

## My Quick Visit to Myanmar at the Dawn of the New Democratic Country

Haruo Shimada

I had a unique opportunity to visit Myanmar for only a few days from March 24 till the morning of March 27, 2016. It is unique because the idea of visiting Myanmar emerged only a very short period before the actual departure from Narita airport, and yet we were able to witness a great occasion of the opening of the Yangon Stock Exchange, met important people within a very short time of stay there. The days we visited were also shortly before the launching of the new democratic government led by Aung San Suu Kyi. In other words, it was the historic moment of the dawn of the new democratic history of Myanmar and if I may it was the historic moment of the dawn of the new capitalist economic development of Myanmar.

All this was made possible by the solicitation, planning and guidance of Mr.Koji Fusa, an unique global fund manager. Mr. Fusa was introduced to me by my friend, Mr. Yu Yamada, who used to be my student at Keio University many years ago and is now a successful businessman running his company which provides concierge services to wealthy customers and many other services stemming from this.

Mr. Yamada one day asked me if I would be interested in visiting Myanmar. Myanmar is one of the countries I wanted to visit but have had so far not good opportunity to do so. Yu told me that Mr. Fusa should be the person who knows Myanmar better and more than any other Japanese who Yu knows of, and asked me if I would be interested to meet with Mr. Fusa. I of course said "Yes."

After some work to arrange an appointment because Mr.Fusa is a very busy person running around the world, it was made possible that Mr.Fusa visits me at my office at Mita, Tokyo. He visited me in the afternoon. Once he sat down the chair, he started to talk many interesting topics like rushing water. Among them, there were two main topics. One was to invite Dragon School in UK, which is the most prestigious elementary school not only in UK but also in many advanced countries. In fact, Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of Keio Gijuku including University down to elementary school visited Dragon school and is said to have been inspired to establish Keio Yochisha, now the most prestigious elementary school in Japan.

Another topic was his effort to develop rice milling and raising shrimp in land to help develop the Myanmar economy. Particularly interesting was his story of his own close connection with Aung San Suu Kyi. He is said to be one of the few or even the only Japanese who can meet with her personally. With a spirit of helping her build her own country, Mr. Fusa is earnestly promoting these projects. I was much impressed by his talk, particularly, his passion, sincerity, energy and insights. At the end, he gave a thick

bundle of manuscript on the topic of Aung San Suu Kyi and her Myanmar. He said he would be happy if I would write a brief message to express my impression of the book on the cover of the book when it is published.

I read the manuscript with great interest. Once, I started to reading it, it became impossible to stop reading it. It was so interesting, inducing and amusing. The story of his association with Ms. Suu Kyi was particularly impressive.

He spent his college days at Wasoeda University. He wished to continue his study abroad. In those years, many students chose the US as the destiny of study. He always wanted to be unique so that he chose UK which was not so popular among Japanese young students. He studied mainly economics and finance, which helped him to develop his career later as an internationally eminent capable fund manager.

One day, he learned that a young couple of scholars wanted to find tenants of their house. They were Aung San Suu Kyi and her husband Michael. Mr. Fusa gladly seized this opportunity. In fact, he turned out to be the first tenant of their house. Because of this unique connection, Mr.Fusa got to know Aung San Suu Kyi personally rather closely and learned her personality and way of thinking in addition to other things.

After a couple of decades, Mr.Fusa grew to be a highly capable and well known fund manager starting his career from London and then covered much broader areas of the world. He learned that Aung San Suu Kyi emerged as a national leader to pursue democracy in the country she was born, and he met her a few times. Since he can understand her motivation, objectives and personality very well, he wanted to do what he could do to help her realize her ambitions making full use of his capability as a financial specialist as well as a powerful business man.

When he offered his ideas to help develop Myanmar economy, she appreciated his offer very much, but at the same time, asked him no to do his business in a way to help already the privileged make more privileged. Myanmar, like many other developing nations, tends to develop in a mode of so-called "crony capitalism." This is because powerful people, may they be military generals, government officials or business leaders, are eager to obtain and monopolize business or power privileges making use of their status or connections with other powerful leaders. Ms. Suu Kyi is harshly critical against this kind of nature of economy, and sought to erase bribes and nepotism.

In recent years, financial and industrial organizations including major corporations of many countries have been rushing into Myanmar viewing it as the last untapped frontier of the world. Japanese such organizations, in fact, have invested to develop infra-structures such as special economic zones. They are interested to invest or launch businesses in such industry as rail road, construction, communication, etc. They tend to be typical candidates of "privileged" cronies.

