

# **THE YOUTH INVITATION PROGRAMME**

ASIA, PACIFIC, AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA AND SAUDI ARABIA

[Report]

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# **THE YOUTH INVITATION PROGRAMME**

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—ASIA, PACIFIC, AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA AND SAUDI ARABIA— [Report](1999)

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TRAINING AND YOUTH INVITATION DIVISION  
DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT  
JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

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# ONE STEP TOWARD MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND FRIENDSHIP

Memorable scenes of the Youth Invitation Programme, 1999

## OPENING CEREMONY



Welcome address by JICA



Earnestly listening to the address



"Now, your official programme has just begun"

## GENERAL ORIENTATION PROGRAMME



"Hajimemashite. Onamae wa ?" ("Hello. What's your name?")  
(Japanese on the move)



Learning Japanese with the help of body language  
(Japanese lesson)



Experiencing "Naginata" for the first time  
(Japanese martial arts experience)

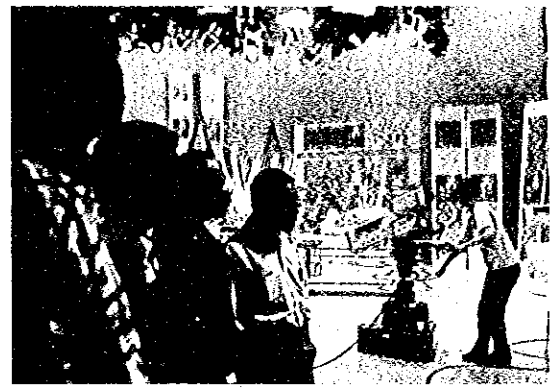
## SPECIALIZED PROGRAMME IN TOKYO



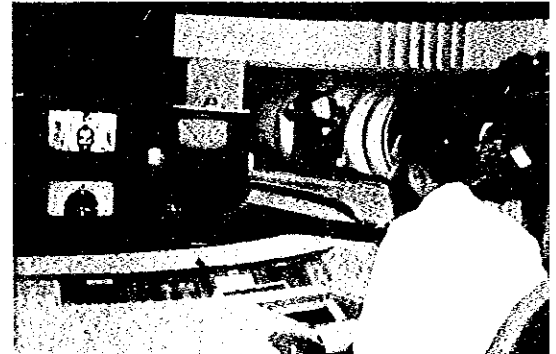
Listening carefully to the lecturer's talk



Observing the sewage system



Observing with interest the TV program being produced



Feeling like a real news caster?



Having a good discussion

## IN-HOUSE SEMINAR



Wearing "Happi" for the first time



Feeling 3 days and 2 nights to be very short



Making a peace sign together (bowling competition)



Having fun late at night

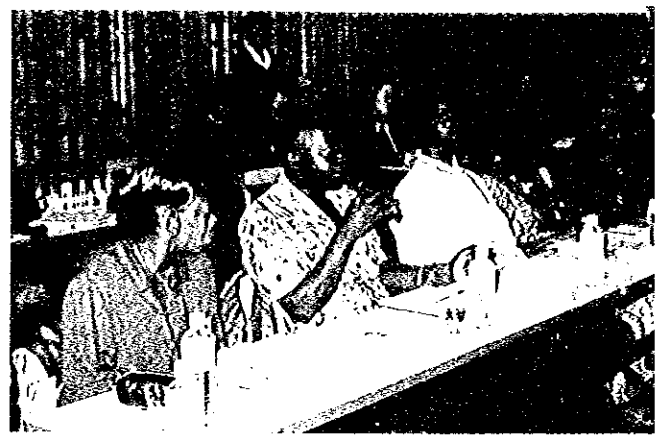
## SPECIALIZED PROGRAMME IN DIFFERENT PREFECTURE



Children—our mutual treasures world wide



Playing ethnic rhythms on the drums



Making a speech as a representative of his country



Trying Japanese calligraphy: "Am I doing all right?"

## HOMESTAY



Look at my new baby girl



Hoping to see you again—not a last dinner, right?



Trying on "Kimono," "Do I look good in a 'Kimono'?"

## OBSERVATION TOUR



Observation tour to a temple in Kyoto



Pledge for peace at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park



Feeling sad at the closing ceremony

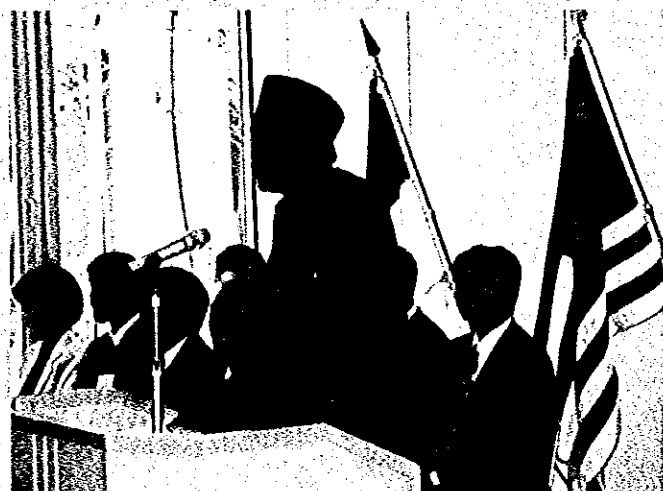
## CLOSING CEREMONY / FAREWELL PARTY



Certification is handed out by JICA



Saying "Kaipai" at the closing ceremony



Making a speech on behalf of all the participants



# ***THE YOUTH INVITATION PROGRAMME***



1157310(2)

## FOREWORD

"The Youth Invitation Programme" is implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as a part of a technical cooperation scheme for developing countries. Under this programme young people who will shoulder the task of future nation-building are invited to Japan for four weeks in different groups categorized by their specialized fields. The purpose of this Programme is to provide the young participants with opportunities to study their respective fields. It is also meant to deepen mutual understanding through broad exchanges with Japanese people, including their host family members so that the participants will be able to establish friendly relationships based upon mutual trust.

At first, only six ASEAN countries participated. Our network of friendship, however, has greatly expanded to include approximately 120 countries and territories.

In the 16 years since the Programme started in 1984, a total of 19,849 young people have visited Japan. I wish to express my deepest appreciation for the warm support and cooperation of all those who have greatly contributed to the Programme.

This Report is a brief account of the participants' stays in Japan, along with essays contributed by some of the participants, by the Japanese youths who took part in the In-house Seminars, as well as by the host families in various parts of Japan. We will be quite delighted if this account helps in developing this programme further and serves to bring good memories to those concerned with it.

This Report will be sent to all the participants of the year 1999 and to those concerned in the participating countries.

In closing, I wish to convey my deep and sincere gratitude to everyone who has sent us touching essays and sincere opinions. I hope for your continued support and cooperation towards making the Youth Invitation Programme even more worthwhile in the years to come.

Thank you very much.

March 2000

Takeshi Imazu  
Managing Director, Domestic Partnership and Training Department  
Japan International Cooperation Agency



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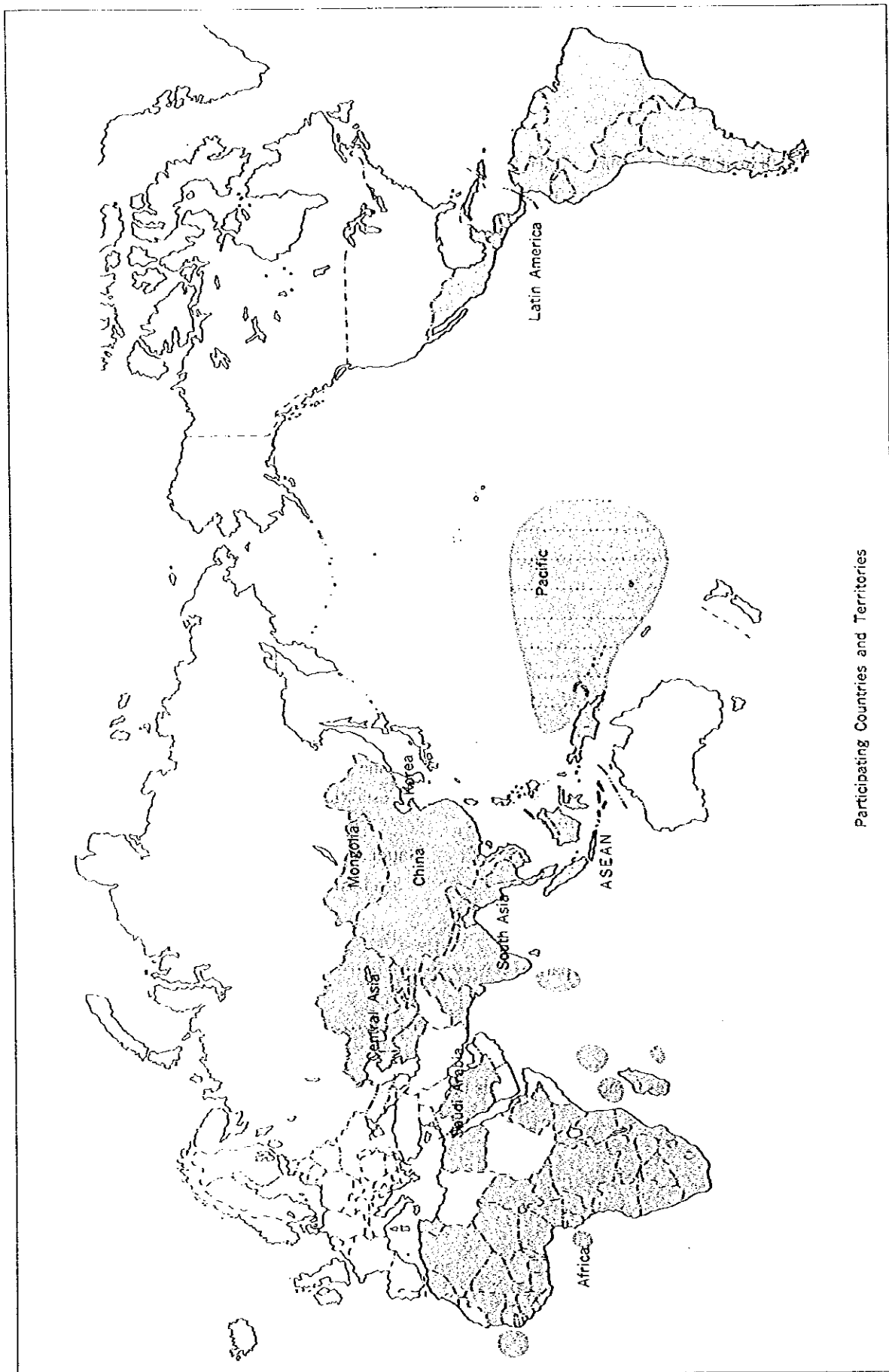
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Participating Countries and Territories

# **1. The Youth Invitation Programme**

*Asia, Pacific, Africa, Latin America and Saudi Arabia*

## **1-1 Outline of the Programme**

### **(1) Purpose**

“The Youth Invitation Programme” is implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as a part of a technical cooperation scheme for developing countries. Under the programme young people from these countries, who will shoulder the task of future nation-building, are invited to Japan for 28 days in different groups categorized by their specialized fields. The purpose of this programme is to provide the participants with opportunities to study their respective fields, as well as to deepen mutual understanding, thereby they can create trust and friendship through exchanges with the Japanese people of the same generation.

### **(2) Group Categories**

- ①Economy (Economic and Financial Managements, Small and Medium Industries and Manufacturing)  
[Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, ASEAN Component, Central Asian Countries]
- ②Education, Teacher, Natural Science and Math Teachers, Female Teacher  
[Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, ASEAN Component, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pacific Countries and Territories, African Countries, Latin American Countries, Saudi Arabia]
- ③Public Administration, Civil Servant, Government Official  
[Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Mongolia, Pacific Countries and Territories]
- ④Agriculture, Agricultural Development, Civil Servant (Agriculture)  
[Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam]
- ⑤Scientific and Technological Developments  
[ASEAN Component]
- ⑥Public Utilities  
[ASEAN Component]
- ⑦Environmental Protection  
[ASEAN Component]
- ⑧Local Development  
[Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand]
- ⑨Health and Medical Services  
[ASEAN Component, Bangladesh, African Countries]
- ⑩Social Welfare  
[ASEAN Component, Latin American Countries]

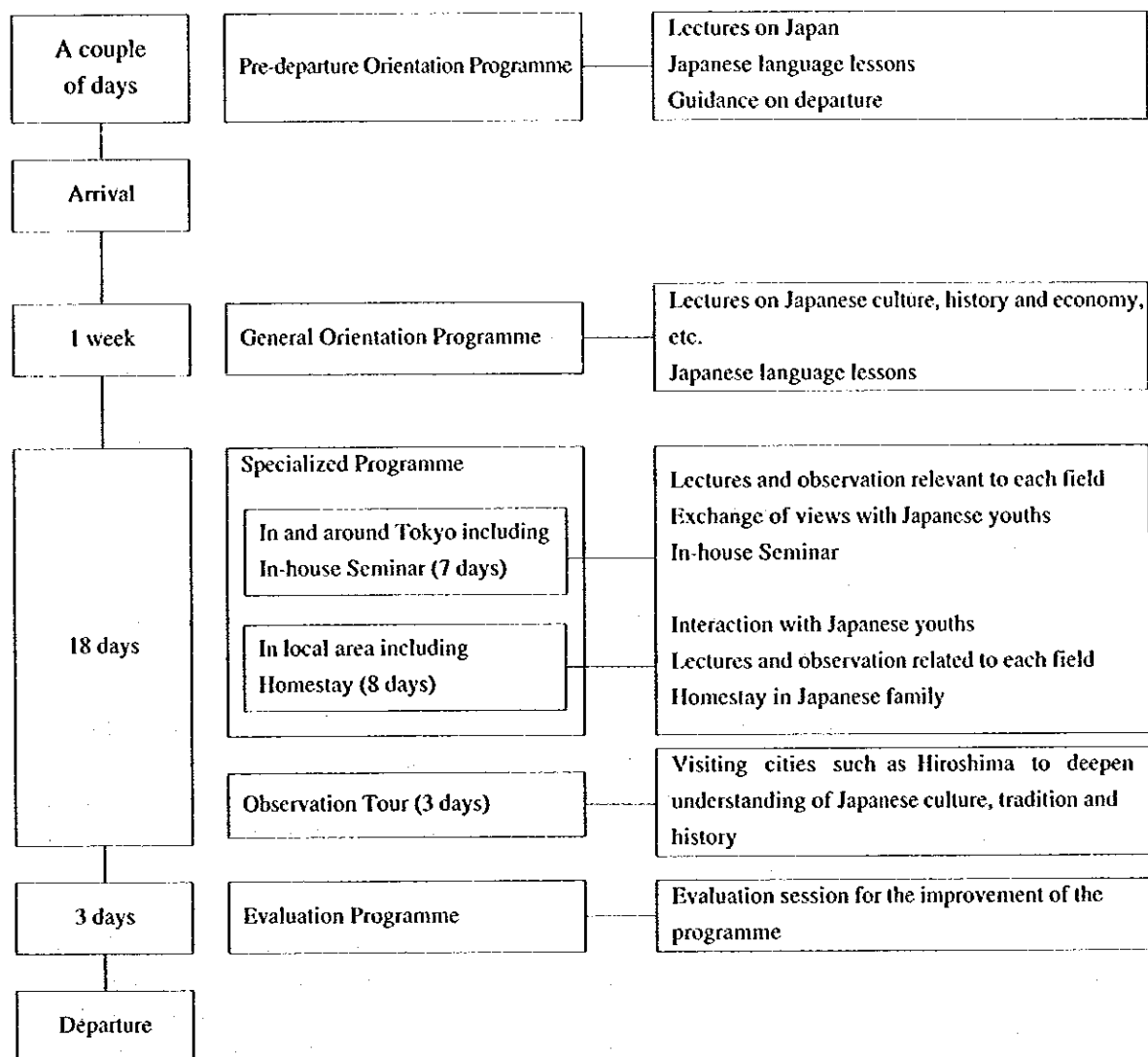
### **(3) Duration and Number of Participants**

797 young people from eight ASEAN-member countries (149 from Indonesia and Malaysia respectively, 150 from Philippines and Thailand respectively, 115 from Viet Nam, 34 from Laos, 30 from Cambodia, 20 from Myanmar), 86 from 14 Pacific countries and territories (including Papua New Guinea and Fiji), 99 from 7 South Asian countries (including India and Pakistan), 10 from Mongolia, 144 from 48 African countries and 1 UN organization, 54 from 20 Latin American countries, 20 from Saudi Arabia and 25 from 5 Central Asian countries were invited to Japan for a period of 28 days from May 1999 to March 2000. 1,235 youths were invited in all under the Youth Invitation Programme.

### **(4) Pre-departure Programme and Four-week Programme in Japan**

- ① Pre-departure Orientation Programme in the respective countries
- ② General Orientation in Tokyo or Osaka
- ③ Specialized Programme (including In-house Seminar and Homestay)
- ④ Observation Tour to cities such as Hiroshima
- ⑤ Evaluation and Preparation for departure



**(5) A Programme Model**

## **(6) Aftercare Project**

In order to promote the understanding of Japan by the youths who were invited under the Youth Invitation Programme and also to perpetuate the friendship between them and Japanese youth, JICA has been conducting an aftercare project as follows.

### **① Supplementary Literature**

JICA supplies the youths who participated, after their return, with an "Exchange Report" which is a digest of the programmes of the year and a news letter "JICA Network," so that they can keep up their understanding of Japan.

