

# Brief Report on JNEB Energy Tour in Fukushima and ICE in Seoul – Submitted to AFSC

## Background and Introduction

In conjunction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Inter-Religious Climate and Ecology (ICE) Network in Seoul, Japanese Network of Engaged Buddhists (JNEB) organized and sponsored a group of 9 civil society actors in South and Southeast Asian countries including Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam and Korea to participate in study tour to learn about impacts of nuclear disaster and local response in Fukushima and local initiatives on sustainable energy run by monastic community in Japan.

As Japan is the key investor nation in Southeast Asia countries, especially Thailand and Myanmar. Thailand has been one of hubs for several Japanese investors on industrial development, including energy and petrochemical sectors. Japanese government is also interested in drawing investors to support investment in Dawei project. Therefore, SEM and DDA attended this JNEB energy trip in order to build networking connection with Japanese civil society to support advocacy on Dawei issue and to raise awareness on Dawei issue to Japanese civil society. Meanwhile, SEM and DDA also met with representatives from Japanese government agencies to raise concerns over Dawei project with support and arrangement of Mekong Watch.

## Activity Description during Trip in Japan

### *Visiting Eco-Temple and Sustainable Energy Initiatives in Tokyo*

One the first day in Tokyo, Rev. Okochi, the abbot of Kenju-in, provided overview situation of Japanese energy issue and nuclear energy where there is structural problem on this nuclear in supporting nuclear industries involving construction industries and large corporations in Japan. He also explained impacts of nuclear energy to local community as well as how religious leaders and CSOs respond in anti-nuclear activities.



*Orientation and Eco-temple with Rev. Okochi*



*Visiting Juko-in Solar Temple*

The group also visited Kenju-in Eco Temple and Juko-in Solar Temple to learn about how Japanese Buddhist monk organizes eco community housing with chemical free and local timber products and organizes community cooperatives for local sustainable energy. We also met with Edogawa Citizen's Network for Climate Change, an NPO promoting sustainable energy and local resilience, to learn about their initiatives on supporting solar energy as alternative to nuclear energy and discussed

about energy situation in Japan by comparing with other countries. Later, one journalist who covers nuclear issue came to share with the group on role of media in this Fukushima incidents and how mainstream media have been influenced by corporations and failed to expose the reality in Fukushima incident.

### *Visiting Fukushima*



*Praying for those who lost in 311 incidents*



*Group photos after discussion with Rev. Tanaka*

2-day visit to Fukushima was organized for us to learn on-the-ground situation on nuclear disaster in Fukushima. Though Tsunami and Fukushima nuclear fall-out incident happened in the past four years, several problems and issues still exist. We had a chance to visit Namie-cho, located 9 kms from Fukushima nuclear plant#1 where we were exposed to deserted school and area affected by Tsunami and nuclear contamination as well as learning their stories during the incident. We also learned from Rev. Tanaka, a Japanese priest who is an abbot of monastery in that area, about situation and his involvement after the incident. It was inspiring to learn that he came back to the village after his family's evacuation to bring gas and supply for local villagers and he has continued to support morally to local people especially the elders who do not want to move out from their ancestral lands. He and one local villager also expressed the lack of trust to the government and how government tried to cover up the situation despite problems. It was also tragic to learn that TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) which is the key responsible agency for this nuclear disaster is still gaining huge profits from decontamination project. In addition, the government rejected idea from local community to grow mangrove forest to prevent Tsunami disaster in the future, instead it build a big wall to prevent which cost several million dollars.



*Visiting Rapeseed Decontamination Project*



*Meeting with 3a Mother group at Koriyama city*

In the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> day, we met with a villager from Itate city which is located on the mountain on northwest to Fukushima# 1 and affected heavily with nuclear radiation. He explained how some academics exploited the opportunity to get funding for their research, especially the research called

“Risk Communication” which is used as government propaganda to suppress concerns of local people. On the second day, the group visited to Nano-Hana Rapeseed Decontamination project in Minama Soma city which JIPPO, a Japanese NGO, has helped to promote to local farmers to grow and use it to decontaminate the soil instead of government project on decontamination by taking out the nutritious top soil from the area. In the afternoon, we also met Mother group called “3a” trying to monitor and protect their children from high radiation area by using radiation equipment to track and creating a mapping system in Koriyama city.

