

# OCA Report 2018

**Fun /  
Making Friends /  
International Exchange**



- 
- May Common Beat Performance in Taipei - 123 Cast Members Participate
  - May Thai Students Japan Study Program - 15 from Chulalongkorn and Chiang Mai Universities
  - July International "Onigiri" Friends Project - 13 UWP alumni
  - August Summer Camp - International Participants from Taiwan (10), Korea (4) and Japan (25)
  - October Northern Thailand Tour - 6 from Chulalongkorn University and 10 from Chuo University
  - December Asian Beat Project in Northern Thailand: 5 Taiwanese, 4 Korean, 20 Japanese School Visit Project- 40 schools, 5,000 students
  - January Memorial for Dr. Toyotane Sohma - 120 gather to pay respects



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# What We Want To Accomplish: Our Action Goals

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## 1) What We Learned When We Were Young

We want to promote international exchange among youth and support their growth and development through OCA activities. In our own youth, we used to go to the MRA Foundation in Azabu on a daily basis to discuss our future and how to live meaningful lives with Shibusawa-san and Sohma-san. We learned a lot by participating in numerous projects such as conferences at the Odawara Asia Center, MRA International Traveling School activities, and performances across the country (including one at Budokan), and in the United States. We are deeply indebted to these two leaders for having helped us realize our hopes and dreams to expand our world and live a new life through musical activities.

Through MRA activities, we learned to:

- Expand our views about world events and voice our opinions.
- Make close friends throughout the world and think of the world as our home.
- Listen attentively to our hearts and follow our own voices in honest ways.
- Recognize that each person is different, accept diverse values, and love people as they are.
- Think about what is right rather than who is right.
- Always think of others and ways to help society.

What we learned helped and supported us as we matured and entered the working world.

## 2) What We Want to Transmit to the Younger Generation

The OCA came under the direct auspices of the MRA Foundation in 2012, which inspired us to think about how we wanted to convey what we learned in our youth to the younger generation. At that time, most of us were over 65 and did not have friends among this much younger group. However, Common Beat, an ensemble which developed the Up With People (UWP) musical in Japan in 2004, had already been organized in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka, and had been performing with a cast of 400 people each year. During this period Common Beat expanded widely to other geographical areas, growing into an organization with 800 cast members and over 5,000 alumni. We decided to work with Common Beat in developing the Asian Beat Project to facilitate interactions among youth through musical activities. This year, this project will be entering its seventh year.

## 3) What We Hope to Achieve

We have developed many projects as described in this report including those with Common Beat, UWP Alumni, university students and young people from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. Through these projects, we hope to provide the younger generation with opportunities to experience the wider world, understand the importance of developing friendships across the world, and grasp important lessons we learned when we were young. In our mind, this is the best way we can transmit and ensure the succession of the spirit and activities of the MRA Foundation.



# Thai Students Japan Study Program

Chulalongkorn University and Chiang Mai University

May 23~June 1



Welcome party with host families in Nakatsugawa

## Koji Okumura



The program took place from May 23 to June 1 with 8 students and 2 professors from Chulalongkorn University. In addition, 2 students from Chiang Mai University participated for the first time. The program started with a visit to Osaka University.

### Visit the World Heritage Site "Shirakawa-goh"

After the exchange program at Osaka University, visited the World Heritage Site "Shirakawa-goh" instead of our annual Kyoto tour. We enjoyed exploring a traditional Japanese

village with Gassho-zukuri houses with thatched roofs. We stayed at Takayama Zenko-ji Temple in Hida Takayama and enjoyed a nice walk through the town of Takayama.

### Home Stay in Nakatsugawa

The host families in Nakatsugawa gave us a warm welcome with a garden party. The students stayed with their host families for three days and two nights. Learning about Japanese family life was a great experience for the students and they left with many fond memories.

At Waseda University



Lecture by Professor Tohdo from Waseda University Institute of Political Economy



## University Visitations in Tokyo

We moved to Tokyo to visit Waseda University, Chuo University and Saitama University. We received special lectures from professors at each university. Thai students also presented about Thai economics and culture, and interacted with Japanese students.

## Visit to the Royal Thai Embassy

We paid a courtesy visit to the Royal Thai Embassy in Tokyo with the help of Professor Sirima of Chulalongkorn University. Ambassador Bansang Bunnag welcomed us and took time out of his busy schedule to spend two hours talking with us about the history of the friendship between Thailand and Japan, as well as the strong connection between the Thai royal family and the Japanese imperial family. Ambassador Bunnag also covered a wide range of other topics such as culture and the economy. Professor Hasegawa of Chuo University and students from his seminar also joined this event.



Garden party with host families in Nakatsugawa

## Farewell Party

A farewell party was held at an izakaya, a Japanese pub. Japanese and Thai students talked until late at night, enriching their friendship. The circle of interaction between students of both countries has continued through the “Study Program for Thai Students in Japan” with the support and cooperation of many people.