Knowing this, he chose two major projects, namely, rice milling, and in-land shrimp raising. Myanmar has long been one of the major rice producing countries in Asia and has been supplying good rice to various customers in the world. During the military rein which lasted half a century, rice producing capacity has been damaged in many respects. Mr. Fusa paid special attention in the area of milling of rice, where new and efficient technology can contribute a lot to enhance the quality of rice at the stage of consumption and therefore can empower competitiveness of Myanmar rice and thus contribute to increase the total income of rice industry.

Another area he chose was in-land shrimp raising. Myanmar has a vast flat land with hot weather which is suitable for shrimp culture. Again, this is the industry in which advanced technology can help develop productivity a lot. He ran around the world to search and secure the best available technology and specialists, and also to raise funds to promote such projects. These industries are specially suitable for Myanmar at this stage of economic development where people are under nourished of protein, and do not enrich already rich crony capitalists.

Reading his manuscript, I was impressed by his keen strategic choice of investments, energy to promote them, and above all strong passion to get his ambitions realized. I thought that when he asks me again to write some message to the cover of the book, I would write, "This is a book of global love of the author dedicated to Aung Sun Suu Kyi."

On the way to go to Myanmar, I made use of a rather long flight of 8 hours from Tokyo to Yangon to read relevant documents on Myanmar, particularly, my news paper clippings about Myanmar both Japanese and such foreign media as Financial Times and the Economist, which I have been collecting for about a year amounting to a brief case full of volume. The news and articles about Myanmar have been increasingly frequent particularly since around the national election which took place in November 2015 in which NLD(National League of Democracy) led by Aung San Suu Kyi gained the landslide victory and enabled them to occupy more than 80 percent of seats in the national assembly excluding the secured seats for the military which is 25% of the total seats.

While many articles of news papers and magazines write about many different issues, happenings, and aspects, one message is amazingly common throughout the variety of media. This is, "Aung San Suu Kyi is a democracy "Icon." But when it comes to economic policies she is incredibly vague." This kind of media message seems to mean that she is extremely popular among the voters as a proponent of democracy. But she knows little or may not be that much interested in economic policies, implying that the new Myanmar led by her may not succeed to realize economic development which people want.

On the way to go to the center of the city of Yangon from the airport, I picked up this topic to talk to Mr. Fusa. His response and observation were quite interesting.

First of all, he emphasized that Western media (he meant to include the Japanese) do not really know the reality nor they have good connections to collect right data or information. In fact, he pointed out, that there were very few or even none of the journalists of Western media have predicted the land slide victory of NLD. This meant the weakness of Western media to understand the reality and predict on the basis of such limited information.

Another reason why they tend to write articles like the ones I quoted above is, in addition to the paucity of first hand information, but also having been captured by their traditional skeptical view about Aung San Suu Kyi and cannot easily alter their judgement drastically even after they witnessed the land slide victory of NLD. He also added that Ms. Suu Kyi usually do not tell what she thinks clearly and in detail to media people because she has some suspicious view about the media which she gained through her bitter experience after having become the leader of campaign for democracy.

He emphasized that Ms. Suu Kyi does have a clear-cut, concrete and detailed view about policy matters even encompassing a long period for the future. Mr. Fusa's view about Mr. Suu Kyi seems to be endorsed when she took the positions of the four cabinet members covering such important policy areas like foreign affairs, energy, education, the management of president office. Without having confidence to manage critical policies, she would not opt to take such roles.

Having driven through the congested roads for more than an hour, we arrived at a hotel near the center of the city of Yangon. The hotel is fairly large and is named Yangon International Hotel. We were welcomed by a cheerful gentleman. Mr. Fusa introduced him to us, Mr. Onodera, Koki, the owner and CEO of the hotel, by saying that he is the most famous Japanese in Myanmar.

Mr. Onodera showed us around the hotel. The hotel has an amazing variety of restaurants, recreational facilities, sports gyms particularly of practicing golf, and a lively disco, which he explained are very popular among Yangon residents. We learned through talking with him and Mr. Fusa that he is a person of having experienced exceptionally unique career to finally arrive at the way he is now.

