

On-site Education of Practical Language for Area Studies

Report in 2009

-Thai, Thammasat University, Kingdom of Thailand, Term (23 Nov. 2009 – 12 Mar. 2010)-

Year of Enrollment: 2009

Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

Miku Takeguchi

On My research theme and Language Training

The purpose of my research is to analyze labour policy development of regional migration in Thailand, focusing on workers in Bangkok from its neighboring countries - Burma, Lao PDR and Cambodia.

Since the late 1980's, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from the three countries have been employed in various sectors of Thai industry. This is not only because of the economic disparities between the states, but also due to changes in the Thai public attitude towards work. As Thailand has become more prosperous, fewer Thai people are willing to work in so-called "3D jobs" – dirty, dangerous and difficult. Migrant workers have filled the labour shortage and the Royal Thai Government has recognized this need by establishing a series of laws and institutions. The first law to control the flow of migrant workers were introduced in 1992 and updated every few years. However, many have argued that those schemes were full of loopholes.

Studies estimate that there are over 2 million undocumented migrants in the kingdom. In 2002 and 2003, Thailand signed a set of three Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) for Cooperation on the Employment Workers with Cambodia, Lao PDR and Burma which calls for the establishment of a legal labour migration scheme allowing workers from the three countries to work in Thailand. Based on the MOUs, the 2009 scheme provided irregular workers who registered and obtained work permits to stay and work in Thailand until 28 February 2010. After this, only migrants who had successfully completed the Nationality Verification process -the process of confirming worker's nationality by the authority of their country of origin- are allowed to stay and work legally in the country, while the rest are subjected to be arrested and deportation. Recently, Thai government issued a 2-year extension of the deadline, largely because the process hasn't worked well. For example, workers from Burma must return to their country to complete the process while the Lao PDR and the Cambodian authorities have sent their officials to Thailand to



[Photo1] Migrant workers,
at a guesthouse near *Khaosan* road



help the migrant workers.

My language study at Thammasat University focused on basic conversation and reading, especially about migrant workers in Thailand. Teachers in the Thai language department taught me for three hours, four times a week. They helped me study Thai even outside the classroom. They took me to a study tour with their students. This trip was a first step for me to make friends with Thai youth. It was rewarding for me to participate in ITP program.

[Photo2] Faculty of Liberal Arts,
Thammasat University



[Photo3] with Thai teachers, in front of the classroom