

# Announcement

## New MSCNE Staff members

In April, Pouram (SCSA coordinator) Shweta (General Affair), Manmeet (Health coordinator), jimmy (Health Nutritionist) and on May Takaya (Administrator) and his family left from MSCNE, Farm staff Rajendra went back home to work for his community in Bihar.

Same time, Deep Chandra newly joined as AST organizer, Shiv Kant promoted farm staff from farm intern. Namita Singh will come back on July from her maternity leave. New Japanese intern staff, Eri and Mariko will join our project activities from July.

## Visitors

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Rev.Teruki Takada                          | The United Church of Christ in Japan                        |
| Shoko Okumura                              | Visitor from Japan (health Nutritionist)                    |
| Mikiko Osaka                               | Consulate-General of Japan in Mumbai                        |
| Akiyoshi Tsuchiya                          | ITG network   |
| Genyo Tsuchiya                             | Akiyoshi India Consulting Pvt. Ltd.                         |
| Takako Yamada                              | JICA Global plaza   |
| Shinichi Yamanaka                          | JICA INDIA Chief Representative                             |
| Wakako Kugita                              | JICA INDIA NGO-Desk   |
| Kazuho Makino                              | ASHA board chairman   |
| Kazuhiro linuma                            | Professor of International university of Health and Welfare |
| Junko linuma                               | ASHA bice-board chairman                                    |
| Kazuki Minato                              | The Institute of Developing Economies                       |
| Jun Noda/Kentarou Takiuchi                 | Rakuno university   |
| Tomoko Tanaka                              | Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers                       |
| Delhi Japanese association volunteer group |   |



## Special Course for Sustainable Agriculture 2012

“10 month Training for future grassroots leaders through sustainable rural development”

Course on July 2012 - April 2013

Subject / Agriculture, Rural organizing, Microfinance, Rural Health, Village income generation, Cooperative management including Food processing, Marketing English Computer etc.

Application must be informed as soon as possible!



## WANTED !!! MSCNE Volunteers

MSCNE wants working volunteers from all over the world.

In the MSCNE community, staff and students are living together on campus. You are expected to take part in and to share your life.



**Request for application form, visit our website <http://mscne.org> or Contact e-mail: [recruitment@ashaasia.org](mailto:recruitment@ashaasia.org) Tel/Fax: 0532-2684306**

Newsletter from Makino School of Continuing & Non-Formal Education  
Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology & Sciences  
Allahabad, U.P. 211007 India

# HARVEST



No.32

June 2012



## “Fixing Eyes on the Future”

“Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times” Romans 12:12

Prof. (Dr.) Teruo Miura, Dean

We are able to gain valuable experiences through the projects in the rural villages. We have not given up even at hardship, and have been able to strive in our works with thankful hearts in the land of India. It also seems that our urge to raise the hurdles are gaining more strengths. We believe that the bible passage, “let your hope keep you joyful,” has given us huge strengths to strive further in our works. Moreover, getting to know about, and seeing for ourselves, the villages’ poverty, sexism, and child labor are providing us with more projects to pursue in order to better improve the villagers’ lives.

Provide the rural villagers with joyful hope. What kind of activities are in demand to do so? We have been recklessly running multiple projects: diffusing organic agriculture, providing education for children from poor family, improving village health, establishing self-help group for village women, systematizing organic cooperate, etc. Even then, we were lacking something to feel true fulfillment. This was probably because we could not see the future in whether these activities will be sustained, and whether the villagers will be independent in the end.

To overcome this anxiety, we have been focusing on training the local villagers since three years ago. We have been placing special emphasis on training the young than the old, especially on the women. Some of the major trainings involve training village volunteer teachers, female village health volunteers, animators as

well as leaders in organic farming.

Training the young villagers requires a lot of patience and time. Only about 30% of them are literate. Also, the historically inherited Hindu culture and ethics are deeply ingrained in them. Perhaps, it is a severe challenge to expect “changes” and “developments” in facing such enormous walls of culture etched in their hearts. In fact, some senior village members claim that their village does not need a change. On the other hand, we have started to understand that it is possible to open tiny wind holes even on these thick stubborn walls, and show them that there is a future beyond these holes. But in order to open these wind holes, we must have strong faith and conviction.

