

## **Report on Participation in Thailand Field Trip 2016**

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First of all, I would like to thank Kyoto University, especially to my supervisor Professor Hisano, for giving me the opportunity to join the Thailand Field Trip 2016. It was a memorable experience and I really enjoyed every second of it.

Before going any further, I would like to make some remarks regarding the preparation of the trip. In particular, I should mention that it was unfortunate that I could not participate in the whole trip, but only in the first half, i.e. the field trip in Chiang Mai (September 19 – 22, 2016). One of the main reasons was that I had to attend and make a presentation in my graduation ceremony on September 23, 2016. Therefore, this report is based on the experience that I got during my time in Chiang Mai. Having said that, I was impressed by how our team prepared ourselves before going to Thailand. All credit should be given to our faculty members, i.e. Lambino-sensei and Souk-sensei, who did an amazing job in guiding and encouraging all members of the trip to prepare themselves properly for two main agendas of the trip, i.e. joint student workshops in Chiang Mai University and Thammasat University. I really appreciate their effort of giving each participating student the opportunity to make a rehearsal of their presentations. Also, in this rehearsal each presenter received constructive comments and feedback from the faculty members and students which was indeed very helpful.

Coming to the main points of this report, we departed from Kansai International Airport on September 19, 2016. After a five-hour comfortable flight with an A380 Thai Airways, we touched down at Chiang Mai International Airport on the same day. It was already 8.30pm and everyone was craving for food. After a quick check-up at Ibis Styles Hotel Chiang Mai, we went to Maya Shopping Mall, one of the largest shopping mall in the city, to have dinner together. We decided to go to a Persian restaurant which served halal food. It was a unique experience for us because the first food that we had in Thailand was not a Thai food!

On the second day (September 20), in the morning we visited the Board of Investment of Thailand, Chiang Mai Branch. We were welcomed by the director and he discussed about the policies and strategies put forward by the government of Thailand to attract investment to the country in general and to Chiang Mai in particular. One interesting topic that he mentioned was the concept of human impact analysis adopted by the Thai government for industry sectors that might produce adverse impacts to the society. In the afternoon, we paid a visit to a relatively successful organic coffee farmer in the northern part of Chiang Mai. We came to his field to see how his organic farming method was used. After the fieldwork, we had a chance to taste the coffee, and surprisingly, everyone agreed that the quality of the organic coffee was outstanding. One thing that caught my attention was when the organic farmer said that he had no desire to expand his farm, despite countless attempts by foreign investors to convince him to do so. He said that he wanted to maintain the trust from his customers by producing only the best quality coffee which might be deteriorated had he expanded his farm production.

On September 21, Chiang Mai University. We were received by Associate Professor Nalitra Thaiprasert of Faculty of Economics and she guided us a brief campus tour. After that, we had a lecture from Professor Chayan Vaddhanaphuti of the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD) about socio-ecological impacts of the development of dams in the Mekong River. It was a very nice lecture from him in which his main

message was to critically evaluate the concept of (top-down) “connectivity” that is often used to marginalize certain groups of people. Instead, he argued, we need a more bottom-up approach where society is empowered to communicate and connect to each other so that they can determine their own ways in tackling certain social problems. In the afternoon, we had a joint student workshop in which I made a presentation about my research. I was surprised by the large number of audience that attended the event. This was a fruitful time for me because I received constructive feedbacks from the audience that could improve my research.

Overall, it was a great experience and I did enjoy my time in Chiang Mai. There are many valuable things that I can learn from the trip both academically and personally. I hope Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University would continue to provide this kind of program to its students so that they can learn by seeing and experiencing the real world.