



J.CLAIR Singapore

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◆Recent Activities

Thailand-Japan Joint Seminar On Local Administration



In order to promote knowledge exchange in the various fields of local administration between local government officials of Thailand and Japan, J.CLAIR Singapore held a seminar during 5 – 6 July in Bangkok in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan and the Department of Local Administration (DLA), Ministry of Interior of Thailand, with whom J.CLAIR Singapore has a longstanding cooperative relationship.

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This seminar was an opportunity for Thailand's local government officials to hear about Japan's best practices in local administration and served as a platform for speakers and participants of both countries to exchange knowledge and discuss about solutions to common challenges facing local governments. Around 300 participants from various Thai local administrative organisations attended the seminar.

The seminar was centered on 3 main topics: public participation in the preparation of local plans, environmental problems and its management, as well as disciplinary education in elementary schools.

For each topic, Japanese speakers presented the initiatives and strategies adopted by their respective organisations. Each presentation was then followed by a panel discussion in which Thailand's academics examined the current problems and suggested measures for improvement while frequently referring to Japan's examples. During each Q&A session, the enthusiastic audience posed many questions and comments that showed their concerns over the issues discussed.

In the first session on tackling the problem of low rates of public participation during the preparation of local plans, Mr. Kazuhisa Kato, Section Chief of the Planning and Policy Division of Odawara City Government, shared the experience of the city government in the process of drafting the 5th Odawara Comprehensive Plan known as the 'Odawara TRY Plan.' The city organises civic discussion sessions such as the Odawara TRY Forum to which randomly selected residents are invited to contribute their opinions. Moreover, the city also engages residents in conceptualising their respective regions' future so that sustained rates of public participation can be achieved.

The second session focused on environmental problems and its management. Most urban cities must grapple with the problem of waste reduction and management and Thailand's local administrative organisations are no exception. In particular, Thailand is concerned about reducing the amount of household waste generated and is putting priority into emphasising the importance of practicing the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) as well as separating trash at home. In this area, Oita City takes waste

management another step further by actively promoting the 4Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) in schools and in public spaces. Mr. Eishin Ando and Mr. Shintaroh Kanamaru, both of whom are from the Waste Reduction Promotion Division of Oita City Government, gave very detailed descriptions of how the city carries out publicity of the 4Rs in its effort to establish a recycling-oriented society.

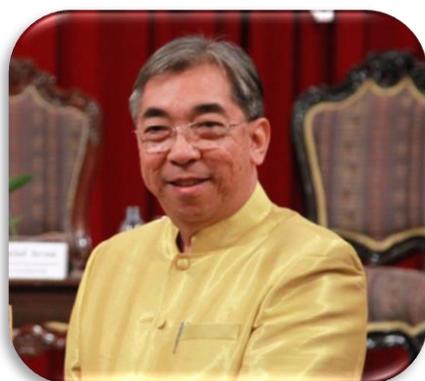
The third session discussed ways of instilling self-discipline in children in elementary schools. Thailand places great emphasis on nurturing children into responsible, cooperative and caring adults and believes that such disciplined behaviour should start in elementary schools and at home. Hence, Japan's example is eagerly sought after as a possible reference. In this session, Mr. Kaoru Muroga, Principal of the Thai Japanese Association School in Bangkok, explained how moral education and social studies education in Japanese elementary schools are conducted in association with daily school activities in order to cultivate children who would grow up to be considerate individuals in their communities.



Workshop Session

Finally, 3 workshops were conducted for the participants to come together and discuss about the difficulties they face concerning the topics, and to suggest possible strategies for improvement in their local administrative organisations. As the Japanese speakers also joined in these workshops, the Thai participants were able to interact with the speakers at close range and pose more questions to understand more about the details of the Japanese case studies. Through such opportunities to share experience on local administration, J.CLAIR Singapore hopes to continue to contribute toward the promotion of local level cooperation between Japan and Thailand.

*A message from Mr. Dhana Yantrakovit,
Deputy Director-General,
Department of Local Administration (DLA)
about the seminar*



***Mr. Dhana Yantrakovit,
Deputy Director-General,
Department of Local
Administration (DLA)***

Department of Local Administration (DLA), Ministry of Interior and Japan Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (J.CLAIR), Singapore have been in partnership for decades. There are many activities/projects that have been conducted annually such as the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar Program, the Local Government International Cooperation Specialist Dispatch Project, and etc.

