



# NEWSLETTER

Japan International Labour Foundation

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## POSITIVE Regional Seminar in Nepal

In July, JILAF and the Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC) jointly held a four-day POSITIVE seminar on occupational safety and health in Chitwan in the central part of Nepal. It was the fourth OSH seminar to be held in Nepal since the first one was held in Katmandu last May.

The goal of this seminar was to train local trainers and expand the POSITIVE program into regional locations. The seminar was mainly conducted by two local trainers who participated in both the first POSITIVE seminar in Katmandu and the follow-up seminar in Pokhara. Dr. Toru Yoshikawa from the Institute for Science of Labour attended to provide supplementary lectures and guide the local trainers. There were 25 seminar participants, including four women. One of the participants had already attended a previous POSITIVE seminar. The young participants — with an average age of 33.2 — quickly grasped the point of the POSITIVE program and participated actively in the seminar.

Dr. Yoshikawa opened the seminar with an overview of the POSITIVE program and “POST-IT Voting” Game. In this game, the participants vote for the



Vote for examples of improvements.

two best photos from around 10 good examples of OSH improvements. The improvement that garnered the most votes was a cart for carrying heavy

objects. At the beginning of the seminar, participants didn't recognize some of the improvements in the photos, but by the end they were able to pick out a variety of good examples and points to be improved. The seminar contained many games and the attendees could enjoy this learning experience.

At the end of the seminar, the participants gave a presentation pinpointing the health and safety improvements at a factory they had toured as well as identifying places where improvements were needed. The presentation was attended by the factory manager, who described management's goals regarding the points brought up by the participants and problems surrounding implementation of some of the improvements. It was a great opportunity for union members to gain an understanding of management's efforts toward improving occupational safety and health. Through interactions such as this, the POSITIVE program in Nepal is not only promoting safety and health, but is also helping to promote cooperation between labor and management.

### What Is the POSITIVE Program?

The POSITIVE (Participation-Oriented Safety Improvements by Trade Union Initiative) program is JILAF's participatory-style occupational safety and health program for trade-union leaders. So far, program seminars have been held in Asian nations. The goal of the program is to prevent industrial accidents by making the workers themselves aware of the importance of OSH and by implementing low-cost changes that promote OSH.

Generally, a POSITIVE seminar runs for four days. The seminar includes a visit to a local factory, after which participants learn and hold group discussions on six technical areas of OSH. Participants then create an action plan for improving safety and health in their

own workplaces. The most important part of the program is that seminar participants act as trainers, educating other workers and promote OSH at their own workplace after attending the seminar.

### The State of Affairs in Nepal

The seminar was originally planned to be held in June. However, it was post-



Visit to a Coca-Cola factory.

poned for one month due to the massacre of the Nepali royal family in their Katmandu palace. Because of the unstable situation in Nepal — including the confusion after the palace massacre and terrorist activities by Maoist groups — we tried to collect as much information as possible to confirm our safety. Finally we decided to hold the seminar at the end of July.

At the time of the seminar, the confusion and unrest in the streets of Katmandu had calmed down and, except for increased security around the palace, things were no different than prior to the palace incident. Information about the activities of the Maoist rebels was unavailable in Japan, but on arriving in Nepal we discovered that the rebel activities were having an influence in the Chitwan area where the seminar was to be held. Fortunately, however, we did not get into any dangerous situation. During our stay in Nepal, there was a major political change. Nepali Prime Minister Koirala stepped down and was replaced by a new prime minister.

# POSITIVE Seminar in Khentii, Mongolia

Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU) and JILAF jointly held a POSITIVE regional seminar from July 3 to 6. Since 1998, eight POSITIVE seminars have been held in Mongolia at



Mr. Toyama explaining the idea of voting for good examples of improvements.

both the national and regional levels, resulting in the creation of skilled trainers in various industries and provinces.

This January, a meeting of local POSITIVE trainers was held for the first time in a suburb of Ulaanbaatar so that trainers could share their experiences. Participants announced safety and health improvements made in their own workplaces and exchanged thoughts and ideas. They also discussed the future course of safety and health activities and decided to establish an OSH committee within CMTU. Monthly committee meetings have been held since February.