Noting our past achievements, the Faculty of Economics of Chuo University responded to a recent request by Professor Sirima of Chulalongkorn University to have Japanese and Thai students visit northern Thailand together to study regional economics and issues confronting local cities. A new project called “Northern Thailand Study Program” will launch in October. Students will learn about the realities of the lives of ethnic minorities and the local economy. This program will also lead to new opportunities for exchange with students at local universities in northern Thailand.



Kaiten sushi (conveyor belt sushi) with Osaka University students: A competition to determine who could eat the most plates (LOL)

Chulalongkorn University  
**Professor Sirima Bunnag**

This year we welcomed students from Chiang Mai University to participate in our exchange program in Japan. Thanks to Professor Charuk Singhapreecha (Vice Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University) who nominated 2 students for the program. We included academic activities for students when we visited Waseda University and Chuo University, which was an opportunity for our students to share information about their country with their Japanese friends. Thai students prepared two presentations-- one paper concerned “supply chain”; the other, the Economy of Northern Thailand, which linked Thailand and Japan together.

Our group of Thai and Japanese faculty and students

were honored to visit the Royal Thai Embassy, Tokyo, Japan and we all were welcomed by Ambassador Bansang Bunnag. The Ambassador gave an overview of the historical relations between Thailand and Japan, the role of the Embassy and the role of the overseas diplomatic corps.



Visiting World Heritage Shirakawa Goh

Faculty of Economics,  
Chuo University

## Professor Toshiaki Hasegawa



Under an academic exchange agreement between Chulalongkorn University and Chuo University, faculty and students are able to participate in short- and long-term programs at both universities. The group photo was taken at the White Gate, which is the symbol of the Chuo University. Students from Chulalongkorn University and Chuo University (Hasegawa seminar) visited Ambassador Bansarn Bunnag. In his lecture, the Ambassador discussed the 600-year history of Japan-Thailand relations, 130 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, as well as economic relations, culture, ties between the royal and imperial families, which also included important messages and advice to the students. We are grateful to the Ambassador for sharing his time with us.

It is important to continue international exchanges and I would like to thank the MRA Foundation and OCA for their continued efforts to plan and support this program.



At the Chuo University White Gate

Lecture by Ambassador Bansarn Bunnag



Ambassador Bansarn Bunnag



With the Ambassador in front of the entrance to the Royal Thai Embassy



## Thai Students Japan Study Program – Program participants

### Chulalongkorn University



Best  
**Virakorn**  
Dulyavit



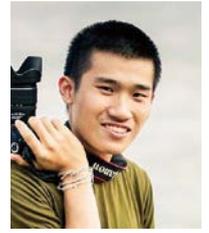
Book  
**Piynudda**  
Kaewpiyasawad



Grace  
**Duangporn**  
Tosom



Nook  
**Nattha**  
Khamphan



Nutt  
**Nutt**  
Asavachaichan



Phol  
**Savaphol**  
HirunDaranakul



Vee  
**Veeraphon**  
Sopaviriyaporn



Win  
**Paris**  
Tosujarittham

### Chiang Mai University



Fern  
**hattaraporn**  
Wangsrikhun



Kwan  
**Sujeeporn**  
Thanongkit

### Chulalongkorn University Professors



Ja sensei  
**Khanittha**  
Tambuntertchai



Pui sensei  
**Sineenat**  
Sermcheep

## Support for Japanese Participants in the Up With People program

With OCA support, two Japanese joined the Up With People program in 2018

Since 2010, OCA has supported Common Beat members to participate in annual UWP programs. Up to now, 16 people have participated in the UWP program. After returning to Japan, many have participated in the OCA program and some remain active as staff members of our OCA program.

The following Common Beat members participated in the UWP program.

- 2010: Juri Nakagawa, Yukari Hanamura, Akiyoshi Kubota
- 2011: Naohiro Harada, Mika Kimura
- 2012: Naohiro Yamada
- 2013: Shizuya Sugimoto
- 2014: Mihoko Arai, Ai Imai, Ryotaro Tsukii, Momoko Hoshino
- 2015: Yukiko Nakahara
- 2016: Yuka Shimabayashi, Atsumi Tai
- 2017: Sakie Yabu, Sae Uehara

### Yuki Mori (Yuuki) 2018 Cast B

I'm really happy to join Up with People which I had known since I was young. I will do my best to apply the many things I learned from the Up with People program in my life and for society.



### Kaede Mitsuya (Moppi) 2019 Cast A

I really wanted to participate in the Up With People program, because I liked to dance since I was a child, and I was interested in expanding my world through international exchange.

I want to actively work and learn many things from the program and after returning home, I hope to become a person who can contribute to the global society.



# The 15th Anniversary Performance of “A Common Beat” in Taiwan

April 28~May 6

## Common Beat 15th Anniversary Taiwan Tour - 123 People Gathered in Taipei



### Ryo Adachi



Because 2018 is the 15th anniversary of the establishment of Common Beat, I wanted to create a special performance with the best members. I consulted with colleagues in Taiwan who had previously requested that we perform in their country. With more than 30 young people from Taiwan who had participated in the Asian Beat Program, our Taiwanese colleagues were also eager to arrange a Common Beat performance be in Taiwan.