In 2018, this year is not only the year of 131st anniversary of Japan – Thailand Diplomatic Relations, but also another remarkable year of the collaboration between DLA and J.CLAIR as these two organisations had agreed to conduct the knowledge sharing joint seminar together. This has even enhanced and strengthened a cordial relationship between Thailand and Japan.

I am delighted to say that the Thailand-Japan Joint Seminar on Local Administration which was held during 5 – 6 July 2018 in Bangkok was a great success. It had been used as a platform for 300 participants coming from all over Thailand to discuss and learn the key factors and elements of the effective implementation in Japan regarding public participation in the planning processes of local plans, waste management in accordance with the 4Rs principle, and managing primary education with the focus on community engagement and self-discipline establishment in children. This platform allowed the participants to exchange knowledge with Japanese speakers as well.

As we know, currently, local governments are organisations which have played vital roles in boosting national development while they face predicaments in many areas. The success of this seminar has enabled the participants to use the received knowledge in providing local public services with a higher level of good governance.

Meanwhile, the seminar also allowed the participants to learn from the Thai academics with specialised expertise on local administration. This has been beneficial to foster collaborative actions among public, private, and people's sectors in order to increase the effectiveness of public service provision according to the authorities and duties of the local administrative organisation (LAO).

Due to the extensive collaboration between DLA and J.CLAIR in hosting the seminar, the participating local organisations in Thailand are expected and certain to absorb all such applicable knowledge and hands-on experience from the Japanese specialists. Undoubtedly, I am looking forward to further collaboration.

Promoting Local Attractions of Japan at the “Sakura Matsuri” in Singapore!

From 30 March to 8 April, a Sakura-themed event was held at the Flower Dome in Singapore’s Gardens by the Bay. Named the “Sakura Matsuri” (which means “Cherry Blossoms Festival” in Japanese), this annual event was first held at Gardens by the Bay two years ago and is extremely well-received each year, as visitors get the opportunity to view many different types of sakura at the same time, most of which are flown in specially from Japan and Europe.

This year, to add further attractions to the event, an exclusive area was also set aside within the venue to introduce and promote Japanese food, cultures and travel information to visitors. Besides staging performances of local traditional cultural acts such as Okinawan folk songs and Sendai *Suzume Odori* (Sparrow Dance), a booth that offered hands-on experience of Japanese cultures like kimono-wearing, green tea tasting and origami etc. was also set up.

J.CLAIR Singapore, together with the Embassy of Japan in Singapore and other related organisations

also coordinated to put up an “All-Japan Booth” at the above event space, to promote local attractions in Japan and hand out travel pamphlets and small gifts that were provided by various Japanese local governments. Many of the visitors who dropped by our booth were very interested in Japan and asked for more sakura-related information such as “When would be the best season to view sakura in Japan?”, and “Which are some of the best spots in Japan to view beautiful sakura?”. Apart from local Singaporeans, there were also many foreign visitors from America, Europe, India etc., who shared that they would like to visit Japan next.

Using sakura as an element of approach, this event was a very valuable opportunity for us to directly distribute information of local attractions in Japan to people who have high interest towards Japan, and we look forward to continue sharing travel information about Japan through such events and contribute in attracting even more inbound tourists to Japan.



“Sakura Matsuri” at Gardens by the Bay in Singapore

Showcasing Japan’s Local Allocation Tax System at the 4th South Asian Cities Summit

The 4th South Asian Cities Summit, organised by All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG) was held in India’s New Delhi over 2 days on 4 and 5

May 2018.

The Summit was organised into 8 sessions, whereby

a series of presentations and panel discussions were held under the main theme of “New Urban Agenda & Localising SDGs”.

Mr. Kenjiro Hashimoto, the former Executive Director of J.CLAIR Singapore, delivered a presentation entitled “Japan’s Local Allocation Tax System for Sustainable Government Administration”.



Lecture on Japan’s Local Allocation Tax System

In his lecture, Mr. Hashimoto focused on exploring the systems of local autonomy as well as local allocation tax in Japan. Even though Japanese local governments can secure their own revenue sources through local taxes, there are local governments whose tax revenues are insufficient to cover the required expenditures. This is the preponderant factor that has catalysed the establishment of the local allocation tax system in Japan. The local allocation tax is a system that adjusts the imbalance of a local government's financial resources by providing a grant or subsidy called “local allocation tax” from the central government to local governments that have sufficient tax revenues as well as those with insufficient tax revenues, so that these local governments can equally sustain their administrative operations.

Participants of the lecture actively took part during the session, and it was evident that there is a high level of interest towards the local autonomy system in Japan.

