

OCA REPORT 2022

Off Campus Activities under MRA Foundation



Fun, Making Friends, International Exchange

What We Want to Do Goal of Action

1) International Exchange after COVID-19

We couldn't go abroad for 3 years due to the Corona pandemic, and overseas people couldn't come to Japan. In 2022, the number of new infections has finally decreased, and the entry restrictions to Japan have been eased. In August, a total of 17 Thai students and professors were invited to a summer camp in Kobuchizawa, Yamanashi Prefecture with 50 participants including Japanese students. At that time, the number of new infections in Tokyo was still as high as 40,000 per day, so all participants were subjected to PCR tests, and all the people involved in the event were also subjected to antigen tests.

However, it was a very stimulating and interesting experience for the students to meet face-to-face for the first time in three years, have meals, and participate in exchange activities. (The below is a group photo in Kobuchizawa.) Thai and Japanese friends chatted late into the night.

After returning to Thailand, the Thai students reported to the university officials that this summer camp was a great program for making friends in Japan, so we have received requests from Chulalongkorn University (Chula) and Mae Fah Luang University (MFU) to organize this program every year.

Following the summer camp, we had a tour of Northern Thailand in October in Chuo, Saitama, and Chula, a CocoWA Project visit to Mae Kok Foundation (MKF) in December, and a volunteer work camp in Keio, Chula, and MFU in March. The students visiting Thailand from Japan were welcomed by Chula and MFU students who had made friends at the summer camp,

and were happy to see each other again.

We thought we could make a lot of friends through online exchanges, but this year made us realize once again that going overseas and doing exchange activities together is much more exciting and interesting.

2) What We Want to Do

In 2023, we are planning a South Korea tour in April, a summer camp in August, a northern Thailand tour in October, a CocoWA project in December, and a visit to Japan by the MLF children in March.

Through these International Exchange Programs, we would like to share the following ideas and ways of life with everyone.

- ① Make close friends throughout the world and think of the world as our home.
- ② Expand our views about world events and voice our opinions.
- ③ Listen attentively to our hearts and follow our own voices in honest ways.
- ④ Recognize that each person is different, accept diverse values, and love people as they are.
- ⑤ Care and think about people's feelings.
- ⑥ Think about what is right rather than who is right.
- ⑦ Always think of others and ways to help society.

We want to embrace these ideas as we interact with others, enjoy daily life and live our lives.



Summer Camp

Aug.1-4, 2022



Brief Description

The Japan-Thailand Student Exchange "Summer Camp" was held from August 1st to 4th at "Megami no Mori, Goddess Forest" in Kobuchizawa. The global pandemic has forced the cancellation of many planned OCA activities. The training program for Thai students in Japan, which had continued until now, was also canceled for three years, and it was a pity that we could not have real face-to-face exchanges. Meanwhile, immigration to Japan from overseas has been eased, and the route to enter Japan from Thailand has become visible.

We welcomed 17 students and professors from Thailand, invited Thai students to Japan, and conducted exchanges with Japanese students at the "Megami no Mori" facility in Kobuchizawa, Yamanashi Prefecture. From Thailand, 14 students and 1 professor from Chula, 2 students from MFU, 17 students from Chuo University (Chuo), 2 students from Saitama University (Saitama), and 10 students from Keio University (Keio) participated. It was an exchange meeting with 50 people in total, including 4 staff members.

Activity Content

On August 1st, the participants from Thailand took a bus directly from Narita Airport to Kobuchizawa. At 15:00, they joined the Japanese students, and the summer camp started from the orientation. After

self-introduction and grouping, the 4-day exchange meeting started.

On August 2nd, we had a farming experience at the "Megami no Mori" organic farm, which implements eco-friendly farming and food safety that does not rely on pesticides. For lunch and dinner, each group had a culinary competition using vegetables harvested from the farm and foodstuffs we had purchased.

On August 3rd, a talk session was held by Thai students. This is an extension of the Thai study group that started in April this year, and it is a study group where you can ask Thai students "problems that they want to ask but are difficult to ask".





Theme 1 "Why is marijuana legal in Thailand?"

Many questions were raised by Japanese students about the recent legalization of the cultivation of cannabis in Thailand. A Thai student introduced photos of marijuana-infused drinks sold at convenience stores and marijuana-infused menus in Japanese restaurants. Japanese students were surprised at the explanation that the cultivation of cannabis is for medicinal purposes and the sale of marijuana cigarettes is illegal.

Theme 2 "What do young people in Japan think about LGBT?"

Thai students asked various questions about LGBT. Japanese students also introduced their friends' experiences and expressed their own opinions, which made the discussion lively.

After the talk session, we went out to the garden and played a game that each group came up with. At night, Everyone enjoyed a barbecue party and fireworks display. A big success!

