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### Activity Report: Dispatch of experts to Thailand

In Thailand, a project for the construction of a training center for the water supply sector (JICA grant aid project) and a series of technical cooperation projects for the capacity development of the training center were implemented from 1985 to 1999. In this May, six former technical cooperation experts of those projects, including WaQuAC-NET members, visited MWA (Metropolitan Water Authority) and PWA (Provincial Water Authority), the counterpart agencies of the projects. Since MWA signed an MOU with WaQuAC-NET ([Newsletter No.15: 2012](#)) and has been continuously cooperating with WaQuAC-NET. Our members took advantage of the opportunity of this visit to observe and exchange opinions. Here is the report of the visits' report for the first time in 20 years. ([WaQuAC-NET Office](#)).

#### [Reference] Project Overview:.

National Waterworks Technical Training Center of Thailand (NWTTI) (JICA's library Website)  
[https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/10908572\\_04.pdf](https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/10908572_04.pdf)



*Presenting a bouquet of flowers from MWA*

#### Report 1

### Visit to MWA and friendly reunion

Tohru Miyagaki

On 19 May 2023, six former JICA experts visited former National Waterworks Technology Training Institute (NWTTI<sup>1</sup>) of Thailand (MWA). The participants were Mr. Yasuhiro Shinji (Nagoya City), Mr. Mitsuhiro Fujitani (Osaka Prefecture), Mr. Hiroshi Sasayama (Yokohama City), and Mr. Nozomi Tasaka (Osaka Prefecture) and Tohru Miyagaki (Tokyo). They were JICA Experts of technology transfer for the projects between 1994 and 1999. And this group includes

<sup>1</sup> Currently M-WIT (MWA Waterworks Institute of Thailand)

WaQuAC-NET members.

From the Thai side, former employees of MWA and Provincial Waterworks Authority (PWA) and employees who are currently serving as executives of the respective authorities participated, and all the experts and counterparts from those days gathered together.

At the beginning of the event, Mr. Mani Panaim, current MWA Governor, said that it was an honor to welcome the experts who have supported the water supply business in Thailand. And that the succession of skills and training of the staff had expanded the results. After that, we visited the former workplace, observed the nostalgic scenery. Even at lunch, it was a moment of laughing and recollecting what happened a quarter of a century ago with their counterpart at the time.

The training institute at that time was still used as a training facility as it is today, but it was said that a new facility would also be built.

Although the training activities were for a limited period, the bonds between people are still kept 24 years later, and we realized that not only the history of technology transfer, but also the international friendship will not fade away. It was a great visit.



*Mr. Mani Panem, Governor of MWA*



*Welcome greetings*



*Leakage survey training yard  
WaQuAC^NET members; (from left) Miyagaki (2nd),  
Fujitani (4<sup>th</sup>), Sasayama (6<sup>th</sup>), Nisapas (right end)*



*Luncheon party*

## Report 2

## Visit to the laboratory of MWA

Hiroshi SASAYAMA

I visited the laboratory of Metropolitan Waterworks Authority (MWA), which is located in Bangkhen treatment plant, on 22 May 2023. The purpose of the visit is interview on Kanagawa Prefecture overseas technical training program. Until now, four scientists of MWA have participated the program and WaQuAC-Net has supported them.

I met Ms. Chaweepan, Director of Water Quality Analysis Division and the responsible person to Kanagawa program, Ms. Weesuda, participating in the JFY 2019 program, Ms. Thitima (JFY2022) and Ms. Kannicha, the coming participant in JFY2023. Unfortunately I could not see two former participants, Ms. Patcharaporn (JFY2017) and Mr. Varich (JFY2018) because they were busy for their jobs.

I asked former participants about troubles in daily life and training activities. They got stomachache or a cold by stress from the new circumstance, but not serious. They met no trouble on foods and traffic. Younger generation of Bangkok looks having no problem for Japanese foods and transferring trains. They



*At the entrance of the laboratory*

can come anywhere with a mapping application on their smartphones. Ms. Weesuda and Ms. Thitima had studied under professor Kamata, Kanto Gakuin University. At the beginning, they could not communicate well with other university students because students were not used to speaking English. Day by day, they and students became to communicate each other smoothly. They had really no serious problem.

About spending time in weekend, they went to one day trip or one night trip with other training participants from other countries. For one night trip, it's better to go with a friend who speak Japanese well, they recommended. They wanted to learn Japanese culture and tradition such as origami (folded paper craft), tea ceremony and flower arranging, if there were any classes. It should be considered as a supporting subject by WaQuAC-Net.

Ms. Kannicha, the coming participant in 2023, has never been to Japan before. She is used to having Japanese foods in Bangkok. Her most favorite one is katsu-don, pork cutlet with egg on



*At the meeting room of the laboratory:  
Ms. Weesuda, Ms. Thitima, Ms. Chaweepan,  
Sasayama, Ms. Kannicha (from left)*



rice in a bowl. At least, she has no problem on foods. ( → )



*Lunch together*

Finally, Ms. Chaweepan told me that all of former participants were chemists and MWA wants to send microbiologists, too. WaQuAC-Net will consider organizations which can accept trainees from MWA by discussing with prof, Kamata.