His root is Kesenuma, Miyagi prefecture. He is an uncle of Minister of Defense of Japanese government some years ago. He started out as a business man handling real estates in Japan when he was quite young. He was also trained as an architect. He soon became one of the prosperous and well known real estate businessmen. One day he was asked by a priest of Myanmar if he was willing to buy the land and the building of Myanmar embassy located at Gotenyama area, the residential area for the rich

people. In fact this was meant by the military government which just started in Myanmar. The price asked by him was 60 billion Japanese yen, which was big enough just as much as an annual budget of Myanmar government at the time.

Having decided to accept this request he ran around to raise funds. Luckily, funds have been collected consisting of contributions of various capitalists including a few major banks in addition to his own fund. The Myanmar authority asked hurriedly to deposit as much as 1.5 billion yen to their designated account within a few days after he started to collect funds. Having successfully purchased the land and building of Myanmar embassy, he was planning to build a huge gorgeous building as a major investment project.

Unfortunately, however, the timing was bad. Soon after he acquired the real estate, he was swamped by the deadly impacts of the harsh policies of the Bank of Japan and the Ministry of Finance. Bank of Japan raised interest rate incredibly high to suppress the “bubble” and Ministry of Finance imposed the quantitative limitation of loans to real estate businesses in order to finish the bubble. He was suppressed to bankrupt in this storm.

Sometime later, though, he was given an unique opportunity by the Myanmar government that they to rent a huge land as broad as 30 000 m<sup>2</sup> in the central district of Yangon. Since in Myanmar, foreigners are not allowed to own a land, the land was rented to him at a very low rent and for a long period as much as 70 years. Without thinking of inheriting the land for the next generation, this meant that Mr.Onodera was allowed to “defacto” own such a huge land in the central district of Yangon.

Having secured the land, he' soon built the largest and best equipped hotel at the time. Toward the end of our tour of the hotel, he invited us to the top of the building open terrace and showed us how good location the hotel was in. He pointed to the huge “Pagoda” famous for Myanmar which was shining in gold with lightings in the mid night of Yangon. The pagoda is not very far from the hotel, meaning the location of the hotel is privileged. Having spent an unique career of fatal failures and dramatic successes, he still now owns a luxurious residential and business facilities in Tokyo and in New York in addition to Yangon. Mr. Onodera accompanied us during the much of our three day tour of Yangon.

Next morning, we got up early and took breakfast in this hotel. The bus came to pick us up. Mr. Fusa meant to show us around the central part of the city before we together go to the celebration of the opening of Yangon Stock Exchange.

Our group consists of Mr.Fusa, Koji, Mr. Onodera, Koki, Mr. Fusa, Hajime, Nomura Securities Inc. Elder brother of Mr.Fusa, Koji, Mr. Taguchi, Yasuro, President of Showa

Yuryo, Inc., Mr. Takeuchi, Takaaki, International College of Liberal Arts, Yamanashi Gakuin University, Mr. Yamada, Yu, CEO of Yipsilon Co.Ltd, and myself.

We drove for about an hour in and around the central part of Yangon city. Yangon city is the city with long history and traditions. The outlook of old part of the city is heavily influenced by British colonial style of buildings. However, this traditional outlook of the city is now rapidly being changed by modern constructions. Toward the center of the city, there remains an old huge red brick structure the building which was used as the central rail road station during the colonial age. This area, including this old structure, is going to be completely renewed to a highly modern district with sky scrapers.

There are many other such cases in the city. Visitors who come to Yangon must be impressed by such renovation plans of the city which have already launched or going to be launched soon. Since the economic development of Myanmar has been much delayed even relative to neighboring Southeast Asian countries during the military government rein of half a century, the gap to catch up or to be filled is huge. This may be one of the reasons for media to describe Myanmar as the “last frontier on the earth.”

We arrived at the building of Yangon Stock Exchange shortly before the opening of the ceremony. Inside the hall, there were already many people gathering who represent various offices, sectors and countries. Our group sat in a row relatively close to the front. For the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) to launch the business, the group of Japanese corporations, including Daiwa security house, helped a lot. Without the technical and managerial support and assistance of Japanese corporations, the YSX could not have been able to initiate its activity as soon as this timing.

The ceremony started. The chairperson declared the opening of the ceremony. After having introduced about a dozen of persons who contributed to this important event, chairperson specially introduced Mr. Serge Pun, the CEO of the most prosperous and well known corporate group, MFI(Myanmar First Investment), and the two gentlemen knocked the bell of the stock exchange. This is the symbolic action to tell that trading started. After sometime, stock price of MFI was indicated on the screen at the stage. All the audience applauded with joy.

