

Good Design: Mekong Design Selection
~Travel to Vietnam~

ALBATRO DESIGN

Mr. Hirohide Takei

1-INTRODUCTION

The “Mekong Design Selection” is a collaboration project, organized by the Japan Institute of Design Promotion (JDP) and the ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC). It aims to promote the traditional materials and techniques of the Mekong Design Selection awarded companies from CLMV (namely Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., Lao P.D.R., and Vietnam) and the innovations of Japanese designers to create high-end new brand products.

Our design proposal concept is “Application of practical design form for apparel with centuries of Vietnamese embroidery culture”. It combines the philosophy of both history and contemporary universal creation (embroidery). We intend to create a new brand product that benefits society and the environment as well.

2-COMPANY PROFILE

Vietnam Embroidery Co., Ltd. is located in Hanoi city and is our collaboration partner. They produce home fashion embroidered products and have successful business within their own country and also parts of Asia and Europe. They skillfully produce and decorate cotton, linen, and silk products by “hand embroidery”, “semi-hand embroidery”, “hem stitch”, and “cutwork”. The history and culture of Vietnamese embroidery brilliantly colors the crafts of their products.

3-HISTORY / CULTURE / TECHNIQUE

We went to Mrs. Duong’s (Director, Vietnam Embroidery Co., Ltd.) hometown to learn about the history and techniques of embroidery. There were many embroidery artisans at the workshop where the village as a whole inherits the skills for generations. The workshop is very spacious and every artisan I’ve viewed was delicately stitching one by one in meticulous designs. By viewing with my own eyes the process of embroidery, techniques, and products; I was also able to sense the purpose within each tangible embroidery crafts. What I sensed was that man made products (handcrafts) have deep cultural and natural purpose and truth within each stitch work. The inspection of the workshop gave me new aspirations to collaborate and create a new branding concept with the high respects of the culture and traditions of Vietnamese embroidery.

4-INSPECTION (FABRIC, SEWING, PATTERN) / FUTURE PLAN

For this collaboration project, we were invited to inspect the workshop of where the sewing, fabrics, and pattern creations are made. During the inspection visit, some challenges came to

light. It was fortunate at the time to discover the challenges that would hinder the conceptualization of our designs, because we were able to backtrack and make amendments to suit the conditions that we saw during the visit. In the end, we were able to conclude a contract to further progress with the collaboration.

We intend to create a brand product that takes into consideration the culture and historic technique and design, with a heart to heart connection, and spread hope to the environment, society and world.

5-VIETRADE / SEMINAR

At the Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency (VIETRADE), we had a meeting about several topics and discussed about the prospective future of Vietnam with regards to the “Progress of Design,” “Recognition and Need of Design,” and “Foreign Design Company and Business Matching”. In addition, we discussed the crucial issue about copyrights of the designs from the project and VIETRADE have assured to manage them carefully. Lastly, VIETRADE officials informed us that they are planning to establish a similar G-Mark Design oriented organization for Vietnamese designs.

During the seminar which was held for Vietnamese enterprises, Mr. Do Kim Lang the Deputy Director General welcomed the audience with few remarks. Mr. Kohei Takata the advisor greeted the audience and introduced Mr. Kenji Yajima of JDP for his presentation on “Design Consultation for Gift/Lifestyle Products Exporting to Japanese Market”. Another fellow designer, Mr. Mitsushi Yanaihara was the last to present on the “Domains of Enterprise Designs”. After a brief Q&A and networking session, Mr. Go Matsuura of AJC summarized and closed the seminar.

6-CONCLUSION

Our visit was during the March dry season. Strolling through the town, there is a sense of enthusiasm from the people around me which as a visitor draws my attention and curiosity. The ancient trees in the middle of both modern and old towns form the scenery, while the architecture of buildings, women working at the market, a young boy selling goods, and hoards of cars crowds the area and environment.

This project gives us, Japanese designers a sense of mission, to not only combine the cultures of both countries but also to appreciate the time we live in that provided this opportunity to begin with.

For the original report in Japanese with pictures, please view this link:

http://www.asean.or.jp/ja/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Vietnam-Report_ALBATRO-DESIGN

[Mr.-Takei1.pdf](#)