



INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES BETWEEN JAPAN AND
OTHER UNESCO MEMBER STATES FOR THE PROMOTION OF
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

-2007 Programme for Professionals in the Fields of UNESCO's Competence-

A Study Tour for Learning Good Practices of ESD in Non-Formal Education



6 - 14 February 2008

Lao P.D.R. and Thailand

Programme Organisers

Steering Committee for ESD Workshops & Symposium
Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

In Cooperation with

PADETC (Participatory Development Training Center), Lao P.D.R.
Moo Baan Dek (Children's Village School), Thailand
University of the Sacred Heart, Japan

International Exchange Programmes between Japan and Other UNESCO Member States for the Promotion of International Cooperation and Mutual Understanding
-2007 Programme for Professionals in the Fields of UNESCO's Competence-
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PREFACE

Four years have passed since the start of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. As problems such as global warming and social inequality have gained clearer form during this time, interest in ESD has gradually increased. However, the more interest in ESD increases, the more people seem to feel the difficulty of changing our own lifestyles and the ways of society.

As specified in the International Implementation Scheme for ESD, ESD needs to be able to change perspectives, actions, values, behaviour and lifestyles in order to achieve a sustainable future. However, it is hardly necessary to emphasise that this is easier said than done. For this reason, through International Exchange Programmes between Japan and Other UNESCO Member States for the Promotion of International Cooperation and Mutual Understanding, our group visited places where unsustainability is being converted to sustainability. Our aim was to learn from the lifestyles, actions and values inherent in these experiments, and we called our trip a “Study Tour for Learning Good Practices of ESD in Non-Formal Education.”

Case studies of ESD in formal educational settings are relatively common. However, as expressed in the title above, our group also recognised the importance of the perspective of lifelong learning. Therefore, we focused on cases of non-formal education outside the government sphere. The key sites visited were PADETC (Participatory Development Training Center) in Lao P.D.R. and *Moo Baan Dek* (Children’s Village School) in Thailand. The former is an NGO engaged in youth development and other activities and led by Sombath Somphone, the winner of the Ramon Magsaysay Award (the so-called “Asian Nobel Prize”). The latter is a community for orphans and others that was established by a Thai grassroots NGO called the Foundation for Children (FFC). Both of these organisations face various challenges, but in terms of actually changing unsustainable to sustainable conditions at the local level it would not be an exaggeration to call them representative Asian pioneers of ESD.

During the study tour, our group received extremely important messages about sustainability in Asia. For example, PADETC’s representative Sombath Somphone based his definition of human happiness on the keywords of “contentment” and “livability,” while Children’s Village School principal Rajani Dhongchai used the word “adequateness,” and talked to the group about the maxim “knowing you have enough.”

These concepts, or wisdom, cultivated through Buddhism are important concepts for thinking about the sustainability of modern society. (For specifics of the speeches, refer to the report Annex B.)

The group was lucky not only to meet these sorts of leaders during the study tour, but young people and villagers who spoke of their hopes. By listening to what they had to say and meeting so many wonderful people, each study tour participant was “stopped in her/his tracks.” The trip became an opportunity for each person to rethink his/her own path in life.

It is true that one should not criticise all facets of globalisation. But it is also a fact that if one pursues efficiency and economic results excessively, many problems reveal themselves. It may seem like an exaggeration, but the encounters during the trip were like streaks of light shining through the black cloud of globalisation. If everyone reading this report can feel the hope that continues to be cultivated in Asia, we will be extremely happy.

Lastly, I would like to express thanks to the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), which provided us with this opportunity. And, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the specialists of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), Oji Paper Co., Ltd. and Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA), who cooperated in the pre-departure training for this tour.

May 10, 2008

Yoshiyuki Nagata
Director, Steering Committee for ESD Workshops & Symposium
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I. Programme Information

1. Introduction and Programme Background

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) (2005-2014) is currently underway. As part of the international/regional commitments, the Japan Holistic Education Society (JHES) and the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) co-organised International Workshops and Symposium: 'Holistic Approaches towards Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Nurturing "Connectedness" in the Asia-Pacific Region' from 31 July to 5 August 2007 at the University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo.

After acquiring basic ideas and philosophies from the workshops and symposium, some of the committee members found it of an extreme importance to make further investigation of ESD with particular reference to its activities in non-formal education. These members, after intensive learning of ESD theories and philosophies at the international event, strongly felt it necessary to deepen their understanding of ESD by visiting and observing good practices in Asian countries.

Good practices chosen to visit for the study tour are the ones initiated by PADETC in Lao P.D.R. and Moo Baan Dek (Children's Village School) in Thailand. Both are non-profit organisations working for the promotion of rights of the child/youth, social welfare for the poor, values education for non-violence, sustainable development of communities. They are award-winning organisations with rich experiences in these ESD-oriented areas.

2. Objectives

The study tour was conducted with a view to identify characteristics of good ESD practices as well as common issues and priorities they could share with other learning communities.

The study tour had the following specific objectives:

- 1) To identify features of good ESD practices with particular focus on the development of non-formal education for sustainability;
- 2) To understand newly emerging problems on ESD with special reference to globalisation in Lao P.D.R. and Thailand;
- 3) To learn the present situations of ESD in the Asia-Pacific region by having a lecture by UNESCO experts working for ESD in region;
- 4) To strengthen networking among learners who show interest in the development of ESD; and
- 5) To disseminate the experiences of the study tour members through publishing a final report which can be useful for other researchers/students working in the field of

NFE/ESD.

In order to get fruitful results during the study visits, the members of the study tour investigated socio-economic and cultural development of these countries with particular focus on education by inviting experts working for JICA, NGOs and private sector in Japan.

3. Results

As a result of the study tour, all the participants have acquired better and enhanced understanding of actual situations of ESD in Asian countries.

Based on their experiences, the follow-up activities are planned and being conducted:

- 1) Editing and publishing a report of the study tour so that citizens in general including students can share the participants' impressions and views;
- 2) Disseminating philosophical and theoretical features of ESD through incorporating record of speeches which were given to the participants during the tour into the final report;
- 3) Producing learning materials on international understanding and ESD, using photos taken during the study tour as 'photo language'; and
- 4) Strengthening domestic as well as regional networking among practitioners, researchers and students through further communication.

Additionally it is worthwhile mentioning that one of the culminations of the study tour was the sharing at one of the final sessions with PADETC leader and staff, where the participants expressed in artistic ways their feelings and impressions on what they had experienced through the visits to PADETC activities. For details of the results of this session, see Annex A-5.

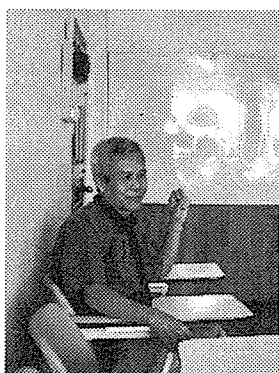
II. Proceedings

Day 1 (6 February 2008)

Study tour participants departed from Narita Airport and arrived at Wattay International Airport, Vientiane at 21:00.

Day 2 (7 February, 2008)

Opening Session at PADETC



The opening session began with welcome remarks from Mr. Sombath Somphone, Founder and Director of PADETC (Participatory Development Training Center). Mr. Somphone introduced himself, and participants were given an opportunity to express their interests concerning the visit to PADETC and Lao P.D.R. Some of the areas mentioned by participants were the relationship between PADETC and the government, the relationship between ESD and Buddhism, and various activities and projects taking place at PADETC.

The Opening Session was followed by a keynote lecture from Mr. Somphone.

Keynote Lecture: “Challenges of Development Work in Lao P.D.R.”

Mr. Sombath Somphone, Founder and Director, PADETC

Globalisation and Alternative Ways of Development:

Mr. Somphone started his presentation by explaining about current world systems. He explained that there are mainly two types of world systems: communism and capitalism. Communism is governed by a single centralised party, while capitalism consists of multiple political parties, though it is governed by corporations. Besides the two systems, globalisation is here, and it is influencing the lives of Lao people today, he said.

In order to illustrate how globalisation has changed the lives of Lao people, Mr. Somphone gave the example of Lao people no longer walking or riding bicycles but instead riding motorcycles and cars. He said that this kind of change has been brought to Lao P.D.R. (hereafter, “Laos”) because globalisation makes people want more material goods; people want more material goods, and thus they work harder. Globalisation reduces people to be mere workers and consumers, and develops material goods and technology but not the human soul.

Mr. Somphone clearly stated that Laos should not follow the present model of development: globalisation. Instead, Laos should use its strengths and pursue the kind of development that would make the country a more livable and a caring society for the planet. Mr.

Somphone used the word 'livable' in order to distinguish it from the English word 'happy'. He said, "The English word 'happiness' sounds shallow. I want to be happy, so I drink beer, take drugs and go out dancing. That's not what we mean by happiness, so I tried to find a more appropriate word, and chose 'livability' and 'contentment'".

Buddhism and Government Institutions

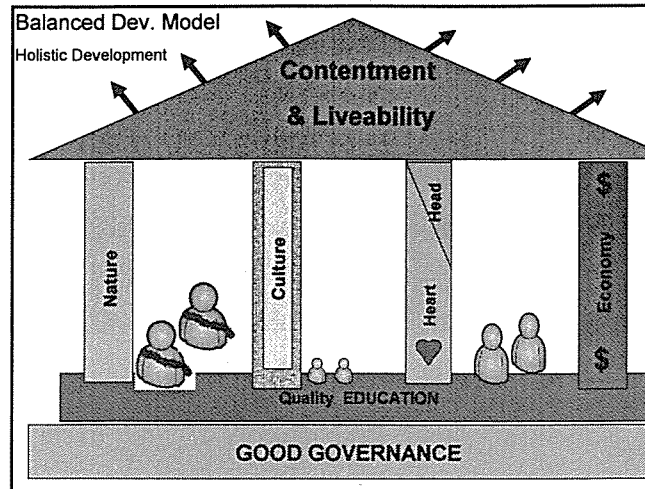
Mr. Somphone went on to contrast Buddhism with the ideologies embedded in government institutions. He said that Buddhism is about getting rid of suffering, while the government is focused on getting rid of economic poverty and increasing income. Buddhism tries to be in harmony with the natural ecology, while the government tries to extract from nature to increase GDP. Buddhism does not focus on self, while the government makes people focus more on self to be more competitive and to do better. Buddhism teaches people to conquer their own emotions, while the government teaches people to be rich and conquer others. Buddhism is for total equality including yourself, your fellows and environment, while the government is creating inequality between the rich and the poor. Buddhism emphasises learning, while the government emphasises teaching.

Then, he raised a question: "What can we do about this inequality?" He said that we cannot go back to where we were, yet we cannot continue the way we are going right now. He emphasised the importance of balancing the two. He also mentioned that it is because of greed, jealousy, and pride that we cannot ensure that every person has access to the basic necessities of life. Thus, our modern education should teach our young to help others as much as possible, or at least refrain from harming others.

Intention:	
Buddhism	Govt. Institutions
■ To rid of all sufferings	■ To increase income
■ To be in harmony with the natural ecology	■ To increase GDP
■ NO self	■ More competition, thus focus on the SELF
■ To detach	■ To consume /own
■ To refrain and conquer own emotions	■ To be rich and conquer others
■ For total equality	■ For inequality
■ Emphasize learning	■ Emphasize teaching

Holistic Development

Mr. Somphone then emphasised the importance of holistic development using the figure below. (For other slides, see Technical Inputs of this report.)



This figure shows various elements that need to be balanced for holistic development: nature, culture, heart/head, and the economy. Mr. Somphone said that the balance of all four will lead people to contentment and livability. (The word ‘contentment’ is used to mean internal satisfaction, and ‘livability’ is used to mean external / material satisfaction.) Mr. Somphone emphasised that we should pursue economic development, but not at the expense of nature, culture and heart/head. The balance of all four is very important. Also, he criticised the present state of the educational system, which feeds too much information to us without nurturing our hearts. Thus, notice how this figure places greater emphasis on heart than on head.

Then, he talked about the importance of balancing the wisdom and information. In this information age, we are constantly fed with information that TV provides. Though information provided by TV is entertaining as it focuses on beauty, youth, wealth, power, killings and pains, it is a mere one-way communication. On the other hand, the wisdom that comes from Buddhism is fostered among different generations, and it enriches our life as it educates us about diseases, poverty, old age and death.

Education of the Heart

Looking back to the figure above, Mr. Somphone pointed out how the four elements are founded upon quality education. He said that quality education is the heart of sustainable/holistic development, and educating the heart is the heart of education.

Then, he raised a question: “How do we educate the heart?” As an answer to this question, he said that “educating the heart is like gardening”. Just like we need to water and nurture seeds to grow flowers and vegetables, we need to nurture positive thoughts, such as compassion, love, caring and giving in young people. In addition, just as gardening requires suppressing the weeds, we need to suppress negative thoughts in young people such as hatred, anger, greed, selfishness, and over-consumption.

As necessary conditions for good gardening, he emphasised the importance of having

mindful gardeners, who are the coaches, trainers or facilitators for young people. He then claimed that “only with an educated heart can one get deep happiness out of life”. And he claimed that the process of such an education should be done not stressfully, but joyfully. Mr. Somphone went on to explain how education and sustainable development are inter-related. He said both are mutually reinforcing, mutually supporting and complementary.

Happiness: A New Science?

Mr. Somphone then showed two diagrams, both of which demonstrate that economic development does not necessarily increase the happiness or contentment of people. For example, the first diagram, which shows the relationship between income and happiness in the United States, reveals that happiness does not increase with the increase in income. The second diagram also shows that there are many low-income countries that have very happy people.

What are factors that affect happiness? Mr. Somphone gave a list of seven factors that influence happiness: family relationships, financial situation, work, community and friends, health, personal freedom, and personal values.

He also shared his view of the meaning of happiness, stating that happiness is a “balance between spiritual and physical well-being, internal and external comforts, or a combination of contentment and livability”.

He then shared a diagram demonstrating what makes people happy at different age levels. According to this diagram, both emotional and physical factors influence the happiness of all age groups. However, what bears emphasising is that young people do not value material goods as much as adults think they do; young people value friends and family more than they value material abundance. Parents often work hard to provide material goods for their children, but children prefer to spend more time with their parents rather than being provided with material goods.

Given these facts, Mr. Somphone suggested that we should engage young people in educational activities in proportion to the factors that make young people happy. For example, if young people are happy in nature, all the learning should take place in nature. If young people like to be with animals, why can't we provide opportunities for children to interact with animals? If children are happy with parents, why can't we have parents share their work with children, doing activities or projects together? Including what makes young people happy in education helps bring out the innate intelligence in them, he said.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mr. Somphone said that we should not rely too much on the government or technology to bring about changes supporting sustainable development. What we need is

awareness-raising among young people at grassroots level. In addition, he said that it is important that local knowledge and wisdom be included in the curriculum, and that older and younger people are given opportunities to work together--they get along very well.

At the end, Mr. Somphone introduced some of the activities and projects that PADETC is implementing to support sustainable development.

« For more detailed information, please see Annex B in this report. »

Question and Answer Session with Mr. Somphone

Q: How is the relationship between PADETC and the government?

A: The relationship with the government is very good at the moment. We don't show off and we try to stay very humble. We have a one party government and we cannot criticise it, so we just do the things that we can. We do things not to get a reward from the government, but because we feel it is our responsibility. We want to be responsible citizens. If we stay humble and do our things, the government appreciates it. Our style is different from the Western way. Westerns show off and they advertise themselves more. Here, we do the opposite, we stay very quiet. In fact, later this month, the government is giving us the medal for our contribution to the development. So, it is good, but we have built it, we have developed it through these years. Also, when the government sees the benefits of our activity, it will accept our activity. For example, in starting a new reading activity at elementary schools, we first started it on weekends. As teachers and the government see the benefits of our activity, they accept it. Now, this activity has extended to over a hundred schools. Again, the relationship between PADETC and the government has been good.

Q: Can you tell us about PADETC's environmental work?

A: We are not very strong on the environment in terms of philosophy, concepts and principles. We carry out activities only. This is because presenting ideas and concepts tends to intimidate children. Instead of introducing concepts, principles and philosophies to children, we do activities such as growing organic vegetables, recycling, earthworm raising, etc. We want to do a lot more than this, but it is not quite possible right now. Today, we are implementing a new environmental activity at school in three communities.

Q: How do you turn concepts into actions?

A: Basically in the same way. We do things based on activities, because people are not trained to think. Thus, we try not to make them think too much--just make them follow the activities. It is like a puzzle--one piece there and one piece there; if we have enough pieces, they will

see the picture. Let them discover the picture themselves. We don't tell them what the picture is. That is how we turn concepts into reality. We start with the activities, and let people discover the concepts themselves.

Q: Can you tell us about the use of media?

A: We have produced media contents for teachers, students and volunteers. We use them as instructional training materials. We don't advertise on air very much. Actually the government wants to promote our media programmes. Sometimes, we have programmes for young people, but it is broadcasted by the government. We also use audio. Young people can go out and interview people and they produce their radio programmes. They are interested in seeing themselves or their friends in the video, and hearing themselves in the audio.

Q: There must be some gap between what PADETC values and what society values. How do you educate or train children to be able to face the challenges that they will experience as they go out into the society?

A: We have to start from ourselves. We have to stop blaming others, and we have start from ourselves. We have to practice controlling our anger and feelings. Be your own leader and lead yourself. If society doesn't smile at you, you smile at the society. Smile more!

Q: Do you have any advice to adults who have missed the chance for education?

A: I heard in the news that Japanese husbands are very upset because they cannot retain their wives. This is because they are not trained to say 'I love you' or 'I care for you' from a young age. Training old people and changing their mindsets is very difficult. So it is always very worthwhile to start when people are young.

Q: Could you please elaborate about the difference between contentment and livability?

A: Contentment is more internal. It is what makes you feel satisfied, what pleases you emotionally; it is your deep feelings. Livability is material and external but it influences your contentment--so contentment and livability are related.

Coffee Break

After the question and answer session, participants and PADETC staff had a short coffee break, enjoying locally-made Lao-style snacks and sweets.

Presentation of Youth Leader Programme

Following the coffee break, Miss Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh (Si) gave a presentation about

the youth leader programme.

First, she introduced some of the main programmes that PADETC organises for young people: camping, community service, and school service. All of these programmes are focusing on learning through activities, and thus, various activities such as painting, drawing, story-telling, 'recycling banks', 'fashion recycling', sweets-making using the local wisdom, sports, media production, singing, playing games are included in the youth programmes. Ms. Si also mentioned that these activities bring happiness not only to children but also to their parents, families and to the government.

She finished her presentation by showing the plans for future development. She said that PADETC keeps nurturing values and local wisdom in the hearts of young children, and plans to integrate garden education into the activities in the future.

