



OCA REPORT

MAY 2017

ACTIVITY REPORT FROM JANUARY 2015 TO DECEMBER 2016

SPECIAL EDITION

We report on activities of the MRA Foundation Off Campus Activities International Exchange (OCA) for two years from January 2015 to December 2016. OCA accepts about 15 students from Chulalongkorn University (Chula Univ.) in Thailand every year and has been hosting homestays and a university exchange program for more than 40 years.

Every November, we conduct exchange activities with about 40 young people in partnership with the Common Beat (CB). We visit Taiwan, Thai universities and orphanages in Thailand. Taiwanese students also participated in this activity in 2015 and 2016 - singing and dancing, in various countries. 11 people in 2015 and 15 students in 2016 from Taiwan participated in these activities. Taiwanese students come to Japan in August every year to enjoy summer camps to create and rehearse

performances together. We understand each other and become real friends through these activities.

In Thailand we visit Chula Univ. as well as Mae Kok Farm, an orphanage in Chiang Rai and Ban Rom Sai, an orphanage for HIV-infected children in Chiang Mai every year. We perform and play with the children. We also have the opportunity to hear stories about the reasons people work at these facilities abroad.

CB performed "A Common Beat" musical in Korea in November with 50 Japanese and 50 Koreans over 8 months. OCA has also supported this activity such as a camp in Japan in August.

In November 2017, we plan to perform in Taiwan and the Philippines. Also in April 2018 we are planning to perform the musical "A Common Beat" in Taiwan. We believe that these activities will make true friends and achieve real international exchange.





50th Anniversary Party of "Let's Go 66"

On November 26, 2016, a commemorative party was held at Hamamatsu-cho Seabans Hall commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Budokan performance of "Let's Go 66". 120 people participated in this grand party involving Let's Go, Sing Out, Travelling High School, UWP, OCA, the MRA Foundation, and Common Beat who have participated in 50 years of activities.

Ms. Raquel Nakayama from the Philippines, Mr. David Lin from Taiwan, Kim Jinsook and Suhyun Hong from Korea, Mr. and Mrs. John and Mrs. Masako Osawa from the United States participated. Mr. Thomas Yano and Mrs. Yoshiyuki Mashima who recently came back from the United States also participated. We had a great time together. Mr. Okumura smoothly emceed the party with Mr. Masahide Shibusawa offering a toast. We also celebrated Dr. Toyotane Sohma's 94th birthday.



The Common Beat performed a part of their recent musical show and sang the old songs of "Let's Go 66" backed by a band organized and lead by Mr. Koseki. At the closing, the Common Beat led a big chorus of "Nada Soh Soh" with everyone singing along.



Chulalongkorn University OCA Visit Japan Program in May



Report from Professor Sirima from Chulalongkorn University

This exchange program has continued for 45 years since 1971. I believe Dr. Sohma has contributed so much to continue this private exchange activity with his strong affection and passion for Thailand. I feel deep gratitude for his efforts. Thanks to this, the OCA Visit Japan program is now an official event of Chulalongkorn University and the university's budget has become available.

I will report on the visit programs that took place in May 2015 and 2016.

May 2015

A total of 12 students from Chulalongkorn Univ. and Kasesart Univ., Professors Sirima and Somboon visited Nagoya, Nakatsugawa, Tokyo and Hakone for ten days from May 27th to June 5th in 2015

At Nagoya University of Commerce & Business (NUBC) in Nagoya, 15 Japanese students and 12 Thai students held a debate about the cultures of Japan and Thailand. Then we visited the Motomachi car assembly line in Toyoda. We also visited the Nagoya Science Museum, the world's best planetarium, and entered a low temperature experience room of -30 degrees and enjoyed the extremely cold world.

In Nakatsugawa, the students stayed with host families for 2 nights in 12 homes, wore yukata and enjoyed a river descent, practiced Japanese drums and tasted Japanese family life.

Saitama university students hosted us in Tokyo. After receiving a special lecture at Saitama University, Thai students and Saitama University students - 30 in all - took a Hakone bus tour, boarded a pirate ship, visited the botanical garden and enjoyed nature. Thai students who participated in this fun program were able to make many Japanese friends.