#### *Networking Seminar on Nuclear Energy and Sustainable Energy issue*

On 25 April, the group also attend networking seminar on nuclear energy and sustainable energy. The discussion in this seminar is around the issue of nuclear energy in Asia, problems and abuses in the nuclear and development project, issue on exporting nuclear energy from developed countries to developing countries and on how we can find solution on sustainable energy and sustainable lifestyle. This networking meeting could help participants in the trip to network with some academic and religious leaders in Japan who are concerned on this issue.

#### *Visiting Fujino Transition Town*

On 26 April, Ratawit and Thant Zin visited Fujino Transition Town in Kanagawa Prefecture. This trip is also to learn about Transition Movement in Japan which is a movement for sustainable living and sustainable energy community. At Fujino, we learn about different aspects of Transition Town including sustainable forestry, solar energy initiatives as community company, sustainable agriculture, and local currency there. We also visit an eco-village nearby in Fujino too.

#### *Advocacy Meeting with Japanese Agencies and MP*



On 27 April, Thant Zin and Ratawit as representatives from DDA and SEM respectively were in meetings with different Japanese Agencies to discuss and lobby on Dawei project. The main purpose of these advocacy meetings is to learn situation from Japanese government agencies on involvement of Japanese government and its procedures and to acquire these necessary information. As well, this provided opportunity for DDA to present concerns of Dawei people on the project to relevant agencies in Japan. The meeting

with Mr. Ishibashi, MP from Democratic Party of Japan, is to inquire him to ask for details from the Japanese government’s involvement on this project within his mandate. In the meeting with JICA, we understand more about procedure of Japanese government on this project and what JICA told us is that there will be different procedures for JICA to involve in this project in which at the moment it is still pre-feasibility study stage. Institute of Developing Economies (IDE) in JETRO also organized a meeting for us to meet with around 15 senior researchers and concerned people in JETRO and this meeting provided opportunity for us to explain ground situation and potential risks about the project. It also helps us to expand the network with people in JETRO and other organizations interested in Dawei issue in Japan.

## Reflection by Ratawit and Thant Zin for Trip in Japan and Korea

Thant Zin

1. *How has the conference/ trip helped you to network with other people and organizations, to improve your work? (Please be specific).*

For ICE, on 2<sup>nd</sup> day when I was in the discussion workshop on Community Energy, I did explain about situation in Dawei especially our resources and our capacity. In the discussion I found that people from outside Korea having a strong network in terms of human resource and networking experience but Korea participants are having strong expertise on renewable energy technology. So we were discussing on how to bridge gaps between other countries in South and Southeast Asia and East Asian countries (Korea/ Japan). I also discussed with Gauthom from India to link with Barefoot College in order to send some people from Dawei to learn about renewable energy from Barefoot College.

2. *What knowledge did you gain from the conference and how will you share it with others when you return home?*

I got more knowledge and idea about role of religious leaders. This conference provoked me to think that we need to mobilize more with religious leaders especially organizing exposure visit for monks to learn about renewable energy and sustainable practices organized by religious leaders in other countries like Thailand.

In the trip to Japan, I learned that social mobilization in Japan is more difficult than in Myanmar due to social structure and political culture. Impacts from nuclear radiation will last longer than 30 years. Every government will try to neglect the problems including the case of Japan in Fukushima.

Many people whom I met in the conference and trip in Japan, it seems they are not doing so big think but they are trying their best in what they can do. So we can start in Dawei from what we can do too! We might assume that climate change is scientific, but I found in the conference that there is moral aspects for people on climate change. To make it different, we should focus with morality side of people to promote climate change issue.

3. *What related activities will you do within your program after you return, and how has the conference helped?*

I plan share idea to the monks in Dawei and communities I work with to initiate "Green Temple" concept. The temple should be model for the community. As many villagers become more consumeristic and consume more junk food including offering this to monks, monks help to raise awareness for local people for sustainable living and less consumption.

Ratawit (Mo)

1. *How has the conference helped you to network with other people and organizations, to improve your work? (Please be specific).*

Both ICE conference and JNEB trip help me to expand the network with organisations and people in the northeast Asian counties such as Japan and Korea on development and energy issue. I also could deepen my relationship and connection with some people in INEB circles more such as Gautham, Harn and Kanchana who joined both JNEB trip and ICE. This could help me to learn more about their work and explore how we could collaborate in the future.

The visit in Japan and Korea also help me to establish connection and friendship to people and organization there as for the work on investment in Myanmar, especially on Dawei issue, we will certainly need their involvement to support on advocacy, lobbying and raising public awareness in the future.

