

DENGUE FEVER SITUATION AND ITS CONTROL

January 15...We touched down at Suvarnabhumi Airport at 5:30 pm and we didn't know that we had to take a bus or taxi to go to Don Muang Airport to be able to check-in at Amari Don Muang for an overnight stay to take the local Nok Air flight to Chiang Mai the next morning.

It's a good thing that we inquired from the friendly information center staff and we were told that there was a free shuttle bus to Don Muang and we were to proceed to Gate 3 and lo and behold, there was indeed a bus waiting. We waited for other passengers but none came...so in about 15 minutes we were on our way to Don Muang, the former International Airport now the Domestic Airport. It took more than an hour through terrible traffic and we were lucky we didn't take a taxi as it would have cost us a fortune.

When we reached the bus terminal near Don Muang, the kind conductress went down and got us a trolley for our 5 heavy pieces of luggage. She even helped us walk to where there was a passageway going into Amari Hotel. We gave her a 100 Baht tip.

Our good friend PDG Sam Kasemchai suggested this hotel, which had a 5-minute walkway on the second floor going into the main Airport terminal. We checked in at Amari Hotel and after we have placed our luggage in the room we decided to explore the hotel and we found a bar where they served Heinken Beer. It was not just an ordinary bar, it was also a restaurant and its décor was unique because it was plastered with old posters of coca-cola, American actors and actresses, etc. We had tomato & mozzarella rolls for dinner and it was quite light but filling. We decided to turn in early as we had a 10:45 a.m. flight the next day.

January 16...The breakfast was included with the room so we had a hearty buffet breakfast and hardly had time to re-pack our luggage as we had to walk through the walkway and take the elevator to the third floor terminal. The Nok-Air flight to Chiang Mai was only one hour and before we knew it we were about to land. We landed at the Chiang Mai International Airport, which was rather large compared to our local airports. It had a Domestic wing and that's where we came in. It was only 11:45 am and we had a long wait before PDG John Cheah was due to arrive at 4:00pm. We had a leisurely lunch at a Chiang Mai Style Restaurant where I had delicious Phad Tai and Ben had tasty Wonton Soup. I had fun looking around the shops while waiting for PDG IR John Cheah of Johor Bahru, Malaysia to arrive.

At about 2:30pm, a lady approached Ben who was about to take off his Rotary jacket to change to a more formal blazer. It's a good thing Ben had it still on, as the lady said she was glad she found Ben because of his jacket with the Rotary emblem. If not, Jurai would not have found us. She was the AG Jurai Chamnan in charge of meeting our group. She was with the incumbent District Governor Thatree Leetheeraprasert of District 3360 and Rtn Dr. Rewadee and Viola Grace Caine. After about 30 minutes, there was John with his big

booming voice! It turned out that I misread his message thinking he would arrive at 4:00 pm. I forgot that Thailand is one hour behind Philippine time, so he arrived at 3:00 pm. We were so glad we could leave the airport one hour ahead as the drive to Phayao was more than two and half hours.



Jurai said she had to pick up 2 more passengers, the Moyanos who were twin brothers from Spain and who were honorary members of her Rotary Club. So finally we were on our way to Phayao. We drove through wide avenues planted with colorful red, pink, lilac, orange and white Bougainvilleas. My eyes feasted on the miles upon miles of colorful blooms until we came upon winding roads, which reminded me of Marcos Highway in La Union. The roads were wide and smooth and as we drove farther both sides of the road were filled with all kinds of

forest trees, bamboo trees and teakwood plantations. After more than an hour, we went to a rest area with a huge main building filled with all sorts of stalls selling handicrafts, baskets, silverware and gems. I decided to just stay near the van so as not to be tempted into buying any items.

As we drove some more, the road got a bit steeper and the weather got cooler. I spotted occasional pine trees but there were no pine forests like Baguio. When we reached Phayao we decided not to go straight to the hotel as it turned out that Praphan, the President of RC Phayao had prepared a welcome party for our group. We stopped at a huge



building which was open on all sides and we could feel the cool air wafting through the building. It didn't need any air-conditioning. AG Jurai introduced us to several Rotarians and guests who came ahead of us...Dr. Harry and Myra Kamen from Ontario, Canada, DG Anurak Napawan of District 3360, PDG Vivat

Upper photo: Ben, Josie, John Cheah and Dr. Virachai: Above: AG Jurai, PP Busabong & PDG Dr. Virachai Jamroendararasama, PDG. Vivat Sirijankapattana, Ben, and our host - President of RC Phayao Praphan Thenviharn and his son

Sirijangkapattana (DG 2003-04 of D. 3360), DG Thatree Leetheeraprasert of RC Kanthraluk, DGN Anusorn Kuanusorn also of D. 3360, Pres.-Elect Yoshiyuki Harada of Japan who was a member of RC Chiangrai, and other club members as well as several members of RC Phayao and neighboring clubs.



