





# **Towards Organic Asia Partners Meeting 2013**

Centre for Development Workers, Bago Region, Myanmar 18 – 22 November 2013



Asian organics joins hand at the TOA Partners Meeting 2013 in Myanmar

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#### 1. Background

Towards Organic Asia Programme (TOA) convened an Annual Partners Meeting at Metta's Centre for Development Workers, Bago Region, Myanmar on 18 – 22 November 2013. Each year, the partners meeting united TOA partner organizations from the Mekong region and Bhutan, to meet for sharing information and updating each other situations. As well as discussing together on current and future plans in order to move forward the movement's activities in the region.

The partners meeting was co-hosted by TOA Secretariat and Metta Development Foundation. In total 14 organizations representing TOA Partnerships and alliance from Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines (observer) participated in the meeting.

#### 5-days TOA partners meeting 2013 consists of three components.

# 18-19 December: TOA Action - Research workshop (see separate "TOA Action-Research Workshop Report")

Two days workshop and exchange session focused on development of action-research cooperation and framework among TOA partners.

#### 20 – 22 December: TOA partners meeting and field excursion

Series of meetings and working group sessions among TOA partners to provide updates on current achievements, working situation and develop and review future plans together. Visit to local organizations and their project sites whose works are related to the field of agroecology in order to understand local organic movement.

#### 22 December: TOA Steering Committee Meeting

Meeting with the current TOA Steering Committee members and programme advisors to review on current and future strategies and make advise and endorsement on strategy and implementation of the partnership activities.

#### 2. Opening and presenting TOA's big picture

After the welcoming remarks given by Hans van Willenswaard (School for Wellbeing Studies and Research) and Sai Sam Kham (Metta Development Foundation), the TOA Coordinator, Thanapol Kheolamai, introduced TOA programme's big picture which including its vision, mission and goals, and also reviewed key network actions and achievements. The presentation provided important updates in order to generate common understanding of the programme's philosophy, implementation, its partnership structure and management.

#### 3. Updating country situations on organic agriculture and agroecology

Among all countries presented, each selected their representative to give 10 minutes oral presentation and briefing on the current situation (good and bad news) on their countries regarding organic agriculture and agroecology. The country representatives provided factoriented inputs on local / national policies, new initiatives from public, private and civil society sector, news and hot issues, organic farming situation and others topics related to agriculture in the country. This sessions aims for updating each others about what have happened in each country on agriculture in order to identify common challenges and learn from other countries experience.





Bhutan (Kesang Tshomo, National Organic Program)		
Good news	Challenges	
<ul> <li>Newly elected government still keep "100% organic country" policy in place.</li> <li>11st five-year development plan; NOP will have more roles to play in driving organic sector in the country plus increase in number of staffs and budget.</li> <li>Increase number of young people and newly graduated student interested in organic farming activities and job in organic sector.</li> <li>Private sector; increase business opportunity in organic sector in Bhutan</li> <li>Increased number of certified organic farm in Bhutan through local certification; few have 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification (small domestic market); focus on developing local certification.</li> <li>In MAR 2014, IFOAM together Navdanya and Millennium Institute, will organize International Conference on "Mountainous Eco-system Agriculture" in Bhutan</li> <li>Bhutan government imposed restriction on imported hybrid seeds coming from India in order to protect local seed varieties.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Policy and implementation to produce sufficient amount of food to meet domestic demands and consumption.</li> <li>Address problems of organic agriculture directly and practically</li> <li>Country assessment to prove that "100% organic" is feasible</li> </ul>	

Cambodia (Sam Vitou, Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture)

	Good news	Challenges
•	CEDAC organic brown rice won 1 <sup>st</sup> prize in Cambodia Rice Festival hold at Siem Riep this year.	Not enough supply for organic products at CEDAC outlet.
•	Opportunity for organic rice exportation in US market	

Laos (Thongsay Saynahuck, Participatory Development Training Center)

Good news	Challenges
PADETC started to promote organic farming	After 2005, intensive chemical farming
since 2006 through Panyanivej and Thatang	began to grow in Laos
Center.	Land concession for foreign companies
	(banana and rubber plantations as well as
	dam construction) affects local farmers in
	rural Laos.

