Invitation Program
First Invitation for Cambodia and East Timor

Team from Southeast Asia
JILAF invited a Southeast Asia Team to Japan from September 4 to 17. This was the 6th invitation for fiscal year 2003, and for the first time included two persons from Cambodia and one from East Timor. JILAF's Invitation Programs, which have a proud history spanning some 14 years since its foundation in 1989, have welcomed more than 1,500 young trade union leaders from various parts of the world to Japan. However, this was the very first time that leaders from these two countries were invited. Other team members included one person from TUCP (Trade Union Congress of the Philippines) — with the recommendation of ICFTU-APRO (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation) — two persons from ICTUC (International Trade Union Confederation), and Ms. Nhim Morm, President of NIFTUC (National Independent Federation Textile Union of Cambodia), joined the program; both unions are members of ICTUC. In the various meetings they participated in during their stay in Japan, both presidents stated that they wanted to strengthen trade union movement in Cambodia, promote unification and create an environment where trade unions can play an active role in the society. They added that there were many things they hoped to learn from Japanese trade union movement and they are ardently looking forward to receiving support from Japanese unions, in such form as invitation programs.

Young Leader from East Timor
Trade unions began to be formed in East Timor another country from which JILAF invited a young leader this time following its recession and independence from Indonesia in 1999. The Timor Loro’si Trade Union Confederation (TILTC) was established with aid and assistance from the ICFTU-APRO. After close consultation with APRO, JILAF decided to invite TILTC for the first time and its President, Jose Da Costa, to visit Japan. East Timor is still in the early stage of independence and is now striving to build itself as a nation and to establish various national systems. Trade union movements are also at the groundbreaking stage, and the conditions and environment for such movements still require further improvement. President Da Costa is very youthful (he is 27 years old) and energetic, and has shown his true mettle as a new trade union leader for a newly established country in the 21st century. He stated with hope and conviction his desire to learn many things from Japan and said he was looking forward to receiving suggestions which can be utilized in the future development of East Timor trade unions.

Only a few years have passed since the first trade unions were formed in both East Timor and Cambodia, and union organization still remains somewhat weak in these nations. Also, they often face rather tough conditions. Accordingly, JILAF will continue to support the future development of trade unions in Cambodia and East Timor in close cooperation with ICFTU-APRO and JTUC-RENGO.
POSITIVE Program for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Starts in China

Seminars Held in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, and Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province

JILAF’s POSITIVE Program (Participation-Oriented Safety Improvements by Trade Unions) has introduced especially for small and medium-sized enterprises which have been slow to take proper measures in the area of occupational safety and health.

A trial POSITIVE seminar was held in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province in January 2003, and was very well received. Following on the heels of the seminar’s success, another POSITIVE seminar focused on ‘the fostering of core trainers’ was organized and was held in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province from September 17-20, as well as in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province from September 23-26. Within the POSITIVE program, there are established labor protection departments at the national, provincial and municipal levels which are in charge of occupational safety and health and which regularly provide guidance concerning occupational safety and health at the workplace. Most of the participants who joined the aforementioned POSITIVE seminars comprised directors and deputy directors from labor protection departments, who have considerable knowledge and experience in the field of occupational safety and health.

However, it will likely be somewhat difficult to spread this seminar approach widely throughout China due to its vast land area and large population. Therefore, it is important to support the activities of local trainers in each region, including the development and use of training materials such as videos and CD-ROMs.

Several persons said that this approach was quite new to them and that they would like to put it into practical use. All of the 41 participants are expected to serve as core trainers in the respective regions they are responsible for, and are also expected to make efforts to improve occupational safety and health at the workplace.

Toward Resolving the Problems Mongol Faces

Seminars on ‘Occupational Safety and Health’ and ‘Labor-Management Relations’ Held with CMTU

In coordination with the Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU), JILAF held a two-day local POSITIVE seminar in Tuv (Central) province from September 3-4 and a Labor-Management Relations Seminar in Ulaanbaatar from September 8-9. Twenty-five persons from the textile industry and the public sector participated in the POSITIVE Seminar. Mr. Tachii, associate professor at Nagoya City University in Japan, also attended this seminar as a recourser. After examining the workplace environment at a textile plant and listening to several lectures, the participants drafted their own individual plans for improving occupational safety and health in their own workplaces. It is our hope that these workshops will contribute towards improvements in the workplace environment.

Meanwhile, JILAF President Tetsutaro Tokumoto attended the Labor-Management Relations Seminar and presented a lecture on Japanese labor-management relations to 32 participants. The participants included those from industrial organizations representing the agricultural, forestry and environmental sectors.

