a broad range of sectors. The current priority sectors may not be the same after a decade. It is important for Japan to establish a certain range of diversified portfolio for human exchange programs since it is an investment in the future.

Countries in the Middle East is growing dynamically by trying to diversify their economy away from oil. They compete regionally with each other to become a hub of the region in finance, distribution of goods, medicine, education and aeronautics, Even in the energy sector, they are keen on diversifying to atomic and renewable energies. Our human exchange programs must keep up with such dynamic structural changes in the region.



A view of Daisetsuzan Mountain

At the Hokkaido Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry, I am currently responsible for the energy and environmental policy of the region. In my duties I have realized that Hokkaido can offer rich learning experience for overseas trainees and visitors. I have cooperated with JICE to organize internship programs for the students from the Middle East in a wish to return the favor their countries did us as a reliable energy exporter to Japan. In the energy sector, for example, Hokkaido is developing various energy sources such as geothermal, solar, biomass and other renewables in addition to still on-going development of conventional fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal. Eastern part of Hokkaido is suitable for solar power plants owing to its vast land area and longer sun shine hours. A number of biomass plants are being constructed because the northern island has a vast forest area and thriving livestock industry. Other innovative energy technologies are being tested here and there such as power stockpiling, production of hydrogen using surplus energy and underground storage of carbon dioxide. These

experiments will be rich learning resource for overseas trainees. In addition, they can enjoy cool weather and delicious food. All in all I believe that Hokkaido is the best place for learning and training.

Last not least, I would like to express my deep respect to JICE as an implementing agency of international exchange programs, particularly for the educational exchange program for Abu Dhabi. Thanks to the hospitality of the JICE staff, the high-ranking officials of the education sector of Abu Dhabi became a huge fan of Japan, which I think is a key factor in international exchange.

It is my wish that the young talented trainees and students from overseas who have learned in Hokkaido will contribute to building a stronger relationship between their countries and Japan through various programs managed by JICE.

Japan's Internationalization

~ A View from a Beijing Citizen

By Bai Zhili, Ph.D.

It has been twenty years since I returned to China from Japan, where I studied from late 1980's to early 1990's, during which Japan's internationalization has taken place and I was the one of whom benefit from it. Under the condition that China has been experiencing the rapid internationalization, I reflect back those days that I spent in Japan.

During the national-wide boom of internationalization in Japan at that time, I was able to join "Ouchiyama-juku", a private school teaching Japanese, which also has set up other disciplines, such as forestry, gardening, law and medicine. The school was dedicated to educating Chinese youth, who were supported by many kind Japanese people there, including professors. Also they were supported financially. After graduation the students obtained employment in Japan or returned to China. The two years I spent there was truly an unforgettable experience to me.

I had a chance to meet Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, former Prime Minister of Japan at an academic symposium in Tokyo a few years ago. He said smilingly that many foreign tourists would like to come to Japan because of the kindness of the Japanese people. When I heard the remarks, I thought that the key of Japan's internationalization would be the kindness and gentleness of its people. I share the same feeling with Mr. Fukuda and I have many experience to prove.

Japan's internationalization is not only about individual exchange between Japanese and foreigners, but also had influenced many universities and educational institutions such as "Ouchiyama-juku".

Soon after I settled down in Ouchiyama, the local villagers organized a group to learn Chinese from us, so we could quickly get familiarized with each other. In Tokyo, my Japanese friends also set up a Chinese language class so that I could earn some money from it. In this way, many people voluntarily supported us financially because few foreign students were eligible for government scholarship in those days. Private foundations have taken actions to support many foreign students, too. I was awarded scholarship from Asia 21st Century Foundation which was funded by private companies and banks. The members of the

foundation not only supported me while studying in Japan but also has been keeping in touch with me as they carry out various follow-up activities. They have made me acquainted with many colleagues from other Asian counties and opened my eyes to a broader Asia.

I think that such solid foundation for internationalization in Japan derives from the gentle-mindedness of the Japanese people and the strong organizational culture of Japan. A case in point is JICE. JICE is a non-profit foundation, and has 40 years history, the scale of which is larger than Asia 21 Century Foundation. It has accumulated a huge know-how and human assets with which to promote international cooperation and exchange, which is an important precondition to advance internationalization for a country.

Another strength of JICE is its staff members who are eager to learn more things from their foreign counterparts. Many JICE staff listened eagerly to my presentation about what I have gained in Japan in the field of public administration. The day-to-day learning and research will be another important element for internationalization of organizations.

Beijing City advocated that Beijing would to be an International Metropolis a few years ago, but I haven't heard of it in recent days. If Beijing is truly keen on its internationalization, it must cultivate organizational strength and gentle-mindedness of its citizens in a longer time as Japan did twenty years ago.



Author talking to his former professor in public administration Hiromi Muto of Hosei University



Invited researcher from Japan lecturing at School of Government, Peking University



Author pictured with Dr. P. Naranbayar, fellow researcher from Mongolia

Goodness About Japan From the Four Perspectives

By Naranbayar Purevsuren, Ph.D.

In addition to the generally favorable perception of Mongolians about Japan, I have more personal attachment to her as an ex-student who studied in Japan. During my stay, I had a chance to speak to the congregation of the JICE staff. I summarized my view about Japan in four points: ①Japan as the first constitutional state in Asia; ②Japan as a country of great technology rapidly recovering after the WWII ③Japan as a country of peace and democracy ④Japan as a country of education. As a leading institution for international cooperation, JICE has provided so many Mongolian youth with the opportunities to study in Japan and contributed to the development of the human resources of our country. Many friends of mine are working in the government miniseries, business community, international organizations and politics after studying in Japan with the support from JICE.

Japan as the first constitutional state in Asia

The Meiji Constitution promulgated in 1889 impacted many Asian countries. The birth of a constitutional state with modern bureaucracy and Japan's success in revising unfair treaties drew much attention in Mongolia. There had been a movement for drafting our own constitution based on the translation of the Meiji Constitution up to the moment when we adopted a socialist constitution under the strong intervention by the Communist International.

Japan as a country of great technology rapidly recovering after the WWII

The spectacular recovery of Japan from the post-war devastation has greatly encouraged many countries such as Mongolia under transition to democracy and market economy. There is so much to learn from Japan's technology, too.

Japan has supported a number of developing countries, particularly, in Asia in their efforts for democratic institution building, human resources development and economic growth.

Japan as a country of peace and democracy

The Japanese people seem to be tolerable and flexible to the racial differences. For example, Japanese sumo fans warmly welcome Mongolian wrestlers although they believe that sumo is the traditional Japanese sports. The present constitution of Japan which embraces peace and non-nuclear principles has fascinated many people in the world and helped elevate Japan's position as a peace-loving nation in the international community.

Japan as a country of education

One of the goodness of Japan is its quality education. That is the reason why so many youth from Mongolia go to Japan to study. Over 340 students in Shine Mongol School, where I teach, have been to Japan to study. The school is the first three-year high school in Mongolia established in



The campus of Shine Mongol School

2000 by Janchiv Galbadrakh, a graduate from Tohoku University, with the support from many Japanese donors. The curriculum and the system of the school follow the Japanese style. Students are required to take off their shoes at school. There are school meal, school uniform, teacher-student-parent meeting, and extra-curricular student activities. From 2012 to 2016, the administration introduced Japanese style curricula and teaching guidance to the primary education in Mongolia. As human resources development is the key to nation building, peace education will be the foundation for creating a more stable international society. It is my conviction that the development of human resources for the peace in Asia must be done through educational cooperation with Japan.

In addition to the above four, I would like to add my personal opinion about the goodness of Japan. The general perception of the Japanese about Mongolia is rather favorable. Their typical image and association about Mongolia are "Chinggis Khaan", "country of glass land and beautiful nature", "country with strong sumo wrestlers", "country which succeeded in democratization" and "country with energetic youth wishing to work for their country's development." Such favorable perception will be helpful for the Mongolian students to live in Japan.

My advice to the international students is that you should not only engage in the academic activities but also enjoy the beautiful nature of Japan and distinctive changes of four seasons. I think that it is important to love the country where you are studying and to have a deep understanding of its culture and the custom. Such attitude will make your study abroad more fulfilling and rewarding. It is also recommended that you use the libraries in the campus and beyond. I frequented to the National Library to collect information to complete my graduate thesis.

I wish that you will make excellent achievement as the international students of JICE and that the knowledge you gain in Japan should not only be utilized for your career but for making the world a better place to live.



Author lecturing to the staff members of JICE

Views, Findings, Experience about Japan

~ Interaction through JICE and beyond ~

By Tran Duy Dong

I prepared for my studying abroad since I was in the high school. My momentum to study at a foreign country was strongly supported by my father and brother. Both of them held a PhD from foreign countries. When I was young, Japan was a country I really wanted to visit since in Vietnam Japanese products were very famous for good quality.

While I was searching for universities to find an appropriate program, I received a phone call from my brother, who was doing PhD in Japan, with a simple question “Why do not you go to study in Japan?”. I was quite surprised with the question since at that time I thought that Japanese universities only provided courses in Japanese. After several minutes of discussion and information provided by my brother, I was impressed and encouraged to find a university in Japan to pursuit at higher level of education.

Once day in 2003, when I was working at my office, I read information on a national newspaper that Japanese Government provided for 30 scholarships for Vietnamese to pursuit a master degree in Japan managed by JICE under the name “Japanese development Scholarship- JDS” program. After reading the objectives, requirements, targeted candidates of the program, I was immediately encouraged to apply for enrollment of the Asian public policy program (APPP), Hitotsubashi University which designed for Asian candidates working in government agencies. Following months, I spent most of my time for the preparation of application form to apply for the program.