We were deeply moved by the fact that we were able

to implement a face-to-face exchange program that had not been possible for nearly three years. In the midst of the global pandemic, technical exchange methods have certainly developed and enjoyed the effects, but these four days were a real sensation of how wonderful it is to be able to actually meet and talk face-to-face. The sight of everyone trying to understand each other's cultures, lifestyles, ways of thinking, learning about each other's cultures, noticing their differences, and trying to understand them was irreplaceable. Not only the differences between Thai and Japanese, but all the people gathered here should know the differences between themselves, think about those differences, respect each other, and cooperate in one thing. The wonders of being able to complete it. We feel that it was a summer camp that we were able to share that.

Participant Comments

Throughout, there were many events, but all of them were very good activities for deepening friendships with both Thai and Japanese students, and I was able to enjoy them very much. Also, I was surprised that I was able to deepen our relationship with each other more than I thought while working as a family. I am glad that I participated in the camp. (Raimu)

It was the best camp of my life. We had a great time camping with everyone. We were able to discuss and share our joys and sorrows together. Through this camp, I was able to build an irreplaceable relationship with the students. (Tah)

This camp allowed me to grow and regain my child's mind, and I was able to gain curiosity. I think it has become a guidepost that shows what kind of things I should be conscious of in my future life. (I'm not overestimating it!!!) (Izumi)

I think it was a very valuable experience to hear the opinions about the Thai royal family because Thai students came to Japan. After the talk session, I asked several students for their opinions, and they were very different from Dr. Piti's opinion. I thought it was wonderful that each person had a strong opinion about how the country should be. (Kento)



Summer Camp Photos



Northern Thailand Tour

Oct. 23-30,2022



Brief Description

The "Northern Thailand Tour", which had been suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic, was held from October 23rd to 30th for the first time in three years. From Japan, 13 Chuo University Komoriya seminar students, Professor Komoriya, and two from Saitama University participated. Considering measures against Coronavirus infection, 3 staff members, 6 students and 2 staff members from Chulalongkorn University participated, making the tour a total of 27 people. In Chiang Rai, 10 students from MFU and Dr. Rapipong participated and spent time together in MKF, an orphanage.

Although the Coronavirus has calmed down, this tour was carried out with the highest awareness and efforts of the participating students, considering the utmost caution and countermeasures. Thanks to everyone's effort, we were able to complete the tour without anyone infected or having a fever.

Also, on this tour, Chula and MFU friends who participated in the "Summer Camp" held in Kobuchizawa "Megami no Mori" in Yamanashi Prefecture in August this year welcomed us and acted together until the end. It was a tour where the friendships that were formed at the summer camp blossomed again.



Activity Content

So far, the students participating in the tour have held study sessions about Thailand through the Internet, and have studied the problems of economic disparities in Thailand and the actual conditions of ethnic minorities in northern Thailand. The day after we arrived in Bangkok, we visited the community of Onnut, one of the slums in Bangkok, guided by Mr. Teruhiko Sekiguchi, Director of the International Labor Foundation Bangkok, who was indebted to us as a lecturer at that time.

Students from Chula also participated in this. One student from Chula knew that there were slums in Bangkok, but said, "Knowing that we are forced to live in a harsh environment like this, I see a new perspective on this country. I'm glad I was able to do it," he said.

After visiting the community, we moved to another location and heard from Mr. Sekiguchi about the income disparity in Thailand, the challenges faced by slums, and the current situation. The reality is that the economic disparity between urban and rural areas in Thailand is severe, and due to the economic development of Thailand, there is always a labor shortage around Bangkok, and migrant workers from rural areas and foreign workers from surrounding Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia gather in slums. They are engaged in a tough job called 3k. The children there are also poorly educated. Even under severe circumstances, they continue to live in the slums rather than returning to their own country. About two million people, one-fifth of Bangkok's population, live in nearly 2,000 slums.

October 25: Visited Chulalongkorn University. We were welcomed by Professor Sirima of the Faculty of Economics and other students, and held a seminar with Chuo University. As part of the Chuo University Komoriya Seminar, three groups gave presentations on their research in Japan. After the seminar, a campus tour was conducted under the guidance of Chula students. Visited a historical museum that explains the founding of Chula and the library with the latest design. The Japanese students were particularly interested in the sophisticated library. After the campus tour, we had a welcome dinner party prepared by Chula. We had a great time and got to know each other better.

On October 26, eight students from Chula participated, and the group left for Chiang Rai from Bangkok on an early morning flight. Visited MFU in Chiang Rai. MFU students gave presentations on the university and the history of Chiang Rai. Before dinner, Mr. Sekiguchi became a lecturer and talked about hill tribes in northern Thailand, the disparity between cities and rural areas, education problems for children, discrimination, and poverty, and the discussion progressed with the students. Children dressed in national costumes performed a dance. After that, we all stayed at the riverside of the Kok River and raised khom loi (lanterns) in the night sky where the stars were shining, and continued to interact with the children through fireworks and other activities.

On October 27th, we rode elephants on the opposite bank of MKF and visited a minority hill tribe village. After lunch, we said goodbye to our MFU friends and left for Chiang Mai. Compared to 3 years ago, the road conditions were improved, and it took about 6 hours to travel by bus. After settling down at Hoshi-hana, which is run by Ban Rom Sai in Chiang Mai, the group got up early the next morning and inspected the morning

market (Hang Dong His Market). While having breakfast there, we observed the people who live in this area.

