

# CLAIR Singapore Newsletter *Volume. 59* *June 2013*

## Specialist Dispatch Project in Phuket, Thailand

With a population of approximately 76,000 people, The City of Phuket in Thailand is renowned worldwide as a popular tourist destination, enchanting tourists with its idyllic coastlines and breathtaking sceneries. Situated on an island off the south-west coast of Thailand, the City of Phuket has successfully implemented effective tourism promotion policies that have enhanced its leader position in the nation's tourism industry. The city's success in tourism promotion has catalyzed Phuket's economic development and leveraged the local community's quality of life.

As urbanization progresses rapidly within the city, the issue of childhood obesity arose and caught the attention of the city administration. In recent years, the prevalence rate of childhood obesity among children in the 7 local municipal schools has been increasing steadily, and though the city administration had implemented various counteract measures, the issue persisted. In the quest for identifying a solution to the problem of childhood obesity, the City of Phuket participated in CLAIR's "2012 Specialist Dispatch Project", whereby Ms. FUJISHITA Manami, an expert from the Department of Public Health and Medical Affairs of Fukuoka Prefectural Government in Japan was dispatched to the City of Phuket from 3rd to 9th February 2013, so as to assist with educating the various local stakeholders on preventing childhood obesity.

In order to have a better grasp on the current situation of childhood obesity occurring in the city, the expert visited some of the local primary and secondary schools on the first day of dispatch. Under the kind assistance from the Medical Services Department of Phuket City Hall, Ms. Fujishita was given an opportunity to observe the effectiveness of the physical education conducted in one of the schools, and at the same time, analyze the nutritional values of meals served in the schools. These are identified as the 2 key factors influencing the prevalence of childhood obesity.

In terms of physical education, in addition to the compulsory daily morning exercise and physical education lessons, school administration also makes sure that children who are obese undergo extra exercises to help them lose weight. These obese children are identified through a monthly routine check on the school children's height and weight. Furthermore, school administration also organizes talks on childhood obesity prevention at the end of semester period and also during the parents' meeting that is held 4 times a year, so as to educate parents on their roles in preventing childhood obesity. As more parents send their children to school by car, local school children nowadays exercise less, and this is thought to be 1 factor that has contributed to the rising rate of childhood obesity in the local community. The expert also visited the school kitchen and canteen used to provide meals to students. Subsidised by the central government and city hall, free meals are provided to primary school students in Phuket, whereas secondary school students can have their meals in the school canteen at their own expense. Lastly, the expert had an opportunity to interview a group of primary school children who successfully lost weight through the school's program, and have represented the school in a national aerobics competition.

Based on her observations and findings from the site visit, the expert conducted lectures to school children from 4 local municipal schools on 5th and 6th February. The lectures were conducted in the morning and afternoon, whereby approximately 70 obese students from each school participated in the lectures. During the lectures, the expert introduced typical healthy Japanese meals that have contributed to the longevity of Japanese, and she also emphasised on the importance of having a balanced diet. In addition, school children were also urged to take breakfast as it provides the energy necessary for daily activities, and helps them concentrate better during lessons. Videos on meals provided in Japanese schools and healthy Japanese homemade meals were shown to the participating students. During the lectures, the expert also conducted demonstrations on the various exercises that can be carried out to prevent obesity.



*The specialist and program participants in a group photo*



*A scene from the lectures*

On 7th February, the expert conducted a lecture to the other stakeholders, which included teachers, parents and personnel from the Medical Services Department of Phuket City Hall. The participants exchanged their views and opinions on childhood obesity with the expert, and the expert provided her insights on solving the issue from a Japanese perspective. In the concluding lecture on 8th February, the expert proposed several programs that can be implemented to overcome the issue of childhood obesity in the City of Phuket. These programs focused on enabling the students to conduct daily checks on their weight changes, and from there motivate them to manage their diet and exercise more regularly. It is hoped that the dispatch project implemented would benefit the City of Phuket in its effort to tackle the issue of childhood obesity.