After completion of several rounds of examination (doing math, writing essay, interviews), I was selected to study at APPP, Hitotsubashi University. I and my family were happy with the result. After 2 years (2004-2006) of studying, I graduated from Hitotsubashi University. Studying in Hitotsubashi and Japan was good experience for myself in terms of knowledge, culture, people...of this country.

First, Japan is a clean and beautiful country. I still remember many beautiful parks in and outside Tokyo like Ueno, Yoyogi, TachikawaThese are good places for people relaxing and enjoying weekend with family and friends. These parks are more beautiful in April and the autumn season when sakura fully blossomed and the leaves changed to different colors. Many other beautiful places can be found in Osaka, Kyoto, Sapporo...



Mr. Dong giving presentation at a conference



At the office of Ministry of Planning Investment, Department of Industrial Zone

Moreover, I am also impressed with clean, convenient of public transportation systems in Japan, especially subway systems in Tokyo. Almost every one kilometer, you can find a train station connecting to very corners of Tokyo and its suburb. This is very special Japan that you may not able to find in other countries.

Second, Japanese people are very friendly, supportive and helpful. If you are foreigners, Japanese people are willing to provide assistance and support if you get lost or face difficulties. I remembered in very first days in Tokyo, I got lost. I approached a woman asking for help. After few minutes, she took me directly to the place. I was so grateful for her assistance. The same support, you can get from Japanese people.

Third, Japanese University provides students with international standard of education. Japan has many famous universities. In several fields, Japanese universities ranks among top universities in the world. Many universities also provide courses conducting in English. Our program, APPP, Hitotsubashi University is conducted in English. Most of our lecturers and professors graduated from famous US universities with much practical experience in the field of public policy.

Forth, studying the Japanese economy also provides lots of lessons for developing countries. Japan has overcome a loss decade with zero economic growth rate. By adopting a flexible monetary and fiscal policies has help the economy gradually recovered. Another notable thing is Japanese corporations and products. Japanese companies provide customers products with best quality. When I was in Japan, I like visiting shopping malls in Shinjuku to watch and feel the changing of technology. Almost every month, Japanese companies launched a new hi-tech products like TV, camera, mobile phones....

Last but not least, JICE provides excellent support and assistance to study in Japan. Pre-departing program by JICE in Vietnam will provide student needed information about Japan such as rules, cultures, food, and of course Japanese. When arrived Japan, JICE officers also support students to find apartment, permanent resident registration, public transportation information...Whenever you face difficulties, JICE officers stay along with you and provide consultation for you.

I am now back to Vietnam. I am lucky since I have many opportunities to meet Japanese and support Japanese companies doing business in Vietnam. Yet all good memories about Japan, JICE program, Hitotsubashi university are still full in my minds. HINON DE IKITAI DESU!

Japan as Number One Is Still Learning From the World

By Lin Ching-Hung

One a muggy day in late September my father rang me in the office and told me that I should quit my job and start learning Japanese from Mid-October of that year at a Taipei language institute for which he had already paid tuition. I was struck dumb for a moment because I had heard nothing about it from him before. My father was so strict with me that I had little chance to talk together with him. So without argument I quit my job on the following day and made preparations to move to Taipei. Later I heard from my mother that he himself had to give up his dream to study in Japan due to loss of his father, my grandfather, by a sudden ill.

Having heard of the true intention of my father, I felt like shouldering a heavy burden but I decided to study in Japan not only for myself but also for him. After studying Japanese for three months in earnest I passed the trial exam for N2 and moved to a language school in Tokyo in April of the following year. The weather at that time of the year was still so cold to me that used to wear my down coat my family had prepared for me. It took me two and half hours standing in a heavily crowded passenger train to travel every day from the house of my relative where I had lodging to the school, changing trains four times. By the time I finally got off the Joban Line train and arrived at the school, I would have been completely exhausted. I still wonder why Japanese men and women can remain calm and disciplined in such a stressful situation in a crowded train.

In the first week of the course of my graduate school, I was instructed to report on the thesis I read to the weekly research seminar in English, not in Japanese I was dismayed because I had given up my poor English long before I acquired a full command of Japanese with N1 qualification. So what I did was to translate theses written in English into Chinese first and then translated it again to Japanese. After repeating this process doggedly, I became able to translate an English thesis directly into Japanese. I realized that in Japan we must read not only Japanese theses but also those in English, particularly in the engineering and science field. Japan is the number one country in technology and economy but the Japanese students keep on reading English theses and learning from those published in Europe and America. I thought that such never-ending leaning attitude is one of the strength of Japan.

As for myself, I wrote my thesis on the theme of Toyota's "Kanban Hoshiki", a just in time production method. I was told that it was a challenging theme for the level of master's degree students but I worked hard and completed it. When I was invited to dinner by my supervisor after the successful thesis defense, I felt like taking down the heavy baggage consigned by my father. Since then my father and I began to talk each other often.

As in Japan, the population in Taiwan is entering into the stage of aging by 2018 and that of super

aging by 2025. Unlike the Japanese Government which is taking various countermeasures, neither the Government nor the business community is fully prepared for it in Taiwan. Against this background, I requested JICE to prepare an observation program for the Japanese silver industries and related product development. The JICE's program was so organized and useful. On the first day of the program, I was able to learn the overall policy of the Japanese Government including METI's specific measures and activities of Japan Standards Association regarding the development of standards applicable to the aged and disabled. On the second day, I was introduced to the activity of the Accessible Design Foundation

of Japan in terms of their market research and development of product design. I was also exposed to the latest research and development of various goods for improving the quality of life of the aged and disabled.

The program organized by JICE was more fruitful than I expected. I am grateful for the extensive care and professionalism with which the JICE staff took charge of the program.



Author (third from left) visiting the Accessible Design Foundation of Japan

Study in Japan Helped me to Promote Business in My Country

By Zaw Min Htwe

Mingalaba JICE, Big Congratulations and best wishes on your 40th Anniversary. Obviously, you have contributed a lot for the human resource development particularly in developing countries by implementing effective programs and supporting activities. Indeed, it is a great honor for me to be able to contribute in this booklet in commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of JICE. I would like to express my views about Japan and Japanese people with three different milestones based on my experiences followed by my findings and expectation.

Firstly, I wished to know more about Japan after applying the JDS scholarship program funded by JICA through JICE. That was my very first time dealing with a Japanese organization back in 2008. During the selection process, I had to communicate with JDS project office in Myanmar and got to know about Japan, Japanese people and their culture to some extent. My interest in Japan appeared to be significant as soon as after I stepped on Japanese soil and I became to realize why Japan is considered as one of the top economies because I could easily see the huge difference between my country and Japan in several aspects. At the airport, JICE staffs warmly welcomed all the students from Myanmar and every program was systematically arranged and well organized since the beginning. In fact, it made me impressed a lot to Japanese people by the ways of getting things done effectively and efficiently after staying a few days in Tokyo. Consequently, we all the students, including the ones from other developing countries had memorable and productive

times through orientation and trainings conducted by JICA and JICE before we all moved to respective universities, where students would be studying for their master degree.

Secondly, my interest in Japan had dramatically increased after I arrived at International University of Japan (IUJ), where I did my Master of Business Administration (MBA) because I could explore detail about Japan, Japanese people, the way they do business and its unique culture in terms of academically and socially. For example, being a MBA student, I had a chance to know about Japanese Management Style, Business Strategy, Banking System, Innovations in Technologies, Japanese Corporate Culture and many other subjects. On the other hand, I think I was lucky enough to be able to participate in the social activities, which reflect the unique traditional Japanese culture like rice harvesting ceremony, cherry blossom viewing ceremony, naked man festival, snow festival and



Author photographed at International University of Japan

Japanese tea ceremony etc., with the help of Japanese communities and local residents, who are near to IUJ. In addition, I could be able to arrange visiting to other big cities like Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Yokohama and Fukuoka etc., during my summer vacations with the help of my Japanese classmates. Every single city I visited, I saw unique characteristics of Japanese people and got to understand their social value. One example I would never forget about Japanese people's moral and discipline while I was in Japan was that there was no looting even at crisis when 8.9 M earthquake hit Japan in March 2011 followed by Tsunami. Instead, they have formed long, orderly queue outside of grocery stores, where employees tried to fairly distribute limited supplies of foods and water. That was totally amazing and it is highly unlikely to be found in other countries.

Thirdly, after returning to my home country, my enthusiasm to utilize expert knowledge what I learnt and acquired in Japan into the real business world was totally unstoppable. Hence, I started my own business, which basically focus on Transportation, ICT & Business Consulting in 2012, targeting to Japanese clients, who are in Myanmar. At the same time, Japanese government increased aids significantly to Myanmar for its democratic initiative in 2011. There were many projects, which were funded by Japanese government since then and also number of Japanese investments has been increasing. As a result, Japanese has become the largest numbers in Myanmar compared to other nationalities. A year after the establishment of the company, I could capture Japanese clients and built a good relationship with them. Everyday, I have been communicating with my Japanese clients and occupied with service activities, which are demanded by big Japanese Corporations. In fact, it helps me a lot to enhance the service quality and understand what "Kaizen" means. Besides, I had a chance to be working together with JICE officials from HQ in a research project as a national consultant.



