



UIAA
Global Youth Summit 2005



**Himalayan Adventure Trust – Japan (HAT-J)
Cross-Cultural Mountain Conservation Project
Mt. Fuji, JAPAN
August 23-28, 2005**

On the invitation of Chairperson Junko Tabei, I attended the Himalayan Adventure Trust – Japan (HAT-J) Cross Cultural Mountain Conservation Project 2005 held at Mt. Fuji, Japan last August 23-28, 2005. 56 international youth participants and leaders as well as 13 youth participants from Japan and a number of HAT-J members and volunteers joined the meet. Countries represented were Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, China-Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Switzerland.

The meet officially started on August 24, from the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo we went by bus to Fujiyoshida for the opening ceremonies. HAT-J Chairperson Junko Tabei met the delegates at Onshirin and gave her warm welcome and introduced the HAT-J organizers of the event.



Junko Tabei with guests and delegates.

Later we attended the lecture on Mt. Fuji's geological and natural environment at the Yamanashi Institute of Environmental Sciences. We learned that Japan is part of the Pacific earthquake and volcanic zone the "Pacific Rim of Fire". After the lecture, we went to the Fuji Center for the welcome ceremonies led by the Fujiyoshida City Mayor.

Japan also happens to be located in a typhoon prone area, during this time a tropical depression was brewing in the Pacific Ocean. Typhoon Mawar according to the local weather bureau was forecasted to directly hit our area late tomorrow afternoon and was expected to bring strong winds and heavy rains.

On August 25 Thursday – Due to the unfavorable weather conditions brought by typhoon Mawar, and to ensure the safety of the youth delegates, the organizers and leaders decided to limit the mountain treks around the foot of Mt. Fuji. As scheduled we took the bus to Mt. Fuji's 6th station (2,390 m) and went through the trail to the peak, heavy rains continue to pour but it did not dampen our spirits. Some youth participants actually even enjoyed the unique experience.



6th station (2,390 m) on the trail to Mt. Fuji's summit

After more than two hours on the trail we found our way back to the 6th station, at this point we had to go back to the comfort and safety of the Fuji Center so we took the bus back and spent the afternoon making new friends. Afterwards, we went to the Beni Fuji NoYu the "Red Fuji Spa" where we were introduced to traditional hot bath and tea ceremonies.

A bright but cloudy morning greeted us on our third day August 26. We still couldn't catch a glimpse of Mt. Fuji's peak from the view decks but the weather was perfect so we decided to take advantage of the opportunity to take pictures with the delegates and the organizers of the meet.

In the morning we went to The Tokyo University Forest at Yamanakako for natural observations and lectures of forest dynamics and regeneration. Afterwards, we had lunch by Lake Yamanaka we were then divide into two groups to visit different sites around Mt. Fuji. The Fujiyoshida Folklore Museum was our group's first destination. We learned more about the city's local history and folklore by observing the dioramas and exhibits. Later we visited the Fuji Kawaguchi-ko high school where we observed school club activities. We met up with the other group in the afternoon to prepare for the highlight event of the day, the Yoshida Fire festival.

The "Himatsuri" Grand Fire Festival is the city's most popular event. The festival marking the end of Mt. Fuji's official climbing season is dedicated to the goddess of Mt. Fuji. The international delegates were divided into smaller groups and celebrated the festival with different host families. We were immersed in the festivities as we enjoyed the warm company of our new friends.



Youth participants at the Yoshida Fire Festival.

We took the bus to transfer to the Chou Central Youth Hostel the next day August 26. Youth participants from each country presented on their local environmental problems and programs. Later in the afternoon a policy paper was drafted and presented to all of the participants in the meet. In the evening, we had our farewell party. The youth delegates donned their traditional costumes. Everybody enjoyed an evening of songs, stories, games and dances.

On Day 5 August 28 Sunday the last day of the meet, we transferred to Tokyo for a study tour of the National Sciences Museum, one of the world's largest science museums. In the afternoon, we proceeded to the Olympic Center for the closing ceremonies.

As we are about to leave Tokyo, another typhoon Nabi was brewing in the pacific. We may never have seen Mt. Fuji's summit, but we we're glad to be going home in one piece. In our hearts we have achieved HAT-J's summit of meeting new friends and unforgettable memories.

I'd like to congratulate the Himalayan Adventure Trust – Japan organizers specially Junko Tabei, Tadao Kanzaki, Kazunori Tagami and Hiroo Saso for a successful youth cross-cultural mountain conservation meet. in Mt. Fuji. We look forward to next year's HAT-J project (India August 2006) and UIAA Youth Commission events.

Reported by Salvador Elmer C. Cabotage (Philippines) for HAT-J.

Organizer: **Himalayan Adventure Trust Japan (HAT-J)**
http://homepage3.nifty.com/hat-j/eng/index_eng.htm

HAT-J was established in October 1990 in order to join the appeal of the Himalayan Adventure Trust established by Sir Edmund Hillary to promote the conservation of the mountain environment.

Under the chairpersonship of Ms. Junko Tabei, HAT-J membership is now over 1400. It has been active in a wide range of fields, such as garbage collection, trekking inside and outside Japan, a project planting apple trees to make cash income for Himalayan villagers, building and running garbage incinerators at Lukla, Kumbhu valley (coordinating with SPCC) and organizing international youth exchanges for conservation of the mountain environment called "Cross-Cultural Mountain Conservation Youth Project" annually.

The first Youth Cross-Cultural Mountain Conservation Project was held in the Mt. Fuji and Tateyama areas, Japan, in 1992. Since then Hat-J has organized youth projects every year and has held them in countries such as Korea, China, Nepal, Pakistan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and most recently Kazakhstan. These projects were made possible with the support of the mountain associations of Asia.