At the end of the presentation, one of the participants asked Ms. Si how she became involved in the youth programme in the first place. Ms. Si said that she was first involved in the story-telling activity at schools. The story-telling activity is basically about bringing *kamishibai* (picture cards) to elementary schools and reading them to children there. In the beginning stage, for almost three years, PADETC volunteers had done this activity on weekends at schools. However, as teachers realised how much children loved this activity, they invited PADETC volunteers into classes, and had them read stories during the school lessons, she said.

Presentation about Monk Development

After the presentation by Ms. Si, Mr. Bounpanh Vannboubpha, who used to be a monk, presented about monk training.

In the presentation, Mr. Vannboubpha explained that one of the objectives of monk training is to train monks to be able to provide educational services to children at primary schools and at educational institutions. He then introduced various training activities involved in monk training. PADETC has 56 monk volunteers at the moment, and they are teaching at 43 primary schools. He also shared some pictures of monks teaching children, participating in discussions with visitors from Asian countries, developing teaching materials, etc.

Visit to Non-Formal Education Development Centre (NFEDC)

In the afternoon, participants visited Non-Formal Educational Development Centre (NFEDC). NFEDC was founded in 1992 under the supervision of the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education. Its roles and responsibilities are to develop a national curriculum and learning materials, develop administrative and technical personnel for non-formal education, conduct research on issues regarding NFE activities, and provide basic vocational trainings and information services to target groups.

Arriving at NFEDC, participants were welcomed by NFEDC staff, and the opening session was inaugurated by Mr. Amphaivong Phongsisay, Deputy-Director of NFEDC. After personal introductions by both Japanese participants and NFEDC staff, Mr. Somsy Southivong, another Deputy-Director of NFEDC, gave a presentation on NFEDC and its activities.

At the end of the presentation, one of the participants asked if NFEDC had a plan to develop new teaching materials in the future. Mr. Southivong responded that teaching materials for growing vegetables, mushrooms and poultry would be appreciated in the future. Textbooks that teach about environmental issues are also needed, he said. However, Mr. Southivong mentioned that developing teaching materials is not sufficient. He was concerned about the lack of teachers or instructors capable of teaching environmental issues in local communities. Therefore, he said, it is important to develop teaching materials and train teachers at the same time.

Following the presentation, gratitude was expressed by Ms. Zaha and Mr. Fujita, the representatives from Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO. Then, participants and NFEDC staff members took a group photo together.

Visit to the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education

After the visit to NFEDC, participants visited the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education.

Participants were welcomed into the office, and were given the opportunity to talk with Mr. Sengthong Nolintha, director of the Department of Non-Formal Education.

Mr. Sengthong shared some of the challenges that Lao P.D.R. has been facing in the field of non-formal education. He said that the salary of the teachers in the non-formal education sectors is very low, and so teachers are not motivated enough to improve the quality of education. Also, he mentioned the lack of qualified teachers as one of the big problems. In order to improve the situation, the Department of Non-Formal Education is receiving some help and assistance from its partner-organisations such as NFUAJ (National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan).

Day 3 (8 February 2008)

Silk Village

On the third day, participants left the hotel at 8:30 to visit Thaphoxay Village, where one of the income-generation projects of PADETC is being implemented. Arriving at the village at 10:15, the group was welcomed by the villagers, and was given the opportunity to interact with them with Mr. Phaivone translating.

The leader of the weavers' group, Ms. Jieng Khan, explained about their activity. Originally, women come from the villages in various provinces. There are 19 members in the group and all of them are women. 107 families are in the village and 40% of the population in the village is the government officials. The rest of the population engages in farming. Before they started weaving silk, many of them were farmers. PADECT started the weaving project of this village 3 years ago and it is one of the 6 weaving project sites. The role of the PADECT is to provide micro credit to village women, allowing them to rent the weaving machines to the group, and to visit the group once a month to make sure that everything goes well and check if the quality of the silk clothes is maintained high.

Women share knowledge not only within the group, but also across groups. Silk products made by the group are traded to be sold at the market, or are exported to foreign countries such as Italy. Also, some people visit the village to buy the silk products directly from the weavers at a lower cost. PADETC is planning to set up a small shop at the village in the future, and to make the village function as the cultural centre of the silk culture, where people can come and learn about silk

The Participants were given a chance to ask some questions to village women. The following is the summary of the question and answer session:

Q: How much money do women earn by producing and selling the silk products?

A (Woman): Because I have 3 sets of weaving machines, I can make 210 silk products per month. It means that I make 200\$ per month (shared with 5 people in the group).

Q: What is the value of \$200?

A (Mr. Phaivone): The salary of the public school teacher, which is \$50 (3000000kip). \$200 can be considered to be a big money.

Q: What were women doing before they participated in the project?

A: Some were working as government officials, others engaged in agriculture.

Q: How had women's life been changed before and after they participated in this programme?

A (Woman A): "The life is improved. For example, I can support my children to study in school. And they have a good house for them, and they can buy motorbikes."

(Woman B): "In the past, I had no money to buy TV, radio, CD player. Now I have money to buy goods and for my children to attend school."

(Woman C): "For me, it is special. I have money to employ workers to help my rice planting in the farm."

(Woman D): "I am very good. I got this house by weaving. Now, I have 3 cows and one motorbike. This is a lot of money."

(Woman E): "I have three children. The one studying electricity, the second studying for becoming teacher, the third studying at the upper secondary school. I can support their education."

(Woman F): "I just became a member of this group last year. I have the money to spend on family activities."

Q: How has the relationship between you and your family members been changed?

A: "This is of my opinion. In rural areas, people live together peacefully, and they help each other. For example, you see, people over there are helping each other. Even in family, people help one another, and they have a good family relationship. Especially when we do weaving, we surely help each other. If the machine gets broken down, husbands come and fix it for us as well."

Lunch (Cultural Exchange)

Study tour participants and the women enjoyed the Lao-style lunch that the women prepared. During the lunch, both Japanese participants and Lao women sang traditional songs, and performed traditional dances to each other.

Monk Training

The group arrived at 2:30 in Nakounnoy Village, which was located 15km north of Vientiane city. In the village, there is a Monk training centre where monks receive some training. Foreign people can also participate in the training though they are required to wear white clothes, which are different from what regular monks would wear. Currently, approximately 50 monks are receiving the training. They value every living creature, thus they don't kill chickens around them.

Monks are from various provinces across the state, and they stay at the centre for a year. Upon completion of the training, they are required to return to their own villages to provide the monk training to local people in the community.

Monks begin their days by getting up at 3:30 a.m. From 9:30-10:30, they go on a *takuhatsu*, which is a religious mendicancy in which people provide food to the monks. This is the only chance for monks to go out of the training centre. People are not allowed to touch monks during *takuhatsu*.

Participants observed the workshop for building teamwork among monks. The facilitator was a monk from Thailand. Approximately 35 monks were participating in the workshop. In the

workshop, monks were lining up in a straight line, and their task was to walk to the end of the room with their legs together. Monks were required to communicate well with others to accomplish this task.

Phakaned Handicraft Company

Participants arrived at 16 : 45 at Phakaned Handicraft Company. This company was established 8 years ago for the purpose of promoting local knowledge exchange, raising the silkworm and exporting silk products, and training villagers to raise silkworms. Since its establishment, PADETC has been supporting this company financially. Mr. Phouthong Saisnith, the owner of this company, is responsible for the training project. There are 20 workers today. They are raising four kinds of local non-hybrid silkworms, which are easy to be raised and produce high quality silk.

At this company, participants were given a chance to observe how silkworms are actually being raised in a small house. Mr. Phouthong also explained the process of raising silkworms.

Brief Sightseeing and Wrap-up meeting

Before going back to the hotel, participants dropped in at the That Luang, which is a supreme temple in Lao P.D.R. and is said to be a national symbol.

Coming back to the hotel, participants took some time to wrap up the third day. Some feelings and opinions expressed by participants were:

- I was impressed by the good family relationship in Thaphoxay.
- I felt that silk business provides a great way for villagers to make money.
- I understood the benefits of the micro credit. Also, I have a mixed feeling about the idea of implementing the cultural village centre in the village.
- I was impressed by how villagers use their surrounding nature wisely.
- I felt very welcomed and loved when I interacted with women in the village. They were as if my own families. I was also impressed by the life of silkworms. Silkworms only produce what is good for humans and for the environment.
- The life of the village reflects the philosophy that Mr. Somphone had told us: Village women were having a livable and contended life.
- The village was filled with humanity, and people were connected to one another at a deep level.
- When I talked to a woman, she asked me to teach some Japanese words to her. I taught them several Japanese words, and she wrote them down. I rediscovered that learning can take place within a simple conversation like this.
- I was impressed by smiles of the villagers. I hope they will continue smiling. However, as I

heard about the idea of building a new cultural centre at the village, I became a little bit worried about their future. I hope their cultural centre will be successful like in the case of Kamikatsu town in Japan, where elders succeeded in producing decorations made out of leaves and flowers.

Conversation with Mr. Somphone at dinner

Participants had dinner with Mr. Somphone at a French restaurant near the hotel, and had a great conversation with him. We introduced ourselves individually to Mr. Somphone, talking about the meanings of the Chinese characters which are used in our names.

Mr. Nagata told Mr. Somphone that he was impressed to hear the word “holistic education” in Mr. Somphone’s speech as well as in his presentation slide. Mr. Somphone said holistic education is not European, but Asian. And Mr. Somphone asked everyone what the difference between holistic education and regular education is. Ms. Soga replied that regular education in Japan seems to detach young people from their surrounding environment such as their family, teachers, and communities. In other words, in regular education, it is difficult for students to realise how they are related or connected to others. Also, the regular education tends to provide one-way instruction. On the other hand, holistic education gives students the opportunities to realise their connectedness and relationship with their schools, communities, families, friends and nature. And holistic education values interaction between teachers and students. After hearing Ms. Soga’s reply, Mr. Somphone told participants that holistic education consists of three components: integration, synergy and value. Participants were impressed by the answer from Mr. Somphone, emphasising that value is the most important component of all.

Ms. Morikawa asked what motivated Mr. Sombath to start PADETC in the first place, and asked if any particular person had influenced him. Then, he answered that no particular person had influenced him, but he decided to start PADETC as he worked in the community with adults for 15 years. After working with them in rural areas, he realised the need to educate young people for the future of the country.

Then, Mr. Nagata asked him how he would cope with young people who have problems. Mr. Somphone answered, “You have to talk with them many times, and have to understand why they have those problems. First thing you have to do is to communicate with them.”

Ms. Soga asked Mr. Somphone when the happiest moment was for him. Then, he answered, “It is at this very moment: the present moment. You should not try to be happy in the past, and you should not try to be happy in the future, and you should not try to be happy anywhere else. You should be happy right now and right here!!” Then, he added, “Your happiest moment should be right now. We are happy being together, aren’t we? You should concentrate on the moment, at the present moment. When you focus on the moment, you will have little worry.

Even when somebody bugs you, you should try to enjoy being with that person. If you learn how to control your emotions, you don't have to be afraid of anything." Then, Mr. Somphone mentioned that it requires a practice to be able to live at the present moment and to control our own feelings. Also, he mentioned the importance of accepting ourselves and accepting others.

Ms. Zaha said that his way of thinking was hard to understand because life is a continuation of here and now. Then, Mr. Somphone explained "you can't go back to the past, and you don't know what the future will be like. So if you worry about the past and the future, you miss the present moment: your mind is somewhere else. It is difficult for you to think that way, because you are not trained to think that way. That is why I encourage young people to train themselves to be at the moment." Then, Ms. Soga asked how he can train young people to live at the moment. Then, he replied to her saying that it can be done through mediation. He said that mediation is like having a good listening skill: just listening to yourself without talking. Mediation is not new: it has been practiced for thousands of years, though our society has forgotten to practice it today.

Then, Ms. Zaha shared the dilemma that she has in her life. She said that she wants to have some time for herself to improve herself, while at the same time, she wants to spend time for those who are in need. Then, Mr. Somphone replied to her, "The fact that you have such a dilemma shows that you have a good heart. However, having intention to do something for others is not enough. You need to determine the best way to help others and put that into action." Then, he emphasised the point that we need to learn and study in order to help others.

Ms. Nakata asked Mr. Somphone about his role in PADECT. Then, he said that he is just enjoying himself at PEDETC. Then, he explained that any leader will start out as a teacher, then s/he will move on to a coach, then to a mentor, advisor and finally to an observer. He said he is at a mentor stage right now.

Day 4 (9 February 2008)

Lao Chalern Recycling

The participants visited the garbage separation centre, and were welcomed by the owner of the centre, Mr. Oudone. Mr. Oudone explained briefly about the centre. According to him, the centre was established in 1999, and it was incorporated following the completion of ODA. Now, the centre is owned by PADETC.

Mr. Oudone provided some information about the workers. The workers at the centre are from 18 to 40 years of age, and the total number of workers is 18. They come from various provinces, and they live in the company's dormitory. Their salary is \$40 per month, and the Directors' salary is \$300 or more. Workers receive no insurance. Some workers are illiterate,

whereas some have learned to read and write through training. They used to train workers so that they can go to schools and teach children about the importance of garbage separation, but because of the financial deficit, they no longer have the training today.

Mr. Oudone also shared information about the company's financial state. He said that the company had invested \$70,000 to start the business, and it made a profit of \$26,000/year in the year 2007.

One of the main challenges that the company faces today is that there has emerged other similar companies like his own. Because of the emergence of other 4 companies, the business has become competitive, and he has to find a way to distinguish his business from others. He said that qualitative garbage separation is the key. And also, raising awareness of the people is important, he said.

Other information provided by him includes: Vientiane city produces 300 tons of garbage per day, and this recycling centre can deal with 130 tons per month.

At the end, he explained that he started this enterprise because he thought it would provide a new solution to the problem in Vientiane, and also that he can help the society and especially poor people.

Visit with PADETC Volunteers

The group arrived at Nongboathongtai primary school at 10:45 a.m. Arriving at the school, the group was welcomed by many PADETC volunteers. Then, the group was given the opportunity to communicate with those volunteers.

During the interaction period, participants asked questions to volunteers, and found out that the volunteers are university students from different universities. There are a few students who want to be teachers, a few students who want to work at the private companies, and majority of students want to work as government officials. They got information about the volunteer positions at the university or from friends.

Participants enjoyed listening to their songs and dancing with them in a circle.

Wrap-up Meeting with Mr. Somphone and PADETC Staff

The group arrived at the PADETC office around 13:30, and participants sat down on the floor and discussed how they would spend the rest of the time with Mr. Somphone. Then, participants decided to express their impressions and feelings in the form of art drawing. Each of the participants drew a picture and then, they showed it to Mr. Somphone and the PADETC staff, explaining the meaning of the drawing. The following is the brief description of what each participant had drawn.

- Ms. Nakata expressed a big tree about the day we spent in Vientiane.

- Ms. Morikawa told about the happiness that she found in Laos.
- Mr. Nagata presented a silkworm story that is explained through the dream of the silkworm.
- Ms. Soga expressed the earth and herself by Japanese calligraphy, telling what she felt in Lao P.D.R. and at PADETC.
- Ms. Zaha explained a picture of a world in which we live together.
- Ms. Matsui drew a spiral tension that expresses two vectors: good and bad.
- Mr. Gotoh explained the picture of the fish that he used to illustrate about the environment.

« *For further details, please see Annex A-5 in this report.* »

After the presentations, Mr. Somphone and the staff gave some feedbacks and comments. Lastly, one of the participants performed the traditional Japanese dance with an umbrella. The group expressed many thanks to each of the PADETC staff, and left for Luang Prabang.

Day 5 (10 February 2008)

Sightseeing

At 8:30, the group left Phousi Hotel for Mouang Luang Hotel. From 9:30 to 10:00, the group visited Wat Hosin near the hotel. The group walked around the town, and climbed the Mt. Phousi about 10:15. The group enjoyed climbing and seeing the view of Luang Prabang from the top of the Mt. Phosi. After that, the group visited Lunag Prabang National Museum to learn about the Laotian history. In the afternoon, the group saw Wat Xiengthong which is registered as the World Heritage Site, and had lunch at the restaurant along the river. After lunch, the participants were divided into 3 groups and each enjoyed the shopping and sight-seeing.

Day 6 (11 February 2008)

Travel from Luang Prabang to Bangkok

The group flew by plane to Bangkok, and took a bus to Kanchanaburi. The group had lunch along the riverside near the “death railway”, and then took the bus again to *Moo Baan Dek*, Children’s Village School, in the forest of Kanchanaburi province. *Moo Baan Dek* is situated 37 kilometers north of Kanchanaburi, on the banks of the Kwai Yai River. The village and school comprise about 140 children and adults, living in traditional Thai-style houses spread out in the greenery. There are classrooms, workshops, farms and assembly areas. *Moo Baan Dek* was

established in 1979, and has been known for its unique approaches to education, initially inspired by A.S. Neill's Summerhill School in England.

Visit to Moo Baan Dek

The group was welcomed by children's big smiles at the Children's Village School in Kanchanaburi. As it was time for *Ap naam*, when children swim and bathe themselves in the river Kwai, held at four o'clock every day, we the group had the opportunity to join them. Children were washing themselves, jumping into the river, swimming and enjoying themselves. Through this activity, we and the children became closer.

Lecture: "Sustainability in the Educational Philosophy and Practice of Moo Baan Dek"

Ms. Rajani Dhongchai, principal of Children's Village School



After the *Ap naam*, the group gathered at the first floor of the guesthouse, and heard a lecture on sustainability by Ms. Dhongchai. She started her lecture by saying that when we talk about sustainability, we have to think about what is unsustainable. Her starting point is caring the children who lived an un-sustainable life through abuse and poverty, and helping them recovered. In this process, the role of arts like painting, batik, ceramic, weaving and furniture making is considered to be very important. Through farming, children touch the earth, small animals, plants and insects.

The role of the river is also very important. Ms. Dhongchai told the group about her experience that children who were fighting each other were both thrown in the river, and they became friends in a very short time. Thus, the education outside the classroom is the core of the education at Moo Baan Dek, where children touch the real life, learn the way of life, and the heart becomes spirit. This is a process of educating themselves to be mindful.

The river makes children also think about how to keep the water clean. The education in Moo Baan Dek cares much about keeping environment sustainable. She emphasised that the forest cannot be repaired as many of the 'specialists' in Thailand think. She expressed her concern about the trend of consumerism that is affecting all over the Thailand and the world.

Moo Baan Dek is planning to build a secondary school, which is going to be an eco-school, built of natural materials and running on biogas.

« For more details, please see Annex B in this report. »

Questions and Answers

Q: What criteria do you use to distinguish sustainability from unsustainability?

A: If you are making yourself and the others around you happy, without causing any problem, then it is sustainable.

Q: How were the children brought into Moo Baan Dek?

A: NGO, social workers and parents bring their children to the Village. When children feel welcomed, they want to stay in the Village.

Q: What do children do after they are brought up in the village?

A: I define success as when children can create happiness in their family and in their life, no matter how much they earn. Graduates work at the national bank, private companies, as teachers, farmers and freelancers. Some of them also come back and work at Moo Baan Dek.