Returned to the Hoshi-hana and visited the adjacent Ban Rom Sai. This is an orphanage for children of parents who have suffered from HIV infection and children who are forced to live in poverty in the community. The Japanese students received an explanation from Ms. Miho Natori, the daughter of Ms. Miwa Natori, the founder of Ban Rom Sai, with whom they have been connected through online study sessions. Miho-san rushed from Japan to coincide with our visit. She was very happy to be able to talk with students who could only talk online and welcomed us. We then played soccer and badminton with the children at the facility who had been looking forward to our visit. The students were amazed at the children's soccer skills. After lunch, a Chula student guided us to Chiang Mai. We visited "Doi Suthep" temple at an altitude of 1080m, which is the main mountain of Chiang Mai. Built in 1383 by King Kuna at the time, it is a large temple that is still worshiped by people today. From here you can see the city of Chiang Mai.

On October 29th, we returned to Bangkok in the afternoon and went sightseeing in Bangkok city with friends from Chulalongkorn.

On October 30th, there was a farewell party (review meeting) that will also serve as lunch in the late afternoon.

The memories of the tour so far and the feeling of gratitude to Chulalongkorn's friends who have acted together with each other were talked and exchanged, and the story never ended.

After the "farewell party" where we reconfirmed our friendship, the tour group returned to Japan on a late-night flight that day.



2022 "Northern Thailand Project" Participants

Chuo University



Shunto Uchiyama



Miku Yamamoto



Hikaru Yamaguchi



Miyu Ishida



Yusuke Nakajima



Mizuki Sakai



Hyoma Matsushita



Sara Shimada



Seina Otokozaawa



Kohei Miyamoto



Miharu Suzuki



Ryo Higashida



Ryotaro Hishikawa



(Professor)
Yoshimasa Komoriya

Saitama University



Tetta Nishiguchi



Shinya Nakayama

Chulalongkorn University



Aimee Potjanapitak



Punawith Sripaeng



Supanath Chameekornkul



Yanin Prasoptham



Chatpimuk Luangaram



Sirawich Wijaithamarit



(STAFF)
Shongrak Thongsom



(STAFF)
Auwat Chalemecheep

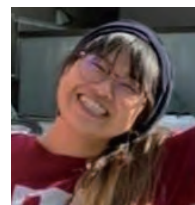
Staff Members



Nobuyuki Takahashi



Koji Okumura



Yuka Shimabayashi



Haruna Kobayashi

January - August

Online Japan-Thailand Student Exchange and Study Group



Comments from Each Teacher

Comment from Professor Sirima, Chulalongkorn University

I think that this program has proposed a new way of student exchange during the Corona pandemic. It proved that the fact that the participants are far away from each other or that the time is different is not a problem for the exchange program. I participated in the first and second times of the Japan-Thailand Online Student Exchange Program. The program was very well organized and the

students who participated actively spoke out. I was especially surprised to see the Japanese and Thai student representatives cooperating in the planning and implementation of the program. Both Japanese and Thai students are usually shy and tend not to participate in discussions. The program had a very relaxed atmosphere in which the students often talked and participated in discussions. I think this program was a great opportunity for us to get to know each other and become good friends through conversation. Even in the breakout room, Japanese and Thai students were divided into small groups and talked well. I would like to thank the Japanese and Thai student representatives who were in charge of this project. I believe that the student representatives held several meetings to discuss freely and create an atmosphere of mutual understanding. I believe that the student representatives, the OCA, and the participating students created a new approach to student exchange activities in an environment where they could not actually meet.

Comment from Chuo University Professor Komoriya

This four-university online exchange meeting was characterized by the fact that the students came up with a plan for each session, without any academic elements. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all international exchanges continue to be conducted online. Even so, it is wonderful to be able to implement a new trial, and I am very happy to be able to participate in that trial. I also participated in all three meetings, and even though there were variations in English proficiency, it was an exchange meeting where each participating student enjoyed something and gained something.

Brief Description

In the midst of the global pandemic caused by the Coronavirus, three times on June 17th, July 5th, and August 10th, Chulalongkorn University, MFU, Chuo University, and Saitama University used Zoom to hold discussions. We implemented an online exchange program between students to make friends. With no end to the Coronavirus in sight, we called on each student to have an opportunity to have exchanges between Japan and Thailand, and there were over 185 applications for participation.

The contents of the three programs are as follows.