### **② Alumni Associations**

JICA promotes the organization of Alumni association which consists of ex-participants of this friendship programme in each of the participating countries respectively. Alumni associations take the initiative in cooperating in pre-departure Programmes for new participants, holding meetings and issuing bulletins for their members. JICA offers support to alumni associations by bearing costs of their activities, etc.

Alumni associations have already been organized in six ASEAN countries. Also in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam, preparation is being done for organizing an alumni association. Apart from these countries, there are some other nations whose former-participants of this programme organize alumni associations in collaboration with ex-participants who took the technical training course in Japan.

### **③ Alumni Liaison Conference**

Representatives of alumni associations in respective countries meet together to hold an alumni liaison conference for the purpose of promoting activities of each alumni association and ensuring continuous development of the Youth Invitation Programme.

JICA gives financial support to alumni liaison conferences by bearing various expenses. JICA also sends a Japanese delegation to the alumni liaison conference to exchange views.

Up to the present, the alumni liaison conferences have been held in the six ASEAN countries and the first such conference was held in Indonesia in 1988. Since then each of the six ASEAN countries has taken a turn to hold an alumni liaison conference every year.

### **④ Follow-up Mission**

To the participating countries, JICA sends missions which consist of Japanese youths, host families, staff members of related organizations, who played a major role in receiving participants in Japan, to ensure further understanding of Japan among the ex-participants. At the same time, Japanese delegations deepen their understanding of the actual conditions of those countries, which contributes to the improvement in planning of programmes.

Follow-up missions expand and develop the Youth Invitation Programme, which used to be rather unilateral, into an "exchange" programme in its true sense which enhances mutual trust and friendship between the youths of Japan and the participating countries.

In 1999, three follow-up mission teams visited China and Mongolia, Viet Nam and Nepal.



## 1-2 List of Invited Groups and Implementing Youth Organizations in 1999

Period	Country	Group	No. of Persons	Youth Organization
May 12-June 8	Thailand	Teacher	23	International Hospitality and Conference Service Association
	Thailand	Agriculture	23	Japan Seinendan Council
May 12-June 8	Philippines	Teacher	23	Japan Youth Hostels Inc.
	Philippines	Agriculture	23	Iwate International Association
	Philippines	Small and Medium Industries	29	The Working Youth Welfare Association
May 19-June 15	Papua New Guinea	Teacher	20	Junior Executive Council of Japan
	Papua New Guinea	Civil Servant	10	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
May 19-June 15	China	Youth Leader	25	National Assembly for Youth Development
	China	Economy	25	Development Association for Youth
	China	Civil Servant	25	Japan Youth Hostels
	China	Teacher	25	Yuai Youth Association
May 26-June 22	Malaysia	Teacher	25	International Hospitality and Conference Service Association
	Malaysia	Agriculture	21	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
	Indonesia	Teacher	23	The Working Youth Welfare Association
	Indonesia	Agriculture	23	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
June 23-July 20	Philippines	Public Administration	20	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
	Philippines	Local Development	20	Junior Executive Council of Japan
June 30-July 27	ASEAN Component	Education	24	Japanese Association of the Experiment in International Living
	ASEAN Component	Economy	25	National Assembly for Youth Development
	ASEAN Component	Health and Medical Services	24	The International Nursing Foundation of Japan
	ASEAN Component	Social Welfare	24	Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation
July 7-Aug. 3	Korea	Youth Leader and Civil Servant	25	National Assembly for Youth Development
	Korea	Working Youth	25	The Working Youth Welfare Association
	Korea	Teacher	25	Japan Youth Hostels
	Korea	Student	25	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
July 14-Aug. 10	Viet Nam	Economy	24	Japan International Cooperation Center
	Viet Nam	Agriculture	25	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
July 14-Aug. 10	ASEAN Component	Scientific and Technological Developments	24	Toyokawa International Association
	ASEAN Component	Environmental Protection	24	Junior Executive Council of Japan
	ASEAN Component	Public Utilities	24	International Hospitality and Conference Service Association
	Laos	Local Development	20	Kochi International Association
Aug. 18-Sep. 14	Bangladesh	Health and Medical Services	20	The International Nursing Foundation of Japan
	Pakistan	Civil Servant	20	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
Sep. 23-Oct. 20	Sri Lanka	Education	10	Aichi International Association
	Bhutan and Maldives	Education	10	Japan International Cooperation Center
	Nepal	Education	9	Komagane Junior Chamber Inc.
Oct. 13-Nov. 9	China	Human Resource Development	25	National Assembly for Youth Development
	China	Economic Development	25	The Working Youth Welfare Association
	China	Local Development	25	Development Association for Youth
	China	Infrastructure	25	International Good Neighborhood
Nov. 3-Nov. 30	Cambodia	Economy	30	Japan Youth Hostels Inc.
	Saudi Arabia	Education	20	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
Nov. 10-Dec. 7	African Component			
	French-speaking Countries: Female Teacher		24	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
	French-speaking Countries: Natural Science and Math Teachers		25	Osaka Foundation of International Exchange
	French-speaking Countries: Health and Medical Services		26	Japan International Cooperation Center
Nov. 17-Dec. 14	India	Education	30	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
	Myanmar	Education	20	National Foundation of UNESCO Association in Japan
Nov. 24-Dec. 21	Pacific Component	Civil Servant	22	Junior Executive Council of Japan
	Pacific Component	Teacher	22	Japanese Association of the Experiment in International Living
	Fiji	Civil Servant	12	Japan International Cooperation Center
Nov. 24-Dec. 21	China	Primary School Teacher 1	24	The Working Youth Welfare Association
	China	Primary School Teacher 2	24	Japan Youth Hostels Inc.
	China	Junior High School Teacher	24	Junior Executive Council of Japan
	China	High School Teacher 1	24	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
	China	High School Teacher 2	24	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
Jan. 12-Feb. 8	Thailand	Economic and Financial Managements	23	The Working Youth Welfare Association
	Thailand	Public Administration	23	International Hospitality and Conference Service Association
	Thailand	Local Development	23	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
Jan. 12-Feb. 8	Viet Nam	Education	26	Development Association for Youth
	Viet Nam	Civil Servant	25	Japan International Cooperation Center
Jan. 19-Feb. 15	Central Asian Component	Economy	25	Japan Youth Hostels Inc.
	Mongolia	Government Official	10	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
Jan. 19-Feb. 15	Latin American Component	Social Welfare	28	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
	Latin American Component	Teacher	26	Japanese Association of the Experiment in International Living
Jan. 26-Feb. 22	Indonesia	Economic and Financial Managements	23	Junior Executive Council of Japan
	Indonesia	Public Administration	23	National Assembly for Youth Development
	Indonesia	Local Development	22	The Working Youth Welfare Association
Feb. 2-Feb. 29	African Component			
	English-speaking Countries: Female Teacher		24	Development Association for Youth
	English-speaking Countries: Natural Science and Math Teachers		23	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association
	English-speaking Countries: Health and Medical Services		22	National Assembly for Youth Development
Feb. 9-March 7	Malaysia	Economic and Financial Managements	21	International Hospitality and Conference Service Association
	Malaysia	Public Administration	25	Japan Youth Hostels Inc.
	Malaysia	Local Development	22	The World Youth Visit Exchange Association
Total	73 Groups 107 countries and territories 1,655 youth	Cambodia (30), Indonesia (149), Laos (34), Malaysia (149), Myanmar (20), Philippines (150), Thailand (150), Viet Nam (115), Pacific Countries and Territories (86), China (320), Korea (100), Southern Asian Countries (99), Mongolia (10), African Countries (144), Latin American Countries (54), Saudi Arabia (20), Central Asian Countries (25)		

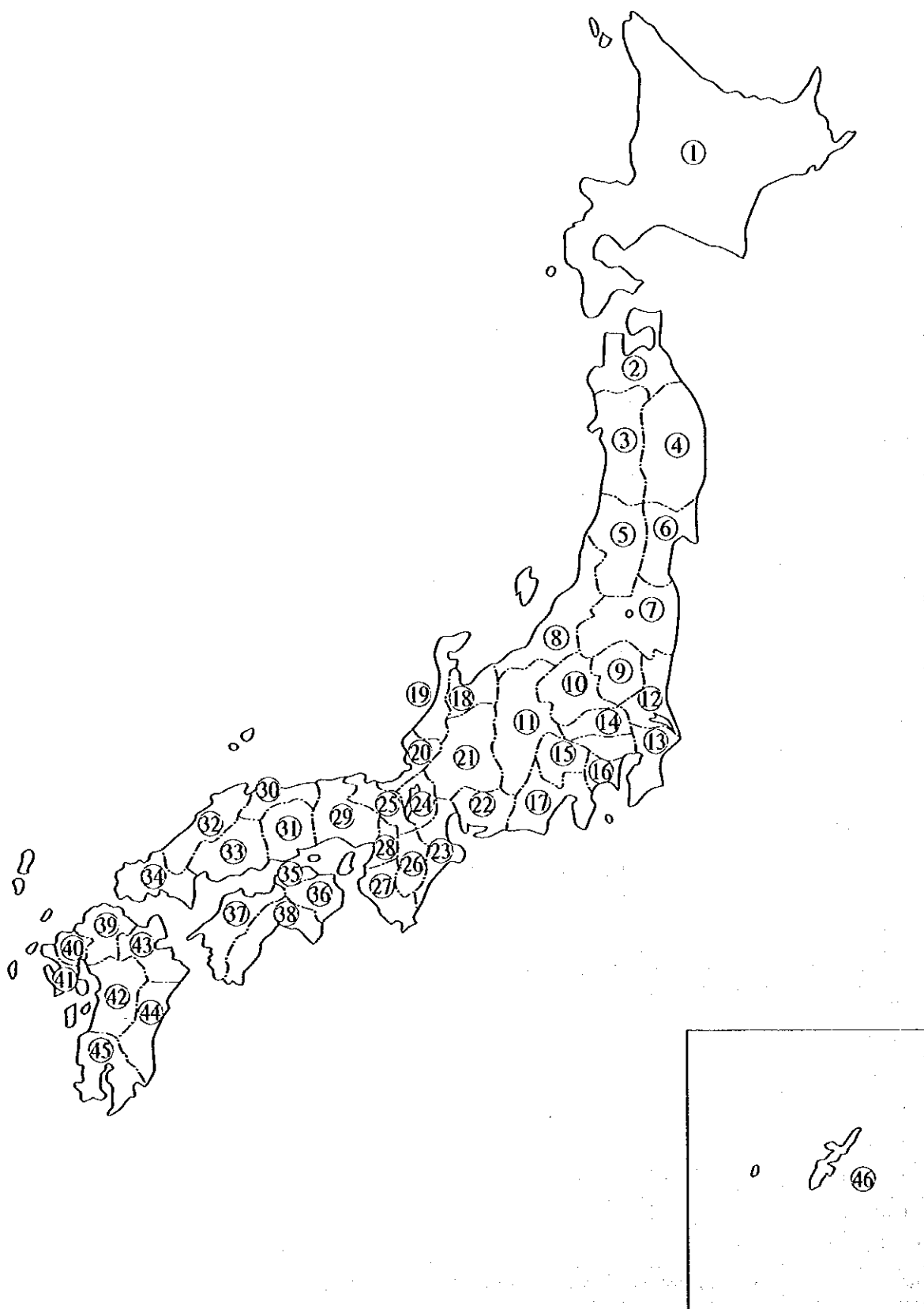
Place for Local Programme	Local Youth Organization
Yamanashi	Yamanashi Prefectural Assembly for Youth Development
Okayama	Okayama-ken Seinenkan
Gunma	Gunma International Association
Iwate	Iwate International Association
Tochigi	Tochigi-ken Seinen Kaikan Foundation
Ishikawa	Komatsu International Association
Nara	Nara International Cooperation Center
Osaka	Osaka Association for Youth Development
Toyama	The Toyama International Center Foundation
Mie	Mie International Foundation
Tokushima	Tokushima Wings of Youth Association
Fukui	Fukui International Association
Akita	Akita International Association
Yamagata	Yamagata Overseas Cooperative Association
Fukuoka	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association Kyushu Branch
Ibaraki	Ibaraki Prefecture Executive Committee
Hokkaido	Chitose International Communication Society
Saitama	The Aege Global Association
Fukuoka	Kyushu-Yamaguchi Economic Federation
Aichi	The International Nursing Foundation of Japan
Hokkaido	Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation
Kagawa	Kagawa Prefectural International Exchange Association
Oita	The Oita Prefectural Foreign Affairs association
Niigata	Niigata International association
Hokkaido	Takikawa International Exchange Association
Ehime	Ehime Prefectural International Association
Wakayama	Wakayama Prefectural Youth Association
Aichi	Toyokawa International Association
Hokkaido	Kushiro City Foreign Youth Invitations Committee
Gifu	Gifu World Youth
Kochi	Kochi International Association
Shimane	The International Youth Exchange Organization of Shimane Prefecture
Kagawa	Friendship Association for Youth Dispatched Overseas in Kagawa
Aichi	Aichi International Association
Saga	Saga UNESCO Association
Nagano	Komagane Junior Chamber Inc.
Ishikawa	Ishikawa Youth Hostel Association
Osaka	Pacific Resource Exchange Center
Tokushima	Tokushima Japan China Youth Exchange Association
Shiga	Shiga Youth Organization Union
Hokkaido	Tomakomai International Exchange Center
Okayama	International Youth Exchange Association of Okayama
Aomori	Aomori Overseas Cooperative Association
Osaka	Osaka Foundation of International Exchange
Okayama	Tsuyama and World Friendship Association
Hokkaido	Tokachi International Association
Kanagawa	Kamakura UNESCO Association
Yamaguchi	Yamaguchi International Exchange Association
Yamaguchi	World Youth Friendship in Tokuyama
Hyogo	Kobe International Center for Cooperation and Communication
Tottori	Tottori Youth Friendship Association
Miyagi	Miyagi Youth Hostel Association
Okinawa	Okinawa Prefectural Assembly for Youth Development
Ehime	Ehime Overseas Cooperative Association
Nagasaki	Federation of World Youth Nagasaki
Aichi	Japan Young Circle Tokai Branch
Kagoshima	Kagoshima International Association
Hyogo	Hyogo Youth Services Administration
Miyazaki	Development Association for Youth Miyazaki Branch
Chiba	Chiba Prefectural International Association
Hokkaido	Hokkaido YMCA
Fukushima	Nihonmatsu Global Citizen's Association
Kumamoto	Kumamoto Overseas Cooperative Association
Okinawa	Okinawa International Foundation
Shizuoka	Numazu Association for International Communications & Exchanges
Fukushima	Fukushima Wings of Youth Association
Fukuoka	Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation
Kyoto	Japan Overseas Cooperative Association Kinki Branch
Hokkaido	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers Hokkaido Alumni Association Eastan
Shizuoka	The Shizuoka Association for International Relations
Hiroshima	Shobara International Exchange Association
Hiroshima	Hiroshima Seishonen Bunka Center
Toyama	Federation of World Youth Toyama



### 1-3 Participating Countries and Number of Youths (1984-99)

Year	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
Country																	
Brunei	5	30	49	50	50	49	50	43	50	48	49	48	49	48	42	--	660
Cambodia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	30	30	30	30	30	150
Indonesia	149	150	150	150	150	149	150	149	147	149	145	150	149	150	148	149	2,384
Laos	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20	18	20	20	34	112
Malaysia	147	148	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	149	150	150	146	149	2,389
Myanmar	--	--	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	20	20	20	20	20	140
Philippines	149	150	150	150	150	150	149	147	148	149	150	149	150	148	149	150	2,388
Singapore	149	150	150	150	150	150	150	147	149	149	147	146	149	148	106	--	2,190
Thailand	149	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	149	147	150	150	150	150	150	150	2,395
Viet Nam	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	98	99	99	100	115	511
Total (ASEAN Countries)	748	778	809	810	800	798	799	786	793	792	811	960	964	963	911	797	13,319
China	--	--	--	100	100	50	199	200	199	197	200	197	200	200	200	320	2,362
Korea	--	--	--	100	99	99	100	98	99	96	100	98	100	97	99	100	1,285
Mongolia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	80
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	30	29	30	13	23	27	24	28	30	234
Bangladesh	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	179
Pakistan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180
Nepal	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	9	10	10	10	10	7	10	9	85
Bhutan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	45
Sri Lanka	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	90
Maldives	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	45
Total (South Asian Countries)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	100	98	100	83	93	97	90	98	99	858
African Countries	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	50	100	97	95	95	92	144	673
Papua New Guinea	--	--	10	14	30	34	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	29	29	30	386
Fiji	--	--	10	10	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	163
Other Pacific Countries and Territories	--	--	--	--	45	38	36	32	36	34	38	36	47	47	47	44	480
Total (Pacific Countries and Territories)	--	--	20	24	86	84	78	74	78	76	80	78	89	88	88	86	1,029
Latin American Countries	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	50	49	54	153
Saudi Arabia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20	20	40
Kazakhstan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	5	11
Kyrgyz	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	5	10
Tajikistan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	5	10
Turkmenistan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	5	9
Uzbekistan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	5	10
Total (Central Asian Countries)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	25	25	50
Total	748	778	829	1,034	1,085	1,031	1,176	1,258	1,277	1,321	1,384	1,533	1,555	1,593	1,592	1,655	19,849