### Zhongshan Hall in Taipei City was Chosen for the Venue.

The Taiwanese members had been longing to perform “A Common Beat” in Taipei in Zhangshan Hall. The Hall is located in the Ximending area, which is popular among youth and is the most prestigious theatre in Taiwan. Built as the “Taipei City Hall” in 1935 by Japanese architects, the structure has a total capacity of 1,100.

### 101 Cast Members Respond to Casting Call

Once the date and location of the performance were set, we posted an announcement on our Common Beat web page on November 15. By January 9, 101 people had responded to the casting call.

Since this was a special performance, I asked Chuson to produce the show. We decided that the show would be performed in English. The three rehearsal dates in Tokyo were set for February 10, March 10 and March 31. The cost of transportation was a considerable burden for the participants, since many had to make long trips to Tokyo from far-flung places in Japan and also Korea.



### Zhongshan Hall is Sold Out!

Although gathering the cast went smoothly, we were concerned whether we could fill Zhongshan Hall. Penny and young Taiwanese Asian Beat members came up the idea of creating and distributing a video. Flyers and posters were also completed at this time. The promotional activities worked, and by the middle of April, we heard from Taiwan that the ticket sales through our sponsors and via the internet exceeded 1,050. It meant we were Sold Out!



## University Visit in Taichung

A total of 123 participants went to Taiwan, including the cast members, their children and staff. The cast members were divided into two teams: a group that arrived in Taiwan on April 28, and a short-stay group that arrived on May 3. On April 30, the early arrival team were divided into two groups, and one visited Dayeh University, and the other visited Central Taiwan University of Science and Technology (CTU) and held an exchange program with students simultaneously. (Both Universities have collaborated with us in the past by sending cast members for Asian Beat.) We met with 400 students at Dayeh University and 200 students at CTU.



## The Performance Begins!

Three cast members from Korea, Taiwan, and Japan were selected to play the role of Border Guards, who narrate the musical, and we decided that they would speak in English, Korean, Taiwanese, and Japanese.

The performance begins!

A long line formed at the entrance of Zhongshan Hall before the performance. Taiwan's Asian Beat alumni and their friends took care of the reception and guided the audience to their seats. Meanwhile, the cast were in the green room with their make-up which had been applied by 15 students from a makeup school in Taiwan. The students had worked with the cast members without being able to communicate in the same language.

Robert gave a greeting on behalf of the Taiwan side, and 15 Asian Beat cast members from Taiwan performed the opening dance from the "Greatest Showman." Zhongshan Hall was packed and the musical started with great applause. The singing and dancing were amazing since this show featured the best members of the last 15 years of the Common Beat performances. Everyone in the cast was excited and enjoyed



performing. For the Encore, the audience were thrilled as we sang three songs in Taiwanese that had been popular in Taiwan during the past three years. After the show, the cast members shook hands with the audience in the lobby of Zhongshan Hall, took photos together and hugged the audience, and had a great time. The cast members took three buses in a caravan with Taiwanese members and went to Hanahaku Park for a dinner party, and we all enjoyed partying until midnight.

## Thank You Very Much to Everyone in Taiwan

I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to Robert, Ken and everyone from Sing Out Taiwan, and all the Asian Beat alumni who took care of the venue, produced posters and flyers, gathered and welcomed the audience on the day of the performances, and coordinated university visits. I also want to thank the cast members who participated in the Taiwan show in spite of their busy schedules. It was fun, wasn't it? We made a lot of great memories. Arigato!

In retrospect, our wonderful week in Taiwan was made possible because of our work with Asian Beat and repertoire of musicals that have been performed continuously for 15 years in Japan. Although there were language barriers, we were able to connect with each other by singing and dancing. Although we have differences, we became friends with a common heartbeat. Moving forward, I hope that we can continue with our adventures and challenges with the members of OCA!

Thank you!



# Common Beat 15th Anniversary Tokyo Performance Report

April 28–May 6

## 15th Anniversary Tokyo performance at Hoku Topia Sakura Hall on May 27th Following Performance in Taiwan

### Chuson Han



While the enthusiasm of the Taiwan performance still remained in our hearts, the Common Beat 15th Anniversary Tokyo performance was held at Hoku Topia Sakura Hall in Tokyo on May 27. To commemorate the 15th Anniversary, the musical "A Common Beat" was presented in the original English. Pat Murphy and Ken Ashby, great musicians and songwriters with "Up With People," rushed to Japan for the performance. They kindly composed and sang "A Song to Celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Common Beat" for us. The cast members and staff were overjoyed, and it was a special moment for all of us.

Yoko Koyama from NPO Peace Boat and Rika Takagi, who were both creators Common Beat, also attended the show. Without them, it would have been impossible for this musical project to start in Japan.

The show started while the original creators and many others involved for the last 15 years looked on. The first part was a live performance of "The Line" by singer-songwriter Tomoe Sawa. "The Line" is a song that has been heard by all generations of Common Beat cast members and is a song that we sing before the performance to bring

everyone together. It was special for the cast members and the staff to listen to Sawa's performance. Her voice resonated with the beautiful lyrics, bringing the audience to tears.