	Person in charge	Content
June 17th	Preaw, Din, Kamoshita, and Dainan	Opening talk, introduction of Japanese and Thai universities, school life, introduction to part-time jobs, and Thailand's conscription system
July 5th	Pennie, Tan, Miyazaki, Masuda	Favorite sports, places you want to travel, popular music, group talk
August 10	Cookie, Nice, Fukui	Games created by the students, favorite food, introduction to origami, topics related to the Olympics, group talk



4 Universities Online Seminar

On January 27, 2022 (Thursday), Chulalongkorn University (Chula), Mae Fah Luang University (MFU), Chuo University (Chuo), and Saitama University jointly held a seminar with Prof. Takao Goto from Chuo as a lecturer. The title of the lecture was "The Current Status and Issues of Transportation in Thai-



land and Japan - Focusing on Road Business and Railways". Discussions were held from the perspective of economics, such as methods for privatizing road and railway businesses in both countries, measures to eliminate road congestion, and construction of high-speed railways to replace air routes.

<Excerpts from questionnaire responses from students>

- It is difficult for me to create opportunities to interact with people from overseas, so it was fun to participate in this kind of project.
- It was interesting to learn about the situation and countermeasures in Japan and other countries, where I had not paid much attention to traffic conditions, and to think about them.
- Rather than discussing the content of the discussion, it felt more like an exchange of information about each person's current situation and lifestyle. It was very interesting.



Thai Study Session

▼ No.1: March 9th Mr. Teruhiko Sekiguchi's Seminar titled **"The Current Situation of Slums in Bangkok"**
We learned about income disparities in Thailand, how slums exist in Bangkok, and how people live there.

<Student's impression>

I felt deeply that Thailand's economic disparities, slums, immigrant worker problems, etc. are built within the Thai social system and cannot be easily resolved. Despite the fact that workers who migrated from neighboring countries (Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, etc.) are treated badly and exploited, they think "I'd rather live in the slums of Thailand than go back to my country." From today's seminar, I learned that life in Thailand's neighboring countries are even more difficult, and I became interested in the reality of the countries.

▼No.2: May 19th Mr. Teruhiko Sekiguchi's Seminar **"The Current Situation of Mae Kok Foundation and Hill Tribes"**

We learned about the efforts of Mae Kok Foundation (MKF), a facility in northern Thailand that provides educational life support for children, and the problems faced by the surrounding hill tribes.

<Student's impression>

"It was very interesting to hear stories that we could not obtain from the information we could research." I

was very interested in all the themes, but if I had to mention one, I was very interested in Ms. Anne's story because I was able to learn about the problems and reality of Thai society. I regret that I was a little reluctant to ask questions. Also, I was very interested in the MKF dinner that came out towards the end! I think that the time spent interacting with Thai students will be more meaningful through this study group, so I would like to actively participate in this study group in the future.

▼ No.3: September 14 Miho Natori and Kentaro Toda's seminar **"Ban Rom Sai and Social Contribution"**
We learned about the history of the establishment of the orphan living facility "Ban Rom Sai" in Chiang Mai, which was established by Ms. Natori, and the social contribution activities that the facility conducts.

<Student's impression>

I wasn't sure what the facility in Ban Rom Sai was like, but through the video broadcast, I thought it was a very clean and relaxing place. It made me even more excited to actually go, and I wanted to go to various places and play with the children. In the story, there were episodes where I had a lot of trouble. Hearing that HIV is not widely known and that there is still prejudice, I thought it was important that we should also learn about HIV and teach it to the people around us in order to spread knowledge about HIV to many people in the future.

March, 2023

Work Camps of Keio, Chula, and MFU

Mar. 24-29, 2023

Completion of the waterproof wall! The names of Keio, Chula, and MFU are written.



Brief Description

Following the northern Thailand tour of Chuo, Saitama, and Chula Universities at the end of October 2022, the students from Keio, Chula, and MFU who became friends at the summer camp in March 2023 visited Mae Kok Foundation (MKF), Chiang Rai for a work camp. MKF suffered extensive damage to farms, fish farms and guest houses due to the flooding of the Kok River last August. This time, a total of 32 students from Keio, Chula, and MFU and OCA staff members visited MKF and held a volunteer work camp to help with the concrete construction of the waterproof wall that was washed away by the flood.

Activity Content

Nine Keio students arrived in Bangkok on March 24th and visited Chula on March 25th. We reunited with 10 Chula students, had a campus tour, a walk around Bangkok, and had a dinner party. After that, 6 Chula students flew to Chiang Rai with Keio students and entered MKF. During this period, Chiang Rai had severe air pollution due to the burning of fields by surrounding farmers and Myanmar farmers, and it was an environment where people had to wear masks all the time. The sky was cloudy due to air pollution from burning fields, so we didn't have a chance to see the many stars in the clear night sky and the shooting stars that we usually see.



Reunion with students from Chula



Students listening to Ms. Anuluck explaining about flood damage



Dirt piling and transport work

On March 27th, the students visited MFU in Chiang Rai and were welcomed by MFU students and 20 other students who came to the summer camp. MFU tourism ambassadors, mainly Myanmar international students from MFU, gave a campus tour, and after that, MFU students guided them to visit the White Temple and other parts of the city of Chiang Rai until the evening.