## Places for Local Programme





- ①Hokkaido: Philippines, Local Development  
ASEAN Comp., Social Welfare  
Korea, Student  
ASEAN Comp., Environmental Protection  
Cambodia, Economy  
India, Education  
Central Asian Comp., Economy  
African Comp. (English-speaking Countries),  
Natural Science and Math Teachers
- ②Aomori: African Comp. (French-speaking Countries),  
Female Teacher
- ③Akita: Malaysia, Agriculture
- ④Iwate: Philippines, Agriculture
- ⑤Yamagata: Indonesia, Teachers
- ⑥Miyagi: China, Primary School Teacher 2
- ⑦Fukushima: Mongolia, Government Official  
Indonesia, Public Administration
- ⑧Niigata: Korea, Teacher
- ⑨Tochigi: Philippines, Small and Medium Industries
- ⑩Gunma: Philippines, Teacher
- ⑪Nagano: Nepal, Education
- ⑫Ibaraki: Philippines, Public Administration
- ⑬Chiba: Viet Nam, Civil Servant
- ⑭Saitama: ASEAN Comp., Education
- ⑮Yamanashi: Thailand, Teacher
- ⑯Kanagawa: Myanmar, Education
- ⑰Shizuoka: Indonesia, Economic and Financial Managements  
African Comp. (English-speaking Countries),  
Health and Medical Services
- ⑱Toyama: China, Economy  
Malaysia, Local Development
- ⑲Ishikawa: Papua New Guinea, Teacher  
China, Human Resource Development
- ⑳Fukui: Malaysia, Teacher
- ㉑Gifu: ASEAN Comp., Public Utilities
- ㉒Aichi: ASEAN Comp., Health and Medical Services  
ASEAN Comp., Scientific and Technological  
Developments  
Sri Lanka, Education  
Thailand, Economic and Financial Managements
- ㉓Mie: China, Civil Servant
- ㉔Shiga: China, Infrastructure
- ㉕Kyoto: African Comp. (English-speaking Countries),  
Female Teacher
- ㉖Nara: Papua New Guinea, Civil Servant
- ㉗Wakayama: Viet Nam, Agriculture
- ㉘Osaka: China, Youth Leader  
African Comp. (French-speaking Countries),  
Natural Science and Math Teachers  
China, Economic Development
- ㉙Hyogo: Fiji, Civil Servant  
Thailand, Local Development
- ㉚Tottori: China, Primary School Teacher 1
- ㉛Okayama: Thailand, Agriculture  
Saudi Arabia, Education  
African Comp. (French-speaking Countries),  
Health and Medical Services
- ㉜Shimane: Bangladesh, Health and Medical Services
- ㉝Hiroshima: Malaysia, Economic and Financial Managements  
Malaysia, Public Administration
- ㉞Yamaguchi: Pacific Comp., Civil Servant  
Pacific Comp., Teacher
- ㉟Kagawa: Korea, Youth Leader and Civil Servant  
Pakistan, Civil Servant
- ㊱Tokushima: China, Teacher  
China, Local Development
- ㊲Ehime: Viet Nam, Economy  
China, High School Teacher 1
- ㊳Kochi: Laos, Local Development
- ㊴Fukuoka: Indonesia, Agriculture  
ASEAN Comp., Economy  
Indonesia, Local Development
- ㊵Saga: Bhutan and Maldives, Education
- ㊶Nagasaki: China, High School Teacher 2
- ㊷Kumamoto: Latin American Comp., Social Welfare
- ㊸Oita: Korea, Working Youth
- ㊹Miyazaki: Viet Nam, Education
- ㊺Kagoshima: Thailand, Public Administration
- ㊻Okinawa: China, Junior High School Teacher  
Latin American Comp., Teacher



## 2. Impressions by the Participants

### ■ Asia

### ■ Cambodia

#### A Journey to Economic Giant Country

Huy Sieng  
Economy Group

We 30 Cambodian participants came to Japan on November 3, 1999, under the Youth Invitation Programme, with hopes of grasping a method to fulfill our objective of putting our nation closer on the road toward becoming a developed country.

Japan is very developed in almost every field. There are many intellectuals leading the country, and the people faithfully follow the leaders. And their industrial technology has attained high level of development.

In contrast, when we look at Cambodia it was only recently that our civil war between countrymen subsided and people began working shoulder to shoulder to reconstruct the nation to prevent it from falling behind its neighbor countries.

Our Youth Invitation Programme started in Osaka and continued on in Tokyo, Muikamachi in Niigata, Hokkaido, Hiroshima, and finally back to Osaka before our departure to Cambodia.

I had exchanges with many people during my stay in Japan. We traveled, learned, had fun, did sports and many other things together, and all these memories will remain with us.

We went to Sapporo while staying in Tomakomai. Sapporo Beer was so tasty that it reminded me of our Cambodian beer.

We learned what true friendship means from the Japanese people through this Programme. We were made aware that maintaining peace is indispensable for any nation to develop. Particularly, I learned what

the technologies, industries, services, and interpersonal relationships in a developed country are all about.

Through the Youth Invitation Programme, a friendly bilateral relationship between Cambodia and Japan will be strengthened, and it can also contribute to the realization of a society without any war and a peaceful world despite our respective country's differences in skin color and level of wealth. I am very sure that this programme can offer Cambodians the incentive to accelerate their nation-building efforts. I would like to tell as many people as possible what I have gained from my stay in Japan.

In closing, I would like to thank JICA and the Japanese government for giving us such a wonderful opportunity.

I wish JICA, Japan, and the people of Japan all the very best in their endeavors toward the 21st century.

## ■ Asia

### ■ Indonesia

## One Month in the Country of Cherry Blossoms

Halimatus Sa'Diyah  
Teacher Group

Before I write something about my impressions of the Youth Invitation Programme, let me express my appreciation from the bottom of my heart to those concerned both in Indonesia and Japan. This programme brought me abroad for the first time, and through it I have gained many experiences. Before I participated, Japan was a country I knew only through the mass media. But I was able to visit many parts of the country, which was once a mere dream to me.

Through this Programme I deepened my knowledge not only of the Japanese educational system but also that of Indonesia. I had also an opportunity to exchange ideas with the Japanese youths who participated in the In-house Seminar, as well as to learn some of traditional Japanese cultures, including Origami folding paper, pottery and Yuzen dyeing.

I was very nervous before the homestay programme, as I was not sure if I would be able to communicate well with my Japanese host family members. Besides, fish dishes are not my favorite, and I was worried that they would prepare fish, particularly sashimi, for me. But my host family members were warmhearted and kind enough to take me to many places. There was nothing but joy during my stay with them. I found it very difficult to say goodbye to them.

It was in Hiroshima, when I tried eating the unpleasant sashimi. I wanted to give it a try as sashimi is their favorite food for the Japanese and I thought that eating it would mean I was appreciating their custom. But I failed in the end. Moreover, I experienced cherry picking, which was a unique experience for me, as cherry trees do not grow in Indonesia.

I hope that this Programme will be conducted for many years to come.

## Wonderful Memories of My Homestay

Sapto Husodo  
Agriculture Group

I do not have words to express my happy feelings when I first found out that I would be able to go to Japan under the Youth Invitation Programme.

Absolutely, to get an opportunity to visit Japan which was known to me as the cherry blossom country, was the happiest event that ever happened to me. Immediately, I made up my mind to go to Japan, because I thought it would broaden my horizon and I also wanted to deepen exchanges with the Japanese people.

Among the programmes, the homestay in Fukuoka was the most interesting part to me. It was truly meaningful and unforgettable. I visited a farm village in Fukuoka where I met many kind people. I learned about ways of agricultural cultivation and the techniques employed by the farmers there. I also learned about their distribution system and observed how they were putting their hearts into their agricultural work.

Many of the farmers there are old but were working very hard. They were eager to learn new techniques and concerned about the preservation of the natural environment. I had my homestay programme at one of the farmer's houses. I was so moved by the family's heartfelt welcome extended to me that I even felt as if they had hoped for me to go there.

Unfortunately, my two-day stay there passed so quickly that I could not learn about their agricultural life in more detail. However, the time I spent there will surely remain in my heart as a good memory. I started developing the feeling that I wanted to help farmers in my country have enthusiasm for their work; just as those Japanese farmers do.

## Peace Forever

Supriyadi  
ASEAN Comp.  
Education Group

While seeing with my eyes the future, 28 days have passed by visiting and joining to harmonizes with Japanese tradition. There were sweet memories, which managed to draw our dreams through this programme.

Many experiences could be directly learned in Japan. One of the important parts of the great success of Japan is divided into 2 great significant factors deeply inside the Japanese spirit. They consist of:

First factor is Bushido Makoto teaching, which makes the Japanese believe that one's sense of modesty leads to self-control.

Second is the spirit of catching-up. At the present, the Japanese have already opened themselves dynamically and aggressively to adopt all sorts of science and technology from throughout the world, and that has brought a great opportunity to their nation. Nevertheless, the prosperity of Japan has no meaning without peace and good feelings deep within the hearts of the people.

For the aforementioned reason, the events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki happened only once and will never come again. We learned that the arrogance and greed of humankind can bring dangers, as follows:

Let us know, to deepen understanding, some wise words:

There is only one God. He is the omnipresence and the almighty.

There is only one race. The race is humanity.

There is only one language. The language is of the heart.

There is only one rule. The rule is duty.

There is only one satisfaction. The satisfaction is self-control.

## A Funny Experience

Christina Agustin  
Economic and Financial Managements Group

I would like to write about my experience in Japan as it was. The episode which reminds me of fond memories of Japan.

While I was staying in Tokyo, Yuna and I were sharing a room. One morning, I sat on a toilet seat before taking shower. Then I pushed and turned some side buttons for fun. Yes, it was the first time in my life to use this kind of toilet.

Some very hot water spouted suddenly. "Ouch!" I did not understand what was happening. But I was to find out that my backside was practically boiling. I rushed into the bathtub and got through the crisis, but the hot water did not stop automatically. The floor got

wet, and I started to laugh not knowing what to do. After a while I came to myself and look at the indications on the buttons timidly but carefully.

Then I found a "stop" button! It was a big relief. But the entire bathroom was all flooded. I was ashamed of what I had done and tried to restore the condition of the room before my roommate used the shower. I used my bath towel to wipe all the walls and the floor and a small towel to wipe myself dry. Everything became all right.

When I came out of the bathroom, Yuna asked me why I had made so much noise. I replied, "Nothing. I just slipped," thinking that Yuna did not know how to use this special toilet and that now I had become a master of "the Washlet," the toilet with an automatic cleaning function and bidet.

One day when we visited the Numazu Chamber of Commerce, I went to their bathroom but came out without using it. Asked why I came out so soon, I answered "I did not use it because it was not a Washlet." Well, I now feel like an important person. However, when I return to Indonesia, I will have to use a ladle to clean the toilet.

## Warmness Amidst the Cold

Yanuar Ahmad  
Public Administration Group

When I first looked at the programme schedule, the words of "homestay in Aizu-wakamatsu" caught my eyes, and they made me very anxious. I tend to feel uneasy just about staying at a friend's house. Here I have to stay with people of totally different customs and culture. In addition, it was winter — a season that I had not experienced before.

My homestay started with learning how to wear slippers. In Indonesia, we do not wear slippers at home and I did not know in what rooms to use them properly. One day I took a bath wearing the slippers. Naturally, the slippers were drenched. I apologized to my "Otosan" and "Okasan" seriously by bending my body 90 degrees. My "father" and "mother" had a hearty laugh and said, "Daijobu desu (No problem)."

My host family treated me as their own child. In Japanese "child" is "kodomo." When they said that I was their "kodomo," I always felt so funny. In

Indonesia we have a kind of reptile called the "Komodo Dragon." Pronounced a little differently, Kodomo sounds like Komodo. That made us laugh a lot.

My worries about staying with cool-looking Japanese have disappeared gradually. The cold winter has not ended, but I am feeling warm at heart.

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## Memories of Japan

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Muherlan  
Local Development Group

I stayed in Japan from January 26 to February 22 under the Youth Invitation Programme, and time flew so quickly.

Our stay was full of new things, and we touched here at the land of the rising sun. We Indonesian youths are all grateful to have been given opportunities to take part in this programme and see Japan with our own eyes.

There were many impressive things. The Kansai International Airport is one of them. We saw it first when we arrived in Japan. The airport built on the reclaimed land on the ocean is beautifully harmonized with the view of the neighboring port.

We were welcomed at the airport quite systematically. From that time on we saw the discipline of the Japanese people in various occasions such as when they cross the streets, throw garbage away and smoke cigarettes.

Our coordinators took good care of us, and we became close to each other. This has become one of our impressive memories. They remembered our names soon, and that helped everything to go well.

It was also impressive for me to see how they coordinated and arranged the programme between the two organizers in Tokyo and the local area. They showed respect to each other, and the programme was conducted without any problems.

I could not fully understand what we were taught, as the information given to us was so rich and the time we spent was too short. I wish we had chances to visit welfare facilities for the aged, the disabled and the people in need.

## Memories of Japan

I miss your cold wind

I miss your warm hugs

I was all right in the snowstorm

As my heart was warmed

As I have hope

The words of goodbye do not come out of my dried lips

Because I wish to be with you once again

■ Asia

■ Laos

## The Japanese in My Mind

Yang Pao Payeveu  
ASEAN Comp.  
Social Welfare Group

Before coming to Japan, the deepest impression I had of this country was its potato blossoms. Now I return home with a better understanding of Japanese history and culture. Especially, the lectures that were given and meeting with Japanese youths have become memories of unforgettable experiences for us to bring back.

The In-house Seminar held in Sapporo City was an occasion where we met Japanese youths to discuss together about Japanese culture and Japanese youths today. This discussion enabled us to know and understand more about today's youths in Asian countries. We also made a lot of new friends with whom we hope to maintain this long-lasting friendship for the years to come.

The homestay was another highlight which all of us had looked forward to. It turned out to be a good and enriching experience. We could feel what it was like living in a Japanese house for a weekend. The host families were so hospitable and kind to us that our homestay was most comfortable and enjoyable.

Many of us didn't understand the impact of the World War II on Japan until we toured the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which made us know well about it, and we hope that its aftermath should never occur again to anyone or any country in the world.

In conclusion, this Youth Invitation Programme has turned out to be fruitful and enriching. We bring back with us not only many "omiyage" but also experiences and beautiful memories of Japan to develop our country in the future. We would like to thank especially the Japanese government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

"Arigato gozaimasu."

## Unforgettable Memories

Phonesay Keosomphanh  
ASEAN Comp.  
Environmental Protection Group

I was very happy to have had an opportunity to visit Japan under the Youth Invitation Programme sponsored by JICA for the developing countries and territories in the world. It was my first trip abroad, and I thought I was very lucky to have had such a chance to visit Japan—a country of high technology, strong economy and of kind people.

During my stay in Japan, we visited many places in 4 cities: Osaka, Tokyo, Kushiro and Hiroshima. In each city, we had lectures on environmental protection, and received a warm welcome and kind cooperation.

Especially, in Kushiro City, we had an exchange party, farewell party, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and canoeing on Kushiro Marsh.

The best part was to stay with the host family; they drove me to the festival venue for shopping, sightseeing in Kushiro City, and cooked seafood for me because I love fish. It was a very special day, and they were very kind. I thank them for giving me enjoyable memories in such a short time. In addition to these activities, we had an exchange party with Japanese youths at the In-house Seminar in Tokyo, and learned about Japanese culture, customs and life styles. All the people we met there were polite and kind. Also, we had group discussions about environmental protection.

In Hiroshima, I was very sad to see the damage to human life and the A-bomb Dome. I thought that if there had been no wars, these things would not have happened. We have to prevent war.

This programme was very useful for me because we ASEAN and Japanese youths have learned from each other and among each other. I will bring these valuable experiences to my developing country so that the relationship between the ASEAN countries and Japan will continue forever.

I would like to thank JICA for letting me know about Japan.

Last but not least, I wish all the people I met in this programme the best of luck, good health, and success in their duties.

I was very glad to have had a good experience like

this one.

Domo-arigato gozaimashita.

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## My Impressions of Local Development in Japan

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Sonephachanh Thavikham  
Local Development Group

I would like to explain my impressions and thoughts on what I actually saw and felt on behalf of the participants of the local development group from Laos who came to Japan with me under the Youth Invitation Programme.

Although the duration of our one-month stay in Japan was short, we visited various places and exchanged views with Japanese youths. During our stay we were able to obtain a great deal of knowledge useful for helping our nation grow out of its present situation as a developing country. Of all our programmes, what impressed me most were the opinion exchange with people from local governments and the In-house Seminar. These occasions gave us Lao participants an opportunity to deepen friendly relations with the Japanese participants. During the In-house Seminar discussions, some Japanese participants showed us cases of various types of local development. In addition, we had chances to observe factories and farmers who were using advanced techniques to grow the profitable "BEINASU" eggplants and rice.

We would like to utilize what we have learned and experienced to help Lao people take interest in advanced agricultural techniques and learn about them. What is more, we would like to support them to ensure that the precious crops resulting from their hard work will be used to get a sufficient food supply and to improve quality of life.

Besides all that, we also visited a home for the elderly that had advanced facilities and a junior high school that provided classes to learn how to use the internet. All these visits made me believe that Japanese society is a highly developed one with the latest scientific systems, and it is a fair society.

The homestay programme was an unforgettable experience, whose memory will last for the rest of my life. This is because my Japanese host family kindly helped me and took good care of me. In the end, we

established a good friendship.

I sincerely hope that the Youth Invitation Programme that enables one to experience such wonderful things will continue for many years to come. I wish JICA and everybody concerned with this programme good health and all the very best.

Thank you very much.



