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(1) OFIX Program Report

■2009 Ando Program/ Osaka Invitational Program for Short-Term Overseas Trainees in Architecture and Arts

Every year OFIX welcomes 10 trainees from around Asia to take part in this program. The program began thanks to generous funding offered by the world renowned architect from Osaka, Tadao Ando. The program also receives the support of a number of architectural firms who provide training for the participants during their time here. It is hoped that the knowledge of both architecture and Japanese culture that the students gain will help to promote exchange and development in their home countries.

The program began in 1993, making this its 18th year. In total we have welcomed 169 people from 19 different countries and regions. This year the program was held from the 14th September to 13th October, with 10 participants from 8 different countries and regions. They took part in training at four companies, Takenaka Corporation, Obayashi Corporation, Zenitaka Corporation, and Daiwa House Industries, where they visited project sites, and learnt about the most up to date technologies. The students also took part in a discussion day with Professor Gunther Nitschke of the Institute for East Asia Architecture, as well as in tours of sites in Osaka, a homestay, and a courtesy visit to the Vice Governor of Osaka Prefecture on the 21st September.

During a visit to Tadao Ando's office the trainees spoke with him, and received instruction from staff there. The trainees were also lucky enough to take part in a symposium on Awaji Island with students from the Kobe Design University. The theme for the symposium was "Solution in Asian Design".

At the closing ceremony for the program we were honored to welcome representatives from the Royal Thai Consulate General, the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia, the Consulate General of India, the Consulate General of the Peoples Republic of China, and the Honorary Consulate of Mongolia. We were also delighted to welcome over 50 people from 18 countries, participants in the Asian International Network Seminar, including one former participant from the 2003 Ando Program to the reception.

All of the trainees headed home with fond memories of their time in Osaka, and a deep affection for the place and its people. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all that assisted us during the running of the program.

Name	Home Country/Region
Cynthia chun-yu Hsieh	Taiwan/Taipei
Jung Sowon	Korea/Pusan
Ayu Sukma Adelia	Indonesia/Bali
Muhammad Hanif Wicaksono	Indonesia/East Java
Darshana Shanthapriya Vithanage	Sri Lanka/Anuradhapura
Worawut Matthayan	Thailand/Torang
Makwana Nirav Arvindbhai	India/Gujarat
Namrata Maharjan	Nepal/Bagmati
Yao ming dong	China/Shanghai
Ariunzaya Chinbat	Mongolia/Ulan Bator



Trainees during visit to Tadao Ando's Office



1. What got you interested in Architecture?

I love things that are beautiful. As an architect, making the world more and more beautiful is my responsibility. I am very proud to be working in such a field.

2. Is this your first time in Osaka? What do you make of the city?

No, but this is the first time I have stayed for such a long time in Osaka. In this way, I have been able to experience real Osaka life. I found that not only are people in Osaka kind and helpful but also the city is very beautiful and active.

3. How is Osaka different from your hometown in Taiwan?

Compared with my hometown, Osaka is much more clean and beautiful.

4. What have you gained from taking part in this programme?

I have been very lucky to get the chance to join this programme. First, I have made lots of friends such as with the other trainees from different countries and my colleagues in Obayashi. Second, I have been able to learn about Japanese culture thanks to my host family, for example, the kimono and tea ceremony. I also bought my first kimono. Lastly, I visited many impressive and marvelous masterpieces made by Tadao Ando. For a student of architecture, there is nothing more exciting than visiting such great buildings. Additionally, these buildings are designed by someone that I truly admire.

5. What are your impressions of Tadao Ando's work?

All the buildings are made using very pure geometry which is classical and elegant. Also, I extremely like the

way in which natural light is controlled in Ando's work. Through the sunlight, the building becomes a part of the natural environment. The gap between the inside and outside is totally broken in Ando's work.

6. Tell us a bit about the training you have been taking part in at Obayashi?

There have been three parts to the training. First is design training. We were assigned a project by the design department at Obayashi. The name of the project is Osaka Gallery in Shinsaibashi. We had to finish the project in 7 days and had a final review in front of all members of the design department. The second part consisted of construction site viewing with the civil engineering department. In this part of the training, we learned about bridge and dam construction. The third part of the training concerned architectural construction. During these two days, we visited some temples where Obayashi is doing some construction remodeling in Nara and Kyoto.

7. How have you been spending your free time in Osaka? What sights/food have you enjoyed?

In fact, I did not have much free time in Osaka. Usually, I and the other trainees went sightseeing to places such as temples, or shopping together in Umeda or Shinsaibashi. There are several kinds of food I enjoyed in Osaka, for instance, okonomiyaki, ramen, and curry rice. I also learned how to make okonomiyaki by myself during my homestay. That was a lot of fun!