## Specialist Dispatch Project in Bangkok, Thailand

Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department was officially established in November 2003 under the jurisdiction and management of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). Since its inception, the department has grown from strength to strength in its core competencies, and it currently has a workforce of 2,087 people including highly professional firefighters to provide vital services in the fields of firefighting, fire and disaster prevention as well as disaster mitigation, so as to protect the lives of the 10 million residents in Bangkok Metropolitan Region.

In view of the need to further enhance the knowledge and skills of its firefighters, Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department participated in CLAIR Singapore's "Specialist Dispatch Project", whereby 5 firefighters from the Tokyo Fire Department were dispatched as experts to Rachaprasa Training Center, a training arm of Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department located in Nakhon Ratchasima, a city in the northeast of Thailand. The project was implemented for 3 weeks from 17th February to 9th March 2013, and training on skillsets such as rescue techniques, safety management in firefighting and disaster mitigation using related equipment were conducted during the dispatch period.

A total of 40 local firefighters handpicked from 8 fire stations (5 representatives from each station) under the purview of Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department

participated in the training program. The participants learnt proactively and enthusiastically from the panel of experts, whereby the results of their training were showcased before senior-ranking officials of Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department and other guests-of-honour during the integrated exercise scheduled on the last day of the training program. Demonstrations on hyper rescue, usage of rescue trucks and aerial ladders, crossing/descending/climbing techniques, fire rescue and other related skillsets were conducted by the participants during the integrated exercise.

6 local participants of the program had prior experience of attending a workshop in Japan organized by Tokyo Fire Department, as part of the ANMC21 (Asian Network of Major Cities 21) Joint Project implemented in November 2012. It is evident that the synergy effect created through related training programs helps strengthen participants' core capabilities in firefighting and disaster prevention.

The experts from Tokyo Fire Department commented that they are confident of the local participants' abilities in imparting the skills that they've learnt from the training program to their peers in the fire stations. It is hoped that such knowledge transfer will serve as a catalyst which further leverages the level and quality of firefighting and disaster prevention in Bangkok Metropolitan Region.

Through the Specialist Dispatch Project, CLAIR Singapore aspires to strengthen the friendly ties and promote a higher level of knowledge transfer between local governments in Japan and the ASEAN region as well as India.



*The expert demonstrating methods of knot-tying*

## CLAIR's Participation in International Travel Fairs held in ASEAN countries

Between February and March of this year, CLAIR Singapore participated in several international travel fairs that were separately held in Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, India and Indonesia, through collaborating with organizations such as the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) and the Japanese Embassy. Besides helping to distribute tourist information of Japan's local regions at these events, CLAIR Singapore also regularly participates in these travel fairs to gather



*The expert (left) explaining methods of tying a figure 8 knot and double 8 knot*

information on these markets before disseminating the findings to Japanese local governments.

Following an almost full-recovery in 2012, Japan tourism had a promising kick-start to the New Year, as it continues to be ranked as one of the top few international travel destination markets at most of these travel fairs. While cities such as Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Hokkaido remained as several of the more popular places-to-visit among tourists to Japan, the Chubu (central) and Kyushu (southern) regions are also slowly gaining popularity among repeaters to the country. Apart from questions on Japan's four seasons, famous hot spring areas, Japanese food and shopping districts, many visitors to the Japan booth were also interested to find out more about when and where would be the best time and spots to view sakuras in Japan; when is the blooming period of Hokkaido's lavender fields during the summer season; and what are some of the available transportation routes or recommended accommodations within Japan etc.

At the 12th Thai International Travel FAIR (TITF) held in Bangkok in February, a total of 16 groups of Japanese local governments and related organizations had exhibited at the event, including first-time exhibitors such as Koya Town (Wakayama Prefecture) and Yokohama City. Majority of the fair visitors had come to the event to gather information in preparation for their travel plans during Thailand's holiday season in April, and amongst visitors to the Japan booth was a significant proportion of repeat travellers who have decided to travel free and independently to Japan this time, after a prior experience with packaged tour groups. Following an increase in the number of repeat travellers to Japan, more Thai visitors are also beginning to show greater diversity in their destination choices as they look to explore local areas and regions in Japan.

