

The 12th Young Engineers of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisation Conference (YEAFFEO)

Sdr. Suresh Yegambaram, Sdr. Yau Chau Fong and Sdr. Wong Chee Fui

Date: 6 – 12 December 2005

Place: Vientiane, Laos

Malaysian YEAFFEO Delegates:

(IEM G&S HQ)

Sdr. Suresh Yegambaram, Sdr. Yau Chau Fong, Sdr. Cheng Wei Loon, Sdr. Ngeow Yen Wan, Sdr. M. Karthigesu, Sdr. Wong Chee Fui, Sdr. Lim Terk Yiang, Sdr. Wilson Lai, Sdri. Bebe Kueh, Sdr. Alex Tan, Sdri. Heah Hooi Kiang

(IEM G&S Penang Branch)

Sdri. Catherine Sim, Sdr. Andy Lian, Sdr. Sim Tzer Yung, Sdr. Lau Tze Liang, Sdri. Tan Hui Sze

Sa Bai Dee (Hello in Laotian Language)!

Yes, it is the 12th YEAFFEO in Laos, the 'land of a million elephants'.

In this particular edition, the Graduate & Student Section (IEM G&S) has created a few firsts in the delegation. For the very first time, we have included our G&S branch delegates and we gathered the largest contingent ever to dispatch to YEAFFEO, comprising of 16 delegates from HQ and Penang Branches.

It was indeed a magnificent 7 days, filled with excitement and unforgettable events for every delegate. Deep in the hearts of all the delegates, the experience carved fond memories for everyone.

6 December 2005 - The departure

Our delegation departed from our respective international airports to Bangkok for a transit to Udon Thani, a province city 80km away from Vientiane, Laos. We put up a quick night in Udon Thani, went night market shopping, tasted the delights of the local food, and experienced the exciting nightlife in this quaint little town.

7 December 2005 - Journey to Vientiane

6.00 a.m. would normally be sleeping time for all of us but with the passion and enthusiasm to enjoy the trip to the fullest, we decided to trade our sleep with a little sightseeing. On the way to Vientiane, we stopped at the border town of Nong Khai, which is separated by the Mekong River with the Laos border.

Our first stop at Nong Khai was at a famous temple called Wat Po Chai. The temple is famed for a large bronze-Buddha with a solid gold head decorated with precious stones (rubies). The temple houses a number of wood carvings and murals. The murals depict the history of the image, which was originally from Laos.

After lunch, we departed to Vientiane via the Friendship Bridge, crossing the Mekong River. We checked into our hotel, The Don Chan Palace, which is also the venue for this year's event. We then had a welcome dinner at the hotel's ballroom. This is the platform where a new bond of friendship were made

as we met up with the rest of the Young Engineers' delegates; exchanging business cards, taking group photos and getting to know each other better.



Our arrival at Udon Thani Airport



YEAFFEO Twelve Board Meeting

8 December 2005 - YEAFFEO country report and board meeting

The day kicked off with the opening ceremony of the 23rd Conference of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations (CAFFEO 23). The ceremony was officially declared open by Lao PDR's Deputy Prime Minister.

After the opening ceremony, it was time for the young engineer's YEAFFEO Conference. The conference started with the presentation of the country report from each country. G&S report was presented by the Chairman, Sdr. Suresh Yegambaram. He highlighted numerous activities organised

and achievements of the G&S Section. From the country report, delegates have expressed interest to exchange experience and knowledge amongst each other.

The YEAFEO members also discussed the exchange of information via the setting-up of a YEAFEO website, multilateral co-operations, and the proposal of setting-up ASEAN Young Engineers Register (AYER). The highlight was the unanimous support and confidence by the board members to elect IEM G&S as the permanent secretariat for a term.

At the end of the meeting, the delegates exchange gifts and gathered for group photos.



Sdr. Suresh and Sdr. Cheng WL represented Malaysia during the YEAFEO-12 Board Meeting



YEAFEO-12 Delegates' Group Photo

9 December 2005 - The YEAFEO trip and closing ceremony

After the first day of toiling and formal activities at the board meeting, the second day of the YEAFEO programme was more relaxed with various trips and visits.

The first stop was to the National University of Laos's faculty of engineering. Firstly, we were greeted by their Dean of faculty and proceeded with the visits to the laboratories, lecture halls and general offices.