8. Tell us about your future plans on returning to Taiwan

Because I am a Phd student, after returning to Taiwan, I will finish my Phd degree as soon as possible. I hope I will find a teaching position at the university and continue my academic career.

(2) Notices

■ Tea Ceremony Event for International Students

Do you fancy wearing a kimono and experiencing a traditional Japanese tea ceremony?

Date: Sunday 21st November

Time: First Group 10:30am-12:30pm

Second Group 1pm-3pm

Place: Orion International House

(400m from Uenoshiba Station on JR Hanwa Line)

Tours of the International House will also be held. Those interested please get in touch with OFIX at 06-6966-2400.

■ African Film Festival in Osaka!

This event is being held for the second time after last years great success. There will also be a talk given by a youth volunteer who worked in Ethiopia after the film showing on the 13th November. For the 19th December film the director will be on hand for a special talk. Please come along!!

The flyer can be seen here:

http://www.jica.go.jp/osaka/event/docs/101016_01.pdf

Saturday 13th November

13:30~ Film: Black Gold

15:15~16:15 Talk about Ethiopia by JICA volunteer

【Special Event】 Sunday 19th December

13:30~ Film: Abuba and Yaaba

15:30~16:30 Special talk with director

【Entry fee】 Free

【Number】 Max 200

【Venue】 I-House (small hall)

<http://www.ih-osaka.or.jp/i.house/900/map.html>

【Applications・Enquiries】

I-House Information and Planning Dept
8-2-6 Uehonmachi, Tennoji-ku, Osaka-shi,
〒543-0001

TEL: 06-6773-8989

URL: <http://www.ih-osaka.or.jp>

Please give your name, contact details, and number of tickets you require.

■ Supporting the Survey into Information Dissemination to Foreign Residents in Osaka

This survey is being undertaken by OFIX in conjunction with the Minoh Association for Global Awareness, and the Tondabayashi Intercultural Communication Centre.

The survey will focus on assessing how information is disseminated amongst foreign communities in Osaka, as well as aim to seek out the key people and organisations acting as focal

■ International Exchange Festival

points in this. Through this it is hoped that effective methods of communication can be developed.

Please get in touch if you have any information with regards to key people, and information dissemination in Osaka. We are also looking for people to assist us in interpreting and translating during interviews with foreign residents.

(Tel: 06-6966-2400, ask for Someya or Yanagisaki)

The International Exchange Festival is an event organised by the Participants Support Council of the Japanese Language Institute, Kansai, and takes place at the Institute. It is an opportunity for students studying at the Institute and local citizens to meet and take part in international exchange. Students will introduce their country's culture, and there will be introductions to Japanese culture such as calligraphy and origami. In the main hall there will be an ethnic clothing fashion show, as well as musical performances. Please

come along!

Date/Time : Sunday 23rd November, 13:00 ~ 16:00

Place : Japan Foundation, Japanese Language Institute, Kansai (Tajiri Town)

Directions: Shuttle bus from Rinku Town Station (Nankai/JR Lines)

Participation Fee : Free

Enquiries : Secretariat

TEL 072-443-3800 (Weds/Fri)

At all other times please email:

kokusai@mk.city.kishiwada.osaka.jp

(3) OFIX Network

■ The Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia

The Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia was first established in Kobe in 1954. Due to the Hanshin earthquake which hit Kobe in 1995, it was moved to its current site in Shinsaibashi area, Osaka.

Having located in Osaka, the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia covers 3 areas namely Kansai, Chugoku and Shikoku, which consists of 17 Prefectures in western part of Japan. The current serving Consul General is Mr. Ibnu Hadi, who began his term of office in January this year.

While political matters are covered by the Embassy in Tokyo, the Consulate General largely deals with economic, consular, information and socio cultural issues. Since the Consulate General is located in Kansai area, home to Japan's big companies and industries, it pays great importance on the enhancement of economic relations in trade and investment between Indonesia and West Japan, particularly Kansai.

To attract investment to Indonesia, the Consulate General provides information on Indonesia's economic condition, as well as business and investment opportunities in Indonesia, while at the same time maintaining good relations with Japanese counterparts who have been operating in Indonesia. It also assists Indonesian businessmen to be able to enter Japanese market.

As for consular activities, it is the duty of the Consulate General to protect and to serve its citizens residing in its areas. Thus the Consulate General provides assistance to Indonesian citizens regarding their passport and other legal documents, as well as information and assistance on legal matters. Consular activities also include issuing visas

and other documents for Japanese and foreign nationals who wish to go to Indonesia.

In the socio cultural and tourism sphere, the Consulate General is continuously working to promote greater relations between the two countries through various activities. Cooperating with Japanese organizations, friendship associations, art and cultural clubs, friends of Indonesia, and other related institutions, many activities have been conducted, such as art and cultural performances, exhibitions, cultural classes, cooking classes, as well as familiarization trips to Indonesia. One of the biggest cultural events was held in 2008, showing a collaboration of Indonesian and Japanese performance to commemorate the 50th diplomatic relations between the two countries.