Previously held in 2013, 2015 and 2016, this 4th summit in 2018 was attended by representatives from India, Korea, Indonesia, Maldives, Bhutan and Bangladesh, in addition to organisations such as the



A scene from the summit

United Nations and UCLG-ASPAC which delivered presentations during the summit.

The summit served as an excellent platform for practitioners of local governance from various countries to broaden their contact networks, and at the same time enable them to exchange expertise and experience in improving the quality of local governance. Participants of the summit also shared views and opinions on various subject matters during the networking sessions and lunch.

Through such international conferences, Japanese local governments are given a meaningful opportunity to showcase and disseminate information about their best practices in local governance to an international audience. It is hoped that more Japanese local governments will be able to introduce their local best practices in international conferences, so as to leverage their recognitions in the international arena. J.CLAIR Singapore will contribute its part in proactively showcasing the best practices of Japanese local governments in international conferences.



Presenting of souvenirs

Sri Lanka Added to Countries Under J.CLAIR Singapore's Purview

~Increased Exchange Opportunities Through CLAIR's Programmes~

After the end of the long civil war, the domestic situation in Sri Lanka has stabilised, and the country has seen steady economic growth in recent years. Given these developments, we foresee increased interest from local governments in Japan to expand their activities in Sri Lanka. To support this, J.CLAIR Singapore added Sri Lanka to the countries under our purview in July 2018. This enables Sri Lanka to participate in our various programmes, and creates more opportunities for exchanges between local governments in Sri Lanka and Japan.

The earliest instances of exchanges at a local government level were in the form of Sister City Agreements. Nuwara Eliya and Uji City in Kyoto Prefecture, Moratuwa and Suita City in Osaka Prefecture, as well as Kandy and Usuki City in Oita Prefecture are the three pairs of Sister Cities between municipalities in Sri Lanka and Japan. Usuki and Kandy celebrated the 50th Anniversary of their Sister City Agreement in 2017 with a commemorative event, and a group of junior high school students from Usuki visited Kandy to mark the occasion.

More recently, in the lead up to the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, several local governments in Japan have actively put themselves forward to serve as Host Towns to the athletes from the Sri Lankan National Team. Another form of exchange has been carried out by Ehime Prefecture, which over the span of many years has been providing support to Sri Lanka in the fields of orange cultivation and fishery products processing.

Apart from activities by local governments, there are currently about 130 Japanese companies that have a presence in Sri Lanka. Located along key shipping routes, Sri Lanka is seen as a strategic logistical base for companies, giving them easy access through the Port of Colombo to export not only to Europe, but to North America and East Asia as well. Many international companies, including Japanese companies have set up operations in Sri Lanka to reap these locational benefits. The Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised an economic

mission to Sri Lanka in January this year, and we can expect companies' interest in Sri Lanka to continue to grow.

Regarding investments and aid, there has been a shift in the fields in Sri Lanka that Japan supports from the construction of roads and so on to infrastructure projects that require advanced technology such as the building of bridges. Furthermore, apart from developing capabilities in water supply and sewage services, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) also lent their expertise to Kandy Municipal Council to develop their Master Plan.

J.CLAIR Singapore aims to continue to research and analyse the current situation in Sri Lanka so as to provide up-to-date and useful information to local governments in Japan. In addition, we will work together with the Embassy, JICA, and other Japanese organisations in order to enhance Japan's presence in Sri Lanka, form new exchanges, as well as support and strengthen existing relationships between our two countries.



***Visiting Ministry of Provincial Councils,
Local Government and Sports***

“Indonesia-Japan Knowledge Exchange Seminar 2018” in Jakarta, Indonesia

In collaboration with Indonesia’s National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), J.CLAIR Singapore jointly organised the “Indonesia-Japan Knowledge Exchange Seminar 2018” on 25 July in Indonesia’s capital city of Jakarta. Themed as “Leaderpreneurship: Developing Local Circular Economy”, the seminar aimed at providing new inspirations to Indonesian participants who mainly consisted of personnel from the local governments.

The seminar was divided into 2 parts, whereby the first part featured lectures by speakers from both Japan as well as Indonesia, and the second part was centred on group discussions between the speakers and the participants. 2 Japanese speakers from Maniwa City in Okayama Prefecture and Umaji Village in Kochi Prefecture were invited to deliver lectures in the seminar. In this regard, the speaker from Maniwa City showcased best practices implemented by the city to promote sustainable urban development through the utilisation of leftover wooden materials to generate biomass electricity. On the other hand, the speaker from Umaji Village featured case studies on how the village commercialised yuzu production by developing new processed products and enhancing the local branding, which eventually resulted in the incorporation of high value-added agricultural activities locally. Participants from Indonesia were deeply impressed with the case studies, and they proactively participated in the sessions.