Then we proceeded to visit The That Luang. That Luang as the National Symbol is featured on the National Emblem of Laos. It was constructed in 1566 by King Say Sethathirath in typical Lao style and is one of the best known That or stupas in Laos.

After lunch, the journey continued to two famous temples, namely; Vat Phra Keo and Vat Sisaket, which is the only temple in Vientiane that has survived the destruction of the city by the Siamese in 1828. It is the oldest monastery standing intact in its original form, and certainly one of the most interesting in the whole country. Inside the main hall, and along the walls of the courtyard surrounding it, are hundreds of little niches and shelves containing a total of 6840 Buddha images.

The final destination was to the bowling alley at the Laos International Convention Centre. The Young Engineers had a very fun time there bowling and fostering camaraderie.

Later that night, we gathered for the closing ceremony dinner. As usual, each country would have to produce their respective country's cultural performance. What was expected from the Malaysians? Well, all these years, our performances remained stagnant, with the chanting of the 'Rasa Sayang' tune every year.



Group photo with Engineering Institute of Thailand's (EIT) Delegates



Our cultural dance performance during the closing performance

Not this year though. We produced a high impact performance this time around. With a larger delegation and better preparation, we started with a simple multimedia presentation on CAFEO and welcoming of the next CAFEO in Malaysia. This was followed by a performance depicting the three main races in Malaysia, namely the Chinese, Malay and Indian. We performed line dancing ala Malay and Indian traditional dance. The performance was remarkable indeed.

10 December - Leaving Vientiane

The morning was spent mostly on another round of shopping at the morning market area. We also took the chance to visit the Victory Monument, situated at the north end of Lane Xang Avenue and it resembles Paris' Arc de Triomphe - as it is sometimes known. During the day, the monument can be climbed and provides an excellent vantage view of the city.

In the afternoon, we departed back to Udon Thani. On our journey back to Udon Thani, we decided to drop by at Ban Chiang Archaeological Site, a location declared as a world heritage site by UNESCO. Ban Chiang is considered one of the most important prehistoric settlement discovered in South-East Asia so far. It marks an important stage in human cultural, social and technological evolution. The site presents the earliest evidence of farming in the region and of the manufacture and use of metals. At night, as usual, we did another round shopping for souvenirs to be brought back to Malaysia.

11 December - Leaving Udon Thani

We diverted out of Udon Thani to a small province called Nong Bua Lamphu, 46 kilometers from Udon Thani. Here we visited the Wat Tham Klong Phen; located at the foot of the Phu Phan mountain chain, 13 kilometers from Nong Bua Lam Phu; a peaceful and ideal place for those seeking mental tranquility. The temple used to be the meditation place for Phra Achan Luang Pu Khao Analayo, who is revered by Thais nationwide. Within the temple grounds there is a cave housing an ancient two faced drum, a stone engraved Buddha image and the Luang Pu Khao Museum, where collection of his utensils and a statue of Luang Pu Kao are displayed for Buddhists to see and worship.

In the late afternoon, we left Udon Thani for Bangkok. In Bangkok, we were very fortunate to be hosted by the EIT (Engineering Institution of Thailand) Young Engineers, whom we have met earlier during the YEAFEO meet in Laos. This shows how fast friends are made in YEAFEO. We were

treated to a sumptuous dinner and the kind hospitality shown, we would certainly be making a quick return to this country.

12 December - Selamat pulang

After six full days of visits, conferences and fellowship, it was time to say goodbye to the wonderful countries of Laos and Thailand. We arrived safely back at K.L. and Penang respectively. All of us looked tired walking out from the airport terminal. Though tired, all of us have ultimately enjoyed this trip.

Till we meet them again next year in Malaysia, YEAFEO 2006. Jumpa Lagi! ■

More information and photos of the above event could be obtained by surfing our G&S website at www.iem.org.my/external/g&s and our G&S blog at theiemgns.blogspot.com. For those who are interested to be part of the YEAFEO 2006 organising committee, please do not hesitate to contact us at iemgs@yahoo.com

Note: We would like to express our sincere gratitude for IEM HQ, IEM Penang Branch, Geotechnical Engineering Technical Division Committee Members and Ir. Oon Chee Kheng for sponsoring Young Engineers to take part in YEAFEO 2005. The experience gained during the delegation will be very useful for the development of young engineers in Malaysia.