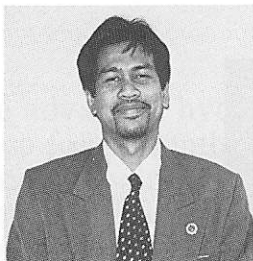


VOICE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

OCEANOGRAPHY AND DATA PRECESSING



Nor Hisham M. Ghazali (Malaysia)

My Winter in Japan

"Are you ready for the cold winter?", my friends asked when they heard that I had applied for the JICA Course in Oceanography and Data Preccessing in Japan. I had not even thought about the winter, a season which I have never liked. I thought only of this chance to broaden my knowledge. Ten years ago, a friend told me: "You should visit Japan, even if only for one day!". Here was the opportunity to learn more of the sea in situations very different to what I had seen up to then. Four months may be long but it will be time well spent. I have been a coastal engineer for many years, yet there are gaps in my knowledge. I needed to fill those gaps and this course promised me the opportunity to do that.

It was later that I realized that the course went to on through the fasting month of Ramadhan, the celebrations of Eidul Fitr - a revered time for Moslems like myself. I will miss the best month of the year; when family, relatives and friends gather for prayers and celebration. But, I assured myself, this will be a small loss for what knowledge I may gain.

As I write, I have spent three months in Japan. Japanese customs are no longer strange to me. I have enjoyed learning the language and realized that it holds the key to understanding the people. As I expected, I have learned more about the sea - its tides and currents. I have sailed with the Japan Coast Guard(JCG) in the Seto Inland Sea, used some of their instruments, and learned to do some to their tasks. This experience - the cold wind, the spray of the white foam as the bows of the Survey Vessel Meiyo sliced the waves - will stay with me forever.

What I bring home with me are more than memories. I have a huge task ahead - to form a data collection unit in my own organization. I think I now have the knowledge to do so and, more importantly, the confidence that can only be obtained with hands-on experience.

To the JCG, *osewa ni narimashita!* Perhaps, there will come a day when it is my turn to tell a young man - "You must visit Japan. Even if only for me one day!"



Dr. Luis Roberto Takiyama (Brazil)

At first, before coming to Japan I did not really know what to expect. Moreover, I was involved in many projects back in Brazil and it was a difficult decision whether to come or not. Fortunately, I made the right decision and here I am, on the verge of completing the training course.

The training course at JHD (Oceanography and Data Processing) is a very well planned course, involving many disciplines in which I had very little knowledge. All the instructors are skillful and experienced, providing a great amount of knowledge to the participants. Most importantly, they share all the information they possess and promptly display their availability for future contacts. This means that the course does not end when we (the participants) return to our countries!

We had two segments of practical training, onboard the Survey Vessels Tenyo and Meiyo, in January and February 2001, respectively. In this training I learned not only the technical aspects presented, but also how important is to work as part of a group, as the crew and the instructors did. All the people at the Japan Coast Guard were very helpful, experienced and friendly, making the training activities seem easy.

Apart from the cold weather, life in Tokyo has been very pleasant. This cosmopolitan city is very lively, providing innumerable leisure options. I will never forget the subway stations full of people rushing to work in the morning. But the thing that amazed me most was the number of small eateries and restaurants. They are everywhere!

Back home I will be involved full-time in projects related to the north coastal area of Amapa State. I will be responsible for activities related to Ecological Economic Zoning and Coastal Survey as well as Pollution Prevention and Remediation. I am sure all the learning obtained here in Japan will be very useful in the near future and I will be looking forward to applying them as much as possible.