I can feel the growth of the village leaders through our training programs. They are the residents of their villages at the moment, and they will be the residents for many years to come. They will be the people who can and will improve their own, as well as their neighboring villages’ lives, even without the help of us project staff members. And there lies our hopes.

Fixing my eyes on the future, I see that our hopes are getting closer to reality little by little. And that is God’s blessing and that is joyful hope. For that, we pray, in thanking our Lord’s support and guidance at times of hardship.

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# Will Japanese Rice Cultivation Propel Allahabad Organic Agriculture Movement?

Prof. (Dr.) Teruo Miura



Dr.Miura with AOAC rice farmers

Rice nursery seminar in MSCNE field

Rice growth checking in each paddy

“Are there any cultivations/techniques that would liven up Organic Agriculture Cooperate?” We have been seeking for the answer to this question for many years. The weather temperature in Allahabad vary from 4C to 50C, thus, making it a temperate zone in one season and tropic zone in another. This weather change enables us to cultivate a wide range of crops and vegetables in organic agricultural manner if we pick the right season for the right crops. It is even possible to harvest rice twice a year as long as water is available. This has already been proven right at MSCNE’s field. Unfortunately, this practice of harvesting rice twice a year did not diffuse at rural villages in Allahabad, despite the success at MSCNE.

“How do we overcome this boundary?” We struggled to breakthrough this problem.

It takes at least a few months to test the validity of a new cultivation technique. Moreover, it takes a few years to test its economic effectiveness. That is to say, we must examine whether the items are appropriately priced and whether they would sell continuously. The reality is that even if a new method is proven effective at MSCNE, such novel methodology is not easily accepted by the local village farmers.

Furthermore, villagers wish to see an immediate effect. Perhaps, they are anxious to know whether these new crops would actually grow, or whether these new methods would really lead to a higher profit. Thus, when they observe that the earlier growths of these new crops do not meet their expectations, they abandon them immediately. The villagers also leave the responsibility of sales of these agricultural crops to the project staffs, leaving the hardest tasks in others’ hands.

In hopes to grasp the answers to overcoming the aforementioned problems, we have started to test harvest the Japanese rice along with the villagers at MSCNE since two years ago. By test harvesting together with the villagers, they could share their problem points with us on the spot, and we could come up with solutions together. This way, even if they fail, they would know the reasons for the failure, and some will, perhaps, be motivated to challenge again.

“Why Japanese Rice?” There are a few reasons for choosing Japanese rice as a target crop for our project. First of all, there are no village farmers harvesting Japanese rice in India. Secondly, Japanese rice sells at more than double the price of Indian first-class rice. Lastly, there are high demands for Japanese rice from Japanese and Korean long-term residents in India. Thus, considering all the above points, there is a potential for gaining a higher income by cultivating Japanese rice. We believed that these are enough reasons to convince the village farmers that it is worth a try.

A success in these cultivation techniques will provide the villagers with great confidence—a confidence and pride that they were able to succeed using a technique that nobody has ever used before. Moreover, by giving AOAC the responsibility to sell these products, the cooperate management is further strengthened. AOAC could set the product’s marginal price high, thus, earning its operational expenses. Also, by selling the products to urban buyers, the villagers could feel how valuable their products are. These logics provide us with hopes that the Japanese rice cultivation does, indeed, propel organic agriculture movements in Allahabad.

Las summer, there were 17 villagers who signed up for the test cultivation. We were not able to produce a result as anticipated for the most part. Even then, we had eight returning challengers for the winter cultivation on December. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, MSCNE project staffs and villagers gathered and toured around each other’s rice fields. We then examined and discussed the irrigation states, fertilizer methodologies, etc. We saw various rice fields ranging from flourishing ones to annihilated ones to in-between ones. Overall, they were far from what we call “successful,” leaving us with more problems to solve in the future. Yet, we heard hopeful voices from the village farmers, such as, “we’ll make better rice plants next year” and “there will be more village participants next summer.”