Q: What is the most important thing when dealing with children?

A: Four things are important: 1) give children a feeling of security, 2) facing them and respecting them, 3) showing love and affection and accepting them, and 4) building relationships as mother and son/daughter.

Q: Can you give an advice for teachers in cities like Tokyo, where there is little nature, about how they can nurture children's minds to care for the environment?

A: The most important thing is to start with oneself and being a good model to children. Thus the situation in Tokyo becomes a good case from which to learn.

Q: Can you tell us about the backgrounds of Moo Baan Dek staff members, and how they are being trained?

A: Nowadays, many university graduates join us as staffs. Also, the organisation called SEM (Spirituality in Education Movement) conducts staff training. Ms. Dhongchai and her staff gather and talk about the problems and how to solve them. It is a process of thinking and educating themselves.

Q: What is happiness for you?

A: It means to know "adequateness".

Dinner with Ms. Dhongchai

The group had dinner with Ms. Dhongchai amidst the beautiful scenery of the forest and by

the Kwai River. The food was made of vegetables harvested in children's village.

Gathering with the Children

Ms. Dhongchai invited the group to the gathering in the activity place in the middle of Moo Baan Dek, where participants interacted and played with children. Some of the participants performed traditional Japanese dance, and children were attracted. Then, all of the Japanese students and children danced a Japanese children's dance together. Finally, Japanese participants sang a song called "Furusato" which means home or our native place.

Wrap-up

The group gathered in Thai style guesthouse, and had a briefly wrap-up of the day. Many members were excited about the interaction and communication with the children. The group was impressed that the children seem to be happy and trusting adults, despite the harshness they had experienced in their early life. Ms. Soga commented that Mr. Somphone in Lao P.D.R. and Ms. Dhongchai in Thailand are like a yin and yang pair. Mr. Gotoh was curious about the eco-school project, and wanted to ask more about that next day.

The group stayed in a traditional Thai house, watching all the stars shining upon them and listening to the concerts of sound made by the animals and insects in the forests.

Day 7 (12 February 2008)

Morning Walk and Breakfast

Some of the participants walked to the farm where the children grow organic vegetables. Children were watering the plants and pulling out the weeds. Then the group had a Thai-style breakfast, made with vegetables from Moo Baan Dek.

Morning Assembly

At 8:30 a.m., the group attended the children's morning assembly and participated in yoga and meditation. Most of the children were sitting quietly and doing meditation, although some seemed to not be calm. Ms. Dhongchai and the teachers were watching and helping the children to concentrate. Then, as a way to exercise their bodies, children walked under a bamboo bar with their stomachs up. Some of the participants attended the kindergarten class.

School Tour

At around 10 a.m., Ms. Dhongchai showed the group around the school. Each kindergarten and elementary school class has its own small house. The group first observed a kindergarten

class where about ten children were playing quietly with Montessori toys. Some of the toys were made by school graduates in a small furniture making studio inside Moo Baan Dek.

Then, the group moved to observe the 1st grade and 2nd grade elementary school classes. Half of the 1st graders were learning in the library. In another room of the library, 4th to 6th graders were learning. The books had been donated by the Foundation for Children (FFC). Many kinds of books were available, as well as newspapers and magazines. There was also a librarian. Each child can take at least one book for himself/herself to read at home.

Next, group members walked to the house where arts and handicrafts are made. There are rooms for batik, bakery, weaving and woodcarving. During the daytime, children who have been abused engage in activities here instead of attending the usual lessons.

In a secondary school classroom, 5-6 students were studying science. Environment books were there. The teacher of this class was a young lady, newly graduated from a university in Bangkok. According to Ms. Dhongchai, the woman wanted to stay for a few weeks at the beginning, but now she is working at the school. When asked about the teachers, Ms. Dhongchai told us that she always asks three questions when she interviews applicants for Moo Baan Dek: 1) If s/he can live in a quiet place, 2) If s/he loves children, and 3) If s/he can work 24 hours/day.

Ms. Dhongchai told us that some of the children were taking national tests that day. This test is mandatory in Thailand.

The group went on to the furniture studio, where a few graduates were making teaching materials for the Moo Baan Dek. In the computer room, some graduates were working on the PC.

Finally, the group came to the Moo Baan Dek shop, where diaries, key holders, scarves, tablecloths, batiks, knitted accessories, detergents and fertiliser made out of organic vegetables and food wastes were for sale.

Lunch and Farewell

The group had a Thai style Moo Baan Dek lunch. Then most of the members made purchases in the Moo Baan Dek shop, where one of the children was helping the shop staff. Then the group said farewell to children, and left the Moo Baan Dek, hoping to visit here again.

Kanchanaburi War Cemetery

The group stopped by the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, where 6,982 allied prisoners were memorialised with individual names and messages from their families. These allied prisoners were made to work during the construction of the "death railway" by the Japanese military. In addition, there are many more victims from Asian countries who are even not named in this

cemetery.

Kanchanaburi JEATH War Museum

The group visited the two war-museums in Kanchanaburi. In the first museum, pictures and paintings of the “death railway” and POWs (Prisoners of War) were exhibited in a prisoner house from that time.

At the second war museum, the group saw several artifacts from the Japanese army and POWs. In the middle of one room, bones and relics of the POWs were displayed, together with pictures of the death railway and leaders of that time. The group saw Japanese translations made by a Japanese high school student group led by Mr. Nagata fourteen years ago.

After visiting the museums, some of the participants walked on the “death Railway”.

Visiting the Foundation for Children (FFC) in Bangkok

The group dropped by the main office of FFC (Foundation for Children) in Bangkok, which is the mother organisation of the Moo Baan Dek. The group was welcomed by Mr. Pibhop Dhongchai, the Secretary-General of FFC and husband of Ms. Rajani Dhongchai, the principal of the Moo Baan Dek. The group shopped in the FFC for items like postcards, notebooks and T-shirts.

Dinner

At the end of the day, the group was invited by Ms. Dhongchai and Mr. Pibhop Dhongchai for dinner in a restaurant along the Mekong River. Two teachers, Ms. Tookta and Ms. Arunee Boonyo, who used to be students at Moo Baan Dek, also joined. Mr. Nagata and the specialist members of the group exchanged ideas and friendship with Ms. and Mr. Dhongchai, while the student members had the opportunity to communicate with young teachers and staff of the school.

Wrap-up

The group had a brief wrap-up of the day at the Hotel, followed by a long discussion about war and peace until late at night.

Mr. Nagata started the wrap-up by emphasising that Moo Baan Dek is a good practice of ESD, having transformed the negative life-cycle of the orphans to a sustainable one. The Children’s Village School is effectively combining the two worlds: the spirit or the root is based on Buddhism, and the methods or the nutrition are taken from the Western world. Mr. Fujita wondered why there were mostly female teachers at the village, and Mr. Nagata mentioned that that was one of the challenges in Moo Baan Dek since its establishment. Mr. Gotoh explained

about the eco-projects in Moo Baan Dek after observing the farming sites and interviewing Ms. Dhongchai. He pointed out that the eco projects were mostly organised by the initiatives of an association of children themselves.

Then the discussion went on naturally to the topic of war and peace. Ms. Zaha, Ms. Nakata and Ms. Matsui were shocked to see the individual names and messages at the war cemetery. Ms. Soga and Ms. Morikawa discussed about the difficulty to think about war, which is a combination and complication of several factors and structures.

Day 8 (13 February 2008)

UNESCO Bangkok, Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

At 10:00, the group visited UNESCO Bangkok office. The group was welcomed by Ms. Aya Yokoi, Associate Expert at the APEID department, and Ms. Kaoru Suzuki, Associate Expert at the APPEAL department. Ms. Yokoi presented a lecture on ESD in Asia-Pacific region.

Lecture

Ms. Yokoi started her presentation by providing definitions of ESD. Then, she mentioned that the past 2 years were spent on disseminating the idea of ESD, and now UNESCO is moving onto a stage of developing teaching materials on ESD.

Ms. Yokoi explained what has been accomplished so far, and what needs to be done in the future for promoting ESD. Also, she shared some of the challenges that UNESCO is facing regarding ESD. One of the challenges had to do with the vagueness of ESD concepts, she said. Since it is not always easy for general public to understand the concepts of ESD, some countries are adding short phrases such as “caring for the earth” to explain the concepts of ESD better.

Then, Ms. Yokoi talked about the development of teaching materials for ESD. She said that teaching material on ESD for teachers has been developed since 2005, though teaching material on ESD for students has not developed much. Today, textbooks for world heritage education are used for ESD.

At the end, Ms. Yokoi emphasised the importance of educating teachers who have the mindsets to carry out the ESD at school.

Questions and Answers

Q: How would you explain the concepts of ESD to those who know almost nothing about ESD?

A: One of the strategies is to add a simple catch phrase to ESD. For example, in New Zealand and Australia, catch phrases such as “Caring for the earth” or “Making the good things last” are widely used to explain the concepts of ESD. Also, New Zealand used the Maori language

to explain ESD. In the case of Japan, some people conceived the concept of ESD as the world of Miyazawa Kenji, who said that human being become happy when every living thing is happy.

Q: Many teachers in Japan do not have chances to learn about ESD. What do you think can be done to educate those teachers?

A: The faculty of education at the university level should reorganise the curriculum in such a way that reflects the ideas and values of ESD.

Q: How are other international organisations and NGOs dealing with the issue?

A: UNU and UNEP are engaged in promoting ESD strongly, whereas UNICEF is cooperating in the field of prevention of natural disaster.

Q: How do you think the local wisdom can be included in the ESD teaching materials?

A: The local relevance is very important, and it needs to be included in the curriculum.

Q: Does UNESCO support the grassroots organisations like PADETC?

A: The role of UNESCO is not to support those activities directly, but is to work with the government.

Q: Are there any universities that provide teacher education on ESD?

A: There are some universities both in and out of Japan, but they do not necessarily advertise their programme using the word ESD.

Q: What is UNESCO trying to accomplish by promoting ESD?

A: The purpose of ESD is to equip people with lifestyles that are different from the present consumerist lifestyle.

At the end of the session, Mr. Gotoh commented that the goal of ESD should be to make a world without wars. Ms. Yokoi told that UNESCO was working at the cluster level, which was smaller than the sub-regional area, trying to meet the wide range of the regional needs including peace and international understanding education.

Lunch

Ms. Suzuki joined the lunch at the UNESCO cafeteria.

Wrap Up

At the hotel, the group wrapped up about the day before and that day. The following is the list of some comments made by the group:

- It was great that we could visit both the organisation at the governmental level and the organisations working at the grassroots level. I understood that both organisations have different roles in promoting ESD.
- UNESCO is starting to work at the cluster level, not at the regional level. This kind of system will strengthen the feeling of unity among nations and foster the knowledge-sharing between nations.
- I strongly felt the need to train teachers and staffs who can promote ESD.
- I think it is a big challenge for UNESCO as well as for any other organisations to include the locally relevant topics and contents in the textbooks and education.

After talking about the visit to UNESCO, the group reflected on the days spent in Lao P.D.R. and Thailand. As a way for the reflection, participants decided to write about the following 4 topics on the blue paper.

1. A place or time that you feel was the most valuable or impressive;
2. A word or phrase that you feel was the most valuable or important;
3. Your opinion about the organisation/structure of the tour itself; and
4. The most impressive or memorable thing that you saw, heard, touched, smelled or tasted, etc...

Responses for Question 1:

- The most fun time for me was when PADETC staff and we danced together.
- The most memorable moment for me was when the children of the Moo Baan Dek welcomed us. Children were so nice to us, and it was hard to believe they had had some bad experiences in their early lives.
- The time we shared with the women at the Thapoxay village was the most memorable moment. I learned that people can get connected at a deep level even when they do not speak the same language.
- I cannot forget about the shock I got when I arrived at Bangkok from Luang Prabang. The life in Luang Prabang was very slow, and people were smiling all the time. On the other hand, the life in Bangkok seemed very busy, and fewer people were smiling at Bangkok. This experience has made me believe that people do not need technologies to live a happy life.

Responses for Question 2:

Most of us were impressed with the words given by Mr. Somphone. For example, the phrases such as “to be at the present”, “to be happy at the present moment”, “Don’t let me talk, I’m the man to walk.”, and “Keep peace in your mind.” were mentioned. Also, some people were fascinated by the words “Adequateness” by Ms. Dhongchai.

Responses for Question 3:

One of the common responses to question 3 was that “it was good to have a time for wrap-up every evening.” The wrap-up time, when participants gathered and talked about what happened that day, provided great opportunity for them to reflect on their thinking, and hear what other people had thought or felt during the day. Also, the wrap-up time helped participants to see one experience from multiple points of view.

Other responses include:

- It was fun to talk about serious issues such as peace and war.
- Each participant comes from different backgrounds, and each contributed to the learning in a very special way.
- Every participant was passionate to learn during this tour, which I believe made this tour a success.

Responses for Question 4

- I experienced a spiritual comfort, and my heart and body are very relaxed at the moment.
- The smell of the soil reminded me of my hometown.
- The noise of mosquitoes is something that I remember.
- The taste of the vegetable soup at the DAY INN is unforgettable.
- I liked the sounds of house lizard –“Tokay”

Dinner

The group had the last dinner at the Hotel Dusit Thani in Bangkok. Ms. Suzuki from UNESCO Bangkok and Ms. Yoko Hiraga, who works at Hitachi Company in Bangkok also joined the dinner. Ms. Hiraga is a former participant of the study tour that Mr. Nagata led about a decade ago. The group enjoyed the delicious traditional Thai food.

Departure from Thailand and Arrival in Japan

The group left Bangkok at 11:50, and arrived in Narita, Japan at 7:30 on 14 February.

III. Comments and Suggestions

After the programme, the participants were requested to answer some questions as part of the evaluation of this International Exchange Programmes. The participants answered each questions as follows:

1. What is your overall impression of the programme you participated in?

- The programme, among several study visits in which the author has organised or been involved, was exceptionally successful particularly because: 1) lectures given by the experts on ESD was so insightful; 2) young staff/teachers who took care of our group was so dedicated and eager to help the participants; and 3) cultures which they have seen/observed/listened to/tasted was so stimulus and impressive.
- I am working to build a sustainable society, and this tour has given me an opportunity to see the sustainable development from new perspectives. Also, sharing opinions among the participants was very meaningful to me.
- Overall, the programme provided me with invaluable opportunities to learn how ESD could be conducted in the non-formal education context. It was also much appreciated that each and every participant could exchange their ideas and feelings every night, which enabled us to reflect on our own experiences much deeper.
- The programme was well organised and all the participants were highly motivated.
- We visited PADETC in Lao and Children's Village School in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. We could meet two wonderful practitioners there and share valuable time with them. Everyday we had a lot of visit programmes and it was busy in fact, but I am sure it was a very fruitful tour. We could see not only good examples but also some negative aspects such as the disposal centre in Lao or the war museum in Kanchanaburi. Through an encounter of the two great practitioners, our tour members could reach deeper thought for each problem. At the wrap-up meeting every night, we could share the precious opinions of each other, and it made this tour very unique. For me, personally, I could get fresh ideas through this tour and members and they must help me in the future.
- I truly enjoyed all the activities of this programme, and I learned so much out of this programme.
- The programme was both well organised and flexible, so that we could have a 'condensed' experience and time through meeting with various people and practices in the field of non-formal education in Lao P.D.R. and Thailand. The study tour not only gave me the opportunity to gain all the new knowledge about the situation, but also a new balanced way of gaining it, as we used all our senses – feeling, listening, watching, thinking, talking and reflecting.
- It was very good for me to see some practical cases of ESD in Non-formal education and was very rich to have a chance to share opinions of the participants and the people who we met.

2. What do you feel were the most useful/valuable activities of the programme? Please give reasons why.

- I found all the activities valuable. However, I would like to emphasise the effect of having wrap-up meetings or time for reflection before the end of the day. Every evening all of the participants attended a wrap-up meeting after all the programme. This has given an opportunity for everyone to look back and express his/her feelings about what s/he had experienced and to share his/her ideas with others. Especially on the last day in Bangkok,

we had three hours intensive discussion on the programme and tour *per se*. This was one of the most valuable time especially for me as a team leader.

- I was impressed with a lecture of Mr. Sombath and activity in Moo Baan Dek. Mr. Sombath takes reality, and the way of solving problem is very rational. Buddhism thought seemed to have the root of his activity. I was able to learn it very much from him. I watched the activity of Moo Baan Dek before about 10 years. I knew that they had begun to make a new product on local wisdom this time. So I realised importance of the will that continued being active steadily.
- I especially liked the talks given by Mr. Sombath from PADETC in Lao P.D.R. and Ms. Rajani from MBD in Thailand. Usually, we only had a chance to listen to them in large audience and only a few, limited people could ask questions. However, this time, we were fortunate enough to listen to them in a small circle and ask questions freely. In addition to that, even after the "lectures", both of them kindly spared their time to exchange opinions with us. That was very encouraging.
- Visit to PADTEC; Through lectures and dialogue with Mr. Sombath, we have learned a lot on the idea and philosophy which PADTEC has and tries to promote. Also, by visiting 'fields' (including weaving village and garbage recycle centre), we can realise how the philosophy is installed to improve the society and community. Especially, their collaboration with private companies showed us the possibility how NGO affects the society even in the socialism.
- Although each activity was meaningful and it is very difficult to choose one of them, the visit to Children's Village School was the most valuable for me where I could directly communicate with children. I felt healing through its environment and communication. The children are basically healthy both in their body and mind with the natural surroundings it cannot be imagined in Tokyo. Even they had awful backgrounds I could see they are absolutely recovering through receiving education there. I participated in the kindergarten morning class that they started with meditation. I could recognise children calm down through practical meditation and can think deeper. I also gained a hint for mental healing in Japanese society. The talking of Ms. Rajani is one of the most impressed moments in this tour. I strongly felt that we all should learn from her practical spirit.
- Even though every activity was useful / valuable, I personally think that the lectures given by Mr Sombath Somphone and Ms. Rajani Dhongchai were the most valuable experiences for us. Especially it was really great that they shared their thoughts in a very relaxing atmosphere. I learned that one person with a clear vision can really change the lives of other people, and change the society little by little.
- The most important activity for me was seeing the real practices of PADETC in Lao P.D.R. (visiting weaving village, Monk development, recycling centre, youth volunteers development etc), and Moo Baan Dek in Thailand (playing with children and seeing various school activities). These real meeting by body and heart, combined with the two lectures of the leaders (Mr. Sombath and Ms. Rajani) made my understanding deeper and wider.
- It was the presentation from Mr. Sombath and Ms. Rajani. They have a valuable experience in Non-formal education, so I am very impressed to hear their philosophies which are the basis of their activities. In addition, they taught us both aspects of the present world because they know the situation of cities, that is, the phenomenon of globalisation, from the view of the Buddhism. It was very meaningful time.

3. What were your objectives in participating in this programme? Please tell us whether or not your expectations were met, and the reasons why/why not.