## Asia

## Malaysia

### Japanese Society

**Salwati Badroddin**  
Teacher Group

I landed in Japan for the first time, and I was filled with interests in Japanese society. With big cities and buildings, the country is not much different from any of the other advanced countries that I had visited before.

Japanese society is well known for its punctuality. Not only are some particular people punctual to the minute, but are the buses, too. Busses surely depart on time. This was amazing to me, as it is almost impossible to find in Malaysia.

Moreover, the Japanese people are very polite, and respect others. When it comes to greetings, they always bow to almost anyone.

We learned many positive attitudes from Japanese society. However, we saw some young people who were influenced by disagreeable parts of Western culture. I think that Japan should take some measures to prevent its culture, which is much admired by the world, from disappearing amidst the current trends. In order to make young people realize the superiority of their own culture, it may be necessary to provide moral and religious education in school.

I shall never forget the many new things I have learned from Japanese society.

### Japan and I

**Majelan B. Serudin**  
Agriculture Group

I have learned

Shogun Tokugawa, the Meiji Restoration, Atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Sumo wrestling, Samurai, Kimono...

I have heard about

State of art technology, Hokkaido and its agriculture, the Great Earthquake in Hanshin and Awaji, Sushi and Sashimi, World Cup Soccer in 2002, Kyoto and its culture...

Now (May 26, 1999)

Arrived in Osaka. Departed for Tokyo and Akita on bullet trains; flew to Haneda and Hiroshima; stopped in Kyoto; returned to Osaka.

I have seen

Tokyo and its people's life there; Akita and its green paddy fields. Hiroshima and Sadako-san's wish (Monument of Sadako); shrines especially those in Kyoto.

Japan and her people are catching up with the clock.

I understood.

Japan is a gallery.

Overflowing with colorful pictures.

It came to the time for me to say goodbye (June 22, 1999).

"Sayonara" the host families were waving at me.

It was just a brief visit.

Situated far away at the corner of my mind.

To JICA, the World Youth Visit Exchange Association, Akita International Association, I thank you all for giving me such a wonderful opportunity.

### 672 Hours in Japan, Friendship for the Future

**Mariam Bt Hassan**  
ASEAN Comp.  
Economy Group

Friendship has been invaluable, and it has been built through experiencing multifaceted aspects which combined to bind our Economy Group...

Every person we met, starting from the smiling and so welcoming coordinators who were the first to greet us and were close by to help us in whatever we needed. We met the youths with colourful hair and trendy clothes in Shinjuku, Tokyo. And the youths in Shinjuku were so amusing.

#### Culture

Being introduced to our new host families, we learned what it was like to be a Japanese "son" and "daughter" for 3 days and 2 nights. We learned a lot from the discussions we had with the Japanese youths, although attention was given to topics such as marriage and courting. We laughed while talking and learned to speak SLOWLY in all discussions.

With the Otosan and Okasan, who were destined to be our adopted parents for 3 days and 2 nights, we experienced being true Japanese "sons" and "daughters."

"Nihongo wakarimasen." Still we had communication activities.

"Oyasuminasai" was said on the buses every time we went on the long rides through the towns while anticipating visits to interesting places.

The media even recorded our visit to the Vice Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture. What should also have been put on NHK were our skills in dancing and our singing at the two parties we had.

At the Yubinkyoku we posted so many letters through them with letters telling all our loved ones at home on how much we were missing them and at the same time, how much fun we were having. Not only were these original means of communication prevalent, but also many green and grey "Denwa" we ran to were also a popular means of communicating. Oh, and don't forget the "Kinko's" and the internet... We couldn't possibly live without communicating and even talking to each other.

It is friendship that we hold for the future from all that we have experienced during the past 672 hours of our lives...

Thank you, Iro Iro Arigato Gozaimasu, from all of us.

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## My One Month in Japan

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Mariah Zainal Abidin  
Economic and Financial Managements Group

Nippon! Nippon! Nippon!

February 2, 2000.

I came from Malaysia

Now I am standing firmly on the land of this country

Ohayo gozaimasu (Good Morning)

I look at the ground and see cotton buds on it

No! It is snow

Samui (Cold). This was the first Japanese word out of my mouth

Dop Dop Dop. What is that? The sound of the Malay Railway?

No, No, it is Nozomi running

Hello! A greeting of friendship

Chotto matte kudasai (Please wait for a little while).

Kawaii (Cute). This is my praise to Japanese girls

Sugoi (Incredible). This shows my admiration for the city of Shobara

Oishii (Delicious). I ask for another helping of Serunding (a Malay dish)

Otosan, Okasan (Father, Mother). My unforgettable memories of you

Waved hands, dropping tears

Thank you very much for everything

At 8:15, on a quiet morning of August in 1945

An atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima

Hiroshima in darkness

Prayers of mothers, hopes of children

Cries of the world, peace on earth

The 21st Century, smiles foster friendship

Sayonara, sayonara, sayonara

Nippon, Malaysia

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## The Japanese Transportation System

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Dzulzalani Bin Eden  
Public Administration Group

Japan is the country with the most advanced transportation system. The whole nation is linked with air, sea and land systems. The land transportation is particularly excellent in spite of Japan's very mountainous geographical features.

Among the various land transportation systems linking urban and rural areas, the railway is especially important. The railway is a fast, cheap and accurate system and is a very common means of transportation for the Japanese. The railway net work consists of various system such as the Shinkansen, trains, monorails, streetcars and subways. These are always accurately operated, and the users are grateful for them.

Japan has more railway systems than other countries. The super express Shinkansen, with the maximum speed of 300 km/h is the most important railway, and its high speed is really remarkable.

The Shikansen links major cities from Hakata in

Kyushu to Morioka in Honshu. Its cars are comfortable to ride in and equipped with bathrooms and dining cars. There are the facilities for the disabled and the aged as well. That means Japan has been making great efforts to provide transportation systems to be used by people without any worries.

In Japan we can see almost all kind of transportation systems. The Japanese are endeavoring to improve them further and at the same time do not forget considerations towards the disabled, aged and pedestrians. I felt the people in Japan are quite happy because their government has provided modern and excellent transportation systems.

## A Visit — One Way of Learning

Ahmad Badri B. Jaafar @ Ismail  
Local Development Group

There are many ways to widen your knowledge: learning at educational institutions, reading books, attending seminars, visiting places and so on. Whatever you do, the objective is one. That is to learn for the benefit of your people, society and nation.

While we observed places, we exchanged information, policies, techniques and opinions, and I believe that benefited both the visitor and the host sides.

There are differences in background between the developed and developing countries. We can get a lot of ideas and various experiences for developing our country by such a visit for learning.

On the other hand, a developed country can learn about opportunities to give assistance to less developed countries. I mean that both sides can benefit economically, politically and socially.

The important thing does not lie in the process of widening knowledge but in the fact that the people who give and receive are always blessed.

## Asia

## Myanmar

### About the Youth Invitation Programme

Mu Mu Myint  
Education Group

I came to Japan on November 17, under the JICA's Youth Invitation Programme as a participant in the Education Group and experienced the "coldness" of autumn for the first time in my life. Mt. Fuji and the coloured leaves were so magnificent, and I was able to pray devoutly to the Great Buddha of Kamakura with my own Buddhist faith.

In Hiroshima I listened to a A-bomb survivor, and I observed some buildings designated as world heritage sites and thereby deepened my knowledge.

I learned about Japan's educational systems that emphasize developing children's ability and talent based on individual interests. Through the programme that enabled us to get close to and exchange ideas with other Myanmar participants, we found it very fruitful that the bilateral relationship between Japan and Myanmar was deepened.

We were very pleased to be welcomed warmly by many Japanese people during our one month stay in Japan. Now, it is with regret that I have to depart from them.

We saw at first hand the ordinary life of the Japanese people.

The Youth Invitation Programme was very useful in promoting mutual friendship between Japan and Myanmar and for gaining further knowledge. I would like to express my highest respects to the sincerity of the people at JICA.

## ■ Asia

## ■ Philippines

### A Teacher's Journey to the Land of the Rising Sun

Lorenzo S. Hipolito Jr.  
Teacher Group

In a book I read about the life of Dr. Jose Rizal, it was pointed out that our national hero had a high regard to Japan as a country. He travelled a lot, he crossed almost the entire world. To him, Japan was something very special. He was very much impressed with the honesty, discipline and hardwork of the Japanese people. Because of these impressions, he was almost tempted to stay in Japan. But, at that time, Rizal was destined to be the Asia's Apostle of Nationalism. Thus, he refused to serve as an interpreter in the Spanish Legation.

This information inspired me a lot somehow and someday to reach the "source of the sun." I looked forward to realizing this dream. I never thought that this dream would become a reality. Fortunately, I was chosen as a participant in the Youth Invitation Programme. I was given the opportunity for a twenty-eight day travel tour, during which I was exposed to and given a glimpse of Japan as a nation.

I strongly believe in the observation made by Dr. Jose P. Rizal. Ever since, homogeneity has been a principal characteristic of Japan's people and culture. This pattern of life still prevails among the Japanese people. This can be traced to the desirable values still evident in Japan. Honesty, discipline and hardwork play a very important factor in enhancing the "group oriented" concept of Japanese life. Despite rapid changes in terms of technological advancements, Japan still preserves its culture as a contribution to world civilization.

### Mission Accomplished in Japan by Heart

Noel Matalubos Saldajeno  
Agriculture Group

Eager to see and experience Japanese culture and society, my mission had to be accomplished. There was only one way to satisfy this curiosity, and that was to find out heartily.

The panoramic postcards of Japan and its published technology have been proven respectively to be as breathtakingly lovely as they appeared to be and competitively advanced as adjudged to be. A place with historical sights, including temples and castles, landscapes and buildings, indeed, Japan is "an island nation of natural beauty and cultural diversity."

The Japanese people generally feel very close to the natural environment. They preserve the creation of the omnipotent "Kami" of Shintoism and Buddhism. No wonder shrines are built everywhere for god-fearing people to offer a prayer.

The Specialized Programme such as lectures and observation of Iwate's prefectural landmarks proved that "Japan is one of the largest importing countries of agricultural products in the world" because of its relatively limited farming area. Farmers are self-sufficient, however. With the vision to compete globally, the land is therefore farmed very effectively using sophisticated machinery; it is intensive farming with highly refined techniques. Farmers own their land, anyway.

Modern technological research through biotechnology has made a breakthrough to have abundant agricultural production.

Fishery as well is one of Japan's major industries since fish is an important dish for Japanese "sashimi" and "tempura."

Interaction with the Japanese youths during the In-house Seminar expressed facets of Japanese and Filipino culture. Similarities are many in international relations, but not as much concerning technology advancement and global competitiveness in agriculture. Nevertheless, the seminar facilitated an effort toward "unity in diversity," challenging the participants to become leaders of the 21st century for nation-building.

The Japanese family is traditionally very close.

Education is prioritized. The homestay in a Japanese family fostered a mutual trust and friendship and raised mutual understanding. The home is a blend of "tatami" and polished wood and carpeting.

Japan wouldn't seem this remarkable if we hadn't visited Tokyo and Hiroshima-landmarks of Japanese culture, society, tradition and history.

Such travel in Japan has taught me this: I missed my own country very much. The more I learn, the more I long to go home and be a part of its food security programme toward the year 2000 and beyond.

Mission accomplished!

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## JAPAN— Refreshing Experience

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Ronald T. Baluyut

Small and Medium Industries Group

Japan is a mixture of many things to me. It typifies the latest in cutting-edge technology that depends on an array of many small, oftentimes unrecognized players. My first-hand experience reinforced my image of Japan as a competitively driven society that values a balance between development and preservation of nature and tradition. I see this need for balance as a check against creeping materialism, and distortion of values.

Japan is struggling out not only against a lingering recession but also against a skeptic and impatient society that has long been pampered by continuous growth in the past. However, I see this break as a sign for Japan to rethink its priority in Asia and the world. I am sure a second wind is just around the corner when it gets its priorities right.

My 28-day stay in Japan taught me to be more persistent and creative. Persistent in conversing with some Japanese who can hardly understand English, but one willing to listen and digest my message. My level of creativity has been enriched by Japanese wisdom and practicality. The discussions I had with Japanese businessmen, friends, counterparts at the In-house Seminar, host family and coordinators help much in explaining to me a complicated society.

I enjoyed Japanese humility as displayed by their tradition of bowing deep. It is a good exercise for trimming both excess pounds and overblown pride. They taught me to recognize my shortcomings and

develop my potentials. This fighting spirit made Japan rise and leap from the rumbles of defeat.

For the Japanese, counting inward is an expression of their desire to add more - friends, wealth, technology and even understanding from outsiders. Timing is also big business for them. Everything depends on accurate timing: the trains, smooth traffic, appointments and sometimes even having fun.

I know the burden of keeping an affluent society rest on their shoulders. The Japanese have to work hard, and work makes them happy. However, the pressure of our working creeps on their nerves; they have to relieve the stress by drinking, sleeping on trains, endless shopping, and sports activities.

Hot springs and public bath wash away their tension. Travelling also gives them the opportunity to compare with other cultures and societies.

It is common to meet a Japanese who has travelled in five countries in the past five years.

To stay for only 28 days in Japan is too short a time to understand the country fully. I am tempted to narrate the small, trivial yet learning experiences, but I would not be able to capture them all.

I know that Japan is not all the friendly smiles, the deep bows, the trains arriving on time, Disneyland and hordes of shopping stalls. It is more than "robatayaki parties" and accommodating host families.

However, the memories of these experiences I had in Japan will forever be imprinted in me. The Japanese friends and the memories of shared dreams make my spirit high.

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## Realizing Japan—A Journey in the Land of the Rising Sun

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Runino Sun, Jr. II

Public Administration Group

While it is true that Japan is an economic superpower as well as a leader in science and technology, its natural beauty is unaffected by its modernization. It has managed to retain its natural blessings with countless environmentally protected areas. The warm hospitality and punctuality of its people became an enriching, fruitful and meaningful experience, as I shared and took part in exchanging our culture and the way of life of a Philippine family. I had a rare opportunity to visit

various magnificent structures and facilities matched with very accommodating government officials and staff. Sharing with them my ideas, views and knowledge in local policy was indeed a great experience.

Meanwhile, it is the Homestay Programme that highlighted my stay in Japan. It enabled me to learn the Japanese of living as it was the most memorable moment of my life. I was treated like a son by my host family. As for me, I valued it so much, and it will remain a treasure for a lifetime.

The journey that I had would not have been realized without the unselfish and ever willing support of our patient coordinators who have done an excellent job. As, I owe them a million thanks for they have spent and devoted their time, effort and resources for the fulfillment of a long-lasting relationship of peace and prosperity based upon mutual understanding and true friendship among the youth of Japan and the Philippines. I can never forget them, for the time we were together has become a priceless moment deep inside me. I say to them "Totemo tanoshikatta desu. Iroiro arigato gozaimashita."

Mabuhai kayong lahet!

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## An Avenue for Unity

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**Bernie A. Dolatre**  
Local Development Group

The Youth Invitation Programme came to us as two-edged sword piercing the two important faculties of our lives - mind and soul (heart). Through it, we were able to confirm that in any other country, the concept and process of development are the same. It starts when people unitedly make their goals and set their minds to them. Dedication, discipline and hardwork, as exemplified by the Japanese who are always on the move, are vital ingredients to realize success. When the leader and his followers wholeheartedly share responsibilities, success is indeed on the way.

Furthermore, we learned that differences in culture, tradition and language are not stumbling blocks to build mutual understanding and cooperation between nations and their people, like in the case of the Philippines and Japan, as well as ourselves and our Japanese counterparts. Our newfound friends are the precious jewels we discovered in the Land of the Rising Sun.

May God bless all mankind with peace, prosperity and good health.

Hurrah to all of us.

Maraming Salamat Po!

Domo Iroiro Arigato Gozaimashita.

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## Friendship in Diversity

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**Maria Zorayda A. Torres**

ASEAN Comp.  
Scientific and Technological Developments Group

In a breakfast conversation, a JICE coordinator once asked, "What have you gained from the programme?" My initial reaction was to say my first learning experience to the very last. However, all my experiences point to one thing: FRIENDSHIP.

JICA was indeed successful in achieving its objective of building friendship between and among ASEAN participants. Recognizing our cultural differences, JICA has still fostered a sense of belonging in that each one is a brother or sister to another, that the NIHONGO language we used despite the difficulty was our common language, and this place where we stayed for 28 days is our second home.

Indeed, the exchanges in Scientific and Technological Developments Group were substantial so that new concepts, ideas and experiences were gained. They were enriched by our visits to the university, agency and companies related to Scientific and Technological Development. On the other hand, the homestay provided the socio-cultural aspect of the programme where we experienced the Japanese way of life, conversing in NIHONGO everyday, eating Japanese food, sleeping on a tatami mat, going to the supermarket with OKASAN, and practicing the tea ceremony, etc.

By now, everyone is richer in experience-an experience of friendship and unity in diversity. It is an experience that transcends all bounds - faster than any SHINKANSEN, more environment-friendly and cost-effective than eco-cars. That is what you can find in JICA Youth Invitation Programme.

Many thanks to our coordinators, to TIA (Toyokawa International Association) and to our Japanese counterparts for all the love put into everything they did.

## Asia

## Thailand

### Friendly Smile

Pornpana Suwannate  
Teacher Group

At the moment I arrived at Narita Airport on a big bird, a natural smile came upon my face. I was determined that I would make friends with the people of this country and would be met with smiles of the Japanese people.

Then soon, I encountered smiles of love and friendliness like those for close friends, brothers, and family members.

