

ASEAN Youth Camp Viet Nam 2010 "DRAGON: Legend in ASEAN Culture"

A Glimpse of ASEAN Culture

by Aki Rainier L. Tsukada (Philippine Delegate-Dance)

"One Culture, One ASEAN!" These are the words that articulated the lips of each and every ASEAN countries' delegates. The words that inspired all of the participants to do whatever they want to do that progressed the recently held ASEAN Youth Camp 2010 last April 23-29 which was held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. It was a very exciting trip after all to be in Ha Noi to deal with total strangers who became my acquaintances, links and facebook friends as well. We may be separated by land but we connect by heart.

It is still vivid in my mind when Gianne, Audrie, I cried at each other at the airport as we see ourselves leaving. It's not a shame for us to express our feelings in front of many people. And imagine, in that short span of time, we can't even afford to lose each other. But it's not depressing after all. We promised each other to visit one's home country once we get a stable job.

I can clearly remember Wan (Malaysia), Wulan (Indonesia), Neesa (Brunei), Trang (Viet Nam), Laura (Singapore), Xu Rongrong (China) and lots of more friends from the dance group. I can still visibly remember the times of our practices with our mentor, Ms. Tuyet Minh. I can also remember the happy memories in the van when Wan and I were bullying the girls by pronouncing their names hardly which is conveyed by the girls then. Our liaison officer, Ms. Pearl for the undoubted help and understanding for us. And the whole trip in Ha Noi.

Also, I can recall Audrie (Malaysia), Kenry (Malaysia), Diep (Viet Nam), the liaison officers and many more from the camp who in one way or another helped me to express myself and share what I wanted and needed to share about Philippines as regards to Films, Dances, Traditions, Customs and lots of more. Of course, the Philippine delegation! Sir Rosswil, Anna, Alee, Gianne and Jophel. There are no dull moments spent together with you guys! I'm very happy to be with you...And last but not least, the persons behind this event. From Philippines to Viet Nam. It was a very perfect event and camp because of you.

To all the persons stated in this simple article, my warmest gratitude and sincerest congratulations to us all! See you all again in the near future and let us live and love the ASEAN way!

Note:

- This article is not after the experience in Ha Noi since a lot of delegates will write about it as presumed.
- This article is more of the camaraderie among the ASEAN delegates. Thank you for lending some time reading this.

Learnings in the camp-gianne:

We started out as unfamiliar people coming from unfamiliar places and people who spoke different languages. But these differences has been a stepping stone for all of us to get to know each other. I have seen that through our art, we were able to communicate clearly, we learned how to be sensitive with each other in lots of ways.

The Activities involved the participation of everyone, and mostly the interaction between the delegations. During our first day, we had a glimpse of every country through their country presentation and exhibition. The following days, we toured around hanoi and learned a lot about vietnam and it's rich culture, we saw some of their preparations for their one thousand years. My groupmates and I went to the pottery village where we saw their rich and authentic glazed ceramics and pottery. We cruised in Halong Bay with mixed emotions in the ship called halong emotion where we saw the beauty of the one thousand islands. We had so much fun during the dinner party on the ship where we shared local food, saw performances from every country and danced all night long. The last day had been the sharing of every group and what we all have done, wherein we had the performances, the exhibit, gift giving, goodbyes.. All of these experiences gave me the realization that we were not so different from each other after all. The last night was filled with smiling faces; familiar faces.

Yes, we were in a place that was very different from where we all came from, but we managed to call it home during the past few days. The most difficult part was saying goodbye to this place, saying goodbye to the people who began as foreign to all of us but we now call, family.

ASEAN Youth Camp 2010 has been about the cultivation of a new masterpiece, a masterpiece that was made up of every one of us and our experiences as persons and as artists. This masterpiece: The bond that we made with each other, will forever stay in our hearts. This bond stands strong and we all hold on to the hope of seeing each other in the near future. The camp was great, awesome to be exact!

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Learning in the Camp

By Gianneluisa Gonzales (Pottery – Philippines)

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Artistry + Cultural Diversity + Solidarity = ASEAN Youth Camp

By Jophel Botero Ybioso (Philippines)

I got excited after seeing the announcement about 2010 ASEAN Youth Camp through the website of National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). All aspiring applicants have undergone rigorous panel interview after submitting the requirements and pertinent documents. We faced the challenge of the board composed of our country's high profile art practitioners.

