

# CLAIR Singapore Newsletter *Volume. 53* June 2011

## Great East Japan Earthquake

On 11th March 2011, a powerful earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, causing tremendous damage across the Tohoku region. Following that, troubling situations also began to unfold at the nuclear power plants in tsunami-hit Fukushima Prefecture.

With respect to the Great East Japan Earthquake, we at CLAIR would like to sincerely express our deepest appreciation for the many heart-warming messages of sympathy and support that we have received from our foreign counterparts in the various central governments, local governments and related organizations.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, several relief activities were carried out by our friends, including a donation drive organized by the JET Alumni Association (JETAA) Singapore, an association established by former JET Programme participants who had previously worked in Japanese schools and local governments. Initiating an effort named the "Message of Hope," the alumni also sent handmade cards with messages of encouragement to schools in the afflicted areas.

Since the earthquake, CLAIR has been cooperating with our affiliated NPO partner – NPO National Conference of Multicultural Managers – in providing various forms of assistance to affected foreign residents in Japan, including publishing multilingual disaster-related materials. In addition, CLAIR is also offering financial support for the programs carried out by Local International Exchange Associations that aid foreign residents affected by the disaster.



• The banner reads "Gambaro Tohoku", which means "Let's move forward together Tohoku"



• Shopping streets are bustling with people once again (Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture)

Going forward, CLAIR will continue to promptly disseminate accurate and timely information about Japan and the disaster-affected areas. Through providing accurate information about Japan's current situation and demonstrating the country's vitality, CLAIR hopes to contribute towards the restoration efforts in Japan.

You can obtain various information about the current situation in Japan on CLAIR Singapore's website as follows:

<http://www.clair.org.sg/index.html>

## Specialist Dispatch Project in Palitana, India

One of CLAIR Singapore's main roles is to promote constructive mutual exchange between local governments in Japan and the ASEAN region, including India. In this regard, exchange in terms of knowledge transfer has always been an emphasis in CLAIR Singapore's programs, and the Specialist Dispatch Project implemented by CLAIR Singapore embodies this vision.

Under the Specialist Dispatch Project, Japanese local government officials (including retirees) who have knowledge or technical skills in various fields are dispatched to local governments in the ASEAN region and India as specialists. These specialists will contribute to improve the quality of local administration, technical expertise and human resources in these overseas local governments. The specialists' fields of expertise include fire and disaster prevention, water supply and sewerage management, social welfare, health and sanitation, local administration and many more.

In fiscal year 2010, CLAIR Singapore received a request from Palitana Municipal Corporation in Bhavnagar District (Gujarat State) to dispatch a specialist in the field of water supply and sewerage management to the local area. The project aims at improving the quality of the local water supply system, and at the same time, upgrade the local sewerage management system. Mr. Masaya Kita, an official from Japan's Tokushima Prefecture was dispatched as a specialist to Palitana Municipal Corporation from 12th February to 2nd March 2011 to implement the project.



• *The specialist (third from right) conducting a site visit with staff from Palitana Municipal Corporation*

During the first half of the project, explanations pertaining to the current conditions of water supply and sewerage management systems in the local area were conducted by Palitana Municipal Corporation. In addition, site visits to water sources, treatment plants and pumping stations were also conducted to enable the specialist to gain a clearer picture of the current water supply and sewerage management operations in Palitana.

In the latter half of the project, the specialist analyzed plan drawings of water-related facilities and conducted several rounds of discussions with persons responsible for the water supply and sewerage systems in Palitana Municipal Corporation. In addition, the specialist also exchanged opinions with the President of Palitana Municipal Corporation on issues relating to water supply and sewerage management in Palitana.

On the last day of the dispatch, a seminar participated by technical experts from not only Palitana Municipal Corporation, but also from other nearby municipalities was conducted. In the seminar, the specialist illustrated the differences in the systems of water supply and sewerage management between Japan and India. Specific solutions to water-related issues faced by Palitana Municipal Corporation were also addressed during the seminar. The specialist commented that, "Good water supply and sewerage systems are the two keystones to ensure that future generations in Palitana could continue to flourish. As a result, I hope that Palitana Municipal Corporation will strive its best in its endeavours to upgrade the local water supply and sewerage systems."

## Chingay Parade Singapore 2011

The Chingay Parade, Singapore's largest international parade, was held on 11th (Friday) and 12th (Saturday) of February 2011.

Now entering its 39th year, the Chingay Parade had its beginnings in 1973 and is Singapore's grandest street parade that invites performers from both within Singapore and abroad. The vibrant and energetic parade was also broadcasted live on television and attracted an audience of more than 60,000 people over the two nights.