I talked with them more than three hours including lunch, they look talking easier than in Japan. It was a good opportunity to hear the support by WaQuAC-Net.

### Report 3

## Visit to EPO1 Chiangmai, Thailand

Hiroshi SASAYAMA

I visited Ms. Sopa at Environment and Pollution Control Office 1 (EPO1) Chiang Mai, Thailand on 16 May 2023. Ms. Sopa is the director of Environmental Quality Analysis Section of EPO1 and also the leader of the project for level up of community water supply around Chiang Mai city. About the activity pf the project, please refer to [the report of 14th webinar in WaQuAC-Net newsletter No.56](#). I got the detail of the project from her. We discussed about further WaQuAC-Net activity to support the project with exchanging both information in Thailand and Japan for 2 hours.

EPO1 was established by expanding Regional Environment Office 1 by including pollution control several years ago. The country is divided into 16 regions, and each region has its own EPO, with EPO 1 covering the four provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun and Mae Hong Son. Each EPO has a laboratory to analyze environmental samples and tap water sample in its region. Most laboratories can



*With Ms.Sopa at her office*

analyze fundamental 34 parameters. Some laboratories can more parameters with specific instruments such as mercury analyzer of EPO1. Water samples of water source areas are also analyzed 3 times a year, in dry, hot and rainy seasons. There are about 60,000 community-based water supply schemes in the country. EPOs can monitor about 900 communities, in other words, an EPO can monitor 60 communities on average. For the case of EPO1, there are 6 staff members for such monitoring including sampling. It must be hard-working. Actually, they sometimes go to sampling even at weekends. EPO1 manages training programs for operators for the level up of community water supply. EPO staff is a lecturer on the importance of water quality and explanation of each parameter. The experienced operator is a lecturer for actual operation and maintenance of

instrument and facility. It is a good way to make trainees understand and to connect the troubleshooting. The training program includes an examination in which trainees can get the certification when they pass. For more activity of the project, the introduction of "Water Safety Plans" is expected and WaQuAC-Net can support it, I think.

This is my first visit to Chiang Mai since 1999, during my dispatch as JICA expert to the National Waterworks Technology and Training Institute (NWTTI) project. I went to Chiang Mai to see old friends of the project. And I got a good opportunity to see Ms. Sopa this time and found face-to-face discussion had something good more than web discussion.



*Lunch with Ms.Sopa and her staff members*



*Mercury analyzer*

## **WaQuAC-NET and Dr. Nan**

Yoshinobu Ishibashi

Former Professor of Khon Kaen University

Ms. Sirapat Khodseewong (nicknamed Nan) finished her study abroad in Sendai and returned to Thailand at the end of April this year. WaQuAC-Net held a farewell party and a job celebration, although it was online. I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Yamamoto, Mr. Sasayama, and all the participants.

The relationship between WaQuAC-NET and Nan dates back over five years. In 2018, Ms. Yamamoto's group visited water facilities in Asia. When she gave a lecture at Khon Kaen University, it was Nan who took care of the lecture and guided them around the site. After that, Nan went on to a doctoral course at Tohoku University, and she had a lot of involvement with WaQuAC-NET through member interviews, interaction with international students, presentations at webinars, and webinar chairperson.

About Nan and I, the Faculty of Public Health, Khon Kaen University (PH-KKU) and the Faculty of Nursing, Fukushima Medical University have been conducting exchange training for a long time. Nan, who participated in the training seven years ago, met me at the Moniwa Water Purification Plant in Sendai City, and one month later, I started working for KKU.

After that, Nan became my student in the master course. Her research subject was eutrophication control in Nong Khod Lake near the university. While we were doing research together, she helped me with her classmates since Khon Kaen was the first place for me. That includes wayfinding, such as the seminar facilities I have

served, director Wasana's PWA Training Center (RTC2), and current now Environment and Pollution Control Office (EPO-10) where Mr. Mongkol works. She also showed interest in the rural water supply improvement project that I and Dr. Rittirong (PH-KKU) have launched with RTC2 and EPO-10.

In 2017, during a meeting to conclude an MOU between Tohoku University and KKU, I asked Professor Konno and Mr. Kusano, who accompanied Professor Nishimura, to give lectures. On this occasion, Nan asked Professor Nishimura about eutrophication, and his kind response inspired her to apply for Tohoku University.

Nan was accepted to enter Tohoku University, and the subject of her research was "The effect of microscopic cyanobacteria, picophytoplankton on coagulation". However, the situation changed drastically with the COVID-19 pandemic. The campus, which should have been crowded with students, was deserted, and Nan had fewer opportunities to make friends. In addition, she was forced to lead a research life different from her usual one because she only gave online presentations at academic conferences. In the latter half of Nan's student life, I temporarily returned to Japan and was unable to return to Thailand due to COVID-19 restrictions. So, I began to give research advice to Nan about once every two weeks.