After a few weeks, I received a call from Ms. Ruleth Salvador of International Affairs Office – NCCA informing me that I'm chosen as one of the six – member Philippine delegation. Then I said to myself, "Thank God for this blessing!" It's a blessing because it's my 3rd time to travel abroad as well as an honor for me to represent our beloved country and school, Polytechnic University of the Philippines. I'm also thankful to have a recommendation from Dr. Liceria D. Lorenzo, our College Dean, Prof. Reyhan Viray, Visual Arts Committee Head of University Center for Culture and the Arts (UCCA) and Prof. Segundo Dizon, UCCA Director. Their endorsement contributed to my application. On the first day of our meeting, I was eager to know personally my co – delegates and Head of Delegation.

We came up with a big idea after series of brainstorming and conceptualization. We were confident enough that our concept for the country presentation will be appreciated. As a collaborative work, our Head of Delegation, Mr. Rosswill Hilario did the relevant input and video editing. He was also the one responsible for capturing scenes of me doing my photo shoot as well as Rina Lee Garibay and Gianneluisa Gonzales making their pottery and painting in the Philippine High School for the Arts situated at the mystic Mount Makiling. Marianna Carminia Achacoso provided a musical background using a traditional kulintang while Aki Rainier Tsukada made the choreography of Malong Dance. Mr. Hilario also included my photographic works while Ana and I did the voice – over for the video presentation.

On April 22, we temporarily bid goodbye to our family and friends to attend the much – awaited ASEAN Youth Camp. During our departure until we arrived at Vietnam we wore a Philippine Flag – inspired jacket. Our group flew from Manila to Bangkok, Thailand for almost 3 hours. At the Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport we waited about 8 hours for our connecting flight to Hanoi. While we were on trip inside the airplane, I didn't miss the chance to capture the splendor of the clouds and sky and breathtaking sceneries. We arrived at the Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi around 8:35 in the morning of April 23. Although we were tired already, the feelings of excitement were still on our faces. Two friendly liaison officers met our group. Since we were excited to have them as our new friends, we gladly introduced ourselves and talked to them eagerly on our way to the hotel. Big smiles from the ASEAN Youth camp organizers warmly welcomed all the delegations.

The time when I set foot to Thang Loi Hotel, I immediately felt the relaxing atmosphere. Thang Loi Hotel is a place with splendid view, touched with the spirit of fresh air, located on the bank of picturesque West Lake. After receiving my room key, I went upstairs to look for Room 310. From there, I met my roommate Mr. Aditia Noviansyah, a very good Indonesian photojournalist. On the first night, all the delegation got busy in preparing for the exhibition. I put on view my award – winning photographs depicting Philippine culture while Rina Lee and Gianneluisa displayed their finest contemporary artworks. I also helped Ana and Aki in setting – up a mannequin representing the traditional Filipina.

On April 24, the much–anticipated event happened. The Opening Ceremony of ASEAN Youth Camp was filled with rich cultural traditional performances. Traditional costumes with sophisticated designs from 10-member ASEAN countries. China made the momentous event more colorful. Our delegation presented a Malong Dance backed–up with a collaborative video presentation about Philippine Arts and Culture. The Camp Director, Dr. Nguyen Van Tinh gave his inspirational message to everyone. Assisted with the Guests of Honor, they graciously opened the exhibition showcasing each country's tradition, arts, culture and identity. I and other delegates had the chance to be interviewed by the media. After having a sumptuous lunch, workshops and orientation

started. Mr. Nguyen Viet Thanh, an excellent photographer was introduced as our Photojournalism instructor. Upon knowing other delegates, we began the so-called "photohunting" at downtown. Hanoi offered a lot of fascinating subjects ranging from human-interest, street scenes, landmarks, cityscape, etc. Hanoi is considerably a unique place with rich history. Most of the people we've seen in the market area were wearing traditional hat. I captured a lot of unguarded moments along the busy streets. We also walked around Hoan Kiem Lake and did some picture-taking. Hoan Kiem Lake which literally means "Lake of the Returned Sword" or "Lake of the Restored Sword", is a lake in the historical center of Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam. The lake is one of the major scenic spots in the city and serves as a focal point for its public life. After having a great time there, we went back to hotel for a welcome dinner.

On April 25, we moved to Bo De Pagoda, located in Gia Lam District, 500m northern to Hanoi. Aside from its historic architecture and spiritual value, Bo De Pagoda is also a shelter to orphans and homeless people. I can't explain the feeling the time when we arrived at Bo De Pagoda. I think it was mixed emotion between happiness and sympathy; happiness for sharing the gift of joy and sympathy for the abandoned children. For me, the moment was made more meaningful because of the rare opportunity of having a charity work involving diversified people in a foreign country. I also observed that the children's faces were transformed into a cheerful one after receiving some love and care in simple way from the organizers and delegates. The charity of work has ended but the feeling of appreciation and realization had just begun. I realized that we are still fortunate enough to have family living together in place called "home". Afterwards, we went to a certain restaurant. Pho, a special and typical identity of Vietnamese food was served to us. Then we went to Literature Temple and I did some photo documentation there.