Representing Japan in the parade this year is a dynamic and uplifting dance item presented by the Nippon Domannaka\* Festival Cultural Foundation, which is the organizer for the annual Nippon Domannaka Festival held in mid-summer in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture.

Working to promote the Nippon Domannaka Festival into a similar major international festival as the Chingay Parade, the Japanese performers also took this opportunity to interact with other parade-participating groups from other countries such as Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Indonesia, and to extend an invitation to them to participate in future Nippon Domannaka Festivals in Japan.



*Nippon Domannaka Festival's lively performance at Chingay Parade 2011*

Each year, in response to a request from the parade organizer – the Singapore People's Association (PA) – for nomination of parade-participating groups, CLAIR Singapore would assist with the recruitment of performance groups from Japan and coordinate with PA to provide the relevant supports to the Japanese groups during their stay in Singapore.

\* "Nippon Domannaka" literally means "right in the center of Japan."

## CLAIR Singapore's Visit to Surabaya City, Indonesia



- *Ir. Tri Rismaharini, Mayor of Surabaya City (Left) and Mr. Oinuma Yutaka, Director of CLAIR Singapore (Right) during the courtesy call*

The strengthening of friendly and cooperative ties with its counterparts in the ASEAN region as well as India has always been a vital mission of CLAIR Singapore. Therefore the organization has been conducting regular visits to local governments and other related administrative organizations in the region. Specifically, these visits aim at gaining insights to the current issues and future outlook of local administration in the region, and at the same time, further enhancing the collaborative relations between CLAIR Singapore and local governments in the region.

On 29th March 2011, the Director of CLAIR Singapore, Mr. Oinuma Yutaka visited Surabaya City in the East Java Province of Indonesia. In addition to a courtesy call on Ir. Tri Rismaharini, the new Mayor of Surabaya City, visits to observe the implementation

of the various administrative reforms in the local area were also conducted.

Surabaya City has established strong cooperative ties with local governments in Japan. In this regard, Surabaya City is a sister city of Kochi City in Japan whereby their friendly relations have flourished for more than 10 years through programs such as CLAIR's Local Government Officials Training Program (LGOTP). In addition, Surabaya City also proactively engages itself in cooperation and exchange programs with other Japanese cities such as Kitakyushu City and Kobe City.

Famous for its clean environment and lush greeneries, Surabaya City is actively implementing various initiatives on environmental conservation even at the grassroots levels. Through the assistance from International Relations Subdivision of Surabaya City, CLAIR Singapore visited Gundi Village, which has won many awards for its 'clean and green' initiatives. Villagers initiated various community-based environmental conservation programs such as tree-planting, incorporating systematic composting methods in their daily lives, and they have even established their own sewerage processing system. These community-based initiatives are indeed aspirational examples of how a local community could promote environmental conservation through its own efforts.

During the courtesy call, Mayor Tri Rismaharini expressed her appreciation towards CLAIR Singapore for the cooperation and exchange programs with Surabaya City implemented so far. In addition, the Mayor also discussed the possible collaborations with CLAIR Singapore that may be implemented in the future.

Through such visits, CLAIR Singapore endeavours to continuously strengthen the cooperative ties between local governments in Japan and ASEAN region as well as India.

## JET Alumni at NATAS Travel Fair 2011

Singaporean alumni of the JET Programme (Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) rendered their assistance and support for the tourism promotional activities of Japanese local governments at the NATAS Travel Fair held in Singapore from 25th to 27th February 2011.

Specifically, JET alumni who had experiences living in Hokkaido and Shizuoka Prefecture assisted in providing travel information pertaining to these two destinations at their respective booths during the travel fair. Explanations by JET alumni were well-received by local Singaporeans visiting the booths, as the information provided were detailed, accurate and highly relatable.

Through such endeavours, JET alumni have the opportunity to maintain their ties with Japanese local governments, thus bridging further exchange between Japan and Singapore.

JET alumni in Singapore have established the Singapore branch of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA), and information pertaining to their various activities can be accessed at: <http://jetaasg.wordpress.com>.

CLAIR Singapore shares strong ties with JETAA Singapore. In this regard, JETAA Singapore recently held its annual general



- *JET alumna (third from left) providing travel information to visitors at the Hokkaido booth during NATAS Travel Fair 2011*

assembly meeting in CLAIR Singapore's office on 19th February 2011, whereby a report on its activities in fiscal year 2010 was made and new executive committee members for fiscal year 2011 were elected. CLAIR Singapore wishes JETAA Singapore all the best in its future endeavours.