May 2016

I organized a 10-day Visit Japan Program from May 24 to June 2 in 2016. Unfortunately, only 9 people including me and two university teachers and 6 students could participate due to the Kumamoto earthquake.

Saitama University and Chuo University hosted us in Tokyo. We had a special lecture at both universities, went to Kawagoe with Japanese students, played at Disneyland, and walked around Asakusa, Meiji Jingu, and Harajuku. Dr. Sohma and I visited with the Thai Ambassador to Japan (my nephew) at his residence, and explained to him and his wife about the student exchange activities.

Thai students did homestays in Nakatsugawa for 2 nights and 3 days. This is the third time for the homestays which Thai students are most excited about every year.

We visited the Toyota factory, the Linear Railway Museum, and Oosu Kannon Shopping Arcade with NUCB students, and at night we had an exciting karaoke competition. They made good friends by interacting with 43 Japanese students at three universities in Tokyo and Nagoya.

This student exchange program I have been in charge of will be passed on to Professor Somboon and Ms. Ploy. Thank you for your cooperation for all these years.



Asian Beat Taiwan / Thai Tour in Nov.



Report from Mr. David Lin, Sing Out Taiwan

I saw "Let's Go 66" when it performed in Taiwan in 1966. After that I set up Sing Out Taiwan with my friend and have been doing activities for 50 years. I invited Up With People to Taiwan and staged UWP Taiwanese performances. In 2015, I learned about OCA's Asian Beat program for the first time, and dispatched 11 Taiwanese students and set up an exchange program with the universities in Taipei and Taichung.

Let me introduce the Activities in 2015 and 2016.

August and November in 2015

We planned a summer camp in Japan in August of this year and we rehearsed for the tour in November. We selected 11 students from Taiwan and joined the summer camp in Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture.

We invited 27 members from Japan to Taichung and conducted a Taichung Performance with a total of 36 people on October 31. An audience of 350 attended the performance and enjoyed singing and dancing in English, Taiwanese and Japanese.

On November 2, 36 cast members flew to Bangkok and held exchange meetings with songs and dances with 70 students including students who had visited Japan from Chulalongkorn University (Chula Univ.) in May.

Cast members went to Chiang Rai in northern Thailand and visited a mountain tribe orphanage "Mae Kok Farm (MKF)" and held an exchange party with the children on November 5.

We enjoyed an elephant ride, a hot spring, visited a mountain village, and in the evening we saw a number of shooting stars in a sky with full of stars.



The Cast traveled to Chiang Mai - 5 hours by bus - and visited the Ban Rom Sai Orphanage (BRS) for HIV-infected orphanages on November 7. We performed and listened to Ms. Miwa Natori's story.

The trip of 9 days from October 31 to November 8 was a dreamlike moment. Taiwanese students also made many friends. This program was also supported by the Japan Foundation.

August and November in 2016

We conducted an audition to select Taiwanese cast members in April and selected 18 students. In June, two instructors from Japan came and practiced.

18 Taiwan students participated in a summer camp held in Ichikawa city, Chiba prefecture from August 26 to September 1, in this camp, 1 student from the Philippines, 39 Common Beat cast members gathered and practiced for the November tour.

Thirty-two cast members participated in the Taiwan · Thai tour in November for 9 days from October 29 to November 6. In Taiwan we performed at Aletheia University which I had graduated from, and also performed a live street show at Lugang Mazu Temple in Taichung.

On November 1, the cast flew to Bangkok and held an exchange party with students of Chula Univ. In the year before the visit to Thailand the King had passed away and singing and dancing were discouraged throughout Thailand. Hence we only had a dinner party and enjoyed the reunion after a long absence. After that, we visited MKF and BRS and held an exchange party with the children.

Every year people with different nationalities gather together. Creating a show, performing and traveling together is the best way to make true friends. I want to continue this wonderful Asian Beat Project.



Support Ban Rom Sai and Mae Kok Farm



Report from Ms. Miho Natori, Ban Rom Sai

Ban Rom Sai is an orphanage for HIV-infected children founded in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 1999. Currently 30 children live in this facility. Thanks to good medicine for HIV, the children now can enjoy of good health.

