

Tailor-made Program on Human Resource Management & Development Held in Japan for an Iranian Group

On February 19, 2008, JCCP welcomed a group of 16 members from Iran who came to Japan to participate in an 11-day Study Tour on “Human Resource Management & Development” (ST-22-07), scheduled for the period from February 19 to 29. The group was composed of human resource (HR) managers from Iran’s Ministry of Petroleum, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), National Iranian Oil Refining & Distribution Co. (NIORDC), National Petrochemical Co. (NPC), and National Iranian Gas Co. (NIGC).



Study Tour participants with JGC Corporation Head Office and the Yokohama Minato-Mirai district in the background

1. Background

Since FY2007, JCCP has been promoting tailor-made courses for major oil-producing countries, as one of its new policies. Last July, when the General Manager of the JCCP Operations Department visited Iran to propose the implementation of tailor-made courses, NIORDC had requested a Study Tour (ST; training course held in Japan for participants from a specific country) on Human Resource Management (HRM). It appears that enhancement of human resource management capacities in the oil refining sector has become an urgent issue, as the privatization (within 5 years) of Iran’s refineries has been officially approved during FY2007.

NIORDC later modified its request, to also include the theme of Human Resource Development (HRD), in addition to HRM, so we designed and implemented a course that focuses on both HRM and HRD issues. With the participation of HR managers from Iran’s Ministry of Petroleum and other oil-related institutions, it was said that Mr. Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh,

Deputy Minister of Petroleum and President of NIORDC, will be keeping an interested eye on the course.

2. Overview of the Course

The participants first received lectures on a general overview of HRM and HRD at JCCP Headquarters, as with regular courses, then visited four companies, including a refinery, to study actual HRM and HRD measures implemented by those companies.

(Lectures at JCCP)

- The oil industry and the physical distribution sector in Japan
- History of Japanese-style HRM and corporate training

(Onsite training and study themes)

- Catalysts & Chemicals, Ind. Co., Ltd. (CCIC), Kitakyushu Office: Aging employees and labor management in an R&D-oriented company
- Nippon Petroleum Refining Co., Ltd., Negishi Refinery: The human resource, evaluation, and training

- systems in a Japanese oil company
- JGC Corporation, Head Office: HRM and corporate education in an engineering company
- Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd., Technical Training Center (Chiba): HRM and TPM in a refinery

3. Major Study Themes

(1) History of Japanese-style HRM and corporate training

This lecture was given for 3 days, divided into the following 4 (HRM) + 1 (HRD) parts.

- (Part 1) History of Japan and the basic mentality of the Japanese
- (Part 2) Japan’s rapid post-war economic growth and unique HRM system
- (Part 3) Social changes in Japan today and changes in the HRM of Japanese companies
- (Part 4) Future issues and direction of HRM in Japanese companies
- (Part 5) Corporate training in Japan and future issues



"Nowadays, Japanese-style HRM is..." (JCCP)



"Here's what I think..." (CCIC Kitakyushu Office)

On the first day of lectures, we explained Japan's unique teamwork spirit and the driving forces behind the high economic growth in Japanese society, from the perspective of two HRM systems unique to Japan—the lifetime employment and seniority systems. On the second day, we lectured on social and corporate changes in Japan today, the introduction of a performance-based system, and future issues. On the third day, we presented an overview of HRD, with a focus on corporate training.

This 5-part overview formed the crux of the course, and therefore received a high level of interest from the participants.

(2) Catalysts & Chemicals, Ind. Co., Ltd. (CCIC), Kitakyushu Office and Wakamatsu Plant: Labor management in an R&D-oriented company

To avoid HRM discussions that

may overlap with other companies, the study theme focused on the effective management of an employee composition that displays diverse academic backgrounds—a composition that occurs because the company has both research laboratories and plants—and specific labor issues that arise from this situation.