During the second part of the show, the cast members who had performed in Taiwan performed "A Common Beat" that had been created by Pat and Ken of Up With People. The audience gave us a warm applause and joined us to sing and keep the rhythm by clapping their hands. Pat and Ken stood and applauded at the end of the performance. The audiences around us followed them, and we experienced the first standing ovation in Japan.

Pat and Ken really liked our show and stated, "The baby we created 18 years ago has been nurtured in Japan for 15 years, and now it can speak three languages. It's really wonderful!!"

For the last 15 years, we have performed in various places in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, and we are now able to perform the show in three languages. We are very grateful to everyone who has been involved with the development of the Common Beat. We look forward to continuing to work with you to further develop the musical. We know that the day when this musical will help nurture peace in East Asia will surely come.

Cast members listening to stories from Pat Murphy and Ken Ashby from Up With People



# World “Onigiri” Friend Project

July 12~26

UWP Alumni were invited to Japan for two weeks to stay with Japanese host families. Eleven alumni visited Fukuoka and Hiroshima



Visiting a shrine wearing yukata. A volunteer wanted to teach people from overseas how to dress in yukata, and the participants were able to experience Japanese postures and mannerisms.

## Yuka Shimabayashi



UWP's young alumni were invited to Japan for two weeks to learn about Japanese culture by experiencing life with their host families. The project also aims at forging close bonds between the participants and their host family.

This year the program took place from July 12 to July 26 and took place in Fukuoka and Hiroshima. We received applicants from all over the world and welcomed 11 young participants from seven countries: three from the USA, two from Mexico, two from Belgium, and one each from Scotland, Germany, Portugal and Japan.

## Participating in the Hakata Yamagasa Festival in Fukuoka

The 11 UWP alumni flew from around the world and met at Fukuoka Airport. They were greeted by their host families and started their one-week stay with them. The visit coincided with the Hakata Yamagasa Festival and they were able to enjoy a traditional Japanese festival. The group also experienced wearing yukata; learned the Yosakoi dance; and conducted classes and had lunch with students at a public elementary school.



## Lessons from Hiroshima

One week in Fukuoka passed by quickly, and we moved to Hiroshima. While staying with host families in Hiroshima, we visited the Peace Memorial Museum and the Peace Park and heard the testimony of the atomic bomb survivors. A cast member from the United States started crying after hearing the story of suffering of the atomic bomb the survivors. She worried that they disliked Americans. It was quite shocking to her. The survivors told her that they did not want to blame anyone, but that they wanted to tell their stories, including the atrocities that occurred. They wanted us to think about what we can do for world peace. We learned a lot during the home-stay in Hiroshima.



## Camping in Miyajima!

We enjoyed interacting with children and participating in their musical, performing at an English language school, and having a farewell party with our host families. We also went camping in Miyajima to get to know each other. All of us took turns cooking, swam in the ocean, gazed at the stars, and enjoyed nature. Making friends with people of different ages and cultures, and spending time together was like a miracle. It was a peaceful time.



Visiting a local Road Shop with the host family. Taking part in daily life.

Visited the the Peace Memorial Museum and talked about peace. We were moved being in this place together with friends from around the world.



## Thank You Host Families!

The Onigiri project took place for the second time, and I am grateful to the support from many people. I am especially grateful to the 5 families in Fukuoka and 7 in Hiroshima who welcomed and took care of the group. Thanks to everyone's cooperation, the participants were able to feel the warmth of Japanese families, experience daily life, meet every day Japanese, and experience a side Japan that would not have been possible on a regular sightseeing trip. Thank you very much. I hope that this program will continue for a long time. I look forward to working on this project to facilitate encounters that resonate with each other's hearts.

Exchange with the Common Beat Yosakoi team. Not being able to speak a common common language did not get in the way of getting close through dancing and smiling. Look how close we became!



The 11 cast members from seven countries connected through this project. During the two weeks, we encountered different values, collided with each other and overcame our differences. We developed a deep companionship. A cast member said, "I made friends in Japan!" I hope that these small projects will enrich each person's life and lead to a peaceful world.

### Participants of the World "Onigiri" Friends Project



Brittany(19)  
Brittanuy Agoyo Chato  
USA



Estefania(20)  
Estefania Meza  
Mexico



Cha(20)  
Charlotte Villers  
Belgium



GG(19)  
Guillaume Delhaye  
Belgium



Erinn(21)  
Erinn Lucas  
Scotland



Jas(19)  
Jasmin Maria Kruger  
Gemany



Jill(21)  
Elizabeth Jill Dube  
USA



Joana(33)  
Joana Ramos morgado  
Portugal



Rae(23)  
Raeanna Clarke  
USA



Kai(20)  
Kaishu Okuma  
Japan



Sofi(27)  
Sofia Rivas Munoz  
Mexico



Yuka  
Shimabayashi Yuka  
Fukuoka



Sae  
Uehara Sae  
Tokyo



Namiko  
Wada Namiko  
Hiroshima

# Northern Thailand Tour Project

October 27~November 4

A project for Japanese and Thai students to visit northern Thailand to learn about the local economy and interact with university students in each city



## Toshiaki Hasegawa

Faculty of Economics, Chuo University



we interacted with local students. In addition, we visited two facilities for orphans. At each facility, lively interaction took place between children and the students.