It is a challenge to encourage small-scale farmers to collaborate, test harvest, and to independently run the organic agriculture cooperate. Nevertheless, there are village farmers in Allahabad who are challenging themselves to aim for the target.

Makino School of Continuing and Non-formal Education is implementing various range of project such as Special Course in Sustainable Agriculture, Rural development project, Rural health project, and Rural education project. in Allahabad villages.



**Thailand study trip**

A great learning experience that will benefit our future village activities



**Japanese Rice Culture Training**

Our challenge in growing rice during winter time in Allahabad is going very well



**ASHA School Sports Day**

700 Asha School pupils play around together in Maida Village ground



**Egg Hatching Machine**

Mr.Takamaru and MSCNE staff built low cost self-maintenance hatching machine



**Mr. Takamaru Dr. Ishihara (Japanese experts)**

A variety of products are ready



**Mrs. Takako Miura worked with VHV/VHA (Health expert)**

VHV always welcome her



**Short Course**

Short course for Mushroom cultivation and refresher program was successful



**Dr.Makino visit**

Founder of our school, Dr.Makino visited us as a chairman of ASHA board which has supported our projects.



**HTC**

Villagers, our project staff, SCSA students, Japanese guests celebrated together



**SCSA graduation**

In year 2011, 11 students from India Myanmar Japan, completed SCSA successfully



**Staff Retreat tour to Rishkesh**

What will we be doing after five years? Staff shared vision for our future projects



**Farm intern graduation**

Three rural youth in Allahabad completed organic agriculture training.

## SCSA Graduation Ceremony for Butch 2011-2012



MSCNE community members and SCSA graduates



Graduation ceremony community song and certificate

11 participants from 3 countries, India, Myanmar and Japan, successfully graduated from the Special Course in Sustainable Agriculture 2011-2012 on April 5th, 2012. Dr. Miura, Dean of MSCNE, handed the certificate to each participant, and they were congratulated with the warm applause of guests, MSCNE staff and interns. The participants responded with power point presentations on what they have learned and experienced during the course, while reminiscing the times of struggle, joy, and appreciation.

The multicultural members have undergone sharing of life for 10 months, mastering routine and special field works in our sustainable field, and taking leadership and roles in a lot of events. They have also learned various types of rural development means and theories such as; sustainable agriculture, development issues, nutrition and health, food processing, SHG, gender, management, book-keeping, rural survey, and small-scale income generating activities. They also interacted with several SCSA graduates, experts, and international visitors, including the Founder of MSCNE, Dr. K. Makino. Since the members came from diverse places, they had faced misunderstandings, miscommunications, and cultural differences. However, by working together and communicating, their understanding on other cultures, humanity and leadership were deepened. During the ceremony, they expressed their appreciation for the cooperation, guidance and care of staff, especially Dr. Miura, the Dean, Mr. Pouram, the Coordinator, and Mr. Santosh, the Field Manager.

### An Article from Fresh Graduate



#### “SCSA for Me”

Mr. Hrang Awi, the new graduate of SCSA, Ordained Minister, Hakha District Methodist Church, Chin State, Myanmar

I feel that the word “sustainable” does not simply imply our daily food, but also income, health and happiness. If we have enough food, we will be healthy and happy, and then we can work more and more for our income. Before I came to Makino School, I was very excited to learn about sustainable agriculture. In Chin State, Myanmar, we have good resources for our agriculture, but we are lacking technology. Even though most farmers practice traditional organic farming, city consumers buy vegetables grown with chemical fertilizer and pesticide, which were transported from flat area. Organic farmers cannot supply enough amounts to fill consumers’ demand. We, organic farmers, need to think how to improve our fields’ productions.

Since I have joined SCSA, I learned various subjects. I

kept whatever I learned from SCSA in my notes and my mind, thinking how I will apply the learning and will organize trainings in my society. I hope that sooner or later, all of my knowledge gained from this school will make fruits in my society. I have to organize trainings to 12 Churches in our state after this graduation. I will start poultry farming with my family. I also decided to start business of soap making within three years.

