

NPA

Newsletter

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The “NPA Newsletter” is issued once a year to widely introduce the latest trend of personnel administration in Japan and international training activities of the NPA. It is designed to promote understanding of the NPA and its activities, primarily among personnel administration experts in foreign countries, and those who participated in international training programs and invitation programs conducted by the NPA.

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I Recent NPA and Personnel Administration Activities in Japan

The following are details concerning key measures and efforts conducted by the NPA during FY2008:

1 Outline of the 2008 NPA Remuneration Recommendation

→Please click below for details:

<http://ssl.jinji.go.jp/en/recomm/re remuneration2008.pdf>

2 Outline of the 2008 NPA Report on Public Employee Personnel Management

→Please click below for details:

<http://ssl.jinji.go.jp/en/recomm/report2008.pdf>

3 Outline of the Working Hours Recommendation

→Please click below for details:

http://ssl.jinji.go.jp/en/recomm/working_hours.pdf

4 Third-year follow-up training program

The National Personnel Authority (NPA) started a third-year follow-up training program this fiscal year. The program is intended for those employees who are in their third year of service and who are expected to play, in the future, a key role in policy planning and coordination in the bureaus and departments of headquarters in the Office and Ministries. The objective of the program is to remind them of their position, mission and role and to ensure that they fully understand what they should exemplify and what they must do as administrators. It also aims to help the trainees understand and trust each other more, so that they can work together on government policies. Among those who had taken the FY 2006 Administrative Training Courses for new recruits, each Office and Ministry picked out those who were suitable for the training program for this fiscal year and who they deemed likely to become key players in the future, and recommended them for the program. A total of 467 employees joined the training program, which was held at the National Institute of Public Administration. The participants were divided into four groups depending on the training course taken, and stayed there for three days and two nights.

5 Government-wide Training Program for Evaluators

With a new scheme on personnel evaluation to be launched throughout the Government in FY2009, the NPA has provided to all ministries and agencies the training program for evaluators aiming at enhancing abilities as well as developing skills required for fair and proper evaluation, which it believes is the key to successful implementation of the scheme as a whole.

The program consists of two courses : Course I is a two-hour lecture designed for director-level evaluators at the headquarters, featuring interview case studies; Course II is a four-and-a-half-hour seminar designed for director-level evaluators at regional as well as prefectural levels, featuring role-playing sessions where each trainee plays at interview scenes, in order, the role of evaluator, evaluatee and observer.

In view of the massive volume of evaluators throughout the Government, the Authority offers training courses for trainers of each ministry and agency, at the headquarters in Tokyo and at nine regional offices throughout Japan as well, and those trainers are expected in turn to conduct courses for evaluators within their respective ministry and agency.

The training program having been launched in October 2008, a total of more than 2,800 officials from all ministries and agencies have attended those courses offered by the NPA. The Authority plans to continue offering to ministries and agencies training courses for trainers in FY2009 and onwards, with a view to ensuring fair and proper functioning of the new scheme Government-wide.

II Promotion of International Cooperation and Exchange

Requests for cooperation are constantly made to the NPA from countries all over the world in the field of governance; particularly in personnel administration. The NPA in turn carries out training courses in Japan for foreign government officials based on Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other plans, provides support for foreign government officials visiting for the purposes of surveys and research, engages in full-fledged exchanges with administrative organizations in foreign countries, and carries out investigation and research for foreign civil service systems.

1. China-Japan-Korea Personnel Policy Network

The National Personnel Authority(NPA) of Japan, the Ministry of Personnel of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea Civil Service Commission(CSC) concluded a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the "China-Japan-Korea Personnel Policy Network" at the Heads of Personnel Authorities Meeting in January, 2005 and since then the three authorities have conducted various cooperation programs such as the Joint Symposium, Joint Study, Mutual Information and Personnel Exchanges, based on the Cooperation Plan decided at the annual Director-Generals' Meetings.

In FY 2008, the three authorities worked on the following activities:

The NPA hosted the fourth DG's Meeting to determine the fourth Cooperation Plan. The Ministry of Public Administration and Security (MOPAS) of Korea, which the CSC was integrated following government organization reform, hosted the third Joint Symposium on recruitment systems; the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of China, which the former Ministry

of Personnel was integrated into following Cabinet reform, hosted the second Joint Training for Young/Middle Employees. In addition to that, the three authorities closely cooperated to conclude the second Joint Study on performance evaluation, to exchange their publications, to contribute to each other an article on public administration and to dispatch their employees to study systems in the other two countries. Furthermore, the NPA promoted exchanges of information and opinions through these various opportunities regarding various recent topics, such as the trend of personnel administration reform in Japan, the enforcement of the new public service law in China, and the operation of the public service system for senior officials in Korea.