The Executive Director from Indonesia’s Ministry of Village, Underdeveloped Regions and Transmigration, as well as the Vice Regent from Bantul Regency in Indonesia’s Yogyakarta Special Region also delivered lectures in the seminar. The Vice Regent of Bantul Regency featured case studies on how local agricultural producers utilises ICT tools to directly market their products to consumers that have increased their incomes. In addition, case studies on the recycling of resources to save production costs were also showcased by the Vice Regent of Bantul Regency.

After the lecture sessions, the speakers and participants were divided into 4 groups, whereby they were given the opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions pertaining to the lecture contents. Participants from Indonesia actively exchanged experiences by comparing the different contexts in Japan and Indonesia. During the closing ceremony, moderators from the 4 groups shared the results of the group discussions with all the participants, and the seminar was concluded meaningfully.

The year 2018 celebrates the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Indonesia, and this seminar is certified as one of the programmes to commemorate this special year. J.CLAIR Singapore looks forward to contributing its part in enhancing the cooperative ties between both countries in terms of local administration.



Scenes from Indonesia-Japan Knowledge Exchange Seminar 2018

◆Travel Fairs in ASEAN countries

~To promote travel to Japan and gather information about Japan tourism, J.CLAIR Singapore actively participates in Travel Fairs held in ASEAN countries~

“Travel Madness Expo 2018” in the Philippines!

1. Outline of the Travel Fair

Organised by Travel Innovators Inc., the “Travel Madness Expo 2018” was held at the SMX Convention Center in Manila, Philippines, for 3 days from 6 July (Friday) to 8 July (Sunday) 2018. J.CLAIR Singapore promoted Japan travel at the event by helping out at the Visit Japan booth put up by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO).



2. Which are the most popular destinations in Japan for Filipinos?

The number of visitor arrivals in 2017 to Japan from the Philippines broke the previous record-high numbers of 2016, largely due to the expansion of low-cost carrier routes and the active promotion of travel to Japan. The number of visitor arrivals in 2017 was 424,121 and the growth rate of the Philippines’ market was 21.9% year on year. There were many visitors at the travel fair who had already been to Japan several times, so it is expected that aggressive promotion will directly result in more visitors, especially for the regional areas of Japan.

Ranking	Destination	Travel Interests
1st	Osaka	There were a lot of people who are interested in local foods. First of all, they tried to collect information on Osaka.
2nd	Kyoto	Many visitors were interested to see the autumn leaves, and we were often asked about when would be the recommended period to view them (usually around mid to late November).
3rd	Tokyo	Tokyo Disney Resort is still very popular, and many were planning to travel to both Tokyo and its vicinities (Yokohama and Hakone) at the same time.
4th	Fukuoka	People who have been along the Golden Route chose this area as their next destination.
5th	Hokkaido	When they thought of winter, a lot of people immediately thought of Hokkaido. They would like to see snow, go skiing and visit the snow festival in Sapporo.

For a lot of Filipino travellers, the main objective of their visit to Japan includes “to see cherry blossoms”, “to experience snow”, or “to take the Shinkansen (bullet train)” etc. In addition, many of the locals also had the assumption that there was snowfall only in Hokkaido, and a lot of them were surprised to know that they can also experience snow in areas that are closer to Tokyo and upon hearing this information, decided to change their itinerary to the nearer regions instead. People were glad to find out that it only takes about 3 hours between Tokyo and Osaka and they could visit both cities during the same trip.



3. What does the future hold for tourism to Japan in the Filipino market?

While there are not that many repeated travellers to Japan from the Philippines, many of the Japanese local governments and businesses who participated in the travel fair expressed the opinion that the purchasing power of Filipino travellers is much higher than they had imagined, and thus, the Philippines is still a highly-anticipated market with huge potential in the future.

“Thai International Travel Fair #23” in Thailand!

1. Outline of the Travel Fair

Organised by the Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA), the “Thai International Travel Fair #23” was held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center in Bangkok, Thailand, for 4 days from Thursday to Sunday, on 9 – 12 August 2018. J.CLAIR Singapore interviewed visitors at the event and promoted travel to Japan at the Japan Zone set up by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO).