*Nan with a degree certificate, Prof. Nishimura and I*

Nan successfully completed the doctoral course in September 2022, and became a technical instructor in Professor Nishimura's laboratory.

Nan has a feeling of respect for professors and seniors. Also, she is very proud that she studied at the same laboratory on the Aobayama campus as I, Prof. Konno who encouraged her in Sendai, and Prof. Nishimura. And she has

declared that she will do the same research on water supply and water environment as we have done.

During her time as a technical instructor, she presented the contents of the doctoral thesis at a webinar, and chaired the webinar titled "Development and challenges of rural water supply in Thailand" by Mr. Mongkol and Ms. Sopa, a colleague of EPO etc (see [newsletter Vol 56](#) for its report). Through these activities, Nan has strengthened her relationship with WaQuAC-NET.

A week after the farewell party, Nan returned to Thailand with a job at the Department of Public Health at Mahasarakham University (MSU). I have heard that MSU is a university that is passionate about education, and a university that accepts pioneering research from the central government. I have also visited MSU a few times to give lectures.



*Zoom meeting with dean and students*



Nan has started working with five graduate students under the direction of Dean. On 7 July, Nan, Dean, students and I had a Zoom meeting to discuss future research.

Nan has many supportive people, including WaQuAC-NET members Dr. Rittirong, Ms. Wasana, and Mr. Mongkol. I hope that in cooperation with them, she will contribute to the improvement of rural water supply as well as student education and research. I also hope that she will act as a bridge between Thai and Japanese members.

### 2023 Kanagawa Prefecture Overseas Technical Trainee has been selected!

WaQuAC-Net recommended Ms. Kannicha Wongchai who is an employee of the Metropolitan Waterworks Authority (MWA), Thailand as a trainee for the Kanagawa Prefecture Overseas Technical Training\*.



*Ms. Wongchai Kannicha*

She will come to Japan in mid-September for training. After taking Japanese language class for a month, she will start studying water quality analysis in the class of Professor Kamata at Kanto Gakuin University for 4.5 months.

She will also visit several water facilities throughout Japan.

WaQuAC-Net plans to go to the water resource area with her and take her to the water research conference. She will also attend the friendship party. We would like to help her to enjoy and have a fruitful time in Japan.

*\* Since 1972, Kanagawa Prefecture Government has accepted technical trainees from developing countries as one of international contributions.*

### **The 5th Executive Forum** for Enhancing Sustainability of Urban Water Supply in Asia

On 21-25 Augst 2023, the 5th Executive Forum for Enhancing Sustainability of Urban Water Supply in Asia will be organized by JICA and Yokohama City Waterworks Bureau. The concept of the forum is “co-creating resilient and sustainable water supply service from Asia”. H.E. Ek Sonn Chan who is the former Director General of Phnom Penth Water Supply Authority (PPWSA), Cambodia will present a keynote speech on the first day. It will be held at the Yokohama Symposia, International Conference Hall in the Industry and Trade Center. We hope this will be an opportunity to bring our members from abroad and Japan together!

## Launch of Water Quality Sub-committee

WaQuAC-NET members are with a variety of backgrounds and expertise, but our recent activities have been mainly webinars, and there has been few occasions for free exchange of opinions among members. This time, at the initiative of Mr. Iwao, a member, we have decided to start activities as a "sub-committee" where people interested in a specific subject can gather and freely exchange information and opinions about their interests and recent activities. First, the Water Quality Subcommittee has started its activities, and I would like to report on the first subcommittee meeting.

### 1. Date and time

19 May 2023, Friday,  
21:00 – 22:00 (in Japan)

### 2. Participants

(In the photo right; top left to right)

Ms. Asami (National Institute of Public Health), Ms. Yariuchi (WaQuAC-NET Office), Mr. Iwao (Kyoto City Waterworks and Sewerage Bureau), Mr. Tsuji (Ebara Corporation), Ms. Sirapat Khodseewong (Department of Public Health at Mahasarakham University of Thailand), Mr. Ono (Yokohama Waterworks Bureau), Mr. Morita (TEC International Co. Ltd), 7 persons in total.



### 3. Main points discussed

- Fluorine removal in water treatment
- Ensure residual chlorine concentration, etc.

### 4. Mr. Iwao's impressions and for the future (points to be improved, etc.)

- We were able to increase opportunities for members to speak up and participate proactively.
- Several members said they would like to participate again next time.
- It might be better to decide to some extent what to discuss and divide the group into smaller groups with breakout rooms as needed.
- Share some detailed timetable in advance
- Increase the number of participants from overseas members by encouraging them to participate individually and by informing them about the meeting earlier.

*Stay tuned for the future evolution of the subcommittee! We welcome your ideas for subcommittee start-ups as well!*

*(Yariuchi, WaQuAC-NET Office)*

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### Next Activity

20 Aug: The 16<sup>th</sup> Webinar "Finance and accounting setting for sustainable water utility management"

1 Nov : Newsletter vol.59 (in Japanese)

15 Nov : Newsletter vol.59 (in English)