- I had primarily three objectives in my mind: 1) to visit good practices of ESD in Asian countries; 2) to gain knowledge on what lies behind these practices; and 3) to share my feelings about these practices with practitioners and experts as well as other participants. Our group visited places where unsustainability is being converted to sustainability. Our aim was fulfilled to learn from the lifestyles, actions and values inherent in their practices. It is true that I have personally received extremely important messages about sustainability from pioneers in Laos and Thailand. This is why I can say that the objectives above have been well attained.
- I learned so much more than I had expected. Though developed countries like Japan may be economically prosperous, they are facing many serious problems such as widening of economic disparity, weakening of local unity, and the increase in the number of people who have mental problems. I think that developing countries have advantages in that they can learn from these mistakes and design new sustainable societies. I believe that the places we visited were leading agencies and organisations that would contribute to the advancement of the sustainable development.
- Looking after ESD-related projects in the Asia-Pacific region, I was hoping to learn how ESD could be realised in the non-formal education settings, particularly for those who are underprivileged. It was an eye-opening experience, being embraced by the nature and being part of the sustainable lifestyle in MBD in Thailand. It is sometimes said that ESD is only for those who can afford it, and people in developing countries, especially those who are underprivileged, have no time for such "luxurious" kind of education. However, MBD really showed me that the sustainable environment is not luxurious at all but a "must" for people in a difficult situation to be healed and empowered as quickly as possible. Being surrounded by the sustainable environment itself was really part of ESD.
- To experience how an international personnel exchange programme which is supported by ACCU is implemented, and to seek for the good practice on it. The expectation was met because I could witness the meeting among Japanese, Lao and Thai participants deepened the understanding on the subject (ESD in non-formal education) and enlightened each other.
- I am studying art programmes as well as interested in spiritual practices. This time I would like to see some of these practices in ESD non-formal institution. Through this tour, I recognised anew that art and spiritual are the key words of ESD. I could see the spiritual practices and get deeper ideas for my art studying. Actually, I myself had a chance to try to express what I had gained through the programmes with drawing. This practical experience was very valuable and I am sure I could learn much more than I expected.
- One of the main objectives of my participating in this programme was to go and see how ESD is actually put into practice at a grass-roots level in Laos and Thailand, as well as to interact with people who are involved in the process of disseminating the ESD values and practices. This expectation of mine was exceedingly met as there were opportunities to hear the lectures by Mr Sombath Somphone and Ms. Rajani Dhongchai, visit the actual project sites of PADETC (weaving village for income generation programme, monk training site, garbage separation programme etc...) and Moo Bann Dek, and interact with staff and participants of those projects.
- My expectation was 1) to see how key persons in South East Asia was doing his/her practice in order to make children/youth/adults happy and sustainable, and 2) to catch a hint towards Japanese society. These expectations were met, through meeting with people and activities as described above. Discussions with PADETC and Moo Baan Dek staff, as

well as reflection session among us (study tour members) made me connect my observation and feelings to my own situation in Japan. And personally, my research interest lied in 3) teacher/staff education at each organisation. Fortunately I got the opportunity to ask about it directly to each leader, and got some answers as well as new questions.

- It was to see the practices of ESD in Non-formal education in the developing countries. I am satisfied to see them in Laos and Thailand. They are very interesting and they have a possibility to expand their activities deeply and widely.

4. To maximize the benefit of this programme, how do you plan on applying ideas and skills you obtained through your participation in the programme upon your return?

- First I should like to internalise what I have gained from talks or speeches by Mr. S. Somphone and Ms. R. Dhongchai. For instance, in order to lead a sustainable life, I should be leading a modest life myself. Second, I would like to share their messages with others. One of the things I thought we could do is to keep a record on their speeches and put them onto our final report, so that readers can have an access to their messages as text. Third, since I am a Univ. lecturer, I would like to convey what I have gained from this trip to my students in my seminars.
- I work on the community reproduction of Satoyama (like a local village). The people are apt to demand economic success as means in many cases. I intend to appeal for sustainable environment not being formed if we do not balance economy with environment. I believe that the sustainable society is formed from the family who became independent by the set of the community unit.
- At the conceptual level, the organisations we visited exemplify the fact that good quality of ESD is possible in a challenging environment. I am sure this will underpin my perception towards ESD from now on, especially when I deal with ESD in NFE in Asia and the Pacific. Furthermore, both of the organisations showed me how to internalise the external concepts into own activities. This will guide me to work with my counterparts in the A-P region for their indigenous development. At the operational level – let me think of it ☺
- The experience I have gained in this programme could improve other ACCU programmes by giving advice to executive organisations in planning and implementing the programmes.
- I am interested in international art programmes. Through this tour, I visited some practical institutions and found some way to consistent ESD with economic society. Recent Japanese art market is in danger of becoming too profit-oriented industry. I would like to look for the way to sensibility-oriented art programmes in the Japanese economic society using ideas I obtained through this programme.
- One of lessons that I learned through this programme was that I need to make a change in myself first before I can make a change in others. So, right now, I am making small changes in my life, which I hope will eventually influence my neighbors. Some of the things I have been trying in my life include:
 - 1) bringing tumbler to the coffee shops, or bringing an eco bag to the supermarket
 - 2) buying food that are locally made
 - 3) cooking more and eating out less, and taking more time to eat with others
 - 4) choosing to buy environmentally-friendly products
 - 5) talking about what I have learned and experienced through this programme to my family and friends

6) making a report on this programme, so that other people can read it and learn from it
I also hope that I can create an opportunity for other people to experience the connectedness between them and nature / other people.

- First of all, as I will work as a researcher in a private education company in Japan, I want to use the network and inspiration I gained from the tour on my work, directly and indirectly. Secondly, I want to develop myself as a sustainable and mindful researcher, who cares about sustainable world. At last but not at least, I want to share my experience with my family and friends.
- I would like the citizens who live around the university and the people who work at the university to know about localisation in ESD. And I would like to develop the university area to the ECO way, connecting between the university and the local community.

5. Please give us your suggestions on how to improve the Programme in the future.

- Again I would like to put an emphasis on the importance of having wrap-up or reflection time every day. ACCU could suggest to the future participants or leaders to make the most of this activity in all the study tours. Also I should like to stress that all the participants have learnt a lot from ACCU staff who participated in this tour as experts in the field. It is true that all of us have gained important messages from Mr. Fujita and Ms. Zaha at every opportunity during the study tour.
- I feel that it is necessary to question the role of money fundamentally in order to build a sustainable society built upon the human happiness. I am interested in efforts of local money all over the world, which connect with the people. For example, in Barkley, USA, there is a restaurant where consumers decide the price for the service they get. I assume that the idea of “gift-economy” is quite western, but, I think such idea is very important. Also, I think the relationship between happiness and money needs to be reconsidered as it is a very important component of sustainable development.
- I wish I could have had more time both at PADTEC and MBD.
- As for logistics on accommodation or transportation, I learned it takes a time.
- This is my first time to participate in this kind of programme, and I could get much more than I expected. I feel I am very lucky because Prof. Nagata, the coordinator, provided information on this tour to me. However, in general, it is very difficult to get to know this kind of programme especially for general working people. Through my experience this time, I am strongly convinced that programme members should have various backgrounds to deepen its contents. I suggest that the programme will be better if the way for information providing is improved. Lastly, I really appreciate your institution to give me such a wonderful opportunity! Thank you!
- I am sorry, but I cannot think of any. Maybe, more time for reflection would be good, but it would be difficult for the schedule is packed...
- I would like to have more time for reflection. The reflection session is the most important time for understanding and connecting experiences, lectures and own feelings. We had a short wrap-up everyday, and a big reflection session at the end of the study tour, but I wish I had more time to think and discuss with the members and myself.
- I wanted to have more time to share opinions and feelings for reflecting ourselves.

IV. Technical Inputs

- Powerpoint Sheets of Lecture/Presentation -

1. Keynote Lecture: "Challenges in Development Work in Lao P.D.R." Mr. Sombath Somphone, Founder and Director, PADETC

Challenges of Development Work in Lao PDR

Sombath Somphone
Participatory Development Training Centre
(PADETC)
ACCU, Vientiane, Laos
7 February, 2008

History of development work: Centralized systems

- Communism- single centralized party
- Capitalism- multiparty centralize corporations
- Globalization- centralized corporation with both single and multiple political parties

Globally people are reduced to be costumers and workers

It is a development of materials and technology and with no human soul

Challenges

- Laos cannot and should not compete in the present model of development;
- It should use its existing strengths and show the world that it can make Laos a more LIVEABLE society – learn from mistakes of others;
- We need to nurture and care for planet by giving the same care as to our own family and society;

Intention:

Buddhism

- To rid of all sufferings
- To be in harmony with the natural ecology
- NO self
- To detach
- To refrain and conquer own emotions
- For total equality
- Emphasize learning

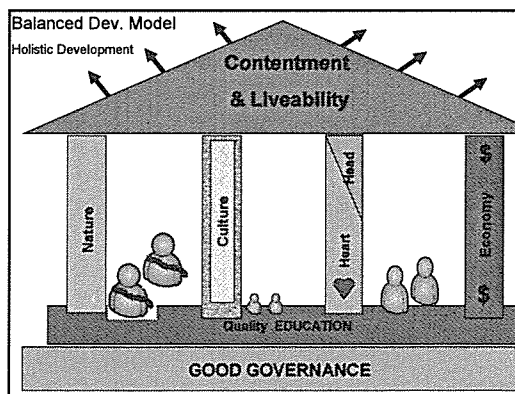
Govt. Institutions

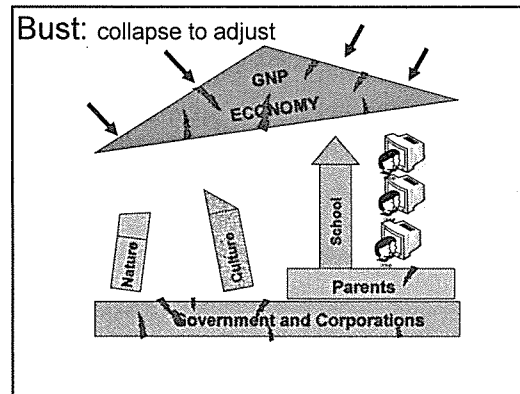
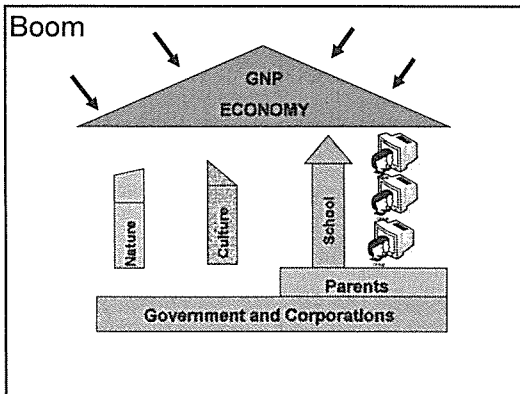
- To increase income
- To increase GDP
- More competition, thus focus on the SELF
- To consume /own
- To be rich and conquer others
- For inequality
- Emphasize teaching

Inequality: needs to balance

- Because of greed, jealousy, and pride, the economy will never become strong enough to ensure that every person has access to the basic necessities of life.
- Our modern education should include spiritual matters. We should teach our young to help others as much as possible, or at least refrain from harming others.

Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse





Balancing Wisdom and Information

BUDDHIST TEACHING

- Diseases
- Poverty
- Old age
- Death

To be reflected on and understood

It is an **EXPERIENTIAL** learning
Similar to **EDUCATION**

INFORMATION AGE

- Strength and power
- Wealth
- Youth and beauty
- Killings and pains

Brought on TV screen as entertainment for profit

It is **FORCE-FEEDING** and rote learning
Similar to **SCHOOLING**

Development of the HEART is the heart of
Balanced Development Model

Educating the HEART is the heart of Education

How to Educate the HEART?

Educating the HEART is like gardening

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nurture POSITIVE thoughts – <u>vegetables</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compassion ■ Love ■ Caring ■ Giving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Suppress NEGATIVE thoughts – <u>weeds</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hatred ■ Anger ■ Greed, selfishness ■ Over-consumption |
|--|---|

Thich Nyat Hanh

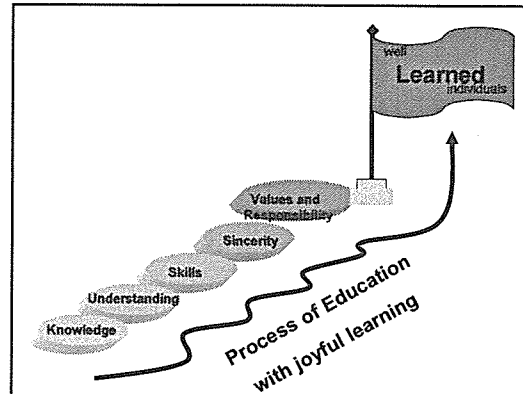
Conditions for good garden?

- Good environment: Fertile soil, non-poisonous water and air
- Good set of seeds : nutritious plants for human body and mind
- A mindful gardener: coach, role model

How to educate the HEART?

- Through school activities and curriculum
- Meditation
- Practice mindful living and decision making

Only with an Educated HEART that one can get deep HAPPINESS out of life



Inter-relationship between Education & Sustainable Development

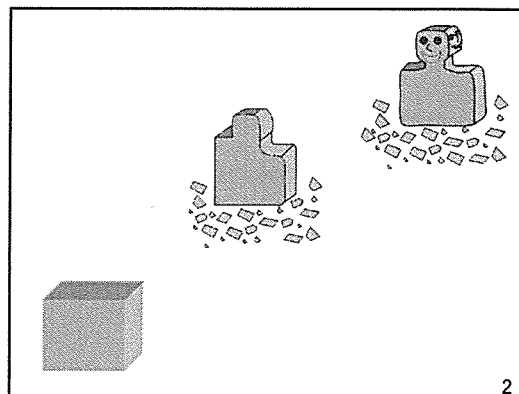
- Mutually reinforcing
- Mutually supporting
- Complementary to each other

Aims

- Education: promotes and supports sustainable development;
- Development: promotes and supports relevant joyful learning in and out of school environment

It follows that:

1. Bad schooling promotes and supports non-sustainable development, directly or indirectly;
2. Non-sustainable development promotes and supports bad real life learning experiences;

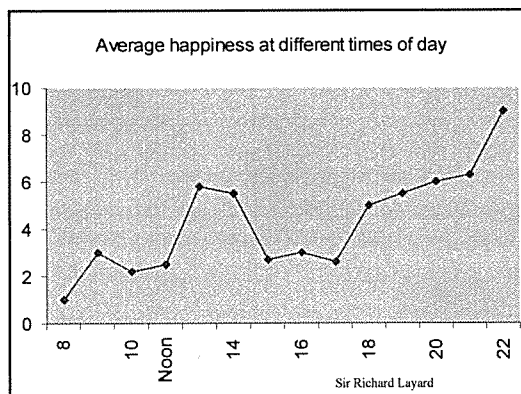
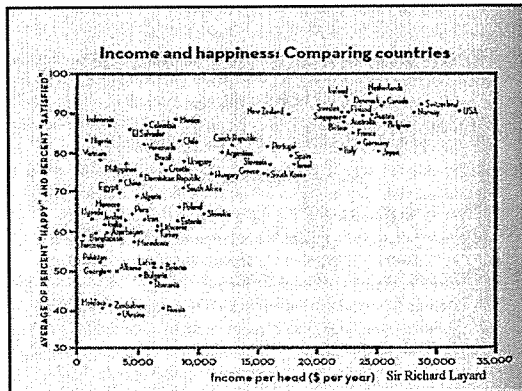
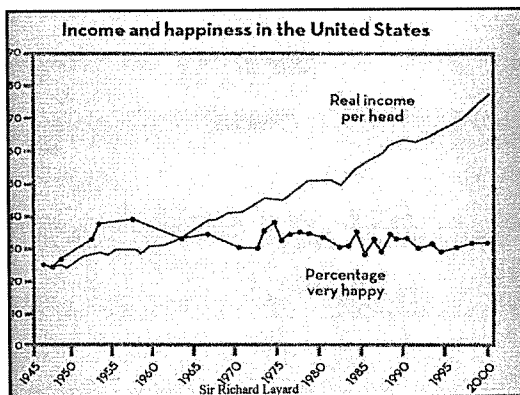


Multiple Intelligences

- Naturalist intelligence
- Spatial
- Musical
- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
- Kinesthetic
- Logical
- Linguistic

Happiness

a new science?



The Big Seven factors affecting happiness

1. Family relationships
2. Financial situation
3. Work
4. Community and friends
5. Health
6. Personal freedom
7. Personal values

Sir Richard Layard

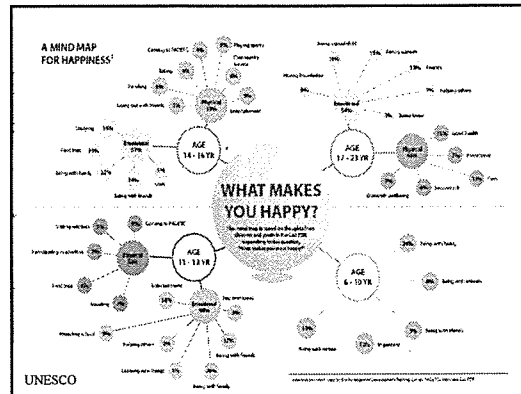
HAPPINESS??

Deep happiness is a balance between:

**Spiritual and physical well-beings
Internal and external comforts**

or

**A combination of Contentment and
Liveability**



Let's plant the seeds of good leadership
among our new generation and nurture
them to grow up and yield the fruits of
good governance, which in turn
supports

Balance Development with joyful
learning, and to bring about a
Contented and Liveable Society for all.

Conclusion

Bringing about change for sustainable future
should not be left in the hands of the state
structures alone.

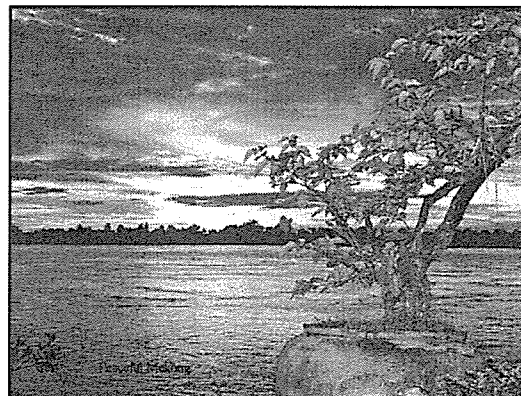
Nor should we rely too much on digital
solutions;

It is with awareness raising among young people
and the grassroots;

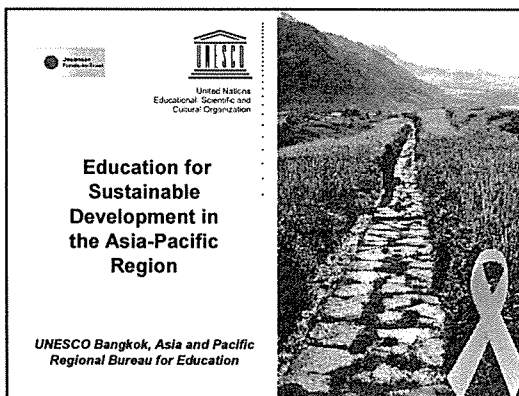
It is also about local knowledge and wisdom;

PADETC pathway to ESD

1. Young volunteers helping improve education;
2. Monk volunteers educating the hearts of students, teachers, and parents;
3. Introduction and expansion of project-based learning with inclusion of SME and local knowledge;
4. Preparing new generation of teachers to deliver holistic education - ESD;
5. Preparation for setting up of holistic learning centers – new breed of schools;
6. SME and appropriate technology integrated with local wisdom.