2. Which are the most popular destinations in Japan for Thai visitors?

According to the level of popularity of pamphlets that were distributed at the Japan Zone, below are some of the top well-liked destinations in Japan among Thai visitors. The locals were especially receptive to pamphlets with pictures that look good on Instagram, such as beautiful flowers and scenery printed on the front, as well as those written in Thai language. For experiences and cuisine, strawberry picking and crabs seem to be popular.

Ranking	Destination	Travel Interests
1st	Hokkaido	Other than to see snow, many also had travel plans to try gourmet food in Hokkaido.
2nd	Tokyo	Apart from well-known sites such as Asakusa, Ginza and Shibuya etc., many also asked about other lesser-known sightseeing spots in Tokyo.
3rd	Okinawa	Many people were making travel plans to Okinawa because of the direct flight from Thailand every day.
4th	Osaka	Universal Studios Japan is very popular among the locals. Many also asked about where Osaka Castle and the Tsutenkaku Tower are in Osaka.
5th	Kyushu	Many people knew about Kyushu partly because of a popular Thai TV drama that was filmed in Saga Prefecture. Yutokuinari Shrine was also well known.

3. What does the future hold for tourism to Japan in the Thai market?

About 980,000 Thai visitors travelled to Japan in 2017, which is the highest visitor arrivals recorded among Southeast Asian countries in the same year. Out of these Thai travellers, over 60% had already been to Japan before and there is also an increase in the number of Thai visitors who are travelling to other regions outside of Japan’s “Golden Route” (which is Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka and so on). Going forward, we can expect to have more visitors from Thailand to visit and enjoy the various attractions all over Japan.



◆Do you know Japanese Local Foods ?

~In Japan, each local area has its own local food that cannot be found in other areas. We will introduce a few of them here~

The Most Photogenic Shaved Ice Dessert! *Shirokuma* of Kagoshima City

Kagoshima City is located in the south of Kyushu. It takes only 2 hours from Tokyo to Kagoshima by plane and 1.5 hours from Fukuoka by the bullet train. Kagoshima City is also often called the “Naples of the East” because of the grandiosity of the city’s natural landscapes such as Mt. Sakurajima, which is one of the few most active volcanos in the world, as well as the Kinko Bay. In addition, Kagoshima City is also



home to many other attractions like the “Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution” that is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, rich and good-quality hot springs, and so on.

In this newsletter, we would like to

introduce one of Kagoshima’s most appealing attractions – *Shirokuma*. A sweet, icy-cold dessert and local specialty of Kagoshima, *Shirokuma*



is traditional shaved ice that is topped with condensed milk, fruits and cooked beans.

Shirokuma in Japanese means “polar bear”. So, why do we call this shaved ice dessert *Shirokuma*?

There are several theories about the origin of its name, and one of them is that the dessert looks like the fuses of a polar bear when viewed from the top. Don’t you think so too?

Many local and foreign tourists will take pictures with *Shirokuma* during the hot summer period, and even in the cold winter season.

Please come to Kagoshima to meet and enjoy *Shirokuma*!

Premium, branded fish in Oita City - *Seki Aji* (horse mackerel) and *Seki Saba* (mackerel)

Oita City is located at the eastern end of Japan’s Kyushu region and has always played an important role as a key hub of eastern Kyushu since ancient times. During the 15th to 16th Century, Otomo Sorin, a Japanese feudal lord who converted to Christianity and ruled the lands where present-day Oita City was helmed as its capital, was the first to introduce western culture to Japan. For this reason, Oita City is historically known as the birthplace of western medicine, music and theatre in Japan.

Surrounded by rich green mountains, blue seas and rivers, Oita City is also naturally blessed with abundant food and ingredients. Amongst these include the *Seki Aji* (horse mackerel) and *Seki Saba* (mackerel), which are much lauded as a premium and high-grade fish.

Horse mackerels and mackerels that are caught using the traditional single pole-and-line fishing method at the Bungo Channel, where large bodies of water from the Seto Inland Sea and Pacific Ocean intersect, are

called *Seki Aji* (horse mackerel) and *Seki Saba* (mackerel). *Seki Aji* and *Seki Saba* are best enjoyed as fresh sashimi with their beautiful gleaming skin, unique umami (savoury taste), and firm and springy meat that has plenty of fat.

March to October is the best season to enjoy *Seki Aji* (horse mackerel), and they taste even more delicious when served as sashimi that is drizzled over with another one of Oita’s specialty, the *Kabosu* (a type of citrus fruit).

The *Seki Saba* (mackerel) gains even more fat at the beginning of fall, and the firmness of its fresh sashimi meat brings about a taste and texture that is distinctive to the region.

