

13 Aiming for Police Services Trusted by Citizens

— Police Box Operated by Women in Indonesia —



“Bapak Agus, selamat pagi. Apa kabar? (Good morning, Mr. Agus. How are you?),” policewoman Ms. Sapte speaks to local resident Mr. Agus. Ms. Sapte works at a police box operated by women in Mekar Sari, Bekasi, a suburb of Jakarta, Indonesia’s capital. This is a police box where only women are on duty, which is unique to Indonesia. This is in stark contrast with the image of the police during the period when they were a part of the military, and local residents appreciate the friendly service offered by the Police Box. One local resident says, “It has been convenient since this police box*1 was set up, for we do not have to go to the police station which is far away. The friendly policewomen stop by our house to listen to our requests and greet us around town, so we have a sense of security.”

In August 2000, Indonesia’s People’s Consultative Assembly decided that the police would be made independent of the national military, and maintenance of security came to be handled by the national police. Currently various reform programs are underway aimed at boosting citizens’ trust for the police. Japan has cooperated with such efforts in Indonesia since 2002 and has assisted the Jakarta Metropolitan police in the capital for its organizational operation, on-site identification, communication command, and police box activities. Mr. Matsue from the Osaka Prefectural Police Department in Japan, who has been involved with work related to the handling of foreigners for a long period of time, is using his knowledge and experience in day-to-day cooperation activities.

Regarding Japan’s cooperation, Mr. Matsue comments, “The police in Japan have set up police boxes and police satellite offices in the jurisdictional areas of the police departments of each prefectural police. One characteristic of the police box system is that in all areas throughout Japan there are always uniformed regional police officers on duty who are responsible for the safety and security of their given area. We have introduced this police box system in Indonesia, to utilize Japan’s system and experience so that the police gain the trust of the citizens as Indonesia is experting. The proposal for a police box which employs only women came from the Indonesian side. It is a very bold measure, and there are no such police boxes in Japan, but I think it is an excellent idea which is based on the status of Indonesian women, which is socially active.”

Japan’s cooperation also incorporates “a three shift work schedule” and “assigned district system” for the Indonesian police. Each police officer systematically carries out patrols and home visits for the safety of the residents in

his or her assigned district. Police boxes have been set up as bases for such police activities which bring closer relations with the citizens.

The police box at Mekar Sari is particularly well-liked. It provides friendly service and strives to be a place where local residents do not hesitate to file reports or seek consultation. Because it is so friendly, one local resident says, “Now that I can communicate with the police officers, I have a sense of security.” It has been three and a half years since this police box was set up, and due to its good relationship with local residents, no major incidents have occurred, and a Police Box Liaison Council has been established, through which cooperation takes place between the police and citizens. Thanks to the establishment of this Council, now the police carries out joint patrols with the local residents and holds discussions with them on how to resolve problems in the community.

As a result of these efforts, local donors in the Bekasi region, by utilizing the police box which had been operated by the Indonesian police, established a police box operated by women only, which is carrying out the same activities as the one in Mekar Sari. It is expected that police activities which have the trust of citizens, and in which Japan’s assistance is combined with efforts by Indonesia, will be further developed.



Policewoman on duty



Expert Mr. Matsue providing instruction.

*1 Police boxes in Indonesia are referred to as “BKPM.”