2. UNESCO Presentation: “Education for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific Region” Ms. Yokoi Aya, Associate Expert, and Ms. Suzuki Kaoru, Associate Expert, UNESCO Bangkok, Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education



Sustainable Development

Is... development that can:

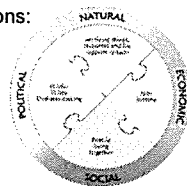
“meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development takes into account four interdependent dimensions:

- Social
- Economic
- Ecological
- Political



Why do we need Sustainable Development?

Pressing global realities:

- The rapid growth of the world's population and its changing distribution
- The persistence of widespread poverty
- The growing pressures on the natural world
- The continuing denial of democracy and human rights
- The very notion of “development” itself, what it has come to mean and how it is measured.

A long heritage

- 1987 Our Common Future
- 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro
- 2000 Millennium Declaration
- 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development
- 2005 DESD adopted by UN

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)

VISION

A world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviours, and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation.

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)

OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate networking, linkages, exchanges, and interaction among stakeholders in ESD
- To foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in Education for Sustainable Development
- To assist countries in making progress toward and attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through ESD efforts
- To provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts

International Implementation Scheme (IIS)

Contents:

- Overview of ESD and the Decade
- Goals and objectives of the Decade
- Relation to other international initiatives
- Strategies for implementation
- Roles of stakeholders
- Monitoring and evaluation

UNESCO's Leadership Role

- Catalyse and strengthen partnerships;
- Encourage monitoring and evaluation;
- Encourage a research agenda and serve as forum for relevant research on ESD;
- Serve as forum for bringing together stakeholders in the Decade
- Share good ESD practices;
- Assist Member States to put in place ESD curricula, policies, research, etc.;
- Convene flexible working groups on particular topics; and
- Fulfil its strategic role with regard to ESD.

Seven Strategies for Implementation

- Vision-building and advocacy
- Consultation and ownership
- Partnership and networks
- Capacity-building and training
- Research, development and innovation
- Use of ICTs
- Monitoring and evaluation

Thematic Programmes:

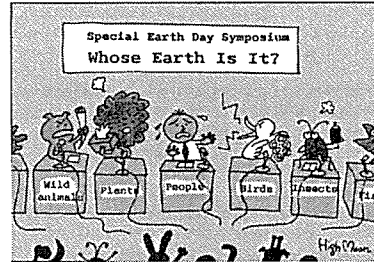
1. International Leadership and Advocacy of the DESD.
2. Integrating ESD into Basic Education
3. Reorienting General Secondary Education for ESD.
4. Integrating ESD into TVET
5. Integrating ESD into Higher Education
6. Teacher Education for ESD
7. Mainstreaming Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue in ESD
8. Education for Sustainable Water Management
9. Education for Sustainable Ecosystems and Livelihoods.

Linkages between the global initiatives in Education

- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Education for All (EFA)
- United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) 2003-2012
- United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) 2005-2014

Common aspects of global education initiatives

- Concern to improve the quality of life
 - Poverty Reduction
 - Health
- Promotion of human rights
- Commitment to education – Education is a key to development
- Participatory approach
- EFA and DESD place emphasis on the quality of learning and education
- EFA, DESD and UNLD emphasize non-formal learning
- UNLD and EFA focus on literacy as a key part of learning and education



DESD in the Asia-Pacific

Function and roles of UNESCO Bangkok

- intellectual leadership
- advocacy for and catalyzing educational innovation and reform
- facilitating the sharing of experience
- knowledge building and knowledge management
- technical support to educational planning processes
- mobilizing partners,
- organizing demonstration projects
- developing guidelines for 'scaling-up' and embedding innovation, training and capacity building

A Partnership for the Decade of ESD

- UN agencies such as UNEP, UNESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), UNDP and UNU-IAS
- Regional bodies such as ACCU (Asia-Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO), SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme) ASEAN, ADB
- NGOs (CEE India, ESD-J Japan, AZAM Malaysia)
- Higher education institutions and research networks

Asia-Pacific Regional Implementation

Asia-Pacific Regional UN Interagency Steering Committee on ESD

UNESCAP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNU-IAS, ACCU, ADB, APCEIU, IUCN, SEAMEO

- Shares information on current and future ESD related activities
- Coordinates ESD activities, enabling a partnership approach for the Decade

Asia-Pacific Regional Experts Group

- Liaises with the Regional Steering Committee
- Assists in activating regional networks and projects for ESD



Working Example of Interagency Co-operation

Partnership of UNESCO BKK with UNEP

- Support UNEP-Tongji University Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development

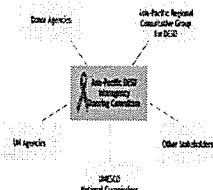
-1st Programme: 35 emerging leaders from 25 countries participated, in 2004
 -2nd Programme: 25 emerging leaders from 15 countries, in 2005
 -3rd Programme: 29 emerging leaders from 16 countries, in 2006



Working Example of Interagency Co-operation

Asia-Pacific DESD Interagency Steering Committee (AP DISC)

- Total 8 committee meetings held.
- Associated with UNESCAP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNU-IAS, ACCU, ADB, APCEIU, IUCN, SEAMEO
- Achievement
 - Update information
 - Mutual support collaboration
 - Other partners / Joint projects
 - Portal website on DESD (almost ready to be launched) : <http://203.154.178.152/>



ESD Stakeholder capacities consolidated and strengthened

- UNESCO Expert Meeting on ESD: Reorienting Education to Address Sustainability, in Kanchanaburi, Thailand
- APEID-APCEIU International Conference, "Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability", in Penang
- 10th APEID International Conference, "Learning Together for Tomorrow: Education for Sustainable Development", on 6-8 December, 2006 in Bangkok

DESD in the Asia-Pacific Region

ESD and Higher Education

- Reorienting teacher education towards sustainability
- UNU postgraduate programme
- UNEP-Tongji University Leadership Programme

ESD Research and Development

- Quality teaching and learning approaches for ESD
- UNESCO-IUCN Asia-Pacific DESD Indicators Project

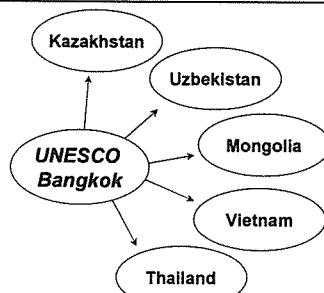
ESD Net

- Network of TEIs and schools committed to reorienting education programs toward ESD

National Launches of DESD Completed (2005-2007)



Assisting the Development of National DESD Guidelines



Leading Regional Activities (2005-2007)



June 2005, Nagoya, Japan
Asia-Pacific Regional Launch of the Decade of ESD

ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific ESD Programme

COE Programme for ESD

Identifies, supports and disseminates good ESD practices across the Asia-Pacific

Innovation Programme for ESD

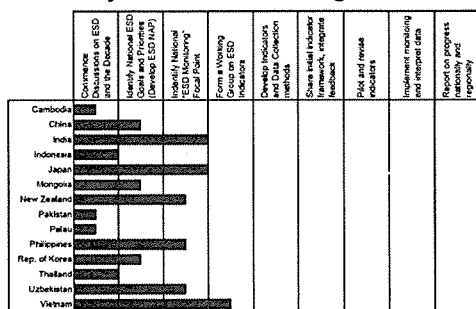
Supports non-formal education and primary/secondary education programmes in literacy, disaster preparedness, inclusive education, TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training), etc.

For more information, please consult the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)
Web site: <http://www.accu.or.jp/esd>

Evidence-based monitoring and assessment frameworks established

- Working with partners to develop and publish national guidelines for ESD Indicators
- Support development of M&E processes
 - Set targets for the Decade
 - Divide responsibilities for M&E
 - Ensure appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and reporting
 - Develop a prototype DESD monitoring system

Development of National DESD Monitoring Systems: Relative Progress



National Initiatives

	DESD Committee	Action Plan
Australia	Department of the Environment and Water Resources (lead agency)	Waiting for the Future, 2006
Austria	DESD National Committee	To be finalized
Japan	The Inter-ministerial Meeting on DESD and the High National Action Plan for UNESCO, 2006	To be finalized
New Zealand	The New Zealand Coordinating Committee for the DESD (since October 2004)	To be finalized
Pakistan	Developing creation of one National ESD Forum	N/A
Philippines	National ESD Committee	Currently discussing issuance of National Legislation
Uzbekistan	The Coordination Council of education for Sustainable Development	Currently developing in line with the National Program of "Development of Environmental Education and Ecological Personnel in Uzbekistan" for 2005-2010"
Vietnam	National DESD Committee, March 2006	The National Action Plan framework, 2006

India

- The focal point is the Indian National Commission for UNESCO for dissemination and coordination of all information and activities relating to ESD
- The Steering Committee consists of representatives from government, civil society, academics, NGOs and experts in education, environment, culture, social sciences, science, communication, media and other related fields, under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Higher Education has been constituted
- The Steering Committee aims to monitor the implementation of the National DESD Action Plan by recommending and formulating ESD policy options which reflect local-level experience and challenges, setting national ESD priorities, integrating the international priorities of EFA, ESD, MDG, UNLD, etc into country programs and identifying capacity building needs and expertise
- National Action Plan is currently developed

Vietnam

- The Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM) is the lead agency for implementing the DESD in collaboration with UNESCO Hanoi and the Ministries of Education and Training; Science and Technology; Natural Resources and Environment; and Culture and Information.
- A National DESD Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, composed of high-ranking government leaders and ministers, including the Vietnam NATCOM. The Committee will assist the Prime Minister in directing all ESD activities in Vietnam under the framework of the DESD.
- Outcome of the committee includes the establishment of ESD priorities for Vietnam and the creation of a national action plan framework to orient education towards the concepts of sustainable development

Development of National DESD Monitoring Systems: Relative Progress

Advanced Stages (e.g., Vietnam, Japan, India)

- Identified National ESD Monitoring Focal Points
- Finalizing DESD National Action Plans

Intermediate Stages (e.g., Korea, Uzbekistan)

- Preparing DESD National Action Plans
- Identifying National DESD Priorities

Beginning Stages (e.g., Cambodia, Pakistan, Palau)

- Organizing discussion meetings on DESD
- Participating in DESD regional workshops to build knowledge base for ESD

DESD in the Asia-Pacific

Challenges

- Developing clear, brief and practical messages on the nature and scope of ESD and how education would be different if ESD were integrated into education sector plans
- Sharing successful experiences in intersectoral collaboration and delivery of services to members
- Identifying organizational structures and incentives for developing intersectoral ESD projects

Build and Strengthen Capacity for ESD: Moving ESD Forward in the Asia-Pacific

Leadership: Ministerial and High-level Policies

Formal and Non-formal Curricula

Indicator Development and Adaptation

MID-DECADE VISION

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Aya Yokoi
UNESCO Bangkok, Asia and Pacific
Regional Bureau for Education
www.unescobkk.org

V. Annex A

1. Programme Schedule

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITIES
Day 1: 6 February, 2008	10:45 15:45 19:35 20:45	Departure from Narita Arrival at Bangkok Departure from Bangkok Arrival at Vientiane
Day 2: 7 February, 2008 (Vientiane, Laos)	9:30-10:00 10:00-11:30 11:30-12:00 12:00-13:00 13:30-14:00 14:00-15:00 15:30-16:30 17:00-18:00 20:00-21:00	Opening Session at PEDETC Lecture by Mr. Sombath Somphone Break Lecture by Ms. Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh and Mr. Bounpanh Vannboubpha Lunch Break Visit the Non-Formal Education Development Centre (NFEDC) Visit the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education. Sightseeing at Patousay Wrap-up Meeting
Day 3: 8 February, 2008 (Vientiane, Laos)	10:15-12:30 12:30-13:30 14:30-16:00 16:45-17:30 17:45-18:15 18:30-18:50 19:00-21:00	Visit the PADETC project site: Thaphoxay Village Lunch and Cultural Exchange Activity Observation of Monk Training at Nakounnoy Village Visit the PADETC Project Site: Phakaned Handicraft Company Sightseeing at That Luang Wrap-up Meeting Dinner with Mr. Sombath Somphone
Day 4: 9 February, 2008 (Vientiane, Laos)	9:30-10:30 10:45-12:00 12:00-13:00 13:30-17:00 18:30 19:30 20:00-21:45 22:00-23:00	Visit the PADETC's Garbage Separation Site: Lao Chalern Recycling Interaction with PADETC volunteers at school Lunch Break Wrap-up Meeting with Mr. Somphone and PADETC Staff. Departure for Luang Prabang Arrival at Luang Prabang Dinner Wrap-up Meeting

Day 5: 10 February, 2008 (Lunag Prabang, Laos)	9:30-10:00 10:15-11:00 11:00-12:00 12:00-13:00 13:00-13:30 13:30 -	Visit Wat Hosin Mt. Phousi Climbing Visit Lunag Prabang National Museum Visit the World Heritage Sites: Wat Xiengthong Lunch Break Sightseeing
Day 6: 11 February, 2008 (Kanchanaburi, Thailand)	8:00 9:40 9:40-14:00 14:00-14:30 15:00-17:00 17:00-18:30 18:30-19:30 20:00-21:00	Departure for Bangkok Arrival at Bangkok Move to Children's Village School: Moo Baan Dek in Kanchanaburi <i>Ap naam</i> (Swimming in the River Kwai) Welcome Session and Lecture by Ms. Rajani Dhongchai Break and Dinner Gathering with Children, Cultural Exchange Activity Wrap-up Meeting
Day 7: 12 February, 2008 (Kanchanaburi and Bangkok, Thailand)	7:45-8:30 8:30-10:00 10:00-11:30 11:30-12:30 12:30 13:30-14:30 14:30 -16:00 16:30-17:30 18:00-19:30 20:30-23:00	Morning walk Morning Assembly with Children School Tour led by Ms Rajani Dongchai Lunch and Shopping Farewell to Moo Baan Dek Visit Kanchanaburi War Cemetery Visit Kanchanaburi War Museums Visit the office of FFC (Foundation for Children) Dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Dhongchai and Other staff Wrap-up Meeting
Day 8: 13 February, 2008 (Bangkok, Thailand)	10:00-12:00 12:00-13:00 13:30-18:00 19:30-20:30 23:00	Visit the UNESCO Bangkok Office, Lecture by Ms. Yokoi Lunch with Ms. Suzuki Final Wrap-up Meeting Dinner with UNESCO staff Departure for Narita
Day 9: 14 February, 2008	7:30	Arrival in Narita Airport

2. List of Participants

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3. List of Collaborating Organisation

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padetc@padetc.org

Moo Baan Dek (Children's Village School)

Tel: (+66)09-410-4427, 09-410-4429, 06-303-6386

Fax: (+66)03-451-5106

Address: Latya-Srisawat Rd., Kanchanaburi 71190, Siam (Thailand)

E-mail address: mbd@ffc.or.th

4. Photos

7 February, 2008

Lecture at the PADETC and Visiting the public offices



8-9 February, 2008
Observation of the PADETC's activities





9 February, 2008
Final Wrap-up meeting & Presentation



10 February, 2008
Luang Prabang

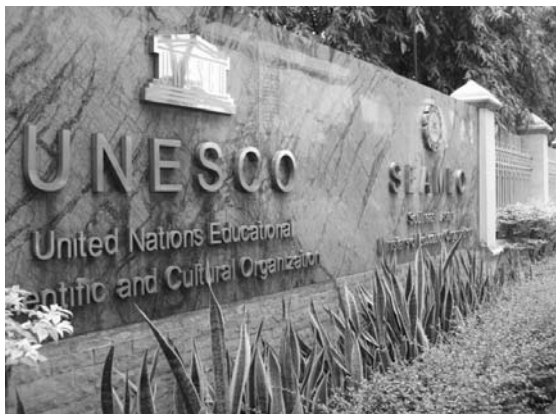


11-12 February, 2008
Death Railway and Moo Baan Dek In Kanchanaburi



13 February, 2008

In Bangkok



5. Final wrap-up meeting with PADETC staff

On the first day, we were asked by Mr. Somphone to make comments and suggestions on what PADETC is doing. Having observed its activities for two and half days, we have come to the conclusion to make a presentation with pictures in front of PADETC staff in order to express our feelings and impression. The pictures with explanations presented by each participant are as follows.

Ms. Reiko Nakata



この木なんの木 気になる木

Kono Ki Nan no Ki • Kini naru Ki

(Title of a Japanese song, which means:

I wonder what this tree is – I am curious about it!)

This is a tree, a big tree, which I felt on the journey and through meeting people in Laos. And I felt that I am a part of this tree.

The root of the tree is the “Asian-beat” – songs and clapping rhythms of the village women, dance and music of the student volunteers. I felt like I “knew” this rhythm – or I should say my body and heart knew this rhythm. It reminded me

at once of my grandmother and mother, and I felt home. There I knew our roots are the same. I am Asian.

The trunk of the big tree, there is the life – the happy life of the human being. I felt that the women in the weaving village are living with both livability and contentment – they now have income and can buy things they need. And what is most important, they live happily together with their family and neighbors. They told us with joy that they could afford their children to go to school, and that they have good (and even better) relationship with their husbands and children.

But now the tree is growing bigger and bigger – in different directions. Main big directions of the branches of the tree are inspired by Mr. Sombath’s diagram. Of these branches, economy has the strongest power. The power is really strong, that is pulling everything towards it. The tree is losing its balance.

The village women are living life with balance and contentment – but will it last? Or is it

to be pulled towards economy? That is the question I want to ask. And I will be following it, as one of the small leaf on the big tree.

And that question comes back to me, too, reflecting. I will be in the middle of the economy branch soon, when I begin working at a private company in Japan. My challenge is, how to pull this branch towards the other branches, and making them connected and entwined. Though that must be a hard job to do, it is worth trying – with a smile!

This tree is named – after a communication and collaboration between us and PADETC staff – as the tree of Buddha!

Reiko Nakata©

Ms. Aiko Morikawa



Sustainable Living in Laos

Before coming to Laos, our group had an opportunity to meet Ms. Kobayashi, a specialist from JICA who used to work in Laos. She told us that Lao people may be the happiest people in the world. At that time, I had no idea why she would say so. However, having visited Laos and spent time with Lao people, I feel like I know why she said so.

