

### International Affairs Department

Dear friends,

My second newsletter of 2018 as a JICA expert is about the Evaluation committee of planning tasks and a talk by Ms. Miyuki Komatsu.

#### 1. EVALUATION COMMITTEE OF PLANNING TASKS

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I joined the evaluation committee of planning tasks for the operation of sector master plan development in the pilot project of Nam Dinh City.

Planning tasks are papers, including the summary of the construction plan and the investigation lists scheduled to be carried out. In Vietnam, any group or organization considering the development of construction plans, including sector master plans, must submit its planning tasks to the related authority for approval of its project (associated regulations: Circular No:12/2016/TT-BXD.)

When the evaluation committee approves the planning tasks, Nam Dinh Provincial People's Committee (PPC) authorizes, and then our operation of sector master plan development can officially start.

The evaluation committee consists of Mr. Tu, Deputy Director of Nam Dinh PPC as a chairperson (Photo 1), Mr. Du, Director of Department of Construction (DOC), as a vice chairperson, representatives from the Departments of Environment, Transport, Finance, Planning and Investment, Agriculture, and Industry, and a chairperson of Nam Dinh Commune People's Committee (CPC) as an interested party.

The committee started with Mr. Chairman's opening speech telling the purpose of the meeting and then followed by an explanation by the consultant who created the planning tasks. After that, Mr. Chairman asked some questions of the consultant and the representatives of Nam Dinh CPC and DOC.

During the Q&A session, a minor accident made us a little nervous. The planning tasks included some matters that had no prior consultation with representatives of DOC who evaluated technical items. Mr. Chairman used tact to solve this problem. His idea was that the interested parties would have



Photo 1: Chairperson Tu

another opportunity to discuss the matters, and after DOC's approval, the planning tasks would be authorized. The solution eased our worry because we knew rescheduling the committee involving more than 20 people was difficult. Later, the planning tasks were successfully adopted through the required procedures.

We will focus on the development of the sector master plan from now.

## 2. A TALK BY MS. MIYUKI KOMATSU

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Photo 2: Ms. Komatsu

Ms. Komatsu (Photo 2) is an original writer of "Blowing in the Winds of Vietnam" (2015), which is the first collaborative film between Vietnam and Japan. The movie is based on a true story describing the life in Vietnam of Ms. Komatsu, who cares for her mother with dementia.

Ms. Komatsu came to Vietnam in 1992 to start her career as a Japanese language teacher. A handout says she wanted to restart her life officially and personally in Vietnam. She said her early experience in Vietnam was a sequence of a fight with different cultures as a Japanese language teacher and as a resident of Hanoi.

At school, she continuously warned students who cheated on exams openly. At home, her cheap landlord disturbed and exhausted Ms. Komatsu from drinking a cold beer by turning off her refrigerator to save power charges. Such things that happened one after another were funny to outsiders like us but were nothing to joke to Ms. Komatsu of the day.

After a struggle for years, she had got used to the culture of Vietnam finally. When she had spent eight years in Vietnam, her father in Japan passed away. So, she decided to take her mother of dementia to her home in Hanoi.

However, care in a foreign country was complicated, and troubles occurred. At first, Ms. Komatsu "could not accept her mother's words and behavior and reacted emotionally."

One day, a local person who saw Ms. Komatsu lose her temper with her mother said, "All elderlies are the same. Why don't you understand it, although she is your mother?" This event made her notice that dementia was "different cultures."

Then, Ms. Komatsu felt better and got acclimated to the different cultures, which is "dementia." Before, when the mother asked, "When is a meal?" just after eating, Ms. Komatsu used to answer, "We have just finished it." But later, she got to accept her mother's request and prepare a meal again. When the mother looked for "something" that she thought had gone, Ms. Komatsu answered, "I will find it." She became easy-going enough to wait for her mother would forget, even looking for something.

Ms. Komatsu looked back on the days with an appreciation for the Vietnamese people of profound humanity. When the mother wandered by herself and went missing in Hanoi, "the landlord and students of the Japanese language school looked for her with me," she said. Neighbors were kind enough to talk to the mother regularly.

While the mother passed away in 2014, Ms. Komatsu has lived in Hanoi for more than a quarter of a century. Her experience that she talked about cheerfully attracted the audience, including me. "Dementia is a different culture" makes sense, and the idea helps people deal with dementia. What do you think?