The day would not be complete without watching one of the most well-known traditional folk art found only in Vietnam – the Water Puppetry. It's a form of entertainment inspired by the annual flooding of the lowlands and has its origins in the Red River Delta of Vietnam developed around tenth century A.D. Water Puppetry has evolved over the centuries from folk art to a more established form of art. From simple theater stages made of bamboo, wood and cloth, it eventually

transformed into permanent structures. Its high cultural, historical and aesthetic value made Water Puppetry a must-see entertainment. After enjoying the exclusive show, we moved to Hoan Kiem and from there we had some photo opportunity. Then, we roamed around the Ancient Quarter for a shopping experience. I bought various souvenir items like scarf, t-shirt and key chains. On the evening, at the Wild Lotus restaurant, Cha' ca was served to us. It was also the time when bonding with new friends took place.

Delectable breakfast commenced the day of April 26. All of us got excited for the Halong Bay Tour. Along the way, we stopped for while in a certain place where ceramics with intricate designs and Vietnamese products were on display for sale. After about 3 hours of land trip, we reached the port of Halong Bay at noontime. Then the much-anticipated moment of boarding the cruise ship, luxurious and magnificent Halong Emotion came. The time when we got on board priceless smiles were on our faces. After taking a delicious meal, I made my stay more memorable by capturing the scenic Ha Long Bay. Around 4 p.m. when we went to Amazing Caves. The impressive rock formations, stalactites and stalagmites with fine indoor lighting attracted us to savor the moment while we were inside the Amazing Caves. On the night aboard Halong Emotion Cruise, delegates from Opera Cruise joined us together for a dinner filled with happiness and camaraderie. The dinner was followed by a show time featuring music and dance performances from each country. Parlor Games and high energy dance grooves made the night livelier. It was such a never dull moment in the cruise.

When I woke up early in the next morning, I realized that the end of our stay in Halong Emotion Cruise was fast approaching. We savored more beautiful sights and scenes and myriad scenes as we moved to Fishing Village. A floating school added to the distinctiveness of the place. We immersed ourselves in the dazzle of the paradise view of Halong Bay. Ha Long Bay literally means "Descending Dragon Bay" is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a popular travel destination. The bay features thousands of limestone karsts and isles in various sizes and shapes. The evolution of the karst in this bay has taken 20 million years under the impact of the tropical wet climate. The geo-diversity of the environment in the area has created biodiversity, including a

tropical evergreen biosystem, oceanic and sea shore biosystem. Ha Long Bay is home to 14 endemic floral species and 60 endemic faunal species. What is also interesting about Halong Bay is that in 2009, the New 7 Wonders Foundation, which runs the New Seven Wonders of the World program, included Halong Bay on its list of nominations as one the World's 7 Natural Wonders. Having a distinct charm, Halong Bay boasts of numerous islands and majestic rock formations ideal for travelers and tourists who are in need of momentary escape from their busy and dynamic lifestyle.

After our tiring yet wonderful experience in Halong Bay, I promised to myself to come back someday and marvel again its world-class beauty. After the Halong Bay tour, we took our lunch and went on to document rehearsal of dance delegates. But before that I submitted first to our instructor all the images I've taken during the photo workshops and activities of ASEAN Youth Camp. Then, I joined with the Head of Delegation on their time around the market area.

April 28 was started with usual delicious breakfast followed by a meeting of all the Head of Delegations and workshops among other groups. I was surprised when our instructor showed us all the photos that he selected for the exhibition. Most of my personal preferences were also his choice. I was then delighted to hear the positive comments from our instructor. Coordinators and Heads of Delegations also liked my photographic works. Then I moved around the hotel to capture some scenes. Afterwards, we took our lunch and accompanied Mr. Hilario in the market area of Hanoi.

In the evening, another much – anticipated event happened. The Closing Ceremony was packed with colorful memories. Music and dance presentation and photo opportunity with one another highlighted the night. Sentimental gifts and souvenir items were given to one another. Though the ceremony has ended, some delegates invited us for a simple gathering in a certain room to cherish our last night of stay in Hanoi. It was around 3 a.m. when I decided to go back to my room and had a little rest. The next morning, I didn't miss the chance to give my award-winning and most valuable photographs to the organizers and delegates as a sign of appreciation and warm regard.