*2. What knowledge did you gain from the conference and how will you share it with others when you return home?*

The most important knowledge I learned is in the JNEB trip about nuclear disaster and how religious leaders are responding to this issue. The active role of Rev. Tanaka in Fukushima and Rev. Okochi to organize anti-nuclear awareness activity is very inspiring. In ICE conference, I also learn more about role of religious leaders in sustainability especially presentation by Rev. Okochi from Japan.

I have also been impressed and inspired by the speech given by Yeb Sano who has dedicated himself for this climate justice and even resigned from position in government to commit to this cause. Even though what he mentioned might not be the new thing to me, his speech was really remarkable and memorable for us to draw on our moral values to raise awareness on climate change.

After I return to Thailand and Myanmar, I would like to share this knowledge as much as I can especially on role of religious leaders in Japan to Buddhist monks in Myanmar in our training.

*3. What related activities will you do within your program after you return, and how has the conference helped?*

I would explore possibility in connecting our work with SEMS and CPME on monastic schools with Harn's network. As I learned more about Harn network on microfinance, it is growing very fast and they are now in the level of forming cooperatives. I think it would be good for monastic schools in SEMS and CPME network to learn from Harn's network in Shan state. I will also explore how to bring in the topics around climate change situation and sustainable issues to integrate in different trainings we would organize in the near future as well as sharing the experiences from Japan and Korea. For our work on Dawei, I would still keep connections with Japanese people whom we met in both conference and JNEB trip to explore possibility of their supports on raising awareness of Japanese investment in Myanmar and in Dawei.

### Schedule for Mo and Thant Zin in JNEB Energy Study Tour and ICE Conference

Date	Detail	Venue
21 Apr 15	Arrival at Tokyo and Check-in	Toyoko Inn Hotel, Tokyo
	Pm: Sharing on Dawei Issue in Undergraduate class at Hosei University (with Prof. Asami)	Hosei University
22 Apr 15	Am: Orientation on Japanese Energy Issue - Nuclear Energy in Japan and Religious Engagement by Rev. Hidehito Okochi - Study tour of Kenju-in "Eco" Temple	Kenju-in Temple
	Pm: Visit to Edogawa Ward of Tokyo - Study tour of Juko-in Solar Temple - Meeting with Edogawa Citizen Network for Climate Change	Edogawa, Tokyo
	Eve: Dinner and Meeting with Journalist on "Role of Media in Nuclear Issue"	Kenju-in Temple
23 Apr 15	<b>Fukushima Study Tour</b> Am: Departure for Fukushima – Travel to Iwaki city Meeting with Rev. Toku-un Tanaka, Local Zen priest working in nuclear evacuation zone	Iwaki city, Fukushima Prefecture
	Pm: - Visit Namie-cho (9 km from Fukushima # 1 nuclear plant) – Impact of Tsunami and Nuclear disaster - Visit Dokei-ji Temple, Odaka ward – Discussion with Rev. Tanaka on the situation after Tsunami and nuclear disaster	Namie-cho and Minami Soma city, Fukushima Prefecture
	Eve: Dinner and Meeting with Community leader from Itate city	Minami Soma city, Fukushima Prefecture
24 Apr 15	Am: - Visit to Na-no Hana Rapeseed Decontamination Project supported by JIPPO - Lunch and Brief discussion with Touwa Nosato, NPO promoting organic agriculture and organizing verification for non-contaminated products	Minami Soma city, Fukushima Prefecture
	Pm: - Meeting with 3a mother group at Koriyama city	Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture
	Eve: Arrival to Tokyo	
25 Apr 15	Am: Rest	
	Pm: <i>Networking Meeting: Societies of Sustainability and Sufficiency: Learning from Fukushima &amp; Building Green Temple Communities</i> Toyo University Hakusan Campus Sky Hall	Toyo University, Tokyo
	Eve: Farewell dinner for Energy Tour	
26 Apr 15	Visit to Fujino Transition town	Fujino town, Kanagawa Pref.
27 Apr 15	Am: Meeting with Mekong Watch Staff and Preparing for Meeting	Tokyo
	Pm: <b>Advocacy Meeting with Japanese Agencies</b> 2.30 pm – Meeting with Mr. Ishibashi, MP from	Tokyo

	Democratic Party of Japan 4.15 pm – Meeting with JICA 6.30 pm – Discussion with JETRO	
28 Apr 15	Travel to Seoul	
29 – 30 Apr 15	ICE Conference 2015, Seoul	Seoul
3 May 15	Departure for Bangkok and Yangon	