Myanmar (Tida, Empower)

Good news	Challenges
Association to provide organic certification in Myanmar	No 100% food security; import hybrid seeds from other countries
<ul> <li>More organic products available at alternative channels</li> <li>Vast areas of ethnic regions and delta area are still practicing traditional farm without accessing to chemical inputs</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>GMO contaminated in imported seeds</li> <li>Increase importation of chemical fertilizers and weedicides; low control in quality; no local language written</li> <li>No lab test on chemical ingredient and its impact</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Land issue; newly drafted land act is in favour of company than small-scale local farmers</li> <li>Increase urban migration</li> <li>Low level of awareness on impacts of chemical used and benefit of organic farming</li> <li>Local plants varieties and herbs are neglected</li> </ul>

#### Thailand (Supa Yaimuang, Alternative Agriculture Network)

#### **Current situation**;

- Attitudes on food consumption pattern for rural people become similar to city people; preferred specific varieties of vegetables, less interest in local varieties.
- Change in production pattern and practices; mechanization
- Increase investment in transportation infrastructure by Thai government and ASEAN

#### Thai government policies;

- ASEAN economic integration
- Promotes cash crop
- Promote eco-tourism

Good news	Challenges
<ul> <li>Organic agriculture is more acceptable among consumers (certification)</li> <li>Increase collaboration between MoA and MoC; local farmers can develop seeds by themselves; consumers and farmers; green market initiatives</li> <li>Campaign on pesticides ban; demonstration on FTAs</li> <li>Growing city farm movement (target city people)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Land use:</li> <li>Agriculture policy: zoning policy (no participation)</li> <li>Increase FTAs (e.g. Thai-EU FTAs will affect IPRs and seeds)</li> <li>Water management affected community livelihood</li> </ul>

The Philippines (Ananeza Aban, Asia-Pacific Network on Food Sovereignty)

Good news	Challenges
<ul> <li>More advocacy efforts from civil society, consumers and youth on organic farming</li> <li>CSOs initiated "Go Organic Mindanao"</li> <li>Pilipino government adopted "Organic agriculture Act"</li> <li>APNFS promotes alternative and monitor on government policy</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Recent typhoon disrupted local ecosystem and heavily affected current situation</li> <li>More indigenous people struggle for natural resources</li> <li>Increase agribusiness plantation (palm oil, rubber and other cash crops); not for local consumption</li> <li>Resource grabbing; land, forest, water (dam) and coal plants</li> <li>Increase private corporates invest in the Philippines</li> </ul>

#### 4. Group exchange session: Sharing inspirations

Each individual participant presented his or her personal projects through hand-written poster. The poster clearly described project name, implemented area, its strength and key challenges. After finished, participants were divided into groups and demonstrated the posters at the "market place". When presenting, other participants wandered to different presenters and gave their feedbacks and comments in rounds. This process helped participants to feel engaged and be able to share and exchange their relevant personal project to others. This sharing was helpful to assess participant expertise and group each participant into working group session according to his or her expertise and interest.

The topics posters presented covered various aspects of organic agriculture and agroecology promotion ranged from local/community to international level. Below table summarize the list of topics presented by participants during the session.





<b>Topics presented</b>	Presenters
Heart-Core Organic: city farm and new generation farmers movement	Nakorn
Fermentation	Voirrey
Young Farmers Leadership	Bobo
Asia-Pacific Network of Food Sovereignty	Ananeza
Farmers Field School – Human Ecology Practical Area	Viengphet
Organic VS non-organic food	Chainat

Marketing buckwheat	Kesang
The "Wellbeing Society" book	Hans
Bs, Ms, PhD in Organic Agriculture at Maejo University	Chomchuan
Panyanivej Organic Farm	Thongsay
Organic for All	Wallapa
Helping the Earth's Health	Aung Moe Hein
Situation analysis on chemical vegetable and fruits take place in local market	Myo Aung
Mushroom	Thi Da
Organic vegetable production	Phukham
Compost Floor Pig Raising	Soe Peter
Increase organic productivity of small farmers through improving soil fertility	Vitou
Eco-village (Loi Kang)	Gum Sha Aung
Mix and Intercropping	Khin Muang Latt
2030 Organic Farming in Mekong Workshop	Dusita
Organic SRI for neighbor farmer	Say Nay Tha Gay
Organic food awareness and master chef contest	Jirapong
Food security	Supa
Towards Ecovillage in Myanmar	Narumon
Media advocacy and environmental education in Myanmar	Thein Soe