Subsequently held in March was the MATTA Fair in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where a total of 10 groups of Japanese tourism related organizations exhibited at the event. Many of the fair visitors to the Japan booth were looking to make use of the low-cost, direct flights available between Malaysia and Tokyo or Osaka, and tourist information about these cities and areas near

them were highly in-demand. Similarly well-received was a Japan travel guide created by JNTO that was catered particularly towards Muslim visitors, and which was being distributed at the Japan booth for the first time. Together with information on popular places of attractions in Japan, the guide also included locations of halal restaurants and mosques that could be found in some of Japan's major cities etc., providing greater assurance to Muslim visitors who are considering a trip to Japan.

Apart from the above-mentioned travel fairs, this year was also the first time that CLAIR Singapore had participated in the Cool Japan Festival held in Mumbai, India; as well as the ASTINDO Fair held in Jakarta, Indonesia. The amount of support and interest towards Japan as shown by local visitors at these events have been extremely positive and encouraging, and CLAIR Singapore hopes to be able to continue to attend and participate in these events to further help promote Japan-bound tourism through spreading the charms and attractions of Japan's local regions.



*Sakura-decorated Japan Zone at TITF #12*

■ **International Travel Fairs participated by CLAIR Singapore in Feb – Mar 2013**

Name	Date	Venue	Organizer
Thai International Travel Fair #12	14 – 17 Feb	Bangkok, Thailand	Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA)
20th Travel Tour Expo 2013	15 – 17 Feb	Manila, Philippines	Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA)
NATAS Travel 2013	22 – 24 Feb	Singapore	National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS)
MATTA FAIR Kuala Lumpur 2013	15 – 17 Mar	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA)
Cool Japan Festival 2013	15 – 17 Mar	Mumbai, India	La Ditta Ltd., Maido Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.
ASTINDO Fair 2013	22 – 24 Mar	Jakarta, Indonesia	The Association of Air Ticketing Companies in Indonesia (ASTINDO)



CLAIR Singapore staff attending to Japan booth visitors at MATTA FAIR Kuala Lumpur 2013

## CLAIR Singapore Enhances Cooperation with Cambodia's Ministry of Interior New Staff

Cambodia's Ministry of Interior is one of CLAIR Singapore's most treasured counterparts for its various programs and activities in the country. Notably, the constructive relation between the two organizations was further strengthened through CLAIR Singapore's "Specialist Dispatch Project" which was implemented for two consecutive years from 2005 to 2006 in Cambodia's Kampong Chhnang Province. The project yielded impressive tangible results, whereby villagers trained in pottery-making are now producing high quality products that directly supplement their income and improved their standard of living.

With the aim to further enhance the cooperative ties between both organizations, delegates from CLAIR Singapore visited Cambodia's Ministry of Interior on 29th January 2013. His Excellency Prum Sokha, Secretary of State and His Excellency Leng Vy, Director General for General Department of Local Administration from the Ministry of Interior welcomed delegates from CLAIR Singapore during the visit. Both representatives are the key personnel who were instrumental and have contributed



**On the left row**

**Right:** His Excellency Prum Sokha, Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior

**Left:** His Excellency Leng Vy, Director General, General Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior

greatly to the implementation of the Specialist Dispatch Project in Kampong Chhnang Province.

During the meeting, His Excellency Prum Sokha commented that he hopes to see more prospective collaborations between both organizations, and he also hopes that CLAIR Singapore would continue to play a proactive role in bridging the friendly ties between local governments in Cambodia and Japan.

CLAIR Singapore looks forward to enhance the collaborative ties with Cambodia's Ministry of Interior through programs such as the Specialist Dispatch Project as well as Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar.

### IWAI Masaya



I am grateful and excited for this opportunity to work with the great team in CLAIR Singapore, and, as my predecessors did, would like to spare no efforts in promoting local level exchanges and fostering cooperative ties between Japan and ASEAN countries as well as India.

I have been employed by Fukuoka Prefectural Government since 1991, and have spent most of my career working on international relations and providing support for international students studying in Fukuoka. Fukuoka Prefecture has signed friendship agreements with three major capital cities in the region where CLAIR Singapore conducts its activities – Bangkok in 2006, Delhi in 2007, and Hanoi in 2008.

