

## **The issues with ASEAN-Korea trade**

**Noberto Tenorio Bondoc**  
**Pridi Banomyong International College,**  
**Thammasat University**  
**December 5th, 2016- February 8th, 2017**

It is a dream come true to step on and to stay temporarily in the “Land of Rising Sun”, Japan. This is my first time to visit and to study in one of most prestigious universities in Japan, which is Kyoto University, even though it was just a very short-term study program. I have learned a lot of new things such as Japanese culture, traditions and cuisines. I also visited some of the famous temples and tourists attraction around Kyoto. I also experienced Japanese hospitality not only inside Kyoto University but also when I visited homes of my new Japanese friends.

As per the courses offered in the International Program of East Asian Sustainable Development Studies at the Graduate School of Economics, I had the privilege to take courses like ASEAN Economy and Sustainable Development; Comparative Industrial Policy, Environmental Management, and Field Research in Japan. These courses are really worth-taking because the topics included in every course are really interesting, relevant and timely. By taking these courses, I was able to broaden my knowledge and increased my awareness about sustainable economic development, environmental risk management and political economy of agriculture. I also gained more understanding as to how important to study sustainable development and apply the sustainability knowledge and skills globally as well as locally. Furthermore, I also acquired some insights about the human world from business to technology to environment and the social sciences. All courses that I took in this program required us to write term papers about any topic that we are interested in and that are related to the course. We were also asked to do critical analysis about some articles published as well as documentary films that tackled some relevant issues regarding fair trade issues, food systems, economic development theories, environmental issues, sustainable development, among others. We were also required to submit a term paper before the end of the study program. These academic requirements made me to study harder, think critically, and reflect and express my own perspective and ideas about relevant sustainable development issues. Furthermore, during the Kyoto Graduate Seminar (KGS), a one-week seminar, I met interesting professors and students from Africa, Germany, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Laos, Madagascar, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam; and built networks and friendships. Furthermore, I was able to build up academic networks with the Professors and international students at Kyoto University which I thought essential in gaining knowledge through, exchanging of ideas, sharing perspectives and insights, asking for advices and opinions about academic research and among others. All professors in the program are all very open-minded, supportive and approachable. They inspired me to further my studies and to apply what I have learned about sustainable development. I enjoyed studying with them though there were a lot of paperwork, reports, and among others but it was all deemed necessary for my personal and professional growth. It was really a life changing experience that I took part in this program. After attending this exchange study program, my perspective and life goals are totally changed for the better. These learning experiences, knowledge and skills that I got from this program will definitely have a great impact in my future endeavor as an academic researcher, a teacher or a policy maker in my country or somewhere else in this world. Moreover, it was really a priceless and unforgettable experience to stay here for almost three months.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for allowing me to be part of this wonderful journey and a once in a life time opportunity.