

Chapter 6

Messages from the Leaders of Southeast Asian Countries and Japan



● **Message by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister**

A heartfelt welcome to Japan to the representatives of the participants of the 42nd Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program.

I have had the pleasure of visiting all ten ASEAN countries since taking office as the Prime Minister of Japan. Upon every visit, I not only received a warm welcome, but also recognized that the basic premise of respect for “the rule of law” are shared between ASEAN and Japan.

Later of this month, the ASEAN-Japan Summit will be held in Malaysia. I am hoping to have sincere dialogues with the heads of state in order to further strengthen the partnership in a wide range of areas between ASEAN and Japan.

Tomorrow, you will embark upon a voyage into the seas which connect Southeast Asia and Japan. You will come

in touch with fellow participants who embrace different histories, cultures, religions, and values on board the ship. It is my hope that you will nurture bonds between human and human as you learn from each other, exchange views and acknowledge the splendor of each other’s countries, while being proud of the country where you were born.

More than 10,000 youths have participated in the program over the past 41 years and they play active roles in the respective fields. I have the highest hopes that you will put the experience to good use and be active in each country as human resource to contribute for the future of Asia. I also wish that you will value and hold this precious bonds of friendship you nurture on board the ship for many years to come.

November 4, 2015

Courtesy call

At the Office of Prime Minister

2 Philippines

● Message by Mr. Paolo Benigno A. Aquino IV, Senator of the Republic of the Philippines

My name is Senator Bam Aquino and SSEAYP changed my life as well! Not because I was a former delegate but because I met my wife through the SSEAYP Program when she was a delegate – a National Capital Region (NCR) Youth Representative on the 31st SSEAYP.

Good afternoon, everyone! Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat!

Dear friends, I'm very happy to be here not only because I can say SSEAYP changed my life, but because I am honored to be standing in front of the future leaders of ASEAN and Japan. I am very pleased to be here to send you off on an exciting adventure! I am sure that everyone is anxious to get on a ship together, discover new places, and make new friends.

Tens of thousands of years ago, people boarded wooden boats and sailed to the unknown. They would happen upon new shores with strange faces, foreign languages, new spices, treasures to find, and strange customs to witness. Mountains, oceans, and seas were natural barriers between peoples. But being the curious explorers that we are, we found each other. We broke through barriers. We overcame mountains with our vehicles and trains; we tamed the savage seas with our ships; and we conquered skies with our planes and rocket ships.

Today, we are more connected than ever. With the Internet, we can meet and interact instantaneously with people from all around the world. Right now, you could be messaging people back home on social media! We can even Google “un-contacted” tribes and learn about how they live in the remotest parts of the Amazon.

Today, indeed, we are more connected than ever. Seeing new faces, learning new languages, and familiarizing ourselves with new customs can be done in the comfort of our own room. Now, more than ever, we can foster multiculturalism and celebrate our diversity.

And still, there are so many areas where we have yet to overcome divisive barriers living within our own minds, our own countries, and our own region. Many, unfortunately, still fail to understand one another; many still refuse to embrace our differences.

All over the world, even here in our country, we find areas where conflict is still quite present. There is conflict in many different parts of the world; and in those parts of the world, we find discord, discrimination, and, sometimes, even hatred for one another.

On a macro and a micro scale, we can see discrimination

and a failure of many to accept diversity and a failure to respect our differences.

But where many people fail, dear friends, I am hopeful – and the leaders here in front are hopeful – that you will succeed.

As you spend time with one another and form the bonds of friendship with young men and women around Asia, as you go on adventures together and learn about other parts of the world together, I believe you will open your minds and your hearts, or puso, to the beauty of our differences.

I am hopeful that your exposure to a variety of histories, a variety cultures, and a variety of paradigms and perspectives will allow you to grow, learn, and evolve into the next generation of Asians and global citizens that can steer our world to the path of peace and prosperity for all.

As we usher in a stronger, united Asia, we have this opportunity to honor our varying histories and cultures while building prosperous nations for everyone.

Thanks to the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program, you have the opportunity to be part of this progress and be part of this change. Not only do you have the opportunity to be ambassadors of your respective nations, you are privileged of being representatives of the united Asia, the ideal Asia, in each place you visit.

Together, you can paint a remarkable, colorful image of our diverse region growing in harmony and not in discord.

I would like to leave you with a quote to keep in your back pocket or maybe at the back of your minds as you go on this great adventure. It is a quote from Mark Twain, the author who penned *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

He said, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.”

And I hope, dear friends that as you travel together, you will create and co-create that united Asia that we all want for our countries, our nations, ourselves and the future generations ahead of us.

On that note, I wish you well. I wish you safety. And I wish you fun!

May you return home with souvenirs of unforgettable memories, lasting friendships, awesome #selfies, and life-changing experiences!

