

International Affairs Department

Dear friends,

My 11th newsletter as a JICA expert is about Vietnam-Japan Sewerage Seminar and wedding reception in Vietnam.

1. VIETNAM-JAPAN SEWERAGE SEMINAR

On March 9, Vietnam-Japan Sewerage Seminar was held in Hanoi. The seminar is a part of the activities based on the memorandum exchanged in 2010 for the technical cooperation in sewage works between Vietnam and Japan. Either of the two countries regularly hosts it.

Participants from Japan were Mr. Okamoto from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Tourism (MLIT) and representatives from municipalities doing their sewage business in Vietnam, including Yokohama City, Shiga Prefecture, Osaka City, Kobe City, and Kitakyushu City. From Vietnam, representatives of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), including the Administration of Technical Infrastructure (ATI) of the Ministry of Construction (MOC), and municipalities joined the seminar.

The seminar started with speeches by Dr. Mai Huong, Director General of ATI from MOC, and Mr. Okamoto from MLIT. We had ten presentations from both parties in four sessions.

In session one, as a theme of "Current conditions and issues of sewerage in Vietnam," presenters reported on SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) set up by the United Nations and the research on the implementation status of sludge management.

The second session had a theme of "Trenchless technology contributing to sewerage improvement/management." Some presentations introduced Japanese sewer rehabilitation/jacking methods in Vietnam and the technology standards of jacking methods for Vietnam. Then, we had a presentation ceremony on "Technology standards of jacking method for Vietnam" (Photo 1), photo



Photo 1: presentation ceremony of the technology standards



Photo 2: Photo session

session (photo 2), and a coffee break.

The third session after the coffee break started with a theme of "Challenges for sewerage improvement." Presenters reported on the support of ADB for sewage works in Vietnam, the needs and issues of sewerage improvement in Nam Dinh City, and JICA's efforts to develop a sewerage plan and execution capability.

The final session four was themed "Approaches contributing to the sustainable sewerage management in Vietnam." Presenters reported on the technology exchange and sewerage mapping systems in Haiphong City and the adoption of the cutting-edge energy-saving wastewater treatment system in Hoi An City. The seminar was open to the public and was packed with people who belong to, regardless of public or private, interested in sewerage activities in Vietnam. People were very conscious of discussing actively, which was very impressive.

2. WEDDING RECEPTION IN VIETNAM

Have you ever attended a Vietnamese wedding reception? Most people might have never joined a wedding reception of not only Vietnamese but foreigners. Recently, I had my first experience with it.

The married couple was Mr. Dung and Ms. Quynh (Photo 3). Mr. Dung working for ATI, is one of the counterparts in our project. I have heard Ms. Quynh, who is from Hanoi, is a pharmacist.



Photo 3: Bride and groom

The reception was held at the groom's parent's home in Vinh Phuc Province, 60 km northwest of Hanoi. We traveled there by chartered taxi. After 90 minutes drive, we joined the reception with many people. We were lucky to meet the bride and groom just after we arrived.

While many guests were already seated, we found our place behind a pillar at the room's far end. We could not see what had happened. The barricade interrupted us, no reception program, and everything, including MC with loud music, was Vietnamese language we did not understand.

So, I left my seat with a camera to forward. Then I finally found a champagne tower, complimentary speeches, cake cutting, and taking photos which are the same as in Japan.

After the reception, guests moved to a different place across the street for a wedding after-party set up in a yard of a house under construction. Groom's father said, "I was worried about Dung because he had not attempted to be married different from other siblings, and however, he finally got married. Today is a wonderful day."

Mr. and Ms. Bui, wishing you a lifetime of love and happiness!