2. International Cooperation Activities conducted by the NPA

(1) Training courses for foreign government officials

As part of technical assistance for many countries, the NPA is conducting courses for government personnel of various countries with the cooperation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other organizations, aiming at contribution of development and improvement of government personnel administration systems of these countries. The NPA conducted the following three training courses in FY 2008.



Mr. Takao KAWAMURA, Director General of Employee Welfare Bureau of the NPA, greeting participants of the Seminar on National Government Administration for Senior Officials. (October, 2008)

Training Course		Main Contents	Number of Participants/ Countries, Duration
Training Course in Human Resource Management	Seminar on Governmental Human Resource Management for Senior Officials	Personnel management of Japan and improvement of personnel administration in developing countries	9/8 About 2 weeks
	Seminar on Public Personnel Administration for Middle Level Officials	Personnel management of Japan and improvement of personnel administration in developing countries	9/8 About 4 weeks
Training Course in National Government Administration	Seminar on National Government Administration for Senior Officials	The role of public administration to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the country.	9/8 About 5 weeks

(2) Mike Mansfield Fellowship Program

This program aims to foster US Federal Government officials with in-depth understanding of Japan and furthermore to promote professional relationships of cooperation between two countries by providing opportunities for the personnel dispatched to Japan under the US law to get a chance of training in Japanese government organizations.

Fellows, who received intensive training in Washington DC for a year in Japanese language, politics, economy, and culture of Japan, have been placed at the each Ministry of Japanese government and serve as a fellow.

The NPA arrange the Fellow's placements at each Ministry, set up and implements common programs such as orientation, study tours, and participation to implement this program more effectively, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other Ministries.

Last year, the Japanese Government accepted five Fellows, the twelfth group, for a one-year program (September 2007-August 2008).

The Japanese Government is currently hosting six Fellows, the thirteenth group, for a one-year program, which began in September 2008 and will finish in August 2009.

(3) Korean Government Officials Development Program

At the request of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the NPA conducts the "Group Training Program for Korean Government Officials" at the director and assistant director level, in order to deepen their experiences and the understanding of Japanese culture and society as well as to promote cooperation between Japan and Republic of Korea in the field of public administration. In FY2008, 19 officials participated in this program from September 28 to October 5.

3. Response to Visitors from Abroad

In tandem with the increase in exchange and information interchange between nations in the field of administration and the civil service system in recent years, the number of foreigners visiting the NPA has increased. The NPA strives to develop a relationship through exchanging views about the present state and issues of personnel administration, and also to introduce the Japanese civil service system and characteristics of personnel management.

The following visitors have been accepted thus far in FY2008.

Date	Visiting Party (Name/Country/No. of Visitors)	Content
2008 5/20	Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Royal Thai/Thailand/1	Inauguration address, request for cooperation
6/30	Deputy Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs /Thailand/9	Personnel Administration in Japan
7/3	Executive Director Training and Development, Department of civil service, Abu Dabi Government/United Arab Emirates /3	Human Resources Development
7/4	Lead researcher at the Korea Labor Institute/Korea/2	Retirement System
7/7	International students of the Meiji University/Malaysia/1	Training System
7/29	International students of the Yokohama National University /Philippines/2	Meeting with Employee Organizations, Anti-corruption strategies
8/14	Student of Harvard University/U.S.A/1	Personnel Administration

8/19-20	Delegation from the office of the civil service commission/ Thailand/7	Recruitment Policy, Human Resources Development, Recruitment Examination
9/24	Seminar for Russian Officials/Russia/10	Civil service system in Japan, Ethics
10/8	Chairman of the Party Central Committee Organization Board of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party/Laos/4	Human Resources Development
10/20	Delegation from Shandong Province, China, for training in Japan/China/20	Personnel Evaluation System
10/21	Delegation from the Beijing School of Administration/ China/6	Training system
10/24	Senior officer management training group/China/21	Human Resources Development, Recruitment system
10/31	Training programme for Young Leaders for Central Asian Countries/Administration(Local Administration) / Central Asian Countries/25	Role of the NPA, Ethics
11/10	Associate Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School/Shingapore/2	Long-term Overseas Fellowship Program
11/17	Leadership development program for middle management level/Malaysia/20	Human Resources Development
11/26	Deputy of Laws and Jpb Performance Development, National Personnel Authority/Indonesia/4	Civil Service System in Japan
11/28	Personnel management system investigation team, Ministry of Finance/China/6	Civil Service System in Japan, Personnel Evaluation System
12/18	Seminar for Russian Officials/Russia/10	Ethics
12/22	Head of a public employee training institute, West Sumatra/Indonesia/8	Training System
2009 1/16	Training programme for Young Leaders for Malaysia (Administration: Human Resource Development)/Malaysia /16	Civil Service System in Japan, Personnel Evaluation System
1/28	Seminar on Human Resource Development and Project Management /Malaysia/20	Role of the NPA, Training System
2/25	Chief Cabinet Secretary for Public Personnel Affairs/ Hungary/3	Human Resource Management
3/2	Joint Secretary, Public Service Commission Secretariat/ Bangladesh/4	Role of the NPA, Recruitment process
3/6	Junior Minister for Public Administration/France/3	Courtesy Call, Personnel Evaluation System, Retirement System
3/12	Director-General, Ministry of Public Service/Kenya /4	Civil Service System in Japan
3/24	Cabinet Under-Secretary, President' Office/Tanzania /7	Human Resource Polices, Human Resource Development and Management
3/31	Deputy Chairperson, Central Organization Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam/Viet Nam/6	Overseas Fellowship Programm