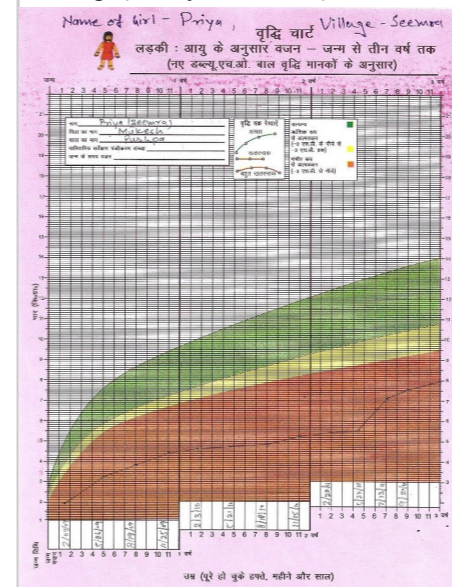
There is no achievement without objectives. I want to recommend such person to study in sustainable agriculture at MSCNE who loves organic farming, who has desire to start business in rural area, who really wants to practice after training, and who wants to give training to others people whatever he learned. If a person holds this kind of purpose, they can catch easily whatever they learn, can study and work happily even though they are doing hard work, can make good decision on what they should do after training, and can think how to prepare to give training to others. To receive the best, we have to give our best.

To maintain sustainability is like a challenge to get better situation. To keep balance in all situations is the key to happiness.

## VHVs Watch Over the Village Children’s Weights



February 2009, Priya weighed only 1955g. (40 days after birth)



Priya’s Mother-Child Health Book Weight Curve



Priya, age 3, in her mother’s arms.



VHV Leader, Shamkali, with VHV Members, at Evaluation Meeting.

It was this March that we heard wonderful news from the Village Health Volunteer (VHV) senior leader, Shamkali. The weight of a three year old girl named Priya has increased up till 7.9kg, and her Mother-Child Health Book has been filled with memos of her growth records. Perhaps, you might think, “Just 7.9kg?” because the average infants that weigh 3kg at birth usually weigh about ±9kg after a year.

3 years ago on February 2009. A tiny 40-days old baby named Priya was brought to the gross monitoring session conducted at Seemra Village meeting hall. Her grandmother told us that “she [was] very weak and need[ed] help.” Priya’s mother was thinking about going to her home village to give birth to the child, since it was her very first delivery experience, but the birth date got advanced with the baby being born prematurely, thus, she had no choice but to give birth at her husband’s home. This mother of Priya, Puspa, had never attended the health gatherings organized by the VHV, but her mother-in-law never missed a meeting, so Puspa was encouraged to raise the baby with breast milk. As a result, she started breastfeeding Priya immediately after birth, but because she thought her breast milk was not sufficient enough, she sometimes added Gutti (sweet herbal water) to feed the child. Priya tended to sleep right after having a few gulps of breast milk, and she also often threw up right after being breastfed. Her birth weight is unknown. We heard that she weighed 1.5 kg 10 days after birth, but this measurement was taken using a balance scale for crops. And on this very day of health gathering when Priya was brought to us for the first time, she weighed 1955g. A huge progress in her weight! How wonderful! It would be even better if she can drink a little more without throwing up. Feeding Gutti is reducing the breast milk production, so she must not be fed any drinks besides breast milk.

The Health Team members were all so impressed with the effort the

family members were putting in supporting Priya’s weight growth in cold January without relying on medical facilities and without themselves being sick. We especially acknowledged Priya’s mother and her grandmother for their hard work.

The Health Team, along with VHV members, visited Priya’s home after gross monitoring session, and we taught Puspa and her mother-in-law how to express breast milk to a clean container after directly breast feeding, and how to feed the child with these expressed milk using a spoon so to compensate for insufficiency in direct breastfeeding.

For three years since then, Priya was brought to the gross monitoring sessions at a regular basis, and her weight increased gradually. When a family is unable to attend the gross monitoring sessions, VHV usually visits their home to monitor the weight growth, but Priya was always there for the sessions, brought either by her mother or grandmother.