### MARUYAMA Iwao

Hello, I am Iwao Maruyama, dispatched from Hyogo Prefectural Government. Hyogo Prefecture is located in central Japan, and the prefectural capital is Kobe city which is well-known for its Kobe beef.

Having always been interested in the diverse cultures of the ASEAN region, I am very glad to have the opportunity to work in CLAIR Singapore. During my stay in Singapore, I would like to learn about Singapore and Southeast Asian countries and provide support to further enhance interactions between Japanese local authorities and these countries.



### SUZUKI Tomomi



Hello, I'm Tomomi Suzuki, dispatched from Koto City which is situated in Tokyo. I am very happy to be given such a precious opportunity to work for CLAIR Singapore.

Koto City is located in the Tokyo Bay area, and the city has successfully implemented various policies pertaining to waste management and environmental conservation, especially in promoting awareness among local residents on the

importance of waste recycling.

I think there are many aspects in which Koto City and Singapore share in common, and as such I aspire to learn more about Singapore during my tenure here.

In addition, I also look forward to an opportunity to deepen my knowledge on ASEAN countries as well as India, so as to obtain insights on establishing guidelines for internationalization in Koto City.

I hope that every experience that I will gain here in Singapore will be useful for strengthening the relationship between Japanese local governments and ASEAN countries as well as India.

### **OKADA Rika**

I am very glad to have the opportunity to work in Singapore. I am from Kumamoto Prefecture which is situated in the center of Kyushu, the southern major island of Japan. Kumamon, the cute black bear mascot that represents the spirit of Kumamoto Prefecture is featured below.



The volcanic Mount Aso, one of the largest calderas in the world is also located in Kumamoto, which allows local residents to gain access to a far greater amount of pure water, crystal-clean groundwater, delicious fruits and many attractive onsens (hot springs). In Kumamoto, you will definitely be enchanted by the Kurokawa Onsen, a well-known onsen town with traditional yet elegant Japanese-style inns located along the Chikugo River. The spring water here contains various vital nutrients that enhances one's wellbeing and beautiful complexion, therefore please visit Kumamoto to enjoy the onsens here and witness for yourself the wonderful health benefits of its spring water.

During my stay in Singapore, in addition to enhancing my knowledge on ASEAN countries and India, I also aspire to contribute whatever I can to support further interactions between Japanese local governments and ASEAN countries as well as India.



### **NAKATA Kazuaki**



Hello, I am Kazuaki Nakata, and I am from Sakai City Government which is situated almost in the center of Osaka Prefecture. I am very glad to have the opportunity to work in Singapore.

Nintoku-ryo Tumulus, Japan's largest keyhole-shaped ancient tomb is situated in Sakai. In addition, Sakai is also famous as the birthplace of Sen no Rikyu, who was the top master of the tea ceremony. You can experience and observe Japan's traditional culture of tea ceremony and captivating traditional industries here in Sakai.

During my stay in Singapore, I would like to learn and experience many things. I will do my best to promote greater mutual understanding between ASEAN countries, India and Japan.

### **MATSUDA Biwa**

Hello, my name is Biwa Matsuda. I am dispatched from Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG). Tokyo is an exciting place to visit regardless of how many times you have been there. It offers everything from traditional culture and entertainment to natural sceneries found in mountains and remote islands.



TMG focuses on strengthening the relationships between Tokyo and cities in the ASEAN region as well as India. In addition to cultural exchange, TMG has also been working hand in hand with these countries in technical fields such as crisis management, environmental conservation and industrial development which have yielded tangible results.

I am truly blessed to be given the opportunity to work here in Singapore, as I like the tropical climate and I love spicy Southeast Asian food. I have also been learning Mandarin Chinese. During my stay here in Singapore, I look forward to an opportunity to enrich my knowledge on the administration systems in ASEAN countries as well as India. In addition, I also look forward to meet people from all walks of life here and share our experiences.

