



TRAINING FOR WMA IN THAILAND

International Affairs Department

1. Introduction

In January, I visited Thailand for a week to join the local training program for staff of the Wastewater Management Authority (WMA) of Thailand. The project is one of the JICA^{*1} Partnership Programs (JPP) that Saitama Prefecture implements. JS has been supporting the program by collaborating with Saitama Sewage Systems Agency.

The purposes of the visit were:

- ① Support establishment of Training Center in Si Racha WWTP that WMA will manage
- ② Prepare a technical seminar for private sectors to be held in November
- ③ Improve O&M of Si Racha WWTP

I will report the support activity for the Training Center (①).

2. Establishment of Training Center

The training program in Si Racha WWTP targets the central government and local municipalities. The WWTP was already equipped for training, and we discussed using the machines and equipment. Two electrical engineers from Saitama Prefecture explained how to complete the electric circuit.

I don't know if it is because of national character, but I was impressed that Thais never said: "I can't do it."

A trainee who was persuaded to try to connect an electric circuit by himself kept trying to say, "All I need is time. I can do it in the end." He succeeded in circuit connection finally. I heard their "Yes" all the



Photo1. Training in Si Racha WWTP

time, but I've never heard "No." Thais seem to have a positive way of thinking all the time. The word "impossible" seems to be not in their vocabulary.

During our visit, we were supposed to consider the training curriculum that WMA was "supposed to complete" before our visit. However, there was no curriculum. I remember when WMA staff visited Japan last October; they said "Yes" to creating a curriculum until the next training, I mean this time. Anyway, we decided to develop the curriculum on concise notice.

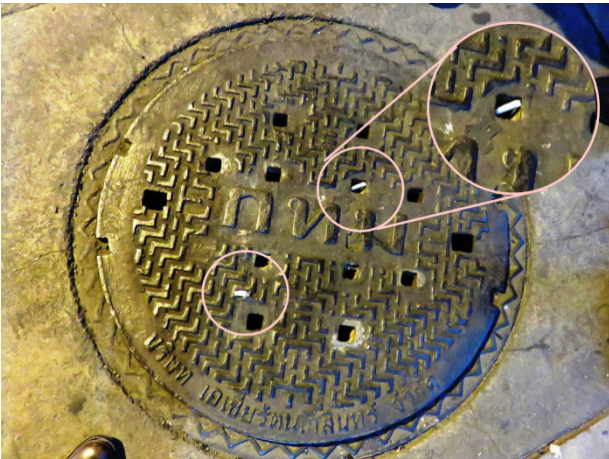


Photo2. I found a cigarette end in the manhole I pictured (In Bangkok, smoking is prohibited. It is fined 2000 baht. (Approx. 7000 yen)

This time, we asked them to create a textbook based on the curriculum. The Thai said "Yes" again though they had just a month to finish this "assignment." I believe they will complete the hard work and send us a draft soon.

The training program that WMA handles will start next year. The new training program includes the education and promotion of sewage works. In Thailand, people have not yet

woken up to the need for wastewater service. The connection to the public sewer does not move ahead even if they have a sophisticated sewer system. People's unconcern is one of the bottlenecks for wastewater improvement.

In Si Racha WWTP, dumped and rotten garbage in sewer makes wastewater anaerobic. Discarded trash is one of the things that discourage wastewater treatment. Removing debris from wastewater is essential, but educating people not to throw rubbish into the sewer is required at the same time. Encouragement activities are crucial to inspire people to pay user charges for their wastewater treatment service. I'm expecting the future education and promotion activities of WMA.

3. Around the city

I saw many places to honor the memory of King Bhumibol in downtown, who passed away last October. Most people left off mourning, and we saw few people wearing black in town, but public employees, including WMA staff, still wore black polo shirts.

On the night of arrival, we stayed at a hotel next to "Terminal 21" Shopping Mall. Each floor of the shopping mall had a display

describing the global culture, and there was a Japanese floor. When I saw the Japanese display (Photo 3), many questions came to mind. They were; Is Sumo representing Japan? Why are they fighting across a post? , Has the person who created the display ever seen Sumo? , Is this just a hit-driven display? I felt we should send collect information about our culture.

4. Conclusion

As I mentioned in my newsletter #181, the project "The Technical Assistance of Sewage Technology in Collaboration with Public and Private Sectors in Thailand" is one of the JICA^{*1} Partnership Programs (JPP.) Saitama Prefecture started it in February 2016, and JS has been supporting it with Saitama Sewage Systems Agency as team members.

The visit in January was the second phase of the project. Since the project team and WMA have built a good relationship, they gave us some damaging information. They have a fiscal predicament for aging facilities; wastewater treatment is unsatisfied because some machines and equipment are broken, etc. The project team and WMA looked very hard toward the same goal, which was improving the water environment in Thailand, and the project seemed to proceed successfully.

I was responsible for the wastewater finance and pricing course last October in Japan. I've heard WMA provides training for its staff based on my lecture. This time in Thailand, candidates for lecturers asked me many questions about finance. I was impressed to know WMA was first trying to deliver knowledge of sewage works in-house.

JS will keep supporting the project.



Photo3. Is Sumo a Japanese image?