The seminar was followed by a group working session. The participants drafted plans for forming one-teacher workshops, “to improve the quality of management relations,” and “the importance of stronger labor-management relations.”

Moreover, JILAF is in the process of preparing non-formal schools for child laborers, Fighting against HIV/AIDS, etc.

In Nepal, a nation where approximately two-fifth of school age children are child laborers, JILAF and the Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC) have continued to run non-formal education schools for such children. In fiscal 2003, we received support from JEIU (DENKI RENGO), as well as from Power Workers Union and Mitsubishi Electric Workers Union, and were successful enough to open three more new schools, in addition to the existing 12 schools.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to these supporting organizations.

Shi Hamada
Executive Committee Member,
Director of General Affairs & Financial Department
Kazuyuki Nakamura
Executive Committee Member, Director of the Organization Department
The Japanese Electrical & Information Union (JEIU)

International Cooperation Efforts by Trade Unions — No.2

Planting of Seedlings to Help Produce a “Beautiful Earth” for Future Generations

JEIU Afforestation Project, “Children’s Forest Project”

The Project’s Background and its Purpose

JEIU recognizes that environmental protection initiatives are important part of the activities of trade unions, and JEIU’s basic philosophy is “To strive to produce a beautiful earth where people can live in happiness.” In 1992, JEIU established the Earth and Love Fund with contributions from union members, and has since performed activities which support the mentally and physically disabled, help protect the global environment and preserve nature, relieve and support major disaster-struck areas, strive to reduce poverty, in addition to various other activities. Also, JEIU made the decision to take part in the Children’s Forest Project, a program which was promoted by OISCA, an NGO, and we have been sending planting volunteers to various areas since 1994. Specifically, once a year a group comprising 100 members is sent to one of the countries in Southeast Asia to conduct planting activities. This group consists of union members and their families, including children, who volunteer for the mission. JEIU’s basic philosophy, which is “To strive to produce a beautiful earth where people can live in happiness.”

Therefore, we believe that if participants in this volunteer program actively discuss the valuable experiences they gain and their impressions of the project and then act locally, this will help achieve the goals of JEIU’s basic philosophy, which is “To strive to produce a beautiful earth where people can live in happiness.”

JEIU Forestry Project

According to Shigeru Tatsukawa, General Secretary of the 90th Years of JEIU Commemoration Committee, as a part of the Children’s Forest Project, the JEIU volunteer seedling-planting program represents an introductory experi-ence to the world of volunteer activity.

Many of JEIU’s 90th years of activity was a recognition of the importance of its volunteer activities, and we believe that these activities have become a symbol of JEIU’s activity. The Children’s Forest Project is a program which started in 1992, and we expect JEIU to continue to further promote such activities.

(For details, log onto JEIU’s website: URL http://www.jeiu.or.jp/activitiesforchildren/index.html)
POSITIVE Program for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Starts in China

Seminars Held in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, and Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province

JILAF’s POSITIVE (Participation-Oriented Safety Improvements by Trade Union Initiative) Program for Occupational Health and Safety for workers of small and medium-sized enterprises was officially launched in China. This program has also been implemented to other Asian countries, including Pakistan. Now China makes the seventh nation in which the Program has been introduced.

JILAF, in coordination with its local partners, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), has continued to promote POSITIVE seminars since 1997 and has held seminars in various parts of China. These seminars are held in labor-management relations agreements, where workers actively share and exchange their experiences in trade union movements, as well as seminars focused on the utilization of small and medium-sized enterprises. JILAF has promoted activities that are held in addressing the problems that workers face in the workplace, a rapidly developing nation under a socialist market economy.

In previous seminars, China has achieved remarkable economic growth — as exemplified by its accession to the World Trade Organization — and this growth has mainly taken place in the country’s coastal regions. On the other hand, the increased incidence of labor accidents (73,595 cases according to 2002 ILO statistics) has become a major issue, which has had a negative impact on workers. Thus the POSITIVE Program has been introduced especially for small and medium-sized enterprises which have been slow to take proper measures in the area of occupational safety and health.

A trial POSITIVE seminar was held in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province in January 2003, and was very well received. Following on the heels of the seminar’s success, another POSITIVE seminar focused on the fostering of core trainers was organized and was held in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province from September 17-20, as well as in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province from September 23-26.