After visiting Laos, I came to realise that the key to happiness / contentment is “togetherness” and “connectedness”. When I visited the weaving village, where one of the income generation projects of PADETC is taking place, I saw women

working together, cooking together, eating, singing and dancing together. They seemed very happy and contented with their life. They welcomed us into their home, and treated us just like their family. I immediately felt at home as I was invited to their home, and I had a great time eating food, singing and dancing together with other people. I felt very happy, and this experience has convinced me that happiness comes from feeling close to other people.

Also, I was fascinated by how Lao people were living closely to their surrounding nature. In the weaving village, vegetables and animals were grown and raised in their garden; clothes were made out of silk that silkworm produced; and furniture or houses were made of woods and bamboos. They were using what was available to them in the local community to sustain their

living, and they were using them very wisely. I thought they have a great wisdom that people in Japan or elsewhere may have lost.

I think it is important that people feel connected to other people and to the surrounding nature not only to feel happy / contented but also to have a sustainable living. However, Japanese people as well as others in the world have been forced to work more to make more money to survive in this globalised society, and losing the feelings of connectedness with others and nature. As a result, many people in Japan are committing suicide, feeling depressed or isolating themselves from the society.

What can we do to solve and cope with this problem? What can we do to make our living more sustainable in this globalised world? This is a difficult question, and no single answer is there. However, I now know that there are people who are working for the better like you, and it encourages me to do the same.

I am hoping that we keep this relationship last long, and work together for sustainable development. Thank you so much for your great SMILES ☺ Aiko

Mr. Yoshiyuki Nagata

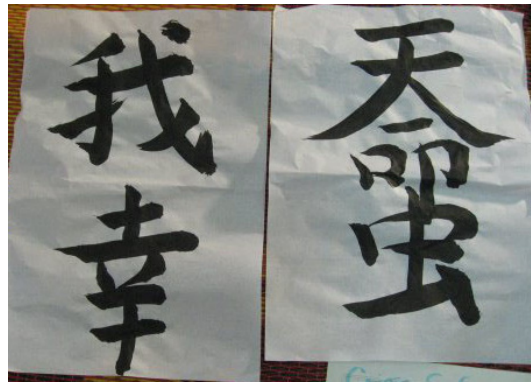


Dream of a Cocoon

~ Where are they going? ~

When a silkworm makes a cocoon, it dreams a beautiful dream, imaging that it will give a world of human beings comfort, security and happiness. Nowadays however, their dreams are being threatened by an unidentified black cloud of “globalisation”. As long as Kip, Laotian currency, from products of cocoons is connected with basic human needs such as health, school education, and possibly with modest luxuries including Honda, Sony, Nokia, one can see smiles on people’s faces. But there is a turning point where these smiles disappear, and their original dreams become unbalanced and twisted. Lao people in villages we visited seemed to be standing at the threshold of “globalisation,” and heading into a sphere of the black cloud.

Ms. Sachiyo Soga



The Earth and Myself

While I stayed in Vientiane, I had some opportunities to see the PADETC's activities. Among them, what moved me the most was the visit to the Thaphoxay village where women were engaged in weaving and producing the silk clothes. Women were very cheerful and looked like mothers in big families. They were connected with nature, for example, trees, rice and vegetables, animals, fields, and so on. And they were also connected with their families and the community. After visiting the village, we moved to the company, where silkworms were raised and strings from cocoons were produced. I saw a life cycle of silkworms for the first time.

I felt the connectedness of all things through these. I re-thought about silkworms from the view of a Japanese letter. Silkworms can be written “蚕” in Chinese character. Upper part is “天 heaven”, and lower part is “虫(insects or bugs)”. It was amazing and mystic that silkworms (蚕) in Japanese shows that silkworms are insects connected with the heaven. At that time, I had an inspiration to create a letter that there has a life (命) between heaven (天) and insects (虫). I created this new Chinese character to mean “the earth”. We, all of the lives, including the insects, animals, plants and so on are living in the Earth between the heaven and the land in which insects are living. The letter tells us that all of the lives are connected with the Earth. That is why we have to protect it, and not to dominate or control it.

And in the second paper, I expressed myself. In the earth, I also live. But I sometimes forget to reflect on myself because I am busy in daily life. Since coming to Vientiane, especially since I asked Mr.Somphone when the happiest time is, I have thought of myself. I tried to face myself. I stared at my name that means who I am, and I found the following.

My name is Soga (曾我) Sachiyo (幸代). Soga is a family name and there is ga (我) that means I or myself, and Sachiyo is a given name and there is sachi (幸) that means happiness. So, I wrote 我幸—I am happy, or I have a happiness.—in the paper. That is my name and I could realise who I am. I appreciate giving me such a wonderful opportunity. Thank you.

Ms. Tamami Zaha



Where We Live Together

This is the world I felt during our short but inspiring stay in Vientiane,

This is the world

Where people live hand in hand,

Some are smiling

Some are crying

Some are raging

Where everyone has a heart, which all connected within

This is the world

Where we see with our eyes

Where we listen with our ears

Where we feel with our skin

Where we taste, and speak, with our mouth

Where we smell with our nose

Where all the feelings are being integrated within

This is the world

Where there are dogs that we live together with

Where there are cats that we live together with

Where there are fish that we take

Where there are ducks that we take

Where there are silkworms producing silk that we wear

Where all the creatures are connected within

Where we fly by plethora of airplanes
Where we drive plethora of cars
Where we consume and discard the resources within,
Nonetheless, we create circulation within

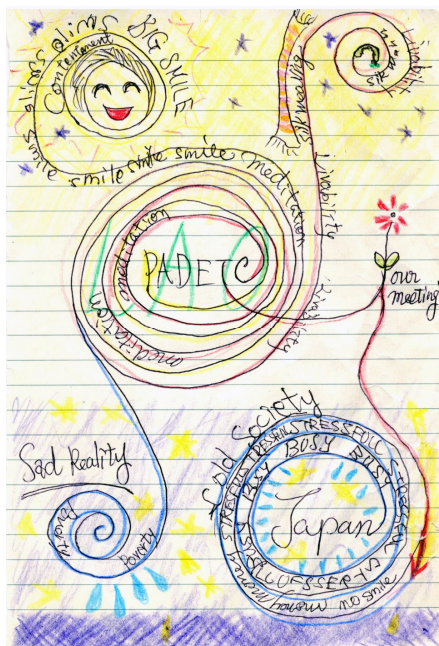
That is embraced by the earth and spirits
With grass, flowers, trees, and rivers

Where each and every one of us keeps brightness within
Which is the energy concentrated and permeate into the world

Whose pattern can be found in any corner of the globe

Where we live together.

Spiral Tension



Spiral has tension. There are two vectors; one extends upward and the other downward. In this figure, the vectors extending upward (yellow part) are connected with PADETC (the centre circle) and expressed good condition of the society. On the other hand, the downward circles are not connected with PADETC; Lao's sad reality and Japanese society. Although we saw some good practices of PADETC in Lao, we could also imagine the dark aspect such as poverty of this country. Japan as well, is facing some social problems due to losing connection or compassion

This figure may also be divided into right and left depending on economic circumstances. In addition, we should never miss some dark or bright points in each of upward and downward. They suggest that each side has opposite possibility.

Through this study tour we could share a lot of things with PADETC members, and it was just like flowers blooming. We can bring these flowers back to Japan and share them with our suffering friends.

Again, spiral has tension. It never comes back to the same place. We should lead its spin into upward direction.

Mr. Hironari Gotoh



Crisis of a Sustainable Society

I would like to explain about the country, Laos P.D.R., by making an analogy of a fish in the Mekong River.

A fish in the Mekong River is getting fatter and fatter these days.

Feeling dizzy and being constipated, he went to see a doctor one day. The doctor said,

“You have lifestyle-related diseases. A fish like you cannot become normal again once you start eating too much, and once you start eating only what you think are

delicious. You should eat moderately and have a balanced diet by having more plankton and having less fried food. If you do not change the way you live your life right now, you will end up with having a disease of an internal organ, and will be diagnosed with cancer within 10 years.”

Having heard this, a fish reflected on his own lifestyle.

Then, he realised that what the doctor told him was true: he *was* constantly having a lot of processed food that tastes good. Furthermore, he realised that abnormal change was occurring not only in his body, but also in the river itself: the temperature of the river was getting higher and higher these days. As the temperature of the river has gone up, his friends and he brought air conditioners in their rooms. While everyone says that it is comfortable to have air conditioners in their rooms, the temperature of the river keeps rising up. Then, he started to feel that something was wrong about his surrounding environment.

Annex B

- Keynote Lectures -

“Challenges of Development Work in Lao P.D.R.”

**Mr. Sombath Somphone, Founder and Director,
Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC)**

“Challenges of Development Work in Lao P.D.R.”

**Mr. Sombath Somphone, Founder and Director,
Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC)**

Issues raised by the participants

Before Mr. Somphone began his lecture, he asked participants of the “Study Tour for Learning Good Practices of ESD in Non-Formal Education” what they expected from visiting Laos and PADETC. Here are some of the issues raised by the participants:

- I think this tour is about learning good practices of ESD. We came here because we believe that PADETC is one of the best organisations that practice ESD. I am interested in how ESD is actually practiced and what kinds of approaches are being used to promote ESD at PADETC. I am also interested in the media-related programmes.
- When I read your homepage and heard about what you are doing, I became very interested in your leadership programme for young people, especially in how to educate the hearts of young people. I think educating the hearts of young people is one of the biggest concerns for everybody in the world. Japan is also one of the countries that need to learn how to educate the hearts of the youth. I am very interested in learning about the philosophy you have for educating young people.
- One of the challenging issues of ESD is intergenerational communication, and building relationships among different generations. Many of the young people in Japan have been disregarded and isolated from the society. I think we can learn a lot from your programmes in that area.
- I am interested in two things. First, I am interested in the relationship between your organisation and the government. Perhaps there are lots of difficulties, but you always keep your motivation at a high level. How do you do that? I am also interested in the monk education and community development. What do you think about the relationship between ESD and Buddhism?
- How does your programme deal with environmental issues?
- I am interested in how your concepts are turned into action at a grassroots level. I

once heard your presentation, and it was very interesting. Now it is time for us to see what is happening here.

Lecture

Mr. Somphone then started his lecture, beginning with a description of the way he and his colleagues are working in Laos—with a smile.

«For the power-point sheets Mr. Somphone used in his lecture, see Chapter IV in this report.»

Over here, we don't take things very seriously. We joke and have a good time as we work. We are generally slow. We are not on time. We sleep and don't plan things in so much detail. We plan parts of it, and if things change, we adjust. That is our way. We are not quite as developed as Japan where everything is programmed.

Okay, first of all, we welcome you all to PADETC and to Laos and Vientiane. It is a very sunny day today. For the past couple of days, it was quite cold and wet. You see the mud on streets around this area, because it was raining. It was a part of the storm that hit China. Over the weekend, I was up in a mountainous area, where it was quite windy and cold. So we are lucky to see the sun today; it is the first time to see the sun in a week.

I am going to start a presentation with quite general and theoretical things. For those who listened to me in Tokyo, I will add on few things and present it more casually.

After my lecture, Bounpanh will talk about the monk activities, and Chanthalangsy, the president of the youth assembly here, will talk about the youth activities, because youth is the centre of our programme. PADETC also has programmes that focus on learning local knowledge, but I have not contacted those people for today.

History of Development Work: Centralised Systems

We want to talk about ESD, Education for Sustainable Development. There are two words: "education" and "sustainable development." These are not new things. Historically, people have pursued them for centuries. We have been trying to do this, but in different ways. If we summarise, there will be two types. I am not going back so far as Confucianism. In Laos, the government system tried to make something to improve the situation. After we had monarchy, we had communism, which is the centralised system with one party. Now, we seem to be shifting from communism to capitalism, but we still have one single party. So basically, the world has two systems now: communism and capitalism. But notice that both are centralised. One is centralised by one party and the other is centralised by other parties, which are the

corporations. The government thinks they are in charge, but it is corporations that really control the power. We have the globalisation of this—namely the centralised corporation—with both single and multiple political parties.

Laos is part of this movement, and is undergoing changes very fast. Five years ago in Vientiane, you hardly saw any cars; people were mostly on bicycles and motorbikes, or they walked. Today, nobody walks, nobody is on bicycle; they are on motorbikes and a lot more in cars. We are changing. What is happening is that people here have to work harder because they want to change materially. We all are reduced to be consumers and workers. We are slaves of our needs. There has been a development in terms of materials and technology, but not much development has been seen in terms of human souls.

Challenge for Laos

The challenge for Laos in my personal view is that we should not follow this kind of model where somebody else has power in a centralised party. I think we should be more participatory, and we have that system in our culture. But now we are following this mode and joining globalisation, where not we but someone else owns the power. That is causing problems. Now, for example, we have the problem of land titling. People are chased off the land, and foreigners plant rubber plants, grow soy beans and corn, and, set up factories here and there. It is a change that people like you and other people in other countries have gone through, and we are following that right now.

“Happiness” and “Livability and Contentment”

I feel that we should use our existing strength, which is, for example, environmental capital. We should capitalise on that and look at livability and contentment. Sometimes we use the word “happiness.” But the word “happiness” in English doesn’t mean what we mean here. The English word “happiness” is very shallow. “I want to be happy, so I drink beer, I take drugs.” But that is not what we mean by happiness. So I tried to find a more appropriate word and changed the words to “livability” and “contentment.” The core of these concepts is the same as happiness, well-being, or livelihood; which has different contents from culture to culture, and from place to place.

We should learn from the mistakes of others. But we don’t see the mistakes of others, and we tend to follow the mistakes from history. There are good lessons from a hundred and a thousand years ago, but we usually don’t learn from them. We want to go forward and never look backward. We think that we are smart, but I begin to realise that we are not. The only thing to do is to nurture and care for the planet with the same care as we do for our own family and society. We should be more caring, not just consuming a lot more than we need.

Buddhism and Government Institutions

I will talk about the Buddhism (see PowerPoint no. 4, in IV-1). I compare Buddhism and government institutions. Buddhism is old--it is over 2000 years old. Government institutions are more recent. The basic objective of Buddhism is to get rid of all sufferings, whereas government institutions are hoping to increase income to get rid of economic poverty. The latter is more sector-like, where income comes on the top of the policy, but suffering in Buddhism covers so many things.

One of the main emphases of Buddhism is harmony with nature--natural ecology. We don't see ourselves as separate from nature. Indeed, we come from nature and we are a part of it. That is the philosophy of Buddhism. Government institutions basically want to extract from nature, so that gross national income will increase.

Buddhism doesn't stress self; rather, we should always be humble. We care about others. We are compassionate. But the present institutions of education and government say that we have to be more competitive. We stress much on self. Whereas in Buddhism, you basically get rid of the self, in the present system, self is very big. These are almost opposing philosophies.

Buddhism says we should detach and give up. Government institutions say we should consume and own as much as we can afford, and we compare ourselves to the guy next door, and to our neighbors.

In Buddhism, we should refrain from and conquer our own emotions, and be able to lead ourselves. Internalisation is important. In today's system, we should get richer and conquer others, or press others so that we can accumulate more wealth.

The whole thing for Buddhism is total equality including yourself and the environment with your fellow human beings. In today's system, you basically have inequality with the trickle-down system. This is not a policy, but a fact. There are richer people with more capital and more poor people. The system doesn't work. It feeds on inequality.

Lastly, Buddhism emphasises *learning*, which is close to the word "education." Government institutions emphasise *teaching*, which is close to the word "schooling."

This is where we have come now. Two thousand or two thousand and five hundred years ago, we had the Buddhist philosophy, but now we have lost it. We don't have soul anymore; we just have more material things.

Inequality: Need for Balance

What are we supposed to do about this inequality, where the government is making inequality in the society? We need a balance. We probably cannot go back and do what we did. But at the same time, we know we cannot go on the way we are going right now. We have to find the balance somewhere. In fact, Buddha mentioned that also. Imagine playing a string

instrument; if you tighten the string too tight, it breaks and there is no music. But if it is too slack, it does not make any music either. It has to be somewhere in the middle.

Because of the greed, jealousy, and pride of humans, what we nurture will never be enough. The economy will never become strong enough for everyone to have access to basic needs, because somebody will always want to take more.

You need to fulfill the basic needs, while you cannot be too greedy and take too much. But how can we do that? That is the question. I feel that as we look back to our own literature, modern education should include spiritual matters and educate the heart. We should teach young people to help others as much as possible, or at least refrain from harming others (PowerPoint no. 5). This idea is from a Tibetan monk.

We seem to join this inequality. We enrich ourselves by taking advantage of others and the environment. We say that we should care, but do we do it? That is the question, including myself. Do I do it enough? Or do I just talk? Talking a lot is not sufficient.

Balanced Development Model

This is my model of balanced development (PowerPoint no.5). Or I use the term “holistic development.” Before, I had “happiness” as an ultimate goal, but since happiness in English has too shallow a meaning, I chose the words “contentment” and “livability,” which make the concept more comprehensible and identifiable for Asian people. “Contentment” is more internal, and “livability” is more materialistic. We need the balance of the two. This is what I call holistic—a balance of yin and yang. It comes from the Confucian philosophy.

The more important thing in this model is the various components. We need so many things in order to obtain a balance and to be holistic. But when happiness is represented as the ultimate goal, the first thing people ask is how to measure happiness. I would say that there is no need to measure happiness. But people are so used to have this aspect of GDP and GNP, and they have to measure it. That’s why the Bhutanese use the word Gross National Happiness, GNH. Automatically, economists ask you how to measure.

But you don’t have to measure happiness. It is like nirvana. When people go into meditation, they ask Buddha, whether they reach nirvana, and when they reach nirvana. Buddha says, “That’s the path. Just get yourself in that direction. When you get there or whether you get there doesn’t matter. You have to be content and happy. Only by meditating this way, you are mostly to get to nirvana which is inside of you, not anywhere else, but inside of your head and emotion; inside of your spirituality.”

This is very difficult for us to see, because we are so trained to see things outside, and not inside ourselves. We are also trained to codify and think everything that occurs is measurable. But there is something not measurable. But this idea isn’t accepted because it is not scientific.

We are so caught in shallow scientific matters.

To reach happiness and contentment, you need to balance all these four dimensions. The economy should not be left out. When people talk about happiness, they sometimes feel that they don't want economic development. I think that we do want economic development, but not at the expense of the other three dimensions.

The most important thing is the heart, which is very missing today. We only try to develop the head, but the head and the heart have to be synchronised and develop together. Actually, we don't even focus on the head either; we only use the head to repeat and know information, but not to think. We should focus on wisdom, and we need to think and assess. Thus, the heart and head are missing. And I put the heart larger than the head, because we are missing the heart the most.