I spent 28 days in the cherry blossoms country, and what I was really looking forward to was the day of my visit to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, which I had wanted for many years to see with my own eyes.

When I was there, I first thought that the park was nothing new but just another tourist park with trees surrounding it and inside it were monuments and destroyed old building rubble. But its significance and the associated history were different. I even saw for the first time in the Peace Memorial Museum photos of the victims of the radiation sickness caused by the atomic bomb.

Then I heard the story of one girl who struggled very hard to live despite her radiation sickness and wished that world peace would prevail. When I approached the memorial monument dedicated to this girl, I was filled with sadness. And I found myself standing still and crying without caring about the people around me who might be seeing. I wanted to make a paper crane with a star in its beak for this girl.

And I said to her departed soul:

I am also the one who sincerely hopes that a peaceful world will be maintained. I am going to make your dream come true. When I return home, I will tell people of the world that Japan, which I have just been to, is a country with great many smiles, and it is striving for true peace to come. Goodbye to the girl resting in heaven.

### Thoughts on Japan

Nikhom Phetpha  
Agriculture Group

Japan is a country that has developed advanced technology and plays a leadership role in the Asian economy.

Japan must not forget its responsibility in bringing about World War II. But it rose again from its once beaten and destroyed as well as ruined situation, and has become the most advanced country in Asia. So I regarded it with wonder.

When I was in Japan, there was a gentle breeze blowing. And while I saw and learned many things, I started to think that it is not such a bad nation.

The Japanese people love nature, and, in fact, the country is filled with much more beautiful nature than I had expected. And I really admired how disciplined the Japanese are, too.

Mikamoson village, where my homestay programme took place, is a very small place in a valley between mountains. But I thought that I got a glimpse of the people's decent daily life there. They disposed their garbage in accordance with the content of the materials in observance of regulations, and even smashed cans before disposing them. I was very ashamed of myself when I carelessly threw away my trash, which my host family's daughter picked up and disposed in a correct way.

Japan has limited natural resources, but is blessed with such wonderful human resources as patient and thoughtful citizen that support to day's nation development. We went to Hiroshima. I could still hear a resentful cry of carnage through remained documents even though it has been more than 50 years after the end of World War II and since the atomic bomb was dropped. I cannot help but admit that the war was the fault of human beings. Before visiting Hiroshima, I thought the atomic bombing had been indispensable in terminating the war, but I completely changed my mind after seeing the dreadful scenes in the photos and displays there. If there is no war, there will be no more development of nuclear weapons.

For the sake of world peace let's stop developing nuclear weapons. Let's stop fighting.

Say "Rest in peace. We will never repeat such a

mistake.”

This promise should be filled with the feelings of the Japanese people for their responsibility in the war.

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## The Friendship Tree

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Sornram Buddhachart  
ASEAN Comp.

Health and Medical Services (Public Health) Group

Since we learned from JICA that we would have the chance to visit Japan, it seemed as if we received the seeds of a tree named Japan-ASEAN Youth Invitation Programme, which we had never seen and never known about before. One thing we knew at that time was that we would have to grow these trees together with ASEAN and Japanese friends in Japan and take care of them as well as possible.

We paid attention to these trees with all of our heart: not only with open minds but also with friendly spirits, and the most important thing was our sincerity. Furthermore, when we looked around, we saw many people from various countries doing the same thing as us. Our hearts were suddenly filled with gladness, and that made our tree grow and stronger and stronger day by day.

As a result of growing this tree, the Japan-ASEAN Youth Invitation Programme, we gained many experiences from each tree. First, from the Japanese tree, we learned about the self-discipline of the Japanese people, together with the very useful concepts of human development and holistic thinking. The other interesting thing was that Japan has managed to develop very advanced technology while conserving ancient culture. In addition to this, among the ASEAN's trees from Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Philippines, Viet Nam together with Thailand, we also had great opportunities to exchange and learn from others. Consequently, we found the truth that Friendship is beyond frontiers.

Now, it's our turn to bring the seeds of this tree, The Friendship Tree, back to our respective countries, try to grow them and let them grow stronger and stronger in our hearts and hearts forever...

Friendship, friendship trees, I just want to see you grow and grow day by day.

Friendship, friendship trees, grow not only for me, but for everyone.

Oh... friendship, friendship trees, grow beyond sight, reach out to the sun, grow for everyone...

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## Friends in a Foreign Country

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Weerapon Bodeerat  
Economic and Financial Managements Group

Good morning. My name is Weerapon Bodeerat. I am here representing Thailand youth, and to share one of the most important experiences in our lives. That is to say, I'm participating the Youth Invitation Programme. By joining this programme, I have had an opportunity to spend a month in Japan and have also made a lot of friends in this country. There are two friends I would really like to introduce to you all.

First is a 70-year old woman named Tanaka Kiyoko, whom I called "Grandma." We accidentally met in Yokohama while I was spending my free day travelling, shopping, drawing and taking pictures from morning until the evening. While I was taking pictures, Grandma came to talk to me since the place I was taking pictures of is also her favorite spot. That led us into a conversation and to eternal memories I will never forget starting from the moment that we met. We talked, walked and took pictures together happily. Before the day had gone, a souvenir from Thailand was given to Grandma, while a good-luck charm from her wallet was given to me. Although we could not understand each other's languages, I know in my heart that Grandma was happy having me as a friend, and vice versa for me.

Second is a kindergarten school pupil, Shunsuke, who came to Nagoya Port with his school. He tried to explain everything to me, and took me to see the tank and tunnels in the park for he knew that I am foreigner. Of course, I could not understand a single word. I played with Shunsuke and his friends happily. I threw them into the sky put them, a round in a circle and then put them on my back. We really enjoyed playing with each other. In a word, thank you. Shunsuke walked toward me and handed a piece of candy to me. I was very glad, and I had never been so happy receiving candy from anybody before that in my life. After that, we went to the cafeteria nearby to have some food with the teachers and pupils. And here, another impression was made when a child with



Down's syndrome who was standing alone was suddenly surrounded by friends. That was also a thing I had never seen before. Everytime I recall that, it makes me feel like crying. Friendship has no differentiations. Before all the children had gone, Shunsuke came toward me again for a farewell by saying "sayonara." And we waved our hands to say goodbye to each other.

That in a very short period of time, only 20 to 30 minutes, I was able to meet Grandma Tanaka Kiyoko and the little boy Shunsuke has created the best memory of my life in Japan for me. And now, I would like to tell everybody that today Grandma's good-luck charm and the paper wrapper for Shunsuke's candy are still in my wallet, and they will be there always and forever.

## My Memories of Japan

Somnuk Sirisuk  
Public Administration Group

It was a cold day with fine snow falling. It was first time for us to experience the cold and snow, which we had only known from books and TV, but the warm welcome from many people made us forget all our worries and the cold. It was indeed a memorable first day in Japan for me.

Some lectures started following day. Visits to representative facilities of Japan including the Diet, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office, Ageo City Office, and Kagoshima Prefectural Government Office satisfied our interests as local government administrators to the full. At the same time, it is true these visits gave me a very precious experience that I will not have again in my whole lifetime.

So many good memories flash back to me of the night we had a talk late at night with many Japanese friends and very affectionate exchanges with my host family members. Those exchanges led to the establishment of a precious friendship and have become imprinted as wonderful memories in my mind.

We are bound together despite of the long distance separating us. I shall pledge to my new Japanese family and friends to keep a long lasting friendship and unfailing feelings for them.

## 28 Days in Japan

Ussanee Kanjanarui  
Local Development Group

I would like to express my opinions about my 28-day stay in Japan from point of view of a participant in the Local Development Group of the Youth Invitation Programme.

Through the Youth Invitation Programme, we experienced three programmes — namely, training and observations organized by the JICE, the In-house Seminar with Japanese participants organized by the World Youth Visit Exchange Association (WYVEA), and observations of local developments in Hyogo Prefecture. These programmes all gave us good opportunities to learn about developments in Japan. We made friends with the people in the said organizations, coordinators and other concerned people. And above all, we were able to foster friendships between Thai and Japanese youths.

The characteristics of the Japanese whom we got to know in various occasions were very impressive. The following is a summary of our group's opinions and impressions of the Japanese.

1. They are punctual. When they carry out something, they usually follow faithfully matters agreed on. Moreover, when it comes to their public behavior, they observe the rules very strictly in a collective manner.
2. They are loyal to worlds of their own and the groups, which they belong to, and seek seriousness. In addition, they attach much importance to individual responsibility.
3. They have a high regard for the honor and reputation of their own groups and organizations that they belong to.
4. They set up goals and do their best to do everything to attain it.

Lastly, I was able to feel the tenderheartedness of the Japanese people and got to know the country's culture. At the same time, together with the youths who participated in various activities, we by established friendship. We carried out things with patience and calmness, and, as a result of our efforts, we all were

able to gain more knowledge and to foster our friendship.

For the aforementioned things, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the JICA and other people from the organizations concerned.

## ■ Asia

### ■ Viet Nam

#### My Love

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Doan Hai Bang  
Economy Group

I love the sky  
I love the blue sea  
And  
I love the everlasting greenery forests  
I love the crystal eyes of children  
Sincerity  
At dusk  
In a quiet park  
Looking faraway, there is a lonely old man  
What is on his mind?  
Tomorrow we will depart  
Let's pray the sky always remains blue  
And the cranes fly over the horizon  
Dear waves,  
Sing in whispers a sweet love song for us  
Dear forests, revitalize  
The soil  
Dear children, sing joyfully  
At the side of the old man lingering in the park  
before sunset  
With a heart filled with love  
Let's build a world of affection

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#### Hiroshima

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Nguyen Bich Ly  
Agriculture Group

My parents gave me a book on Japan and the Japanese for my 10th birthday. They told me that on August 6th, my birthday, the atomic bombing in Hiroshima took place, and it has become a special day thereafter in Japan. Ever since then, many thoughts about Japan and particularly Hiroshima had filled my mind.

Luckily, an opportunity for me to participate in the Youth Invitation Programme arose. The joy I felt at the time of going and seeing Japan and the Japanese people with my own eyes could not possibly be expressed with words, because I had developed ideas about them, which gradually came to be fermented over years deep in my

mind. Moreover, what moved me was finding out that the day we visited Hiroshima happened to be exactly the same day as the atomic bombing there 54 years ago and coincidentally my 23rd birthday, too. My fellow participants and coordinators were kind enough to celebrate for me in the Peace Memorial Park in front of a monument of a child victim of the atomic bombing, and that made me feel even more touched on that special day.

I became speechless, as my heart was filled with sorrow at the sight of the hanging 1,000 colorful paper cranes laid at the monument. I felt as if I could hear cries for peace and sympathy for Hiroshima from children from all the five continents of the world. I was very touched when I heard that Japanese people believe that hanging 1,000 paper cranes will bring immeasurable happiness to them. I deeply respect those who realized their hopes through constructing this monument to convey the very deep feelings of the Japanese people to everyone and as well as to people of the next generation.

My recent trip to Japan was very impressive and interesting. Memories of those days of my stay in Japan just before we enter the 21st century, the third century of human history, will last forever in my mind.

## Our Impressions During the Stay in Japan

Trinh To Oanh  
Duong Thi Cam Huong  
ASEAN Comp.  
Public Utilities (Traffic and Transport) Group

We are participants of ASEAN Component Public Utilities (Traffic and Transport) Group attending the Youth Invitation Programme, organized by JICA in the year of 1999. Our group consisted of 24 participants from ASEAN countries, namely Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

### 1. General Orientation Programme

We learned Japanese language and culture, and the history of transport developments in Japan. This programme provided us with a general background about Japan before we could see and experience things by ourselves. The programme was very useful for us

who visited Japan for the first time.

### 2. Specialized Programme

Through this programme, we had good opportunities to visit agencies related to our field. We gained very good experiences from Japanese experts. We realized that Japan has well-developed infrastructures and well-balanced development in aviation, maritime and land transport sectors with its own technologies and efforts.

Japan has an efficient system in land use for infrastructure development. Management and operation in terms of infrastructure development are very good.

### 3. Homestay Programme

All of us had the same feeling that the homestay was one of the most interesting programmes. We found out that the Japanese are very friendly and enthusiastic. We could practice Japanese and came to understand much more about their customs compared with what we had learned from the orientation programme. We all are very happy because now we have a second family in Japan.

### 4. Exchanging Views with Japanese Youths

Although we had only a very short time with Japanese youths, we realized that young Japanese are very self-confident and well-educated. They have the strong will to develop their country. Mutual understanding was created between us.

### 5. Japanese Culture Programme and Experiencing Japanese Dance

We all enjoyed this programme very much. Japan is changing rapidly, but the Japanese still maintain their own culture and traditional dances.

### 6. Observation Tour in Okayama and Hiroshima

In spite of a tight schedule and our feeling a bit tired, we still loved this programme. We were very lucky to visit Hiroshima on the 54th anniversary ceremony. We were very emotional when we visited the Peace Memorial Museum. Through this programme, we came to understand Japanese history deeply.

### Conclusion

On behalf of the Public Utilities Group, we would like to express our special thanks to JICA as well as to the related agencies that made very many efforts to organize this programme. The Youth Invitation Programme is very good and beneficial for all of the ASEAN participants. Through the programme we not only had very useful lessons from Japan but also established very good relationships with other countries

in the region. We do hope what we have learned and gained from Japan can be applied to our respective countries.

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## My Stay in Japan and Impressions of Japan

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Huynh Thi My Ngan  
Education Group

I got the impression of Japan as being a developed and modern country when I saw skyscrapers, factories with tall chimneys, and a good many freeways soon after I arrived there.

People told me that winter is cold in Japan, so that I was prepared for that, but I felt rather good in the fresh and clean air.

Also, the flowers and green trees planted in every place in Japan made me feel peaceful.

During my stay in Japan, I was able to see many places, structures ranging from modern buildings to old ones, castles that have remained for many years from an ancient time, shrines and temples. Those buildings had a traditional Japanese and unique construction style. Moreover, I was attracted to Japan's natural landscapes such as beautiful and magnificent mountains and oceans.

I think I was able to deepen my knowledge by observing many exhibits displayed at the museum. The experiences of trying on colorful kimono and the tea ceremony spirit still remain as unforgettable and interesting events to me.

The Japanese people showed a heartfelt concern for us Vietnamese people and tried to cooperate proactively in many ways for the friendship between Japan and Viet Nam.

The days spent together with the Japanese people, especially those of my homestay as a family member in a Japanese home, will be never forgotten in my mind. It was a lucky thing for me to experience different family life. I learned patience, hard work, cleanliness and tidiness, and modesty from the Japanese.

Memories of my stay in Japan imprinted in the bottom of my mind will remain forever.

I hope to have another occasion to visit and see my close friends, and I strongly hope that the friendship

between Japan and Viet Nam will last forever.

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## Thoughts on Japan

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Vuong Quang Lihn  
Civil Servant Group

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the government of Japan, JICA, JICE, Programme Coordinators, and Coordinators. Thanks to their painstaking efforts, we were able to develop our understanding about the Japanese, especially Japanese youths.

The most impressive thing for me was the Japanese youths' self-reliance. They used their brain and hands to make their life self-reliant. In addition, they were young, full of good spirits combined with abundant of energy and were inquisitive about everything.

That was my impressions of them. Why do they want to know about everything? The answer is simple. They wanted to know about Viet Nam and its people, culture and politics. I got the impression from their reply that they are frank and open.

The most memorable thing to me was the homestay. The objective of the homestay was to get to know the Japanese and their life by getting us to fit in with their life and share their feelings. I am now recalling many memories of my host family. They are my second family: my second father, mother, brother and sister. My second mother took very good care of me, just the way she treats her own 5 and 3 year old children. I was treated with love as a special child, who eats a lot. These are my frank opinions about Japan. I hope that my friends' memories were good enough to blow off the cold and language barrier after I came to warmhearted Japan.

But, there is one thing that concerns me. I feel that our Japanese friends do not know much about Viet Nam and the Vietnamese. Is it because my country is poor? Yes, that is true. That is why we Vietnamese have to make efforts to make the same miracle that once happened in Japan also happen in Viet Nam by our hard work and, in particular, through learning from our Japanese friends' rich experiences.

## ■ Bangladesh

## Friend in Need, A Friend Indeed

**Baizid Khoorshid Riaz**  
Health and Medical Services Group

In Japan we found the highest power of a single word: "Sumimasen" (excuse me). Even if we could not pronounce any Japanese word, other than "Sumimasen," it would not have been problem for us to enjoy our time in Japan. By use of the single word "Sumimasen," we could draw the patient attention of an unknown Japanese person; we could trace our destination from him or her and, we could share our troubles with him or her, etc. That was the absolute evidence of the great courtesy and hospitality of the Japanese nation. The cordial attitude of the Japanese people enabled us to overcome all the barriers of communication between our two nations.

I was lucky enough to start my first overseas journey in my life with Japan. Our tour was arranged in such a fashion that all of my sense organs got satisfaction from the nature of Japan and from the culture of the Japanese nation.

But just as "science gives motion, snatches away emotion," Japanese people are losing their emotions a little bit.

It is said that, "a person is known by the company he keeps." It was a great pleasure for the people of Bangladesh to enjoy the consistently warm and friendly company of the people of Japan.

## Bhutan

## Japan, the Mirror of My Dream

Dechen Tshering  
Education Group

My dream became a real situation when I visited my dreamland, "Nippon." My eagerness to learn about its rich culture and systematic education system was the shadow of my dream.

