

環境科学同窓会通信 第13号

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環境科学院時代の特異的で恵まれた研究環境

小森田智大（生物圏科学専攻 2009 年 3 月修了 熊本県立大学環境共生学部准教授）

私は 2006 年から 2009 年までの 3 年間、生物圏科学専攻・海洋生物生産環境学コース（現：海洋生物生産学コース）で博士後期課程を過ごしました。当時の所属コースは、主指導教官の門谷茂先生をはじめ、工藤勲先生、久万健志先生、岸道郎先生といった錚々たるメンバーで構成されており、およそ海洋の低次生産に関わる全ての分野が幅広くカバーされていました。当時は、総勢 40 名程度の学生が同コースに所属しており、大人数で活気のあるゼミや突発的に開催されるジンパなど賑やかなものでした（私はジンパへの参加率がそう高い方ではありませんでしたが）。これらの経験は、私にとっての研究室（当時はコースという括りでしたが）という学びの場作りの原型になりました。

研究では、道東の火散布沼（「ひちりっふぬま」と読みます）という汽水湖でアサリが生態系に与える影響を調べていました。今にして思えば、月に 1 回、車で片道 8 時間かけて移動するというのは正気の沙汰と言えるものではありません。ただ、当時は特に何の疑問もなかったもので、これは私が北海道民から熊本県民に戻ったために発生する感覚のギャップなのかも知れません。（有）シーベックの柴沼氏や（株）西村組の山田氏といった現場調査のプロフェッショナルから調査のいろはをたたき込まれつつ、漁協からお借りしていた番屋で馬車馬のような充実した日々を過ごしたものです。現在は寒地土木研究所の研究者となっている梶原氏と結託して、指導教官の門谷先生には内緒の調査をたくさん画策していました。さして成果の上がらない中で、かなり自由に研究させて頂けたことに感謝しています。今になって気づくことは、あの当時に私が享受していた教育・研究環境が自分の研究者人生の中でも特異的であり、相当に恵まれていたということです。あれだけの環境を構築し、維持していくためには先生方の才覚もさることながら、膨大な時間、コスト、強い意思が懸けられていたことは疑う余地がありません。幸いなことに私は大学教員という職務についています。道程は途方も無く長いですが、あの当を上回る研究・教育環境を学生に提供することが、キャリアを通じた私の大きな目標の 1 つとなりました。



My Life in Hokkaido University Japan under ABE Initiative Scholarship

Kariuki Boniface Wainaina (Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, KENYA)

In 2013 the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Kenya office announced the first batch of the African Business Education (ABE) Initiative scholarship program. The program offers scholarship for African youth to undertake a master's course in Japan as well as an internship in Japanese companies. The aim of the program is to foster a network between the Japanese and the African businesses and it appeared to me as quite a unique program. I therefore applied for it without hesitation. This was to be followed by very thorough screening processes characterized by interviews and sitting examinations. The rest is history since I eventually became one of the first 156 beneficiaries of this prestigious scholarship and Hokkaido University located in Sapporo city would become my home for two years between 2014 and 2016.

All the 156 African youth that had qualified for the program converged in Tokyo at first where we were given a very warm welcome followed by an elaborate orientation of the Japanese systems and culture. Tokyo was to me an amazing city, it was actually beyond my imagination, highways, buildings, subways, malls name it, were all dazzling. At the close of the program in Tokyo, we had learnt a lot, we had tasted a lot of Japanese delicacies, and we had seen a glimpse of the wonderland Japan. It was time for us to depart to our designated universities. A send-off party that had been organized for this purpose and attend by many Japanese drawn from various sectors remains memorable to this day. One of the invited guests was no other than Prof. Shunitz Tanaka, a renowned researcher at the Graduate School of Environmental Science at Hokudai. On the side chat during the party, he heartily welcomed five of us who were to join Hokkaido University on behalf of the Hokudai fraternity and I started feeling part of the great university long before I joined.

By the time we landed in Sapporo, winter was knocking to set in and it was getting chilly, we were first received at Sapporo JICA centre to a warm welcome by staff members there. They took care of us in collaboration with JICE throughout our study life at Hokudai.

I joined the university on my birthday in 2014, and therefore that makes it remain remarkable. I was received well by my supervisor Prof. Tomonori Sato and he became very helpful throughout my studies. He, together with other professors at Hokudai, exhibited kind hearts and were always willing to assist us in all ways. Immediately after joining the university I started to become accustomed to the exciting life at



With some members of the regional climate research group at Hokudai.

Hokudai which started with an annual International Students' welcome party which is normally organized at the Graduate School of Environmental Science. We had a taste of the traditional Japanese food which obviously included the famous sushi among other delicacies. Life in Japan was filled with many more memorable experiences. It is not possible to put it all into context, but the most exciting ones were the "Onsen" (hot spring bath), Karaoke, "Tabenomi Houdai" Sapporo beer garden and the annual Sapporo snow festival. My first onsen experience was organized by my supervisor together with other members of the



With a JICA Staff (Fukuchi san) In a tour to the Ainu Ethnic Museum (“Poroto Kotan”)

faculty and students. I did not know what to expect until we got there, all the rest were Japanese except myself and another Indonesian who refused to get in. At the onsen all of us had to wear the “birthday” suit, I almost asked the ground to break and swallow me but it was too late, the rest is history. After that I visited Onsen two more times with friends and it was fun, indeed, I miss that activity so much. The karaokes were also exciting and refreshing. After days of hard work and long hours inside the research room, karaoke would come in handy. Actually, my friends used to associate me with karaoke since my sir name kariuki sounds the same. We actually don’t have karaokes in Kenya and I have even been having a wild thought of starting up one.

Tabe nomi houdai was another nice experience. We occasionally held our parties there and the fun in the place is derived from the fact that you eat and drink as much as you can within a specified period of time for a specified amount of money.

I was impressed by the both the formal and informal lifestyle of the Japanese in various ways. First, Japanese are accurate when it comes to punctuality. So accurate are the Japanese that, when a train gets late by a minute at a railway station, they announce an apology. The other thing that really impressed me was the humility of the Japanese. Their humility and polite nature are portrayed at all levels and in all places. This character makes their service delivery extremely perfect and one gets to enjoy every bit of it. I can say a million things about my experience in Japan but they can all be summed to saying that it was incredibly memorable.

I went back to my homeland Kenya in 2016 and back to my position as the Chief Technologist in the department of mechatronic Engineering at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. I came back more refined, with renewed zeal to serve others with dedication. Immediately after coming back to Kenya, my supervisor back in Japan Professor Sato informed me that my master thesis had won the Numaguchi Memorial Award for being outstanding. He thereafter sent me the certificate and the medal which I received with humility. Prof. Tomonori Sato, always availed himself whenever I sought out for him and also offered immeasurable help. This is an important trait I picked proudly from him and brought to my current work place which both my colleagues and the students I interact with have the honor of enjoying.



With other members of Manufacturing research Chair carrying out research on coconut value chain.

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