Within ACFTU, there are established labor protection departments in the national, provincial, and municipal levels which are in charge of occupational safety and health and which regularly provide guidance concerning occupational safety and health at the workplace. Most of the participants who joined the aforementioned POSITIVE seminars comprised directors and deputy directors from labor protection department, who are knowledgeable and have experience in the field of occupational safety and health. At first, it was uncertain whether the conventional approach used in POSITIVE seminars, in which the various participants (workers) discuss and promote activities for improving the workplace, would be accepted in China. However, it turned out that the participants said that this approach was quite new to them and that they would like to put it into practical use. All of the 41 participants are expected to serve as core trainers in the respective regions they are responsible for, and are also expected to make efforts to improve occupational safety and health at the workplace.

However, it will likely be somewhat difficult to spread this seminar approach widely throughout China due to its vast area and large population. Therefore, it is important to support the activities of local trainers in each region, including the development and use of training materials such as videos and CD-ROMs.

International Cooperation Efforts by Trade Unions — No.2

Planting of Seedlings to Help Produce a “Beautiful Earth” for Future Generations

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The Project’s Background and its Purpose

JEIU recognizes that environmental protection initiatives are important parts of the activities of trade unions, and JEIU’s basic philosophy is “To strive to produce a beautiful earth where everyone lives.” In 1992, JEIU established the Earth and Love Fund with contributions from union members, and has since performed activities which support the mentally and physically disabled, help protect the global environment and preserve nature, relieve and support major disaster-struck areas, strive to reduce poverty, in addition to various other activities. Also, JEIU made the decision to take part in the Children’s Forest Project, a program which had been promoted by OSCEA, an NGO, and we have been sending planting volunteers to various areas since 1994. Specifically, once a year a group comprising 100 members is sent to one of the countries in Southeast Asia to conduct planting activities. This group consists of union members and their families, including the basic formation, the JEIU volunteer planting volunteers, and the local residents and their children, plant seedlings on the school grounds of primary and middle schools as well as on adjacent lands. The aim of these activities is to raise awareness of global environmental issues and to help develop new ties through seedling-planting activities and exchanges.

Initiatives Focused on the Concept of “Schools”

The key concept of this afforestation project is “schools.” Members work closely together to preserve tropical forests, and through these activities local people, including children, and the Japanese volunteers are able to learn about the importance of forest conservation. Moreover, Japanese children can encounter experiences which help them grow and learn as youngsters as they plant seedlings together with local school children. The planting project therefore can be said to play a vital educational role, similar to that of “schools.”

Future Challenges

According to Shigeru Tatukawa, General Secretary of the 9th Volunteer Planting Mission, the JEIU volunteer planting-program represents an introductory experience to the world of voluntary activity.

In Nepal, a nation where approximately two-fifths of school age children are child laborers, JILAF and the Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC) have continued to run non-formal education schools for such children.

In fiscal 2003, we received support from JEIU (DENR RANGI), as well as several other Power Workshops. These activities have been highly praised by ACFTU, which organized this program. The JEIU support enabled ACFTU to improve school life, including providing textbooks, school uniforms and school bags.

In addition, we have received high marks from the local authorities, the school administration, and school children. The project has also contributed to the children’s development.

Lending a Hand to Support Activities in Developing Countries

Management of Non-Formal Schools for Child Laborers, Fighting against HIV/AIDS, etc.

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The hardest thing to get used to during the first week or so was not the heat of Singapore or its unique foods, but rather getting used to the diversity of languages, especially English. We were provided with English speaking instructions for eating, even for something as simple as the heat of Singapore or its unique foods, but rather getting used to the diversity of languages, especially English. We were provided with English speaking instructions for eating, even for something as simple as the food and how to eat it. It was a daunting task for us all.

In the meantime, the graduation ceremony for the 7th Program was held on October 15 for the ten trainees who completed the program. This shows that English is truly the common language used by Asian trade union activists. All of the classes during the program comprised sessions of discussions, group work, and presentations. My fellow Japanese participants and I found it somewhat difficult to fully join in the classes on equal terms, probably because we have not fully experienced English discussions. Twenty-seven members from 18 countries, including the very first participants from Cambodia and Laos, attended the 12th Advanced Leadership Course. The theme of this year’s course was "Trade Unions & Globalization: Strengthening Basics." Through the lectures and some class exercises, we were able to heighten our awareness of the real situations regarding trade union movements in each country under the trend of globalization.

We also naturally launched with the aim of developing Japanese young union members that are capable of playing an active role in the international field of trade union movements. The total number of trainees who have completed the program to date stands at 60, many of whom are now actively working in the international arena. The trainees of the 8th Program will participate in courses designed to help them improve their English proficiency and help them acquire knowledge about domestic and international trade union movements. This current batch will attend training which will last until September 2004.

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