

The 1st Study Meeting on Asia

1. Date: August 3, 2010 15:00 – 17:00
2. Venue: Meeting Room, the Takeda Foundation
3. Title: Society and Economy of Malaysia

Speaker: Mr. Yoshikazu Uno from Action for a Better International Community (ABIC)

4. Participants :

01	Yoshikazu Uno	ABIC
02	Shinichi Kobayashi	Professor, Research Center for University Studies, University of Tsukuba
03	Takashi Watanabe	Dean and Professor, Graduate School of Engineering Management, Shibaura Institute of Technology
04	Tsuneo Kanazawa	CEO, Excel of Mechatronix.Co
05	Ikuo Moriwaki	
06	Joackim Senou	President, Benin Diaspora High Council-Japan Section
07	Kazutoshi Oyamada	International Program Department, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
08	Ikuo Takeda	Chairman, the Takeda Foundation
09	Mlstuo Akagi	Senior Managing Director, the Takeda Foundation
10	Ysuo Tarui	Managing Director, the Takeda Foundation
11	Yuzo Mizobuchi	Director, the Takeda Foundation
12	Norio Ohto	Director, the Takeda Foundation
13	Naoaki Aizaki	Program Officer, the Takeda Foundation
14	Aiko Ubasawa	Program Specialist, the Takeda Foundation
15	Setsufumi Kamuro	Program Specialist, the Takeda Foundation
16	Mototaka Kamoshida	Program Specialist, the Takeda Foundation
17	Emiko Mitsui	Program Officer, the Takeda Foundation
18	Takami	Member, the Takeda Foundation

5. Memo

Ohto:

ABIC is an approved non-profit organization (NPO) established by the Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc. (JFTC), an association of the foreign trade industry in Japan. ABIC is a unique organization whose mission is to contribute to society by utilizing human resources with linguistic skills and global business experience. Most ABIC members are older retirees from *sogo shosha*, general trading companies. Today's speaker, Mr. Uno, graduated from the faculty of engineering of the graduate school of Hiroshima University, and Joined Mitsui & Co. LTD in 1976. From 1989 to 1995, he served as Director of Mechanics in the Kuala Lumpur Branch office. He was in charge of introducing mechanical plants to Malaysia. Today's speech, I believe, is based on his experiences during his stay in Malaysia. After returning to Japan, he held prominent positions including Director of Sales in the Department of Telecommunications and Electrical Wire, Director of Display Business of Mitsui & Co. Ltd, and President of Mitsui Electronics Inc.

Speaker:

My stay in Malaysia was 15 years ago, and my experience is rather old because Malaysia has changed a great deal since then. However, I like Malaysia very much, and have visited there many times after my official stay there ended. My story today is based on my experience of staying in and visiting Malaysia. There were not many cars in Kuala Lumpur in 1989, but when I was leaving there in 1995, the streets were filled with cars, and what had been a 15 minute drive to my office in 1989 now took more than 1 hour.

An Overview of Malaysia

Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government whose national territory comprises the southern part of the Malay Peninsula and the northern part of Borneo. The land area is about 330,000 square kilometers, which is about 90% of the area of Japan. It borders Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and Brunei. The population of about 27 million comprises with 60% Malay, 30% of Indian origin, and 10% of Chinese origin. The British East Asian Company had its headquarters in Malaysia in the 19th Century, and they promoted the immigration of Indian and Chinese people to Malaysia for plantation labor, resulting in the current high ratio of people of Indian and Chinese origin in Malaysia. From the 19th Century, the Malay

Peninsula and the northern part of Borneo were a British colony until the occupation of the Malay Peninsula by the Japanese army in 1942. The occupation of the Malay Peninsula by the Japanese army liberated the Malay people from the long colonial reign by Europeans, and their liberation by the Asian Japanese seemed to give confidence to the Malay people as Asians. In those days, there were many Malay people who respected the Japanese. Currently, they respect Japan, but it is not clear that they respect the Japanese. The Malaysian government embraces the concept of Bumiputra, which favors Malay people over non-Malay people, including Indians and Chinese, in the hiring of government employees, the establishment of companies, and interests. Although there were racial conflicts and communist revolts in the past, Malaysia has been enjoying a peaceful era since Mahathir bin Mohamad became its prime minister. Malaysia is sometimes called the prize pupil of Southeast Asia since it has achieved substantial economic growth by promoting industrialization. However, Malaysian politicians think that it is too early for Malaysia to adopt an American-style democracy, so Malaysia has assumed a policy of an economic growth by despotism promoted by Mahathir. The official language of Malaysia is Malay, but since Malaysia was a British colony for a long time, many people speak English, which gives Malaysia an advantage in attracting data centers. During the time of the Mahathir Administration, the Malaysian government adopted several important policy measures, including the promotion of the domestic production of various goods and the “Look East” policy, which promoted learning from Japan and Korea rather than from Western countries. Malaysia had a GDP of 20 trillion yen in 2008. Its main industries include the production of natural rubber, tin, and manufactured products including electric appliances and computer parts. Malaysia is one of production sites for Dell Computers in Asia. Most remote controls for analogue televisions were made in Malaysia, but this situation has changed since digital televisions have replaced analogue ones. Although Malaysia is good at manufacturing electric appliances and computer parts, these all involves the assembly production of IC parts. It will be difficult for Malaysia to produce precision machines with moving parts such as printers that require precise movement. This is my personal opinion. Following an Asian car policy adopted by the Mahathir administration, two domestic companies, Proton and Perodua, have introduced automobile technology from Mitsubishi Motors and Daihatsu Motors and have been manufacturing Malaysian cars that have more than a half share of the domestic

market. However, Mitsubishi Motors stopped its collaboration with Proton because of different views of management. Malaysia also focuses on its IT industry, and near Kuala Lumpur, they have constructed a Multimedia Super Corridor to equip the IT infrastructure. In Malaysia, I was involved in the construction of public telephone facilities, highway gates, telephone switchboards, and airports. Since there was no official aid from the US, Japanese yen loans played a very important role in constructing the infrastructure of Malaysia. Politically, Malaysia is rather anti-US and not involved in the collective security arrangement led by the US. Malaysia is a Common Wealth country. It is an Islamic country, but interestingly, they take interests, that differ from Islamic countries in the Middle East. They have free lower education systems, although wealthy Chinese children go to private Chinese schools. Competent Malay students go to colleges in Australia or England. Chinese people seek to make money in private companies, while good Malays seek jobs as high ranking government officials. Malaysia deals very harshly with drug smugglers and drug possession results in a death sentence.

Question:

I heard that the southern part of Thailand that borders Malaysia is Islamic territory and very dangerous with frequent revolts by Islamic fundamentalists. How is the security on the Malaysian side that borders the dangerous region in southern Thailand?

Speaker:

The southern part of Thailand has a different religion from the central and northern parts of Thailand, and has a very active Islamic movement. The Malaysian side of the border with southern Thailand does not have such problems and has stable security.