Although POSITIVE activities have been spreading steadily since the program was first implemented in Mongolia three years ago, it comes as no surprise

in a country as large and extensive as Mongolia that so far seminars have only been held in around half of the country's 22 provinces. This latest seminar was held in the outlying province of Khentii, which lies some 340 kilometers east of Ulaanbaatar. Khentii — population 70,000 — is the birthplace of the famous figure from history, Genghis Khan.

Twenty-five people — 13 men and 12 women — took part in the seminar. Five of them came from the neighboring province of Sukhbaatar.

The seminar began with tours of Khentii office of Telecom Mongolia and a local bread and confectionary factory. With checklists in hand, participants inspected safety and health aspects of the workplaces while listening to the explanations of workplace managers. Knowing that their checklists would serve as the basis for future group discussions, the participants kept their eyes wide open for existing or needed safety and health improvements.

Lectures were led by Mr. Naoki Toyama from Tokyo Occupational Safety and Health Center, General-Secretary Amgalanbaatar of Ulaanbaatar City's Trade Union Federation, and Sister Batbayar of Khentii Aimag's Trade Union Federation. The young Brother Amgalanbaatar, who has already given lectures as a core trainer, was the main force behind this seminar.

All the participants were intensely involved in the group discussions. On the final day of the seminar they presented proposals for low-cost, realistic

safety and health improvements to managers at both of the workplaces they had toured on the first day. Hopefully, participants will put what they learned during the seminar to use in their own unions and work toward creating a safer and better workplace.



Checklist exercise at the telecommunication company.

The greatest factor behind the success of the POSITIVE program in Mongolia is the CMTU leadership, starting with President Adiya. They recognize that the POSITIVE program for low-cost, effective OSH improvements is the perfect fit for Mongolia, which has been suffering through difficult economic times since turning to the market economy. The leadership is actively promoting the program. These are exactly the kind of local trade union-based Field Projects that JILAF always wants to see. We would like to once again express our gratitude to those at CMTU for their constant help and cooperation and for their warm hospitality to seminar participants from Japan.

## FROM JIMBOCHO

### Jimbocho Is a Great Place — Come See for Yourself!

This time I'm going to change the framework of this column a little and talk about the place for which this column is named — Jimbocho, Kanda.

JILAF moved to Jimbocho, right in the middle of Tokyo near both the Imperial Palace and Yasukuni Shrine, in the fall of 1995. Our office is near Kanda's famous bookstore district, which is home to major bookstores such as Sanseido as well as well-known shops carrying used and antique books. When I need a break from work, I like to tell my colleagues, "I'm going on a little trip," and I go outside and drift along through the ocean of books for awhile.

In recent years, a variety of wonderful ethnic restaurants have also sprung up one after another in Jimbocho. Chinese, Thai, Russian and Brazilian cuisine can be found just down the street. These restaurants make Jimbocho an attractive spot for young people. Of course, Kanda's famous, centuries-old *soba* noodle, *sushi* and *unagi* (eel) shops are still going strong, too. With so many places to choose from, every lunch hour is like a pilgrimage.

Although Jimbocho is located in the heart of Tokyo, its streets are lined with old two-story brick buildings that date to before the Second World War. Entering

Jimbocho from other parts of Tokyo which bristle with modern glass-and-steel skyscrapers is like stepping back in time. I still clearly remember what a young man from the All-China Federation of Trade Unions said to me on his first visit to Tokyo.

"I've been studying Japanese ever since high school and Tokyo would come up often in our lessons. I couldn't wait to come and see what a great metropolis it was. But here in Jimbocho, it's really just like a village, isn't it?"

Indeed!