Mabuhay kayong lahat! Mabuhay ang SSEAYP! Thank you and good afternoon!

November 11, 2015
Welcome Ceremony
At Diamond Hotel

● Message by Mr. Lam Dinh Thang, Standing Deputy Secretary, Ho Chi Minh City Committee of Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union

Time has gone by so fast. This is the last day of the five-day schedule of the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program 2015 in Ho Chi Minh City. We just get to know you all and now we have to say goodbye to you. Nevertheless, the people in our city have entirely felt the remarks of the program. And I am sure that the PYs must have had lots of good memories with us as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, sailing into its 42nd year, this unique program continues to foster deeper understanding and forge friendships among youths around the region and Japan. It is an excellent platform for our youths to broaden their international viewpoint and cultivate the spirit of international cooperation. The program has established an inspiration for brighter and better future with the core values of peace, friendship and solidarity.

To Vietnam, the program has also played an important role over the past years in terms of foreign affair. It is more essential this year as Vietnam is in the progress of being a member of ASEAN Economic Community in this December.

Thus, for the local program, many people have come together and given their time, and energy not just because of their duties but also because of their love for SSEAYP. There are hundreds of officials, employees, families, volunteers and ex-PYs who have shown their passion and commitment for this program. What we have done may have got some inevitable mistakes, but we strongly want you to acknowledge that though Vietnam is still a developing country but our love, spirit, hospitality are much higher than that.

My dear PYs, let me repeat some words from the ex

- PYs in the Reunion onboard last night. "SSEAYP has brought us to a wider world. SSEAYP has opened our mind with knowledge about the culture and people of Japan and ASEAN. SSEAYP has also opened our hearts as we became members of a big multicultural family with more fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters." And you can see they are all surrounding here to say goodbye to you. Keep that precious love in your hearts – forever. Many do not believe but it's true – SSEAYP would change your lives.

You may stop being PYs in some more days but do remember that you will always remain ex-PYs and we can hand in hand build a strong community for our nations as well as SSEAYP.

Today, through SSEAYP, we connect friendship among the youths. Tomorrow, through ex-PYs community we connect the cooperation among the nations. Once a PY, forever a PY.

On behalf of the Reception Committees, I would like to thank the Administrative staff, the NLs, the PYs for your active and helpful cooperation. I would also like to thank the Naval Brigade 125, the ex-PYs, the volunteers and the host families for your commitment and dedication in organizing the reception together with the Communist Youth Union of Ho Chi Minh city.

Last but not least, goodbyes are never easy. Pictures we keep here cannot carry your warmth. But we will miss you all.

We wish all participants and officials of SSEAYP 2015 a rewarding and memorable experience in the journey ahead. Good bye and see you soon!

Thank you.

November 21, 2015
Send-off Ceremony
At Cat Lai Port

4 Lao P.D.R.

● Message by H.E. Dr. Bounpone Bouttanavong, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao People's Democratic Republic

First of all, on behalf of the Lao government and people, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all delegates from ASEAN and Japan participating in the 42nd Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program 2015 to the Lao P.D.R. Your current visit is taking place at a time when the entire Lao people are joyfully celebrating many important events namely the 40th Anniversary of the proclamation of the Lao P.D.R. and the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of Lao Youth Union and others.

Aware as we are, the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program is one of the best youth exchange programs for ASEAN – Japanese Youth aimed at promoting mutual understanding and friendship, exchanging culture and tradition as well as strengthening the cooperation between ASEAN and Japan. Moreover, we greatly value SSEAYP program as one of the most useful and beneficial program to foster the development of our young human resources of ASEAN and Japan. Therefore, I would like to encourage the participants to strengthen your friendship and expand your network gained from the program for

your future cooperation and for the prosperity of ASEAN and Japan.

Back in 1997 when I was the Secretary General of Lao Youth Union, I was the first person to support Lao youth to join SSEAYP until now. In this regard, on behalf of the Lao government, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the government of Japan and ASEAN as well as the administrator of SSEAYP for the opportunity accorded to Lao youth to share the fine tradition and cultural values of the Lao people with their ASEAN and Japanese counterparts. As you may know, the Lao government attaches great importance to this program and earnestly hopes that the government of Japan will carry on this program into the future.

Last but not least, I wish you all a nice and fruitful stay in the Lao PDR.

Finally, I wish the 42nd Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program 2015 a brilliant success.

Thank you very much.

November 19, 2015

Courtesy Call

At the Government Office of Lao P.D.R.

● Message by H.E. Dr. Daw Khin San Yee, Union Minister for Education

Ladies and Gentlemen, a very good evening!

It is my pleasure to extend my warm welcome to you all to this Welcome Dinner of the 42nd Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program.

