

Business Trip to Thailand

International Affairs Department

In 2022, I visited the office and management facilities of Thailand's Wastewater Management Authority (WMA). This trip was to formulate a project for AWaP.

During this visit, I had the opportunity to meet with some participants from past training courses, so we would like to focus on that aspect of the visit.



1. Mr. Kitti Teerasoradech (Kitti) and Mr. Surachet Nokham (Oh)



Photo 1

Kitti (far right in photo 1) works at the WMA headquarters (① on the map), coordinates with local governments, and guides junior staff.

I first met him in March 2016, when I visited Thailand. The second time was when he visited Japan as a trainee a few months later. This was our third meeting. Kittti, currently an expert at WMA and mainly works as a coordinator with local governments and national organizations, and as a mentor to junior staff, helped us coordinate with the regional office during our survey of a local city this time.

By the way, he has nothing to do with a very famous Japanese character.

Mr. Oh (second from right in photo 1) is currently the director of the Lampang WWTP and was a trainee in Japan in 2012. He remembered me well, and his youthful appearance belied the years that had passed. (I'm envious.)

2. Mr. Navin Jitkeaw (Navin)

I met him (second from the left in photo 2: Pak Nam Pran (③ on the Map) in charge at an intensive training session in Thailand in 2014. At the time, he was in his late 20s and had a slightly mischievous air.

He is steadily becoming more mature, his body shape is changing, and he is on the way to becoming a middle-aged man. At the time, he had just been infected with COVID-19, so he was wearing glasses and a mask. Because of this, I was late in noticing his presence, and he spoke to me frankly, saying, "Have you forgotten?"



Photo 2

3. Ms. Khankruer Duangial (Rung)



Photo 3

She (third from the left in photo 3: Head of

Prachuap Kirikhan WWTP (④ on the Map) is a talented woman who graduated from Chulalongkorn University with a doctorate. Thai women are known for their hard work and diligence, and they are also very considerate of others.

It had been 10 years since I had last seen her, so we looked at the photos we had taken 10 years ago together and reminisced about how time had passed. The training workshop, which took place 10 years ago, was a four-day event in which more than 30 people from the WMA organization, which had just over 100 members, were trained simultaneously. It was like a training camp.

Once the training was over, a dinner party started immediately. The lecturers, coordinators, and trainees all sat around the table together, and I think the days we spent together on the same level have fostered a sense of closeness since then.

The trainees from that time are now in important positions, and wherever you go in WMA facilities, you will find someone you know.

A short break (Part 1: Thai people's nicknames)

Many Thai people have nicknames, and they often refer to each other by these nicknames. For this reason, it seems that even classmates are unaware of each other's real names.

A short break (Part 2: Loi Krathong Festival) *Sometimes written as "Loy Kratong."

The Loi Krathong festival is held on the night of the full moon in November and is said to have originated in the Sukhothai region. It is considered to be the most beautiful festival in Thailand. During this festival, people pray to the water goddess "Phra Mae Khongkha" by floating "kratong" lanterns made from banana leaves and flowers down rivers and into the sea. They also express gratitude for having access to water and apologize for polluting it.

As this business trip was in November, I had hoped to attend, but unfortunately, my poor karma meant that I had to return to Japan four days before the festival.

I was fortunate enough to participate in the 2014 event, and I created a krathong (a type of floating lantern) that I floated in the sea at Si Racha. I want to show you some photos from that time.



Left and middle: making and completing the Krathong
Right: the author, second from the left in the front row

The Chao Phraya River in Bangkok is also said to be filled with lanterns, which makes it look solemn and gorgeous. In the northern region of Chiang Mai, the Loi Krathong Festival is also known as the Yi Ben Festival, and it features a festival where paper lanterns are released into the sky, much like hot air balloons.

November marks the start of the dry season in Thailand, making it a comfortable time to visit. The tourists in the city are diverse and full of vitality, including not only the Westerners you've seen before but also Indians, Muslims, and Asians.

How about leaving cold Japan behind and spending some warm time there?