Seminar at Chulalongkorn University

The Northern Thailand Tour Project with students and faculty from Chulalongkorn University and Chuo University was made possible with the support of OCA. Twenty one students and faculty from the two universities visited and interacted with colleagues at Chiang Mai University and Mae Fah Luang University (MFU) in northern Thailand. The region is located along the border of the Mae Kong Delta Economic Area, and the project focused on border trade that has been progressing in an area that struggles with poverty.

Participants were able to learn about the actual conditions of the regional economy, which differs from the one-sided economic and social conditions that are directed towards Bangkok, the Thai capital. After attending special lectures at the Faculty of Economics at the universities,



Exchange event at Sasa House

With students at Chulalongkorn University



Mae Fah Luang University (MFU), a wonderful university with beautiful facilities on a vast campus, was established 20 years ago. MFU has a distinctive educational curriculum because it is located in Chiang Rai, a border city. After visiting the MFU, the group visited Mae Kok Farm, an orphanage in the suburbs, and interacted with the children until late at night. The group also visited the Mae Sai city which borders Myanmar, and walked over the bridge and visited the town on the Myanmar side. After re-entering Thailand, we visited a local market, then a museum called the Hall of Opium to learn about the history of narcotics and current programs to eradicate the drug trade. The group then visited the Golden Triangle from the Thai side. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to understand the relevance of this region. We then traveled to Chiang Mai by bus to visit Chiang Mai University. Professor Charuk of the Faculty of Economics presented a lecture on the over-concentration of the Thai economy and the recent activation of the northern regional economy. After the lecture, we went to our next destination, Ban Rom Sai, with students from Chiang Mai University. Ban Rom Sai, located in the suburbs of Chiang Mai, is an orphanage which serves about 20 children. The library at Ban Rom Sai is open to local children.



A lecture by Dr. Rapienng of Mae Fah Luang University



The Mekong River flows between Thailand and Laos; the Ruak River flows between Thailand and Myanmar. The Golden Triangle borders three countries.



Raising 'Komroi' in the night sky at Mae Kok Farm



Tour of the Mae Kok River in the Golden Triangle



Market in the city of Mae Sai on the border



Lecture by Dr. Charuk of Chiang Mai University



Visit to Ban Rom Sai, and staying at Hoshihana Village

We stayed at “Hoshihana Village,” a hotel established to support the orphanage. The hotel is surrounded by nature, and our students socialized with students from Chiang Mai University and Chulalongkorn University by the garden and pool. The gathering continued until late at night. Upon returning to Bangkok, the students from Chulalongkorn University and Chuo University held a farewell party on the evening of November 3. The party lasted forever, with students sharing songs and dances. I look forward to the continued collaboration with Thai university students, and hope that OCA will continue to support exchanges. I also hope that the students from both countries who participated in the training will continue to understand the importance of connecting with people beyond national boundaries even after graduation.



Visit to Ban Rom Sai, a facility for HIV-infected orphans, with students of Chiang Mai University



Farewell party with Chiang Mai University students who had participated in the Study Program for Thai Students in Japan

## Participants of the Northern Thailand Tour Project

### Chuo University



Sayoko  
布間 小葉子  
Sayoko Fuma



Ma - chan  
馬 曉晨  
Xiaochen Ma



Mana  
成安 真名  
Mana Nariyasu



Yamashin  
山崎 慎太郎  
Shintaro Yamazaki



Fukku  
福田 健人  
Kent Fukuda



Arimacchi  
有馬 和也  
Kazuya Arima



Li Hou  
李 鋒  
Li Hou



Yuriko  
瀧 佑里子  
Yuriko Taki



Ryu  
刘 威文  
Takefumi Ryu



Hana  
石川 花  
Hana Ishikawa



Professor  
長谷川 聰哲  
Toshiaki Hasegawa

### Chulalongkorn University



Best  
Virakorn  
Dulyavit



Grace  
Duangporn  
Tosom



Phol  
Savaphol  
Hiruntiaranakul



Vee  
Veeraphon  
Sopaviriyaporn



Dear  
Chongra  
Thongsom



Puen  
Prasit  
Ninsang

# Asian Beat Thai Tour

December 15~23

A total of 30 people - 5 from Taiwan, 4 from Korea, and 21 from Japan - visited northern Thailand and performed shows and had social gatherings in various places involving singing and dancing



Performing "Fortune Cookie in Love," a Japanese song, that is popular in Thailand. University students danced along. So much fun!

## Yuka Shimabayashi



My name is Yuka Shimabayashi (Yukachin), and I was a staff member of the Asian Beat Project 2018. This year we were in Thailand! I'd like to report on our tour, where we flew from Tokyo which was in the midst of winter, to the hot climate in Thailand.