(3) Nippon Petroleum Refining Co., Ltd., Negishi Refinery: Human resource and training systems in a major oil company

A classroom lecture, which is usually held at the head office of the company, was conducted for the first time at its refinery. The study theme centered on details of the company's HRM and human resource evaluation systems, as well as on both an overview and the specifics of its training system. Compared to a normal classroom lecture, an introduction to the refinery

and a tour of the facilities lent variety to the program, and made an impression on the participants.

(4) JGC Corporation, Head Office: HRM and HRD in an engineering company

A brief outline of the HRM system was given in reference to the company's salary and evaluation systems, followed by discussions on the status of its employment system, an overview of the training system, and career paths of employees in an engineering company.

In response to our request for a program on both HRM and HRD issues, JGC gave a clear and concise presentation that covered both topics separately, in a balanced manner.

Toward the end of the program, the participants learned about separating people into "types" based on self-evaluation and other-evaluations, in the form of a card game, and enjoyed a fun learning experience.



Showered with questions (Nippon Petroleum Refining Co., Ltd., Negishi Refinery)



Checking one's own "type" through a card game (JGC Corporation, Head Office)

**(5) Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd.,
Technical Training Center
(Chiba): HRM and TPM in a
refinery**

The study theme centered on Idemitsu Kosan's basic principles of career development and the concept of total productive management (TPM), through an introduction of case examples. Then, after a brief description of the company's HRD system, a presentation titled "A day of a refinery manager" presented pictures of a refinery manager's daily routines, which include making an appearance on the shopfloor every day, and other uniquely Japanese workplace practices.

4. Summary

The members of the study group consisted of 16 HR managers from the Ministry of Petroleum, NIOC, NIORDC, NPC, NIOPDC, and NIGC. Iranians are generally said to be earnest and honest, and we found this to be true; the members of the group were model participants who displayed gentlemanly

manner and open friendliness. It seems there were many macro-level questions, perhaps because of the participants' high positions within their organization, but there were also many technical questions at the facilities visited, from members who originally began their careers as an engineer. Therefore, though the focus of the course was specific, diverse topics that were directly and indirectly related to HRM were actively discussed at an extremely high level.

The 11-day course was a productive course, with an English-proficient member translating important points of the programs into Persian for the other members, and an active course, in which the members frequently engaged in heated discussions amongst themselves.



*Observing a technical training session for new employees
(Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd., Technical Training Center)*

According to evaluation forms filled out by all participants at the end of the course, the majority of them were extremely satisfied with the course. They indicated, for example, that the course would certainly be useful in fulfilling their responsibilities, and that the program content was much better than they expected.

We hope the participants have returned to Iran with a favorable impression of Japan, and hope that the course has played a small role in Japan's efforts to secure a stable supply of oil.

<by Akio Hoshino, Training Dept.>



My Impressions of the Study Tour

Speech delivered by the leader of the ST group (Mr. Mohammad S. Bakhshian) in the closing ceremony

On behalf of all members of the Study Tour, I would like to express our appreciation and sincere thanks to Mr. Kojima and all other JCCP staff for what we learned and received during our stay in your beautiful country.

Unfortunately, I missed the first three days of the program, due to urgent obligations that had arisen prior to my departure to Japan. Nevertheless, the course was unforgettable and so impressive that it will remain in my memory as one of the best courses I have ever participated in, with the best group of people whom I can proudly call friends.

During the program, we were impressed with Japanese history, culture, and traditions, which were

together reflected in the management styles and leadership philosophy in JCCP.

This closing ceremony is not the end of our program, however. I believe that the course has marked the beginning of a new era in building stronger, everlasting relations between Iran, Japanese companies, and JCCP.

Almost every night, we reviewed what we studied that day, as well as discussed our impressions, and concluded that your nation—Japan and the Japanese people—could be symbolized by the following terms: Unity, Uniformity, Honesty, Commitment, Faithfulness, Challenging, Innovative, Creative, Teamwork, etc.

Thank you again, and I hope to see you in Iran one of these days.