During the month of November, there will be a training for Indonesia trainees on banking and entrepreneurship, seminar on the Indonesia-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement co-hosted by the Japan Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the International Business Promotion Center Osaka, seminar on the protection of women, and Indonesian film viewing.

For further details, please contact us at:

Resona Semba Building 6th Fl.

4-4-21, Minami Semba, Chuo-ku, Osaka 542-0081

Tel.: 06-6252-9825 – 31, Fax.: 06-6252-9872

Website: www.indonesia-osaka.org



(4) Osaka International Club News

■ Letter from the Shanghai Expo Chen Jinxin (Student at Osaka City University)

In the summer of 2010 I experience something I will never forget. I returned to China for the first time in a while, and met Haibo. Some may know who Haibo is, but for me he is the character that represents the "Better City, Better Life" slogan of the Shanghai Expo. With over 246 huge pavilions run by countries, regions, and international organizations, this is said to be the largest expo in history.

From the start of the year I had been waiting for the chance to visit. Finally in September I was able to go along with a friend. The expo site was only 20 minutes away from our hotel by taxi, but the whole town was crowded, and it took nearly double that to get to the venue. We arrived at the venue at around 8am.

It was still early, so we thought it wouldn't be too busy. How wrong we were! After queuing for an hour we finally got into the site. Since I am studying in Japan my friend said we had to go to the Japan pavilion. However, it was very popular, and we were told we would have to wait 4 hours to get in! So we gave up on that and went to the

Japan industries pavilion instead.

The main characteristic of this pavilion was that many Japanese companies collaborated to bring it to fruition. Eight companies were on show including Kikkoman and INAX. All of the companies used the latest 3D technology to introduce their current products.

The most popular was probably the so-called "worlds best toilet" on show by INAX. Just by waving your hand the toilet seat lifts up, there is a washlet, and the toilet flushes automatically. It was a real hit with the locals.

After this, we went to the Korean, Chinese, French, and Italian pavilions. All had different designs which represented the respective countries, and left a lasting impression on our hearts.

~From OFIX~

OFIX is proud to have a display on show at the Osaka Pavilion, introducing the work of OFIX and the Orion International House.

(6) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

■ The Cost of Smoking

Hi everyone, Richard here again.

This month was somewhat of a painful one for smokers in Japan. October 1st saw the biggest tax increases on cigarettes the country has ever seen. The price of an average packet of cigarettes went from 300 yen to 410 yen. The aim of the government (aside from the obvious rise in tax revenue) is to encourage smokers to quit. Japan has always seemed to me to be an extremely smoker-friendly place, so I was rather surprised when I first heard about this rather large price hike. As a non-smoker the change doesn't affect me directly, but I am interested to see how much of an effect it has on the number of smokers in Japan.

With convenience stores open 24 hours a day, and cigarette vending machines on nearly every corner, getting hold of a pack is never a problem. Indeed, up until very recently there was nothing to stop kids buying from the machines. Thankfully a system called TASPO (an acronym for "tobacco passport") was introduced in 2008 whereby only those with an ID card are able to use the machines. There is no similar system for the thousands of beer vending machines yet though which still amazes me!

To many smokers the nearly 40% jump in price may seem a tad harsh, but compared with the UK where a single pack costs in the region of 1000 yen (5 pounds), smokers in Japan still have it easy! Indeed, things were made even more difficult for smokers in the UK few years ago when

smoking was made illegal in all public buildings (offices, restaurants, bars etc). Of course it goes without saying that the ban was put in place to protect both customers and staff from the effects of second-hand smoke. The rationale being that smoking is optional, but breathing is not. The only problem with the ban is that people now tend to gather to smoke directly outside the entrances to bars and restaurants, meaning you have to pass through a cloud of smoke to get inside!

In Japan there is a very different approach to banning smoking in public places. Although recent years have seen an increase in the number of restaurants with non-smoking areas, entirely smoke free establishments are rather hard to come by. The focus in Japan seems to be on banning smoking in outdoor areas, such as on the Midosuji Road, the main shopping street in Osaka. Here it would seem that the priority is not protecting people from second-hand smoke, but to stop people littering the streets with their cigarette butts, or burning small children who may be walking nearby a smoker. Although valid points, this has always seemed to me to be missing the point. Indoor restrictions are definitely more important in my opinion.

With any restrictions put in place there are those that feel hard done by, and of course I understand this. However, I can only see positive things in a smoke-free society.

- ◎ Comments and suggestions for OFIX News: info@ofix.or.jp
- ◎ Osaka International Club Reports: clubnews@ofix.or.jp
- ◎ Register to OFIX News: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/index.html>
- ◎ OFIX News Back Numbers: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber.html>

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