### September Summer Camp

The nine-day Asian Beat Tour took place from December 15th to 23rd. Before the tour we held a summer camp in September in Tokyo for cast members to get to know each other and work together to create a performance. A total of 30 people, including 10 from Taiwan, 4 from South Korea, and 16 from Japan, gathered at the Ichikawa Youth Center. The cast from Taiwan arrived in Japan on September 4th and stayed overnight at a hotel in Higashi Shinjuku. The next

day, we visited the Shiroganedai Elementary School in the Minato Ward with the School Project staff to meet and dance with the students. In the evening, the Common Beat members held a welcome party at Yoyogi Muse Hall. On September 6 we spent time with children at a dance class run by Mika Takahashi, who participated in the Asian Beat last year. We moved to Ichikawa Youth Center on the 7th, and were joined by South Korean and Japanese cast members for rehearsals. On the 8th we reviewed the Asian Beat Thai Tour, decided on the theme, exchanged dances, and presented the Asian Beat dances to the cast of the 48th Tokyo performance.



We announced the home team on the 9th. Following a group discussion about the tour, we had an outdoor cooking party, finished the summer camp, and headed to Narita Airport. We developed great teamwork through creating the dance choreography, explaining the tour to the members of the Common Beat Tokyo performance, and cooking curry and rice outdoors. Everyone returned to their home country, where they continued to rehearse. I believe that the summer camp experience strengthened the ties among the members of the Asian Beat.

### Reunion in December

Thirty people in total --17 from all over Japan, 5 from Taiwan, 4 from Korea, and 4 staff members — gathered in Bangkok on December 15. We saw each other for the first time in three months. During this time we had practiced and encouraged each other by sending videos. The tour finally started amidst anxiety and excitement.

### A Major Performance at an University!

In the early morning of December 16, we headed by plane from Bangkok to Chiang Rai in northern Thailand. The cast members visited Mae Fah Luang University where the first show was held. It was a big challenge to combine in only 3 hours what we had practiced separately for three months. We had some songs that hadn't been completed and scenes which did not work well, perhaps because everyone was tense. Just before the performance, cast members formed a circle and began to sing the song that was most problematic. By looking at each others' eyes while singing, we felt each other and we felt strong. "What do we want to convey during the show?" What was important was not how well we danced or sang, but to convey the sense of comradery despite differences in nationality, age, and language. The cast members reaffirmed the reasons for performing the Asian Beat. And then it was show time!

The show was a big success! The cast members fully showed their passion to the audience. The band performances and game times on the university side were exciting, and more than 100 students and school officials gathered in the hall. At the end, students joined in on the dancing.



Everybody cooked rice and curry. A first time collaboration, but it was delicious! @Summer Camp



Team building activity



Mae Fah Luang University band members performed a live show. We were moved!



Lunch with Chiang Mai University students. Poor English but we "spoke" body language.



## Interacting with Children

Asian Beat values not only performing shows, but also interacting with local children through singing and dancing. On this tour, we danced with 300 children in an elementary school and spent time with the children in orphanages and villages. What was impressive in the exchange was the free time to play with them. We played with ropes, drew portraits and teaching origami (folding paper into figures). The cast members' special skills and individuality were exhibited, and we saw many smiling children. We were not fluent in English and couldn't understand the words, but we were able to communicate and have fun together. We also learned a lot about the Ban Rom Sai orphanage thanks to a wonderful guide who provided information on the operation of the facility.

## Crossing the Border

We traveled through the three main cities of Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Bangkok, and we also had the experience of crossing two countries in one day. From Mae Sai to Myanmar on foot, from the Golden Triangle to Laos by boat! It was a very strange feeling when we crossed the border – the two cities' language and the atmosphere were different. Although the river was the border, the border line could not be seen. It made the cast members think about the strong impact of the borders on human societies.

## The Second Show

We also had a full show at Chiang Mai University. We performed on a flat surface, not a stage, and the reaction from the audience was intimate and quite exciting. Since it was the last full show, the cast members went full out.

## Our Theme was "STEP"

A theme that we cherished during the tour is "STEP." Challenge one or more of your own "STEPS" whether big or small!

During the middle of the bus tour, we set up a time to share what Asian Beat meant for each of us. A member who shared that "We are imperfect, so we can support each other to make up for it." Another member followed and shared the painful and bitter experience of not being able to speak English, and everyone shared their respective feelings with each other.

During the final reflection period, everyone shared their thoughts; most became emotional and shared their heartfelt feelings with tears. I was moved that we were able to build great teamwork in only nine days, and that each member took their own "steps" to move forward.

Had this been a regular travel tour, we could not have created a warm team like a family. I think the unity became stronger because of the challenge of creating the show together. I also think that the environment in which cast members could not understand each others' languages also strengthened our motivation to get to know each

other. I realized that lacking something is not necessarily a negative, but can be positive. We enjoyed the inability to communicate in each others' languages and realized that we can cultivate real friendship that transcends national boundaries. We need each other.

