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Country can do with more 'people-friendly' roads

Y. Yamada

MY job has given me a number of opportunities to visit Malaysia.

I even had the chance to work in Kuala Lumpur for three years from 1983 to 1986.

Then, I returned to Japan to take up an administrative post in a private college.

Malaysia's lush greenery, the beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur, highways planted with rows of mature trees, the clean and beautiful kampung houses on the outskirts of the city, always came back to mind.

As I was getting bored with my job, a friend of mine invited me to work as a translator in Kuala Lumpur.

I packed my bags and headed for the city I loved.

It was not an easy job. First, I had to set up a company.

Secondly, various approvals had to be obtained and that was potentially tedious and time consuming. Maybe it was my enthusiasm that motivated me; I did not feel any pressure at all.

Within a month, everything was completed. Thanks to the government departments concerned for lending a helping hand.

That was only the start.

Marketing is an important aspect of obtaining translation work and I had to visit potential clients.

It was a good thing that I was able to set up a number of appointments in a single day and knowing that it would be difficult to get parking space, I started using taxis but that was where the problems started.

It was difficult to get a taxi. When I finally managed to stop one, the poor old driver had to face horrendous jams.

In the end, I could only attend half of the appointments made.

During my earlier stay in Kuala Lumpur, there were no such problems at all. It was with some sadness that I continued my daily routine, but the good points of the country made up for this feeling.

I found the Malaysian lifestyle, living conditions, interpersonal relationships and the price of goods attractive.

It may not be true to say that I am not suited to the Tokyo way of life, but I must say I find Malaysia to be a better country.

I encountered traffic jams nearly every day, but I was still able to complete my term and returned to Japan again.

I have found a new job which takes me to Malaysia four to five times a year.

My friends and I feel that it would be nice if Malaysian roads could be made more "people friendly". The traffic situation, especially in Kuala Lumpur, is getting from bad to worse each time I visit Malaysia.

It is surprising to see the number of vehicles on the road during rush hour and the pollution that has been caused.

Accompanying the country's astonishing economic growth has been the tremendous rise in the number of vehicles on the road, but if observed carefully, about 80 per cent of the vehicles have only one occupant and this may be the main reason for the congestion.

Maybe, a more effective signalling system is needed.

The Malaysian Government is investing a huge sum of money to improve its infrastructure. The new international airport in Sepang will be opened in the near future.

Traffic problems may not be easy to solve and may be the price to pay

for development, but I sincerely believe that Malaysia will become an industrialised nation, loved by people around the world.

And let's hope that never again will Malaysians be faced with traffic woes and congestion, thanks to the able leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the hard work of his resourceful bureaucrats and citizens.

Y. Yamada

Tokyo

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