Note: The files of poster presentations are available upon request. Please contact TOA Coordinator (Thanapol Kheolamai – thanapol.kheolamai@gmail.com)

#### 5. Working group session: participatory action plan development

Participants were grouped, according to their interests and expertise, into four groups that represented the four TOA-WGs; Capacity Building and Youth, Action-Research and Advocacy, Technical Exchange, and Consumer Education and Marketing. In each WG, participants developed together the 4-years action plan which included goal, resource, key activities, success factors and challenges. When finished, the World Café process was introduced and each WG took turn to present their initial action plans and gathered comments from other participants. The final product of this process is broad strategy and action plan for TOA-WGs 2014 – 17. The plans for TOA-WGs developed together by TOA partner organizations represented at the Partners Meeting has goals, resources, activity plan, success factors and challenges.





#### TOA-WG 1: Capacity building and Youth:

New generation of Asian grassroots leaders are strengthened to collaboration in activities of organic agriculture and agroecology.

GROUP MEMBERS	
<ul> <li>Nakorn</li> <li>Bobo</li> <li>Viengphet</li> <li>Phukham</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Myo Aung</li> <li>Thein Soe</li> <li>Jirapong</li> <li>Kien</li> <li>Thanapol</li> </ul>

RESOURCES		
•	YOFs and network in	
	Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia,	
	Bhutan, Thailand and Vietnam	

- YOFs Manifesto "Occupy Your Life"
- Annual Meeting and reports

#### ACTIVITIES PLAN

- Youth exchange programme (farm stay / cultural and technical exchange)
- Mekong organic / agroecological farms mapping and database
- Grant research for YOFs
- Joining fairs, symposium, knowledge sharing + communication
- Considering YOF 2014 + ASEAN Youth Forum in Myanmar)

#### **GOALS**

# "Strong regional network of YOF" (+ outreaching to the world)

- Knowledge and technical exchange among YOFs
- Joining with ASEAN Youth Forum 2014 in Myanmar

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS**

- Craziness (confidence)
- Connection (eg. Funding / collaboration)
- \* Related to ASEAN agenda
- Well communication and preparation for youth exchange (participatory curriculum programme design)
- ❖ Effective communication channels (e.g website / FB /...etc)

- Language barriers
- Funding
- Hosting obstacles (policy + situation)
- ❖ Uncertainty for strong commitment from YOFs (parents' influence)

#### TOA WG 2: Action research and Advocacy

Country assessment and regional strategies for influencing public policy in organic agriculture and agroecology formulated

<b>GROUP MEMBERS</b>	
o Hans	o Sai Sam Kham
o Dusita	o Ananeza
<ul><li>Supa</li></ul>	

#### RESOURCES

- Possible funds from various international and domestic donors / CSR funds
- Academic institutes, networks and technical supports from TOA partners + international network
- Training centres

#### ACTIVITIES PLAN

#### 2014

- Country assessment and workshop
- M & E workshop + Action-research country coordinator meeting
- Country assessment (specific countries)
- > Young organic farmers mapping
- > Action-research (indigenous wisdom)

#### 2015

- Policy dialogues
- Country assessment forum
- Publications
- Research report launching
- Policy briefings
- Scenario building workshop
- Young researcher exchange

#### **GOALS**

#### "Agroecology Organic Asia"

(Country assessment based / Advocacy / Wellbeing / Multi-stakeholder communication / Local wisdom & indigenous empowerment / Center-based research / Farming community)

#### SUCCESS FACTORS

Wellbeing framework / model (to screen donors)

- **♦** (Wo)manpower
- Coordination
- \* External pressure (chemical farming / neo-liberal policies)
- \* Rigid academic structure
- Political intervention
- Competition among NGOs
- Finding concrete evidence of economic feasibility (bringing small farmers in econ development cooperation + policy intervention)
- ❖ ASEAN integration 2015
- Financial sustainability

#### TOA – WG 3: Technical Exchange

TOA supports roles of local grassroots farmer's organizations and traditional agriculture in Asia.