(Yamada)

## Dreams That Much-needed Aid Will Make Its Way to Asian Countries

My relationship with the Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF) started back in March 1999, when I was working for RENGO's International Division. At that time, I took part in research concerning the Nepalese School Project of JILAF, with the purpose of developing a new international cooperation project for RENGO. During the study trip, we visited schools that were being operated by JILAF in cooperation with the NTUC, national center in Nepal. Most of the schools were not proper buildings, and in many cases classes were simply held in makeshift houses that resembled deserted shanties. Despite such conditions, what I saw there were children studying earnestly, eyes expressing a deep desire to learn. It appeared that the efforts that had been made by JILAF to eliminate child labor and provide children with educational opportunities had indeed started to take root in schools in the mountainous region.

I was seconded from RENGO to ICFTU-APRO's office in Singapore on December 1, 2000, and I came to realize that APRO also had various cooperative relationships with JILAF. The Women's Seminar (November 6-7, 2000), held prior to the APRO regional conference was supported by JILAF. It helped that many female union members who attended the seminar were elected to the national center delegation and therefore were able to attend the APRO regional conference (November 8-10), which was held immediately after. Accordingly, the seminar contributed to increase the participation of women at the regional conference.

JILAF's support of youth activities led to the establishment of the APRO Youth Committee in the Asian and Pacific region, which was the first establishment among the three ICFTU regional organizations. Also, in the field of safety and health, I heard from my colleague that there were plans to use a textbook edited by JILAF in the seminars being held at OHSE Institute, which was founded by APRO in Bangkok, Thailand. Meanwhile, the Advanced Leadership Course has started its four-week program for this year. This course is also supported by JILAF and is aimed at training future trade-union leaders. The course was started back in 1992 and celebrated its 10th year with the number of graduates from the course now being 200. As a result, I have realized that the activities of APRO are closely related with JILAF in various

### PROFILE



### Midori Sasaki

Senior Officer, Information Department  
International Confederation of Free Trade  
Unions — Asian and Pacific Regional  
Organization (ICFTU-APRO)

Midori Sasaki was born in 1962. In 1986, she joined Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK), where she worked in the Public Relations Program Department in Tokyo, NHK Osaka News Department, as well as the World News Department in Tokyo. From 1997, she worked for the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO) in its International Affairs Department, and the Gender Equality Department, etc. She was later seconded from JTUC-RENGO to ICFTU-APRO in Singapore, and has been in the current post since December 2000.

aspects.

In APRO, I am in charge of information activities, and we publish a newsletter called "Labor Flash" twice a week. Working in Singapore provides me with a sense that is quite different from when I was working in Japan. In Singapore, I feel that I am at the center of Asia due to several unique features. First, Singapore possesses a multi-ethnic culture in which its citizens come from Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian descent. Secondly, the country is geographically advantageous as the hub of Asia — as represented by Changi International Airport. Lastly, Singapore is also the communication center of Asia providing various types of information via the English language.

Many parts of Asia still require aid. What is expected of JILAF is that it continues to offer aid that is truly needed by the people in Asian countries, no matter how far away from Japan they may seem in terms of location, culture or language. I strongly believe APRO should promote further cooperation with JILAF in order to play a vital role throughout the Asian and Pacific region. JILAF and APRO can attain the goal of providing aid that is both substantial and beneficial for people in this region. It is my sincere hope that by providing useful information in my post I will make a contribution to this role.

## Letter from a Trainee (14) Hosting the South Asia Team

To learn about one of JILAF's key projects, the Invitation Program, I participated in the hosting of the South Asia Team this May. Preparation for their visit began at least one to two months prior to the team's arrival. We reviewed the letters of recommendation from the various national centers and sent out invitations. Then we prepared all the materials that would be used during their two-week stay and put them into sepa-

rate files with the name of each visitor. After reading their names again and again, you start to imagine what they look like although you've never seen their faces.

Phonecalls to the organizations that the team will be visiting and arrangements for interpreters and hotel reservations also needed to be made. We were busy late into the night until the very eve of the team's arrival. Finally the day of arrival came. As we waited for the limousine bus from the airport to arrive, I nervously wondered, "Did they all make it on their planes alright? Didn't they get lost in the airport?"

Then, "Here it comes!" As soon as I saw those eight faces as they stepped off the bus, all the exhaustion and stress of the hours and days of preparation disappeared in an instant.