Author visiting various places of interest in Japan

The project basically aimed to conduct research on the outcome of JDS project to investigate on graduates how they were engaging in implementing social and economic development plan after returning to their home countries. Through those research activities, I got to know that Japan has committed a lot to help for my country's human resource development in a larger scale.

Not surprisingly, my two years stay in Japan was so amazing and what I found based on my experiences is that Japan is the only country, which provides aids to Myanmar in several ways regardless of government, which rules the country. Moreover, Japanese people possess a very good behavior and attitude with high moral value. Furthermore, I am very much grateful to Japanese government and Japanese people for their supports to be able to study in Japan. It cannot be denied that expert knowledge I gained and human network I built in Japan helped me a lot to be what I am today.

Last but not least, I strongly expect Japan to provide more generous contributions and continuous supports to Myanmar through JICE not only for JDS Scholarship but also other program that JICE is managing for the human resource development, which is very much essential in building a modern developed nation.

Wishing you much more success in the years ahead, and Happy 40th Anniversary!

IIE and JICE as Partners for International Educational Exchange

By Peggy Blumenthal

As JICE celebrates its 40th anniversary next year, and IIE heads towards its 100th anniversary in 2019, I am delighted to share some thoughts about our common missions and shared experiences. The Institute of International Education (IIE) was founded just after WWI by a professor at Columbia University and two Nobel Laureates for Peace, one a former Secretary of State and the other the President of Columbia University. Together, they believed that the best way to reduce tensions between nations was to deepen understanding of “the other” through academic exchanges and study abroad. It is a conviction that IIE’s current Board and staff members still believe today, and it led our President to launch Generation Study Abroad, with a goal of doubling the number and diversity of

Americans studying overseas by the end of this decade, when IIE turns 100 years old.

When I first visited JICE in 2013, I was deeply moved to hear how closely its staff shared these same convictions, and how the commitment to deepening mutual understanding informed their work. Led by its dynamic and inspiring President, JICE has worked to expand its range of activities and supporters, and also to continuously improve its services by exploring other approaches and best practices globally in the field. IIE has been honored to host each year a JICE staff member for short-term professional attachments; we have also arranged an intensive English Language training and orientation program for three others. Reading



Author (furthest to left in back row) photographed with the JICE delegation visiting IIE’s Headquarters in New York City



Author meeting with JICE President Sachiko Yamano



IIE staff photographed with the JICE delegation

their reports of what they observed and learned during their time with us in NYC documented the value of even a short-term professional exchange experience; these programs also benefit the host organization, with staff members reinvigorated by interactions with their international colleagues.

We at IIE also value JICE as a partner in managing global scholarship programs, starting with our shared management of a Libyan Government Scholarship program for oil industry employees over a decade ago. We look forward to future opportunities to collaborate and send warm congratulations to JICE as it celebrates its 40th anniversary. Our shared mission of deepening mutual understanding through educational and cultural exchange is just as important today as it was when IIE was founded almost 100 years ago. Together with other colleague organizations in Japan and around the globe, we must



Author chatting with JICE President Sachiko Yamano and JICE staff

all continue to expand such learning opportunities to the next generation of leaders and citizens, in order to build a more peaceful world in which all can reach their full potential and contribute to solving global problems and building more just and more prosperous communities at home and abroad.

Literature and the man of Letters Are a Social Asset

~Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn

By Bon Koizumi

In September 2001 I started teaching at Central Washington University as exchange scholar. I used to make a class visit to the school my ten year-old son was attending. I had a kind of culture shock when I observed the teaching methodology of commending pupils and developing their attitudes for self-esteem. The theme of the class was leaning about the salmon. Pupils were given the opportunity of fishing salmon at Columbia River, visiting salmon farm, observing salmon egg spawning and enjoying salmon barbecue. Their task was to make a fish print and a short poem about the salmon. This series of learning experience spanned over the subjects such as biology, geography, sociology, arts and English language.

Many teachers at the school placed emphasis on teaching the attitude of self-esteem, in other words, the greatness of one's existence. At the end of the semester, each pupil was instructed to list up the strong points of his classmates and the list was handed over to each pupil together with the school record.

This practice has reminded me of the proposal which my great grandfather Koizumi Yakumo (Lafcadio Hearn) made to the Government of Japan at that time. He had misgivings about the Japanese education system where pupils were crammed up with knowledge and memory was more important than imagination.



Lafcadio Hearn Gardens in Tramore

The open-minded leaning attitude of Yakumo fully using five senses has been evaluated across the world under the Project of Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn. Born in Greek and brought up in Ireland, the man of letters landed in Japan in 1890 after travelling across America and the Caribbean Sea. While being a little stubborn and short-tempered, he was able to observe the culture with truly cosmopolitan mindset not influenced by the western philosophy or human-centered ideology. With the effort of his Greek friend who was a huge fan of his literary works, the first exhibition of "The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn Exhibition" was held in Athens in 2009, followed by the one in Matsue, his home town while in Japan, in 2010, one at New York Japan Club in 2011, one in New Orleans in 2012. The most recent one was held in Lefkada in Greece, his birthplace, in the form of international symposium bringing together nine panelists from four countries under the title of "Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn ~ from the West to the East ~" The central discussion at the symposium was that everything that one believes is neither the absolute nor final one and that we should teach our children to open up a new path from where they stand.

In 2015 the Lafcadio Hearn Gardens were opened in Tramore, Ireland with Hearn's spirituality enshrined in nine gardens. These gardens are not like typical Japanese gardens seen everywhere in the world but a creation with the Irish sense of open mindedness.

While in Japan Hearn was fascinated by the whole bunch of Japanese myth, associated the appearance of shrine maiden to that of ancient Greek and was reminded of the Celtic fairy faith. In a way he discovered the ancient essence of European culture in Japan. I wish that such open mindedness of Hearn will be shared by many people in the world as a social asset of literature and the man of letters.



Opening ceremony of the Open Mind Project at Matsue Castle
(Author in left end)



Lafcadio Hearn Reading Performance by an actor and a guitarist

2015 Impressions from Medical Study and Research in Japan

By Zhou Xiaojun, M.D., Ph.D.

Japan is both familiar and unusual to me. On the one hand, China and Japan have kept close exchanges with each other since the Tang Dynasty. However, our understanding of Japan comes from film, television and literary works. What is the reality of Japan and the living conditions of Japanese people? It is said that Japan is a medically advanced country. What is the medical situation of Japan? These areas were quite unfamiliar to me.

During Sep. to Nov. 2015, I had the honor of becoming a member of the fourth batch of the medical exchange program organized by Jiangsu Provincial Commission of Health and Family Planning - the Japan International Cooperation Center. We came to Tokyo, surrounded by sea on all sides, to start our three-month medical research and studies. JICE made thoughtful arrangements for us, so that we may have a deep understanding of Japan, Japanese people and medical treatments.

During the first week in Tokyo, JICE arranged a number of official activities, which gave us an initial impression of medicine in Japan, which can be described as advanced, rigorous and standardized.

According to our own specialized characteristics, our group consisted of ten doctors who were assigned to different hospitals and departments to start our research and studies. Five doctors and I were assigned to a famous hospital attached to a private university in Tokyo: Juntendo University Hospital.



Courtesy Call on Prof. Hideaki Ogawa, Dean of Juntendo University

I was assigned to study in the department of digestive endoscopy in the first month. Japan's digestive endoscopic diagnosis and treatment technology is ranked first in the world. My research and studies created an opportunity for me to have close contact with and learn from Japan's endoscopist, gain a deep understanding of the newest advances in diagnosis and endoscopic treatment of early gastric and colonic cancer.



Training on Colonoscopic Surgery by Use of a Simulator



Training on Robotic Surgery at National Cancer Center Japan

For the following two months, I came to the department of Low GI, which corresponds to colorectal surgery in China. Professor Kazuhiro Sakamoto, the head of department of Low GI, greeted me friendly, and designated a young doctor to help me to familiarize me with the routine work and operating theatre environment. Professor Sakamoto is a careful yet easygoing professor. When knowing I was engaged in gastrointestinal surgery in China, Professor Sakamoto believed I would be interested in gastric surgery, and helped me contact with Professor Masaki Fukunaga from Juntendo University Urayasu Hospital and Dr. Ehara from the Saitama Cancer Center, who are famous specialists in laparoscopic surgery for gastric cancer in Japan.

Japanese doctors take each surgical procedure very seriously and conduct operations in strict accordance with standard procedures. Although different doctors have different levels of skill and speed, they must pay scrupulous attention to every detail during the operation process. In the beginning, it seemed to be a cumbersome process to me, but I gradually realized that such standardized processes and operation quality control ensure patients receive the safest therapy and reduce postoperative complications. At the same time, such standardized rigorous processes are conducive to the growth of junior doctors.

This trip to Tokyo was not only a journey in studying but also a cultural journey in Japan,

which relied on the efforts of all staff of JICE, who offered us the opportunity to enjoy a splendid trip to Hokkaido, the beautiful scenery of the northern islands. I was greatly inspired by the visit to the ancient city of Kyoto, a visit to Mr. Seihan Mori, the chief abbot at Kiyomizu Temple, knowing more religious history and culture in Japan, the visit to a shrine in Kamakura, the significance of shrines in the hearts of Japanese people. There are two things impressed me most of all, one was a table tennis game in Takadanobaba, and paying a visit to a Japanese family. Face-to-face interaction with ordinary Japanese people promotes our understanding of each other's culture, ideas and customs.