I am very grateful to the people who supported our tour: the universities and orphanage, and the students who welcomed us in Thailand. Thank you for the truly valuable experience.



A Thai taxi like vehicle called Sontera. We enjoyed the spaciousness.



Golden Triangle. The sunset on the border river was so beautiful.



## Participants of the Asian Beat Thai Tour

### Taiwan Members (5)



Penny  
康文品  
Hang Wen-pin



Jackie  
黃薔琳  
Huang Qiang-lin



Lisa  
何安淳  
He An-chun



Lily  
何安雯  
He An-wen



Jenny  
何慧琳  
Ho Hui-chuan

### Korea Members (4)



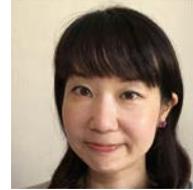
CHUN  
박준수  
JunSu Park



JUHONG  
김주홍  
Juhong Kim



YOUME  
김유미  
Youme Kim



NORI  
大草 紀子  
Ohkusa Noriko

### Japan Members (17) + Staff(2)



OG  
迫 裕樹  
Sako Yuki



Ho-chan  
宝蔵 花穂  
Hohzoh Kaho



Yusa  
佐藤 ゆさ子  
Sato Yusako



Natchan  
赤石 夏海  
Akaishi Natsumi



Sasa  
佐々 文佳  
Sasa Fumika



March  
金子 弥生  
Kaneko Yayoi



Sawacchi  
澤田 和典  
Sawada Kazunori



litomo  
飯田 朋真  
Iida Tomomi



Sachi  
下田 さち  
Shimoda Sachi



Miyuki  
松本 美幸  
Matsumoto Miyuki



Ichigo  
佐藤 いちご  
Sato Ichigo



Diggy  
田中 誠一  
Tanaka Seiichi



Yakitate  
荒巻 淳  
Aramaki Jun



Rock  
金子 将大  
Kaneko Shota



HaL  
杉山 晴子  
Sugiyama Haruko



Shin chan  
楊 宇華  
Yan Yushen



Mika  
高橋 ミカ  
Takahashi Mika



Yuka  
島林 由香  
Shimabayasi Yuka



Sae  
上原 紗英  
Uehara SAE

# "School Project" Spreads to 40 Schools a Year



**Kaori Hanamiya**



During this fiscal year, we offered classes that enabled students to enjoy international understanding and expression. The group, ranging from elementary to high school, totaled 5,003 students from 43 schools. In addition, about 60 adults visited the school. At elementary schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area, there has been an increase in the demand for international understanding because of the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games.

The "International Dance Class" provided by Common Beat exposes students to cultural diversity and expression by experiencing dances from various regions of the world such as Kenya, France, Turkey, Thailand, and Brazil. There have been a growing number of schools that request our classes. Furthermore, this year, in response to requests to provide children in rural areas with opportunities to experience different cultures and to interact with diverse adults, we also conducted classes in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture.

This year we started a new initiative to conduct training courses for facilitators because of increasing requests from a variety of groups such as the PTA and after-school programs. Facilitators with international experience such as Up With People alumni are able to enhance childrens' interest in the world by providing hands-on experience.

## 〈Children's Comments〉

- I enjoyed the dance today, so when I grow up, I would like to go to all the countries and dance with the people of that country.
- I did not like physical education classes, but I enjoyed today's dance
- I want to know dances from other countries, so please come to teach the class again
- I have not been to foreign countries, but learning about greetings and seeing photos and dances gave me fun images.

## 〈Teachers' Comments〉

A lot of information is available to our children, but they are not able to go to foreign countries. Learning about different cultures by moving their bodies was a refreshing and valuable experience for them.



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# The Passing of Dr. Toyotane Sohma and Memorial Party

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The memorial party for Dr. Toyotane Sohma was held on January 27. Dr. Toyotane Sohma, who contributed to the activities of the MRA Foundation and established OCA, passed away on July 30, 2018 at the age of 95. The funeral was held on August 6th at the Kirigaya Funeral Hall, and 200 people attended to mourn his passing. A Shinto funeral took place and condolences from Mr. and Mrs. Blanton Belk of Up With People was read during the ceremony. Bouquets were delivered from her Imperial Highness Princess Hitachi and the Royal Thai Embassy, and many people attended the funeral from Thailand.

An interment ceremony was held at the Aoyama Cemetery on the fiftieth day after his death on Sept. 17. Mr. Blanton Belk and Mr. Dale Penny from UWP, and Mr. David Lin from Taiwan joined Dr. Sohma's relatives as he was laid to rest.

