

## **International Graduate Course for East Asia Sustainable Economic Development Studies**

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December 5th, 2016- February 8th, 2017**

Thanks to Faculty of Economics, Thammasat University and Graduate school of Economics, I was given the chance to study at Kyoto University in Japan. This is my first time to stay in Japan- the second foreign country that I visited. It was my great experience not only studying but also travelling.

There are eight exchange students this year, two students from Faculty of Economics (Thammasat), four students from Pridi Banomyong International College (Thammasat) and two from Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia). We have become friends, shared information and helped each other to adapt with new environment in Japan. I'm also very lucky because in the apartment where I live here, there are many Vietnamese students who have shared their life experiences in Japan. When we had free time, my friends and I travelled to many places. We visited many temples around Kyoto and that was great time, especially during snow. Because I am from Vietnam- a tropical country, I hadn't have experience with snow before, I was really happy and excited with snowfall.

For studying, I registered five subjects: Environment Management; ASEAN Economy and Sustainable Development; Field Research; Introduction to East Asian Economies and Comparative Development Studies. In which the first three subjects are in my credit and the latter two are not. I also want to thank to Prof. Kono Hisaki; he allowed me to attend the class of Development Economics<sup>1</sup> during the time I stayed in Kyoto. To be honest, except for Development Economics, my subjects enrolled are a bit different from subjects in my Faculty which focused on quantitative method and Maths. I think this is partly because these subjects are designed for two-month exchange duration. However, thanks to this, I recognized that every subject has its own difficulty. While students in Maths and Econometrics are required to have logical thinking, they should be more critical and flexible in evaluating problems in sociological subjects. Moreover, as other exchange students, I had an opportunity to join the Kyoto Graduate Seminar (KGS) on Economic Development and Sustainability Studies- an annual seminar in Kyoto. This seminar was within one week from 9th to 16th December. It was good opportunity for me to meet many scholars, researchers and students from many different universities and institutions around the world. Even though I had basic idea about sustainable development, many new concepts with different aspects about what sustainable is, why it has become the Millennium Development Goals and how people can reach to this goal and so on was explored through this seminar. Besides that, there was also three field trips in KGS which participants can visit Cultural sites, Ohara green farming and Place Panasonic Eco-Technology Center. They are successful evidences showing that people can develop economy and protect environment at the same time.

Upon graduating, I would become a lecturer in a university in Vietnam, I hope that I can share my gained experience to students that could help them equip necessary skills before entering labor market. Moreover, with educated background, I desire to be a good researcher, a consultant in Development economic field. This international exchange experience in Kyoto will be valuable for these career goals by providing me with exposure to cultures that I will likely work with as a researcher. This will also give me a competitive edge when I apply for scholarships for further study.