GI	ROUP MEMBERS	
0	Gum Sha Aung	o Thongsay
0	Kin Muang Latt	o Soe Peter
0	Thida	<ul> <li>Voirrey</li> </ul>
0	Vitou	

#### RESOURCES

- YOFs and network in Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Bhutan, Thailand and Vietnam
- YOFs Manifesto "Occupy Your Life"
- Annual Meeting and reports

#### ACTIVITIES PLAN

#### Country level

- Technical knowledge documentation and sharing
- > Technical training
- > Technical exchange visit
- Post-harvest mnt / food packaging / food processing
- Local organic seed conservation and production

# Network level

#### 2014

- Exhibition of documents and products (showcases) during TOA meeting, WS, event + partners events
- TOA Technology exchange exhibition / session
- E-communication
- Regional training at MJU (cert. / curriculum / Design training / form up research team)
- Resource person sharing (cross-country)

#### 2015

- Symposium on technical support on traditional wisdom & organic
- Regional collaboration on seed production and exchange
- Cross-country exchange
- Collection, selection, production (ex-situ)
- Community seeds bank
- > Seeds policy research advocacy
- > Sharing system development
- Seeds action / rights

## GOALS

"TOA supports roles of local grassroots farmer's organizations and traditional agriculture in Asia."

#### SUCCESS FACTORS

- Momentum of the network
- ❖ Available resources (human / money...)
- ❖ GNH model
- Inspiration and success stories from other partners

- ❖ Government policies not favorable to family farming
- **❖** AEC
- **❖** Land grabbing
- Young people migration
- Growing of super market
- ❖ Agro-industry
- Urbanization

### TOA – WG 4: Consumer Education and Marketing

Mindful market platform bridges organic agriculture and agroecology between consumers and producers.

GI	ROUP MEMBERS		
0	Wallapa	0	Kesang
0	Chainat	0	Narumon
0	Chomchuan	0	Aung Moe Hein

<ul> <li>Network organizations + partners</li> <li>Green markets</li> <li>Green / organic canteens</li> <li>PGS / CSA available</li> <li>Networking of models</li> <li>Networking of fairs /</li> <li>Central committee for PGS and CSA (policy / consumers, students, staffs / processors / entrepreneurs + restaurants, community markets)</li> <li>Networking of models</li> <li>Organize forums / fairs /</li> </ul>	RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES PLAN	GOALS
exhibitions  Making directory and guidebooks (shops / outlets + consumer education)  TOA marketing website (network + database directory)  Forum for multi-stakeholders dialogue  Media (health / environment / trusting building / sustainable economics)	partners     Green markets     Green / organic canteens	and CSA (policy / consumers, students, staffs / processors / entrepreneurs + restaurants, community markets)  Networking of models  Organize forums / fairs / exhibitions  Making directory and guidebooks (shops / outlets + consumer education)  TOA marketing website (network + database directory)  Forum for multi-stakeholders dialogue  Media (health / environment / trusting building / sustainable	

#### SUCCESS FACTORS

- Subsidies from local administrative authorities
- Constant supply and seasonal menu
- Consumer awareness

- ❖ Linkages (farmer consumers)
- Fair-trade
- Strong policy to support OA

#### 6. Field excursion

One-day excursion is organized by the host organization (Metta Development Foundation) together with other local partner organizations for participants to explore on-going actions of organic movement in Myanmar. The excursion involved visit to one eco-village (Ei Lin Ey), where a group of dedicated practitioners set up as practical area for training and living organically. The other visit was at Gai Ha Hi Ta, a green shop and café located in Yangon, where green activists and youth gathered.