With open hearts we moved into the In-house Seminar where the exchanging of views, deepening of knowledge and mutual understanding about culture, society and education of three countries took place. The education system and daily school activities were also given importance.

We actively experienced the education system, cultural and moral values of Japan functioning when we visited various Boards of Education, some schools, and a university and also during the homestay. The organization and management of education system are handled with sensitive care. The people of this land are filled with by real human values that make their way of living seem more meaningful.

We perceived that emphasizing global peace is noble but the destruction of human life and nature is evil. The world leaders should keep “Global Peace” as their motto so that the living things in this universe can enjoy a natural and meaningful life.

The real rich culture and handicrafts of Japan's forefathers can be clearly seen and are preserved with intensive care in Kyoto, which gives glimpses of traditional life styles in reality.

The trip was so interesting and meaningful that we got a package of new knowledge and experiences for us to take back home for our children.

**Tashi Delak.**

## ■ Asia

### ■ India

#### The Rising Country

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Indu Shankar  
Education Group

Japan — the country of the rising sun, with people full of love and affection; abundant nature blessed with the sea, mountains and hot springs; and a rich cultural atmosphere that has been cultivated for a long time. It is a country which is well known both domestically and internationally for its spas, and as a technological and tourist country.

The four seasons of the country fascinate people with its beautiful scenery. In the spring it is full of plums blossoms, in summer its beaches are filled with people enjoying aquatic sports; in winter it is appreciated for its hot spring, and its autumn is for viewing works of art and visiting historical spots.

Traditional events like the tea ceremony and festivals have been handed down unchanged through the ages, to transmit the minds of their ancestors.

The sea, mountains and the sky, all surround Japan and are the stages for outdoor sports.

Education is the topmost priority for the people of Japan. In order to promote the best education, children are provided with high-tech facilities and an environment for favorable learning.

In Japan, which is also called the country of high technology, advancement in technology is unmatched. In every walk of life it surprises the world.

Finally, Japan is the country of machines and technology, culture and traditions, sincerity and punctuality, love and affection, with the motto: "work is worship."

Last but not the least—the youth of both countries (India and Japan) must raise our relationship, culture and traditions to a peak.

Long Live India-Japan Friendship.

## ■ Asia

### ■ Maldives

#### My View of Japan-South Asia Youth Friendship

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Ismail Ali  
Education Group

We appreciated very much the Youth Invitation Programme organized every year by JICA under the direction of the Government of Japan. These programmes for different professionals from different countries will help to strengthen the ties between the governments of their respective countries and Japan.

The participants in this programme come to Japan and observe the techniques and methods of related fields. We got the opportunity to have discussions with professionals of different levels at related institutions.

This programme has helped us to exchange the ideas and experiences with our counterparts in the field of education, who are from the participating countries, namely Bhutan, the Maldives and Japan. We have been exposed to better techniques and have acquired information regarding the lessons, which they have learned in these different countries. This also has helped us to study the problems and the difficulties they are facing in this field. Participants are able to acquire better ideas to overcome these kinds of problems we may face in the future.

With this programme we have refreshed ourselves and strengthened our skills. The knowledge and experience, which we have gained from this programme, will be shared with our colleagues and put to practice through activities in our respective countries. We are sure that this will improve the standard of education in our countries.

The organizing for the Japan-South Asia Youth Invitation Programme sponsored by JICA in this year was significant. All the arrangements and coordination made us comfortable and made it seem as if we were at home away from home. We were lucky enough to cover all the planned activities under the schedule of this programme with the help of very active coordinators.

We want to express our deep appreciation to JICA and the organizing staff of this programme. We are looking forward to meeting them again in a similar programme in the future.

## ■ Asia

## ■ Nepal

### New Experiences in Japan

**Padam Bahadur Rai**

Education (School Management) Group

Our group of nine participants from Nepal arrived in Japan on 22 Sept., 1999 to participate the given programme for four weeks. We are the group of school management. All the arrangements for conducting the programme were administered by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

We were totally surprised ourselves seeing the views of Japan because they had nothing do with the development here. Everywhere there are good facilities for electricity, education and transportation, etc. It is sure that the Japanese people developed their country in a very short time after the World War II. I think no one is more polite, cooperative and disciplined in the world than the Japanese people. They are always careful about time and their own duties. That means that they were never late even by a minute.

When we visited a rural area during our stay, we were more surprised because these places were like city centers. We never saw any shortage of any facilities. We saw that each house has electricity and access roads (most Nepalese have to walk to get to their homes) for transportation. Most of the people live on a plain just under a hill. There are green forests in the hillside everywhere which makes the environment very good. As for agriculture, rice is the main crop, and apples are mostly planted in the area we visited.

Most of our time was well spent in Komagane-Shi, which is in Nagano Prefecture. The nature of Komagane is beautiful. The JC families, the JOCV and the people of this area heartily guided us; as a result, our stay was very successful. We would like to thank them.

For our visiting programme, we visited Nozomi Gakuen. This school is especially for those students who are frustrated and mentally tired of the school system. Nozomi Gakuen accepts only this type of student and cares for them seriously until they are ready to go back to their original school. Nozomi Gakuen's way of handling these students was new for us. Nozomi Gakuen analyzed Japan's school system through these students' eyes, instead of looking at the

students from perspective of the school system. This made us more surprised.

Although our Homestay Programme was a very short, we were very happy. We spent our two day programme happily having delicious food, visiting many interesting places and communicating with the families without speaking. It was very bad moment in my life when I had to leave the host family. Finally, we separated from each other, while tears dropped from our eyes.

Many people visit Nepal to see the Himalayan ranges, but we wanted to see the ocean. We visited the ocean near Hiroshima, which we enjoyed very much. We tasted the water in the ocean. It was like salt. We travelled on a boat and saw different kinds of sea creatures at the aquarium. It was completely wonderful experience for all of us.

Finally, we'd like to express many thanks to the people we met and thanks for this programme.

## ■ Asia

## ■ Pakistan

### Nihon Nama\*

Qumar Sarwar Abbasi

Civil Servant (Developing Sector) Group

They knew not what they were going to see  
All they cared was, in Japan to be

There were twenty of them  
All young and strong  
Streets of Tokyo  
They thought they'd throng

Eiko-san came to fetch them all  
She said we'd sing and play volleyball  
And see all of Nippon  
Big and small

The flight was long, tiring and tough  
The food they served tasted so rough

The sight of Osaka changed it all  
The JICA centre rose to the call  
Rooms so cozy, they forgot all about the chill  
Food so delicious, they ate to their fill

Nihongo lessons were part of the fun  
No one was allowed to escape and run  
Lectures were insightful, to say the least  
Though some did sleep, other weren't mum

Osaka they left, the "Bullet way"  
Tokyo was busy and so were they  
They liked it there  
But were told to pack away

Orientation was way too much  
One has to sometimes speak the "saach" \*  
The visits were interesting, the people so fine  
The things so "kirei," hard not to touch

Sajima Marina they'll never forget  
They mixed up quickly, no time to fret  
Discussions were intense, they party fab  
Never a thing came so close to perfect

Takamatsu was the destination next  
They thought here they'd get some rest  
But only a day, and they were tired again  
Out of the hotel, their patience at test

Homestay was to start that night  
They wanted to put their best face upright  
Host families were already there  
Queuing for the toilet, us having a fight

The homes they found "sugoi" and green  
The hosts were caring, friendly and clean  
Was a great time there, though short it was  
With the "kawaii" memories, their minds did beam

Kijima san had the toughest job  
"Piki" \* — of the "Hitsuji" \* — mob  
The mavericks she hated and rightfully so  
But never said a word nor did she sob

Hiroshima was quick but cool  
The message was simple, don't be a fool  
Racing cars or the horrors of war  
Life is beautiful, if peace be the rule

Back to Osaka, relieved one tad  
Remembering the good, forgetting the bad  
Packing their "omiyage" ready to leave  
Behind their smiles, their hearts were sad

\* Nama is an Urdu word meaning "letter."

\* Saach in Urdu means "truth," and is pronounced in the same way as "such."

\* A Nihongo for "counter."

\* Hitsuji in Nihongo means "Sheep."



## ■ Asia

### ■ Sri Lanka

#### The Rising Sun

P. D. Priyanthi Samanmal  
Education Group

Visiting Japan was a dream which I cherished for a long time—ever since I heard of its beauty, technology, old traditional culture and hospitality. “The Youth Invitation Programme,” which is implemented by JICA, paved the path for me to make my dream come true. Of the whole programme, the homestay was the most interesting and exciting activity I experienced.

The idea of the barrier of communication and the difference in the life style made me shed tears when my host family came to welcome me. The same barrier became the bridge to understand the deep feelings, emotions, and close relationships which cannot be expressed by millions of words. The participation in Origami and traditional Koto music proved to me that there’s no difference between nations and races. There’s no difference in warm red blood. We all belong to one nation: one mankind. Nobody is entitled to harm another; we should only love.

In a cold evening I heard the tolling of the death bell of Hiroshima. I wish that sorrowful sound would awaken all the war ringing nations, so that the world will be a wonderful place to live in.

The Youth Invitation Programme proved that Japan is the country of the rising sun. May Japan be the rising sun for the whole world and the whole universe, to bring peace and harmony.

## ■ Asia

### ■ Mongolia

#### Japan As I Felt It

Oyuntchimeg Duvdoi  
Government Official Group

It has been 26 days since we came to Japan under the JICA’s Youth Invitation Programme. Though our stay was short, my understanding of Japan has become deeper and deeper, and I have started to respect the people of Japan.

We followed the well-organized programme and visited various organizations related to our specialized field and met people of the same specialty. We also had chances to visit many historical and cultural places.

The most impressive part of the programme was the 8-day stay in Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture. We had very meaningful experiences, which will benefit our future profession, such as a courtesy call on the City Mayor of Nihonmatsu, attending a lecture on city administration and visit to Fukushima Prefecture Training Center.

We also learned Japanese customs through the Homestay Programme of 2 nights and 3 days. During the homestay, I was able to celebrate the Mongolian lunar new year with my host family. When I was eating Buuz, the new year’s dish of Mongolia, I felt as if I were at home and could not stop shedding tears.

The people of Nihonmatsu touched me, as they treasure their local history, culture and traditions a great deal. When we visited a primary school, the children gave a concert for us and in classrooms they greeted us and sang in the Mongolian language. The children were all clever and lively just like Mongolian children. In fact, Japanese and Mongolian children look alike. The children of the school deeply moved our hearts.

Our stay in Japan was short, but the people who shared their time with us will remain in our memories forever.

## ■ Asia

### ■ Tajikistan

#### Friendship Towards the 21st Century

Rukhshona Tokhirovna Olimova  
Central Asian Comp.  
Economy Group

We had the opportunity for one month to see and be impressed by the economic and technological development of Japan, the land of rising sun. Through our visits to companies, receiving lectures rich in content, observing various museums and cultural facilities, we realized that there is considerable ground for Japan to have taken leadership of the world in politics and economy. Japan seemed to us a nation that blended high technology and the traditions of centuries.

Historically speaking, Japan abandoned the mentality behind its Isolation Policy in a short period of time and then achieved the status of a world power. Its technological development is almost perfect, yet the modern society and traditional culture are well harmonized.

We had chances to get to know the life of the ordinary people as well as about the economical capacity of Japan. The homestay experience made us understand characteristics of Japanese people. They are not only hardworking but also friendly and hospitable.

We visited several prefectures and are amazed by the fact that economic development had been achieved not only in the central region but all over the country, too.

Our training programme was complete and fruitful. We are very grateful to have been given the opportunities to have exchanges with Japanese youths and foster friendship with them. We now have windows to Japan. I believe this friendship will expand in the 21st century and both the intelligence and the warm-heartedness of the Japanese people as well as our impression of Japan will remain deep in our hearts. I dearly hope our fruitful cooperation will continue from now on.

I would like to extend our hearty gratitude to the government of Japan, JICA and organizers of the programme.

Thank you very much indeed.

## ■ Pacific

### ■ Papua New Guinea

#### With Love from PNG

Patrick Giru  
Teacher Group

Japanese society has always been intriguing to us. All we knew about the people was from the World War II, books, TV, and videos.

Stories from people who visited Japan was another source from which we learned about the Land of the Rising Sun. But that again is only as limited as our curiosity goes. And when we visited Japan on the 19th of May 1999, we were so overwhelmed with all that we saw.

While Japan is hailed as the second leading economy in the world, we feel that its rise to its present status was only made possible because of the Japanese people. The Japanese are a unique race. But their way of attaining objectives is still shrouded in a cloud of mystery. We know we will never make it to where Japan is today. However, from the opportunity JICA gave us through this Youth Invitation Programme, we have really learned a lot. The various programmes we undertook gave us various perspectives and glimpses of the Japanese society.

The Homestay Programme in our schedule we felt was the culmination of our entire stay. There, we felt that we had really come face to face with the Japanese people. But we know that that is not enough. We know that there is a lot to learn from you.

And for all the different organizations namely, JICA, JICE, JEC (Junior Executive Council of Japan), KIA (Komatsu International Association), we owe you a deep sense of gratitude. We will try our utmost to implement all that we have learnt here in Japan and wish that the relationship between Japan and PNG will prosper.

## Beautiful Japan

Ivali Kwalu  
Civil Servant Group

I lived in a place that is called Japan  
She is made for busy and free  
This truth in their books is all written  
How beautiful Japan she is  
How beautiful Japan she is

She is made to be busy and free  
They speak in one language  
Language in common  
How beautiful Japan she is

Her people are loving and kind  
They show it welcome greetings  
They mind their own business for life  
How beautiful Japan she is

How beautiful Japan is  
With beautiful flowers all around  
With pride and culture  
How beautiful Japan she is

## Pacific

### Fiji

## The Building of a Friendship Bridge

Yolinda Chan  
Civil Servant Group

Japan, a country blessed with bountiful natural landscapes and well known for its hard-working and dedicated labourforce, is a land of great fascination to me. Noting its remarkable achievement of economic prosperity and technological advancement in the past fifty years, I was determined to find out, during my short stay in Japan under the Youth Invitation Programme, the real attributes behind this success story.

After my month-long participation in this Programme in which I attended lectures, Specialized Programmes and Observation Tours, my deepest impression of Japan is the dedicated commitment of its people to nation-building and the collective economic and social prosperity.

The story of the city of Kobe, which suffered a major earthquake in January, 1995, is an excellent example of what wonders collective efforts can produce. The rapid aftermath reconstruction of the city of Kobe, a process that only took two years to complete, clearly denotes the efficiency of the Japanese system whose success depends on a culture of diligence and teamwork. Though the reasons behind the work-alcoholic nature of the Japanese are many, I firmly believe that the Japanese people in general have an inherent desire to excel. Coming from the Pacific where life is more relaxing and things move at a much slower pace, I thought the Japanese attitudes and commitment towards work are important lessons that developing countries like Fiji could learn to build a stronger nation with greater social and economic prosperity for its people.

And despite the expressionless and tired-looking faces that I usually saw on Japanese trains, it was a pleasant surprise to learn that Japanese people are very considerate, courteous, helpful and hospitable. I was so touched to find out that a casual remark like "Japan samui desu ne," a phrase murmured in eagerness to my host mother as I practiced my limited and newly acquired Japanese vocabulary, actually resulted in her placing four warm blankets, an electric blanket and a heater in my bedroom for the night. I was equally

surprised to discover that even strangers on the street were so eager to offer assistance in such a courteous way whenever I approached them seeking help concerning directions.

As the Programme draws to an end, I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the 1999 Fiji Civil Servant Group, to express our most sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan, and in particular to the organizers, JICA, JICE and Kobe International Center for Cooperation and Communication, for giving us this valuable opportunity to visit your beautiful country to deepen our understanding and knowledge of your society and its people. The happy memories we will take home and the many new friends we have made during our short stay here have constructed a new friendship bridge — one that is longer than the Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge. This new bridge extends from Japan, the land of the Rising Sun, to the shores of Fiji, where the first light of the new Millennium will dawn.

**Pacific**

**Palau**

## **Japan: Thought Pacific Eyes**

**Bernadett Besebes**  
Pacific Comp.  
Civil Servant Group

Through the JICA Youth Invitational Programme, 22 civil servants representing 11 Pacific countries were able to experience Japan's many faces. The purpose of this programme is to provide the future leaders of developing Pacific countries with a visit to Japan to experience the similarities of closely related situations concerning their particular professions.

The programme, which began on November 24, was 28 days long. From the beginning we had Japanese lessons in preparation for our homestay. We also had lectures regarding the government structure of Japan. From these initial lessons and lectures, the major impression I got was the polite and non-confrontational traditions of the Japanese.

We also had the chance to visit the National Diet Building, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Metropolitan Police. From these visits, I basically learnt that even with all the reforms going on in Japan, much information, which in my country would be considered public information, is still very much in the hands of only a few key people.

During the In-house Seminar with the Japanese counterparts, we had group discussions on the major issues we face today. Within my group, we chose to discuss drugs and the environment. Again, I was amazed and frustrated by the polite and non-confrontational traditions of our Japanese group members. We were the exact opposites in our expression of views. We Pacific Islanders were most frustrated by what seemed to be a refusal by the Japanese to share views. Instead, in their polite way, they did not want to dispute and cause confrontation within our group.

The last part of our programme was concentrated on a cultural exchange. We got to experience a homestay, which gave us a chance to practice what we have learnt so far and also to learn more about the typical daily life of a Japanese family. We also had the chance to visit Hiroshima and Kyoto. In Hiroshima, we had a very emotional and eye opening experience at the

Peace Memorial Museum. In Kyoto, we visited several Shinto shrines and took part in various religious rites. We also had the pleasure of watching a Kimono fashion show and trying on kimonos ourselves.