When I asked for a donation from OCA in 2012, I was worried about how to bring together the orphans and the children in the area. It was a time of strong prejudice about HIV infection. I operated the library project with the support of OCA, I improved the library in Ban Rom Sai and asked children in the area to visit. Today, 160 of 8 to 20 year-old children are using this library. Also, the library computer is a necessity for children to complete their homework.

The Asian Beat cast visit Ban Rom Sai every November and perform singing and dancing shows for the children. The children are always looking forward to it every year..

The current problem is how to adapt the children to society after graduating from Ban Rom Sai at the age of 18. Also it becomes a big problem how the children can become independent while maintaining a relationship with Ban Rom Sai. I am planning to make a program to cooperate with the people of OCA and Asian Beat about this.



Report from Ms. Anuluck Chaisurin, Mae Kok Farm

The Mae Kok Farm is an orphanage for mountain tribe founded by my husband, Pipat Chaisurin and Professor Tobe of the Sei Gakuen in 1990. During the Second World War, the Japanese army started selling opium in northern Thailand. The Japanese army covered 30% of its expenses with opium sales. Northern Thailand had suffered from opium poisoning long after the war. The Mae Kok Farm has been active as a rehabilitation facility for opium poisoning patients from 1996 to 2000. After that, the Farm acted as an orphanage to pick up and nurture children of addicted patients, and children of parents who died of AIDS. Currently, 30 children are living in the Mae Kok Farm.

I learned about Dr. Sohma through Professor Tobe in 2010, and since then I have gotten the support of OCA. I know that Dr. Sohma has offered support to improve the lives of the children. The Asian Beat cast has visited the Farm in November every year from 2012, and they perform songs and dances for the children. The children look forward to this every year. We invite not only staff members of Mae Kok Farm but also nearby mountaineering tribes to eat dinner and have the opportunity to enjoy singing and dancing. Last year I asked the Asian Beat to visit a nearby elementary school where a child of Mae Kok Farm attended for performance.

I will continue to support the lives and education of the children of mountainous tribes. Thank you for OCA and the Asian Beat cast.





Support Activities by Common Beat

OCA originated in the Sing out activities of the Japanese young people who were inspired by the musical show "Up With People" (UWP) started in the United States in 1965. Those young people who used to belong to Sing Out embarked on exchange activities with Asia in 1971. It was the beginning of OCA. OCA has carefully nurtured a relationship with UWP since then.

"A Common Beat" was one of the UWP musical programs performed in 2004 in Japan and the Common Beat organization was established in Japan as an NPO.

In 2015 Common Beat invited 50 cast members from Japan and 50 from Korea to organize a performance of the musical "A Common Beat" with a mixed cast of 100 Japanese and Koreans. From May, Common Beat started recruiting in Japan and Korea, held several joint camps, gathered 1,000 spectators at Seoul's Universal Art Center on September 19, and performed for the first time on October 3. Also they performed for an audience of 1,000 at the Castle Theater in Fukuoka. In Seoul, 60% of the show was performed in Korean. In Fukuoka 60% was in Japanese. Cast members taught each other their languages.

In 2016, we recruited cast members in Japan and Korea in the same way, and conducted a musical 'A Common Beat' with 36 people from Japan and 54 Korea for a total of 90 people. Since we could not get a performance venue in Japan, we performed 3 shows on November 12th and 13th at the Mapo Art Center in Seoul for a total audience of 1,400. All the performances were done in Korean when the Japanese-Korea cast performed on stage together in Korea. The 2016 performances were subsidized by the Japan Foundation. OCA cooperated in applying for this subsidy and participated in joint training in Japan.

Both Japan and South Korea have many political challenges. Korean society has many problems, but the cast of Japanese and Koreans noticed more commonality than differences from each other through 6 months of musical preparations and performances. We succeeded in this performance by opening our minds toward a common and sharing joy and pain together.



Scholarship for Joining Up With People Program

Report from Ms. Atsumi Tai (Atchan) who participated in 2016 Cast B

I participated in the Up With People program from July to December 2016 with OCA support. I teach English at a high school and I have been telling the students that English is not a subject but a communication tool, so I tried to use it and participate - seeing the world with my own eyes. What I have gained through traveling in 5 countries - with 116 members from 21 countries is the value of accepting others without pre-conceived notions and prejudices and to look for the good in others.