### **SHIMOMURA Hideki**



Hello, I am Hideki Shimomura and I am dispatched from Tahara City, a local government in Aichi Prefecture.

Tahara City is located in the central part of Japan and it faces the Pacific Ocean. Blessed with vast natural resources, the economic backbone of Tahara City lies in agriculture, and the city is famous for its fresh and high-quality agricultural produce. In addition to agriculture, a vibrant manufacturing industry is also present here in Tahara City, whereby the city is well-known as a hub for the manufacturing of automobiles. I strongly recommend you to visit Tahara City, as it offers you the best from both worlds.

I am very glad to have the opportunity to work in Singapore. During my 2 year tenure here in Singapore, I look forward to learn more about the culture and policy of this country.

### **MIYAZAKI Fumitaka**

Hello, I am Fumitaka Miyazaki and I am dispatched from Saga Prefecture, a tranquil and comfortable garden city in the Kyushu region.



I am very fascinated by Singapore's great success in propelling itself to be the economic and financial hub of Southeast Asia.

It is a great opportunity for me to work in CLAIR Singapore, and I aspire to learn more about the successful systems implemented in Singapore, especially the cutting-edge operation systems of airport and port terminal facilities.

I also hope that you can come to Saga to enjoy the good food, and relax in the tranquility of Saga with its lush greenery!

### **SEKINE Noriki**



Hello, I am Noriki Sekine, and I am dispatched from Niigata City which is situated at the location where the Shinano River, Japan's largest river, meets the Japan Sea. As Niigata City is surrounded by the sea, big rivers and beautiful lagoons, it is also called "The City of Water". Blessed with an abundance of aquatic resources and a temperate climate Niigata produces

many well-known delicacies such as Koshihikari Rice, Sake and various kinds of fresh seafood.

I am very glad to have the valuable opportunity to work for CLAIR Singapore. During my stay in Singapore, I would like to support further interactions between Japanese local governments and ASEAN countries as well as India.

### **USA Sumiko**

Hello, I am Sumiko Usa, and I am dispatched from Miyazaki Prefecture which is located in Southern Japan. Miyazaki Prefecture is also called "The Land of Green and Sunshine", as it has one of the warmest climates on the main island of Japan combined with attractions such as resorts, beaches, sports facilities and beautiful coastline facing the Pacific Ocean. In addition, enchanting shrines with mythic legends on the birth of Japan could also be found in Miyazaki Prefecture.

It is a pleasure for me to be able to work for CLAIR Singapore. I aspire to introduce to the people in ASEAN and India the many wonderful tourist sites in Japan.



### **BANDO Yoshiaki**



Here comes the 56-year-old man from Kumamoto! I am Yoshiaki Bando, the representative of Kumamoto Prefectural Government.

Kumamoto is located in the center of Kyushu Island and is blessed with rich natural resources. As a result, we have a great variety of agricultural, forestry and marine products. However, to my regret, even in Japan few people know where Kumamoto is.

During my stay in Singapore, I would like to introduce Kumamoto and our products to the people in ASEAN as well as India so as to promote trade between Kumamoto and these countries. In addition, I also aspire to further strengthen the cordial ties between Kumamoto and these countries.

### **SUZUKI Atsushi**

Hello, I am Atsushi Suzuki. I am the representative of Yamagata Prefectural Government in Singapore. Yamagata Prefecture is located at the northeastern region of Honshu, the main land of Japan. On the map, Yamagata Prefecture looks like a profile image of a person, and it is famous for its fresh, high-quality, safe and reliable agricultural products such as cherry, peach, melon, grape, pear, apple and others.



There are 35 municipalities in Yamagata Prefecture, and you can find hot springs in all of them. In addition, you can enjoy skiing in summer at "Gassan Ski Slope", and Yamagata Prefecture is also the hometown of "Oshin", a Japanese TV drama which is very famous in Southeast Asia.

During my stay in Singapore, I would like to introduce the charms of Yamagata to the people in Southeast Asian countries as well as India, and I will do my best to develop the economic relations between these countries and Yamagata.

## **About CLAIR**

CLAIR is a joint organization founded in 1988 by 47 prefectures and 20 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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