Priya’s weight gradually increased, with 3.2kg at 5 months, 3.9kg at 8 months, and 4.4kg at 11 months. She survived a couple of sicknesses, overcame her first year, and by the time she past her second year and her younger brother was born, her meal amount, as well as her weight increased significantly.

Even though we tried to shift Priya’s growth curve to the left to compensate the fact that she was born prematurely, she could never get out of the “red zone” that signified “serious malnutrition.” Yet, she was able to gain her weight as much as possible. Thus, our VHV leader, Shamkali, could proudly announce that Priya had reached 7.9kg at the age of 3.

The fact that VHV could listen and support not only the mothers of the village, but also their husbands, mother-in-laws, and other family members, proves that their presence plays a huge role in the village of Seemra.



## Short Course in Mushroom Culture + SCS(G)A Reunion and Refresher Course

organized into groups, and each group made PDA (Potato Dextrose Agar), which is a growth media for the mushroom mycelium. Taking a small part of fresh oyster mushroom, all the participants practiced tissue culture in aseptic box. It required concentration and manual dexterity to accomplish the tasks. In the next step, the ready-made mycelium was used to produce spawn with grains such as sorghum and wheat. The participants practiced boiling grains, filling in bottles and sterilizing in autoclave. They tried to inoculate a small piece of mycelium into grains in a bottle in the aseptic box. The participants also enjoyed handling the laboratory tools to practice.

In the field, mushroom sheds and equipment, such as substrate pressing machines, stylizing shed and drum can, were introduced to the participants. They practiced mixing substrate, filling it in plastic bags, and sterilizing in drum can. They also exercised inoculating spawn in the substrate and arranging those plastic bags on the wooden shelves in the sheds. Not only oyster mushroom, but also button mushroom was included in the explanations, since button mushroom has been increasingly demanded in markets.

The participants participated in the sharing sessions of SCSA graduates and guest speakers. The various efforts in rural development at 5 places were introduced, and it impressed and stimulated the participants to be creative and continue to learn, apply and deepen knowledge and skills for the development of respective communities. (Refer to the article on the right page).

On the last day, they participated in SCSA Reunion Program as well as Food Fair organized by Allahabad Organic Agricultural Cooperative (AOAC). Since AOAC promotes new variety of food such as smoked chicken, sausage, pizza, and other newly introduced dishes, the participants enjoyed the tastes and learned one alternative marketing way to promote organic farming and field products.

They were also exposed to the homemade egg hatchery designed and constructed by joint team of MSCNE staff (Mr. Vinod as carpentry expert, and Mr. Rajesh as electrician) and Japanese expert (Mr. Takamaru as Farmer engineer). The developed blood vessels in 5-days-old eggs were shown with handmade egg candler.

The Course was shaped by both the learning and fellowship opportunities throughout the field activities, laboratory work, classroom lectures, dormitory life and dining, and interactions in sharing session. We expect all the participants to practice mushroom culture, so together, we can use our collective experiences to improve techniques appropriate for rural small-scale farmers.

### Mushroom Culture

MSCNE has been studying about mushroom culture for several years. Although mushroom demand is increasing in India and it could be a means of income generation for small-scale farmers, it is difficult to produce without certain knowledge and techniques. However, the trainings generally available in India merely provide theoretical lectures without or with a very few practical trainings for rural farmers. MSCNE developed the mushroom culture knowledge, techniques, and facilities which are more adaptable for rural small-scale farmers and organizations. Therefore, the Short Course, specifically focused on mushroom culture, was held from 20-25<sup>th</sup> February, 2012.

Twenty-five participants from 10 Indian states and Nepal participated, which included 11 graduates of SCS(G)A (Special Course in Sustainable/General Agriculture) and previous Short Courses. They have been continuously working at grassroots level. The Course was technically guided by the Coordinator, Mr. Pouram, and the Field Manager, Mr. Santosh, both with plenty of teaching and working experiences.

On 20<sup>th</sup> evening, the Short Course participants were welcomed by SCSA participants of this year in the fellowship program. Songs and dances were effective ice breaking activity by that the diverse members gathered in MSCNE interacted and started communicating each other.