Courtesy Call on Mr. Seihan Mori, Chief Abbot of Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto

Our group consisted of ten doctors selected from technical cadres of major hospitals in Jiangsu Province. The Sino-Japanese medical exchange program allows us to develop close relations like members of a family. Through our joint efforts, we were able to make this trip to Tokyo so wonderful. We will treasure this beautiful memory. Our group members are Wang Fangjun, Zhou Zhong, Xu Wei, Zhou, Pan Feng, Zhang Weiguo, Min Han, Zhang Ming, Chen Junhong and Chen Xiaolin.

We came to Japan to learn medical skills and also to bring the friendship of Chinese people. Ties between our two countries are based on friendship. We sincerely invite all Japanese friends to visit China, especially Jiangsu Province and the city where we are situated. They would receive a warm and friendly welcome.

A New Era of Public Diplomacy

~ Connecting People and Changing the World Through Educational Exchange

By El-Moamen Abdalla, Ph.D.

There was my favorite place to eat in the town where I lived in Egypt. It was a roadside sandwich restaurant. It was more like a stall with a small counter and a kitchen. The taste of the sandwich was ordinary except the pickles but I went there almost every day because I liked listening to the interesting stories told by the restaurant owner. This illustrates the distinction between the core value and the added value of the goods and services.

The core value of a sandwich is its taste and price but its value may be added by the side dish or the personality of the vendor. Same thing can be true of education. Japan has achieved one of the highest level of science and technology in the world and its quality of education in terms of technological knowledge and knowhow may be second to none. But what about the added value of Japan's education? Has it been shared by foreign learners? Perhaps many Japanese educators will be caught off guard if they are asked what the added value of Japanese education. Science and technology can be learned elsewhere. But what difference can Japan make?

Here are some of the answers to that question I asked to the foreign students studying in Japan. A Saudi student in science and technology replied that he had learned how to control himself by watching the Japanese behavior of considering the relationship with other selves more deeply

than asserting themselves. An engineering student from UAE reflected that Japanese placed more emphasis on the process than on the result and that attitude was applied to manufacturing of products. An Egyptian liberal art student said that he became able to develop a unique Japanese communication style which places importance on how the other party may feel about one's opinion, which was completely different from the Western way based on logical thinking. The commonality among many foreign students is that they were more concerned with the unique Japanese values such as harmony, discipline, trustworthiness, loyalty and aesthetics rather than technological knowledge.

Twenty-one loving years have passed since I came to Japan. The first ten years was a hard but rewarding time for me. Throughout these years I have been convinced that the true value of Japanese is that each individual puts other people first and works hard for the happiness of others, which is the opposite of the Western idea of putting the interest of oneself and one's country first. If you go to the station, the station staff will help you kindly and friendly. If you go to hospitals, schools and companies, you will find many employees working for their organization not for themselves. Such social fabric in which its members care about other members more than themselves can only be found in Japan.

There has been a growing opportunity for Japanese and Arabs to deepen exchange in science and technology but they sometimes find it difficult to understand each other due to language and cultural barriers. Public diplomacy, particularly in the field of educational exchange such as studying abroad and participant training, will play a significant role in narrowing such gaps. Public diplomacy serves to bridge the difference between nations, cultures and ethnicity and will be a stepping stone for the progress of human beings.

In this context, the role of JICE as the professional of intentional education exchange and training is more important than ever. When I was Academic Supervisor at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Japan, I used to work tirelessly with JICE to promote various cooperation projects between the two countries. The staff of JICE did a wonderful job in accepting Saudi government



Author lecturing about Islam after the terrorist attack on Paris magazine publisher

funded students, supporting their academic study and helping them to explore career opportunities. JICE has made a remarkable contribution to the advancement of higher education not only in Saudi Arabia but also in other Arab countries such as UAE.

Unfortunately, there has been a growing misunderstanding about the Arabs and Islam as well as increasingly critical view of Arabs on Japan's Middle East policy. The relationship between Japan and the Arab countries in the 21st century should transcend that of the 20th century's. We are living in a compound age where we should think about the past, the present and the future in the same sphere. Public diplomacy will definitely be the effective guide to create such new era.



Author participating in the study in Japan promotion at the Najah Exhibition in Abu Dhabi

“Experience Japan” Promoting Cultural Understanding Between Ireland and Japan

By Hugo O'Donnell

Ireland is an English-speaking island in the North Atlantic to the northwestern of Europe. Some 4.8 million people live in the Republic of Ireland, which became fully independent of the United Kingdom in 1921 and is the 16th largest country in the European Union.

In 1957, after Ireland joined the United Nations, Ireland and Japan established diplomatic relations and this was the first such diplomatic relationship between Ireland and an Asian country. Accordingly, 2017 sees the commemoration of 60 years of the Japan-Ireland diplomatic relationship.

Ireland's national day is Saint Patrick's Day and is celebrated each year on 17th March in Ireland and throughout the world. The largest and longest-established St. Patrick's Day parade in Asia takes place in Tokyo with some 30,000 spectators and participants attending each year.

Cultural Festivals are an excellent way to promote cultural understanding and learning. So, in 2010 a group of community activists from a cross-section of organisations in Ireland came together to establish 'Experience Japan' with the aim of celebrating and promoting Japan and Japanese-Irish culture and heritage in Dublin and throughout Ireland. In doing this, they marked the longstanding warm relations and friendships which exist between the peoples of Ireland and Japan. The 'Experience Japan' festival runs for the month of April and every year sees an increase in the number of events held.

A highlight of 'Experience Japan' each year is the celebration of the centuries old Japanese custom of 'Hanami' or flower-viewing in the beautiful Farmleigh house and gardens in the Phoenix Park. It is a perfect setting to celebrate and enjoy spring and 'Sakura' (cherry blossoms). Up to 125,000 have attended over the years. Large numbers gather to enjoy events including stage performances, martial arts, taiko drums, origami and craft workshops, Cosplay fashion and others. Farmleigh, the national guest house, is a special place for the Japanese community in Ireland as Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko stayed there for a four-day official visit in May 2005.

Many other events are organised. The Japanese Embassy runs the Japanese Film Festival to coincide with 'Experience Japan'. Over two weeks it visits many different locations around Ireland including Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.

The Lonely Planet guide has recommended the Chester Beatty Library as one of the best museums in Europe. It is based in Dublin city centre and features many Asian holdings including many from Japan. It is a 'must-see' venue and it organizes a range of events on Japanese history, art, popular culture and social issues. It is a key partner for 'Experience Japan'. As part of our festival we have held a Japanese High School Life Day that has a focus on cutting edge trends including spectacular Cosplay fashion. Also in Chester Beatty Library, we have organised Japanese Studies seminars

focusing on gender representations in fine art, theatre and the development of "Science Women" in Japan.

To promote business links between the two countries 'Experience Japan' teamed up with the national Asia Trade Forum of the Irish Exporters Association to hold briefing sessions on "Doing Business in Japan".

Early in the evolution of the 'Experience Japan' festival, we had contact with Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) who were very helpful in assisting us make contacts in Japan with individuals and agencies who had interests in Ireland and Irish culture. JICE staff have also been able to join the 'Experience Japan' festival taking the opportunity to highlight the work they do and present information sessions on Japan-Ireland links. Their interest in promoting cultural understanding and learning opportunities very much coincides with those of our festival.

'Experience Japan' aims to bring together all those who appreciate and want to discover more about Japan and Japanese culture. In particular, we want to provide a platform for Irish-Japanese children to learn more about their culture and heritage. The festival has grown enormously in recent years testifying to the wide and deep interest in all matters relating to Japan. For the future, we want

to expand this model and reach out to many more individuals and groups from all sectors: education, tourism, business in all its forms, the arts, literature, media and many others. We also would like to work more outside Dublin around Ireland. We are always interested in having discussions on proposals for events and new ideas.

Our activities are family-oriented and mostly free of charge. Working together, using the great benefits of volunteerism, the support of the Japanese home and visiting students in our universities are the hallmark of the event. Our student performers and volunteers are one of the main reasons for the success of 'Experience Japan'. Adding up numbers of performers, supporters and volunteers, more than 350 people contribute each year to the 'Experience Japan' festival.

In recent times there are more and more Japan festivals like ours being held all over the world. Why not check out the options near you and get involved? It is also very personally rewarding to give back to your community. It broadens horizons and is a great opportunity for discovery. We are deeply indebted to the Embassy of Japan for all their support in making this success possible, to JICE for all their kind support in Japan and to the many volunteers who contribute so generously each year.

The Experience Japan Festival is run with the support of Dublin City Council, the Office of Public Works in Farmleigh, the Japan Business Society in Ireland, University College Dublin, Ireland Japan Association, and the Embassy of Japan in Ireland



Towards Making Good Friends With Each Other

By Yoshiro Minato

“Making friends of Japan” is the title of the book authored by Kensuke Yanagiya, former President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The book is full of important messages drawn from his long years of experience as a diplomat.

I have served for JICA for more than 30 years managing various participant training programs in Japan as well as overseas development projects in tandem with JICE. Through this experience, I have a gut feeling that whether the participants achieve more from the training or they become fond of Japan depends largely on the persons who instruct or assist them.

People matter. A symbolic example is JICE’s training coordinators who assist participants not only in interpreting the lectures but also in their daily life while in Japan. Most of the participants would say to me that they thanked JICE’s coordinators without mentioning JICA which was the sponsor of the training. I did not care about it because I fully recognized the role of JICE in conducting training courses smoothly and effectively.