March 28th is volunteer work at last. The students changed into work clothes, put on work gloves, and worked together with the MKF children. We divided up the work of filling bags with sand and carrying them to the foundation construction site, and bucket relaying the materials that were kneaded with concrete and sand to the site. In March in Thailand, the temperature is 35 to 37 degrees even in northern Thailand. It was quite a tough task for the students who were not accustomed to the Thai climate. The children from MKF were more accustomed to the work and had more stamina than the students from Tokyo and Bangkok, so they continued working without worrying about it. When everyone was exhausted after the work, Ms. Anuluck, the person in charge of MKF, provided us with handmade ice cream and everyone took a break. In the evening of that day, the fires that had been burned by the surrounding farmers spread to the forest, and the mountains behind MKF caught fire. This is the dry season in Thailand, so the dry grass catches fire, and the fire approaches with a loud banging sound. Depending on the direction of the wind, there was a possibility that MKF could catch fire, so when we consulted with Professor Rapipong of MFU, the MFU headquarters instructed us to evacuate the students from this area, so the MFU prepared a bus. We decided to go to the MFU student dormitory. Soon after that, a fire engine came and extinguished the fire, but it was a busy day as we had to quickly get ready and head to MFU by bus.

We were relieved to meet the children in MKF on the morning of March 29th. On this day, we enjoyed elephant riding at an elephant camp near MKF, and after enjoying lunch with Ms. Anuluck, we all had a looking back session and a farewell party. We hugged the children of MKF and regretted saying goodbye, and headed to the airport. Among the students who participated in the summer camp in Bangkok, Chula students who could not participate in the tour this time came to see us and reunited with old friends. Because the return flight to Narita was suddenly canceled, the



Cement Bucket Relay

Keio students waited at the airport until the morning of that day and headed for Narita via Seoul early the next morning. It was a short visit, but many things happened, and we overcame those problems together with the Thai students.

Finally, we would like to introduce a comment of the participants of this work camp. "Everyone who participated in this tour said it was the best trip, and I was able to create many memories that will last a lifetime. There were a lot of happenings along the way, but it was all interesting and a lot of fun.

In addition, Chula and MFU students and MKF children were all very kind and I was able to get to know them very well. Thank you very much for giving us such a wonderful experience. It was a great pleasure to meet all of you from OCA.

Kento Mizuno, New Junior at Keio University"



Wildfires approaching MKF



with MKF children

Work Camp Participants from Keio, Chula, and MFU

Keio University



Kento Mizuno



Aoi Takagi



Ayumu Sato



Miki Yamasawa



Miyako Takase



Momoka Tokuda



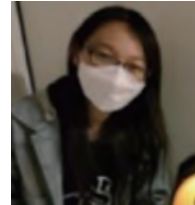
Mana Fukuzawa



Shiho Anzai



Keita Maejima



Pang Ka Yee

Chulalongkorn University



Khing



Ploy



Belle



Chair



Web



Cooky



Sirima.B

Mae Fah Luang University



Zee



Lukyee



Max



Gingphai



Mud



Preaw



Fei hung



Da



Pond

Staff Members



Dio



Rapipong Promnart



Anuluck Chaisurin



Nobuyuki Takahashi
(OCA)



Akemi Takahashi
(OCA)



Tetsuya Koinuma
(OCA)



Yuka Shimabayashi
(OCA)



Haruna Kobayashi
(OCA)



Akiko Takizawa
(OCA)



Jiro Tobe

Asian Beat Project



Brief Description

The AsianBeat Project has moved its activities online due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This May marks the fourth time that the event has been held, and the circle of friendship that has involved Asian countries has expanded. A total of 34 people including staff members participated. Friends from various countries such as Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan, Nepal, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia spent the days getting to know each other through singing, dancing, talk time, etc., and aim for the day we can meet someday.



ABO4 Activity Report

Impressions from participants (staff) from Thailand

Hello everyone! It's Mindi from Thailand. Last year I participated as a cast member in Asian Beat Online a.k.a. ABO. Being invited from Yukachin (Yuka Shimabayashi, program moderator), this year I decided to be a part of ABO4 as a staff member. It's been two months since 10 staff members from Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea met up every Tuesday night via Zoom. These are my thoughts about the program that I would like to share so you will understand what ABO is and how awesome it is!

We got to know each other more through sharing our personalities. It was amazing that everyone shared their impressions of each other, and I found that everyone has their own unique points. Something that you think might be a weakness of yours, it could actually be a good quality to others.

The Cast Orientation was held on 23,24,30 April 2022. Staff members planned for various activities which mainly focused on self expression and hopefully the candidates could feel ABO vibe. This was my first time running activity! Super nervous but it went pretty okay. I can clearly see that all staff members put their efforts to make ABO4 lively and meaningful. Couldn't be better when candidates said that they had a good time during the orientation.

After the Cast Orientation was over, we continued planning for the main program. Cast and staff members from all over Asia will experience 3-weekend activities where we can express ourselves and learn new cultures. Participants will be divided into families (small groups of people from different countries) and do family missions together. Unlike other ABO programs, this time each family has an opportunity to make their own performance. I really look forward to this!