4. Invitation of Foreign Officials etc.

The NPA invites executive officials from personnel administrative organizations etc. in foreign countries to exchange views on the actual state of personnel administration, in order to strengthen the ties with foreign personnel administration organizations, promote cooperation in the field of personnel administration, and research the civil service system in foreign countries.

In FY 2008, Mr. David Lewis, professor of politics at Vanderbilt University, was invited to give a lecture and an interview on the “Political appointments in the United States” as well as to exchange opinions with the NPA’s officials.

In February, Mr. Barry Forrester, principal policy adviser, Office of the Civil Service Commissioners, U.K., was invited to give a lecture entitled “Personnel affairs of Senior Civil Service.” as well as to exchange opinions with the NPA’s officials.

III Exchange with Participants and Concerned Parties

Regarding International Cooperation and International Exchange Programs

Message from a Professor who participated in the NPA invitation program

In its FY2008 invitation program, Vanderbilt University Professor David E. Lewis was invited to Japan in January 2009 to give a lecture on political appointments in the United States. Professor Lewis is the author of *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance* (Princeton University Press, April 2008), which analyzes the relationship between political appointments and governmental performance in the United States.

My visit to the National Personnel Authority in January 2009 provided a tremendous opportunity to learn about the civil service system in Japan, the challenges the system confronts, and the politically proposed remedies to these problems. During my interactions with NPA officials and professors at Waseda and Ritsumeikan universities two themes emerged that are relevant to those concerned with civil service reform on both sides of the Atlantic.



The first thing that struck me during my visit was that many of the concerns expressed about the civil service in Japan are also common in the United States. For example, in the United States politicians have been concerned with making the civil service more responsive to political direction for a long time. This is a concern shared by many of their colleagues in Japan. At the same time, many American critics of the civil service want it to be more expert, competent and independent and it has been criticized for large visible government failures. Concerns for responsiveness and competence are hard to satisfy at the same time. On the one hand, there is increasing theoretical and empirical evidence in the United States that measures taken to increase responsiveness in the civil service damage the overall competence of the civil service. When civil servants lose influence in government, when the top jobs are no longer accessible to them, and when their jobs lose public prestige it becomes harder for government to recruit and retain top civil servants in government. The very best workers leave government or do not enter the civil service in the first place. Such actions also reduce morale and civil service incentives to develop and cultivate expertise. On the other hand, civil service systems can become overly insular, unresponsive to the expressed will of voters, and lose sight of the larger goals of government without enough political involvement.

The second theme that emerged from my visit was the importance of having good data when making decisions about civil service reform. There is an emerging movement across academic fields in United States, including, medicine, business, and public administration that emphasizes evidence-based management. Too often decisions in these fields are based upon one person's experience, anecdotal evidence, or intuition. In all three of the fields mentioned above there are new movements to base decisions on carefully designed studies and systematic analysis. I was impressed to see the NPA approaching civil service reform in a careful and scholarly way and researching different civil service systems and the experience of other countries. The NPA documents that describe the different civil service systems in developed democracies and detail their similarities and differences on a variety of dimensions were very impressive. I had never seen that information collected in one document before my visit to Japan. NPA efforts to look outside the Japanese experience for guidance about civil service reform will likely lead to more informed decisions. The United States would do well to learn from the Japanese example.

I will carry these two themes and the connections I made with me into my future work on civil service reform in the United States.

A Message from the International Affairs Division

The lecture was held a day after Barack Obama's presidential inauguration and attracted a huge audience. The NPA is grateful to him for clarifying the real situation surrounding political appointments made by past governments and his accompanying analysis, and for his predictions about the political appointments that may be made by the Obama administration. His talk was informative and should prove to be useful as a basis for discussing the relationships between politicians and bureaucrats in Japan.

He said that he would continue to work on the study and analysis from various points of view. The NPA would appreciate it if he would make suggestions on how Japan might make improvements.