This is indeed the symbolic start of Myanmar’s “capitalism.” Symbolic, because the company which achieved the initial public offering was only MFI. After the initial price of the company was determined, there was an announcement that many people who wanted to purchase the share of the company lined up since 5 O’clock in the morning. This news is particularly impressive for me because Myanmar is the country where the percentage of people who have bank account is at most 10%. For such a country, many people lined up to buy the shares of the IPO company is truly indicative of the fact that

Myanmar is really experiencing the historical epoch of the dawn of its future capitalist economy.

Outside the building is already very hot. The temperature was close to 38 degree centigrade. On the way to go to lunch, Mr.Fusa talked about problems of Japanese corporations to do their business in Myanmar. One example he explained to me is the competition to get approval to facilitate mobile phone infra-structure. Japan's corporate group of telecom company and trading company lost the completion against some European companies. Mr.Fusa described their poor presentation at the final state of competition. While most of contenders presented well organized materials beautifully with English presentation by themselves.

In contrast, Japanese corporations spoke Japanese and asked interpreters to translate given the same time budget, We may suspect that Japanese companies may have taken for granted that they would get the contract partly because their technology is certainly good, and Japanese trading companies have helped Myanmar to develop major economic zones etc so that the royal seats are reserved for the Japanese companies. They apparently lack sensitivity to understand stern business and political conditions in which they have to operate.

We together went to eat lunch. The restaurant recommended by Mr. Onodera was the restaurant which provides Japanese cuisine. He said that this restaurant will close in a few days. In the room, I happened to have encountered Mr. Tsuchiya, Akiyoshi. He called my name. It took me a while for me to recognize who he was because he looked much younger than the time I met him last year in Japan, and looked quite "native" of Myanmar.

Mr.Tsuchiya was introduced to me last year by Mr. Hirao, Koji, a senior advisor to Showa Women's College. Mr. Hirao used to work for Japan's Long-Term Credit Bank. He himself is a specialist of management in addition to be a qualified banker. Mr.Tsuchiya was a fairly successful entrepreneur in construction business. He once was a highly popular evangelist of rational management of construction business running a good size consulting network having a few thousands members. In those years, Mr.Tsuchiya encountered an excellent book on management which was written by Mr. Hirao. Mr.Hirao happened to have met Mr. Tsuchiya in Myanmar several years ago and was deeply impressed by his ever growing challenging spirit. This is a reason why Mr.Hirao introduced Mr.Tsuchiya for me.

One day when he stopped by Myanmar several years ago, he was a sort of revolted that this is the country of his destiny. Walking through the country side of Myanmar, he realized that the level of development of the country is just about the early Meiji era of Japan. Meiji Japan developed rapidly because people, particularly of women workers worked hard as symbolized by the character "Oshin" in a highly popular TV program.

Mr. Tsuchiya thought that what Myanmar needs most is “Oshin.” He moved quickly to build a school to educate many “Oshins.” When I met Mr. Tsuchiya in the Japanese cuisine restaurant he proudly showed me pictures of completed buildings of “Oshin” school. Myanmar is a wonder place for me because I happened to have met people who I would otherwise not be able to meet.

In the afternoon, we visited the office of JAICA. Two officers came out to welcome us. Mr. Fusa told them that the purpose of our visit this time was to give Prof. Shimada a good overview about Myanmar economy since it is the first visit for him. The principal officer, Mr. Inada, who gave us a briefing told me that he took my lecture at Keio University when he was a student. How small the world is, particularly in Myanmar!

The briefing was quite systematic and informative. Of many points he explained, two major observations were impressive. One is that Myanmar people are polite, courteous, and diligent. They do work well and for long hours. Another is the lack or paucity of infrastructure. Railways, irrigations, communication systems, power supplies, and even hospitals. In fact, excellent students are sent to medical education. However, since hospital facilities are shabby and outdated, good medical human talents cannot be used. In agriculture, there remains vast flat land in the country, but since necessary infrastructure is lacking, large land resources are not utilized.

We then visited International Financial Center very briefly. Since time budget is getting extremely tight because we had an appointment with Mr. Serge Pun, the owner and CEO of FMI at 16:00. The main purpose for us to visit IFC is that Mr. Fusa needs to ascertain some of his business matters with the responsible officer there. Since the matter relates to international financing of Mr. Fusa’s project, he had to take advantage of this opportunity to ascertain some of the important points of his project such as rice milling and shrimp cultures. Mr. Fusa and the responsible officer of IFC talked many points extremely fast and efficiently, which impressed very much, as a living example of stern and strict business.