If you ask me what makes ABO so special, well.. I can feel that we have something in common. Perhaps an open-minded personality. During the meeting, we usually express our thoughts and feelings and everybody just mindfully listens. We are willing to volunteer and support each other. Even though we come from different life backgrounds, it seems like we are family.

3 words describing ABO

- Cheerful
- Unstoppable
- Friendship

Apart from online activities, the staff members decided to send one card to everyone's houses. I'm so excited about this as well! And also this June, the program will be held on-site in Kyoto so all ABO members can meet each other in person! Unfortunately I couldn't join this event but I truly believe that I will receive a warm welcome next time when possible.

At first, practicing communication skills was my aim to join this program. However it turned out that making long-lasting friendships would be my main goal instead! I wouldn't regret spending my spare time with this program. Being an ABO member is my best experience during the pandemic. And I hope it will do so to you.

Asian Beat Online in Kyoto

On June 18th and 19th, we held a program called "Japan Assembly" where we met friends who had participated in AsianBeat online in person, and the participants gathered in Kyoto and had a great time! We planned to gather participants from overseas, but due to the situation with the new Coronavirus, it was difficult for them to enter the country, so this time it was held on a small scale, with only participants living in Japan. Even though it was only for people living in Japan, we were able to spend time with a diverse group of people, including not only Japanese, but also people from the Philippines, Indonesia, and the United States. There were no major problems, and it was a time when we



experienced the wonderfulness of actually meeting and working, saying, "It's nice to be able to meet and talk! Thanks to the online connection, it's finally coming to fruition!" From now on, face-to-face activities will also increase. Please enjoy the blog written by one of the participants along with your expectations for the future.

Hello everyone! I'm Hiroyuki Yagi (Yagi-chan) from Japan. I live in Tokyo, but I took a Shinkansen (bullet train) to Kyoto to participate in the Japan Assembly! I usually only meet ABO friends online, but what is it like to meet in person? With my heart pounding, I headed to the meeting place at Kyoto Station. I felt uneasy if I might lose my way to the meeting place, but there was no need to worry. Because there was a group in front of me that seemed to be having fun. After saying hello, the vaccination certificate and negative test were done, and we were off to the city of Kyoto. First, we headed to Higashi Honganji. It was a large temple, and a part of the hall in front of the gate was open to the public. Checked in at our accommodation! After putting down our luggage, we all went shopping for dinner. There were quite a few foods that some people couldn't eat for various reasons (Participants from Indonesia said that they could not eat pork for religious reasons.) It was very interesting for me to feel different cultures when we discussed what to buy for ingredients so that everyone can eat with peace of mind. When we got back to our accommodation, we all worked together to make dinner that recreated our own home cooking and the taste of our home country, and we enjoyed eating them! Details of the upcoming real tour were announced, and it was a great excitement. Unlike online, we talked to the person who wanted to talk, and one person talked about picture books around the world with the real thing in one hand. We really had a great time. The next day, those who got up early in the morning meditated, went for a walk, etc. After that, we all had breakfast, changed places, and talked about the future of AsianBeat. "It was a very meaningful time with various ideas."



March/September/December

Support for the Mae Kok Foundation in Thailand



Support for the Mae Kok Foundation (MKF)

The MKF was founded by the late Mr. Pipat Chaislin, the husband of the current representative Anuluck Chaislin, together with Mr. Jiro Tobe, who was a teacher at Seigakuin Junior and Senior High School at the time, and Professor Shigeru Takehara of Reitaku University. It started with holding a "study tour" for students and working people to visit the farming villages and hill tribes of Chiang Rai and experience their lives. While learning about the current situation in northern Thailand at the time, problems such as drugs, poverty, prostitution, and education came up. Among them, drug addiction was a serious problem because of the long history of drug cultivation, and caused many secondary problems. After that, Mr. Pipat established a rehabilitation facility for drug addicts and started activities aimed at eradicating drug addiction in the village. His activities bore fruit and were taken over by the Thai government. He came to the idea that educating children is important to create a drug-free society. At that time, the guardians of many children in the village died of drug addiction or were imprisoned, and there were many children without parents. Those children were left in the care of relatives, but many were unable to receive adequate food, clothing, or education. The children in such situations were taken care of and sent to school together, and the number of facilities was gradually increased, resulting in the present form of the MKF. In 2021, OCA members, OCA Thailand friends, Make a Difference who are active mainly in Nagoya, charity projects centered on the cast of AsianBeat, etc. supported individual donations. We were able to build a long-awaited "computer room" for children. MKF was damaged by flooding in 2022, but participants in the CocoWA project in December of the same year helped them repair the riverbanks.

Charity Run

The opening ceremony was held on Saturday, March

26th, and it got off to a great start. The participation fee of 25 people was directly sent to MKF as a donation. The amount collected was 60,500 yen. With the goal of "Running a Cumulative Distance of 1,000 km with all Participants," the participants encouraged each other as they walked and ran every day. We are so busy with our daily lives that we tend to forget to take care of our physical health. We were able to take advantage of this opportunity to work on our exercise.