After the World War II Japan strived to achieve rapid economic growth with the assistance from the international community while overcoming the externalities such as environmental pollution. Such experience will be of great reference to other countries as they strive for further development.

Equally useful is Japan’s experience in crafting various policy measures to overcome long lasting deflation after the bust of bubble economy. Its current challenge to tackle with the graying population will also be of future reference to many other aging countries.

At the level of individuals, many foreigners praise Japanese for their discipline, kindness and morality. I think that discipline at the level of rank and file

workers has been the backbone of Japan’s economy. Other merit of Japanese is good teamwork. The reason why the Japanese team without any members able to run 100 meters in less than ten seconds won a silver medal after Jamaica at the 400 meter relay race of the Rio Olympic Games must have been the power of teamwork.

However, such power exhibited as a group may work negatively if the members of the team are forced to behave in the same manner or if one who stands out is frowned upon. The bottom line is that the Japanese tradition values harmony. But if such sense of value is pushed to excess, it may muffle free discussion and expression of individual ideas. What I suggest to foreign visitors is that they should look at Japan as it is and absorb what they feel as her real goodness.

People visiting Japan as trainees and students have positive impact on the host community in the sense that they stimulate monotonous daily life of the locals, revitalize the community and raise international awareness. In this context, I wish that you will connect with as many people as possible not just your colleagues at the lab and classroom but also ordinary people walking in the street. They may be shy to speak to you at first but

eventually they will be very kind to you. For this purpose, even an elementary knowledge of Japanese is a necessity. I hope that JICE and other supporting institutions care about providing more opportunities to learn Japanese.

“Nation building, human resources development and heart to heart communication” was the old slogan of JICA. But I think that remains true all the time and should be embraced by all people engaged in international cooperation and exchange over a long time. In particular, heart to heart communication is a two-way action. I do hope that you will have the courage to talk to people around you while in Japan.

Japanese Secrets ?

By KIMURA Carlos Alberto Hiroshi

The other day, a foreign technical trainee asked me such a question. It was the same long missed question I did to many people when I came to Japan, 26 years ago. The surprised ones who even talked to me just asked “what secret?” At that time I wanted to know “how Japan managed to become an economic power from a war defeated country in such a short time” or “how Japan manages to balance tradition with economic development”. They were too vague questions, and today I believe that even me myself did not know exactly “what” I wanted to know.

Having been living in Japan for such a long time and taking part in Japanese ODA activities through JICE I feel that I have found some hints to manage to find the answers to the doubts that my former self had in the past. Through taking part in overseas project study teams I was able to know about processes from war to peace negotiations, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities and the standpoint and thought of the involved governments, as well as the feelings of the nationals. On the other hand, talking with foreign officials as well as people related to Japanese training programs made me think about “nation building”. These helped me make clear “what” exactly I wanted to know in the past.

Regarding the question “how the Japanese people managed to develop their country”, after getting in touch with many different areas of the society and

economy, as well as talking to people from different sectors, I changed the question to “what is common ground in any sector”. The answer to this question is the same one many people answered me but I could not understand in the past. It is “worked frantically”.

In any sector, it is possible even today to see government officials, company employees or civilians working hard on their “duties”.

I feel that it is their efforts that sustain the basic and social infrastructures be it on the cities or in rural areas.

I have never experienced a blackout or water shortage living in Japan. When ill, it is always possible to be treated in any hospital I go, and never had experienced any mistake in payments or reimbursements in Japan. For people living in developed countries this may seem obvious, but it is not as simple as it seems. An extreme example, one that surprises any visitor to Japan as well as myself every time, is to be able to have back a wallet dropped somewhere in the megalopolis Tokyo with its contents intact. That is something that is not so common in other countries.

Considering “nation building” there is another point that I noticed regarding “work” in Japan. It is the volume of “information” and “data”. Even considering that Japan has a long history, you can find an enormous volume of records related to “human living” in any sector, even on minimal



Mr. Kimura (at the left end) is facilitating practical training for African engineers. Data collection and analysis have been key for life improvement in Japan

issues. Just considering such records, I feel overwhelmed thinking about the humble repetitive activities that are needed to collect them.

Anytime I see such data or information it comes to mind the people counting cars or human traffic in intersections that sometimes I see on the streets. Be it sunny or rainy, these people exposed to car fumes keep counting. In any sector, in order to elaborate policies or measures on any issue it is necessary to have information or data. But such information always requires humble activities and as so, it is rather difficult to collect them. In contemporary societies, one may suggest that such information can be collected through technological means such as cameras and sensors, but Japan has been collecting them since before the digital age, updating and using them for life improvement.

On the other hand, walking around Japanese cities, besides to basic infrastructure construction and maintenance, I feel a determination on “convenience”. Not just water and electricity facilities, convenience of transportation, shopping, education, etc., there are demands that are natural

human ones, but difficult to build up, maintain or develop, but even so, there is a constant effort to answer them. However, these “conveniences” do not mean “to have an easy life”. Living in Japan I feel that to attain these “conveniences” tremendous efforts and energy are being applied.

I feel that these efforts incorporating modern technology into daily life is the key to my curiosity on how Japan has managed to “balance traditional culture with technology”.

Certainly one can say that Japanese history shows a lot of sacrifice and strife in the name of economic development, but as I see it the Japanese society has in any of these struggles taken its time consulting its history and records, adjusting the situation to find solutions.

I can say that my present self is not as curious as my former self on “Japanese secrets”, but living in Japan, I think that not just government policies were and are important for the Japanese “nation building”, but especially the daily efforts of the common people of Japan.

Minami Ashigara, a Truly Good Place to Visit in Japan

By Toshiyuki Kuroyanagi

After retiring from JICA for which I served for many years, I established a company for international agricultural development and moved to Minami Ashigara, a rural town near Mt. Fuji, to start farming there. Seishou Region which includes Minami Ashigara and Yamakita is famous for farming tea called "Ashigara Cha". One day when I went to a tea farm to help picking, I was amazed by the terrain on which the farm was located. It was a terrace garden created at the back slope of the mountain presumably before the World War II by manual labor using hoes, shovels and picks because there was no farm road to carry heavy machines at that time. Such tea plantation is commonly seen in this region. I must express my deep respect to the farmers at that time for their tireless work. They had to walk a long way every day to plant tea because there was no farm road to derive on and the terrain was too slanting and dangerous to work on. I felt like discovering the real diligence of old Japanese farmers.

Bordering Minami Ashigara is the birthplace of Sontoku Ninomiya, a famous agriculturist and philosopher. One of his teaching is: "If you wish to achieve a great thing, start from a small step. Even if you want to cultivate a huge area of the land, you must start labor by using a hoe." Such teaching was exactly reflected in the tea plantation in this region. The philosopher's spirit rests as the god in Ninomitya Sontoku Shrine nearby.

Seisho Region is also famous for orange farming. The farm owned by my company is located along the broad farm road surrounded by many other farms for orange and plum. The farms are so close to the road that farmers can harvest the fruits from the roadside without entering inside of the farm. Not only farmers but many ordinary people come here to enjoy jogging and hiking. But to my surprise I have not witnessed anyone who secretly picked fruits from the trees. I am planting passion fruits and papaya alongside the road but I have never had them stolen by anyone except crows, wild boars and masked palm civets although they have no consciousness of stealing things. I am always amazed both by the high morality of Japanese and the energetic activities of the animal.



Oranges richly growing in the roadside farm



The scenery of Mt. Fuji viewed from Ashigara

Many people whom I was working with at JICA, JICE and other development organizations come to help me to farm. This is so encouraging to me as a first time farmer. I am truly indebted to their kindness and loyalty which I think is another goodness of Japanese.

Lastly, I would like to talk about the delicious water available in this region which is the spring water from Mt. Fuji. The water is not only used for farming but for making sake. People smack their tongue when they taste the rice and sake made from the delicious water here.

The scenery of Mt. Fuji viewed from the mountain path of Ashigara is breath taking. Next to Ashigara is Hakone which is world famous for hot springs, Onsen. We have also Asahi beer brewery. Here you can find so many things that Japanese are fond of. This is really a fantastic place. I sincerely hope that many people not only in Japan but from foreign countries will visit here and appreciate real goodness of Japan...

Omotenashi

—Offering all kinds of selfless hospitality across Japan

By Akiko Kajihara

At the end of every JICA training or JICE exchange program, participants or other groups of foreign guests to Japan are requested to fill out questionnaires. Asked about their impressions from their stay in Japan, they frequently mention things like: “the Japanese are kind and diligent”; “the selfless hospitality of Japanese was impressive”; and “Japanese cities are clean and safe wherever we visited.”

Long before *omotenashi* became a recent buzzword, participants would mention to me the kindness and selfless hospitality of Japanese as represented in the word.

Many of participants I was in charge shared their experience of benevolent Japanese passers-by who helped them and even bothered to take them to their destinations when they got lost on the street. They seemed to be impressed by such acts of kindness by Japanese strangers. Indeed, participants began to seek assistance from Japanese passers-by whenever I hinted that I was not sure how to guide them to the next destination.

Here is another experience from the training program organized for participants from Thailand at a Japanese manufacturing plant. During a lunch time, we decided to eat at the cafeteria at this remote plant with no nearby convenience stores or restaurants. A few ladies were working in the kitchen to serve only a set meal with baked fish in this cafeteria. I was worried unnecessarily if the participants would eat the meal—but they began to do so very eagerly. However, it

seemed the miso soup was too mild for the Thai participants, who had been used to spicy food. They lavished chili pepper until their miso soup was all red. I apologized to the kitchen staff on behalf of these participants for any offense they had made by overdoing the pepper. To my surprise, the ladies smiled and said, “It is best they enjoy their meal with their favorite taste.”