We arrived at the office of MFI, where Mr. Serge Pun was waiting. Since Mr. Fusa had his confidential business matters to talk with Mr. Pun. We were sitting together to listen their talk. This was interesting and learning, but I will not write about it because of its confidential nature. After the business talk, Mr. Pun began to talk about his view on the forthcoming new administration led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

He said that many journalists of foreign media want to predict about the future of Aung San Suu Kyi’s government. There are, however, a couple of important elements which foreign media seem to overlook. One is the mandate and the other is her strong commitment to deny bribery and fight against corruption.

On mandate, her party NLD gained more than 85% of votes in the recent general election and thus is authorized to take 85% of seats in the national assembly except for 25% of seats reserved for the military. Mr.Pun said that the popularity and real support of the people is much higher than this figure. For instance, he quoted the fact that in the capitol city, "Nepido," where bureaucrats and military consist of most of citizens, NLD gained almost 100% of votes. This implies that the majority of military people in fact support NLD rather than opposing against it. It is often told that the military is anti-NLD. This is misleading, according to Mr.Pun. Those who oppose against NLD within the military should be just a handful of military executives who get bribes and monopolize power.

On bribery and corruption, Aung San Suu Kyi made it very clear that she would never tolerate bribery and want to erase corruption from Myanmar. Indeed, she ordered to the party people and government officials that if they are sent gifts they should not receive and return them to the sender. While some wonder how rigorously this order could be realized because gifts giving is deeply entrenched practice in Myanmar society for a long time, the very fact that Ms Suu Kyi sternly and continuously commits to fight against corruption may well give rise to prepare the ground of fair competition in the industrial society. This should be helpful to increase productivity of Myanmar industry because competitors will no longer be disturbed by corrupt maneuver of the market.

He said that foreign media largely overlook these critical points of the new government.

At the same time, though, he added an observation as an experienced business man. He said that most of the candidates for ministerial positions of the new cabinet seem to be "good" persons. However, being good and being capable may not go together. While personally very good, but, some cabinet ministers may turn out to be incapable of running the organization because most of them are inexperienced. If the top is incapable, the organization will not work well. He confessed that whether the new government will go well is to be seen yet.

Mr.Pun talks gently, softly and systematically, while he is very sharp and persuasive. It is amazing that he spent almost one hour for us in this very important day for him and Myanmar. He planned a huge dinner party to invite many important guests both in and out of Myanmar which was to start from 18:30. We were very grateful for his special kindness and care to us.

A couple of hours later, in a big hotel in the center of Yangon city, the large scale dinner party was organized by Mr. Serge Pun and his company MFI. We were among the some 500 invitees. When I heard about this party, I thought it would be a party without chairs and seats, and thought of coming back to hotel to eat after attending briefly. However, this was a full-fledged dinner party with many round tables. It was gorgeous.

When I stepped into the lobby of the hotel where many guests are talking, a couple of Chinese businessmen approached me and solicited me to join their team of golf next morning. They said they were going to play golf with Mr. Onodera, and a room for one person is vacant. I did not see why they, whom I had no idea, approached me and solicited me. Playing golf, however, is not a bad idea and I accepted this offer.

The gorgeous dinner party started. On the stage, a gentleman with beautiful King's English started to talk. I first thought this gentleman is a master of ceremony because he was explaining the history of Myanmar economic development with the aid of slide show. However, soon afterwards I realized that he was Mr. Serge Pun himself.

Having explained briefly the history of Myanmar economic and business development, he then moved on to explain various investment and development projects of the conglomerate business organization of his group, MFI, Myanmar First Investment. The group handles businesses of real estate, city planning, golf courses, hospital and health service, transportation, aviation, communication and so on. He thanked many people who worked together with his group and opportunity provided to him. He particularly thanked and celebrated the opening of Yangon exchange of today. He ended up his long speech by pointing to several of his executive supporters within the company. This was indeed a well organized perfect speech.

While I was much impressed by the contents of his speech, but I was even more impressed by his flawless English. I wonder where and how he acquired such skill and habit. From what I learned about him, he went to mainland China with his family when he was young. He had to stay in China rather a long period because China in those years were unstable and politically difficult with such happenings like Tiananmen affair. He was sent to country side for some years due to "Xia Fan," the campaign to send the elites to far-away country side.

When conditions became stable under the rein of Deng Xiao-ping, he escaped to Honking around the age of thirty and stayed there a while. Then, he came back to Myanmar and built and developed his company step by step. In view of his career such as this, he could not easily have had a good environment to brush up his King's English. He must have been an extra-ordinary person to be able to accomplish whatever he wish to regardless of the environment.