People are very important components in the model. Young people are put right in the centre of the model, because if we want to talk about the future and about sustainability, it is young people who stay the longest, and not me. Between economy and love, there are the parents supporting these two dimensions. The elderly use the local wisdom about preserving the culture and nature. They know more than anybody else. They transfer these through education--the quality school, the quality education. It is not schooling and repeating. Finally, we, of course, need a good government to help, promote and support all of these.

Starting with the Young

The question is where to start in this model. We start basically from education and young people. But we don't ignore all of the other ingredients, including governance and leadership.

I said we should not measure happiness, but we should measure these four ingredients. Make sure you have all these ingredients that make the dish delicious. Make sure that you have these ingredients, and that you cook them well, properly, and they taste good.

The economy today develops at the expense of nature, culture and the heart. The economy is substituting for something important and promoting consumption. Parents work very hard to make sure to send the kids to school, so as to satisfy their material needs. The government has to promote corporations to bring jobs, so that parents can work. So the economy is developing at the expense of the other three pillars. At the end, where is happiness? Completely disappeared and forgotten. Then you choose to drink beer or sake to get happiness!

Balancing Wisdom and Information

Now, I compare teaching in the new information age and Buddhist teaching, and discuss about how to balance them (PowerPoint no.9). The Buddhist concept of learning is very similar to *education*, whereas the concept of learning in the information age is similar to *schooling*.

Buddhism accepts disease, poverty, old age and death. That's the reality of life. But the information age doesn't want to talk about or face them. Instead of diseases, they want to talk about strength and power, and instead of poverty, they want to show wealth. You don't show poor people. Instead of old age, they want to show beautiful people and youth. Since death is unavoidable, they use killing and pain as entertainment--wrestling, boxing and violent movies.

In Buddhist teaching, you should try to reflect. That's why meditation comes in right here. It is an attempt to try to understand, whereas in the information age, everything becomes entertainment, and people make money out of it.

If you look at the styles of education, Buddhist teaching is more of experiential learning. In the information age, teaching is more force-feeding and rote learning, which tells you not to think but just take.

Education of the Heart, and the Heart of Education

The base of the balanced development model is the heart. I would say that ESD is a SD (sustainable development) model with education at the centre of it. Thus, education is the heart of the sustainable development model, and educating the heart is the heart of education. But now we omit our heart completely from the education. That's why people grow up and become leaders, and then start leading the violence. They are not trained. But the question is how to get at the heart. It is not easy.

Educating is Like Gardening

I will quote an idea from the great Zen master, Thich Nyat Hanh (PowerPoint no.11). He is still alive and is a monk. He considers education and compares it to gardening. In gardening, you have the natural seeds there. We give them water and nurture them. Then there will be flowers, wheat and vegetables. But the gardener has to learn how to suppress the weeds, so that you have a useful garden. We have to promote, nurture and stimulate positive thoughts, while also suppressing negative thoughts like the weeds. Positive thoughts are compassion, love, caring, and the art of giving, which means not expecting anything in return. Negative thoughts are hatred, anger, greed, selfishness and over-consumption. All these are the education of the heart, and this should be the heart of education. But they are not included in education at all.

For any good gardening, you need a good gardener. That's the coach, trainer or the facilitator. I think ACCU is trying to play the role of the facilitator, and so do UNESCO, teachers and parents. For good gardening, you will need a good environment, fertile soil, and non-poisonous water and air. To make sure that there is no poison means, for example, violent films should be out of the air. It is to get rid of the bad seeds--bad thoughts. You really need a good gardener, a good trainer, a mindful gardener, or a role model to try to suppress the

negative thoughts and raise the positive. Even the garden cannot go on by itself (it needs help from the gardener). That's why masters and *senseis* are important. But if a *sensei* is doing it for money, you lose the meaning of *sensei*. She should be the owner of wisdom, but now they are doing it to just get a salary. It has become work or a job.

Educating the Heart at School

How do we educate the heart in school? We start with extra-curricular activities. And then they slowly go in the curriculum itself through meditation, practice, mindful reading and decision-making. This is a lot of work. We can only do what we can, what the young people can absorb, what the teachers allow, what the school allows, what the government allows, and what the parents will accept. We need to continue to push it. We try to be a gardener. We give water and nurture the good thoughts, and suppress the bad ones.

You bring in all the gardeners, for example, monks. We all are gardening in school. Only by educating the heart can we get to deep happiness in life. Deep happiness is the same as contentment.

This chart describes the process of education (PowerPoint no. 14). The education system and schooling focus only on the first one that are knowledge and sometimes skills. But the last half, that are sincerity, responsibility, and values, are not usually included in our schooling. We just don't learn these things. The path or the process of education has to be done joyfully, not stressfully.

Education and Sustainable Development are Interrelated

Education and sustainable development are interrelated. They are mutually reinforcing, mutually supporting, and complementary. The two are together.

The aim of education is to promote and support the sustainable development issues. Development, on the other side, promotes and supports relevant and joyful learning in and outside the school environment. Education is doing development work, and development is actually automatically educating people. Thus, if you have a bad school, you are supporting non-sustainable development, and if you have non-sustainable development, you actually support bad real-life learning experiences. That is actually a model of learning.

Happiness as a New Science?

Happiness is a new science. The Westerners think it is. Modern economists and the psychologists think it is. But is it a new science?

This is a graph made by a well-known economist, Sir Richard Layard, who is the founder of the London School of Economics and adviser to the British governments on economy

(PowerPoint no.21). He plotted income in \$1000 [increments] from 1945 to 2000. Income continues to rise from \$25,000 to over \$70,000 per year as an average in the United States. At the same time, he checks the percentage of people who feel content in their life. It increases at the beginning, and then it remains pretty much the same, even decreasing a bit.

What I want to point out is different patterns (PowerPoint no.21). First, when incomes grow, contentment and happiness increase also. But as income continues to grow, happiness doesn't grow. This graph made by the economist is suggestive. People are supposed to be happy with increased income, but at a certain point, they realise that they just need the income for basic needs. But in our development, we keep pushing this. The point is, we do need something else when we have moved to a certain level. We need the heart and the environment.

Let's look at the different countries according to their average income and percentage of people who were content or satisfied with their life (PowerPoint no.22). There is no correlation between poor countries and happiness. The United States and Norway have high income and satisfied people. Here you see Indonesia and the Philippines with low income, but also very happy people. So the rule doesn't work globally. For the countries where war is going on, it is irrelevant because security is a problem there and war destabilises different components.

Layard tried to identify the factors affecting happiness (PowerPoint no.24). The highest one is family relationships and not income. Secondly, financial situations. Work is also a human relationship. Thus, "human relationship" also means security in income. Community and friends are also important. Health is important. The last two, freedom and values, is different for everybody.

So, what is happiness? I think it's a balance between spiritual and physical well-being, or internal and external comforts, internal contentment and external comfort, or a combination of contentment and livability.

What Makes You Happy?

This chart came out in the UNESCO publication for ESD (PowerPoint no. 26). Two or three gentlemen here at PADETC did the work.

We surveyed young people here at primary school age, lower secondary school age, upper secondary, and university level. We find that the factors which make them happy are physical and emotional, external and internal. They are pretty much the same but, at the oldest three age levels, the percentage of the answers at the emotional level is always higher. Emotional is more important than physical, or more or less the same, whereas for the youngest people at the age of 6-10 years, over 50% say "being with nature." They are really enjoying the environment.

Among the emotional factors, the highest one is usually being with family. Family relationships and friends are the most important.

Interestingly, a similar study was done in Canada over three years ago. The results came out almost the same. The conclusion they had was that young people are not happy with material things. They don't value material things as highly as the adults think they do. They value friends and families much higher, and material things are at the bottom. This is where the generation gap is.

The kids demand things because they want to get attention. It's not the material itself they want; it's the attention of the parents. Because the parents are so tired of working to pay for the needs, they have no time for the kids. That's why the kids make a mess. It is their way of communication. The more the parents work, the more there is the generation gap.

If these are the factors that comprise the happiness of the young people, why can't we do the education activities according to the proportion of these factors? If kids like to be in nature, all the learning should be with nature. If they like animals, learning should be with animals, cover animals, and name animals. Of course, kids like different animals. You start with the interest of the kids to bring out the learning and the inner intelligence.

Even in higher levels of school, if they like to be with families, why can't we, families, share the work and do a project, do activities with the kids? Then they would be happy and they would value it, they would not make material demands on parents anymore. They would not ask for extra attention.

But usually we don't make the link between what the kids are interested in or what makes the kids happy and the curriculum or the pedagogy of teaching. I think it will take a lot of years until you see activities based on the interests of kids according to their age. If we can do this, we don't need to force everyone to go to school. They will really enjoy it. Now they don't enjoy it; they are forced to go.

Leadership

We need leadership at the bottom of the model for good governance.

You have to start with the people who go through the education, to value one another and the heart, and to become the next generation of leaders. The government has to support getting leaders through this process, because only then will we have a system where ESD is actually implemented. If you don't have government support, you don't have leaders at all strata of the administration. If you are not going to focus on this, you are not going to have good support for ESD.

Linking Young People and Local Knowledge

To bring about change for a sustainable future, we should not be left in the hands of the state structures alone. Right now, the structure on the top is quite centralised. We cannot rely on

the government alone, nor can we rely too much on technology. I don't mean that we shouldn't use them, but we shouldn't rely on this.

What we need is awareness-raising among young people at the grassroots level with the parents. Young people and parents, local knowledge and wisdom, are so critical as a vantage point.

Young people are interested in local knowledge and in old people, whereas old people are interested in young people. Thus, if you get old people to introduce local knowledge, young people will play along. We have a project started three years ago. It is amazing how the young and the old get together so well. But the schoolteachers don't really want to join in with it. When the community and the young students teach one another how to do things on the weekends, they actually do learn math, language, and science through teaching. Only then the teachers start to join in.

We try to see whether we can integrate local knowledge into the curriculum. We have already received permission from the government to introduce local knowledge and indigenous knowledge into schools as the local curriculum. In our constitution, 20% of the curriculum should be local curriculum, but all these years, no one did anything about it. So we try to use local wisdom and local knowledge as the local curriculum. We are developing the material. It is amazing that young people and old people get together very well. Old people teach the young, and young boys teach themselves in school. They are so proud of themselves to know about culture and the ways of doing things or living. This is reducing the generation gap.

We hope that it also reduces the migration from rural to urban areas. If you give young people the value of what they have, they don't want to go away. Today, the television is showing the rich, wealthy and beautiful somewhere else. People want to follow this and leave their hometown. By introducing local knowledge to the young people, they would have greater self-esteem and want to stay. That's the hypothesis. But it will take a long time to assess it scientifically.

PADETC's Pathway to ESD

Where is PADETC trying to go? We don't know. ESD is just on the path in the direction to contentment and livability, to happiness and contentment: a balanced life. We have many volunteers at the university level, high school level, and even at the primary school level, to help improve education in schools. We also have monk volunteers to educate the hearts of students, teachers, and parents. This was started later, 2-3 years ago, and is not as developed as the young volunteers yet.

We will introduce and expand project-based, activity-based learning, which includes income-generation and SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and local knowledge. Kids should

learn in existing schools, based on activities and their life that they know about and see by themselves. This should include local knowledge and income generation. The economy is important and they have to learn about what it should be like. We don't want to be dominated by the capitalist system.

We are preparing a new generation of teachers to deliver holistic education including ESD. This is quite new and we have not come very far yet, but we are doing it through the help of the students. We are also preparing to set up learning centres, which are going to be a new generation of school.

SME and appropriate technology is integrated into local wisdom. We are trying to revive this, so that people can make money from it. For example, silks and weaving is the local wisdom. We try to think how to get people to make income from it, how to improve the profit, how to integrate technology, or how to intensively improve the quality. That is the part we are moving on. SME is using appropriate technology, and is based on what we have in our tradition.

PADETC and Government

I try to answer the questions you have raised at the beginning of the lecture.

PADETC and government. Our relationship with the government is very good at the moment. But we designed it in such a way that we don't show off what we do. We try to stay very humble because it is a one-party government, and we cannot criticise it. We just do the things that we can within the system. Through demonstration of success, the government sees our work and they know that we do it from our heart. We don't want an award from the government, we just do it because we feel it's our responsibility. We want to be responsible citizens. So the government appreciates our being. This is very different from Western ways. In Western ways, people tend to show off and advertise themselves. Here we do the opposite--you just stay quiet. In fact, later this month, the government is giving us the medal of recognition for our contribution to development. So we have built a good relationship. We have developed it through these years.

It's not easy to change the mindsets of the teachers. So we began with introducing the young people to play first. They started on weekends and outside of the classroom. Slowly the kids accepted the activities, and the volunteers moved into the classrooms. The teachers saw the benefits and then they accepted it. It is the same thing with the government. When they see the benefit, they accept it. Now we expanded the quality schools from ten to over one hundred schools. The materials that we produced were only for 137 schools, but we know they copy them, and they now are used by 400-500 schools. We don't know how many at the moment.

Environment

We are not very strong on environment in terms of philosophy, concept and principles. We do only activities, because if I present the whole idea, the authority will be afraid, and that could be a challenge for us. So what I do is only activities--one activity there, one activity here and only one at a time. On environmental issues, we do activities like using organic fertilizer, organic vegetable recycling, and earthworm raising. Now we're experimenting in schools in three communities. There we take the environment as a learning laboratory. We want to do more, but it is still experimental.

How we turn concepts into action is basically the same as doing activities. Because people are not trained to think, we try not to make them think too much. It's just like a puzzle--one piece there, and one piece here. When you have enough pieces, you have the whole picture. Let them discover the picture themselves--we don't tell them what it is. That is how we introduce concepts into reality. We start it doing activities in reality, and let people discover the concept. I never present the concept in lectures.

Use of Media

We produce DVDs and use them as instructional training materials. I use media for instructional training materials. We don't advertise much on air, because it is up to the government. Sometimes we make a programme on the young people. We have many radio and TV programmes. But they are done by the government.

We focus on taking pictures by camera or capturing the activity of the young people by video-camera in order to make a documentary. But since something like this needs to be approved by the government to go on the air, we just use the Chinese DVD players to watch and show to people who need.

We also use audio recorders. The young people can go out with them and interview people, and later they report that on their radio programme.

So, media is used for learning. It is to get the kids interested in the activities. Actually, they are very interested in seeing and hearing themselves and their friends, but barely in the content of it. So we don't take content first, but we take the interest first. This is how we translate concepts to action using the media.

Q&A

Q: I think educating the heart is very important, but at the same time, our society also wants people who are competitive. We have to be competitive to a certain level. Thus, even though young people are educated in a holistic way in the school, when they go into the society, they

face the challenge to be competitive. So what they are learning at school, and what they are doing in the society, is different. How can you train young people in this situation?

A: The question of how to start is always a good question. But I think Japan is like any society and you have good people and good practice there. The question is how to identify them, to bring them up in the media, talk and discuss about that. It means that you have to use the media. Don't be used by the media--use the media.

I went to see the lake 40 kilometers north of Tokyo, where almost 1000 primary school students preserved the lake from pollution. That's their heart. You have it already there. But it is not captured, and made available or accessible to the general public. You should start there and with the kids within it. Then you will win the heart of someone exposed to it, and you also give pride to the people working on it. You acknowledge them. I think the man who runs that programme deserves an honorary Ph.D., but he is only a junior high school graduate. He does excellent work. Every society has this kind of people and practice. That's one.

Secondly, I think you should start with yourself. If you are paid by somebody to do a certain work, you have to be responsible for your work. The question is whether you have choice what kind of work to do. Choosing a job is very important. If you don't have the choice, you have to comply with the rules because you need to bring rice home to feed your family.

People don't want to understand the importance of their heart. But still I give them my heart, and then you will win their heart. Don't try to put the blame on others all the time. Start what you yourself can do. It is not easy. You have to practice this gardening--suppress your hatred, your anger. You have to repeat that practice daily, and even many times a day, to confront your emotions. Some people say, before you get angry at somebody, why don't you stop? Close your eyes, take a deep breath three times, before you react. You should start reacting with a smile first. It is more important to be able to be your own leader. Lead yourself. But this is theory, and to do it is not very easy. But this is the path--this is the way. I sometimes also lose my temper and I usually regret it. I wake up in the morning and say to myself: "Okay, I should not lose my temper at anybody. Because you are going to suffer". It deteriorates. So control yourself, and smile more! If the society doesn't smile at you, it doesn't matter. You smile to the society.

Q: Do you have any advice to adults in Japan? They all already missed their chance to have heart education, or they have to work in a really economic-based society. But they have to become parents, and educate their children in a family. Do you have any advice for them?

A: I don't know, because you really have to know the society to give the appropriate idea and the advice for what people confront in Japan. I think I come from a different society. Recently I saw in the news that the Japanese men are really upset now because they cannot retain their

wives. When they are retired, their wives will divorce them. So there is a group of men, forming an association, teaching one another how to love and care for their wives. They are practicing to say "I love you," and "What can I do for you?" They were not trained to do that from when they were young. And trying to do that in old age is very difficult. That's why it is always worthwhile to start with young people. For example, teaching courtesy and no gender differences from the young age--pre-school--is important. So you have to expose yourselves to other people, and to be in touch with people. That's one step.

I want to point out one thing we are doing here. When we are working with young people--for example, to make the mind map of what makes you happy--it is not only to get data. The big thing is participating in it, realising "hey, there's something in me." They get to know that there is emotional happiness and material happiness, and they realise, for example, "I am actually valuing the emotional happiness as more important than material happiness. But why am I not doing it?" So this process is awakening for them. By conducting this survey, we disturb you, we make people realise. And maybe they will form a group to help parents and their children, because they realised that kids are happy if they spend time with their parents. It is just like the husband realises that his wife will be happy if he spends time with her. Realisation. Everything is there, but not realised. The needs are there.

Everyone is moving too fast to realise something. Try to slow down a little bit more--how much will we lose? Actually you don't lose anything. If you realise it, you will gain it. Just slow down. If husbands know they will gain--that they can manage to retain their wives--they will slow down. If you want to prevent your kids from committing suicide, parents should slow down. But someone has to make him or her realise that. It is heavy.

Q: Could you please elaborate a little bit about the difference between contentment and livability?

A: Contentment is more internal--what makes you feel satisfied, what pleases you emotionally. This is very deep. It is your feelings. Material happiness (=livability) is more comfort. You don't have to sweat, don't have to work so hard, and you don't have to waste so much time. And the two are related. If your neighbor is not friendly, you don't want to live in that place. It's no longer liveable if the neighbor bothers you. So livability is material and external from you, but can have influence on your contentment, or your internal stability. So they are like yin and yang; one is the inside, and the other is the outside.

You can use your internal to influence others, by smiling, by being compassionate, and you can also use your internal to block out the anger from other people. If people are angry, you can block that out and you can smile. You can have control over the environment by the way you react to it.

Q: You were using the words emotional and physical happiness. What is the difference between emotional and physical?

A: It is the same thing as contentment and livability. I translated them from our own language. The word “happiness” is one, but comprises of two things--one is material, the other is emotional. The two together mean deep happiness. I separated this into two words because it is easier for people here to understand what we mean.