Remarks of a Participant

Ms. Maricar Trinidad Aquino, Director III, Human Resources Development Office, Civil Service Commission of the Republic of the Philippines, participated in the “Seminar on National Government Administration for Senior Officials 2008” conducted by the NPA.



I readily agreed when Ms. Koshiishi asked me to write about my insights on my participation in the Seminar on National Government Administration for Senior Officials held on 21 October to 22 November 2008. Ms Koshiishi is one person whom I cannot say no to because of her congeniality and good spiritedness. She and Ms. Nakano, our coordinator, are two of the reasons that made my thirty-three (33) days stay in Japan memorable.

There are a lot of good things that I can say about the Seminar. The course content was comprehensive. The Seminar had good speakers who are experts on the topics they discussed. The exchange of ideas, information and experiences among the participants was engaging. The books and handouts provided are a rich source of additional information on the concepts and ideas discussed during the lectures.

As regards my learning, firstly, I am deeply amazed how the Japanese people were able to rise above the difficulties of war and how they were able to turn the devastating experience into something great. It took tremendous courage for them to build a nation and bring it to where it is now. The visit to Nijo Castle, the Imperial Palace, and the Handicraft Center in Kyoto made me more appreciative of the richness and magnificence of Japanese history and culture.

Secondly, Japan puts premium to its human resources. A country without vast natural resources to speak of, Japan depends mainly on the strength of its people to spur its economy. True enough, huge investments on human resource development and talent improvement paved the way for massive recovery and sustained economic growth. For one, the *Irodori* (colored leaves) Project in Tokushima proved that age is not a hindrance to development. *Irodori* mirrored how a small town of aging population was able to revitalize its community to become a farming community. Tenjin Primary School, on the other hand, exemplifies Japan’s earnest efforts to continually harness the potentials of the young through formal education.

Thirdly, concern for the environment is another best thing about Japan. In the era of rapid growth following World War II, Japan became one of the most polluted countries in the world. To achieve environmental quality, a number of reform measures were implemented. When we visited the Kirin Beer Park in Kobe, I was able to observe, learn and understand how a private company’s

commitment to environmental protection and energy conservation impacts on employees' morale and productivity.

Based on the individual presentation of the Seminar participants' country papers and final reports, I learned that the participating (developing) countries have similar problems and experiences – poverty, over population, graft and corruption, political instability, politicized bureaucracy, and the grave impact of global economic crisis on their development.

Meanwhile, the concept of good governance with its universal appeal seemed to be the cornerstone of economic development. Prof. Hirono summed it in the words of U.N. Secretary General Kofi Anan, “Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.”

On the whole, the audience with the Crown Prince and Princess, both intelligently charming, put the exclamation point to the entirely meaningful and excitable Seminar.

I returned to the Philippines fully equipped with newly acquired knowledge and experiences gung-ho to implement my learning and translate what are applicable and adaptable to my own organization's improvement and development.

To JICA and the NPA, arigato gozaimasu.

A Message from the International Affairs Division

The training program was shorter than that in the previous fiscal year and so we had a tight schedule. Nevertheless, everyone participated energetically in the five-week training program. They must have learned a lot from the experiences of the Japanese participants and from the other countries taking part. We hope that they will apply what they have learned to development in their own countries. During the tour of inspection, they also visited local cities and cultural facilities in order to gain a better understanding of Japan. We hope that the friendly relations between participating countries and Japan will continue.

A Message from the International Affairs Division

The NPA celebrated the 60th anniversary of its foundation in December 2008. Since starting as a personnel administration organization after the Second World War, the NPA has continuously given institutional support to public employees who have played a major role in assisting postwar reconstruction and the rapid economic growth of the country. The past 60 years have seen minor changes in its functions and roles. Presently, it is committed to neutral and fair management of public employees as a specialized agency that takes an unbiased position.

During these 60 years, Japan's public employee system has developed into what it is now. Today, however, various aspects of the system need to be reviewed due to changes in social conditions and the level of awareness among young public employees. In this context, the review of the personnel evaluation system has already started. You can visit our website to see what has been achieved.

Moreover, the Basic Law for Reform of the Public Employee System was enacted in June 2008. The country is ready for major reform of the system, including a review of the so-called "career system," introducing unified management of public employees at the Director level or above, and establishing transparent relationships between politicians and bureaucrats, etc.

Numerous government officials from around the world visited the NPA this fiscal year, as has been the case in the past, and it is clear to NPA officials that the country's administration and public employee system are attracting international attention. The NPA will continue to update information on the progress of reform and other matters.

The NPA is looking forward to receiving messages and information from you all.

~ATTENTION~

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International Affairs Division, National Personnel Authority, The Japanese Government

If you wish to make comments on this Newsletter, please contact the International Affairs Division, NPA.: npainternational@jinji.go.jp