#### 7. TOA Steering Committee Meeting

The current steering committee members of Towards Organic Asia consist of;

- Sai Sam Kham (Metta Development Foundation, Myanmar)
- Keam Makarady (Cambodian Center for Studies and Development in Agriculture, Cambodia)
- Kolaka Bounedaoheaung (Participatory Development Training Center, Laos)
- Tshering Phuntsho (Center for Bhutan Studies, Bhutan)
- Supa Yaimuang (Alternative Agriculture Movement, Thailand)
- Doung Quang Chau (Social Policy Ecology Research Institute, Vietnam) together with TOA Secretariat members;
- Hans van Willenswaard, School for Wellbeing Studies and Research
- Wallapa van Willenswaard, Suan Nguen Mee Ma and Thai Green Market Network
- Somboon Chungprampree, Spirit in Education Movement
- Thanapol Kheolamai, School for Wellbeing Studies and Research
- Dusita Krawanchid, School for Wellbeing Studies and Research

The steering committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November evening presented by:

- Sai Sam Kham
- Sam Vitou (represented Keam Makarady)
- Thongsay Saynahuck (represented Kolaka Bounedaoheaung)
- Supa Yaimuang
- Kesang Tshomo (represented TOA Bhutan partners)
- Hans van Willenswaard
- Wallapa van Willenswaard
- Thanapol Kheolamai
- Dusita Krawanchid

#### **Issues discussed**

• Endorsement of TOA joint-Strategy and action plan 2014 – 17

The steering committee agreed on broad strategy and action plan formulated by TOA partners during the Partners Meeting 2013. The secretariat proposed to start revising and drafting the final TOA action plan before sending to the committee members for their reviews and later

endorsement. Once endorsed, the TOA action plan and strategy will be used among the partners for guiding their collaborative strategy on promoting agroecology. TOA Partners could annex the TOA plan into their own organizational plan and agenda. Secondly, partners could develop joint proposals for the region to take part in organic movement and commit to common vision and mission of Towards Organic Asia.

#### • Expanding new partners in Asia to strengthen organic movement

The steering committee discussed on future strategy to expand TOA partnerships and bring in new committed groups from the Mekong region, Bhutan and beyond to join the movement. The committee has agreed upon the point that the pioneer groups of TOA, which are current partners, will work together as *core partners* group and involve in decision-making on the network affairs. At the same time, the network is open for new groups in Asia who has strong commitment on supporting and promoting organic agriculture and agroecology under wellbeing perspective to join. Current TOA partners will introduce and encourage new groups to participate in relevant activities organized by TOA and alliances. The next strategic area for partnership development in 2014 - 17 will be emphasized on ASEAN region, while groups active on the other parts of Asia are also encouraged to join in relevant activities.

#### • Common terminology

The committee discussed on the common terminology to communicate among partners organization and with wider public. There are various terminologies used by partner organizations when referring to the works of their organizations and the network. Organic agriculture, sustainable agriculture, eco-farming, alternative agriculture, diversified farming and agro-ecology are among the commonly used terms among partners. The committee proposed to keep the common term used flexible in respect to the diversity of practices. Organic agriculture and agroecology will be general terms to be used by TOA secretariat when refer to the works of TOA partners.

#### 8. Way forwards and Recommendation

In 2014, TOA's major activities will be implementing to support the initial TOA-WG's goals. TOA Secretariat will play active roles in facilitating communication, information sharing, network actions and joint-initiatives among partners. Mekong Youth Alliance for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology, Action-research to compare wellbeing impacts of industrial and agroecological practices in the selected Mekong countries, international forum on mindful market and are going to be leverage points to engage TOA partners organizations with other movements in the region and beyond. Also, participation in the IFOAM's Organic World Congress in 2014 is strategic move for TOA to have its presence in the international organic agriculture movement.

As next year (2014) the final year of its first 3-year plan of TOA which officially began in 2012, the evaluation are planned to be conducted among the current partners through different means in order to reflect on previous actions throughout the years and design proper future action together.

In the next 3-years period of TOA (2015 – 17), formulating joint proposals and fundraising will be among the key challenges for the movement. TOA secretariat together with core partners organizations need to work together to make the collaboration the most effective and deliver the best possible outcomes.

