

International Affairs Department

Dear friends,

I will send you my last newsletter from Vietnam as a JICA expert.

I have been sending newsletters every month since May 2017, when I came to Vietnam. My journals were about sewage works in Vietnam, including my project and Vietnamese culture. Your feedback and comments always encouraged and inspired me to continue sending messages. I greatly appreciate your support. The Vietnamese project will continue with expert mori as a leader after I leave. I would appreciate your continuous support and cooperation with the project.

Thank you for reading my newsletters until now. The final issue is about the sewage works seminar and Trang An Marathon 2018.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Japan. Thank you very much.

1. SEWAGE WORKS SEMINAR

There was a sewage works seminar on September 21, and I reported my activities in Vietnam during this opportunity. My report contained:

- ① Background of VSC project,
- ② About the project implementation support (PIS) department,
- ③ A pilot project in Nam Dinh city,
- ④ Summary of sewage works planning in Nam Dinh city,
- ⑤ Knowledge obtained from the pilot project,
- ⑥ Application of activity results to training project, and
- ⑦ Proposal to the project and sewage works.

The contents of each subject were as follows:

- ① There are some problems with sewage works in Vietnam, such as insufficient development and implementation in the sewage law system, shortcomings of planning and design, and delays in the project. Establishing a VSC

(tentatively called) that has training, R&D, and project implementation support was proposed to solve the above problems.

- ② I explained the purpose and the necessity of the PIS department, how to support the project implementation, and expected achievements. Then I proposed how to obtain the required money and human resources at the project's start.
- ③ As the purpose of the pilot project in Nam Dinh city, sewage works planning is developed, and this plan development offered the knowledge required for the management of the PIS department. I provided a rough schedule of the project implementation.
- ④ I presented the research area and wastewater and rainwater treatment plans in the sewage work planning in Nam Dinh city.
- ⑤ I proposed some problems and their solutions for the pieces of knowledge obtained from the pilot project in Nam Dinh city are data collection, opinion collection and approval process, and supervision of local consultants.
- ⑥ In the training program held in Nha Trang in July, my Vietnamese counterpart presented the knowledge obtained from the pilot project in Nam Dinh city.
- ⑦ I made some proposals for the project and sewage works. They establish a sound and stable financial foundation, develop/distribute technical guidelines/statistics, enrich PR activities, and adapt qualification systems.

The person in charge of the training program reported the results of a fact-finding investigation, and Expert Ibaraki presented the activity planning in the seminar.

After taking the group photo (Photo 1), project members hold a luncheon for me leaving Vietnam at the end of September.

I greatly appreciate their kindness and support during my stay. Thank you very much!



Photo 1: After the seminar

2. Trang An Marathon 2018

I joined the first Trang An Marathon on September 9.

Trang An is a scenic area of Ninh Binh province, and its Scenic Landscape Complex is inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Trang An Marathon sets its start and goal points at Hoa Lu, another part of the Trang An Scenic Landscape Complex. The marathon course includes the famous scenic site for

cruising limestone karst cliffs on a boat which I mentioned in my previous newsletter.

Hoa Lu was the capital of the Dinh Dynasty (966-980), sometimes called the first independent dynasty in Vietnam. The reasons why Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, the founder of the Dinh Dynasty, chose Hoa Lu as the capital were: in addition to the city being his base, it kept a distance from China followers and was geographically defensible.

I drove with my running buddies to Trang An from Hanoi for two hours. We arrived at Trang An on the previous day, Saturday, received bibs and checked into our hotel.



Photo 2: The starting point before sunrise

The race started on Sunday morning. Full-marathon began first, then half-marathon, 10km, and 5km-marathon followed.

My group members joined half or 10km- marathons, which started at 6 a.m and 7 a.m., respectively. I was surprised that the full marathon began at 5 a.m. Since we arrived at the starting point early just in case, we could see the complete marathon start. The view of the marathon starting point at dawn looked mysterious, with lighted-up historical monuments in the background (photo 2).

The sun had risen when the half-marathon which I joined began. Starting with daylight was good.

The course was comfortable with a flat and moderate-width road except for two turning points. These points were hairpin curves with a narrow width. Since each turning point had only one hydration station on one side, some runners almost bumped into other runners. As for me, I enjoyed the race from start to finish, and my record was decent, though.

Trang An Marathon has just started, and it has some points to be improved. However, its course is enjoyable with scenic views; this event seems to become famous.

The end