On behalf of the State as well as the Ministry of Education, I am very proud to host the Welcome Dinner in honor of the Administrator, Captain of Nippon Maru, Administrative Staff, National Leaders and Participating Youths of the 42nd Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program, this evening.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to note that the Japanese government has been steadfast in actively collaborating with Southeast Asian nations, creating opportunities for youths for better intercultural interaction through its activities. I would, thus, like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Japan for offering generous assistance to Myanmar in many sectors, including the education sector.

The Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program is significant for both Japan and the ASEAN Region, as it has constantly broadened the international outlook of youths from the countries involved and has also fostered friendship and greater understanding among them.

Ladies and gentlemen, with this Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program, participants from Japan and Southeast Asian nations are brought together and closely engaged in various activities onboard, in Japan and in countries in the region. This program has

accomplished its principle purpose of expanding the network and deepening mutual understanding in the culture and traditions of nations in Southeast Asia and Japan.

It can be seen that the multiplied effects of this program is tremendous.

I, thus, would like to urge our youths to preserve what is unique about each of our culture, our values and our traditions that have guided our forefathers and nourished our culture to allow peace and prosperity to reign in our continent and the world in the coming centuries in the face of competitions, challenges and the changing demands of the world.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Japanese government again for providing the Ministry of Education with a privilege to host the 42nd Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program in Myanmar this year.

I also wish to offer warm congratulations to the Japanese government for its stewardship of the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program, and responsible personnel for their diligence, and efforts to details in organizing the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program.

I wish all of you a pleasant stay in Yangon. Let me conclude with a warm invitation to the dinner this evening.

Thank you.

November 27, 2015

Welcome Dinner

At Sule Shangri-La Yangon

6 Malaysia

● Message by Datuk Seri Panglima Musa Haji Aman, Chief Minister of Sabah

On behalf of the Sabah State Government and the people, I wish to thank the Government of Japan and organizers of this youth program, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia for your commitment in ensuring its success. We are honored that Kota Kinabalu is the final port of call of the 42nd Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program (SSEAYP). I also wish to commend the Ministry of Youth and Sports Sabah and the organizing committee for your dedication to this event.

Any program or activity that promotes human interaction, especially among young people, is appropriate and timely in this age of virtual reality and social media. It is heartening to see that a technologically advanced and internet savvy country like Japan is at the forefront of efforts to encourage real face to face interaction. There is no doubt that the internet is a wonderful tool in global development. Nevertheless, its use must complement and continually promote the human factor in global progress.

I am sure we all agree that no matter how convenient it may be able to be able to instantly communicate with someone at the other side of the world, it can never be as meaningful as face to face communication. This is why we must encourage our young people to travel, both overseas and in their own countries. It is through the intermingling of people from different walks of life and cultural backgrounds that many of the world's problems can be solved or better yet, avoided. I believe that human interaction, in combination with the promotion of positive values, will result in a better and more progressive global society.

Youth represent the hopes and aspiration of every nation. Events such as this one should be given full support and attention by all quarters, including governments, social organizations, society at large and most importantly, parents and guardian. The world is changing rapidly, and there are challenges tearing away at the very fabric of society from every corner. To overcome negativity, we must strive to empower youth.

Today's young generation or Gen Y are the most well-informed, knowledgeable and highly-educated, much of it thanks to the accessibility of high-tech communication and learning facilities. These valuable qualities must be

harnessed and infused with positive values so that when this present generation of youth is ready to take up leadership roles, they will do so with a sense of responsibility, human compassion and a genuine sense of empathy.

We, the older generation, must also have empathy for our eventual successors. We cannot and must not force our values upon our youth. What we can do is plant seeds of positivity in their lives and nurture this, remaining optimistic that our labor of love will indeed yield what we envision.

This youth ship program is a perfect example of planting the seeds of positivity. In the spirit of leering and exposure, young people from different countries participate in healthy activities and forge friendships which hopefully will stand the test of time. You travel to different port of call destinations and share experiences which will become memories that forever bind you as citizens of the world. It is a kinship that can only come from actual human interaction.

And speaking of kinship, tomorrow is a big day for the selected foster families when they invite participating youth of this program into their homes. I am confident this will be a rewarding experience for everyone involved. I urge you to use this opportunity to make new friends, to network, as they say nowadays. To our foreign visitors, I hope you will discover for yourselves why Sabah is such a wonderful place.

Here in Sabah, we take great pride in the richness of our natural resources and the diversity of our cultural heritage. I hope you get to see some of our natural and cultural attractions during your stay. The Sabah Government is committed to safeguarding our natural ecosystems which range all the way from Mount Kinabalu to marine diversity in the seas that surround the state.

It is my hope that your visit is a comfortable and memorable one. May friendship created through this program prevail and contribute to a better world in years to come.

Have a good evening ahead.

Thank you.

December 5, 2015

Welcome Dinner

At Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort and Spa

Kota Kinabalu