# Appendix 1: Participants list

No.	Name	Organization	Country
1	Ms. Kesang Tshomo	National Organic Programme	Bhutan
2	Mr. Sam Vitou	Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC)	Cambodia
3	Mr. Phoukham Douangchanhome	Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC)	Laos
4	Mr. Thongsay Saynahuck	Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC)	Laos
5	Dr. Thida Win Ko Ko	Empower	Myanmar
5	Mr. Saw Nay Tha Gay	Gaia Sustainable Management Institute (GSMI)	Myanmar
7	Mr. Thet nai	Gaia Sustainable Management Institute (GSMI)	Myanmar
3	Mr. Aung Moe Hein	Kalayana Mittra Foundation	Myanmar
)	Ms. Narumon Paiboonsittikun	Kalayana Mittra Foundation/Spirit in Education Movement	Myanmar
10	Mr. Myo Aung	Kalayana Mittra Foundation/YOF	Myanmar
11	Mr. Gum Sha	Metta Foundation	Myanmar
12	Mr. Kin Myaung Latt	Metta Foundation	Myanmar
13	Mr. Wai Zin Aung	Metta Foundation	Myanmar
14	Ms. Angging Aban	Asia-Pacific Network for Food Sovereignty (APNFS)	Philippines
15	Ms. Supa Yaimuang	Alternative Agriculture Network (AAN)	Thailand
16	Mr. Nakorn Limpakubtathavorn	Urban Garden Center/Thai Green Market Network	Thailand
17	Ms. Wallapa van Willenswaard	Suan Nguen Mee Ma social enterprise / Thai green Market Network	Thailand
18	Mr. Hans van Willenswaard	School for Wellbeing Studies and Research/Towards Organic Asia	Thailand
19	Ms. Dusita Krawanchid	School for Wellbeing Studies and Research/Towards Organic Asia	Thailand
20	Mr. Thanapol Kheolamai	School for Wellbeing Studies and Research/Towards Organic Asia	Thailand
21	Mr. Chainat Jitwatna	Mekong Youth Alliance for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology	Thailand
22	Dr. Chomchuan Boonrahong	Maejo University	Thailand
23	Mr. Jirapong Chaichawwong	Maejo University	Thailand
24	Ms. Dang To Kien	Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI)	Vietnam
25	Mr. Viengphet Pan Oudom	Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI)/Kalayana Mittra Foundation	Vietnam

# Appendix 2: Common Schedule

	2015	2014 "Training for organic farm family model" (PADETC) 5 days in JAN; "Eco-farming" in Myammar (contact Phet) 3rd JAN "Green Lover Gathering" (Myanmar)	<b>2013</b> JAN
(tentative);	•	2nd week FEB (5days); "Sustainable Living" (Yangon, MYN)	FEB
	•	Young farmer forum (Southern Shan state, MYN)  ASEAN Youth Meeting in Myanmar (date to be confirmed)  5 - 9 MAR; Food and health for sovereignty (Bangkok,: SAFT)  5 - 8 MAR; IFOAM Conferenceon Organic Agri in the mountain ecosystems (Thimphu, BT)	MAR
	•		APR
	-	7th Green fair (Bkk, TH) 12 - 17 May; International partner workshop PROLINNOV A (Cambodia)	MAY
	•	5 JUN; World environment day	NUL
	•	JUL - SEP; Farmer led extension ToT (Myitkyina, Myanmar: METTA)  3 - 5 JUL TOA Action- Research Workshop (Bangkok, Thailand) 7 - 18 JUL 1st CU right Livelihood summer school (Thailand) Second half JUL Forum of "Mindful Markets CSA and PGS" (MJU, Chiang Mai)	JUL
	•	Second half AUG: Mekong YOFs 2014 (South Thailand)	AUG
	•		SEP
	-	18 <sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress and IFOAM General Assembly (Turkey) Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum (Belgium)	OCT
	•	28 - 30 NOV; Asia Europe Food Ethic Conf. (BKK, TH) 30 NOV; Res presentation "Uphold Food Sovereignty, Reclaim Resources, Reclaim Rights (Bali, Indonesia)	NOV
	•	2 DEC; Gandhi lecture with Satish Kumar "Soil, Soul and Society" (Bkk, TH) 5 - 7 DEC; 2nd Asia Today Conference (MJU, Chiang Mai) + 80th Anniversary MJU	DEC