The next day, we were astounded to find a huge new bottle of chili pepper on our lunch table. All the participants cheerfully sprinkled the pepper not only on the miso soup, but also on their rice.

One expression of *omotenashi* is to prepare and serve the best meals. Another expression is to accept all the difference of other people, including their tastes and customs. That's how I felt from the experience.

Following my long experience as a training coordinator, I now have more occasions to accompany and coordinate exchange programs rather than training programs.

We often visit aging and depopulating provinces, where many elderly (including those who apparently cannot speak English) eagerly approach and talk to our foreign visitors.

Several years ago, one of the participants from our program fell down and injured her knee. The bleeding stopped, but we went to a nearby hospital to attend the deep wound.

The waiting room was full, mostly with the elderly patients. I asked the injured participant to wait for me until I finished with registration. When I came back, I saw her talking with curious elderly ladies who asked many questions like “Where do you come from?”, “Are you travelling?”, “How did you injure yourself?”, and “Have you eaten our local specialty yet?” When we left the hospital, the participant was carrying a bag of mandarin oranges from a fellow patient.

Though she missed all the program activities for that day, she was in fine spirits saying that she “enjoyed a chance to visit the Japanese hospital and to mingle with the very friendly locals.” I am also grateful to those local people who cheered her up when she was depressed with the injury.

Aside from the kindness of Japanese, participants often mention the safety of staying in Japan. Some are careless with their valuable belongings. In particular, high school and university students tend

to lose their passports and mobile phones. In the cases I was in charge these belongings were returned to the owners thanks to Japanese passers-by who found and brought them to police stations. One participant left his wallet in a taxi. Before he noticed the problem, the taxi driver drove back to the hotel to deliver the wallet. These participants were awed to receive back their precious belongings saying “It would be unbelievable in my home country.” But I am concerned that they overly believe in Japan as a safe place. On the first day of their visit, I always warn participants to be mindful of their belongings as they may not be found, although I stress to them that Japan is relatively safer than other countries. Still, after spending some time in Japan, all of them completely let their guard down. So, it became my habit to greet them every morning during the program followed

by a question if they were carrying their passports with them.

Japan prides itself not only on its spirit of selfless hospitality and safe and clean cities. I would be more than pleased if future participants discover the other virtues of our country.

Japan seen by the 0.000000825% of the world

By Kuniko Maki

It's been already more than 20 years since I began to work with JICE. I couldn't then imagine I'd have such a long career. People sometimes ask me why I continued my involvement in international exchange. I then ask in return questions like: Have you seen inside a human heart? Have you witnessed the delivery of human or animal babies? Have you seen freshly manufactured cars coming out from the production line one after another? Have you seen red hot molten iron from a blast furnace at a steelwork? People are stunned by my questions. In fact, these "WOW!" experiences are something I have gained without any qualification as a doctor, veterinarian, or engineer—simply by assisting in training and in exchange programs for people from all parts of the world. The twenty years have simply flown past as new encounters rewarded my intellectual curiosity and left me no time to feel bored. Thanks JICE for offering me the opportunity to work on the ground of international cooperation.

There is a wide range of JICE programs, including professional and student exchange and technical assistance. Guests or participants for these programs are invited from diverse countries from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. I have met people from 98 countries so far throughout my career. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan recognizes 196 countries in the world. That means I have met people from half the world. In terms of number, I had the chance to meet about 150 foreigners in the first five years with JICE. Although I stopped keeping track, in extrapolation, I have probably worked with 600 foreigners in the last 20 years.

The number accounts only for 0.000000825% of the global population of 7.3 billion. So, the figure is just about nil. Still, they surely represent 0.000000825% of the world. The exchange with these people has been an excellent opportunity to ponder Japan and the Japanese in relation to the rest of the world.

The 0.000000825% of the global population I have met said: they see no rubbish in Japanese cities; squeaky clean paved roads everywhere and dusty mud roads are nowhere to be seen; the electricity and water supply are never disrupted; the infrastructure is wonderfully developed, public transportation reliably takes them to any destination precisely to the minute on time; public restrooms in airports and stations are equipped with high-tech lavatory seats Washlet as a matter of course; and toll gates automatically open for cars driving on highways. Despite all these advanced technologies, the country preserves its bountiful nature, and cherishes its ancient traditions and architecture. These foreign guests regard us Japanese as diligent and kind people with a love for meticulous work and punctuality, who respect rules, commit to agreements, and take strangers to their destinations when asked for directions.

At the end of each training and exchange program, participants are requested to fill out questionnaires including a question on their impressions about Japan. Basically, their answers boil down to these rather similar and superficial comments. But let me introduce one quite insightful comment I noticed.

That insightful comment was left by a fish researcher from Sri Lanka. He described that the most striking experience, even a lifetime memory, was his visit to a school during his stay in Japan for one and a half months. I remembered him in tears when pupils from all grades sang a song in the school gym. I asked him if the song of these children impressed him the most in Japan. But his answer was a bit unexpected. Of course, the beautiful choir and the hospitality of these children as small as his own child, who had taken their time to practice the song for foreign guests touched his heart and his eyes brimmed with tears. But the major discovery that left the most striking impression from Japan was made during the lunch and cleaning time at the school.

All pupils on duty wear aprons and go fetch their meals from the school kitchen. They serve meals and make sure that nobody misses anything. Once all are seated, they clasp their hands and chant "itadakimasu" in expression of gratitude before properly eating their meals. During clean-up after eating, pupils neatly open and stack up their milk cartons for recycling. There is even a cleaning time after the lunch when pupils themselves move their desks to the side to sweep and mop the floor. This is an utterly familiar sight for us Japanese. But the Sri Lankan researcher was so impressed by the contrast between these children and the way it is with his own child and his own country. He claimed he had discovered the essence of the Japanese—that is, "The Japanese are shaped into Japanese in this manner." In association with what he saw at school during lunch and cleaning time, he drew a convincing conclusion that the way Japanese respect rules and achieve great teamwork is shaped through education from their childhood. Lastly, he remarked that Japan has a bright future as these pupils represent the future of this country.



The third batch of young researchers invited by the KAKEHASHI Project 2016 joined the study tour at J-Power's environment-friendly and highly efficient Isogo Thermal Power Station. Ms. Maki is photographed at the right end



A group photo with students from Catawba College after they presented a moving, original musical composition inspired by Japan. They were invited to Japan by the KAKEHASHI Project 2014 as the third batch of young creators. Ms. Maki is at the right end on the front row

So grateful for his precious comment, let me confess here that I could not reveal reality of current Japanese education, that faces a series of problems such as truancy, bullying, declining learning ability and other.

Foreign guests' or participants' experience in Japan may depends on the types of JICE programs. Yet I sincerely hope that all the participants will encounter many "WOW!" and unforgettable experiences through the programs. On top of that, I do hope that those experiences will lead a deeper understanding of the essence of Japan and the Japanese, both their strengths and weaknesses.

How to understand “Japan”

By Maki Saito

“Of course, we could have covered the same training topics in another country. But the most significant experience for us was to learn in Japan.”

So remarked one of the participants in his speech at the closing ceremony of a training course organized not long after I joined JICE. Based on the lectures and training summary, the training objectives had mostly been satisfied. However, I wondered what the significance was for them in having bothered to come and learn in Japan. Therefore, I asked the speaker what he meant by “learning in Japan.” He immediately answered, “To get to know Japan.” With a smile, he added, “It was a real pleasure to have spent time with people in Japan.”

In the past 40 years, JICE has been evolving by adapting to the changing external environment. In its infancy, JICE provided prompt and satisfactory support services for the programs conducted by Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA), established three years earlier. Back then, the JICE staff was expected to provide accurate and detailed response for the front-line of international cooperation and JICE duly met this expectation. Built on 40 years of experience in managing various programs of Japan’s ODA, JICE has been entrusted to conduct more and more training programs from foreign governments and international organizations. In addition, newly launched international student programs and associated overseas project offices led to an expansion and deepening of the scope of work, while JICE staff was expected to play a

more active role on the ground. I joined JICE when the international student program was getting into gear. Even a newly recruit like me could feel the major shift in the expectations for JICE staff. Moreover, the international exchange program by the government of Japan that began in 2007 empowered the staff to play more core roles and exercise more initiative in program implementation. Needless to say, there were also expectation for enhanced skills in language, negotiations, and coordination.

Throughout these programs, JICE staff has been offering the opportunity to learn the cutting-edge hard / soft technology and know-how to participants, international students, and other visitors. Accordingly, we also have been developing effective contents by appropriate selecting lecturers and site visits that would meet the expectations of visitors. However, that phrase “to get to know Japan” had always stuck somewhere in my mind because I could not



Presentation in Ireland “A view of Japan from the eyes of Lafcadio Hearn”



Author speaking with the then Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Philippines

grasp its real meaning. Still, I had always been wondering if we were telling them about “Japan” unilaterally. I had thought that they could draw only stereotypical images of Japan from such one-way lectures. So, what did that participant find out and learn when he said that his best experience was to “get to know Japan”?

