

WMA TRAINING IN JAPAN

International Affairs Department

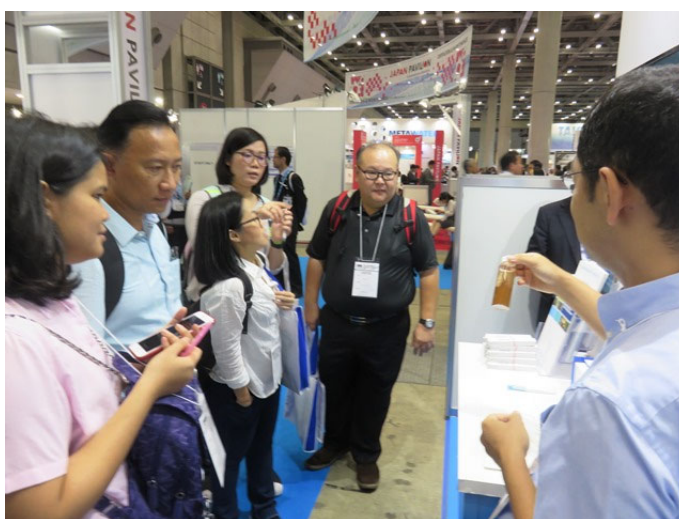
In September, Saitama prefecture invited five WMA (Wastewater Management Authority of Thailand) staff from Thailand for domestic training in Japan. I helped Saitama prefecture and Saitama Sewage Systems Agency as a lecturer in the training program. In the program, JS provided the following four classes.

- ① The management scheme of the JS training center
- ② The outline of wastewater treatment and facilities
- ③ Sewage works finance in Japan
- ④ Sewerage charge collection

Participants made an active discussion about the connection with the sewer that is the basis of the user charge for sewerage services. Presently in Thailand, the government has a big issue with how it encourages people to connect with sewers. The country has not had any law yet, which obligates people to connect to sewerage services like Sewage Law in Japan. So participants from WMA want to develop sewerage-relating regulations in the future while they feel the necessity of promotion activities.

On September 13, I joined factory tours of Maezawa Industries, Inc. and Nagashima Foundry Co., Ltd., which is a manufacturer of manhole covers. We watched glowing melted cast iron poured into a mold in the factory. I got excited to see the actual scene in that manhole covers were made.

The tour on the day reminded us that the manhole cover considering safety, is a fruit of modern science and this kind of small part is the basis of the reliability of



Participants listened attentively to an explanation at the IWA exhibition

Japanese technologies.

At the same time as their visit to Japan, IWA (International Water Association) held the World Water Congress & Exhibition in Tokyo. It was an excellent opportunity to visit the Tokyo Big Site for the exhibition. The participants were especially interested in the advanced technology, including a membrane treatment and a new quakeproof sewer technology. WMA staffs seem to like something new. Japanese might be the same, but they show interest in novel things with their eyes shining more than we do.



Participants delivered their presentations at the evaluation meeting

Somebody called my name when I was in the IWA exhibition on a different day. That was Mr. Chira, Deputy Director General for Technical and Planning of WMA. I was happy he remembered my name.

On the last day of the training program, JICA hosted an evaluation meeting. Participants presented "what we learned from the training program in Japan." Mr. Hasegawa of JICA commented that he expected

their outstanding presentations would be delivered to all the staff of WMA in Thailand. He also said, "I used to work for the JICA office in Thailand and had known many Thai people participated in training programs in Japan. Though the participants reported they had learned a lot in the programs, they could not utilize their knowledge for practical work in Thailand. Sewage works in Thailand had just started, and they had to wait for an opportunity. This time, he was impressed with their presentations which were very practical considering how they would feedback the training to their sewerage operations in their country."

Currently, in Thailand, the different authorities administer each construction, O&M of sewage works, and WMA providing O&M of sewerage facilities. The relationships between the ministries are pretty complicated. However, we have good news the government decided to change the administrator of WMA from the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment to the Ministry of Interior, controlling municipalities in charge of the construction and O&M of sewerage facilities. We expect that this re-organization facilitates

the cooperative relationship between WMA and cities, expands the role of WMA, and enhances the presence of WMA. WMA is becoming JS in Thailand.

I will be rewarded if the knowledge and experiences they got in Japan contribute to developing the sewage works in Thailand.