

Report on Participation in [Field Research to Indonesia]

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M1 (as of September 2013)
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Report on Field Research to Yogyakarta and Jakarta, Indonesia
September 15 – 21, 2013

I couldn't agree more with Lambino-sensei's saying: "Bitu, you're travelling to Indonesia as you're going to Shugakuin." The day of our departure to Indonesia in September 15 was only two weeks apart from the time I arrived back in Japan after spending my whole summer break home. This time together with Hisano-sensei, Lambino-sensei, and five Kyoto University graduate students, I flew to Indonesia to participate in preparatory field research. As implied in the name of the program, this trip was intended as a preliminary effort to prepare the necessities for a real field research which was scheduled to be conducted next year.

We spent the next day after our arrival in the first city, Yogyakarta, on two most important agendas of the trip. In the morning we had courtesy visit and MoU negotiation with Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Gadjah Mada (FEB UGM). I was lucky to have the opportunity to witness the negotiation between the delegations from FEB UGM and GSE KU on the possibility of establishing collaboration between these two institutions. Even though I didn't do anything on the negotiation, but being an alumnus of FEB UGM and currently enrolled in GSE KU, there was a big relief when finally these two institutions agreed to conclude an academic cooperation.

Later in the afternoon, we moved to the Master of Economic Development campus where we're scheduled to have joint student workshop. Apart from all the preparation done by three Kyoto University Ph.D. students who were presenting, none of us could hide our bewilderment when in just 15 minutes to the workshops we were informed that there'll be around 100 students attending. The number was just five times more than what we expected. Started with a bit anxiety (a lot, in my case, even though I was just moderating), the workshop turned to be very interesting with fruitful discussions. The paper presented by Zhu Ran (D2) discussing about Kyoto local government policy on fostering economic growth seemed to be the one garnered the most of audiences' interests. Besides the content of the paper itself which was very interesting, this was also due to the fact that most of the student audiences are actually working as local government officials from several provinces in Indonesia. Two UGM graduate students, each from Master of Economic Development Program and Master of Science in Economics, were also presenting in the workshop.

Our second day in Yogyakarta was started a little bit earlier compared to the day before. But unlike yesterday's business and academic agendas, our schedule on that day was full packed with cultural tour. The first destination was King's Palace located just about 5 minutes drive from the hotel we're staying. Being one of three special districts/provinces in Indonesia, the term "king" in Yogyakarta actually refers to a real nobleman who is also possesses a legitimate power as a governor. By the time we visited it, the palace was busy preparing the wedding of king's 3rd daughter which will be held in mid-October. We then continued our trip to the southern part of the city, Kotagede, which is renowned as home for hundreds of silversmiths. A visit to one of the biggest workshops in the

area gave us a new knowledge on how to make silver crafts, besides of course a ladies-just-couldn't-easily-resist shopping experience. After lunch, we visited Beringharjo market, the biggest wholesale market in the city which sells wide range of commodities; from clothes, fresh fruits and vegetables, to motorcycles spare parts. Had lived in Yogyakarta for 6 years, I was quite embarrassed to admit that it was the first time I went to fresh fruits and vegetables section. In fact, Beringharjo market is actually more popular as a must-go destination to buy batik, Indonesian traditional clothes, than as a wholesale market for some other commodities. I found this experience was very valuable, especially as we could interact directly with the sellers. Later in the evening, as a finalè for our trip that day, we watched the Ramayana Ballet performance in Prambanan Temple.

Completing all of the schedules in Yogyakarta, we flew to the capital city Jakarta in the morning of September 18. As I also told the other participants, there's always a reluctant feeling every time I'm heading to this city. This time was not different. A little bit out of topic, this "syndrome" of help-me-I-don't-want-to-live-in-or-even-go-to-Jakarta is actually common among new college graduates of the universities in Yogyakarta. As the center of literally everything, where more than 60% of nation's total money supply is circulated, and as one of the cities with highest income inequality in the country, Jakarta is just 180 degree different from Yogyakarta. The thing that makes us even feel helpless is the fact that the best jobs that we want to have, as well as the companies or institutions which are willing to hire us, are mostly headquartered in this city.

Anyway, the show must go on.

The hotel we're staying in is located right in the heart of the busiest business district in the city (and probably in the country), ensuring us swarmed by office-like ambience for 24 hours. Our main agendas were to visit The Japan Foundation, JASSO Office and Jakarta Japan Club Foundation in regards to the financial and technical support for the scheduled field research. A visit to The Japan Foundation was particularly fruitful as we received information on some possible collaboration programs between Japanese and Indonesian institutions, which might be useful in designing the activities for the coming field research. We also had interesting talks with the Director General of The Japan Foundation about the situation of Japanese language learning and teaching in Indonesia, for example regarding the government policy which doesn't allow someone without professional Japanese teaching education (usually affiliated to faculty of education) to teach Japanese even though she/he graduated with Japanese major (affiliated to faculty of literature or cultural science). Another visit to Jakarta Japan Club Foundation, the association for Japanese corporations operated in Jakarta and its surrounding areas, revealed famous classic problem of bad traffic condition which often hampering the production and distribution cycles.

As we did in Yogyakarta, we also conducted sort of cultural tour in Jakarta. The highlight of the latter one was to have Indonesian customer market survey which actually brought us to witness the social and economic discrepancy between the rich and the poor which, as I mentioned before, is one of the highest in the country. We visited Grand Indonesia Shopping Mall, located near modern apartment buildings just some blocks away from our hotel. Only branded luxurious goods are there in the show windows. The next day we went to Petak Sembilan Market, or Asemka as locals are used to call. Instead of fully air-conditioned and beautifully designed building as Grand Indonesia, Asemka is simply dozens of children's toys street vendors lining up in narrow alleys under an overpass. Talking about location, the market is adjacent to congested residential area dominated by semi-permanent houses and buildings. Grand Indonesia and Asemka pretty much sums up of what cover the land of Jakarta. It is also considered a common sight to have Grand Indonesia-like building standing side by side with Asemka-like market complex.

In addition to customer market survey mentioned above, we also visited National Monument, the Istiqlal Mosque and its neighboring Cathedral Church, and even had an afternoon stroll in the area called Old Jakarta where you can feel the trace of Dutch colonialism. We also challenged ourselves to ride Transjakarta, a relatively new city bus system

which is expected to reduce, if to solve is too optimistic, the traffic jam problems in the city.

When in the end of the trip I was asked, "How do you feel about the trip?" and I could only smiled, that's due to some mixed feelings I actually had. From a relief of escaping from the typhoon in Kyoto (subway was suspended for three days?), such homecoming-like feeling when visiting my almamater, an anxiety to survive (later revised to "at least not to get lost too often") in the city I've been avoiding to visit, a childhood memories of going to the most famous landmark in the country (last time I visited National Monument was when I was in the elementary school), and of course lots of eye-opening moments to real life problems faced by my home country (I certainly need more guts to commute with Transjakarta). At this point I'm also suspicious that I've finally reached the acceptance stage in my Kübler-Ross' Five Stages of Grief on The Probability of Ended up Working and Living in Jakarta (what did I say? commute?). My deepest gratitude for everyone who gave me the opportunity to participate in this trip. I will try my best to make the best use of everything that I get from the trip, not only for my study but also for my life in general.