One day, during lunch hour in one of the programs, participants were lining up their scattered shoes voluntarily. One of them tried to explain the reason: “Because I saw the Japanese fellow doing that.” Another one agreed, saying “It is certainly cumbersome but it will certainly make it easier for the restaurant staff to put them to the shelf.” That seemingly trivial comment made me a bit surprised. I did not tell them anything about lining up shoes, but they saw our action with their own eyes and drew the conclusion that the practice requires additional effort, yet it is efficient and kind for others. Foreign visitors try to interpret and understand Japanese-ness from their own perspective, based on their first-hand experience in Japan. Books and the internet can help understand Japan’s manufacturing technologies and the history of their development. In order to apply these technologies in practice, however, it is essential to understand their historical background and the mentality of the people applying them. Otherwise, it is hard for

foreigners to apply them according to their own culture and level of technological sophistication. Seeking to gain such a relative understanding of Japan, foreign visitors first observe us JICE staff as the closest samples of Japanese. Unless we truly understand the best of Japan, think of its significance, and act accordingly, it will be difficult for foreign visitors to understand Japan in a comprehensive manner and digest their experience with their own interpretations. In this sense, we Japanese staff carry great responsibilities for the way we behave, speak, and act in front of them.

We also have responsibility in forging a genuine partnership. Japan does not engage in international cooperation programs expecting gratitude from partner countries. True to the mission of JICE, we must demonstrate that Japan is a reliable and robust partner by building close relationships with the world. Therefore, the JICE staff must play an increasing role to facilitate international exchange.

A famous quote by the Red Queen, Alice in Wonderland; “Here we must run as fast as we can, just to stay in place. And if you wish to go anywhere you must run twice as fast as that”, is the idea that JICE today should abide by. I hope to continue my learning efforts and mobilizing my network as a JICE staff to pass on “Japan” to the world.

JICE's practical Japanese language courses for improving communication skills and understanding Japan

By Yuko Watabe

During meetings in the seminar room at the JICE Headquarters, we often hear the lively recitation of Japanese following the lead of an instructor. The voices come from a Japanese course commissioned to JICE by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) as a part of the Training Course for Promoting Stable Employment of Foreign Residents.

JICE began offering Japanese courses for technical trainees in 1978 as commissioned by JICA. For a long time, these courses remained the main part of the Japanese courses until JICA began to conduct all their Japanese courses by themselves in 2013. In 1983, JICE developed textbooks entitled "Japanese for Technical Training" from the introductory to the advanced level as a part of a commissioned project from JICA. For over two decades, JICE has been providing Japanese courses with different durations and course assignments in order to enhance the quality of training for diverse trainees.

The launching of the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 2000 marked the beginning of Japanese courses offered both in Japan and in partner countries. With limited time and human resources, it must have taken an extraordinary effort to make the necessary arrangements for conducting Japanese courses and dispatching Japanese instructors to different countries. The person in charge explained that this was possible owing to human capital and the professional Japanese language education system built up over years. The quite practical Japanese training set a attainment target of coursework for

each day to enable learners to communicate with native Japanese, while promoting an understanding of Japanese mentality and culture. This effort has been underway since we started to this date.

Today, JICE offers much more diverse Japanese courses for a wider range of learners.

Major examples of these courses for the training for supporting foreign workers' employment and job retention are those intended to facilitate foreign residents to learn Japanese for recruitment purposes, as well as to understand the manners and rules expected in their working environment in Japan. Annually, 250 courses are offered for about 4,200 learners at 88 locations in 16 prefectures.

Japanese courses are also offered to support e.g., the MOFA's JDS, African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative), international students at Hitotsubashi University and Polytechnic University, and researchers invited by the Rotary Foundation and Institute of Developing Economies. Business Japanese courses are offered to foreigners employed by Japanese companies.

In recent years, Japanese courses are offered at foreign universities and other institutions of higher education. In the program by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry designed to develop advanced human resources, Japanese instructors from JICE are appointed at universities and other institutes of higher education in Abu Dhabi to set up Japanese courses. In 2016, intensive Japanese courses were conducted at a university in the suburb of Nairobi where the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI)

was convened. Previously, courses have been designed for learning Japanese for daily and campus life to facilitate training and research in Japan. Learners take these courses out of their interests in Japan and Japanese language rather than for practical and pragmatic reasons. The demand for these courses is expected to grow given the worldwide popularity of Japanese pop culture and trust in the country's science and technologies.

Arguably, an advantage of Japanese courses offered by JICE, with its rich experience in a wide array of Japanese education, is the way they are fine-tuned according to the needs of diverse learners.

Most organizations that commission Japanese courses to JICE do not specialize in Japanese language education. I believe JICE can differentiate these courses from those offered by other organizations with our professional ability to propose a unique curriculum by clarifying the needs of learners. Take business Japanese, for instance. Learning needs not only depend on the proficiency level of learners, but also on their assignments. Email communication style varies from one company to another. Accordingly, different priorities must be given in each syllabus for learning Japanese in a limited period of time.

We should probably go beyond mere acquisition of Japanese language skills to conduct Japanese courses by keeping in mind the specific needs of learners after acquiring such skills.



Ms. Watabe teaches learners how to write their names in *katakana* (second from the left)

For instance, we offer many Japanese courses for international students who obtain their degrees in English. Their need to quickly learn minimal Japanese for their daily life remains the same. But without effective communication with Japanese students with limited English skills, they cannot forge any partnership in businesses. These students will simply remain research friends. In order to facilitate the research life of foreign students, I believe they need support in learning Japanese to forge interpersonal relationships with Japanese students.

Another question is what kind of role Japanese skill can play in terms of the career development of respective students—that is, what is the significance of their studies in Japan, and how can their studies contribute to their home countries and Japan? Such consideration must be made not only with international students, but also with foreign residents who need support in finding employment. In this sense, Japanese language education is a part of career development support provided over a long term.

JICE is expected to offer even more diverse Japanese courses. We strive to enrich the program along with our reinforced team of instructors.



Before their arrival to Japan, learners practice introduction themselves by repeating "*Hajimemashite, XX to moshimasu.*" Language courses are essential for foreigners seeking training and recruitment who wish to have a rewarding stay in Japan

Programs Created Jointly with Local Communities

By Kazuo Nagayama

Let me share with you a selection of comments made by community members who hosted foreign guests in the short-term exchange program in fiscal year 2012.

- We had never hosted study tours for international guests like this. This project prompted us to implement programs that we never tried before the Great East Japan Earthquake—thus, we could forge partnerships with a range of new actors in our community.
- It was an important anecdotal experience for accommodation facilities in our village to host a huge and diverse group of people with different religions and ethnicities. Having developed a hands-on program with the know-how and human resources for hosting a group of over 100, we feel ready to host other study tours on earthquake disasters and our preparedness efforts. We also developed menus customized for respective religions, so we are now capable of hosting Muslims at all accommodation facilities in our village. We could also develop the contents of study tours for international guests.
- Residents became used to mingling with visitors from other countries. They no longer feel nervous and now enjoy such interaction. An elderly lady asked me from where the boy came this time.
- We became confident that even a small provincial town like ours can host international guests.
- We had never hosted study tours for international guests. This project helped us boost the skills of our employees and gave us insights into the customs and mentality of guests, and thereby helped us pursue community development.

- Our company could learn how to make an English evacuation announcement, serve Japanese meals and other meals adjusted for different religions.
- Because guests could visit us for more than one day, we could offer various programs. The visit also forged a cross-sectional network as different groups and consultative bodies began to cooperate and mutually study the way they hosted guests.
- Visits by many students from other countries helped us restore our damaged reputation. Japanese schools and travel agencies began to say that Japanese students could visit us all the more so when we had students from other countries. It was a great public relations opportunity for us to demonstrate the nature, culture, and human touch of our town to people from many different countries.
- Our depopulating village with a low profile could use this opportunity to present our appeal both inside and outside our prefecture, and even overseas. The many requests for interviews we received entailed excellent public relations opportunities.

In pursuit of the overall success of our study tour programs for international guests at a higher level, we always seek benefits not only for guests, but also for host communities.

Likewise, participants in any program can benefit greatly when people and organizations with the necessary knowledge, experience, and technologies organize the contents well and present them in the most effective manner. In so doing, the presenters and their organizations can also gain advantages and satisfaction from the excellent occasion to



Mr. Nagayama is pictured in the center, holding a series of meetings in preparation for hosting guests. He always stresses the need to offer benefits both to participants and host communities

re-organize their knowledge, experience, and technologies. Sophistication of training leads to mutual learning process away from unilateral communication from the teaching side to the learning side, and thereby attains the stage of knowledge sharing. For this reason, I count the satisfaction level of a host also in important indicators of training outcomes.

Let's consider exchange programs, whose interactivity is obviously the key to success. By definition, an exchange program can be conducted only with the participation of two parties, not by thinking only of the interest of guests. In practice, however, we tend to focus on what invited guests expect and become oblivious of hosts. But such exchange programs lead nowhere. The key here is to give due consideration of the benefits for hosts in order to encourage their active commitment.

Therefore, we coordinate hosting programs while pursuing positive outcomes for guests and hosts who are both treated as participants.

All too often, the expansion of hosting projects to other regions is mistakenly done by remotely contacting host communities to delegate every task

for hosting guests. Ostensibly, this is an efficient way that respects the initiatives of host communities. But this approach tends to be driven more by the interests of requesting parties and visitors.

It has been 25 years since I joined JICE. During my career, I worked 14 and a half years outside of the headquarters, during which time I mainly handled training and exchange programs. In addition to be based in Hokkaido, Tohoku, Chubu, and Kansai Offices, I visited every part of Japan for program development—from Hokkaido to Okinawa. My extensive travels for implementing programs made me acutely aware of the need to actually visit host communities, think of the mutual benefits for the hosts and visitors, and devise a way to achieve the desired outcome with due consideration to the interactivity I have stressed.