Charity Cooking

"Enjoyable International Contribution!" Series Cooking Corner, Global Charity Cooking Thai Vol.2 was held on September 3rd. We received a total of 55,000 yen in support from the 12 participants.

This time we made a dish called "Pad See Ew". It was a menu that the management staff, Ms. Kiriha Megumi (Kiri-chan) loved. Some ingredients and seasonings were difficult to obtain in Japan, Mindi, the instructor, and Ms. Yuka Shimabayashi, the operation staff, discussed in advance and sampled the food, so we prepared what we could prepare in Japan. (Actually, there were ingredients that didn't appear in the preparation, and I forgot to write eggs in the recipe... It was a mess, but it's cross-cultural exchange that makes me laugh!)

Thanks to that, all the people who ate it were surprised and delighted. One of the participants also gave this impression. "I've always made stir-fried rice vermicelli and ate it, but the taste was completely different and delicious. Why? When we think about it, we think that we added a procedure to season the ingredients. It seems that there was also a new discovery.

After the meal, we enjoyed a quiz prepared by Mindi. Everyone struggled with quizzes related to Thailand, such as the population of Thailand and the number of provinces. It was a fun time full of laughter. Thanks to all of you, we were able to welcome the 5th edition of the "Enjoyable International Contribution!" series.

CocoWA Project

This project actually visited MKF at the end of the year. We decided to call the participating members "crews" with the idea of "creating together through trial and error, having the awareness that they are sailors on the same ship." After a thorough online preparation period, the crew gathered in Chiang Mai. In addition to MKF, we also visited Ban Rom Sai in Chiang Mai (another orphanage established and operated by Japanese people).

After leaving Ban Rom Sai, we traveled from Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai by bus for 3 hours, and finally to MKF. The children who welcomed us enthusiastically from the moment we arrived blew away the fatigue of traveling long distances. We prepared several activities for the children, and among them, the children listened intently to the toothpaste lesson, which included a puppet show, despite our clumsy

Thai. We have been preparing to convey the importance of brushing teeth so that children can have healthy teeth. We tried to figure out how to convey our message properly, and when we put together things we could do, such as picture-story shows and puppet shows, we were able to convey the message to the children in a fun way.

Not only did we tell them something, but we also learned a lot from the children. In the work of repairing the riverbank washed away by the flood, we had to do it with only our bodies and the spirit of doing our best, because we had enough manpower. The children knew how to work efficiently and taught us how to make cement and sandbags. Even though we didn't understand each other's language, we communicated with each other using gestures and the words we knew. We were exhausted, but we had fun and sweated together.



On New Year's Eve (12/31), we had breakfast, entertainment time, cooking Japanese food, crew talk, and New Year's Eve party. The breakfast was porridge. This was exquisite and gentle on the body. We also ate toast, boiled eggs and vegetables. (Porridge is also famous as a Thai dish. Thai cucumbers are very delicious.)

For the entertainment time, the children gathered at Cherry Hall (a flat space where events can be held), and began with a dance to the song Jumboree Mickey, led by crew member Taisei Ito. We all had fun dancing and running around until we were exhausted. After that, it was time to create a dance which was very unique and interesting to use ideas from children

and create dances on the spot. The New Year's Eve party was filled with games, dances, gift exchanges, and more! The most exciting event was the candy Kusudama (a large decorative paper ball) splitting. We did it in the same way as watermelon splitting. This is also hard to crack... This play is fun even if it cracks or doesn't crack. When it broke, the candies inside were scattered and everyone jumped at them. After that, we celebrated the New Year with fireworks, a barbecue, a bonfire, and a toast. The crew members jumped on New Year's Eve. It may be something we do a lot in Japan, but for some reason jumping in Thailand was special, and it made us feel young and happy.

On New Year's Day (January 1), we held a worship service, a looking back session, and a SAYONARA party. The worship service was held at a church in MKF. It was a time to sing hymns with band music, sing hymns together with the piano, and offer prayers. Everything in the space was handmade, and we felt very warm. In the looking back session, we wrote and shared our thoughts. It was only a few days' program, but we learned that each person felt differently and changed, and it was a very intense day. At the SAYONARA party, as it was the New Year's Day, we were presented with a 5-yen New Year's gift and Kotobuki chopsticks. After that, we sang Yuzu's "Mata Aeru Hi Made", and we gave the children the medals with a kanji character representing the children and portraits with messages.

In return, the children improvised and sang a song. We were moved by Angela Aki's "Letter". On the final day (1/2), we shared some used items and did a

retrospective work 2. I would be happy if we could make a little bit of a circulation without being able to do it. In the retrospective work 2, we performed the activities "Tap You" and "Sneak Peek Buddy". Tap You is a very warm activity that allows you to convey your love to your friends by touching them. It was a very moving and tearful time. Sneak Peek Buddy is an activity in which you cheer for the opponent you drew in the lottery during the program period. Someone is watching the changes and small efforts that even the person himself does not notice. And I am rooting for someone. I think this is one of the reasons why we were able to build such a wonderful relationship between crew members. And farewell.