Throughout the whole programme, we each had common as well as different learning experiences. This was due mostly to the fact that we all represent different cultural backgrounds. However, this fact did not hinder our shared leaning. In fact, all the experiences we had were perceived differently: possibly in 11 different ways. This only served to broaden our leaning. Japan was seen through many different Pacific eyes, and for that, our lives are richer from our experiences.

Kom kmal mesulan el rokui.

## Pacific

## Solomon Islands

### A Symbol of Peace Hiroshima

Nester Kadi  
Pacific Comp.  
Teacher Group

Hiroshima: tears of agony, pain. Love and peace rolled down from the eyes of millions who entered the Peace Memorial Museum.

Hiroshima, you are the foundation of peace for millions. Hiroshima, you bear the tragedy of war and the inconceivable horror of nuclear weapons created in the hearts of men.

Hiroshima, memories of pain and agony still linger on in the hearts of millions who glimpsed at you.

Hiroshima, you bear the memories of the violent military expansion and as the first target of atomic warfare in the history of mankind

Hiroshima, where the living witness to the atomic bomb lie.

Hiroshima, you are a symbol of peace and harmony to the entire human race.

Peace loving people, can we allow such weapons to exist?

Peace loving people, is it not our duty to see that Hiroshima and Nagasaki are never repeated?

Peace loving people, two tragic world wars in this century.

Peace loving people, we still face the prospect of World War III.

Peace loving people, somewhere, someday we will have another Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Peace loving people, what can we do?

All wars begin in the hearts of human beings.

All wars end in the hearts of human beings.

World Peace must begin in Hiroshima.

What is the next step?

Education for peace.

Education for a changing world.

Japan and the Pacific region.

What is our stand for peace?

Let us join hands together and stand for peace.

Let us arise from the existence of selfish, separate nations.

Let us help others to become aware of the error of

Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Let us create a united society of humankind and become members of the entire family of the human race.

Let us educate the young generation in the spirit of love, peace and unity, despite the cultural, social, economic, religious and political differences that exist. In the name of peace and love, we are united nations.

All people of Japan and the Pacific and the entire world.

Please! Accept the spirit of Hiroshima as expressed by the immortal words written on the coffin.

That lies in the Hiroshima Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb victims which says;

"Let all the souls here rest in peace.

For we shall not repeat the evil."

## ■ Africa

### ■ Burkina Faso

#### The Way to Japan

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Jeremie Cesaire Sawadogo

French-speaking Countries:  
Health and Medical Services Group

A newly born sun rises in the Far East

She wraps your motherland up gently with bright rays

And will call you

African youths coming from a great distance

You will grow in her warmth

You will learn her knowledge

Stand up and take a first step

She will be pleased and open the door for you

Whispering to you, you can do it

She will light up the new way for you

In this unstable world

She will support you

You will go to the land on her wings

There are people there who are called the greatest people

Bear in mind

To call the sun Japan

## ■ Africa

## ■ Côte d'Ivoire

### My Homestay in Aomori

Constance Mariam Komara-Diabate  
French-speaking Countries:  
Female Teacher Group

I trembled when I heard that there was a Homestay Programme in the Youth Invitation Programme, because I imagined myself being left alone not knowing any Japanese words and what to do at a Japanese family's home where I expected no one to speak either French or English.

Although I attended Japanese language and culture classes after arriving in Japan, I could not stop worrying. It was at 6 p.m. on November 26, after we arrived at Aomori that I was introduced to my host family members.

However, my homestay ended with much joy. We all felt at home with each other. In the end, I felt ashamed of myself for having been very worried before. We became such good friends that I was in tears when I left their home.

I think it is worthwhile for everybody to experience such a wonderful time. It is, of course, important to learn about other cultures through books, but I found it in a sense very important to experience other cultures as a part of daily life. What I experienced was indeed to put this into actual practice.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Japan, Aomori Overseas Cooperative Association, and JICA, as well as to everybody in my host family.

### A Journey to the Country of the Rising Sun

Klinto Marguerite Kone Epse Yoli-Bi  
French-speaking Countries:  
Natural Science and Math Teachers Group

We dreamed about taking a look at this faraway country, created by Amaterasu Ohmikami, the Sun Goddess.

We dreamed of taking a glance at Shogun, Samurai and this country.

We dreamed of taking a glance at this country with such advanced technology revealed in its cars of Mazda

and Toyota and electric equipment of Sony, etc.

And actually Japan is a country of the modern and traditional existing side by side and in harmony in various fields.

Temples and castles have stood over centuries and centuries.

Elegant ladies in kimono

The 4000 meter-long Akashi Ohashi Bridge stretches over to the Awaji Island.

Skyscrapers

Underneath stand proud historical buildings shining brilliantly.

All these dazzled my eyes.

I understood the pains of the Japanese people when I visited the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima.

I understood Japan, its culture, its people and their zeal for work when I saw the society blended with contemporary and tradition.

I thank JICA for making our dreams come true.

■ Africa

■ Eritrea

## IWANU GA HANA

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Haile Bizen Abraha

English-speaking Countries:  
Natural Science Teacher Group

As the wheels of the aircraft touched ground, we heard, "the time now in Japan is approximately 3:20." At once, we all adjusted our watches to fit into the ever running clock - days of Japan; it was the beginning of our Japan Experience.

### IWANU GA HANA!

The Butterflies

With vibrant national colours  
beamed with dignity and pride,  
flew one after another and landed at Nippon

The Butterflies

Moved from place to place  
to lick the nectars of Osaka, Tokyo, Sajima Marina,  
Hiroshima, Kyoto, and  
the land of Boken (adventure) — Hokkaido  
where fields, mountains and rivers  
hide their existence,  
and people live between two "skys"

There, the Butterflies

almost met with the Angels,  
the spiritual families,  
HANA MO MI MO ARU (bearing both flowers  
and fruit)

The Butterflies

Of seventeen colours  
revealed their oneness  
by tuning their heart-beats:  
they sang and sang...  
NKOSI SIKELEL' I AFRICA.

The Butterflies

Honour the courtesy of NIHON  
the people, culture, the language  
even the weather — SAMUIDESUNE?! (It's cold,  
isn't it?)

We are now —

Tea ceremonied

Ikebana flower arranged

Origami folded

Calligraphied — Japanese Africans

The Butterflies

Like the saying

"to know the taste of an ocean, a drop is enough."

IWANU GA HANA!

is the term for their stay in Japan.



## Africa

### Seychelles

## Japan in a Month

Jude Gedeon

English-speaking Countries:  
Health and Medical Services Group

Worldwide most people would know Japan from its vehicle and electrical appliance brands. I feel privileged to know much more now. One month here in Japan has been a memorable experience spent with a people and nation rich in culture and unique in lifestyle.

The visits to the various institutions were indeed appropriate to our field of work. Unfortunately, time did not always allow for more in-depth and elaborate exchanges. Japan's success in implementing its primary health care and public health programs, which are fundamentally different from ours, is impressive.

Experiencing Japan's culture and way of life through the various exchanges and visits were to say the least, enriching and very informative. One cannot help but admire the Japanese commitment to duty and hard work. Amidst that exist a gentleness that is not been seen anywhere else.

Our fear of the unknown and anxiety prior to the homestay proved unfounded. We all enjoyed that experience and the exchanges so much that it became the high point of our stay in Shizuoka and Japan as a whole.

Given the liberty of the pen, I could write a book about my stay in Japan. How can one forget the unsurpassed attention to quality and details, the flamboyant kimono, the exciting cuisine, the swift Shinkansen, the trip to Hiroshima, the museums that make you go "Wow!," the dazzling technology and infrastructures... The list is endless.

Such memories have been engraved within me. I return home to share them with my family, friends and colleagues.

Farewell Japan... But not forever.

## Africa

### Zambia

## From Africa to Japan with Love!

Chiole Sakala Msori

English-speaking Countries:  
Female Teacher Group

On February 2, I arrived from Zambia for the Youth Invitation Programme. Though cold and tired, I was excited.

Tokyo was exciting. Never had I dreamt of visiting it. Yet there I was, walking down its busy streets and staying in a hotel in the famous Ginza area!

The educational tours were excellent. Miwada Female School impressed me the most. Everything there seemed perfect. At Ogawa High School I had fun, especially in cooking with the pupils, listening to their brass band and watching the martial arts display. Kyoto Commercial School interested me with its use of the abacus, computers and the way the students got business experience by buying items for a department store. Kami-Mutobe Primary School was lovely; there I was met by three snowmen, something I was seeing for the first time and which were made for us two days before.

Then I later saw pupils help serve lunch while dressed in white, looking like actors ready to play doctors in the theatre! Minami-Yamashiro School for the handicapped warmed my heart with the pupils' great efforts to put on a good performance.

Last but not least, Seika-Minami Junior High School made an impression on me with its unique efforts in gardening.

Atami was a treasure. All the recreation, the public baths, saunas and the company of our Japanese counterpart were enjoyable.

Kyoto was great, especially the homestay in Fukuchiyama. At first I was apprehensive, but after meeting the Miyauchi family, my hosts, I relaxed. I loved wearing a kimono and going to a tea ceremony. As I go back to Africa, I am leaving my love in exchange for the many good memories and experiences.

## ■ Latin America

### ■ Chile

#### Love, Peace and Friendship

Basilia Augusta Saez Sclabos  
Latin American Comp.  
Teacher Group

Thank you for everything you have shown us and taught us, too. We have learnt a lot about your people, culture and your country.

The Japanese people are strong, kind, and they don't give up easily. You have suffered too much from wars and bombs, but you have risen again like a phoenix from the ashes and that is an example that we ought to follow.

You opened your arms and hearts to receive us; we'll never forget that.

The programme was excellent, and we have received so much knowledge. You can be sure that we are going to use it.

I hope someday our country will receive you in the same way.

I promise you that I'm going to work harder to develop my country with love and peace as a teacher.

## ■ Latin America

### ■ Costa Rica

#### Planes, Buses, JR and the Shinkan-sen

Ailyn Raifer B.  
Latin American Comp.  
Social Welfare Group

Here we are: twenty-eight young professionals involved with social welfare in twenty different Latin American and Caribbean countries, who were invited by the Japanese government to discover this millennium country, its culture, its people and its social welfare system. It has been a very intensive month, to say the least, and we have just begun to understand what we have seen, learned, savored and experienced. Here, I offer you just a small sample of our adventures.

**Planes.** Upon arriving in Japan, we first attempted to master some of the basics of the Japanese language in the classroom. In the streets we learned about the generalities of the real Japan; and, most importantly, we mastered the art of eating with "hashi" (chopsticks).

**Shinkan-sen.** We soon departed our first Japanese homestay and travelled at high speed on the bullet train and were introduced to the speed of Tokyo. We had the opportunity to place ourselves more in-depth in the social welfare and pension systems of Japan, and we appreciated the very colorful sights of the Japanese streets. In the midst of the rush of the city, we escaped for the weekend to Kanagawa for our "In-house Seminar," where we exchanged our thoughts and cultures with a group of young Japanese.

In Kumamoto, we enjoyed a week of true cultural learning, and were honored to visit the Governor and were welcomed into the homes of some wonderful Japanese families.

**Buses.** We stayed in the bus when we visited the Aso Volcano on a stormy winter day. And we could practically claim a prize for packing and unpacking our small hand-bags with unprecedented ability. At the end, Hiroshima made us question the human capacity for destruction.

**JR.** We had many episodes involving the metro and train systems, and our various jokes helped us pass the time as we got lost and tried very hard to get out of the train stations.

Back in OSIC, I found myself contemplating my deep respect for the Japanese people for the way they have developed their ideals, their intense desire to share their culture and the manner in which they maintain tradition without being bound by it. Our deep gratitude must be expressed to JICA for an experience of a lifetime, and especially to our three dear friends: Saeko Takahama, Hiromi Ujimoto and Kazumi Takesako, who guided, counseled, pampered and confronted us. We learned, we laughed, we cried, and we can all now say with joy.

NIHON BANZAI! Iro, iro, arigato gozaimasu!  
(Vive Japan. Thank you for everything.)

## ■ Saudi Arabia

## ■ Saudi Arabia

### A Brilliant Planet

Saud Rashed Al-Abdullatif  
Education Group

No wonder that a star is jealous of a brilliant planet, and the moon's light cools off when the golden gleams of the sun rise. In a day, those golden gleams notify the departure time and the tree's branches lean by the effect of the breeze.

This is what I felt after that shuttle trip under the protection of JICA, the contractor of the Japan-Saudi Arabia Youth Invitation Programme. How interesting the days were that I spent in Japan. I can not forget that assorted programmes, the comfortable accommodations and transportation, traversing between benefits and enjoyment. The meaningful discussions and other merits can not be overlooked, either.

Any rational person wishes to be given an opportunity to pluck a flower out of each garden and give it a dewdrop to quench any thirst at the same time. My groupmates and I penetrated some ripe gardens in Japan, then plucked flowers, which were pleasing, to us. We also have promoted the useful aspects, that are common to Japan and Saudi Arabia. Both nations are seeking peace to be achieved all over the world.

We need to develop the relationship between our two nations further. Taking the special traditions of my country has into consideration important to make the programmes more successful.

Through our relationship of friendship and cooperation, we can create an immortal glory and achieve an high-minded purpose for all of the universe.



### 3. Impressions by Japanese Counterparts

#### Thanks to the Power of a Southern Nation!

Mayumi Takahashi  
Teacher

We were a group of young Malaysians we were meeting for the first time and the Japanese who had met each other just once before. All of a sudden, all of us went together to Chiba Prefecture by bus for a short trip. I was very nervous and tense, but the Malaysians were filled with excitement from the very beginning. We Japanese soon got affected by their cheerfulness and the bus tour turned out to be fun, even though I struggled to communicate with my poor English.

What impressed me most while I was spending time with them was their energy; where does this come from? They remained consistently at high gear from the very beginning until the end of the trip, and I was impressed how thoughtfully they communicated with others and considerate they were in trying not to make others feel bad.

Thanks to those Malaysians, I think I was made aware of something important that I had almost forgotten amidst our busy daily lives.

#### What I Learned from the In-house Seminar

Naoko Ogawa  
Student

The best thing that happened during my participation in the 2-day-3-night In-house Seminar with the members of the Agricultural Group from Indonesia

was that I made many friends there.

My encounter with the Indonesian youths gave me a confidence that I am capable of having international exchanges and perhaps I can even do something for international cooperation.

Before that, I used English only when I was asked for directions on the street. But, I managed to speak English naturally when I met with the Indonesian youths who talked frankly to me, which I think led to developing my confidence. And, I strongly wanted to become a better at speaking English.

The Japanese participants taught me about different ways of living. I was able to meet with participants of various in ages and occupations at the In-house Seminar and talk about many things with them from morning until late at night. It was an enjoyable and worthwhile time. I was very glad to be able to participate in the In-house Seminar.

#### An Encounter with People from the Philippines

Izumi Hayashi  
Company Employee

I participated in the In-house Seminar with both interest and worry about communication, but the young people from the Philippines were friendly, at ease, and welcomed us cheerfully. Yes, we were supposed to welcome them, but it turned out to be the other way around.

Their cheerfulness, powerfulness, ideas and ability to carry out things were all wonderful. They devised various things. They loved dancing, and danced hard at the welcome party to the rhythm of the keyboards without any background music. Also, at the presentation session, which was held after discussions, they expressed what had happened in the discussions in an interesting and fun way through pictures and a mini

drama.

They were hardworking young people full of curiosity. Even in very short conversations they would ask us how to say something in Japanese, and would soon memorize the words and use them. By contrast, we soon forgot their Tagalog words no matter how many times we heard them.

We became close to each other during the brief three-day In-house Seminar and were able to share culture, customs and ideas with each other. I was made aware that I did not know anything about our neighbor countries even though we were all fellow Asians, and at the same time it gave me a good opportunity to think about Japan again. I hope that this In-house Seminar experience will serve as a beginning for me to continue exchanges with fellow Asian countries.

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## **To Our Tender-hearted Friends, to Our Beautiful Friends**

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**Ken Mizutani**  
Company Employee

Almost two weeks have already passed since the young people from Viet Nam went back to their home country after completing their training in Japan. The other day at a Vietnamese I met again restaurant with some of other Japanese participants of the In-house Seminar for the Vietnamese and Japanese. The experiences of the In-house Seminar, a mere three days long, were then about to change our futures.

At first, everyone had doubts that such a thing could happen. But, as time went by, we all became certain that a feeling for Viet Nam, a country we all had never been to, and a sense of solidarity among those participants were getting stronger and stronger each day. One Japanese participant was still keeping in touch with some of the Vietnamese participants, while others were planing to touch ground in Viet Nam, where our dear friends live, this year.

We sang "we are the world" together at the end of the farewell party for the Vietnamese youths. The scene, where we were singing this song with arms around each other's shoulders, flashed back to me as if it had happened just yesterday. But the days we spent together will never be merely a good memory to me;

our friendly exchanges just began and will continue forever hereafter.

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## **Mutual Understanding and International Cooperation**

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**Tomomi Kitajima**  
Company Employee

I work as a development consultant in the waste disposal field.

I wanted to take a look at environmental issues from a perspective different from my daily work through exchanges with youths involved in urban environmental protection in their own respective ASEAN-member countries. That is what motivated me to take part in the In-house Seminar.