Aside from hosting programs, there are social integration programs, international student programs, and other JICE programs intended for foreign residents in Japan, which makes close partnership with hosting communities even more essential.

In the past 40 years, JICE staffs from both the headquarters and branch offices have been traveling to communities to jointly create programs. We intend to join hands with local communities and serve as their bridge to the world while jointly creating new programs.



❶ A study tour on disaster prevention was conducted in Kesennuma City in Miyagi Prefecture, where visitors saw a ship thrown inland by the tsunami from the Great East Japan Earthquake

❷ Participants from ASEAN countries visited Onagawa in Miyagi Prefecture affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake

JICE's mission to Charm the World with The Best of Japan

By Erito Uchiyama

“If memory serves, I was recruited as a JICA training coordinator in the fall of 1984 and became a regular employee at JICE in 1989. Looking back today, these thirty-some years have passed like three days. The end.” Of course, I know that such a contribution is not acceptable. But in having the nightmarish honor of being requested to make a contribution to the publication commemorating JICE's 40th anniversary, I am now compelled to reflect on my years with JICE (though I had intended to do so quietly as I approach the moment of death).

When I look back on my career and the evolution of our organization, so many memories loom and absorb my mind. It is hard to put them in words. It is almost like organizing an old room, but ending up gazing at photo albums. I have spent many days like that without finishing my job.

It's quite nostalgic to think back my 33 years spent with this organization—15 years for technical training, 15 years for international exchange, and 3 years on foreign assignments.

I remember my trouble in compiling the publication commemorating the 10th anniversary. I also recall that I appeared a bit in the publication commemorating the 20th anniversary. Today, I feel like a fossil in our organization. JICE has changed considerably since its establishment as a backseat supporter of technical training to becoming a main pillar of official development assistance (ODA). Now, JICE is an organization that can take the initiative in a competitive environment, and assume responsibilities for the choices made. It is so easy to simply state that JICE has transformed itself. But what I see now is a world away, particularly

with JICE having undergone the stormy challenges of the past decades.

Today, I work at the International Exchange's Department to develop and implement Japan's Friendship Ties programs and Sakura Science Plan, which are all government-led programs we won through proposal competition to invite and dispatch youths. At present, we host and dispatch about 9,500 youths from and to 50 countries and regions. These programs have different names, according to geographic divisions—JENESYS (Asia), KAKEHASHI Project (North America), JUNTOS (Central and South America), and MIRAI (Europe). All of them are jointly designed to build a forward-looking solidarity by gaining friends for Japan through mutual exchange with partner countries. I feel lucky to serve the purpose of conveying the best of Japan to the world. I always design each program for about 20-30 youths over a period of about one week while asking myself how to effectively communicate Japan and what is the essence of international exchange.

In 1989, I was assigned to the International Exchange's Department immediately after I joined JICE. The department with several employees was responsible for program development and on-site assignments involved with the Friendship Program for the 21st Century for inviting foreign youths. This international program had been implemented initially with five ASEAN member states, when then-Prime Minister Nakasone proposed the idea in 1984. The program was later transformed into the still ongoing JICA Youth Training Program. Partner countries were expanded to include China,



These youths (here receiving completion certificates from international exchange programs) will remember their inspiring days in Japan

South Korea, Southwest Asia, Central and South America, and Africa.

Back then, Japan was enjoying the bubble economy, which fact gave us a generous budget enabling us to invite youths for about a month. There were three components to visit Tokyo, Hiroshima and Kyoto, and other remote parts of Japan. We had no personal computers and internet. But we managed to rent rooms from major hotels in Shinagawa and Ikebukuro to invite about 500-800 youths every year by only relying on word processors and a fax machine that was just installed in our office. I believe that the foundation for the later development of international exchange by JICE was built during these days. The youths we invited then are now playing core roles in their own countries. Some of them work for Japanese companies—others have even become prime ministers and cabinet ministers. The Japan that JICE presented to these people continues to inspire them.

In retrospect, I have always been working with people. My role was to observe them to protect their life. By gaining relevant experience, I have been strengthening the capacity of our organization to protect and attend to the health of participants, to respond to natural disasters, and to manage other crises. Technical trainees and guests for international exchange commonly teach me that they are impressed with something we Japanese take for granted, and thus do not note in our daily life.

There are three elements that impress these guests, namely: “The Japanese are responsible and try to fulfill their duties,” “Japan is clean,” and “Japan is safe.” Fortunately, their image of Japan has not changed much from what I used to hear. I still hear the same opinions today. To put it another way, there are many countries where people cannot enjoy what we Japanese take for granted. This means that we Japanese have reason to exist in this world. I strongly believe that we Japanese need to recognize what invited guests say about our country, and share this among ourselves so we can continue to retain our virtues in the future. Another mission we need to keep in mind is to assist our guests in drawing as many lessons as possible from comparisons between their countries and Japan. Japan has still a lot more inspiration to offer. We should simply show our country, rather than burying guests with loads of complicated information. My lifework would be to carry out this task in practice.

JICE has already completed forty years. The organization understands the difficulty, joy, and importance of presenting Japan to people around the world. JICE should take pride in the experience in honestly facing people for four decades. In appreciation of the opportunities I have had with JICE to meet people from all corners of the world—and to work with the people who made this possible—I am a bit tempted to hang in there until the 50th anniversary.



Mr. Uchiyama makes a briefing

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Peggy Blumenthal is Senior Counselor to the President of Institute of International Education (IIE) since 2011 after having served there for thirty years. She is co-author of "International Students and Global Mobility in Higher Education: National Trends and New Directions". She also chairs the board of JCIE-USA (Japan Center for International Exchange).

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Hugo O'Donnell is the Senior Administrative Officer in the Applied Language Centre, University College Dublin. He is Chair of the Experience Japan Festival Committee who organise a series of events designed to celebrate Japanese culture and the Japanese community in Ireland. In January 2017 Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Fumio Kishida presenting Mr. O'Donnell with a special commendation for his "longstanding contribution to the promotion of Japanese culture in Ireland".

Yoshiro Minato is assumed numerous posts at Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) including Managing-Detector of Training Affairs Department, Managing Director of Office of the President, Deputy Chief Representative of JICA Malaysia Office and Director of Personnel. After graduating from Waseda University, he worked as reporter of Yomiuri Shimbun.

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Kuniko Maki is freelance interpreter in English and JICE training coordinator for English speaking participants. Graduated from Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Dokkyo University, Saitama, Japan. Since 1993, she has been engaged in JICA's various technical training courses as JICE training coordinator. From 2000 to 2002 she served as JICA's project coordinator in Turkey. More recently she has been active as coordinator for JICE's intentional exchange programs as well as outreach lecturing on international cooperation.

Editorial Note

After a hectic discussion about the concept and contents of this booklet, the editorial committee reached a consensus that it should be a collection of meaningful messages to young students and participants who come to Japan for study, training and exchange rather than a litany of congratulatory notes from the people concerned with JICE.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to all the authors of the essays for their kind contribution. They are not just prominent people in various fields but supporters for JICE in some way or other in the implementation of our scholarship, training, cultural exchange and social integration programs. Without their favor and cooperation, our 40th year anniversary publication would not have been possible at all.

If you read the essays carefully, you will find that most of them refer not to something visible such as the Japanese technology but to something invisible such as goodness about Japan and Japanese people. It is said that from time immemorial, Japanese have been keen to keep good relationship with the nature and other selves including the dead rather than to assert only oneself. Such attitude has bred the spirit of "Omotenashi", or Japanese hospitality, which puts the relationship with other people and guests first.

Created 40 years ago with the mission to bring Japan and the world closer together, JICE has kept working with the mind to value the relationship with other people and countries. Looking forward, we will continue to work hard to make people coming to Japan for study, training and exchange better understand the characteristics of Japan and the cultural background and to foster long lasting friendship between them and Japan.

Atsushi Tsutsumi
Managing Director
General Affairs Department / Chief of the Editorial Committee of the JICE 40th Anniversary Essay Collection

Maki Saito is Director of Personnel, General Affairs Department of JICE since 2015. After working in a private firm, she joined JICE and managed various international training programs such as those entrusted by JICA for more than ten years. More recently, she has been engaged in international scholarship programs and youth exchange programs at JICE.

Yuko Watabe is Chief Japanese Language Instructor at International Training Department of JICE. She had served as Japanese language instructor for foreign students studying in Japan for more than 15 years. After joining JICE in 2013, she has been actively supporting Japanese language component of JICE's operation such as Training Program for Stable Employment of Foreign Residents entrusted by Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labor and other Japanese language courses designed for university students and private company staff.

Kazuo Nagayama is Director of Kansai Branch Office of JICE. Since 2015 he has also been in charge of promoting local and regional partnership across entire programs of JICE by drawing on his experience of serving as Director of Tohoku, Chubu and Hokkaido branches respectively. His responsibility is to implement and promote various operations of JICE at the local and regional level in partnership with the local government, business community and the civil society.

Erito Uchiyama is Program Director at International Exchange Department of JICE. He is also Member of International Committee of Japan Football Association. Starting from his career as training coordinator, he has been serving JICE for more than 30 years. He was involved in organizing JICE's international exchange programs as one of the startup members.

JICE 40th Anniversary Essay Collection

~ Connecting Hearts and
Minds Towards
a Harmonious Future ~

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