The Memorial Party for Dr. Sohma was held on Sunday, January 27. A total of 120 people gathered at the Tokai University Alumni Hall on the 35th floor of the Kasumigaseki Building. In preparing for the memorial, we tried to create a lively party which Dr. Sohma would have preferred, and asked that people attend in casual attire. Young people from Common Beat performed some songs. Dr. Worawet, the Dean of Faculty of Economics at Chulalongkorn University, Professor Sirima and 16 other people from Thailand,



and Ms. Raquel Calma and Mr. Atek from the Philippines attended. Mr. Okumura emceed the party. Following a toast by Mr. Takayoshi Sato, Director of the MRA Foundation, Mr. Masahide Shibusawa, representing Dr. Sohma's friends gave a speech. Ms. Chutima, the representative of Thailand OCA, and Dr. Worawet, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, gave speeches in fluent Japanese. While guests were enjoying food and refreshments, 12 young members of Common Beat came on stage and sang their main theme, "A Common Beat," a song which Dr. Sohma liked.



Bill Crutchfield then joined the singing and cheered us up with "Beyond Tears" and "Up With People" as the audience sang along. Slides introducing Dr. Sohma's life and videos of Asian Beat and Budokan were presented. In closing, Mrs. Tokiko Sohma expressed her gratitude and shared a few memories of her husband. Many people commented that it was a wonderful event. We understood the breadth and depth of Dr. Sohma's friendships and their influence.



## MRA Foundation and OCA Programs

MRA is an abbreviation of Moral Re-Armament. It started when Dr. Frank Buchman started a peace movement called the Oxford Group in the 1920s. After World War II, a "World Conference" a forerunner to the current Davos Conference was held in Caux, Switzerland, and developed the "German-French reconciliation" and the "Asian unity and friendship" movement including Japan. The group advocated for re-arming morally rather than militarily during the Cold War. This was the starting point of the activities of MRA. After that, in the United States and around the world MRA performed shows and developed an education foundation called "Up with People" to educate young people. In Japan, the MRA Foundation developed into an organization that promotes international mutual understanding. The foundation supports and subsidizes projects aimed at developing international leaders and human resources. The 2018 operating budget for the foundation was ¥ 97,900,000, which is used in the public interest and grants funding.

OCA is an acronym for Off Campus Activities. The OCA was founded in 1971 as a division of MRA Foundation with the goal of

promoting international exchange and student exchanges with Southeast Asia. For the past fifty years, OCA has facilitated exchanges among youth in Southeast Asia, Korea, and Taiwan.

The OCA Division is currently under the direct control of the MRA Foundation and has been implementing projects that have been introduced in this activity report.

The annual budget for the OCA operations was ¥ 14,580,000 yen in fiscal year 2018 (actual) and ¥16,500,000 yen in fiscal 2019 (budget).

New MRA Foundation office constructed on the site of former MRA Foundation in Azabu. Will be completed in 2020 (image)



# OCA Operation Policy

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- Policy:** The goal of OCA is to foster global leadership through interaction with local communities and cross-cultural exchanges with other countries.
- Budget:** The operation budget of OCA depends on the annual budget of the MRA Foundation.
- Budget for Activities:** The activities of the MRA Foundation are financed by its endowment and management of basic assets.
- Annual Budget:** OCA activities and the expenses of the fiscal year of 2018 (actual), and 2019 (budget) are as follows:

| Period            | Program                                  | FY 2018 (Actual)  | FY 2019 (Budget)  |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| May               | Common Beat Taiwan Performance           | 1,158,000         | —                 |
| May               | Study Program for Thai Students in Japan | 748,000           | 740,000           |
| June              | Cast Rehearsal Instructor for Taiwan     | 176,000           | 200,000           |
| July              | World Onigiri Friends Project            | 663,000           | 700,000           |
| August            | Summer Camp                              | 430,000           | 450,000           |
| November          | Northern Thailand Tour Project           | 1,122,000         | 1,200,000         |
| December          | Asian Beat Project                       | 1,720,000         | 1,690,000         |
|                   | New Business Research Expenses           | 519,000           | 500,000           |
|                   | Travel Expenses                          | 1,147,000         | 1,140,000         |
|                   | Chulalongkorn University Support Expense | 83,000            | 100,000           |
|                   | School Visit Project                     | 514,000           | 1,500,000         |
|                   | Donation to Mae Kok Farm, Ban Rom Sai    | 800,000           | 800,000           |
|                   | UWP Japanese Participants Support        | 1,000,000         | 1,000,000         |
|                   | Consignment Fee                          | 2,505,000         | 3,500,000         |
|                   | Other Expenses                           | 1,990,000         | 2,500,000         |
|                   | OCA Report Printing Costs                | —                 | 480,000           |
| <b>Total(Yen)</b> |  | <b>14,575,000</b> | <b>16,500,000</b> |

**Steering Committee:** Sato, Kehara, Koseki, Takahashi, Shimizu, Adachi, Agatsuma, Nakajima, Takizawa, Koinuma, Okumura, Kitano, Akiyama, Shimabayashi, Shibusawa, Kanbe

**How to Join:** OCA does not have a membership system. No membership fee is required. Information on OCA activities are available on the MRA Foundation website. Please contact us from the website.

## Contact:

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### OCA International Exchange Program, MRA Foundation

Homat West 440, 15-11 Roppongi 3-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106- 0032,

TEL: 03-6441-3182

Website: <http://www.mrafoundation.or.jp/>