There were lots of dances and presentations while we partook of a "Lauriat" prepared by Chinese Caterer. We had around 10 kinds of dishes, dimsum appetizers, tofu with squid and straw mushrooms, stewed pork leg that was very tender, stir-fried veggies with slivers of carrots, snap peas and mini corn, cabbage and button mushrooms. There was a big fish crisply fried and sprinkled with finely chopped chilis, fried garlic and coriander leaves. There was also some fine noodles with slivers of carrots, leeks and cabbage The pièce de résistance was a whole dressed chicken which must have been boiled for hours and was swimming in its own broth. It literally melted in our mouths! For dessert we had hot Lin Chee Kang (lychees and almond squares).



Upper photo: PDG John Cheah, Pres. Praphan, PE of RC Chiang Rai - Yoshiyuki Harada of Japan, PDG Dr. Virachai, Josie and Ben; Above: AG Jurai, Señor Moyano, Dr. Harry Kamen, PDG John Cheah, UP President: Dr. Mondhon Sanguansersri, Josie, Ben, PDG Anurak, DGN Anusorn and Señor Moyano



There were several Dance presentations but the highlight was the skit done by some students depicting the striped biting mosquito and its prevention. Later, we all went back to the van for Gateway Hotel, which was a good 20-minute drive away.

January 17...The next morning we had to wake-up a bit early for the Buffet Breakfast of chicken sausages, fried eggs, 2 kinds of sautéed veggies Chinese porridge and lots of hot steaming brewed coffee.

We all were excited to see the University of Phayao and we were not disappointed. It was so impressive! The buildings looked almost new and the grounds were landscaped with groups of Italian pine trees, lots of colorful carpets of multi-colored flowers. This reminded me again of the flowers of Baguio, yellow and orange marigolds, red and pink flowers and various kinds of trees. The University had a complete array of ultra modern buildings like a big College of Medicine, a College of Nursing, also a Management and Information Science building, Architecture and Fine Arts, etc.



The RAG Conference on Dengue was held at the ICT Bldg. (Information and Communication Technology Building).

Both sides of the façade stairs were filled with countless pots of cheerful marigolds and other colorful blooms and foliage to greet all the attendees. All of the registration tables had lovely greeters and beautiful and colorful flower arrangements.

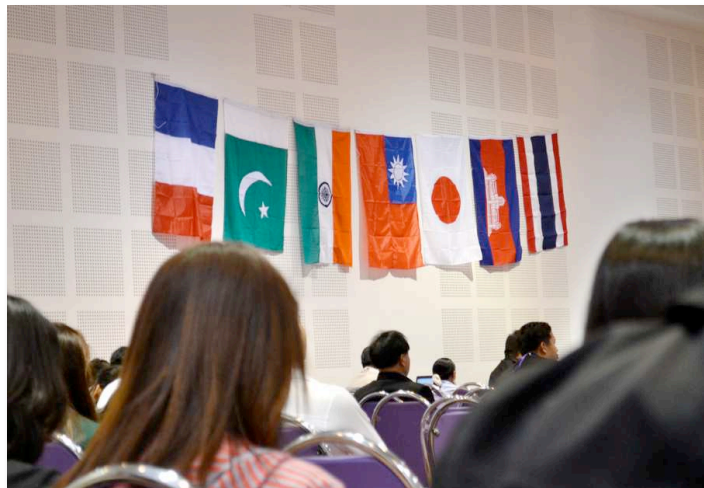


We were led to the main hall, which could sit more than a thousand and it was filled to capacity with Rotarians, faculty members, guests and some of the college students who were participating in a competition for ointments, creams and sprays useful against mosquitoes.

There was a herbal exhibit of different kinds of fresh plants like lemon grass, ginger, Thai basil, garlic and other kinds of herbs useful in the fight against Dengue mosquitoes. There were also some dried fruits and chilies, creams for sale like Aloe Vera, insect repellent, various spices, etc and other items like embroidered bags, colorful shawls, dress materials that were hand-woven and sewn by the various tribes in the hills of Chiang Mai. I planned to view all of these exhibits after the conference was over, and do some shopping on the side as there were so many items for sale and quite cheap too, that one could not find in many shopping malls in Bangkok, except perhaps in the countless night markets.



UP President: Dr.Mondhon Sanguansermsri at the opening ceremonies



The opening ceremonies started on time, with the President of the University, greeting everyone and then making a presentation of some slides about the beautiful campus of University of Phayao. After the impressive opening, we moved to another hall and the first speaker was a lady doctor, Aree Tanbanjong, M.D., the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Phayao province, who gave a power point presentation backgrounder on the "Situation of Dengue Fever in Phayao". PDG Ruben Henson, M.D. was the next speaker and he likewise made a power point presentation on the "RAG CONTROL OF DENGUE IN ASIA," followed by PDG IR John Cheah, who made a PPT Presentation on the "MALAYSIAN EFFORTS TO ERADICATE DENGUE FEVER". The last speaker was a Senior Public Health Officer, another also lady doctor, Wannapa Suwankerd, M.D., who spoke on the Experiences and Practices of Dengue in Thailand.