This team was made up of members from seven national centers from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Although they are all from South Asia, there are differences

in both language and religion. Nevertheless, they worked together as well as any other team and were fun-loving and pleasant. The laughter never seemed to stop.

The participants were all extremely eager to learn how Japan rebuilt and developed after the war and what role the trade unions played in that process. They listened attentively to all the lectures and asked pertinent questions. At the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, they peered intently at the exhibits. I sensed their desire to learn everything they could about Japan during their short stay and absorb the good points before they left. I myself learned a lot from their attitude.

Now that all the visitors have returned home, I am sure that they are active in their own unions. My dream now is to someday visit South Asia and meet these people again.

JILAF trainee **Mamiko Suzuki**  
(All NTT Workers Union of Japan)



Joining the team in a tea ceremony.

## Taking Applications for the 6th JILAF International Activist Training Course

### Gist and Goals

The International Activist Training Course was established in 1996 with the aim of training trade-union members to be active participants in the labor movement on the international stage. The course is aimed at union officials from RENGO affiliates and ITS offices. The goals for trainees are to attain a level of proficiency in English, which is the basis for international activism, and to acquire knowledge about the state of the international labor movement and the international activities of Japan's labor unions.

The one-year course begins in November 2001.

### Course Outline

- Language Training

There are four intensive training sessions, each lasting for seven consecutive days. Trainees learn to describe and discuss Japan's labor movement through individual follow-up sessions, so that they can operate in English in the international arena.

- Labor Seminar

Instructors included executive directors from JILAF and others involved in the international labor movement, teach trainees about the international labor movement as well as deepening their understanding of Japan's own labor movement.

- Overseas Training

To cap off the course, trainees attend the Advanced Leadership Course at the Singapore Institute of Labor Studies.

### JILAF Calendar (June – August 2001)

#### 1. Invitation Program

- South Asia Team (June 7 to 20)
- West Africa Team (June 21 to July 4)
- Central America/Caribbean Team (July 5 to 18)
- Central and North Africa Team (July 18 to 31)

#### 2. Field Projects (only those projects conducted by specialists sent from Japan)

- Mongolia POSITIVE local seminar (June 30 to July 8)
- Nepal POSITIVE seminar/school tour (July 17 to 30)
- ICFTU-APRO Regional Organization Meeting, Singapore (August 13 to 18)
- Mongolia Labor/Management Relations Seminar (August 22 to 26)
- Philippines POSITIVE seminar (August 26 to September 2)
- Nepal School Management Seminar (August 20 to 26)
- India Learning Center Year-long Planning Meeting (August 26 to 31)
- Indonesia Labor Contract Workshop (August 26 to 28)

#### 3. Surveys

- Employment survey and planning of joint seminar with KOILAF (June 26 to 28), South Korea
- Dispatch of instructors and participation in the 10th ICFTU-APRO /SILS/JILAF Leadership Training Course (August 12 to September 9); Instructors (August 18 to 21), Singapore
- ICFTU-APRO Regional Organization Meeting (August 13 to 18), Singapore
- Participation in the 13th ILO Asia Region General Assembly (August 28 to September 1)
- Latin America Labor Conditions Survey (August 25 to September 3), Venezuela and Ecuador

### Inside Out

In June, new Executive Director Mr. Tatsuaki Iwata (former Consul-General of Edinburgh) arrived at his post.

#### Tatsuaki Iwata



Prior to joining the Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF), I was engaged in the field of international affairs for some 20 years, mainly at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I have worked in various countries in South Asia, Europe and North America. In such countries, I have been able to acquire a myriad of experiences by working closely with people of different cultures and backgrounds.

Presently, there are a great number of tasks ahead that the international community needs to address and solve. Among others, there is an increasing need to support developing countries in their efforts toward democratization. Meanwhile however, it is undeniable that the general environment surrounding aid and support supplied by Japan to developing countries is not as favorable as before. Under such circumstances, I hope I can make a valuable contribution to the labor community of Japan in promoting its support of democratization in developing countries. I appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with you.