For the first day of the In-house Seminar, we organized recreational activities, including a tug of war, jumping a large rope, and Japanese Bon-dancing, all of which the ASEAN participants enjoyed very much. Of course, we Japanese participants, too, had great fun, as we felt as if we had become children again. I even wondered if it were really all right to forget about our primary objective and have such a good time.

However, I strongly believe that our discussions the next day would not have gone so well if we hadn't had the first day's recreational activities. While maintaining a frank atmosphere, we carried out active opinion exchanges until we reached satisfaction on the complicated and very serious issue of "environmental preservation."

I think that it was possible for a group formed of Japanese and people from six ASEAN nations, all with different backgrounds, because we had all managed to communicate with our hearts and attain a mutual sympathy going beyond all cultural and linguistic differences at the friendship party held on the first day. I was personally made to feel the importance of international cooperation based on mutual understanding.

I achieved a level of mutual understanding with both the ASEAN youths and Japanese youths I met at the In-house Seminar that hardly seemed to possible from a mere three days. I believe that our contacts will continue for a long time hereafter.

## Japan is Also Still at a Developing Stage

Tetsuji Omura  
Government Employee

The three days I had been both very worried about and looking forward to began.

At the friendship party on the first day, I was successful in making the participants from various countries laugh when I introduced myself, thanks to Amelia who was sitting next to me and taught me a humorous phrase. I appreciated her for showing so much consideration to someone she just met for the first time.

At the discussions the next day, I sometimes sensed the belief from the participants of the ASEAN-member countries that "development of one's country solely depends on oneself." Many Japanese of the same generation would probably not think that way. The discussions made me consider the roles we should play in our own country.

I learned various things from the In-house Seminar. I decided to study languages more because I wanted to meet with these youths again. And the desire to visit their respective countries came to bloom in my mind.

## We Shall Overcome

Koji Nabae  
Doctor

"We shall overcome" was the song they often sang. The Bangladesh Health and Medical Services Group this time was an elite group in which of 13 out of the 20 members were doctors working at national hospitals. However, their perspective was mostly based on their two years of grass-root experiences working in remote areas, so they understood people's suffering well.

A mixture of poverty and natural disaster has produced sad figures in the country's health and medical statistics. They made a strong appeal that their people can hardly think about their health in a situation where there is no food for tomorrow.

However, they were not powerless pessimists. When more than two thirds of their land was covered with water from the great flood of 1998, they ran fervently from east to west and back to distribute ORSs (oral

solutions). Thanks to their work, there were almost no deaths from diarrhea. Moreover, the birth rate has been decreased to one third in the last 20 years because of family and birth control planning in the nation.

They should be proud of the wonderful work they have achieved so far, despite the great difficulties they had to overcome. I believe they will continue their work philosophically from now on, too.

This song suits them well.

## Although We Live in Different Environments

Kazumi Ura  
Teacher

We were a group consisting of Bhutanese, who were seeing the ocean for the first time; people from the Maldives who live by the beautiful sea; and us Japanese.

I was half in doubt about how deeply all of from three different nations could deepen our friendship during the three day In-house Seminar, because we had grown up in a completely different environment though we were born of the same generation.

But, all these worries disappeared when I faced their friendly smile and eagerness to speak Japanese to us. I strongly realized that if there is a desire to understand and learn from others as much as possible, we can easily overcome the differences of nationality, language and culture.

Moreover, while we talked eagerly about things for the future, their pride in their own culture and traditions seemed to teach us Japanese an important thing that we had forgotten.

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## Knowledge is Important; An Encounter is Wonderful

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Katsufumi Kobayashi  
Teacher

The information that I obtained in advance told me that the participants from Saudi Arabia were "overly serious." However, when I met them I found them good at creating a friendly atmosphere and considerate towards others. They seemed to be good teachers.

At the In-house Seminar I was first afraid that we might impose our own ideas and perceptions of the world and religion on each other, but we participants actually of put stress on getting to know more about each other, so everything turned out to be very fruitful.

I was not so surprised at differences in our customs, as I had some advance knowledge, hearing their alarm bell for early morning prayer and holding a party without any alcohol were novel experiences for me.

In the morning of the last In-house Seminar day, my room mate, Saud-san, made Arabic coffee for me. I felt a sense hospitality from him similar to that of the Japanese tea ceremony. I cannot forget the aroma of coffee and atmosphere of that morning.

To encounter new friends is wonderful.

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## African Dancing Night

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Eri Ishizawa  
Nurse

During the 2-day/3-night In-house Seminar I spent time together with the African youths actively engaged in health and medical services who came to Japan from French-speaking countries. It was a very fun three days. I can even say that the 60 youths from Japan and various African countries kept on singing and dancing together throughout the three days.

Taken in by the feverish excitement of the African youths, we Japanese youths found ourselves eventually moving our hips and starting to dance together with them. There were some points where we could not reach agreement with each other during our discussions on specialized fields, since we Japanese and the Africans work in completely different environments. Still, I found that we are similarly

concerned about working for the benefit of our patients. That was what I, participating as a nurse, thought at the end of our discussions.

I hope that what we felt and learned at the In-house Seminar will become the source of future endeavors for us.

Vive Africa! Vive Japan!

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## Having Participated in the In-house Seminar with Youths from Myanmar

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Kimitaka Nishimaki  
Organization Employee

Nothing came to my mind when I first heard the name of the country, Myanmar and its language. Also, there was very little information available about that country when I searched through various documents, so I had great difficulty in my preparations before participating in the In-house Seminar. Furthermore, the situation that there were few English-speaking Myanmar youths among them made us even more worried.

However, those worries disappeared when the Myanmar youths actually came. Although we could not make ourselves understood very well and had some difficulty in communicating with each other in discussions, I think that, on the other hand, we managed to have a true international exchange from the bottom of our hearts.

They were very friendly and considerate towards us.

My impression is that despite the differences in whom we tea after they returned home, we are still communicating with each other about our anxieties concerning school.

Having such truly precious experiences and making wonderful friends through this In-house Seminar has become the greatest treasure of all to me.

Thank you very much.



## The Pacific Islands Have Become Closer to Me

Tomoko Takahashi  
Teacher

I gained two things from participating in the In-house Seminar for the first time.

First, I made friends with whom I had spent a very enjoyable time. We gained very valuable experiences by playing volleyball and talking until late at night with the youths who had gathered both from various Pacific Islands and from all over Japan (from Aomori in the north to Tokushima in the south). The Japanese youths, who came from different occupations and backgrounds, influenced me very much.

Secondly, I came to feel the Pacific Islands close to me. I realized that even though each Pacific Island has a different educational system and is in a different stage of development, they are all striving similarly hard in their work as teachers, while worrying about how to raise the children.

I would very much like to participate in an In-house Seminar again.



## 4. Impressions by Host Families

### A Splendid Memory

Kyoko Akiyama  
Akita Prefecture

It was my family's first homestay experience, and we worried considerably about differences in culture and eating habits.

However, while dining together and having the young Malaysian man spend some nights at our home, the more we got to know him, the more his straightforward nature and desire to learn were conveyed to us. We finally managed to overcome the language barrier by using gestures to communicate. At that time mutual trust developed between us, which went on to move us. There will be no national boundaries for the youths who will be growing from now on, and great expectations can be had about their future endeavors.

I believe the young man was able to grasp one aspect of Japan through his stay with us in the countryside. The sight of him removing his shoes in the entrance area and trying to step into the house from there still is a source of joking conversation among us.

After spending a few days together with the young Malaysian, our original worries turned into a splendid memory. I would like to continue engaging in activities leading to international understanding and cooperation from small contacts in the future, too.

Thank you to the youth from Malaysia.

### I Met with a Fresh Smile

Yoshiko Kato  
Ibaraki Prefecture

I heard that many Filipinos tend to be cheerful, and that was true about John-san who was always smiling. As we spent time together, his nice smile, consideration toward others, intelligence and charm all ended up fascinating us.

When we recall the three days with John-san, the most impressive moment of all came when he was returning to his hotel from my home and he asked me if he could hold my mother's hand to greet her, and I said, "Please do," to him. He then wrapped her hand with his big hands and took it to his forehead as if he were handling something precious and prayed for her. His pious manner brought tears to my eyes.

During our days with him, I was moved by his love for his family and his appreciation of nature. And all this suggested to me how rich his heart must be. These days I find myself thinking about visiting Samar Island to meet John-san again some day after he has become a father.

### As a Host Mother

Masako Haga  
Hokkaido Prefecture

We, a family of three, had a very enjoyable time with a guest from Indonesia.

Mimi-san was a wonderful lady with a daughter 1 year and 4 months old. We had an opportunity to go on a picnic by train together with a group of 150 children and their parents as part of my daughter's school outing. The 70 children in the 2nd grade looked very restless and wanted to know who Mimi was. But, they were not brave enough to speak to her. Some

came to my side to ask me, "Who is that woman?" without even looking at me. That's because if they looked me, their eyes would meet those of Mimi-san, who was at my side.

Before our lunch, I introduced Mimi-san to everybody. Suddenly, the children's interest in her exploded, and they started showering her with questions.

I have been recalling the beginning of the home stay. During our short period of exchange some, Japanese customs surprised Mimi-san, which in turn surprised me. For instance, I saw the look of surprise on Mimi-san's face when I tried a tuna sashimi sample at a supermarket, and I was surprised when I saw the bath tub emptied of hot water after Mimi-san had used it (I forgot to tell her how to use the Japanese bath). And so on.

But, this should be the true pleasure of being a host mother.

Thank you very much for many memories, Mimi-san.

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## Homestay with a Vietnamese

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Takahiro Mizokawa  
Wakayama Prefecture

Although I had often heard and saw the name Viet Nam on TV and radio, I really knew nothing about that country. About the only thing I knew about Viet Nam was that it had a war. Therefore, I studied its language and researched daily customs a little beforehand.

The Vietnamese who came to our home was a lady named Lai. She is a high school teacher and very polite. She tried hard to communicate with my family in broken Japanese.

My wife and I were not very successful in communicating with her; but, to our surprise, our 7 and 6 year old children had friendly talks as if they had known her for a while. Watching them, we adults realized that we had been unnecessarily on guard without noticing it. I learned that we can make ourselves mutually understood, despite differences in national background and language, as long as we show each other warm cordiality as fellow human beings.

Rather than saying it was fun, I would like to state

that I had a good experience learning various things about the country where our home-stay guest was born.

If I have a chance, I would like very much to participate again.

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## Hosting a Young Laotian Man at My Home

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Tetsuhito Yamazaki  
Kochi Prefecture

During Vong-san's Homestay Programme at my place, my sons enjoyed his company as they learned some music on a musical instrument, and played sports like mini-baseball with him as well as a home soccer game. Our family took him to Kochi's Katsurahama beach, where the sea is beautiful, and also to a dolphin show. All in all, we had an enjoyable time together.

Moreover, as we heard he was serving as a rice-crop instructor, we showed him our own paddy fields and raw materials for Washi (Japanese-style) paper. He touched the materials with great interest and asked me about our rice crop yield as well as other matters.

At the farewell party in Kochi City, Vong-san brought his interpreter to thank me for his three-day stay at my home and told me in the words of his interpreter that my sons are "darling," which touched me.

The duration of the homestay was rather short. But both my sons and my father, who is normally reserved, got involved in the visit; and despite the problems in verbal communication, we were all impressed with Vong-san's gentle personality. We were also made aware once again of the importance of interpersonal exchanges, so they were a very meaningful three days.

My family now has gained pleasant memories of the summer.

## Upon Finishing the Homestay Programme

Etsuko Kubota  
Saga Prefecture

As it was our first time to experience a homestay, my family and I were filled with worry and tension until the day it began.

We were especially worried as we were going to host visitors from a southwest Asian country and were not sure what our guests would be like.

Yet, although there was a language barrier between us, once we made contact with our guests, we found there were no differences between us and that our hearts could communicate. What seems normal in our daily lives apparently appeared rich and stimulating to the women who came from the Maldives. I even felt embarrassed about our present situation in which we pursue only our desires and forget to be thankful about what we have in our daily life itself.

I believe that "a meeting makes for a chance." Through meeting the women from the Maldives, I couldn't help feeling that something had started to move within us. While that something may not have immediate bearing on us, it will surely come across in our way of living hereafter.

Not wasting this chance, I am grateful from the bottom of my heart that I was able to learn to be considerate to and understanding of others. Thank you very much.

## Ms. Devaki Ayer, Thank You

Ritsuko Kojke  
Nagano Prefecture

"Namaste," Ms. Devaki Ayer said when she greeted us. When I saw her smile, all the worries I had before disappeared suddenly. Honestly speaking, I had been worried up to then about. Whether I could communicate with her, and if she can eat our food. I think she must have been even more worried than we about to coming to stay with a family she didn't know at all.

While having dinner together, we started to understand what she was talking about by using my poor English, looking up Nepali words in a book, and

with my children's interpretation.

We heard about her family and school in distant Nepal. We were very surprised to hear that she walked from her village for 8 hours to take a bus, and it took her 22 hours to get to Katmandu—something unimaginable for us living in the car-oriented society of Japan.

Her face looked like that of a mother's when she talked about her children. She looked very happy when she told me her children's names, ages and so on. She said when she left home to come to Japan her children cried.

There were other things I still wanted to talk about and ask, but my scant English and Nepali prevented me from doing so, and I felt ashamed of my lack of ability. She looked tired from the tight schedule full of the many things we had planned for her. I wish I could have been a bit more considerate toward her.

The 2-day-3-night programme passed so quickly. When she departed, we hugged each other as if we had been lifetime friends.

Thank you very much for giving us a precious time.

## Till We Meet Again, Maggie-san!

Chiyoko Sakai  
Osaka Prefecture

It was a very much moving exchange for me, as I was lucky to have a good opportunity to learn about African countries through my host family experience. Through Maggie-san, I was able to learn about the natural features and living environment of Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, she told me about her family and cooked very delicious Côte d'Ivoire-style dishes. I would like try to cooking them sometime while remembering her.

When I met Maggie-san again at the exchange party one week after her homestay with us, I was introduced to her friends, which made me feel as if she were my beloved daughter. I was reluctant to part with her like that, so I visited her at JICA's Osaka International Centre. She walked me to the nearest station and we promised to see each other again. It was a tearful parting.

But the very next day I saw her again. Maggie-san was invited to her friend's host family home. That

family by chance is also my friend. I was surprised at and touched by these four reunions, and I felt tears welling up in my eyes. I realized once again that communication comes from sincerity.

I look forward to visiting her home in the future.

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## A Brother from India

Toshio Hayashi  
Hokkaido Prefecture

I had heard the word "homestay" before, but this was my first experience serving as a host family. Therefore, everything I heard and did was a new experience for me. My entire family made such a fuss about it that our home seemed like an overturned anthill.

What we worried about the most were the differences in our respective dietary cultures, customs, and languages. The day for us to receive Dass-san came before we could find any solution to these problems. But our worries disappeared with his words, "Hajimemashite. Watakushi wa Dass to moshimasu." ("Pleased to meet you. My name is Dass.")

After that, we did not find the language barrier troublesome. My father talked to him with a dictionary in his hand; my mother kept on speaking Japanese with a strong Aomori Prefecture accent, and I used the English words I knew, as the three days passed by.

Dass-san overcame our cultural differences, brought our two nations closer all at once during those three days, and taught us that we are also members of Asia.

We had an enjoyable time coming in contact with Indian culture during a season in Hokkaido so cold that it must have seemed like being inside a refrigerator to someone coming from the region where Dass-san resides. I wonder how he felt about his three-day stay in northern Japan.

He called me "brother," and India and Japan became closer to each other, though the two nations are really far apart geographically. With this experience as a start, I would like to make friends with more brothers around the world.

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## Like a Wind Blowing from the South Pacific

Yoshiko Takenaga  
Yamaguchi Prefecture

Just at the moment Janet arrived at my home, she said, "I lost my bag containing my passport," which made the JICA people run around on a search.

The next morning she said "this is okay," as she sipped hot noodles in a cup that she brought herself as if nothing had happened the previous night.

Thanks to her attitude, I felt a load lifted from my shoulders, and soon we were able to talk openly with each other.

When she saw my husband who was busy with year-end parties and golfing with his customers, she remarked, "He is a salary-man, who supports Japan's economic growth," and taught me what she learned from the lectures about Japanese society she had in Tokyo. By using the internet she also showed me the home pages introducing her country, Micronesia.

Janet was truly happy when I suggested that she send e-mail to her husband. When we had a party for her to which we invited four young ladies, she was in high spirits while holding a wine bottle. We had so much fun late at night playing an "animal fortune telling" game.

I have already received three e-mails from her, since she was left like a wind, leaving lots of memories behind with us.

In her e-mail she said, "I miss your fried noodles," which made me smile wryly.

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## Accepting a Mongolian

Naomi Honda  
Fukushima Prefecture

It was our first experience becoming a host family, and that created a big excitement in our household. My father who at first said, "You must manage somehow as it is you who decided to do this," turned to be very enthusiastic and said that he would drive the Mongolian to the sea. My mother planned to serve mochi (rice cakes), and was excited about various things though she at first she said she'd participate just

as a cook. And even my grandmother started to learn the Mongolian language.

Actually, I alone was confused in a sense because I knew that English would be useless for our communication. But we managed to overcome this language barrier easily. We used every possible means such as Mongolian, Japanese, exaggerated gestures mixed with English words and even songs. It was so exciting us.

It was a truly happy three days. We felt as if we gained one more family member.

I think that by becoming a host family we managed to contribute somewhat to international cooperation and at the same time we were able to deepen our family bonds.





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