This was followed by a luncheon and we were sitted together with Dr, Virachai and visiting Rtn, Michitaro Morita from Hyogo, Japan. We tasted typical Thai cuisine that one does not find in restaurants. There was of course Jasmine rice, tasty patties, which were faintly spicy, some fresh vegetable salads, sautéed mixed vegetables, ground meat with green peas in tomato sauce which was a bit spicy, but my favorite was the sliced eggplants sautéed in coconut milk, with slivers of chicken with a hint of ginger and anise. There were crispy shrimp crackers and fresh pineapple and luscious watermelon slices for dessert as well as plates of sweet miniature mandarin oranges.



After the luncheon, we went back to the big hall where the first speaker was Dr. Harry Kamen of Ontario Canada. A member fo RC Amprior, Canada, he spoke on Illness and Poverty and on Infectious diseases. Next to speak was DGN Anusorn Kunanusorn, Ph.D., the Dean of the Universtiy of Phayao School of Management and Information Science. He expounded on the Dengue Fever Control Program in Ampur Muang, Chiang



Mai: "A Lesson of Universal Health Coverage". Associate Professor Dr. Noppon Sittisombat, M.D. Ph.D. spoke last...on his pet project: The Dengue Vaccine Development.



The conference lasted till late afternoon and after afternoon Tea and Coffee Break, there was a Question and Answer Portion which were answered by the panel of speakers, and PDG Dr. Supavat Poovakul fielded one of the first questions. After this came the awarding to the contest winners by guests and Myra Kamen and I awarded two of the winners and the rest were awarded by

PDGs. The President of the University then made the Closing Remarks ending the session, then we had dinner on the 2nd floor near the function hall again hosted by the university. January 18...The next morning, PDG Virachai Jamroendararasama, M.D. summarized the whole proceedings with a detailed PPT presentation. PDG Ruben Henson, M.D. had another presentation this time on Rotary Foundation on Future Vision Plans and Grants. Then, DG Virachai's spouse Prof. PP Busabong Jamroendararasama, explained the Global Grant 26107 through a PPT presentation, which the Rotary Club of Phayao got from Rotary Foundation. Later, Kae, one of the assistants of Dr. Virachai submitted two CDs, which contained the whole proceedings. They were a formidable husband and wife team. There was group photo session afterwards.



*Upper photo: The lovely grouping of yellow and orange marigolds near the stage;
Above: The crowd of participants seen from the back of the conference hall*



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That night was the farewell dinner and it was to be held at the huge and beautiful convention hall with its graceful sloping roofs. Since it was still early and the venue was located a bit far from the ICT Conference venue, Nan, a lovely instructor we met earlier offered to drive us there.

Before that we went through some of the lovely herbal exhibits done by the different colleges. We also visited the various exhibits by the college students and we met a young man who used two plastic containers that could act as filters for water from sewage and convert it to water that can be used for flushing toilets and watering plants. He has a group called UP Go Green and he is a lecturer of the UP College of Management.



Upper photo: Group photo of speakers and Rotarian guests; Above left: Dr. Warach Matthayomburut, lecturer MIS UP; Right: Dr. Kannika Phimonsri Lecturer of MIS UP in typical Chiangmai costume

Some of the fresh mini-herbal & spice garden exhibits displayed by the different colleges in the university



After that, Nan drove us around the lovely campus. The university was located on top of rolling hills and the weather was pleasantly cool. We drove through the lovely grounds and gardens dotted with flower groupings in different colors. We saw the many modern structures and marveled at the impressive buildings of the different faculties, the different multi-story dorms, cafeterias, grocery stores and quaint houses provided for the teachers and professors and the deans of the university.

When we reached the venue for the dinner it was almost dark and to our amazement, we saw some huge paper lanterns being unfolded, lighted, and then we were thrilled to participate in floating these up into the starlit



sky. The ritual is known as "Poi Khom Loi (in Thai)" or Floating Lanterns. We had another 10-course dinner from the same Chinese restaurant that catered our first night. There were more dance presentations and singers and fire-breathing entertainers during dinner. It was sad to say goodbye to newfound friends we have made in the two days we were in this lovely university.





Upper photo: The lovely flower groupings in the front grounds of "King Ngam Meuang" Conference Building (named after one of the kings of the Northern realm of Thailand); Above: Ben, Josie, Nan and John in front of this beautiful Convention Center