# New Staff

## Etsuya Nakamura

Hello, my name is Etsuya Nakamura, and I am dispatched from Fukuoka Prefectural Government. Previously, I have long been handling matters related to both economic and cultural exchange with various countries, and this is the first time that I have been stationed in an Asian country apart from Japan. It is a great pleasure for me to be able to both work in Singapore and experience for myself the vibrancy of ASEAN countries and India. I very much look forward to doing my best in promoting the exchanges between the regions and local governments in Japan. Therefore, should you be visiting Singapore, please do feel free to contact me anytime.

## Hirofumi Hishida

Hello, I am Hirofumi Hishida, and I have been dispatched to Singapore from Hyogo Prefectural Government. Since the opening of the Port of Kobe in 1868, Hyogo Prefecture has served as a gateway to Japan and has broadly opened up itself to countries over the world. Even till today, Hyogo Prefecture still remains as a highly internationalized city.

While this is my first time to Singapore, I have been very much amazed by the country's advancement and the diversity of its people and culture. I look forward to doing my best in promoting the exchanges between Japanese local governments and both Singapore and various countries in the ASEAN region, as well as India. Thank you.

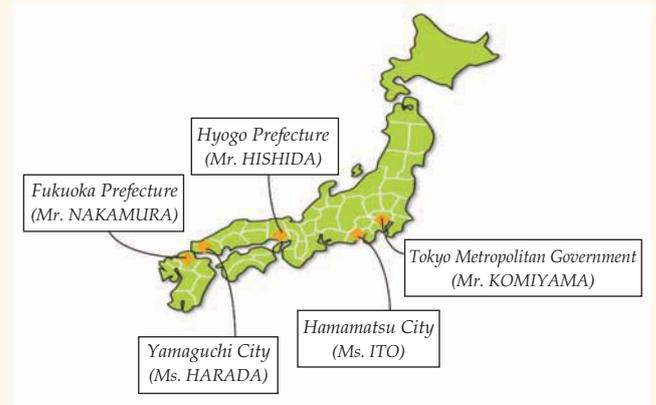
## Keiko Harada

Hello, my name is Keiko Harada, and I am dispatched from Yamaguchi City Government in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Situated in the westernmost part of the main island of Japan, Yamaguchi City has been known as the "Kyoto of the West" with its culturally flourished streets and sights.

This is my first time to be stationed overseas and it has been a fascinating experience for me everyday, as I discover unique Asian qualities of the region that is distinct to Japan. Through the mutual sharing of the uniqueness of each of the countries; and through further promotion of exchanges and cooperation, I hope that I would be able to act as a "bridge" that connects Japan with countries in the ASEAN region as well as India.

## Toru Komiyama

Hello, I am Toru Komiyama from Tokyo Metropolitan Government and have just assumed my duties at CLAIR Singapore. Using the experiences that I have gained in Tokyo, I hope to be able to further strengthen the relationship between



From left to right: Mr. KOMIYAMA, Mr. NAKAMURA, Mr. HISHIDA, Ms. HARADA, Ms. ITO

Japan and ASEAN as well as India, through the sharing of the uniqueness of our respective cities; as well as through the undertaking of concerns that the region faces in common, such as industrial promotion and environmental issues.

Finally, I sincerely look forward to having the opportunities to meet with everyone in the future and help in further deepening our exchanges.

## Hiroko Ito

Hello, I am Hiroko Ito, and I am dispatched from Hamamatsu City Government in Shizuoka Prefecture. Located in Central Japan, Hamamatsu City is about an hour and a half away from both Tokyo and Osaka by the *shinkansen* (bullet train). While there are four seasons in Hamamatsu, the city's climate is relatively mild all-year-round, making it a very comfortable place to live in. At the same time, Hamamatsu City is also the birthplace of several major global companies such as Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha.

This is my first time to Singapore, and it has been almost 10 years since I last visited Southeast Asia during my school days. I am both thrilled and excited to be given this opportunity to work in the region, and I will strive to do my best in making my two-year stay here an interesting and fruitful one.

## About CLAIR

CLAIR is a joint organization founded in 1988 by 47 prefectures and 19 major cities in Japan in order to assist Japanese local authorities with the implementation of their international exchange policies. With its headquarters in Tokyo, CLAIR has seven overseas offices in New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney, and Beijing.

CLAIR Singapore office was set up in October 1990. It supports and promotes international activities and friendly relations between local authorities in Japan and their counterparts in Singapore and the ASEAN countries as well as India.

For further information on our activities, please contact CLAIR Singapore.

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