Q: It is very interesting because when you talk about emotion, you talk about friends and family also. It means that the concept is both interrelated to other people and internal to you.

A: Yes, it is interrelated. We ask people to classify which one is emotional and which one physical by themselves. It is according to their understanding. Our language has these two concepts already. I don't know if you have that word in Japanese too, but we have one word *Kom suk*, which means deep happiness. We have three words: *Kom suk*, *Suk kai*, *Sabai jai*. *Suk kai* is physical comfort. *Sabai jai* means satisfied. You use *Sabai di* as a greeting word. It means: “Are you happy? Are you satisfied?” It is not physical but more emotional. Do you have the word?

Q: Yes, I think it is *Kouhuku* and *Manzoku* in Japanese.

A: I think Asians tend to have these words. I was told that the closest word to the happiness which the Asians mean is the word “bliss”.

Q: I think I have an actual example. When he was drinking Lao beer, he was so happy. That was a shallow happiness. Now after listening to your talk, he is now going into a deep happiness.

A: Again, Buddha doesn't say that we should stop drinking, but you should do it moderately. It is the middle way. He doesn't omit everything. But when Buddhism is translated into practice, it becomes a rigid ritual. It is the same in education. We have the Ministry of Education, and then we have the schooling, which is very rigid. But that is not the original intention. In Buddhism, the temple is like schooling and is very rigid, and they do rituals. This is not different from force-feeding. These two, Buddhism and education, are the same. We lose its original identity and its original practice and meaning through time. That's why I said that human beings are not very smart. We are born with a lot of inner intelligence, but we don't stimulate it out. When you don't stimulate it, it becomes rusty. Each generation becomes dumber and dumber. So we rely on computers now, not our own brains.

“Sustainability in the Educational Philosophy and Practice of Moo Baan Dek”

**Ms. Rajani Dhongchai,
Principal, Moo Baan Dek (Children’s Village School)**

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Definition of Sustainability

If we are to talk about sustainability, we first have to think about what is unsustainable. If we can answer that question, we can work out an approach to sustainable education, and can make children think about sustainability. Our children come from backgrounds of suffering--some were abused children, some were abandoned, and others were often very poor. They have difficulty in their life. If they remember the suffering, they cannot think or do anything for sustainability. So, we started to learn about their backgrounds, thought to provide therapy, and help them recover. Once they become happy, we think that they can learn everything very well.

So how to do this is the question--how to provide therapy and how to help children recover themselves. We learned from ancient wisdom. The ancient wisdom is: if children grow up in a good environment, they will grow as healthy adults. We call this good environment for children *Karayana Mitaa*. It means good teachers, good media, good movies, and good books.

Art Education and Natural Farming

We also value arts. Arts are very good because children can see and touch beautiful things. We have paintings, batik and ceramics. We have a teacher of ceramics. And we have weaving and furniture making as art work, too.

I think that one activity that is very important is natural farming. We still follow Masanobu Fukuoka's idea now. He is a famous Japanese farmer. His activity, the natural farming, is a very good activity for children. It is very good for their healing, because they touch the earth. They touch the green, the seeds and the trees, and at the same time, they touch butterflies, they touch many insects, and they touch many animals underground. The children have many questions. I think that is a good way of learning, that they have many questions. For example, they ask why the grasshopper has many colors. When there is a question, we answer it by playing several kinds of games. After that, they can answer the question by themselves--why the grasshoppers have many colors. We teach them counting by making them count the legs of the grasshoppers. If there are five grasshoppers, and one has eight legs, it means there are forty legs. This is mathematics. They can learn about the environment and mathematics at the same time. After the activity, they write about the experience in Thai. So in this way, they enjoy studying.

We don't use chemicals--no chemical pesticides, no chemical fertilizer. It means we don't kill any insects, we don't kill any animals, and we don't kill any germs. One day, the insects ate the leaves of the vegetables, and I threw out the question: how should we solve the problem? Maybe we won't have enough vegetables to eat, if the insects eat vegetables like this. Then one child said, "Mama, you have to expand the land for growing vegetables: half of them are for the insects, and the other half are for us to eat." In this way, they learn from the environment, and the environment cultivates the spirit. So this is what we think is a very good activity.

Role of Nature in Education

After that, we learned that it is good for children to use their hands. Moving hands is like training brains. This, I read it in the book *Brain Gym*. The book is about gymnastics of the brain. If we work, it is like exercising the brain; it makes them clever. So I think we are walking on the right path.

By interacting with the environment, they learn how to preserve nature. And you know, the river is very important for children. If they swim every day, they get happy. For example, that is my experience; when the children are fighting, I throw both of them into the river. Then, they swim and swim, and become good friends. So the river is very important.

One day, one of my teachers asked the students: "If the water is very dirty, what do you think will happen to you?" They didn't answer the question. But they said that we have to keep the water clean. In this way, we always think about how to keep the water clean and how to keep our trees and the animals healthy.

We think that lessons in the classrooms are not so important, but our way of life is the most important. So if they practice everything in the way of life, they can remember, and they can think, and at the same time they can think in the right way, so that the heart will grow. The heart becomes the spirit--the spirit of the heart. After that, they can practice preserving the environment, which is our activity.

Protesting Against Dam Construction

There is a big protest in Isaan, in the northeast part of Thailand, near Laos and Cambodia. The protesting is about a dam, because the government is making a big dam. The government said it is for providing electricity for Bangkok. It impacts the farmers and the fishermen in Isaan. If there is a dam, fish like salmon cannot produce fish babies, because the dam breaks down the ecology. The fish cannot lay the eggs anymore. It means the river loses many species of fish. As a result, the fishermen become poorer and poorer. They cannot get money from the fish, and at the same time, they cannot preserve the fish for the next generation. So people started to protest against the government. Because this is a big project, it impacts their daily life. We took our

children to visit the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and listened to their problems. After that, we sat down, and our students discussed the way of life in Bangkok. In Bangkok, there are many big department stores, which consume a lot of energy. Because of the large energy consumption, the government has to build many dams in Isaan.

Fifty years ago, Isaan was a very healthy area, but now it has become dry. Farmers cannot grow rice, and they cannot get mushrooms in the forest. The forest is like a supermarket for the poor. They go to the forest, and they get much food: wild mushrooms, wild vegetables, wild fruit, and sometimes small animals. The people living around the forest learn that if they eat, they have to preserve what they can eat for next year. But the people in Bangkok don't know this. Especially the businessmen don't know about the environment--they don't know about the forest because universities in Thailand do not teach about environment. The architects who make big buildings and big roads know how to build and design them only, and they don't know about the environment.

Ten years ago, I went to the forest with my friends. Thirteen students here tried to stop others from building pipeline from Myanmar to Thailand to get gas from Myanmar. I told the architect: "If you build the pipeline along the healthy forest, you will destroy the ecological system there." I said to him that the forest has provided water for people who live in Kanchanaburi and many provinces, so if you are to damage the forests, the forest will not provide water for us. Then, the architect said to me that he can repair the forest. I said the forest is quite different from the water tap. If it is a water tap, you can repair it. But nobody can repair the forest. I said: "If you say you can repair it, I ask you to bring dinosaurs back to our world. If you can bring the dinosaurs back to our world, I will believe you. Then I believe that you can repair the forest."

Current Educational Challenges and the Importance of Environmental Education

The education system in Thailand is not good. They produce specialists. But the specialists don't know about the ecology and about the environment. They destroy the environment. That's why I asked the question-- why, for example, global warming is a big problem for people now. Because we produce specialists only-- doctors, architects, etc. It is not holistic. That's why we have many conflicts.

So, we took our children to the site, and let them learn about protecting the environment. And after visiting the site, children came here, and we sat down and discussed. I raised the question: "What do you think can be done to solve this problem?" I asked two or three boys. First they said that now we use a lot of paper. If we use a lot of paper, we damage the forest, because we have to cut trees to produce the paper. Secondly, they talked about the electricity, the power supply. If we are careful about this, we don't need the dam. We don't need the

generator and the GET, the generator authority of Thailand. They have to produce a lot of electricity for big department stores and for air conditioners which are everywhere in Bangkok, because it is so hot. We have to use air conditioners, and we need a lot of power.

So, we take them to study outside, and we come back, sit down and discuss the problems that the poor people in Thailand are facing now. After that, we discuss what we should do. In Moo Baan Dek, we have lessons in the classroom, but it is not good enough for the students. What is outside of the classroom is very important. They can learn by touching the real things, touching the real life. After that they can come and sit down and talk. And we have to think what we should do. We need, need, need, and need, like a consumer. Now we live in a consumerism culture. We need that, we need those, we need this... need, need, need, and need. We cannot stop. If we cannot stop, it means that our country has to use a lot of energy for producing things. This is the first thing.

The second thing is the following: one day we read the newspaper, saying that the big stars got sick, and became poor. Now they have to collect the garbage to earn a salary. So we said that we have to see and watch our garbage waste like plastic bottles, etc. We have to learn about the garbage. If we don't reuse the plastic, it takes 100 years for it to become the soil. We produce garbage in the world every day. In Bangkok and in Japan, we put the food in a plastic food box. Everything needs 100 years to 500 years to become soil again. It means that we produce a lot of waste--a lot of plastic waste and bottle waste.

We cannot burn those wastes. If we burn it, it produces pollution. But when we go back to the past in our history, like in ancient times, we used the leaf, for example banana leaves, to put the food on. Banana leaf has a very good smell, and it takes only one week to become compost. Paper also takes one week to become compost. If we use materials like this, we can produce the compost for the world and the earth. But with plastic, we make pollution for our earth.

Once we went to the market after we discussed about waste, and bought durian for eating. The seller put the durian in a plastic bag, and gave it to us. Children said to me: "Mama, you taught me plastic is not good. Why do you use the plastic?" I said, "Yes, very good question. I forgot!" One said that he would cut my mark. I could not pass the examination, because I forgot what I taught them.

In this way, everyone discusses and talks about the environment every day here. After that we think about how to keep the children learning about the environment and how to make the environment happy and healthy.

Food Education

We said to the children many times that if we are to change our way of life, we have to eat everything. We plant everything and eat everything. For example, we eat white vegetables

on a big tree, tamarind, as vegetables. White vegetables are good for health--they are like herbs. If we can eat herbs, it means that your body is healthy. If we don't have any chemicals, our health is good, too.

So we practice our way of life, and we put it in the content of the classroom, and outside the classroom. We have to learn every day. In Moo Baan Dek, we think that our education is not only studying Thai, mathematics, science, or history, but we think that every step of our life is learning. Every day, we are cooking, planting the vegetables, swimming in the pool, and breathing the fresh air with mindfulness. It means you are educating yourself. At the same time, education is about a good relationship between human and human. Good relationships between humans and animals and trees is itself very good education. So we try to educate ourselves and educate our children at the same time.

Building an Ecological Secondary School

Now, we are thinking about a secondary school in Moo Baan Dek, expanding the education. We will build it next to the vegetable farm. We have a friend, our colleague, who is coming here to work together on it. We think about how we can produce biogas from the waste and use the energy for the school. We will make the compost, and when the gas comes out, we will use the gas in the kitchen. We will use the gas for the electricity. The thing that remains will become compost in the farm. If we feed the chickens, waste comes from the chickens, and it becomes the food for the fit. And we can get the water for the farm. So it will be like a circle. We think that by this way, children can see and learn to remind themselves. When they grow up, they can teach other people to change their way of life--not the modern way of life, but they have to think about the local wisdom. Local wisdom is very important knowledge.

If you come next year, you will see the secondary school. We will try to start this year. We think and discuss about the building, if it is going to be a bamboo house or something else. There are so many styles of house made from natural things. That is our dream.

Q&A

Comment from Mr. Nagata: I have seen the school nearly since its establishment. It always keeps developing, and that keeps Rajani so busy, but so energetic. She is still going, and going to build a secondary alternative school with a new style—an ecological recycling style. It sounds good, wonderful. Thank you very much.

Q: You have told us that you bring children to Moo Baan Dek and change their unsustainable living into sustainable living. It is a very strange question, but I just want to know what is the

criteria for you to determine what is sustainable and what is not.

A: If you say sustainable, it means that our way of life does not produce problems for ourselves. For example, if I think of myself, if every day I breathe in and breathe out, if my life makes me happy, it means no problem for me. If we are happy like this, it means that it is “sustainable” for my life. When I think about my life, I don’t think about myself only, because what we do and how we live is related to everything around. If we make others happy, it means that I am sustainable. And they are sustainable, too. If my children think like this, and do like this, it means that they can live sustainably in their lives. If we are unsustainable, it means that we make a lot of problems.

Q: Yes, yes... so the balance, the stability. The spirit.

A: Yes.

Q: How do the children come here? Do you bring them here or do children want to come here?

A: Let’s see. The children don’t know about this place, and so the adults--social workers from this school or the government and non-governmental organisations--bring them here. Or, some parents bring them here. Our children come from all over Thailand. Some from the north--some are tribal people, minority people--and some from the south. Mostly from the countryside in the north, the poor area in Thailand, and some from Kanchanaburi, and some from Isaan.

Q: Are there any children who don’t want to stay here?

A: If they don’t want to stay here, they want go back to their family. If the warmest family, single mother or single father can take care [of the child], take care very well, we give money for the scholarship and for basic needs, so that they can stay with their family. [Sometimes on the]...first day, they don’t want to stay here. But after only one week, they can change their mind. They want to stay here. But I think that the first impression [is important]. It means that the first day, if they come here, and they receive a good welcome--like the teacher goes and gives them a warm welcome and explains about friends and the rules of this school--they will want to stay here on the first day. So it depends on the technique of the teacher.

Q: I would like to know what the children do when they grow older. What do they do after “graduation”?

A: I would like to say that our aim is happiness. It means, if they go out and grow up, and they have a family, if they can bring happiness to the family, that is my success. I don’t care the salary of the children. If they are happy, and if they can have healthy food, it is okay. And about the career, about the job, they get many different kinds of jobs. Some work for a national bank,

some work for companies, some work for foundations, like FFC, some become teachers in kindergartens at the foundation, and some become teachers here. And some become farmers, and some work as freelancers.

Q: What is the most important thing for you when you communicate with the children? And what do you do when children have some problems?

A: The first thing is to make them feel secure--that they know that there is no danger, no hitting, no beating, no violence--and that they have the food, house, and clothes. I think that is the security, the first thing. The second is to make them to feel like I am with them. It is like I respect them. I respect the children. And we think that that can change the children's behaviour. The third is about love. They need love and affection. Love and affection mean that we accept their behaviour. If you steal, I will tell you that I love you and you are my son, by you made me feel unhappy. The fourth is the power. The relationship between you and the student is like a top-down one. It means that I have more power. You can keep them from running out of the school, etc. So the power is very important. We have to change the relationship to be the friend--mama to the son, *okaasan* to the son. If we change like this, they are happy. And we think that the happiness makes them be a good child.

Q: Some of us here are planning to be teachers in the future. And it is very likely that we will work in urban areas like busy Tokyo. If we work in Tokyo, we don't have a rich environment like you have here. In such a situation, what can we do to teach children the importance of taking care of the environment? Do you have any advice for us?

A: When we talk about the environment, we think about the trees, we think about the river, we think about the animals, and human beings. But if we think about the environment in town, there are many cars, there is much pollution, etc. I think that is useful for the lesson. We have to use problem-based education. If we are facing pollution, how do you solve this problem? That is the big question that the children have to answer. I think that we have to start from ourselves. Not from other people--we have to start from us. If you don't produce pollution, you become a good model to the people. It means that you have to build the balance inside, and you have to think about what you do. It means that the education gives us the opportunity to grow.

Comment from Mr. Nagata: Everything starts with ourselves!

Q: Who are the teachers or the staff here, and what kind of background do they have? How do you train or educate them?

A: That is a big job! Because the corporations come to Thailand, and consumerism is here,

many people who live outside, they think about consumerism. At first, we adapted teachers from the rural areas, at the beginning of the school. I have learned that the modern life has come to everywhere in Thailand--in the brains. So after that, I adapt the graduates from the universities. And we ask SEM (Spirit in Education Movement) to develop our teachers--in Bangkok and sometimes here. For me, we have a meeting every week where we address the problems, like how we did in the afternoon when you came and saw me in the afternoon. At the meeting the teachers, vocational teachers, and social workers, carpenters, and the housewives--the wives of the carpenters gather. They are assumed to be the teachers for the students. Because the students can learn from their way of life, they can learn by sitting down and speaking together. Sometimes students come to their houses and eat dinner with them so that they have time to discuss. We have to do a lot--everyone here. At the staff meeting, we write down problems on the white-board, and I ask them how to solve the problems. They have to think. Teachers have to think, everyone has to think to solve the problem. It is the way to educate them. If they are facing the problem, they have to think about how to solve it. If they can solve it perfectly, it means they have the education already. And if they cannot solve the problem, or if they solve this one, but make another deep problem, it is not perfect. So we have to encourage them to solve every problem. If the teachers can think, it means that they can teach students like this, too. So we have to say that SEM helps me to train the teachers, and for me, we do our job training every week. We sit down in the afternoon here.

Q: SEM is located in Bangkok? Who is the organiser?

A: Pibop Dhongchai and Pam who used to be a teacher here. Pibop is only at the board of SEM.

Q: You said right now that you have to solve the problem perfectly and not cause another big problem. But is it possible to solve the problem perfectly?

A: It is impossible! But some problems can be solved. It is the nature of humans. We have many complicated issues around us. So many times, we change our minds, and change our thinking. [Different factors] affect us. For example, I loved Summerhill School very much--freedom and self- government. But now, we meet Buddhism and learn about Buddhism. So, I change to be Buddhist. Buddhism is about the balance inside and ecology. You don't kill animals, you don't kill anything. And the nature can make the balance, and becomes sustainable. Sustain circle.

Q: You just said, we don't kill the insects, you don't kill animals, but we have to eat animals to survive, so we have to kill animals.

A: Yes, of course. But we don't kill a lot. We don't kill many, many, many, many, and have a loss of species. We kill only what is needed for our food. And my stomach is so small. If we

have enough for the stomach, we don't have to kill many. But the consumerism, you have many, many things. If we go to the restaurant, we eat only a spoon piece of fish, but we get a big one. And after that we throw it away.

Q: So you teach children to eat everything?

A: Yes. Eat enough, adequate.

Q: Let me ask you the last question. In Laos, we talked a lot about what happiness is. What is happiness — *Kuam suk* — for you?

A: *Kuam suk* (Happiness in Thai language) means, if you know what you need, if you know about what adequateness is. If we have more, we share with other people. After we have enough, we share with other people. For example, if I buy one kilogram of oranges, I eat only three. The others we give to our teachers and to our students who live in my house. It means that the children are happy, and I'm happy too.

Comment from Mr. Nagata: I think Moo Baan Dek education is teaching what adequateness is to the children, and this is important for the foundation of sustainable development.

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