The training was started with mushroom cooking class, since, in order to promote mushrooms, the growers need to know how the consumers process them. Six multi-cultural dishes were prepared by the participants and Japanese cooking expert, Ms. Iinuma. During the mushroom-tasting, the participants were amazed by its nutritional richness, such as various vitamins and minerals that help lower the cholesterol and sugar level in blood.

The classroom lectures on Sustainable Mushroom Culture was given by Dr. Miura, the Dean of the School. The class provided the participants with general information on the history of and the background information on mushroom culture. Being faced by many hurdles in his experiments, he emphasized on how important it is to not give up until the mushroom culture is successfully done.

The techniques were taught by demonstration and learning -by-doing. For laboratory techniques, the participants were



Theory of mushroom culture and practical work (mixing substrate and filling)



Practice mushroom tissue culture



Food fair celebrating song by participants



Fellowship dinner



Sharing work experience in their village

### Reunion and Refresher Course

MSCNE organized Reunion and Refresher Course of SCS (G)A, inviting 7 active development workers in respective places among the graduates. This was the first time to hold Reunion and Refresher Course after the changes in course and college name from SCGA to SCSA, as well as CCNFE (College of Continuing and Non-Formal Education) to MSCNE (Makino School of Continuing and Non-Formal Education), were made.

There have been demands for refresher course among graduates and their organizations since they have felt that refreshing and updating techniques and spirit is important. MSCNE staff were interested in listening to the graduates who are now rural works; how they are applying their learning in their fields, what kind of difficulties they have faced, and how there are going to overcome those challenges.

Therefore, the program was organized with the aims; to share rural development experiences and the challenges, to refresh certain knowledge, skills, and motivation of graduates as well as MSCNE, to feedback the evaluation to the SCSA program, and to seek the potential collaborations among the organizations of the graduates and MSCNE.

The program was attached with Short Course, so that the graduates can also participate in learning newly developed techniques. The graduates gave presentations on their rural activities in front of the participants of Short Course, current SCSA, and MSCNE staff during the sharing sessions. The gathered SCSA graduates included; Mr. Enos Soren ('81 graduate), Director of Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church Rural Development, Jharkhand, Mr. Sailesh Hembron ('08), training coordinator of the same organization; Sr. Shushma Toppo ('05), Sr. Vimla Oreya ('05), from St. Joseph Social Welfare Service; M.P., Mr. Maskal Topno ('08) and Mr. Sem Tete ('09), Technician and Field Supervisor of Gram Uttarn Kendra, Jharkhand; and Mr. Elias Narzary ('06), Field Worker of Bethany Society, Meghalaya.

Furthermore, we specially invited Mr. Ricky N. Renthlei, Senior Program Coordinator, Bethany Society ('07 Short Course and the Awardee of Best Presentation from Asian Pacific Environmental Forum 2011), Meghalaya, Mr. Kamal Rai, Research and Conservation Officer, Wetland Biodiversity Conservation Society Nepal, and Mr. Narayan Patel, the Awardee of Best Farmer in Orissa State, for introducing their unique efforts.

Each group introduced their organizations and activities with photographs, agricultural and spiritual experiences, and challenges in their project sites. By listening to their dynamic and creative approaches for uplifting rural poverty, the current SCSA and Short Course participants were motivated to plan their future works after going back home, MSCNE staffs were encouraged to unceasingly challenge themselves in improving the trainings by their feedback, and all of us were exposed to various means for rural development.

"Knowledge and technology cannot work alone in rural development," said Mr. Enos Soren, the most senior among the graduates. "Humans should have light in the heart. If the light directs heart towards good, then do it!"

Mr. Maskal Topno, farming-based development worker in deep forest in Naxalite area, appealed to the audience after introducing his efforts in propagating pigs among community youths and marketing meats, by stating, "start from zero! I started from zero even though I did not have many things, and I did not have enough knowledge. We can do, and we should do. Start from zero!" His strong message echoed again and again in our hearts.

The SCSA Reunion Ceremony was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, and we appreciated God for giving us the precious opportunity and the sustaining spirits desiring to keep connected with sound society among the graduates, their organizations, and MSCNE. We, MSCNE, would like to continuously move forward together with people on this spiritual connection.