Saying goodbye to the children is very lonely, but for some reason we strongly feel that it will be okay. "I'll do my best in Japan, too." "I'll come see you again. Come to see me."



<Comments from Participants>

This is Minami Matsui, who participated in the CocoWA project. I want to write about my thoughts and thoughts after returning to Japan. As for the program participation period, we can choose between 9 days full participation and 6 days short participation, and I participated in the 6 days short program. I had so much fun that I wanted to stay in MKF for more than 6 days. What impressed me the most was that "words aren't the only way to connect feelings." I decided to go to Thailand because I couldn't go abroad to study because of the Coronavirus pandemic, so I wanted to go abroad for the first time in a while, and because I wanted to learn how to interact with children through interacting with them. Currently, I am studying to become a teacher, but I had a lot of lectures at university, and I didn't have the opportunity to get close to children, so I thought it would be nice if I could get something through this program. The reason for the second half is my purpose, and I was determined that I would interact a lot from the beginning! However, since we speak different languages, Thai and Japanese, we were not able to interact as we had hoped, and I was very worried about what would happen if we could not deepen our relationship. In my university lectures, I was taught that it is important to chat with students in order to get along with them. And I started to feel a

high wall in exchange.

At that time, the crew had time to honestly share what they were feeling at the time, and when I decided to consult with them, I got many suggestions as below:

- Start by saying hello
- Smile and call your name
- Just snuggle up (beside) and so on

It made me realize that I had been too obsessed with "conversation," and that I might be able to share my feelings without exchanging words. From the next day onwards, I tried to actively greet them, and even if I didn't say anything, I just approached them by my side. As I spent more time with the children, playing with them, I felt that the walls within me were disappearing. It was a moment when I realized that words are a means of communication and that conversation is not the only thing necessary for communication.



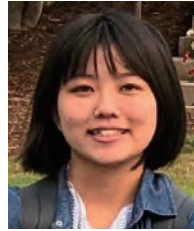
CocoWA Project Participants



Megumi Ikeda



Tomoka Oka



Minami Matsui



Sayo Kuribayashi



Miho Chikuma



Hikari Fujiki



Hikari Matsumura



Taisei Ito



Kaho Toyosawa



Kanae Isozaki

Staff Members



Yuka Shimabayashi



Chiyo Nakabayashi



Megumi Kiriha

What is MRA, What is OCA, and What is Activity Budget

What is MRA?

MRA stands for Moral Re-Armament. It began in the 1920s after World War I, when Dr. Frank Buckman advocated a peace movement called the Oxford Group.

After World War II, a "World Conference" was held in Caux, Switzerland, and the "Reconciliation between Germany and France", and the "Fusion of Asia" movement including Japan were founded. The goal of the group was not to advocate for the military rearmament during the Cold War, but to re-arm the world with morality.

This is the starting point of MRA activities.

After that, starting in the United States, MRA traveled the world putting on music shows, and developing an educational foundation called "Up with People," which educates young people. In Japan, it developed into a project to promote international mutual understanding as the "MRA Foundation" and a project to develop international leaders and human resources.

What is OCA?

OCA stands for Off Campus Activities. It was established in 1971 by the MRA Foundation for the purpose of promoting international exchange programs and student exchange projects within Asia. In that year, Japanese students visited universities in Southeast Asia, and for more than 50 years, we have continued international exchange activities for young people, mainly in Southeast Asia, South Korea, and Taiwan.

OCA activity budget

OCA activities and annual expenses/budget for fiscal 2022 (actual) and fiscal 2023 (budget) are as follows.

Program	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Budget)
Asian Beat Project	1,297,000	1,279,000
apan-Thailand Student Exchange		
Thai Student Visit to Japan Summer Camp	716,000	891,000
Northern Thailand Project	1,310,000	1,060,000
Japanese and Thai Students Online		30,000
MKF, Ban Rom Sai		
Donation to MKF	500,000	500,000
Donation to Ban Rom Sai	400,000	400,000
CocoWA Project	671,000	935,000
MKF Training in Japan	0	750,000
Keio-Thailand Project	989,000	0
Other Programs		
Website Renovation	93,000	350,000
OCA Report	196,000	400,000
Christmas Party	62,000	100,000
Overseas Travel Expenses	Included in project	1,915,000
Outsourcing Expenses	699,000	1,300,000
General Expenses	878,000	2,000,000
Total (Japanese Yen)	7,811,000円	11,910,000円

How to participate in OCA activities

OCA activities do not entail a membership regime, per se. No admission fee is required. The schedule of activities and program content are described on the homepage (see below). So, if you would like to participate, please contact us through the web site.

Contacts

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TEL 03-3445-5111 Fax 03-3445-5112

Website **ASIAN BEAT** <https://asianbeat.net/>

Japan-Thailand students exchange <https://thaijapan.mrafoundation.or.jp>