It's almost 7:00 in the morning when we left the Thang Loi Hotel where ASEAN Youth Camp happened with lots of precious memories we will keep forever in our hearts and minds.

Few days after the ASEAN Youth Camp, we had a so – called “Post – Camp” in ICAM Room of NCCA and Harbour Square in Manila. What we did was a group meeting and planning for the next activities. We also continued our interview needed for the documentary video about our journey to ASEAN Youth Camp which supposed to be finished by the end of May.

Another significant event happened when we're invited for a live t.v. guesting at the Sining – Gising, an arts and culture talk show of National Broadcasting Network (NBN – 4) hosted by former Executive Director of NCCA and current Presidential Adviser for Culture and the Arts, Hon. Cecile Guidote – Alvarez. During our live t.v. guesting, we shared our memorable experiences and video footages were presented. Some of our noteworthy artworks were also featured. As a sign of appreciation I offered my award – winning photographs to Hon. Cecile Guidote – Alvarez and other guests of the t.v. show such as Dr. Vilma Labrador (NCCA Chairman and Department of Education Undersecretary), Dr. Mona Valisno (Department of Education Secretary) and Mr. Rolando De Leon (2010 ITI Awardee and President of On – the – spot Artists Association).

Now, I'm hoping that more good things are going to happen after the ASEAN Youth Camp. In behalf of the Philippine Delegation, I'm grateful and very much thankful to the organizers from Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam, to the support given to us by National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and especially to all the friends and people that I met and whom I shared my valuable time in Hanoi, Vietnam.

For a young artist like me, traveling abroad is dream come true. It immerses me in such wonderful places bounded by rich and diversified culture. Exploring interesting sceneries and meeting new people broadens and enriches my learning. One thing is for sure, our exhilarating experiences and precious memories in ASEAN Youth Camp will stay with us for life. The Philippine Delegation will

always cherish and treasure our journey to Hanoi, Vietnam. It truthfully proves that the group that travels together, stays together...

MY PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND REALIZATION

ASEAN Youth Camp is a key project of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI). It began as the ASEAN Youth Friend Programme, held in the Philippines in 1998 and Thailand in 1999. The aim was to build a stronger regional identity by raising awareness of Southeast Asia's history and heritage through the arts. The camp themed "Dragon: Legend in ASEAN Culture" was held to mark the 1,000th founding anniversary of Thang Long – Hanoi and the year that Vietnam takes over the ASEAN presidency.

Solidarity amidst cultural diversity. Spending valuable time with people from different countries was worthwhile for me. Singapore will also be the next host of 2012 ASEAN Youth Camp.

Exhilarating journey and enriching experience for all the participants of ASEAN Youth Camp.

ASEAN Region composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam took the active role in the 2010 ASEAN Youth Camp including China. Since 2000, ASEAN Youth Camp has been doing—exposing young people to the arts, crafts and culture of ASEAN and contributing to the development of future cultural leadership in the region.

New friends, new discoveries and new experiences. In other words, Youth camp gives its participants a chance to widen one's network, horizons and knowledge.

Young brilliant artists from ASEAN Region and China were given a valuable opportunity to express their ideas, to share their talent, to showcase their exceptional works and to enrich their cross-cultural experience.

Opportunity to share one's culture and heritage and an opportune time to meet and mingle with diversified people having different language, religion and customs is what ASEAN Youth Camp was all about.

Understanding and Unity among ASEAN Region and China was a good reason for having ASEAN Youth Camp.

Thank you very much and God Bless to the ASEAN Youth Camp organizers and coordinators, National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Heads of Delegation and Delegates who made my daily life from April 23–28 momentous and meaningful. I treasure you all.

History of Vietnam became rich because of its famous Water Puppetry, arts and crafts and famous landmarks. Halong Bay tour was also one of my most unforgettable experiences that brought joy and excitement.

Capturing the grandeur of Vietnam was like winning a prize in a photo competition. Camaraderie among the participants was also highlighted the ASEAN Youth Camp.

Art made my life worthwhile and blissful. As a Photographer, freezing those moments and taking photos of memories give more life to me. A simple life blessed with very good people whom I met during ASEAN Youth Camp.

Meaningful activities such as charity work at Bo De Pagoda, photo documentation, exhibition and tour around Vietnam were really memorable. Indeed, a celebration of life.

Philippine Delegation where I belonged was proud of being part of ASEAN Youth Camp. Philippines' rich arts, culture, identity were shared and made known. It's also an honor to represent my beloved country.