Next morning, Mr. Onodera brought me from his hotel to a golf course which was the top class course built by Mr. Serge Pun. On the way to go to the course, Mr. Onodera told me of some further stories of his life in Myanmar. He apparently has had good connections and association with powerful military leaders. He particularly spoke of a leader who was recently nominated as the vice president of Aung San Suu Kyi government. In foreign media including Japanese, this person who represents the

military side is notorious for having suppressed the NLD movement which sought for democracy. When I referred to such media views, Mr. Onodera explained how important the military is to govern and stabilize the country. Such roles of the military will continue to exist until the country, namely the leaders and the people, will be sufficiently matured and prepared to run a genuine democratic regime.

I thought of the dramatic event of transferring the military government led by the ex-general president Tin Sain. Mr. Tin Sain became the last president of military government in 2015 when the military government denied the result of the general election which was the landslide victory of National League of Democracy. However, once Mr. Tin Sain took the power, he put forward steadily and powerfully opening of the country to international trade and investment, relaxing outdated regulations, which resulted in remarkable growth of the economy. He also talked about democratization of politics. And after witnessing the overwhelming victory of the NLD in the general election of November 2015, he admitted the result honestly and decided to give authority to run the country to NLD. He is said to be spending time now as a priest. Mr. Tin Sain may well be recognized and remembered in Myanmar history as a great leader who has really changed the political regime of the country and gave the critical momentum for the Myanmar economy to grow.

It was an interesting experience to play golf with Mr. Onodera and his Chinese friends. In the evening of the first day when we arrive at Myanmar, he showed us indoor golf practicing facilities in the hotel. He was proud of showing the facility and said that he practices every night and would not go to bed until he hits 300 yards on the record of the machine. For a 73 years' old man to do this must be extra-ordinary. And in the morning, he showed us hitting almost 300 yards on the real course. It was amazing. Since this third day of our stay in Myanmar, the final day, was planned to go sight seeing, I finished golf by the end the first half and waited for the rest of our team to come.

My group without Mr. Fusa, now joined by Mr. Miki Daisuke, and Ms. Sano, Yukiko, came to pick me up at the golf course. We went around the city, dropped by a typical Myanmar cuisine restaurant in downtown, fooled around the markets, visited the famous Pagoda.

Mr. Miki guided the trip. Ms. Sano joined us finally as a reunion of myself with her in Myanmar which I wished to some realize since ten years ago. Mr. Miki is a young resourceful man trying to find a good opportunity to work in Myanmar hoping to fully testing his possibility in his life. He attended Keio University, Economics Dept. While as a student, he opted to spend a year in British university in Edinburgh taking advantage of an exchange program with Keio University.

After graduation he joined a Japanese Bank. It was then he got acquainted with a powerful financial specialist who is a close friend of Mr. Fusa, and he got to know Mr. Fusa, who inspired Mr. Miki powerfully to exciting possibilities which were unfolding in Myanmar. He is currently attending Myanmar college of diplomacy mainly to learn Myanmar language. Within a year or half a year he wish to find out an opportunity in which he can devote himself fully. He is a young person with a lot of possibilities for the future. I was much impressed by his challenging spirit to trying to find out his possibilities by himself working in a quite different cultural, social and economic environments.

Ms. Sano, Yukiko, used to be a student of my seminar some 20 years ago when i was a professor of Keio University. After graduation, she worked for me to run my office for a while. She then joined JAICA. She was sent to several countries where there were difficult national problems such as Afghanistan, South Sudan etc. She also joined a graduate program of Kennedy School of Harvard University. In the program, she learned many things through exciting and stimulating experiences both in and outside of campus particularly as a member of technical aid mission to developing countries. From several years ago, she has been working in Myanmar as a specialist of development program of JAICA.

Until I met her this time in the country where she has an important mission to help develop the country, I did not quite realize how much power she had within herself which she usually do not show up outside. While she has had many challenging experiences intellectually and physically even incurring some fatal risks, she performs her job precisely and smoothly and also raise her very young child who just started to speak. She confessed me of her incredible happiness and excitement when she had time with her baby, and she is even more empowered by her life of having to raise her son even though the conditions to raise a very young child are not quite helpful on the job.

My short trip to Myanmar gave me many excitements, stimulus, learning, and above all, opportunities to watch and learn about wonderful people.