When asking questions to the students at a school in Mexico, all the children raised their hands saying "Yes, yes", but when a boy was called, he said, "I forgot". They were not afraid of making mistakes but enjoyed simply participating.

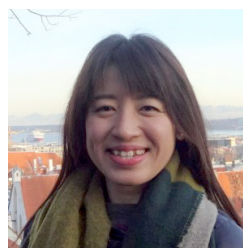
There seems to be no homework given at schools in Finland. That is very different from Japan which promotes the demerit system if you do not do your homework. They use their own judgement and gain strength and knowledge by learning from their experience.

When I spoke English, it was to share very own thoughts. I wanted them to understand me. And I wanted to know them. The desire in our hearts to know and understand each other brought joy and excitement and overcome the limits of our English ability.

It may take more time to process what I experienced my experiences of the past five months. But the meaning and value what I experienced will continue to grow as they affect my work as a teacher. Thank you very much for your support.

OCA Activities and the MRA Foundation

MRA stands for Moral Re-Armament. Dr. Frank Buchman, an American, started a peace movement called the Oxford Group in the 1920s after World War I. After the end of World War II, a "World Conference" a precursor of the current Davos Meetings was held at Caux in Switzerland. The group developed a movement of "harmony in Asia" including Japan and a peaceful settlement between Germany and France. It then proposed to emphasize moral rearmament over military rearmament during the Cold War. This is the origin of the activities of the MRA Foundation (MRA). The activities have expanded to an Education Foundation in the US called "Up with People" which educates the youth-traveling the world



*Atumi
Tai
(Atchan)*

2016CastB



*Yuka
Shimabayashi
(Yukachin)*

2016CastA



*Yukiko
Nakahara
(Yukko)*

2015CastA



while performing musical shows. In Japan, it has developed into the MRA which implements, supports, and subsidizes projects which promote international mutual understanding and develop global leaders. The MRA has granted ¥56.5 million for public interest purposes in fiscal year 2015.

OCA stands for Off Campus Activities. It was established in 1971 by the MRA to promote international cultural exchange in Southeast Asia, and to establish a student exchange program. Japanese university students started the exchange activities visiting Southeast Asian universities in that year. Since then, OCA has been conducting an annual student exchange program centering on Chula Univ. in Thailand for 40 years.

OCA Management Policy

Organization: OCA is a division of the MRA Foundation.

Policy: OCA is intended to foster global leadership through interaction with the local communities and cross-cultural exchanges with foreign countries.

Budget: OCA receives an annual budget from the MRA Foundation. The MRA Foundation is income derives from the management of its assets.

Annual budget: The expenses of fiscal year 2015/2016 are as follows.

		2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)
May	Thai student exchange program in Japan	1,420,000	1,000,000
June	Preparation work for UWP Japan visit		150,000
June	Staff Taiwan visit for cast rehearsal		150,000
July	Support for Sohma Wild Horse Festival Project	200,000	
Aug.	Joint lesson with Korean casts		520,000
Aug.	Summer camp with Taiwan casts	440,000	400,000
Oct.	Staff visit to Ban Rom Sai		160,000
Oct.	Thai/Taiwan Tour	1,120,000	1,160,000
Oct.	50 th Anniversary Party		130,000
	Support for Chulalongkorn University	330,000	520,000
	Development of new partnerships	300,000	800,000
	Donation to Mae Kok Farm	400,000	400,000
	Donation to Ban Rom Sai	400,000	400,000
	Donation to Up With People program participants	500,000	1,000,000
	Other expenses including report printing, travel expenses, and conference fees	920,000	950,000
	Total Expenses	6,030,000	7,740,000

Steering committee:

Toyotane Sohma, Takayoshi Sato, Kiyoshi Kehara, Masahiro Koseki, Nobuyuki Takahashi, Toshio Shimizu, Ryo Adachi, Noritada Agatsuma, Hiroki Nakajima, Akiko Takizawa, Tetsuya Koinuma

How to Join: OCA does not have a membership system. No admission fee is required. Since the content and activities are shown on the home page of the MRA Foundation, please feel free to contact us through the home page. Anybody can join. Let's have fun!

How to contact

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