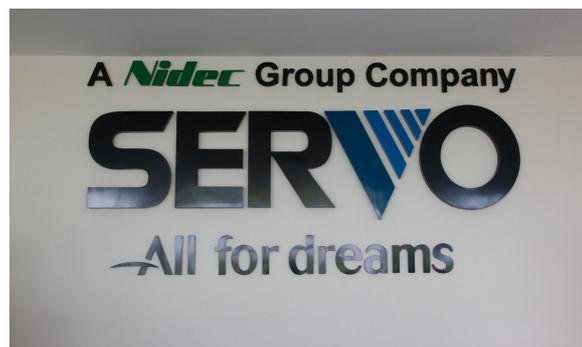Zachary Nosker

ICDV Trip Report

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

12-17 November 2013

As part of Kobayashi laboratory, I attended and presented a poster at the 2013 conference on Integrated Circuits, Design and Verification (ICDV) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Before the trip, all I knew about Vietnam were the stories I had heard in the media, and the Vietnamese food like *phở* I had eaten back in California.

From an American perspective, Vietnam will always be known as the place where one of the bloodiest wars in history took place: fought by young men forced into the service for an increasingly anti-war nation, ultimately ending in defeat for the Americans and decades of social problems for the veterans that returned home. In the end, communism prevailed in Vietnam, after countless civilians were killed and the country was exposed to the horrors of chemical weapons like napalm and agent orange. But these days Vietnam is much less the heavily-armed search for renegade Colonel Kurtz (as in *Apocalypse Now*) and is a bustling South-East Asian country trying to grow its economy and enter the modern age.

Renesas Design Center

Servo Factory Sign

Before the conference started, we visited two Japanese companies with operations in Ho Chi Minh City—Renesas and Nihon Densan (Servo). At the Renesas design center, we saw the facilities where several hundred Vietnamese engineers work on hardware and software, while at the Servo factory we saw the production of different kinds of motors. In both cases, these companies are offering competitive jobs to Vietnamese people while lowering costs due to lower local wages.

We also visited two universities, the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and the University of Technical Education. At both universities, professor Kobayashi introduced Gunma University to the Vietnamese professors and students. We also had a chance to see the facilities of both universities by touring some of their labs.
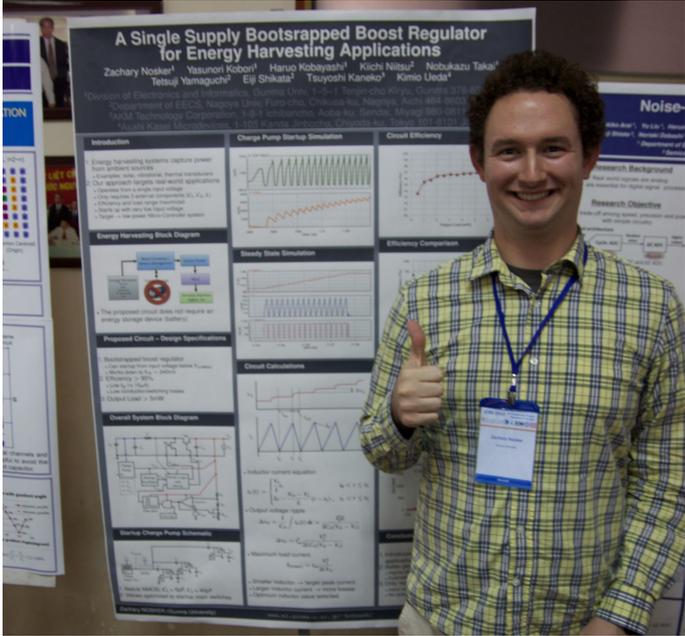

Professors Kobayashi and Huynh in RF lab, HCMUT

Students in Automation Lab, UTE

After two days of touring companies and universities, we finally started the conference and I presented my poster. It seemed that most of the attendees at the conference did not specialize in power electronics, so I tried to explain my research in simpler terms that could be easily understood.

My poster presentation

All in all, I found that Vietnam is an interesting country that seems to be on the verge of expanding rapidly. The traffic on the streets is chaotic, especially during rush hour, and Ho Chi Minh City is about as clean as other cities in Southeast asia, but there is a sense that the economy is growing quickly, and the city will be a lot different in a few years. There is considerable investment happening in Vietnam by Japanese companies, and this will just help to increase the economy and the quality of life for the people of Vietnam. I'm looking forward to visiting Vietnam in the future and seeing how much has changed.